The Politics of the ‘New’ Labour and Social Policies

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1) What is new in labour and social policies

2) How do we interpret change

3) How do we account for change

4) Some remarks
1) What is ‘New’ in labour and social policies

A. Development of new functions and policies (from income protection to work promotion)
   • Pushing non-working people into employment
   • Providing income support for working poors
   • Reconciling work and family life
   • Active ageing and new services for older people
   • Investing in human capital
   • Improvement of social protection for a-typical workers
1) What is ‘New’ in labour and social policies?

B. Retrenchment
   • Pensions and Unemployment benefits;

C. Labour market deregulation at the margin
   • non-standard employment as a form of selective deregulation
   • standard employment not much touched

D. Stronger integration between social, employment, fiscal and education policies
   • more crowded policymaking process
2) How do we interpret change

a. Social Investment Perspective

b. Labour Market (and welfare) Dualisation(s)/Segmentation/Polarization

c. Austerity finally begun (after the Great Recession)
3) How do we account for change

- Policy changes beyond Path-dependency
  - Transformative changes

- Changing Socio-economic Context beyond Permanent Austerity
  - new risks, new role for employment and social policy
3) How do we account for change

1. The Role of Ideas beyond neo-liberalism
   • social investment
   • flexicurity
   • activation

2. Solidarity boundaries transformation
   • Territorial boundaries (EU integration)
   • Risk groups (insiders/outsiders)
   • New map of categories
3) How do we account for change

1. Multidimensionality of the reform agenda
   - benefits level
   - coverage and redistribution
   - employment-friendly measures

2. Room for ...
   - Political Exchange
   - Modernising compromises
   - Affordable credit claiming
   - Divide et impera
4. Some Remarks….

1. Labour and social policies have changed

2. This not just cost-contrainment

3. Overall redefinition of solidarity boundaries, new inequalities

4. Issues of uncertainty, precariousness, socio-political (un)sustainability