Social Policy Paradigms, welfare state reforms and the crisis
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From Neo-liberalism to Liberal Neo-Welfarism?
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What is the paper about?

- long-term waves in social policy paradigms
- the evolution of the European welfare regimes (persistent divergence)
- the impact of the crisis
- some insights about probable future developments
Key advancements

- Convincing reading of decades of welfare policies
- Clear distinction between policy paradigms and welfare regimes
- Evidence-based analysis of challenges, reforms’ outputs and outcomes
- Non-ideological or partisan reconstruction of the welfare state debate
- Mixing the literature on social investment with that on dualisation
More complex aspects (I)

• **Definition of the Social Investment Perspective**
  - Overlapping concepts used in the literature, enabling state, active social policies, etc. (Barbier, 2012)
  - M. Nadel on public policy ‘I don't know how to define it, but I know it when I see it’
    For Social Investment, ‘I know how to define it, but I don’t know it when I see it’
  - Problems in recognising policy outputs (RSA in France; Targeting in UK, etc.) (de la Porte and Jacobsson, 2012) and outcomes (Cantillon, 2011)
  - Is it a true paradigm? How many Social Investment(s)?
More complex aspects (II)

• **Welfare modeling, beyond the three worlds of welfare**
  - Original focus on old age, sickness and unemployment protection
  - Labour market (protection/segmentation)
  - Healthcare

• **How many worlds of welfare?**
  - Is the Southern European model in?

• **More than Welfare …**
  - Need for explicit focus on industrial relations and capitalist models
What prospect for future research?

• *Be brave and go beyond Esping-Andersen*
  ✓ Mixing welfare state analysis with VoC and IRL (Thelen, Palier and Thelen, Baccaro, 2011)
  ✓ Explaining the SI failure

• *Look more at the distributive recalibration*
  ✓ Redrawing the coverage models

• *The future of the Social Investment and the EU*
  ✓ Explicit endorsement?
What is the paper about?
• Ideological turns at the end of the 20th century
• Discursive neo-institutionalism
• End of neo-liberalism followed by the Liberal neo-Welfarism (LNW)
• ‘Ping-pong’ analytical perspective between supranational arena and national reforms
Key advancements

• Convincing reading of the ‘parabola’ of ideological turns

• Fascinating elaboration of the discoursive neo-institutionalism (Schmidt)
  ✓ Tracing the role of ideologues (policy middle-men; academics/politicians hybrids, etc.)

• Focus on ideas is not detrimental of broader analysis of the role of interests and institutions
  ✓ The role of ‘Brussels’

• Lights on the potential articulation of political struggle and coalitions
More complex aspects (I), how deep is the ideological turn?

- **Ideological components**
  - Core components
  - Adjacent components
  - Peripheral components

- **Last turn from NL to LNW is radical or marginal?**
  - NL was so dogmatic or more plastic and thus able to regenerate? (Steger and Roy, 2010)
  - How stable is the new synthesis (between liberty and equality)?
More complex aspects (II), ideological turn and societal transformation

• *Ideological change being the result of societal, political, and philosophical and ideational transformations*

✓ The fall of Neo-lib as a consequence of globalisation and post-industrialism (consistency and timing)

✓ If NL was not able to forge new social and electoral coalitions…has the LNW able to do it? If Thatcher failed…Zapatero succeeded?
More complex aspects (III)

policy and institutional change

• Ideology keeps a foot in the realm of political thought and a foot in the realm of political action (Freeden, 1996)

• From Ideological change to institutional and policy change

  ✔ EU trends in the 1990s: Amsterdam Treaty, EES, Nice Treaty, Social OMC

  ✔ But still EMU, SGP, Single Market (Institutional inertia?)
What prospect for future research?

- *What impact of the crisis?*
  - A new societal transformation?

- *Need to test the effectiveness of past institutional changes*
  - Conflicting views of the Lisbon Strategy and Europe 2020
  - European Semester and Euro Plus Pact
What prospect for future research?

• *Need to monitor the next institutional changes*
  ✓ Social Investment Pact (or package)

• *Look at the dynamics and potential coalitions*
  ✓ Purple coalitions/Grosse Koalition/Social-dem and far left?
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