

## ***WELFARE STATE CHANGE AS A POLANYIAN DOUBLE MOVEMENT***

*HOW SOCIAL POLICY CHANGE AFFECTS WOMEN ACROSS DIFFERENT SOCIAL CLASSES.*

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## AIM OF THE PROJECT

- Investigating and interpreting the connection between welfare state change, gender and class comparatively.
- Analysing how policy change concern women across different social classes using a framework grounded in Polanyi's double movement perspective.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How can welfare state changes across four decades and 21 high-income countries be understood from a double movement perspective?
- How have these changes affected women across different social classes?

## STRUCTURE OF THE PROJECT

### WP 1:

- WP 1 is a quantitative comparative analysis of welfare state change in the fields of labour market, family and income maintenance policies in 21 high-income countries over four decades.

### WP2:

- WP 2 is a qualitative comparative historical analysis of policy change in France and Italy.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND 1/3

Polanyi (2001) theorised the double movement as the result of two changes: a) a movement towards commodification of social life; and b) a countermovement that society puts in place to protect itself from the damages generated by this marketization.

1. Retrenchment of 'compensatory policies', that we define as social transfers or tax rebates that compensate individuals for specific life situations and income shortage (e.g. unemployment benefits, family allowances and child tax credits, income maintenance).
2. Expansion of 'employment-oriented' policies (e.g. childcare, active labour market policies), that have been extended to replace compensatory policies – following the idea that investing and preventing is better than cure (SI)

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND 2/3

Fordist sexual contract as a 'revolution' for women's emancipation from a patriarchal societal organization, but 'unfinished', 'uneven and stalled', 'quiet', and 'incomplete' (Gerson 2010; Goldin 2006; Esping-Andersen 2009).

This is because the relation between production and reproduction rests on a strong gender bias (Einstein 2009; Daly 2005).

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND 3/3

### The role of the welfare state

- Previous literature has suggested that mostly middle-upper class women, seem to enjoy the liberating potential of the post-Fordist sexual contract.
- Women of lower classes, who cannot afford external help for the social reproduction tasks, are confined to low-paid jobs, and their quality of life seems to have deteriorated under the new sexual contract (McDowell 1991)
- The shift to a new welfare and sexual contract encouraged the exploitation of lower class women in the labour market and contributed to a major crisis in social reproduction.

## INVESTIGATING WELFARE STATE CHANGE

### Labour market protection:

- Employment protection
- Unemployment protection
- Income maintenance
- Activation dimensions
- Changes in the workforce composition

### Family policy:

- Leave
- ECEC
- Child income support



## DATA

### WP 1:

- 21 high-income countries: Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden in the social democratic cluster; Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland in the Christian democratic cluster; Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain in the Mediterranean cluster; Australia, Canada, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, the UK and the US in the liberal cluster;
- Time-period: from the 1980s to 2022

### WP 2:

- Countries: France and Italy
- Same time-period as WP1

## METHODOLOGY 1

- We analyse welfare state change employing a mixed-methods approach.
- First, we perform a series of quantitative analyses (involving Factor and Principal Component Analyses [PCA]).
- Second, we undertake a comparative historical analysis of policy change in France and Italy. Process tracing will be enriched with an analysis of relevant outcomes, e.g. the share of women working in the low-skilled service sector (calculated through a reduced version of the 17-class scheme developed by Oesch 2006 and available within EU-SILC micro-data), time spent doing housework and care activities (available on the EUROSTAT website).

## CONTRIBUTIONS

1. Provide a holistic map of welfare state change, reflecting on the different connotations that policy reforms assume for women across different social classes.
  - Achieved with the use of different factorial techniques to provide rich descriptions related to a precise theoretical perspective.
2. Complement these broad insights with an evaluation of policy reforms over forty years in three countries belonging to different welfare regimes.
  - Quantitative comparative analyses cannot capture all policy change as they are too stability prone.
3. Integrating the quantitative and the qualitative analyses allows us to grasp the relevance of general shifts and situate specific country-reforms within a broad context.

Thank you!!!