

Welfare State Change as a Polanyian Double Movement

How social policy change affects women across different social classes (POLWOM)

The POLWOM project contributes to the literature investigating and interpreting the connection between welfare state change, gender and class comparatively. Theoretically, it analyses how policy changes concern women across different social classes, employing a framework grounded in Polanyi's double movement perspective. Empirically, it proposes a mixed-methods approach, with a quantitative comparative analysis of welfare state change (analysing labour market protection, family policy and income maintenance) in 21 high-income countries and a qualitative comparative historical analysis of one case study.

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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?

Work Package 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**. We construct country-scores of policy generosity based on several indicators, and then Principal Component Analysis to observe the specific characteristics of each country in a comparative setting based on the double movement perspective. The other innovation proposed is to produce different models for women belonging to different social classes (measured through the post-industrial class-scheme developed by Oesch 2006).

Work Package 2

WP 2 is a **qualitative historical analysis of policy change in Italy**. In WP 2, we complement the quantitative investigation with a process-tracing analysis of labour market protection, family policy reforms and income maintenance in three cases over the last 40 years. This will help emphasise institutional discontinuity and change within the double movement perspective and focus on the situation of women across different social classes.

A multidisciplinary project

Our evaluation of policy change, and its influence on women across different social classes will involve:

- (1) The use of sophisticated statistical techniques (from economics and sociology);
- (2) The comparative knowledge of broad institutional change (from political science and in particular institutionalist literature);
- (3) The historical detail about specific policy reforms (from comparative and historical institutionalism);
- (4) An appraisal of the influence of welfare state change on gender and class (from sociological literature on the effect of specific institutional outcomes).

Expected outcomes

- Providing a holistic map of welfare stage change, reflecting on the different connotations that policy reforms assume for women across different social classes.
- Evaluating policy reforms over forty years.
- Integrating quantitative and qualitative analyses, allowing to grasp the relevance of general shifts and situate specific country-reforms within a broad context.

Research team:

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Consultant at OECD
- Alessandro ARRIGONI
Independent researcher of political sciences
- Elisa FARNESE
PhD student in political studies (University of Milan)

Methodology

We analyse welfare state change employing a **mixed-methods** approach.

First, we will perform a series of **quantitative analyses** (involving Factor and Principal Component Analyses [PCA]) in 21 high-income countries.

Second, we will undertake a **comparative historical analysis** of policy change in Italy. Labour market protection includes employment protection, unemployment protection and activation dimensions and we will investigate also the changes in the workforce composition that each reform contributed to foster. Family policy will be analysed along the leave, service and child income support dimensions.

Finally, we will also consider **changes to income maintenance**.

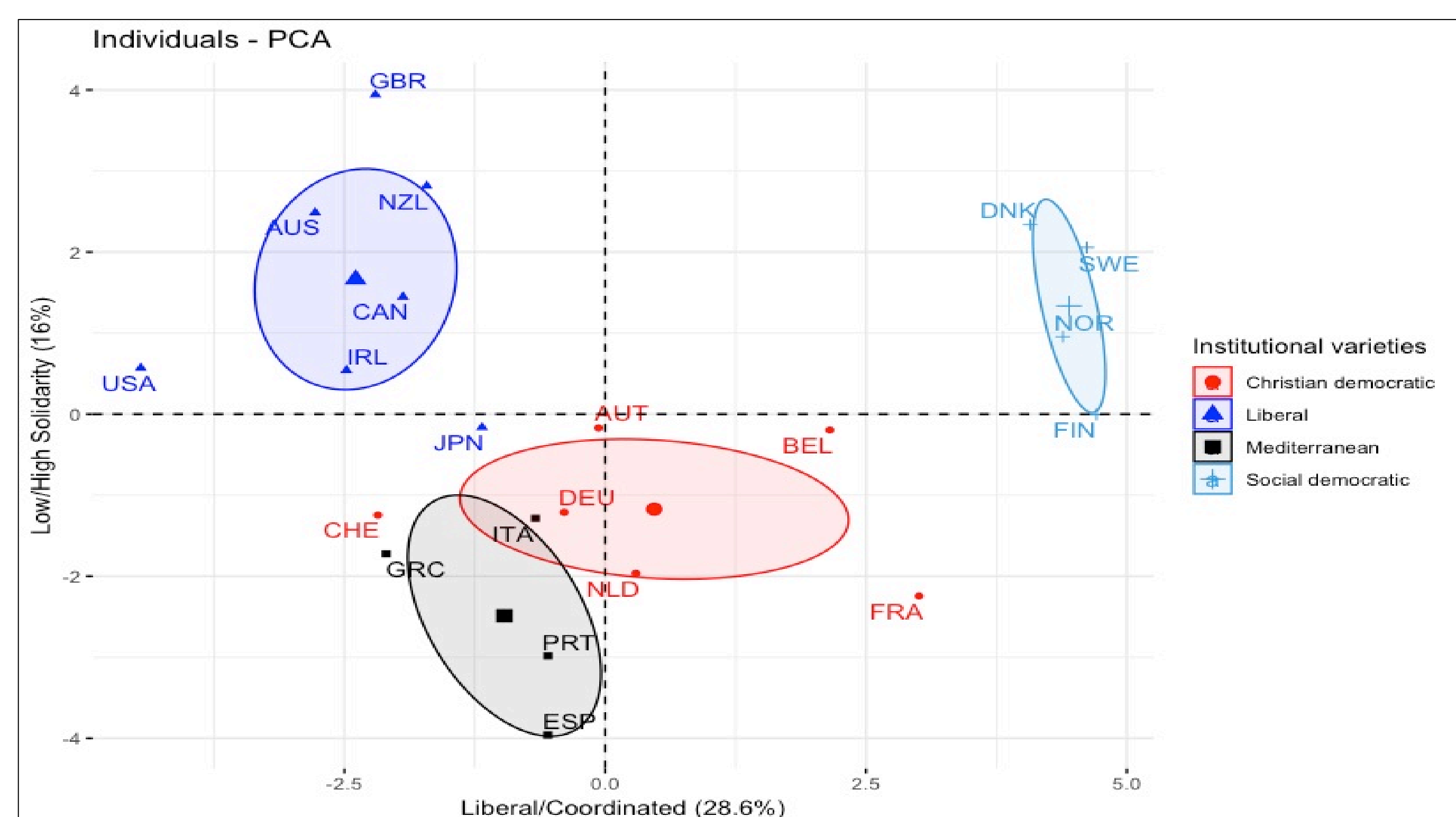


Figure 1 – Labour market and family policy varieties in high-income countries (2015)