Reorienting the Worlds of Welfare:
Tracing Trajectories of Double Movement in North and South, 1985-2000

Stephanie Lee Mudge
Department of Sociology
University of California-Berkeley

This paper extends Esping-Andersen's influential typology of welfare regimes to develop a means of assessing shifts in economic and social policy that can be applied across both developed and developing countries. In a re-specification that draws heavily on the Karl Polanyi's (1944) concept of double movement, I place Esping-Andersen's three 'worlds'— liberal, conservative and social democratic—along two dimensions: social/integrative and economic/regulatory. I develop measures on these dimensions for more than 190 countries using two data sources: the Fraser Institute and the Göteborg Institute's Quality of Government (QoG) time series dataset. Using data from the Fraser Institute, I rank countries along the economic/regulatory axis with a composite measure that, I argue, can be used as a proxy measure for institutionalized neoliberalism. Country rankings along the social/integrative axis are derived from a combination of the Fraser and the QoG datasets: they account for government spending, labor market regulations, political participation and social rights. As part of my discussion of this framework's conceptual fit with Esping-Andersen's typology of welfare states, I emphasize that its admittedly weak identifiers of certain important welfare state characteristics should be weighed against the substantial benefits of extending comparative policy analysis beyond the limited realm of wealthy western democracies. My framework draws on foundational concepts in sociological and institutional approaches to comparative welfare analysis while also developing an inclusive and comprehensive picture of international patterns of convergence, divergence and change. I then offer a two-part quantitative analysis: first, a descriptive analysis that traces the trajectories of 190 countries in a two-dimensional space of social and economic policy between 1985 and the year 2000, examining differences between OECD and non-OECD countries, EU and non-EU countries and northern and southern countries. Second, I bring in measures of right-left politics from the World Bank's Database of Political Institutions (DPI) and measures of political stability from the QoG and DPI datasets for a fixed effects regression analysis that isolates the effects of social/integrative and economic/regulatory (neoliberal) rankings on movements in right-left and extremist politics in the 1990s, controlling for differences in region, political institutions and national wealth.