

The Global Future of the Welfare State

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This talk will address two key questions:

1. Will European forms of welfare state be reproduced elsewhere in the world? What have been the experiences of social policy diffusion outside the classical OECD area?
2. What are the major future challenges to existing and new welfare states?
 1. Welfare regimes and social policy across the world. This breaks down into two questions.
 - a. Will individual risks continue to be collectively managed, or left to lie where they fall?
 - b. If the former, will the forms of collective management of risk follow Western models, or develop in quite novel ways? The patterns of risk management across the world will be summarised using a highly-modified welfare regime framework (of which all Western welfare state regimes are but one model). The likely future development of these patterns will be discussed in terms of path dependence versus the pressures of new problems and demands (including global epidemics and global migration/ remittances).

The issues raised include:

- The sheer size of mass poverty in South Asia, Africa, and in the interior of China
- How to give formal social rights to the huge sectors of informal work in Africa, Asia, and Latin America
- How to institutionalize social rights for large migrant populations
- Can sufficient civic solidarity be generated among a tax-paying middleclass?
- The development of non-corrupt and efficient public organizations of rights implementation and service delivery

2. Future welfare states: the challenge of environmental sustainability

How to reconcile policies of economic growth, social equity and environmental sustainability? In the 21st century the challenges include collective and long-term global threats of which probably the most egregious is climate change. Policy measures to cope with it are typically divided into mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change. Both will have implications for 'traditional' social policy.

For example:

- The redistributive impact of both climate change and adaptation/mitigation policies. What are the congruences and contradictions between social justice and environmental justice?
- The need for governments to move away from traditional provision of services and transfers and towards more diffuse behaviour-changing goals. What will be the mix of education, taxation, regulation and enforcement in changing consumption behaviour?
- Will there be a shift from 'growth+welfare' to sustainable wellbeing, as the unifying goal of social policy? Economic growth has been broadly perceived as a win-win means to accomplish social policy goals. If it now directly threatens them, will this push up the agenda alternative notions of 'progress' and new measures of wellbeing?