

Social pacts, Coalitions, and Changing Welfare States

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Outline

- Social pacts as metaphor
 - Social pacts and systems of interest group representation: corporatism vs. pluralism
- A more expansive conception of “social pacts:”
 - social pacts as *coalition engineering*

Outline

- Three lessons for aspiring *coalition engineers*:
 - Trade-offs and positive-sum solutions
 - The socially desirable vs. the historically feasible
 - No social pact is forever
- Social pacts in an age of austerity

Corporatist vs. Pluralist Systems of Interest Group Representation

- **Corporatist Social Pacts**

- **Social Pacts** are “... formal policy contracts between the government and *social partners* over income, labour market or welfare policies that identify explicitly policy issues and targets , means to achieve them, and the tasks and responsibilities to achieve them.” (Avdagic 2008:11)
- The “***social partners***” refer to peak organizations of business and labour.



- Pluralist Politics

- A marketplace of competing and fragmented interest groups
- Cross-cutting cleavages and the democratic balance of power??

From “social pacts” to “coalition engineering”

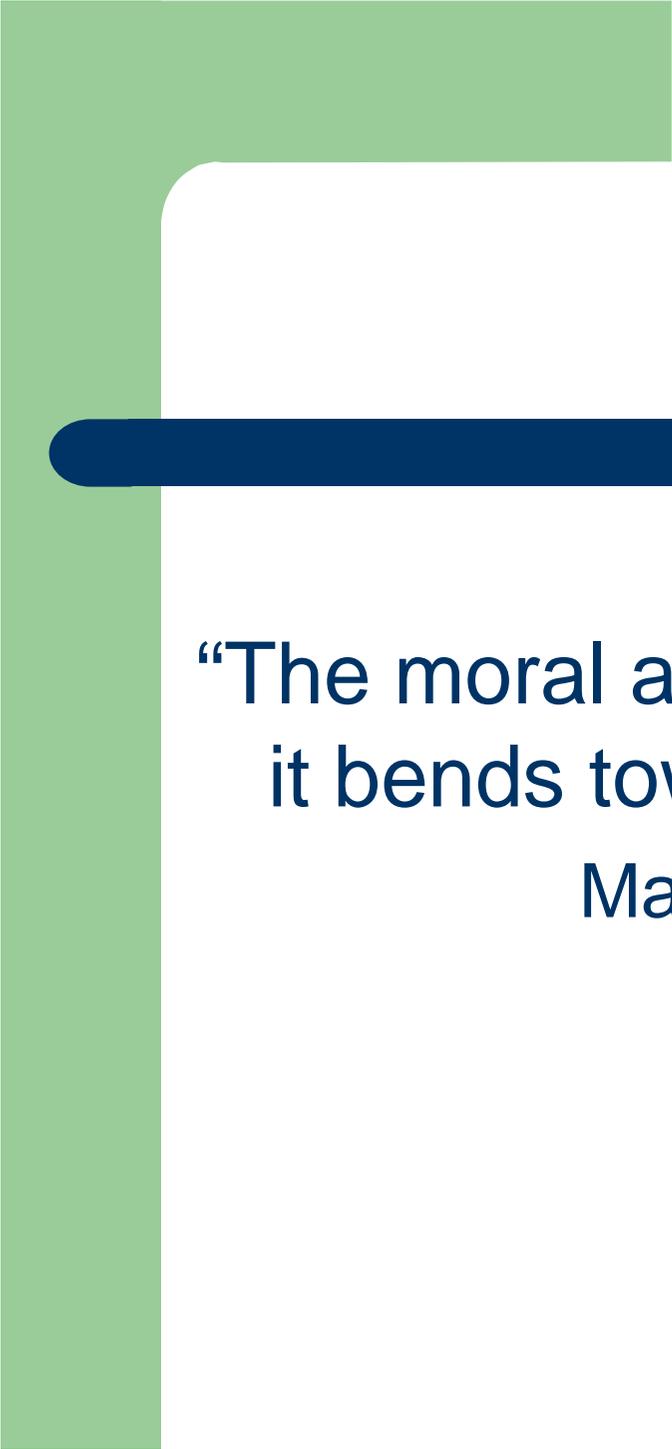
- Coalition building restructures power relations
- Coalition building and the welfare state
 - In the United States
 - In Canada
- Coalitions as mechanisms of
 - Social inclusion
 - Social exclusion

Three Lessons for Aspiring Coalition Engineers

- Trade-offs and the search for positive-sum solutions
- Distinguishing between the socially desirable and the politically feasible
- No social pact is forever: the limited time horizon of social pacts

New Challenges in the 21st Century

- Coalition building has become more difficult in an age of austerity.
- “Retrenchment” and backsliding do not mean we are going back to the past.
- Social pacts are temporary and always in need of recalibration.
- But social rights are enduring



“The moral arc of the universe is long, but
it bends toward justice.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.