

13th Conference  
of the European  
Sociological Association

(Un)Making Europe:  
Capitalism, Solidarities,  
Subjectivities

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ABSTRACT BOOK

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**“New social policy paths through external trajectories: The impact of the Economic Adjustment Programmes on the Greek Welfare State reform**  
Gabriel Amitsis  
Technology University of Athens, Greece  
amitsis(at)otenet.gr

Greece is the EU Member State most impacted by the 2008 - 2009 financial crisis, given that there were neither primary social safety nets for those unable to meet their needs through market or family settings, nor supplementary policies in case of specific needs. The national social protection model was strongly fragmented, and public spending was focused on civil servants salaries and state pensions.

A radical welfare reform was a high priority issue within the structural agenda of the three Economic Adjustment Programmes (known also as Bailout Programmes), which were implemented since May 2010 by major lending international partners (European Commission, European Central Bank, International Monetary Fund). These institutions identified serious problems and shortcomings in the regulation and funding of welfare, and they adopted a controversial social policy agenda with strong financial but limited social effects, which puts into question the traditional balance of power between national and international competences in the welfare policy-making process. This is a unique agenda, given that it may be considered as the first attempt to introduce for the very first time a broader external operational welfare trajectory in Europe, which changes dramatically values and ideologies of the European Social Model and may influence its solidarity and redistributive effects in the near future.

In this respect, the objective of this Paper is to discuss the impact of the Economic Adjustment Programmes on the Greek Welfare State reform and highlight the framework of relevant key national initiatives, as the Greek National Social Inclusion Strategy (adopted by the Greek Government in 2014 and re-affirmed by the European Commission in 2015).

RN26 | Session 08a Welfare Policies - Changes and Challenges

Disability and Independent Living in Portugal: policy changes and challenges  
Fernando Fontes, Bruno Martins, Ema Loja, Mónica Lopes, Joana Pimentel, Paula Pinto, Silvia Portugal  
Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Portugal; Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Portugal; Institute of Social and Political Sciences, University of Lisbon, Portugal; Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Portugal; Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Portugal; Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, University of Porto, Portugal; Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Portugal  
fernando(at)ces.uc.pt, bsenamartins(at)gmail.com, loja.ema(at)gmail.com, monica(at)ces.uc.pt, joanapimentelalves(at)gmail.com,

ppinto(at)iscsp.ulisboa.pt, sp(at)fe.uc.pt

The growing international recognition of disabled people's rights is far from translating into a substantive change in their living conditions and participation horizons. Those identified as disabled have often been disregarded, marginalized, silenced, made dependent, and their lives have been disproportionately affected by poverty and social exclusion. Likewise, Portuguese disability policies have been unable to change this reality.

Paradigmatic change in disability policies in other geographical contexts materialized through the establishment of 'Independent Living' for disabled people as a social citizenship right. Understood as the idea of disabled people's control over their lives, Independent Living encapsulates the right to live in contexts where they are not dependent on family care or on solutions offered in institutional contexts. This change has been implemented through 'direct payments', 'independent living funds', personal assistance and the formation of centers for independent living.

The Portuguese Welfare State, characterized by low levels of social protection, low benefits, different welfare-regimes and contrasting generosity levels is now introducing changes to implement 'independent living' for disabled people and to raise disability benefits above the poverty line.

Based on an ongoing research project "DECIDE - Disability and self-determination: the challenge of Independent living in Portugal" (reference no. PTDC/IVCSOC/6484/2014), and drawing on documentary analysis, semi-structured interviews and focus-groups with disabled people, NGO representatives and stakeholders, this paper examines, first, the changes currently taking place on Portuguese Disability Policies, second, the challenges and opportunities created for disabled people and, finally, the implication of these changes for the analysis of the Portuguese Welfare State.

Forgotten childhoods: Paradoxes and politics of De-Institutionalisation in Bulgaria  
Barry Percy-Smith, Galina Markova  
University of Huddersfield, United Kingdom; Know How Centre, New Bulgarian University, Sofia, Bulgaria  
B.Percy-Smith(at)hud.ac.uk, galina.a.markova(at)gmail.com

A condition of Bulgaria joining the EU was to decrease the number of institutionalized children which in 2000 was 35 000. These children were effectively the forgotten minorities of childhood, handed over by parents without support and unable to cope, and left to eke out an institutionalised existence largely cut off from wider society and denied opportunities to participate as active citizens.

In 2010 Bulgaria embarked on a national programme of De-Institutionalisation (DI) funded by EU programs. In spite of a rhetorical commitment to DI at the level of national policy, there is no strategy for developing a robust child protection system as an alternative to