

T09P08 / Experimentalist Welfare Governance in the European Union

Topic : T09 / Governance, Policy networks and Multi-level Governance

Chair : Klaus Schubert (Institute for Political Science, University of Muenster)

Second Chair : Minna Van Gerven (University of Twente)

Third Chair : Lukas Jerg (Institute for Political Science, University of Muenster)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

All European Welfare Systems (EWS) are facing severe challenges (Schubert/de Villota/Kuhlmann 2016) and it is uncertain as to what extent political re-actions change our acquainted worlds of welfare. On the one hand even European countries with similar sets of criteria – e.g. demographic structure, (un)employment rate, public deficit/debt) – have generated wildly diverging policy responses and it seems that national social institutions, social interests and experiences are shaping national welfare policies. On the other hand, however, also the EU plays an important role in shaping national welfare systems. EWS have nowadays become semi-sovereign welfare states (Van Gerven/Beckers 2009) as the EU has taken a strong position in influencing national policy preferences and facilitating policy learning (Kerschen 2012). National welfare states are legally and economically constrained by European rules of economic integration, liberalization and competition law. Moreover, the objectives of the EU regarding employment and social protection and the respective competences of the Union and of the European member states are defined in European treaties. So, although the future development of the EWS seems to be open to change, it is reasonable to see future processes taking place in a corridor between national path-dependency, a large variety of political intentions and EU-stimulated coordinated action (Natali/Vanhercke 2013).

From this perspective it seems useful to apply a newly available constructive approach to analyze the interplay of national and European welfare policy development. In the last few years much has been published on 'experimental' policy-making. However these approaches all follow a trial-and-error mode of policy-making which is guided by recursive and reflective learning and adjusting processes. Dorff and Sabel (1998) devised the term "democratic experimentalism", Stoker and John (2009) the term "design experiments" and lately Sabel and Zeitlin (2008) coined the term "experimentalist governance" and provided rather interesting empirical examples and illustrations from Multi-Level Governance in the EU (Sabel/Zeitlin 2012). "One important omission", they state here, "concerns transformations in national welfare states particularly within the Nordic universal access, service-based welfare regimes that are arguably becoming a model for the EU as a whole" (Sabel/Zeitlin 2012, p.8).

Our panel investigates this "important omission" and invites papers that analyze the development of European Welfare Systems from a multi-level policy-making perspective. Also papers discussing 'experimental' policy-making from a more theoretical perspective are welcome.

CALL FOR PAPERS

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Our panel investigates this “important omission” and invites papers analyzing the development of EWS from a multi-level policy-making perspective or are dealing with theoretical aspects of experimentalist policy-making. General orientation gives the full title of our panel: Experimentalist Welfare Governance in the European Union: What, Why, and if What Difference does it make?

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Session 1

Friday, June 30th 13:45 to 15:45 (Block B 4 - 3)

International and supranational institutions as social policy actors: the case of Latvia

Olga Rajevska (University of Latvia)

Feliciana Rajevska (Vidzeme Univeraity of Applied Sciences)

“The social clauses of the Economic Adjustment Programmes for Greece: A controversial paradigm for experimental policy-making in the welfare domain”

Gabriel Amitsis (Technology University of Athens)

Experimenting with the European Union: The in, out, or throughput legitimacy of the European Social Fund

Minna Van Gerven (University of Twente)

Sonja Bekker (Tilburg University)

Experimentalist Governance in Welfare State Research?

Lukas Jerg (Institute for Political Science, University of Muenster)