

ECPR JOINT SESSIONS OF WORKSHOPS 2009

CALL FOR PAPERS

Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology
(CIES-ISCTE), University Institute for Social Sciences Business Studies
and Technologies (ISCTE), Institute for Social
Sciences of the University of Lisbon (ICS) and Portuguese Political
Science Association (APCP), Portugal
14-19 April 2009

The Political Economy of Labour Market Reforms in Advanced Capitalist Democracies

Workshop Directors: Nikos Koutsiaras (University of Athens) and
Sotiria Theodoropoulou (Trinity College Dublin)

Labour market reforms have been at the top of the policy agenda in advanced capitalist democracies since the 1980s. These countries have faced a number of structural pressures since the 1970s, including the slowdown in productivity growth, technological change, increased economic integration, particularly within the EU, de-industrialisation and tertiarisation. These pressures have called into question the effectiveness of economic and especially labour market policies and institutions, such as systems of collective wage bargaining and non-employment benefits, employment protection legislation and activation policies that were established during the 'Golden Era' in supporting good labour market performance. In spite of the largely common pressures, reform patterns have varied widely.

The purpose of this workshop is to bring together researchers in political economy with a special interest in the reforms of the above labour market policies and institutions in order to discuss theoretical and empirical contributions on how domestic and international political, social and economic institutions, norms and discourse have been shaping the patterns of these reforms in the light of the aforementioned pressures since the 1980s, especially those relating to the rise of the service sector and economic integration (including EMU and growing trade flows in services). The existing literature on the political economy of reforms has been abundant with hypotheses on these questions, however, there is no such thing as a 'general' model of the political economy of labour market reforms, while findings are often contradictory.

One of the main interests of this workshop is to take stock of what empirical evidence can teach us about the validity of the existing hypotheses and any useful extensions that may be drawn thereof. Some of the questions that we would like to see addressed during the workshop include

- How have developments such as economic integration (especially EMU) and the rise of the service sectors affected the demand for and supply of labour market reforms?
- Can we identify distinguishable patterns of labour market reforms and reform strategies in advanced capitalist democracies? What do they look like? (e.g. comprehensive or marginal? Packages or 'piecemeal'?)
- To what extent and how have domestic and international politics, institutions and discourse been shaping labour market reform strategies?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of currently used methods and existing datasets for empirically investigating questions in the political economy of labour market reforms in advanced capitalist democracies?

We welcome both theoretical and empirical papers. We are open to different empirical approaches with emphasis on variable-oriented or configurations-oriented, large- or small-N analyses. We are particularly interested in empirical micro-studies, i.e. case-studies of reforms (comparative cross-country or single-cases across time) to identify the conditions under which they went through in the form they did. We also welcome contributions discussing the available data on labour market reforms.

Submission of abstracts

Prospective participants should contact the workshop directors with any queries. We will expect each selected participant to circulate in advance and present a paper. We welcome applications from scholars and advanced research students.

Deadline for applications: 1 December 2008

Applications should include the title of the paper, name, affiliation and contact details of the author(s) and an abstract of the paper (max 300 words). Participants will be expected to participate in the workshop for the whole duration of the Joint Sessions. We will inform applicants

of whether they have been admitted shortly after the above deadline date.

Practical information on the ECPR 2008 Joint Sessions is available at http://www.ecpr.org.uk/lisbon/participant_info.html

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