

EQUALSOC: A CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE ON SOCIAL RESEARCH IN EUROPE

After 5 years of intense work, the EU-funded Network of Excellence EqualSOC, consisting of top European institutes studying social inequality and social cohesion, finalized its activities in the current form. This newsletter covers the main 2010 event – the Final EqualSOC Conference organized at the University of Amsterdam in June, and announces upcoming publications and events that will take place this year.

But.... EQUALSOC continues!

The Governing Council of EQUALSOC decided, in their meeting in Amsterdam in November 2010, to continue with the network. EQUALSOC will thus remain in existence for another 3 years! Due to more limited funds without EU funding, EQUALSOC aims to continue its activities mainly for PhD students, including a continuation of the Summer School, Methodology Workshops, and student visitorships. At least one more network conference is also on the agenda. The infrastructure will remain in place, including the website. It is hoped that many people will benefit from the activities that will be organized! ★

FINAL EQUALSOC CONFERENCE, 3-5 JUNE 2010, AMSTERDAM

The focus of EQUALSOC research has been on social cohesion and its dependence on social differentiation, the relationships between the growing importance of knowledge in the economy, the different chances that individuals and groups experience with respect to the quality of life, and social cohesion. The final EqualSOC conference provided the participating researchers with an opportunity to present their work on the following themes:

- ★ Family and the life course
- ★ Care: family, welfare state and the market issues
- ★ Flexibilization of life courses
- ★ The intergenerational reproduction of inequality
- ★ Education in comparative research
- ★ The generation of educational inequality: Primary and secondary mechanisms
- ★ Higher education: Expansion, differentiation and its consequences for social inequality
- ★ Occupational mobility and social inequality in the life course
- ★ Educational expansion, educational inequality and social mobility
- ★ Ethnicity and educational inequalities
- ★ Ethnicity and labour market outcomes
- ★ Marriage patterns and migrants integration
- ★ Integration of immigrants in Europe
- ★ Lifestyle, identity and social differentiation
- ★ Poverty and social exclusion
- ★ Contemporary political cleavages
- ★ Civicness and inequality
- ★ The decline of unions and collective organization
- ★ Monitoring living conditions and quality of life in Europe

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COLOPHON

The EqualSOC newsletter is published annually. Future issues will be distributed through e-mail. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter again, please send an e-mail to newsletter@equalsoc.org.

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(Lay-out).

For two and a half days, about 250 researchers from the participating institutions and invited guests were discussing and exchanging ideas on these topics. On the next page, we present highlights of the conference sessions, as reported by PhD students at the University of Amsterdam, Valentina di Stasio, Thijs Bol and Marii Paskov.



FINAL EQUALSOC CONFERENCE 2010 - PARALLEL SESSIONS

During the final EQUALSOC conference a great diversity of topics was addressed in four parallel sessions on Friday and Saturday. An example of these are two projects carried out within the EDUC group: primary and secondary effects and the establishment of improved indicators to measure educational level.

Two full sessions were dedicated to research focussing on primary and secondary effects of education. The concepts, originating from the sixties and further developed by Boudon in 1974, form the red line in a volume edited by **Michelle Jackson**. In the book primary and secondary effects are compared across countries by using national studies by country experts. At the conference, national accounts on Sweden and France were presented as well as a first draft of the comparative chapter.

Another EDUC presentation was devoted to comparing educational measurements: **Silke Schneider** and her team have been working on a paper which finds that with the widely used ISCED levels, crucial information on the

differentiation within upper secondary and tertiary education is lost to the analysis. The paper validates an analytical scheme that was developed in an earlier paper and that can be derived from detailed ISCED categories. One crucial difference between ISCED and ES-ISCED is the distinction between qualifications on the theoretical pathway to the PhD and qualifications leading to the labour market or further vocational education. While the former are mostly general but also sometimes vocational education programmes, the latter are always vocational.

Other issues discussed at the parallel sessions included the problem of immigrants' integration in the host societies. Immigrants were compared to the native population in different contexts – education, labour market, but also the housing market. In addition, ethnic integration and its implications were discussed. Turning to another topic, family issues were discussed in terms of care, family disruption, household work, fertility, and family policy. At the same time gender topics were addressed from the perspective of careers and gender inequality. Contributions

on inequality, poverty and social exclusions were covering issues (just to name a few) on intergenerational income mobility, housing deprivation, unemployment, and social assistance. Special attention was given to poverty and social exclusion among the elderly people, which was a central topic of one of the sessions. Furthermore, two papers on another crucial source of inequality – health inequality – were presented. With regard to employment there were contributions on part-time and atypical work, employment protection and security, and early-career. In addition, there were also presentations on job satisfaction, union membership and collective organization. Last but not least, papers on social capital and meritocracy were discussed.

Most sessions combined work done in different research teams. Furthermore, papers presented also reflected that collaboration was taking place between different research teams combining topics of education, employment, family, income distribution, and cultural and social differentiation, but also issues of trust, associations and legitimacy. ★

MAIN RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE RESEARCH GROUPS

The EQUALSOC final conference brought together a conspicuous number of scholars. The meeting represented a platform where to attest that the primary goals of this network of excellence – namely to stimulate high-quality comparative research and mobilise expertise across Europe on the deeply interwoven issues of economic change, quality of life and social cohesion - have been successfully met over the past five years. During her words of welcome Professor **Anita Hardon**, dean of the research school hosting the meeting (the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research), encouraged the members of EQUALSOC to think of possible avenues in which to further develop such a collaboration in the future, and admitted to have been positively impressed by the prolific and wide-ranging work of the network. The project officer **Giulia Amaducci**, who supervised the activities of EQUALSOC at the EU level, continued along the same lines, and stressed the importance of disseminating the results of the research program to policy-makers and to the public at large.

The six research groups that compose EQUALSOC presented the results of a wide array of studies carried out over the last five years, on which basis a new research agenda for the future was set forth. Altogether, this impressive amount of empirics has advanced the state of the art in disciplines such as sociology, political science and economics, by exploring the structural determinants of social inequalities and the mechanisms by which they reproduce at the micro, meso and macro levels. The cleavages that structure patterns of social mobility and economic change across

European societies have been thoroughly dealt with, by pointing out the institutions that mediate (in a sustaining or countervailing fashion) the inter-generational transmission of inequalities and the intra-generational process of social stratification.



Richard Layte briefly sketched out the main achievements of the group working on *Income distribution, consumption and income mobility* (INCDIS). In this context, research on poverty and social exclusion has been re-oriented towards a multi-faceted approach to social exclusion that employs non-monetary indicators. Advances were made in the understanding of the mechanisms that underpin the intergenerational transmission of inequalities. The group also investigated the role of social welfare institutions in influencing social stratification: an important finding was the fact that the impact of demographic and family-related variables on poverty distribution vary across welfare regimes. **Hiroshi Ishida**, from Tokyo University, after recognizing the benefits that may derive from the more refined measures of deprivation that the program group developed, urged researchers to engage in a deeper study of demographic transformations at the macro-level, such as the effects that an extended longevity and steadily declining birth rates may have on social differentiation in contemporary societies.

Duncan Gallie, chairing the group *Employment and the labour mar-*



ket (EMPLOY), outlined the research outcomes that are intimately related with the policy goals of the Lisbon Agenda. A detailed measurement of skills change - and of the extent to which the shift to a knowledge-based economy has implied a skill-upgrading within occupational demands - revealed an overall tendency for skills to rise, particularly for managerial and professional positions. No general process of skill polarization was found, except for the UK: as a result, social cohesion – although not improving – has not deteriorated. The group also concentrated on the distribution and perception of job quality and job insecurity. The state of the national employment cycle still holds as a key determinant of job insecurity across countries. Job quality is unevenly distributed, and is particularly low for low-skilled, temporary and part-time workers. The multi-dimensional definitional approach to job quality was praised by **Arne Kalleberg**, from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, who stressed the integrated efforts existing between the various working teams. Considering that structural insecurities, and the way they are perceived, appear to be mediated by welfare institutions, Prof Kalleberg called for the need to unpack the concept of insecurity (for instance by differentiating job insecurity from employment insecurity and labour market insecurity) and to study the potential role of institutions in alleviating its structural determinants.

Chiara Saraceno illustrated the results that research group *Family and Social Networks* (FAMNET) has accomplished over these years. The team pursued a relational approach to the study of patterns of family formation and organization, with a particular focus on gender division of household labour, perceptions of work/family balance, the development of family relationships in societies of instable marriages and aging kinships and the presence and reproduction of social inequalities between and across generations. The group found evidence of persisting gender asymmetries in work-family arrangements; even more importantly, cross-country differences seemed to be due to state interventions, rather than to changing male behaviours. A worrisome finding was the fact that solidarity appears to be more selective especially where there is a lack of welfare-related support. Hence, the scope for containing the intergenerational reproduction of social inequality is more strained in those countries where the welfare of individuals is more dependent on the availability of intergenerational solidarity.

Walter Müller presented an overview of the work of research group *Education, social mobility and social cohesion* (EDUC). The group specifically focused on the uneven distribution of educational chances, the transmission of educational inequalities, and the magnitude and spread of returns to education. A closely related goal was to improve the infrastructure for comparative research on education through the development of more accurate indicators. In the last few decades the provision of education faced an enormous expansion worldwide. This went hand in hand with a process of differentiation of higher education institutions, which begs the question of how access to various kinds of study in a diversified system has occurred. Returns to education were analyzed with regard to selection into fields of study, gender-related occupational segregation and ethnic disparities in educational attainment. Moreover, researchers devoted great attention to the study of primary and secondary effects of social origin on educational outcomes and approached the issues of occupational mobility and transmission of social inequality from a life-course perspective. Overall, no tendency of increasing intra-generational mobility was found: social origin effects do not seem to decrease systematically over one's career. Yossi Shavit from Tel Aviv University, while

commenting on the achievements of the EDUC group, maintained that, given the primacy of primary effects in explaining the inequality of educational outcomes, ability should be given prime attention in comparative research on education. However, in policy terms, it might be simply more feasible to tackle secondary effects by taking students' aspirations – and their structural and institutional determinants – into due account.



Jelle Visser introduced the main research developments of the group *Trust, Associability and Legitimacy* (TRALEG), exploring the institutional underpinnings of economic growth and social cohesion in a knowledge-based society, and the basis for the generation of trust and legitimacy therein. The group also investigated issues of civiness, political engagement and democracy; quality of life in the context of the EU enlargement, the relationship between social divisions and political choice and, finally, causes and consequences of a ubiquitous union decline. Clustered patterns of social solidarity were found and tentatively associated to the well-established classification of welfare state regimes. National perceptions of quality of life or, conversely, of collective deprivation were also addressed, starting from the sociological assumptions that social cohesion is stemming from social bonds and solidarity. In particular, a core research interest of the group was how social developments and political strategies interact to (re)produce changes in the social basis for political choices. Both bottom-up effects of economic developments and affluence allocation on choice and top-down effects of political party positioning on societal processes were proposed and tested. As for the decline of trade union membership, multi-level models offered an appropriate methodological tool for studying the role that institutions play in moderating individual propensities of membership. Rising earning inequalities can partly be explained by weakening labour market institutions and partly by a decline over time of the mediating institutional effect. In his comment on the research agenda of TRALEG **Arne Kalleberg** emphasized the need for researchers to focus on the possibility of occupational associational formations that are portable across workplaces, in order to better cater to the demands of the diversified and mobile workforce typical of the post-industrial society.

Lastly, **Yannick Lemel** concluded the overview of the network's activities with a summary of the main achievements of the group *Social and Cultural Differentiation* (SOCCULT). This team dealt with the issues of social exclusion, urban inequalities, social networks and ethnic integration. The primary goals of SOCCULT were to increase the focus of international research on the access of migrants to socio-economic resources (such as education and employment) and to encourage the study of how these resources are used, by concentrating on lifestyles and living conditions. **Yossi Shavit** gave an enthusiastic review of the work of this group: SOCCULT arguably did an impressive work in trying to set the research agenda in a field where academic scholarship was far less developed. As a final remark, Shavit stressed the fact that inequality, per se, is different from exclusion, although it may result from exclusionary practices. Somewhat paradoxically, inequality may also derive from inclusionary practices. Therefore, researchers should seriously consider the need to include individual agency amongst the conceptual signifiers of social exclusion, in order to arrive at a broader understanding of how inequalities reproduce over time and across social groups in contemporary societies. ★

CONCLUDING SESSIONS AND THE END OF THE CONFERENCE

The conference ended with a concluding discussion on institutions, social differentiation and the economic crisis with a special focus on challenges to social cohesion in the European Union. The first concluding talk was given by **Jens Alber** (WZB, Social Science Research Center in Berlin) who discussed the issues and implications of ethnic diversity in Europe. The second talk was given by **Brian Nolan** (University College Dublin) who talked about inequality and the econo-

mic crisis. A well-deserved final conference dinner took place at the Hotel The Grand – one of the finest restaurants in Amsterdam. During the dinner John Goldthorpe shared memories with the members of EQUALSOC about how the network got started and how smoothly the project has run ever since. He ended with a word of thanks to the members of EQUALSOC ★

EQUALSOC POLICY MEETING - 6 SEPTEMBER 2010

„ACTIVE INCLUSION: WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT WHAT WORKS AND WHAT NOT?“

This last EQUALSOC policy meeting took place on 6 September 2010 in Liège, Belgium.

Agenda

- 14:00 – 14:15: Welcome and introduction: by Bea Cantillon, Centre for Social Policy – Herman Deleeck, University of Antwerp Belgium.
- 14:15 – 16:00: SESSION I: Active inclusion
 “Social inclusion, low pay and poverty”, by Wiemer Salverda, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
 “Intergenerational solidarity in an ageing environment”, by Chiara Saraceno, University of Turin, Italy.
 „Labour market polarisation”, by Duncan Gallie, University of Oxford, UK
 “Migration and social cohesion”, by Yannick Lemel, CREST, France
- 16:20 – 17:30 SESSION II: Panel discussion with European policy makers ★

TRALEG WORKSHOP - 25-27 NOVEMBER 2010

„WORKSHOP ON INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE“

The TRALEG workshop ‘Institutional Change’, organized by Jelle Visser, Bernhard Ebbinghaus, and Claus Wendt, was hosted by the MZES/ Mannheim University, on November 25-27, 2010. The workshop covered the following topics:

- ★ Theorizing institutional change – e.g. in relation to the VoC, employment regimes, or welfare state regimes;
- ★ Methodological frameworks and empirical evidence of institutional change;
- ★ Social learning, global diffusion of ideas and institutional change; and
- ★ Policy reforms, institutional change, and the outcomes of new institutional settings.

Contributions included paper such as ‘Choice and persistence in coordinating institutions in wage bargaining in the OECD between 1980 and 2010’ (Jelle Visser), ‘Integration and Isomorphism among Welfare States in the European Union’ (Jason Beckfield), and ‘Model Transfer in Skill Formation: Examining Institutional Change in Vocational Training and Higher Education Systems’ (Justin Powell) from various EQUALSOC partners and further participants ★

EQUALSOC CONCLUDING SEMINAR OF THE MINIMUM INCOME PROTECTION INDICATORS (MIPI) GROUP

This seminar took place on 1 December 2010 in Brussels and marked the end of the activities of the MIPI group within EQUALSOC. The MIPI group brought together researchers working on minimum income protection in the EU in order to exchange expertise and to stimulate collaborative research. Participating institutes included AIAS, CSB, ESRI, MZES, and SOFI. The purpose of this final seminar was to take stock of our knowledge of minimum income protection in the European Union, and to set priorities and objectives for future research, most notably relating to EU policy issues. Several representatives from the Commission attended. A book is planned to be published with Palgrave. ★

PARTNERS



AIAS-SCHOLAR, AMSTERDAM

AIAS is an interdisciplinary expert centre for research and teaching on industrial relations, organisation of work, wage formation, labour market inequalities and social policy. AIAS maintains databases on trade union membership, collective bargaining and labour market institutions, and collective agreements. SCHOLAR is a research group of the Faculty of Economics. It studies the efficiency of the transition from education and the labour market, its consequences for economic development, and the equity aspects of the transition process.



CENTRE FOR SOCIAL POLICY (CSB), ANTWERP

The Centre's principal objective is to study the adequacy of social policies. Its research is mainly based on large-scale socio-economic surveys of households in Belgium and Flanders. The Centre seeks to link developments in the distribution of welfare and poverty to broader socio-demographic and economic trends, and to explain the actual and possible role government policies can play in this regard. For this purpose the Centre has developed a micro-simulation model (MISIM).



CNRS, PARIS

The CNRS (National Scientific Research Centre/ Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique) is a state-funded scientific organization under the authority of the French Ministry of Education and Research.



ESRI, DUBLIN

The Economic and Social Research Institute is Ireland's leading centre for applied research in the social sciences. The ESRI is an independent, not-for-profit organisation, with the mission of bringing the latest thinking in economics and the social sciences to the actual and potential problems of Irish society. Organisational goals of the ESRI are academic excellence, objectivity relevance to policy, and widespread dissemination of results.



MZES, MANNHEIM

The Mannheim Centre for European Social Research is an interdisciplinary research institute of the University of Mannheim. It is Germany's largest university-based social science research centre and is among Europe's leading centres for the comparative study of the development and integration of the European societies and the European political systems. It is affiliated to the faculty of social sciences (University of Mannheim), which ranks at the top (place 1) in the field of sociology and political science in Germany according to several national and international rankings.



NUFFIELD COLLEGE, OXFORD

Nuffield is the specialist social science college of the University of Oxford. It has particular strengths in Economics, Politics and Sociology. The College has a strong tradition of quantitative social science, making extensive use of large-scale data sets (both cross-sectional and longitudinal).

PARTNERS



SOFI, STOCKHOLM

The Swedish Institute for Social Research (SOFI) conducts research on questions related to living conditions, welfare, social inequality, social policy and labour market policy. Research at SOFI is organised within three research divisions: labour economics, level of living and social policy.



UNIMIB, UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO, MILAN

The common commitment of scholars working at UNIMIB is to carry out theoretically informed empirical studies, using advanced quantitative and qualitative social research techniques.



UNIVERSITY OF POMPEU FABRA, BARCELONA

The UPF's economics department is ranked among the top in Europe and the Political and Social Science department is ranked among the best in Southern Europe. Within the political and social sciences department, main research fields include public policies and regulation, comparative social policy and welfare states, research on social inequalities and poverty, demography and the family, labour markets and employment.



UNIVERSITY OF TARTU

The Faculty of Social Sciences includes the depts. of Journalism & Social Communication; Political Sciences; Public Administration; Psychology; Semiotics; Sociology and Social Policy. Currently there are two major streams of research in the Dept. of Sociology and Social Policy that could be brought under the common denominator of life-course studies and welfare and social policy studies. The direction of life-course studies also includes studies into social stratification. The direction of welfare and social policy studies has been built up on the basis of family and welfare studies.



UNIVERSITY OF TORINO

The Department of Social Sciences, one of the largest in Italy, includes sociologists belonging to four faculties in the University of Torino: Political Sciences; Education; Literature and Philosophy; and Economics. The Department organizes a Ph.D. programme on comparative social research.



UNIVERSITY OF TRENTO

The Department of Sociology and Social Research of the University of Trento carries out cutting-edge research often relying upon innovative techniques of field research such as panel studies, content analysis and, more recently, network analysis. The Department has successfully attracted both national and international funds in 23 highly competitive application processes.



WZB, BERLIN

The Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (Social Science Research Centre, Berlin) is structured into four research areas which are composed of a total of eight research units and seven working groups, with around 140 social scientists. The participation of the WZB in the EQUALSOC Network is implemented by the research unit 'Inequality and Social Integration'. ★

FORTHCOMING

The work of EQUALSOC research team Education and Career Mobility will be published in a Special Issue of European Societies. The contributions are as follows:

- 1 Career mobility, education, and intergenerational reproduction in five European societies**
Carlo Barone and Antonio Schizzerotto
- 2 Career mobility in Italy: a growth curves analysis of occupational attainment over the 20th century**
Carlo Barone, Mario Lucchini, and Antonio Schizzerotto
- 3 Occupational attainment and career progression in Sweden**
Erik Bihagen and Juho Harkonen
- 4 Education, social origins and career (im)mobility in contemporary Italy: a holistic and categorical approach**
Ivano Bison
- 5 Class origins, education and occupational attainment: cross-cohort changes among men in Britain**
Erzsebet Bukodi and John H. Goldthorpe
- 6 Occupational mobility and developments of inequality along the life course: the German case**
Steffen Hilmert
- 7 Educational attainment, occupational achievements, career peaks: the Netherlands in the second part of the 20th century**
M.H.J. Wolbers, Ruud Luijckx, and Wout Ultee

The TRALEG research team 'The Demise of Collective Organization in Europe: The Decline in Union Membership and its Consequences' has prepared a special issue on 'Causes, Consequences and Cures of Union Decline', which is forthcoming in the European Journal of Industrial Relations. The issue has been edited by Alex Bryson (NIESR), Bernhard Ebbinghaus (MZES) and Jelle Visser (AIAS) and it features the following contributions. Special Issue on Causes, Consequences and Cures of Union Decline, forthcoming in European Journal of Industrial Relations.

Introduction The Waning of Trade Union Membership and its Consequences

Alex Bryson, Bernhard Ebbinghaus, and Jelle Visser

- 1 Social Capital, 'Ghent' and Workplace Contexts Matter: Comparing Union Membership in Europe**
Bernhard Ebbinghaus, Claudia Göbel, and Sebastian Koos
- 2 Institutional effects on the presence of trade unions at the workplace. Moderation in a multilevel setting**
Zoltán Fazekas
- 3 Ghent revisited: Unemployment insurance and union membership in Belgium and the Nordic countries**
Tim Van Rie, Ive Marx, and Jeroen Horemans
- 4 Models of Unionism and Unemployment**
Daniele Checchi and Luca Nunziata
- 5 Evolution or Revolution? The Role of Unions in the Modern Workplace**
Alex Bryson, John Forth, and Patrice Laroche
- 6 Emigration and Labour Shortages: an Opportunity for Trade Unions in New Member States?**
Monika Ewa Kaminska and Marta Kahancová ★

New!

