



UNIVERSITÀ
degli STUDI
di CATANIA

DIPARTIMENTO
DI SCIENZE POLITICHE E SOCIALI

Istituto
di formazione e ricerca
sui problemi sociali
dello sviluppo **ISVI**

EUROPEAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION REGIONAL RESEARCH NETWORK ON 'SOUTHERN EUROPEAN SOCIETIES'-RN27

ESA/RN27 MID-TERM CONFERENCE 2018

SOCIAL STRUCTURES, CULTURE AND INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTHERN EUROPEAN SOCIETIES

Catania (Italy), 4-6 October 2018

*Co-organized by the Department of Social and Political Sciences (University of Catania),
LaPoss- University Research Centre (University of Catania) and
ISVI - Istituto di formazione e ricerca sui problemi sociali dello sviluppo*

Venue: Department of Social and Political Sciences
University of Catania, Catania, Sicily, Italy

CALL FOR PAPERS

Background

Southern European countries and regions are a subject of social research on their own. In addition to sharing a historic past and a number of cultural and identifying features, throughout the 20th and 21st centuries Southern European Societies have undertaken parallel processes of political, economic and social change. These include the transition from dictatorship to democracy, integration in the European Union, far-reaching economic and labour market reforms, changes in gender and intergenerational relations as well as population and family trends.

A number of variations in European capitalism can be identified in southern Europe: the late or non-existent industrialisation, the importance of agriculture and tourism, high levels of land speculation linked to urban development and the important presence of small family businesses. This region is also characterised by its dual market nature, in the sense that we find both robust and technologically advanced business sectors as well as SMEs and companies that have "fallen behind". The 2008 economic crisis has had a similar effect on countries within the region, where the impact of the recession was particularly severe (resulting in loss of activity, rising unemployment and inequality, welfare cuts and social movements).

Southern European Societies share a welfare state model with specific features, namely a weak system of social protection and a strong influence of the role of the family as a welfare provider. The southern European welfare state is shaped not only by governmental social policies, but also by a gender-imbalanced labour market, the importance of home ownership and family values. Therefore, specific factors in Southern European Societies have acted as mechanisms of cohesion and modernization, including the networks of solidarity, the informal economy, and the functioning of some basic social services, mainly health and education.

In addition to the above mentioned, Southern European Societies also share similarities regarding the rapid processes of social change and the convergence with other European societies. The shift towards new gendered orders reveals a rapid transformation of women's role in society, resulting in a gap between older and younger female generations. Women's access to higher education is one of the most relevant features of the gender shift. There has also been a progressive increase in the number of women who remain permanently in the labour force and a rescheduling of women's family life, although important inequalities remain, especially when compared to other European regions.

Southern Europe's youth share a number of common characteristics. Young people in southern Europe are faced with high unemployment rates, stay at the family home for longer and are less likely to have children out of marriage than young people living in other countries of Europe. These specific characteristics are also framed by the nature of the labour market in the region, as well as social policies and relations between family models and education.

Southern Europe also has its own unique migratory model. After decades of migration from rural to urban areas and to other countries, new waves of immigrants have had important impacts on local labour markets and social relations. Immigration in southern Europe is also characterised by large numbers of illegal immigrants, the illegal trafficking of immigrants and many immigrants working in the informal economy. In the wake of the 2008 financial crisis southern European countries have experienced a revival in emigration flows to their neighbours in the North, principally among the young, but also by those who are re-emigrating, together with the consolidation of their position as Europe's southern border and the arrival of refugees.

Finally, there are important scholarly and policy debates about the causes and the social mechanisms that contribute to the current state of social affairs, in comparison to other countries and regions of Europe and beyond. Some of the main issues at stake are the specific configuration of the institutions and the organizational fields that shape the distinctive characteristics of Southern European Societies, including the welfare system, the organization of the State, the fiscal system, the provision of infrastructures, and key institutions related to education, health, science and technology, industrial development and economic policy, among others.

The south of Europe as a strategic research site

The above research topics, together with many others, make southern European region an important context for comparative studies due to similarities in the social problems experienced by its countries. The region also shares common problems and social trends with neighbouring countries, mainly in the Mediterranean area, the Middle East and others areas of Europe. However, sociological research has not dedicated sufficient attention to the specific trends affecting this region from a comparative perspective.

An important issue is still the meaning of the south in the European domain. Trying to define present-day southern Europe as a region is an exercise subject to discussion where geographical and sociological maps do not always coincide. It is necessary to take into account current convergence and divergence processes across the region and inside specific countries. Because regional boundaries are fluid, socio-political trends in neighbouring areas are clearly interconnected to southern Europe and should be considered. Currently the meaning of Southern European Societies may be undergoing another regional transformation that is being promoted from social dynamics both inside and in other countries as a result of the recent global crisis.

Goals of the conference

This conference will discuss the challenges and dilemmas of Southern European Societies in several strands of research in order to provide an authoritative account of the current situation. Participants are invited to discuss comparative research and specific studies with general implications as a means to understanding Southern European Societies at regional and international level.

Although other proposals will be welcome, we especially invite papers on the following topics:

- Social problems in Southern European Societies (poverty, violence, social exclusion, unemployment, etc.)
- Social trends and social transformations (employment, science and innovation, education, family, gender issues, migration, etc.)
- Social and cultural structures in the south of Europe (stratification, social classes, statuses, values, identities and cultural patterns)

- Institutions and governance (institutions related to welfare, education, politics, economy, etc.; informal institutions; institutional quality; institutional dependence)
- Convergence and divergence in Southern European Societies (social differentiation and social convergence between southern European regions and countries. Convergence and divergence processes in the European Union domain and beyond)
- Social issues and trends in the Mediterranean Area, the Middle East and other areas of Europe with implications for Southern European Societies
- The production of sociological knowledge for informing policy making in southern European regions and countries (applied research, orientation or research and relationship between sociological research and policy)

Key dates

Abstract submission: **From 15th of May to 15th of July**
Notification of acceptance: **5th of August**
Publication of the preliminary programme: **1st of September**
Registration: **From 5th of August to 15th of September**
Publication of the final programme: **20th of September**

Abstracts, Format of Papers and Language

The organizers invite theoretical or empirical papers, whether quantitative, qualitative or case studies, on the above (or related) topics. Special consideration will be given to comparative papers or country-based papers with implications for several countries and regions.

The language of the abstracts, papers and conference will be English.

Abstracts should be approximately 350 words, and should be accompanied by the name(s) of the author(s), his/her/their affiliation(s) and E-mail(s).

Abstracts should be submitted to Teresa Consoli isvi@isvi.it on copy to consoli@unict.it

Conference Fees

Members of the European Sociological Association (ESA): 60 euros for non-students and 35 euros for students.

Others participants: 80 euros for non-students and 45 euros for students.

Registration fees will cover organization costs, conference materials for participants and coffee breaks. An optional farewell dinner and other social activities for participants will be arranged.

Publication Options

A selection of papers subject to peer review will be published in edited volumes of the book series "Southern European Societies", published by Edward Elgar in collaboration with the ESA RN27.

Other papers will be offered the possibility of publication in special issues arranged with selected journals.

International Organizing Committee

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Registration and Secretariat

Instructions for registration will be available after the notification of acceptance

About the Organizers

The ESA RN27 – Regional Research Network on Southern European Societies is one of the research groups of the European Sociological Association. By organizing regular meetings, publications and research training the ESA RN27 brings together research experience and critical views of the different ways in which research is being conducted, along with perspectives concerning social trends and socio-politics operating in southern Europe. The aim of the network is to facilitate sociological research and to promote cooperation between sociologists and other social scientists interested in the region. The ESA RN27 welcomes the participation of researches from neighbouring countries working on common social issues, especially from the Mediterranean area, the Middle East and others regions of Europe.

The Department of Social and Political Sciences and the University of Catania. *The University of Catania* (UNICT) (<http://www.unict.it/en>) is the oldest of Sicily, its foundation dates back to 1434. The organization of the teaching is handled today by 17 departments and there are about 45.000 students actually enrolled at the University of Catania. **The Department of Social and Political Science** (DSPS) (www.dpsp.unict.it) is located in the antique Palazzo Pedagoggi, an imposing XIX century building in the city centre. With around one hundred professors, research fellows and lecturers, the department is one of the largest at University of Catania. Founded in 1969, today it runs three undergraduate (BAs), six graduate (MAs) and one PhD courses. Since 2012, as a result of a University reform and reorganization process, DSPS is the only department at UNICT developing research and teaching in the fields of political, historical, social, economic and juridical sciences. DSPS hosts research and study centres covering major topics related to social sciences, ranging from public policies, migration and social services (Laposswww.lpss.unict.it) to political and urban history (ISSICO, IMES), from local development (CEDOC) to history of migration (Cosmica), from EU Politics and Policies (Jean Monnet Centre) to Geography research and study (PROGEO). Its library owns 110 thousands books, in addition to journals.

ISVI – Research Institute of Education and Research on Social Development Problems (<https://isvi.it/>) is a non-profit association, established in Catania in 1972, with the aim to promote studies on social development problems through the organization of courses, research and conferences. In particular, the Institute works on qualification and specialization programs for cultural and social workers, carrying out training courses for young people and public administrators, study and research on political and administrative institutions, on work organization, on social, political and economic planning. Since its establishment, the Institute cooperates with Italian and foreign Universities and Institutes and it has been recognized as an Institute of regional interest for research and training (law of the Sicilian Region n.234 of 1979).

Practical information

The town of Catania is Sicily's second largest city, with a population of around 300,000. It lies on the Ionian Sea, under the shadow of Mount Etna. In 1669 Catania was covered in lava and then, just 24 years later, in 1693, an earthquake shook the town down to its foundations. The reaction to this latter catastrophe was amazing: the entire old part of town was rebuilt in Baroque style, with large, wide open squares and avenues. The most remarkable aspect, however, was the building material used: lava! Catania is essentially a "grey" city, unique in the world.

Catania has an International Airport (<http://www.aeroporto.catania.it>) and there are numerous direct flights to Catania Fontanarossa Airport from most major cities in Europe. From the airport to the city centre and to the Train station the "Alibus Service" leaves every 20 minutes from 5.00 am to midnight. The Catania railway station is located in Piazza Giovanni XXIII (www.trenitalia.it) where there is also a Metro Station (www.circumetnea.it)

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