

Stream #1

Welfare States, Demography and Bodies

Conveners:

- Hannah Zagel, WZB Berlin Social Science Center
- Rohan Khan, WZB Berlin Social Science Center
- Nadine Reibling, Fulda University of Applied Sciences
- Julie Vinck, KU Leuven

The proposed conference stream 'Welfare States, Demography and Bodies' examines the interdependence between population dynamics, welfare states and bodies as sites of reproduction, autonomy and health. This intersection arguably underpins not only historical developments of welfare states but also welfare state restructuring in the turn to neoliberalism and the social investment state. Births, sickness, disability and death are bodily concerns that were crucial for the development of welfare states at the end of the 19th and beginning of 20th century as exemplified by the introduction of policies governing population dynamics and shaping bodies such as maternity leave regulation (births), public health services (sickness), incapacity benefits (disability), and widowers' pensions (deaths). However, demography and bodies continue to invoke discussions of welfare state reform particularly with the turn to neoliberalism and the social investment paradigm.

Fertility decline, for instance, is addressed due to the pressures it creates on social security systems and care work, provoking policy interventions that affect reproductive autonomy, family formation and intergenerational obligations. Sickness and disability are considered challenges towards labour market integration and social participation requiring investments to prevent, maintain, and rehabilitate populations and individual bodies to be active citizens – often ignoring the underlying social determinants of ill health and disability which are partially shaped by welfare states themselves. Finally, armed conflicts lead states to directly claim authority over bodies through conscription, while producing displacement, population loss and collective trauma that reconfigure disability and reproductive politics on-site and migration flows abroad.

This stream foregrounds bodies as sites where population dynamics and welfare policies intersect. We invite papers that conceptualize bodies in two overlapping

registers: as units in population statistics and policy calculations (e.g. population and age structures, life expectancy, migration aggregates), and as lived sites of health and bodily experience (e.g. health inequalities, disability, reproduction and bodily autonomy). Possible questions are how population statistics translate into institutional priorities; how welfare interventions shape reproductive choices and technologies; how social, health and disability policies mediate outcomes for inequality, poverty, employment, and well-being; and how health inequalities are politicized and governed within welfare states across racialized, gendered and socioeconomic lines. (Comparative) Policy analyses, case studies, quantitative or qualitative life-course or demographic studies, as well as legal and ethical inquiries are invited contributions. We encourage early career as well as senior researchers to submit their paper.

