

## Stream #11

# Pensions in the 21st century: Challenges, Policy Feedback and Political Dynamics

### Conveners:

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Following the seminal works by Paul Pierson (Pierson & Weaver 1993; Pierson 1994), a broad literature investigated the massive wave of pension reforms adopted in European countries (and beyond) between the mid-1980s and early-2000s. This literature neatly outlined the main policy trajectories and emerging novel pension architectures, also revealing the key institutional factors and political mechanisms underpinning policy changes (Bonoli 2000, 2003; Bonoli and Palier 2007; Immergut 2007), and carefully investigating the interplay between pension and labour market reforms (Hinrichs and Jessoula 2012).

In more recent years, pensions have been less central in the social policy literature, and this has left us with a number of relatively important research gaps. This is why in this session we welcome contributions which analyse the policy and the political consequences of those reforms, three decades later, from different angles.

First, with regards policy outcomes, beside studies aimed at evaluating the economic-fiscal sustainability of reformed pension systems, we particularly appreciate contributions assessing the distributional impact of reforms, both along the vertical - ie. across income levels - and the horizontal dimension – ie. among different social groups, professional categories, and electoral constituencies as well – to reflect on the three key dimensions of pension adequacy: a. poverty prevention; b. income maintenance; c. retirement duration (the so called “adequacy triangle”, Jessoula 2015, European Commission 2018).

Second, we welcome contributions which investigate the changing politics of pensions, detecting likely “policy feedback” (Easton 1957, Pierson 1994) prompted by reforms adopted three decades ago and their overall and distributional outcomes, which have now materialized. In order to shed light on the relationship between economic-fiscal sustainability, social sustainability and political

sustainability of reformed pension systems, research may focus on the persistence – or rather change - of preferences of traditional social actors (trade unions and employers primarily) and political parties in pension policy, old & new of patterns of socio-political mobilization shaping the current politics of pensions, the possible entrance of new actors in pension policymaking as well as changes in policy discourse and public debate.

Third, papers may focus on policy output. We welcome analyses aimed to identify elements of continuity and change between the reforms of the 1980s-2000s and the more recent interventions, especially highlighting whether – and to what extent – recent pension reforms have partly modified, or even reversed, the policy path to improve adequacy and/or equity.

Both empirical and theory-oriented contributions, which either adopt a (small/large N) comparative approach or rather focus on single case-studies, are appreciated.