

14h00 – 15h15

Plenary Session I (Room: Auditorium) - Chair: Volker Busch-Geertsema, DE



Dorottya Szikra, HU: Illiberal Welfare States in the making (TBC)

Dorottya Szikra is Senior Researcher at the Centre for Social Sciences, Budapest, and Visiting Professor at the Department of Gender Studies, CEU Vienna. She is also associated with CEU Democracy Institute. Her main research field is the illiberal and populist welfare state and family policy. Between 2016 and 2020 she acted as the co-chair of the European Social Policy Analysis Network (ESPAnet). In 2021-22 she has served as a member of the EC commissioned High-Level Group on the future of social protection and of the welfare state in the EU.

Illiberal and right wing populist parties are on the rise all over the world. Their anti-pluralist stance and polarizing discourses contribute to the demise of democracy in many countries, including EU member states. Illiberal actors' welfare-related claims and policies are however rarely analysed.

Based on evidence derived from manifestos and policies of illiberal parties that were in a ruling position in the last decade, I argue that their welfare ideas share important commonalities. Still, there is no one illiberal welfare model, rather, there is a diversity in their welfare effort as well as the target populations illiberals intend to please. One important message of my talk is that democratic forces need to learn from the ways in which illiberal and populist actors break away from neoliberal economic and social policies and often cater for vulnerable social groups in innovative and novel ways.

Bálint Misetics, HU: Understanding Homelessness: Housing and Capital



Bálint Misetics, Hungary, is a social policy expert whose work integrates research, advocacy, policy, and fieldwork. He is currently working for the Municipality of Budapest as the Senior Advisor to the Mayor on Housing and Social Policy, and serves as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees at the Municipal Foundation for Social Policy. He was the author of the Municipality's new strategy on homelessness which attempts to reframe and address homelessness as a housing problem.

Why is it that the inability to purchase something is universally understood to be caused by the lack of monetary resources, but the discrepancy between the price of housing and whatever income people who are homeless have or can attain is often not granted the appropriate focus in the discourse on homelessness? Is it not, ultimately, wealth and income that allow people to be housed, and is it not the lack thereof that explains that certain people lack housing?

Poverty is the enforced lack of necessities. Homelessness, the enforced lack of housing, is a subset of poverty, and – as poverty itself – should be understood as the consequence and manifestation of social inequalities. Revisiting the fundamental question of social scientific inquiries into homelessness from these premises, the lecture attempts to sketch and justify a structural and political understanding of homelessness, centered around the affordability of housing. Marital status and family dissolution are integrated through their effect on the volume of housing wealth and income one can access through his or her social capital; “individual” vulnerabilities and risk factors are integrated as socially and unequally produced characteristics which are penalized unequally (depending on the relevant characteristics and shortcomings of welfare systems) and contribute to homelessness primarily through their effects on one's access to economic and social capital. The lecture concludes with reflections on policy.

15h15 – 15h30

Questions