

NEWSLETTER

LIVEWHAT—Living with Hard Times: How Citizens React to Economic Crises and Their Social and Political Consequences

Issue 3, August 2015

<http://www.livewhat.unige.ch/>



LIVEWHAT is a research project that studies policy responses and citizens' resilience in times of crisis. The project brings together universities and an international advisory board of leading scientists from nine European countries – France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

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LIVEWHAT updates

NEW FINDINGS: AUSTERITY MEASURES ACROSS EUROPE

Read an article by our researchers *Ludvig Norman and Katrin Uba, Uppsala Universitet, and Luke Temple, University of Sheffield*

The austerity spectrum

Based on the analysis of policy documents and over 100 interviews with key informants in government

and civil society, the LIVEWHAT project has compared welfare policy changes and austerity measures from 2005-2014 across nine European countries: France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK. With the exception of Switzerland, the nine countries are members of the EU and therefore not fully independent in their reactions to the financial crisis of 2007-2008; evidence suggests that the role of the institutions of the EU and the European Central Bank (ECB) have been considerably

strengthened in the wake of the crisis, particularly when the Eurozone crisis erupted in late 2009. The initial response to the meltdown, prompted especially by the US Federal Reserve and the Bank of England, was to bailout collapsing financial institutions and stimulate the market through quantitative easing.

However, the European focus since has predominantly been on implementing austerity policies to try to tackle government deficits. Austerity measures have been pursued by governments of all

colors, with measures that seek to reduce government spending by slashing department budgets, which inevitably leads to reducing welfare payments and cutting public sector jobs. For some, such as Prime Minister David Cameron in the UK, this has been taken further to a call for a permanently 'leaner' state.

There is a clear spectrum of severity when it comes to the austerity measures being implemented by governments across Europe. Austerity drives in Germany, Switzerland and Sweden have been moderate, and they generally mirror the weaker effects the 2007-2008 financial crisis had in these countries. This isn't to say there's been no acknowledgement of financial constraints; for instance, in Germany the narrative of Sparpolitik ('savings') and balancing the books is a prevalent one, but it isn't that new and it doesn't match the swinging reforms being pursued in other countries. France didn't make it through the financial crisis unscathed but policy responses there haven't necessarily had a fundamental impact on labor market policy or the social security system.



However, the severity of austerity measures increases when we look at Poland and the UK. Here governments have introduced wide-ranging policies to cut public spending, with plenty more to come. And at the far end of the spectrum we find the most

considerable austerity drives which, as expected, are in those places hit hardest by the financial crisis: Italy, Spain and, most notably, Greece. In fact, the reforms in Greece have been 'all embracing', leaving practically no section of society unaffected. Yet austerity-driven reforms of the welfare systems in these nine countries have been less comprehensive than might have been expected, especially in light of recent academic and public debates. There has arguably not been a revolution, but rather a constant gnawing erosion of the social security safety net. And what matters most is that this is happening alongside changing patterns of employment in the labor market which predate the financial crisis.

A precarious labor market

The labor market across Europe has clearly become more precarious since the financial crisis and job losses aren't the only indicator of this. For instance, according to the OECD, since 2008 the percentage of part-time workers who consider their work status to be involuntary has, with the exception of Germany, increased across all nine countries in the LIVEWHAT study. In 2013, it ranged from 6% of part-time workers in Switzerland to a staggering 66% in Spain, with almost half of part-time workers in Greece and Italy in this position, and a third in France (OECD Stat, 2014).

Across all of the European Union this amounts to around 8.5 million people who might consider themselves lucky to have jobs, but are in need of more hours. The most worrying labor market trends however are for the youth of Europe. In February 2014, unemployment rates for those aged

15-24 in the EU were double the overall unemployment rate. In the third-quarter of 2014, youth unemployment rates in Greece and Spain stood at over 50%, and at over 40% in Italy. In Sweden, Poland and France over a fifth are unemployed, a rate matched in the UK in 2012-2013 before it appeared to drop to around 17% in 2014. Much lower rates of 11% and 8% are recorded in Switzerland and Germany, respectively (OECD Stat, 2014).

Furthermore, of those who are employed in this age range, around 50% or more are in temporary contracts (the exception being Greece and the UK, where the numbers are much lower, at 27% and 16%, respectively). Worse still is the issue of entrenched youth unemployment, that is, those who have been without work for over a year: these account for over 50% of the unemployed youth in Greece and Italy, about 40% in Spain, and around a quarter in the UK, Poland, France and Germany (OECD Stat, 2014).

In the last two years these problems appear to be abating, but only slightly, and it isn't yet clear if this improvement is a definite trend. As it stands, a report from the House of Lords (2014) described the youth in Europe as being a potentially 'scarred generation'. Whilst the details vary from country to country, the report further acknowledges that the financial crisis rarely caused these problems, but accentuated existing and long-term structural issues that have been present in labor markets since the 1980s.

Yet, when it comes to getting people into work during times of austerity, the overriding narrative of government responses across Europe has been focused not on

structural issues but on the individual worker.



Austerity and flexicurity

In the UK, the idea of worklessness being the fault of the individual, as opposed to the fault of the labor market, was most clearly articulated by the impact of welfare reforms and the Freud Report, commissioned by New Labor and published in early 2007 – before anyone recognized the financial crisis was about to unfold. This approach to the problem of unemployment chimes with the idea of ‘flexicurity’, an increasingly popular approach to labor policy.

The idea is to create a job market in which workers are flexible and expected to accept the heightened loss of jobs if there is some security provided by unemployment benefits and other help, such as further training (see Crouch, 2014). The problem with an approach that emphasizes flexicurity is that during an austerity drive it is easier to do the first part (removing people from work), but harder to organize and fund the apparatus to achieve the second part (helping people get work).

For instance, let’s say we want to dismiss a middle-aged man who has been employed in the private sector for twenty years. In Germany, he should be informed about the dismissal seven months in advance, while in Greece the period is four months (it was six months until

2010). In Poland, Switzerland, and the UK the period is only three months whilst in Spain he gets 15 days (it was a month until 2010). Collective agreements affect the notice period in France, Italy and Sweden. If we dismiss a young person with a short working history of six months, then the notice period is significantly shorter – from one week in UK to four weeks in Germany, Greece, Sweden or Switzerland. In France and Italy, the notice period is still dependent on collective agreements.

Now let’s say we’re being dismissed, and we think our dismissal was unfair. If we wanted to argue such a case, we might find it a considerable struggle. Focusing just on the UK, as of April 2012, the length of required work at a company before an employee can claim for unfair dismissal was extended from one to two years. Consultation periods for large-scale redundancies were halved and compensation was capped. Workers making applications to employment tribunals must now pay charges of up to £1,200.

Yet even as dismissal times are reduced (or inadequate to begin with) and claims against unfair dismissals are made harder, not everyone is covered by them anyway: particularly workers with short-term contracts. Many younger workers in Greece, Italy, Poland and Spain are completely excluded from employment protection (see detailed analysis of this in McKay et al., 2012). And the next stage of worker dispute – taking strike action – has also been made more complicated.

For instance, in the UK, stricter requirements on Trade Unions to keep their membership lists up-to-date or face fines were snuck through in the Transparency and

Lobbying Bill of 2014. So flexibility of the labor market has been on the increase – what about the security? It is quite clear that during the austerity drive, state support for the unemployed across Europe has not increased in scope to match.

Most safety nets are not increasing at all. In fact, in many instances across Europe unemployment benefit has been frozen, reduced or capped, most dramatically in Greece, where the amount received for basic unemployment benefit was cut by 22% in 2012. Eligibility for receiving unemployment support has been made stricter in France, Spain, the UK, and in Poland, where budgets for services aimed at the unemployed were also cut by 50% in 2011.



Finally, sanctions against those who do not follow benefit conditions have generally increased; taking the UK again as an example, in the second half of 2010 there were 387,000 sanction decisions applied to people claiming Job Seeker’s Allowance. By the second half of 2013 this stood at 473,000 (DWP, 2014). So whilst it’s clear that austerity measures which cut government spending will worsen the situation of public sector employees, we can expect negative long-term impacts on people in work or seeking work across all areas of employment.



Because of imbalance in the flexicurity approach – weighted towards the creation of a flexible workforce – it doesn't even require large austerity drives or radical overhauls of the social security system for these problems to materialize for people out of or even in work. Italy serves as a clear example here as social insurance has remained more or less stable – even becoming Impact of welfare reforms more generous in specific areas – but it fails to cover an increasing proportion of the workforce: those who can only get temporary or freelance contracts.



Conclusion: Not revolution but erosion

This combination of austerity and flexicurity, then, has knock-on effects. For instance, standard maternity/paternity pay is linked to

employment, as is saving up a pension. In some cases health insurance is an issue. Across these nine countries sick pay has escaped the worst of the cuts but it too has generally been made less generous (the UK sticks out here as the only country where the statutory sick pay is a flat-rate amount not linked to income: equal to only 17% of the median weekly wage).

Whilst austerity has gripped Europe for half a decade, the long-term and cumulative effects are still yet to be felt. Overall, reforms of the social security systems across Europe have been less comprehensive than might have been expected in light of recent media, public and academic debates. These systems still exist, even in Greece. There has not been a revolution in which the safety net has been completely withdrawn. However, governments everywhere are making the holes in these nets bigger, whilst simultaneously jobs become less secure and harder to get.

In Europe the UK sits about halfway on the spectrum of severity when it comes to these issues, but this isn't a time to celebrate that we aren't at the bottom. What it shows is that the UK is not alone in travelling in a direction that points towards further insecurity and hardship for most workers. As this erosion continues, and if living costs continue to outstrip wage increases, another phenomena intensifies: working poverty. It reflects badly on governments if

even those citizens in full-time work are struggling to get by; this does not happen under a 'leaner' state, it happens under a neglectful state.

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Announcements and upcoming events

LIVEWHAT SUMMER SCHOOL

The Summer School on Citizens' Resilience in Times of Crises sponsored by the LIVEWHAT consortium and organized by the Centre on Social Movement Studies (COSMOS) took place between 5th and 11th July 2015 at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Florence.



The academic programme of the School addressed three fundamental questions: how do people respond to crises in general and the current economic crisis in particular? What strategies exist to cope with the crisis in the public and private domains, collectively and individually, and through policies, protests and individual behaviors? What forms of resilience does society develop at times of crisis?

The Summer School provided an interactive learning environment where 21 young scholars from around the world attended courses on a number of methods employed in the study of the interlinkages

between crises, policy responses, and citizens' resilience, and on issues of mobilization and alternative forms of action. Participants presented their on-going research projects and received feedback from leading scholars in the field.

Keynotes Lectures

Seven keynote speeches from internationally-renowned scholars were delivered.

Professor Javier Auyero: *"In Harm's Way. The meanings and dynamics of violence at the urban margins"*



Drawing on more than two years of intensive fieldwork in an Argentine shantytown, this presentation examined the sources, uses, and forms of interpersonal violence among the urban poor. Professor Auyero argued that physical aggression has become a habitual way of acting in poor and marginalized communities, and that violence is routine and carries across various domains of public and private life.

The presentation has traced how different types of violence—be it criminal, drug related, sexual, or domestic—overlap, intersect, and blur together. It has also shown how the state is complicit in the production of harm, and describe the routines and relationships that endangered residents, particularly children, establish to cope with and respond to the constant risk that besieges them and their loved ones.



Professor Maria Kousis: *"Collective responses to hard economic times in Greece: from Large Protest Events against Troika Memoranda and Austerity Policies to Alternative Forms of Resilience"*

The presentation addressed theoretical issues related to two basic strategic approaches through which collective bodies outside the government organized their resources and extended their network and support structures in order to confront unprecedented austerity policies and hard economic times in crisis-stricken Greece, since 2010. It has drawn upon: i) a recent data set of the largest protest events in Greece during the current crisis, as well as, ii) a fresh data set of alternative action groups, initiatives and networks in Greece, produced in the context of the LIVEWHAT project. The findings were discussed in a comparative perspective, highlighting similarities and differences with current and former austerity contexts beyond Greece.



Professor Jeff Goodwin: *"Political Responses to the Great Recession in the United States"*

This presentation examined the consequences of the Great Recession in the U.S. for both institutionalized and non-institutionalized politics. The key puzzle it has examined was why the recession—unlike the Great

Depression of the 1930s—failed to shift politics in the U.S. decisively to the left.



Professor Hanspeter Kriesi: *“Mobilizing of protest in the age of austerity”*

The presentation started from McAdam’s and Tilly’s observation that the inattention to the connection between elections and social movements was a ‘serious lacuna’ of their Dynamics of Contention and discussed the relationship between the mobilization by parties on the one hand, and social movements on the other hand. Next, it introduced some concepts and theoretical expectations about the mobilization in the electoral and the protest channel in the Great Recession and how they relate to each other, distinguishing between a short-term and a long-term perspective. Third, using the examples of the US, Greece and Spain, it illustrated how these concepts might be used for the empirical analysis, and how the expectations might hold up.



Professor Donatella Della Porta: *“Social Movements in Times of Austerity”*

This presentation addressed the anti-austerity social movements mobilization in the context of a crisis of neoliberalism. It showed that, in order to understand their main facets in terms of social basis, strategy, and identity and organizational structures, we should look at the specific characteristics

of the socioeconomic, cultural and political context in which they developed.



Dr. Magda Osman: *“Controlling uncertainty: The psychology of decision-making in complex dynamic real world situations”*

This presentation focused on present insights from psychological evidence when making decisions in dynamic contexts, the way this type of decision-making is studied in the lab, and the key theoretical claims concerning the mechanisms that underpin dynamic decision-making under extreme uncertainty.



Professor Marco Giugni: *“Collective responses to the economic crisis and austerity: the return of grievances?”*

This presentation addressed the relationship between economic crisis, austerity policies, and the collective mobilizations in the public domain. Empirically, the analysis was based on a random sample of political claims in nine countries (Britain, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland covering 10 years (2005-2014)).

Methodological lectures

A series of methodological lectures were given by LIVEWHAT researchers. These included:

◆ “How to study collective responses to the crisis: protest event and political claim analysis”, by Dr. Manlio Cinalli (SciencesPo) and Dr. Katrin Uba (Uppsala University).

This methodological lecture gave an overview on the development of protest event and political claim analysis in studying collective responses to the crisis. Apart from classic studies that rely on protest events as their coding unit, the session dealt also with newer approaches that turn to alternative coding units by either covering a broader set of units (e.g., political claims or core sentences) or by disentangling a single protest event into smaller components.

◆ “How to study individual responses to the crisis: survey and experimental designs”, by Dr. Jordi Munoz (Autonomous University of Barcelona) and Dr. Luke A. Temple (University of Sheffield).

Mainstream studies on the economic crisis have especially focused on macro and meso-level analyses. This methodological lecture gave an overview of the development of survey and experimental designs in studying individual attitudes and behaviors in times of crisis.

◆ “How to study collective responses to the crisis: qualitative interviews”, by Dr. Lorenzo Bosi (European University Institute) and Prof. Christian Lahusen (University of Siegen).

Interviewing is among the most central methods scholars use in their scientific researches. Through an examination of different studies that employ interviews, we discussed different types of interviews (structured, unstructured and semi-structured), sampling and coding methods, ethical issues, potential problems associated with this research method and how to deal with these issues.

Finally, the aim of this lecture was practically oriented to introduce how to conduct good interviews, by gaining the most out of their analysis and writing up.



Papers presentation

To ensure fruitful exchanges, participants were asked to present a paper drawing on a theme of their PhD thesis or other research work. Each presentation was followed by feedback (methodological, analytical, empirical) from a keynote speaker, a methodological lecturer and a peer participant. Then, the floor was open to further discussion on the paper itself or on related issues.



See pictures of our Summer School on Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/LIVEWHATproject>

Upcoming event

The LIVEWHAT Consortium is pleased to announce the LIVEWHAT **International Scientific Conference** to take place in Geneva, Wednesday 14th to Friday 16th October 2015. The International Scientific Conference takes place within the framework of the LIVEWHAT project and is organized by the project coordinator, the Institute of Citizenship Studies (InCite) of the University of Geneva.

This invite-only event will bring together members of the LIVEWHAT Consortium and external scholars to present and discuss papers on different aspects relating to the project's topic, namely citizens' resilience to the economic crisis. The aim is two-fold: to disseminate the project's findings and to foster exchanges between the LIVEWHAT Consortium and prominent scholars working in the field.

The conference is structured around four main themes reflecting key research dimensions of the project. Each theme will be addressed by two panels with half day duration. Each panel will last 90 minutes and include two paper-givers, one discussant, and one chair.

In addition to the four themes, a fifth theme will be tackled by the PolCite research group of the Institute of Citizenship Studies

(InCite). The fifth theme will be addressed by two panels and focus on the interrelations of forms of political participation.



Conference: Themes and Participants

Theme 1: The interplay of different forms of participation in times of crisis

Research on party politics and protest politics seldom speak to one another. Theme 1 aims to bring together scholars discussing the interaction between political parties, civil society organizations, and social movements. The studies to be presented will deal with the mechanisms connecting different forms of political participation at the micro-, meso-, and the macro-levels.

The panels of Theme 1 will: at the macro-level, address the broader question of the interaction between contentious and party politics and how they influence each other; at the meso-level, question the mobilizing capacity of civil society organizations on different policy issues, and; at the micro-level, address whether and how citizens

engage in and combine multiple forms of participation.

Panel 1: Social movements and political parties interplay

Chair

Nina Eggert (University of Geneva)

Discussant

Katrin Uba (Uppsala University)

Presentations

- Swen Hutter (European University Institute)
- Doug McAdam (Stanford University)

Panel 2: Social movements and individual mobilization interplay

Chair

Jasmine Lorenzini (European University Institute)

Discussant

Marco Giugni (University of Geneva)

Presentations

- Nina Eggert (University of Geneva) and Jasmine Lorenzini (European University Institute)
- Bert Klandermans (Free University of Amsterdam)

Theme 2: Austerity policies and the governance structure of the economic crisis

The economic crisis has shaped a field of intense grievance and high political salience, which in itself questions the role of political institutions, policy-making, and broader processes of governance. The two panels of Theme 2 offer a comprehensive framework for the study of these processes. The underlying idea is that the political

inclusion of different kinds of stakeholders and civil society actors in the public domain can hardly be disconnected from the decisions of elites and institutions in the policy domain. Hybrid processes at the intersection of the public and the policy domain are also evident when political elites become main actors within the ‘national publics’.

Panel 1 focuses on the complex mixture of laws, policies and different types of arrangements that shape the political context. Attention is also focused on more fluid decisions in the hands of policy-makers, who can intervene to widen, or otherwise restrict, scope for bottom-up political access. Panel 2 takes into account a more dynamic model where roles of public challengers and policy insiders are detected in the concrete development of interventions of actors themselves. Governance processes are thus evaluated in the open-ending interplay across politics and society.

Panel 1: Political opportunities and ‘softer’ channels for policy-making

Chair

Didier Chabanet (SciencesPo)

Discussant

Pavlos Vasilopolos (SciencesPo)

Presentations

- Marco Giugni (University of Geneva) and Maria Grasso (University of Sheffield)
- Emanuele Ferragina (SciencesPo) and Alessandro Arrigoni (University of Oxford)

Panel 2: Dynamics of interplaying across the public and the policy domain

Chair

Frédéric Royall (University of Limerick)

Discussant

Alessandro Arrigoni (University of Oxford)

Presentations

- Manlio Cinalli (SciencesPo)
- Robert Salais (IDHES)

Theme 3: Alternative forms of resilience in times of economic crisis

Since the economic crisis of 2008, citizens have responded to economic threats by engaging in a wide repertoire of alternative economic and non-economic practices aligned with solidarity and social economy aims, so as to meet basic needs linked to food, shelter, health, childcare and education that are no longer covered by the respective social policies.

At the same time these alternative practices foster and facilitate new forms of political participation aimed to strengthen open, democratic forms of governance and sustain social economy objectives. They may stem from social movements, labor unions, or other associative structures.

The aim of the two panels of Theme 3 is to highlight the interactions between these alternative initiatives, the policies affecting them, the policies influenced by them, as well as the social movement milieu which fosters them.

Panel 1: Alternative collective responses and social movements

Chair

Maria Kousis (University of Crete)

Discussant

Riccardo Guidi (University of Pisa)

Presentations

- Lorenzo Bosi (Scuola Normale Superiore) and Lorenzo Zamponi (European University Institute)
- Francesca Forno (University of Bergamo)

Panel 2: The policy dimension of alternative forms of resilience

Chair

Stefania Kalogeraki (University of Crete)

Discussant

Jochen Roose (University of Wroclaw)

Presentations

- Maria Kousis (University of Crete), Maria Mexi (University of Geneva) and Stefania Kalogeraki (University of Crete)
- Angeliki Paidakaki (KU Leuven) and Frank Moolaert (KU Leuven)

Theme 4: Economic crisis and the rise of populisms

Populist discourse has become increasingly widespread in Europe over recent decades. While in some countries populist parties, particularly on the radical right, have a relatively long history, in others populist parties seem to have flourished in the context of the economic crisis. Despite the widely held impression that economic recession is a ‘breeding ground’ for populism, the effect of the economy on the prevalence and character of populist discourse remains an open question.

The panels of Theme 4 will discuss how and under what circumstances

the economic crisis affects the rise of populism and the specific forms it might take. The first focuses on the success of the populist radical right and the appeal of its policy stances, such as opposition to immigration and Euroscepticism. The second will examine the spread of populist rhetoric in public debate and the rise of populist attitudes among the public.

Panel 1: Extreme-right populism

Chair

Guillem Rico (Autonomous University of Barcelona)

Discussant

Takis Pappas (European University Institute)

Presentations

- Steven Hauwaert (SciencesPo)
- Stijn van Kessel (Loughborough University)

Panel 2: Populist discourses and attitudes

Chair

Eva Anduiza (Autonomous University of Barcelona)

Discussant

Stijn van Kessel (Loughborough University)

Presentations

- Eva Anduiza, Camilo Cristancho, Jordi Muñoz and Guillem Rico (Autonomous University of Barcelona)
- Takis Pappas (European University Institute)

Theme 5: Social welfare, family, and non-political resistance to the economic crisis

As a reaction to the current economic crisis, European countries have been implementing significant social policy reforms including the fields of: labor market policy, family policy, and social protection systems. However, the directions of these reforms have often been contradictory. On the one hand, significant cuts in social spending as part of the austerity measures were made; on the other, increased financial support was introduced for families to ease their difficult situation in the crisis. The panels of Theme 5 discuss the directions of welfare regimes’ transformations, particularly the consequences of social policy reforms on social citizenship in Europe.

Panel 1: Family policies

Chair

Maria Theiss (University of Warsaw)

Discussant

Lars Meier (IAB)

Presentations

- Anna Kurowska (University of Warsaw)
- Steven Saxonberg (Masaryk University)

Panel 2: Social protection and labor policy

Chair

Anna Kurowska (University of Warsaw)

Discussant

Steven Saxonberg (Masaryk University)

Presentations

- Maria Theiss (University of Warsaw), Maria Mexi (University of Geneva) and Janina Petelczyc (University of Warsaw)
- Markus Promberger (IAB)

Keynote Speakers

The conference will take the form of a workshop and be primarily open to those who act as paper-givers, discussants and chairs. Two keynote speeches will be given on Wednesday and Thursday evening that are open to a broader audience.

Our keynote speakers are:

Doug McAdam, Professor of Sociology at Stanford University (Wednesday 14th)

Topic: *Racial Politics and Social Movements in the Origins of Today's Divided America and the Great Recession*

Jonas Pontusson, Professor of Comparative Politics at the University of Geneva (Thursday 15th)

Topic: *The Impact of the Economic Crisis on Support for Redistribution in Europe*



Doug McAdam



Doug McAdam is The Ray Lyman Wilbur Professor of Sociology at Stanford University and the former Director of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. He is the author or co-author of 18 books and some 85 other publications in the area of political sociology, with a special emphasis on race in the U.S., American politics, and the study of social movements and “contentious politics”.

Among his best known works are *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, a new edition of which was published in 1999 (University of Chicago Press), *Freedom Summer* (1988, Oxford University Press), which was awarded the 1990 C. Wright Mills Award as well as being a finalist for the American Sociological Association’s best book prize for 1991 and *Dynamics of Contention* (2001, Cambridge University Press) with Sid Tarrow and Charles Tilly.

He is also the author of the 2012 book, *A Theory of Fields* (Oxford University Press), with Neil Fligstein and a book due out this summer on the historical origins of the deep political and economic divisions that characterize the contemporary U.S. The book, from Oxford

University Press, is entitled: *The Origins of Our Fractured Society: Racial Politics and Social Movements in Post-War America* (with Karina Kloos). He was elected to membership in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2003.

Date: October 14, 2015; **Time:** 18:30

Venue: Room MR060, UniMail, Boulevard du Pont d'Arve 40, Geneva

Jonas Pontusson



Jonas Pontusson is Professor of Comparative Politics at the University of Geneva in Switzerland. A leading scholar of comparative political economy and the welfare state, he previously taught at Cornell and Princeton. He has been a visiting scholar at the Russell Sage Foundation, the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study in Social Sciences, and Nuffield College, Oxford.

He received the American Political Science Association's Gladys M. Kemmerer Award for *Inequality and Prosperity: Social Europe versus Liberal America* (2005) and the Heinz Eulau Award for “The American Welfare State in Comparative Perspective” (*Perspectives in Politics*, 2006).

Jonas Pontusson received his Ph.D. from the University of California-Berkeley.

Date: **THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2015;** Time: **18:30**

Venue: **Room MR060, UniMail, Boulevard du Pont d'Arve 40, Geneva**



For updated info, visit our conference website page:

<http://www.livewhat.unige.ch/?p=1861>

LIVEWHAT events



and LIVEWHAT working together

LIVEWHAT consortium has been active in seeking to establish close communication and collaboration ties with other projects, such as LIVEWHAT's sister FP7 project RESCuE. To this end, LIVEWHAT researchers will take part at the RESCuE Workshop on socio-economic practices that will take place on 24th-26th June 2015. It has been acknowledged that the scientific pursuits of LIVEWHAT and RESCuE are complementary.

Whereas LIVEWAHT focuses on individual and collective, political and non-political responses to the crisis and their contextual factors, RESCuE focuses on households' practices in hard times. Like LIVEWHAT, RESCuE is eager to not only focus on the financial/Euro-crisis and its consequences alone, but to understand "hard times" or hardship and how individuals/households deal with it more generally. Within the RESCuE research team the concept of resilience is discussed

quite critically and, also due to the grounded theory-oriented, qualitative approach, they are cautious to define, e.g., a set of coping strategies and an exact strategy of resilience. Interestingly, resilience is approached in RESCuE from a historical perspective: it can develop but it can also fade away. This stands in contrast to more essentialist concepts of resilience.

A point that is most striking from their research so far is how poor and struggling households use up resources that help them deal with hardships. After a period of time in hardship many of these resources are exhausted (furniture or other belongings sold, solidarity networks exhausted, savings used up, debts which are often moved around as a strategy are getting to high). Considering the retrenchment of the welfare state at the same time, these households and arguably classes become more and more vulnerable, i.e. less resilient when the next crisis strikes.



As the project continues, RESCuE will try to consider more contextual and structural factors for resilience to not run into the trap of methodological individualism and individualizing the task "to be resilient". LIVEWHAT can especially benefit from RESCuE's insights on household-based strategies on a country to country basis, even though the country selection is not completely similar.

This can also help for the comparative analysis of the LIVEWHAT data, especially when it comes to analyzing and interpreting the WP4 survey data, which itself may allow for generalizing the individual results

of RESCuE; and maybe later, when it comes to analyzing the WP6 data on alternative forms of resilience, i.e. local initiatives supporting people experiencing hard times. On the other hand, RESCuE can benefit from a closer look on LIVEWHAT's work as well, since the focus here is stronger on much contextual factors, especially with the WP1 (dataset on indicators) and WP2 (policy and legal analysis).

Furthermore, the emphasis on comparative analysis is stronger and thus the data allows (in the best case scenario together with RESCuE data) for more general conclusions. Last but not least, LIVEWHAT adds the political and collective action dimension and, especially with WP4 the public sphere is

covered as well, which is not an objective in RESCuE.

Not only thematically are the two projects complementary, but also in their coverage. RESCuE and LIVEWHAT share Germany, Greece, Poland, Spain and the UK. Ireland, Portugal, Turkey and Finland are part of the RESCuE project and LIVEWHAT includes Italy, France, Sweden, and Switzerland. With their different perspectives, but parallel objectives, both projects complement each other and cooperation is promising. In this respect, the participation of LIVEWHAT researchers at the RESCuE workshop in June will only be the first step of cooperation between the two projects. The RESCuE coordinator, Markus

Promberger (IAB Nürnberg, Germany), will participate in the upcoming LIVEWHAT International Scientific Conference, organized in October, to present the project results.

The aim – in the medium-term - is not only to exchange results on a similar topic, but also to learn from different approaches and to combine results to better understand citizens' resilience in times of crisis.

Feedback from latest Consortium meetings



LIVEWHAT's fourth Consortium meeting took place on 23rd-24th April 2015. The meeting was hosted by UoC at the premises of the University in Rethymno, Crete. During the meeting the national teams discuss latest developments in the project and planned future activities.

Concerning the current stage of the LIVEWHAT research, the national teams are currently conducting the **third workpackage** which aims to describe and analyze collective responses to crises by both policy actors and citizens in the public domain, in the form of political claims-making (including collective mobilizations and protest events), through a systematic content analysis of newspapers over time (**WP3**).

Immediately after WP3, national teams will analyze individual responses to crises by citizens, in the form of individual attitudes and behaviors, through a population survey (**WP4**).

The findings of WP3 Collective Responses to Crises in the Public Domain and WP4 Individual Responses to Crises will be out in September 2015.



Contact Us

LIVEWHAT Consortium includes nine European Universities across Europe. Project Coordinator is the University of Geneva (Switzerland).

The Consortium Partners are:

- **European University Institute** (Italy)
- **Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques** (France)
- **University of Crete** (Greece)
- **Autonomous University of Barcelona** (Spain)
- **University of Sheffield** (United Kingdom)
- **University of Siegen** (Germany)
- **University of Warsaw** (Poland)
- **Uppsala University** (Sweden).



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