

Welfare recalibration and the ecological crisis: research topics, approaches and findings for a sustainable transition

International Open Workshop, 11 November 2019, 13:30 – 18:30
Working Seminar (By Invitation Only), 12 November 2019, 9:00 – 13:00

Aula Magna Palazzo Boilleau, via Santa Maria, 85 – Pisa

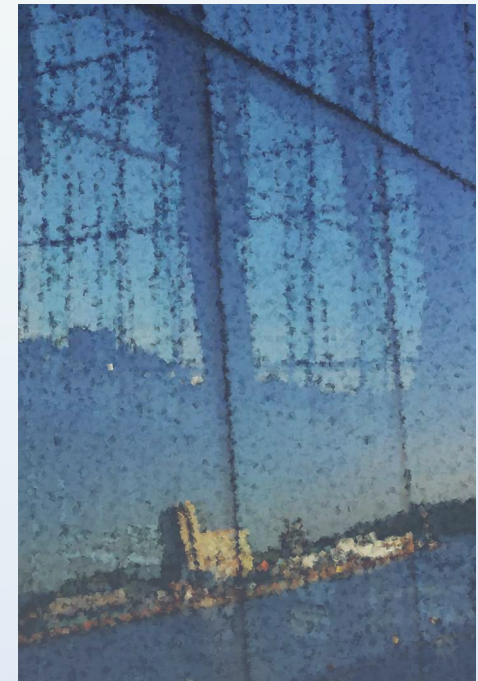
Introduction: discussing the sustainable welfare

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Welfare recalibration and the ecological crisis:

research topics, approaches and findings for a sustainable transition

General hypothesis:

- Welfare systems are an important *driver* of a model of development that is proving *incompatible with eco-systems limits and properties*

Scope:

- Better understanding relationship between social welfare and sustainability
- Contributing in addressing the sustainability challenge

A call:

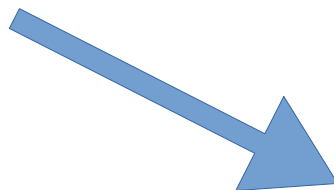
- *putting more effort in the search for a more holistic and integrated vision between social policy research and sustainability issues (Ian Gough 2016)*

Why this workshop

- Discuss the current research topics, approaches, findings and identify further research perspectives
- Linking up research traditions within common eco-social policy fields e scholars from different countries, networks and research fields
(Social Policy, Ecological Economics, Organizational and Urban Studies)

Why here and now?

- Research on this topic needs to take a major step. In Italy: people mobilization and size/urgency of the problem hardly reflects researchers activation on the topic
- Contributing in international networks, stimulating a debate in Italy
- Connecting on a path ...



Why this workshop



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Stream 11 SiseC IV Congress
Italian Society of Economic Sociology
***Changing welfare systems and the
environmental crisis***



SISEC
Società Italiana
di Sociologia Economica

ESPAnet Europe 2020 Conference
***Nature's Conditions: Social policy in
relation to climate change and energy
transition***

as one of two key identified topic

THE EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR
SOCIAL POLICY ANALYSIS



ESEE 2021 Conference in Pisa
***Many participants at this workshop
will be surely here ...***



**EUROPEAN SOCIETY FOR
ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS**

Why this workshop

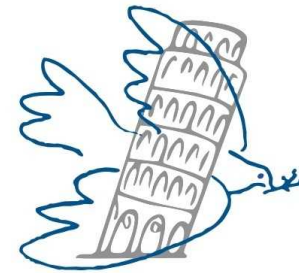


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CISP

Active on many topics related to sustainability, conflicts, social rights

*Has a group dedicated to promote the **Responsible Research and Innovation** paradigm at University of Pisa*



UNIVERSITÀ DI PISA
C I S P
Interdisciplinary Centre
Sciences for Peace

CIRSEC

Centre for Climate Change Impact

Interdipartimental and Interdisciplinary new initiative at UNIPI



Università di Pisa

*Centro Interdipartimentale per lo Studio
degli Effetti dei Cambiamenti Climatici
Centre for Climate Change Impact*

REMARC

*Conducting research on **responsible management and sustainable development** and to have an impact on managers, policy makers and other stakeholders*



ANALYSIS &
POLICY for
RESPONSIBLE
MANAGEMENT &
SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT



And others groups, networks, ...

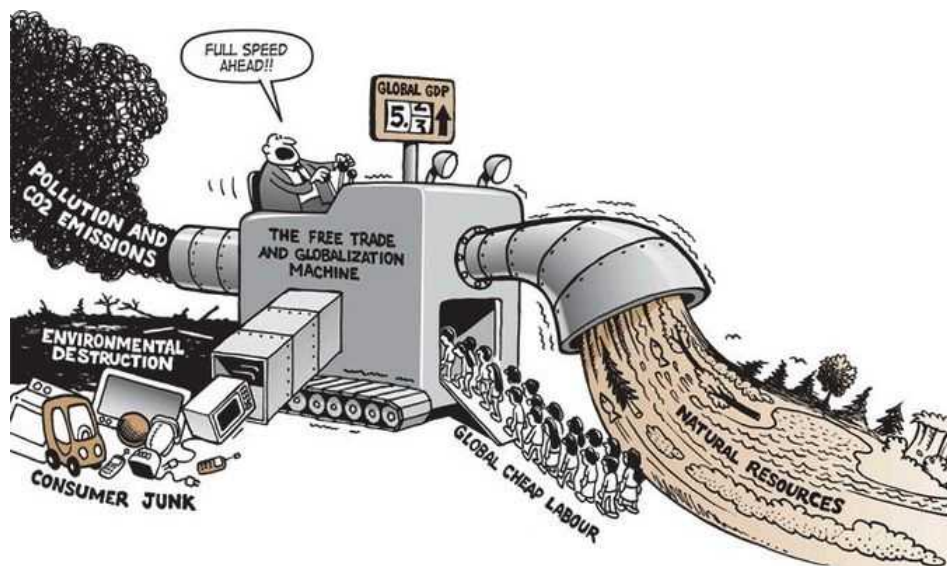
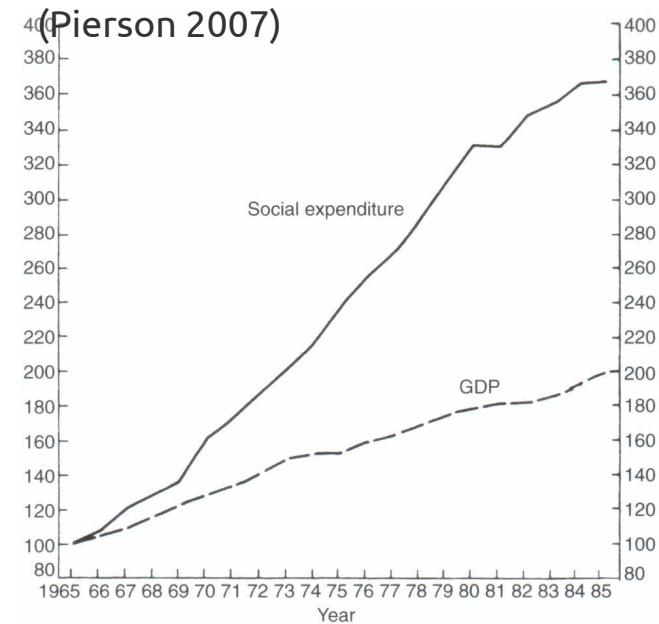
e.g. Politics Ontologies Ecology

1. The problem of welfare sustainability

A model of **dependency on growth**: increasing productivity, employment and (re)distribution of benefits, **mutually reinforcing each other in an alleged virtuous circle**.

However:

- Possible declining effects on well-being and happiness
- No more (necessarily) greater equality and jobs
- Wrecking our ecology and wellbeing conditions

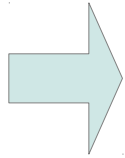


2. From a double to a triple crisis?



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**Double crisis
of welfare
state**



Contradictions between (e.g. Taylor-Gooby 2004):

- increasing demands of social protection (changing social risks)
- aggravating fiscal crisis due to states' responses to economic downturn in the wake of the austerity doctrine.

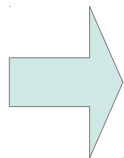
Worker
=
money pump

**“Why should we
pay for all?”**



Contradictions between

**Triple crisis of
welfare
state**



- increasing demands of social protection
- fiscal crisis
- new social risks due to climate crisis and climate policies e.g. regressive effects of decarbonization efforts

Social risks and climate crisis:

In the short run: an aggravator of existing social risks, health, poverty, inequality

- mainly on vulnerable communities / territories
- displacement and migration



In the long run: the main driver of social risks (particularly in case of weak anticipation, mitigation and conservation) with severe effects on

- conditions for livelihood for many people/communities
- resources and economies on which they depend
- the employment-insurances system on which welfare systems are designed
- fiscal competition between welfare and environmental demands ...

And

Tricky distributional implications between

individuals and populations, social classes, generations, places

→ Social risks usually individually unpredictable but collectively predictable

→ Social risks from climate change: collectively unpredictable



3. Dealing with the triple crisis

“More welfare”: expansion and social investment?

Less inequality, stronger states for decarbonization strategies and policies for dealing with eco-social risks, more public good and collective sense-making, consensus towards climate policies

But.... Still growth dependence and productivism ?

“Less welfare”: retrenchment strategies?

Less costs and less growth dependence

But.... Counterproductive for inequality and distribution of risks; weaker states and policies for dealing with eco-social risks, less consensus



A different welfare? Different how and how much?

- **Which change** within which paradigm (green-growth, post-growth, de-growth)?
- **Which implications:** economy, values, goals, organization, relationship with nature, wellbeing
- **How the transition?** Which risks and how to deal with them?

A triple sustainability crisis: social-economic-environmental

- **Complexity and non-linearity:** every change in one sphere create non-linear unpredictable effects and feedback loops in the overall system (Bateson 1972; Byrne 1998; Room 2011)
- **Combination** of size, speed, uncertainty, contradiction and urgency

Create conditions of double bind:

- Any choice may have counteractive and counterintuitive effects ... up to make it look wrong anyway (Bateson 1972; Eriksen 2016).
- No strategy seems really effective in preventing us from falling into deep contradiction
- Simplification risks further boosting vicious circles



Therefore: “climate change is essentially political” (Ruser 2018)

- Needs for translation
- No mere technical solutions
- Institutions, Lifestyle, Learned Habits, Culture, Values are involved
- Interests in conflict and modes/powers for addressing them
- Not just Top-down *or* bottom-up strategies
- Democracy and participation or...?

Climate change is a problem and conflict of ideas

- Einstein: no problem can be solved from the same **level of consciousness** that created it
- Bateson: a higher **level of learning** is required to solve problems created to a lower one.
- Questioning **lenses and ideas**
“which evolved in a previous age”
(Espinosa and Walker 2011)



“The major problems in the world are the result of the difference between how nature works and the way people think” (Gregory Bateson)

Current research

- Concepts of **sustainable welfare, ecological state** and **eco-social policies ...**
- Aim: Addressing societal needs “within ecological limits, from an intergenerational and global perspective” (Koch and Mont 2016),
- **A much needed research agenda.**

Possible needs / perspectives:

- Overcoming **anthropocentrism** in social policy research
- More **interdisciplinarity**
- Investigating the multi-scale and circular **interdependences** between social, economic and environmental aspects
- Understanding both **context-based and trans-contextual differences**
- Learning methods/patterns of **transition** towards eco-states and eco-social policies

Thank you for your attention

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