

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Costs of Children

ARENA – Centre for European Studies, University of Oslo

24-25 February 2011

The aim of this workshop is to explore the role and status of gender by investigating the aspect that has the greatest impact on the different roles of men and women: namely, the bearing and raising of children.

Family policies vary considerably across the European Union in two distinct ways: in how they affect levels of female employment and pay; and, in the degree to which they adhere to the principle of equality of treatment. The accession of former communist countries to the EU, which under socialism actively encouraged female labour force participation through extensive state-funded childcare, adds another perspective to debates about family policy and gender regimes. In contrast to the much-praised Nordic model of female-friendly childcare services, the closure of many state-run childcare centres and a reported 'return' to a male-breadwinner model in the new European democracies complicates any assumed links between gender equality and democratic values such as social justice and citizenship.

We would welcome contributions including empirical case studies that explore:

- The relationships between social regimes, gender equality and democracy in Europe (but we would also welcome one or two contributions from a non-European context);
- How effectively family policies share the 'costs of children', especially opportunity costs, between men and women;
- Welfare policies, social class and the incidence of poverty among families with children;
- The importance of social capital in coping with the raising of children, in particular amongst ethnic minorities and immigrants;
- Gender equality and the role of fathers;
- The value of care and children's welfare in debates about gender equality.

The workshop is coordinated by the University of Auckland's Europe Institute as a member of the EU-funded 'RECON' project within its research cluster on 'The Political Economy of the European Union'. RECON ('Reconstituting Democracy in Europe') is an Integrated Project supported by the European Commission's Sixth Framework Programme for Research. The project seeks to clarify whether democracy is possible under conditions of pluralism, diversity and complex multilevel governance. For more details and for updates on the workshop, see www.reconproject.eu.

Abstracts of around 300 words or completed papers should be submitted by email to Mark Thomson at mr.thomson@auckland.ac.nz by Friday 22 October 2010. Notification of acceptance will be by Friday 5 November 2010. Complete papers should be submitted for circulation by Friday 21 January 2011. RECON will cover the agreed costs of participants.