

ARC - Social rights in the European Union (1960-2020): from market to social citizenship and back? (SOCITEU)

With the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008, the destabilization of the Eurozone, on the verge of a “Grexit”, the ongoing migration crisis since 2015, and the Brexit, scholars and political actors alike have become aware that what was done could be undone. The realization that EU integration is not linear has important implications. It forces us to question the social “addedvalue” of the EU, in the sense of a specific contribution to social progress and, more particularly, the gradual crystallization of a Europe wide social citizenship through the granting of individual social rights.

Therefore, in times where the European project seems in trouble, the proposed ARC embraces a reflective and critical study of the EU as a main intellectual endeavour. The core hypothesis guiding the research is that the history of the EU (formerly the European Economic Community) exhibits a non-linear movement of (slow) construction and (relatively rapid) deconstruction of social rights. This implies that EU has failed to constitute an alternative arena for the reconstruction of an enhanced social citizenship at the supranational level in the face of structural transformations affecting national economies and societies.

The project pursues four objectives: 1. Substantiating the conceptual and empirical distinction between market and social citizenship; 2. Documenting the historical construction and deconstruction of a European social citizenship; 3. Generate empirical findings about the actors (decision makers, experts and intellectuals) who have fostered a European social citizenship ; 4. Understand how the trajectory from a European market citizenship to social citizenship is strongly embedded with the emergence of social nationalism.

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