

13th Conference  
of the European  
Sociological Association

(Un)Making Europe:  
Capitalism, Solidarities,  
Subjectivities

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ABSTRACT BOOK

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exploitation, and critique or protest referring to everyday life practice as well as alternative visions. The contribution, first, shows how the consolidation of class-specific interests refers to and re/produces social inequalities and polarizations, also basing on gender and ethnicity. Second, referring to the example of care provision by care agencies and their promise to bridge the care gap demands for justice as well as pitting precarities against precarities become obvious. The conclusion, third, figures out how credible alternatives can interfere in the distributional struggles of a, in principle, careless society providing care as a privilege for a minority and what questions of inequality and justice arise and have to be considered.

#### New Distributional Conflicts and the Right-Populist Revolt

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Capitalism without rapid and permanent growth creates fertile soil upon which a new populist right can thrive. Class-specific inequalities and exclusion have increased dramatically, yet class movements and organised class politics from below are in many ways at an historical ebb. Class relations take effect even if experiences of injustice do not result in collective activity towards the improvement of shared grievances. In the absence of political orientations which mobilised classes could theoretically produce or at least prompt, class relations take effect via the mode of competition, and via collective social de- and re-valuation. The state assumes a vital role in this process. Political demarcations linked to the allocation of social goods trigger class-formation through collective debasement and stigmatisation of major social groups. Adding to this are collective debasement and negative classifications through which members of the lower classes seek to prevail in processes of social competition. In this sense, the central claim of this paper is as follows: the more difficult or impossible remedying distributional relations perceived as unjust from the top to the bottom (from the rich to the poor) appears, the more likely it becomes that wage-earners will tend toward exclusive solidarity and, consequently, become susceptible to right-populist slogans and concepts. One of the challenges facing the trade unions today emerges from the fact that right-wing orientations and sympathies for right-populism are often present among their active members. The article proceeds from a discussion of the situation in Germany and a comparison to other European countries, drawing on theoretical concepts developed by the author (capitalist Landnahme) as well as on empirical research.

#### Portugal: between ‘Contraption’ and ‘The flying cow’

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The cycle of anti-austerity contention between 2010 and 2013 in Portugal reveals a complex picture, where traditional actors, including trade unions and left-wing political parties, emerged as key actors. Notwithstanding, the principal “engine” that gave rise to this change was a cycle of social mass protests who helped to break down the former Right-wing majority. It’s true that, at that time, nobody in Portugal could admit that – meaning the proximity between PS/socialists and PCP/ communists – would be possible. One of the criticisms became a new concept focused on PS Government until today: «The Contraption» . This notion, suggested by a right-wing opinion maker, was initially directed to the Socialist Party, but the public opinion picked it up and spread it out until now. Other observers, more sympathetic, have also named this political solution as «The flying cow», a metaphor to emphasize the “miracle” that it would be to watch a cow flying, similar to such surprising agreement among this different – and normally divergent – political parties. Departing from that political scenario in Portugal we propose a sociological analysis about the role of social movements and their articulations/tensions they’ve played with political Left-wing political parties and questioning the current Government solution (and what will happens in the next future).

In spite of all negative expectations, the political alternative found in Portugal brought some important accomplishments regarding precarious work, social rights and working class conquests, albeit not being considered a consistent solution. Until now (January 2017), it has worked. So, “the cow still flies”...

RN06 | Session 04b Accumulation by Dispossession and the Possibilities for Hope

#### Logics of Exploitation: Subsumption and Imprinting

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Neoliberal policies are deeply traversed by circuits of exploitation. Yet it is unclear how they stand in relation to wage-labour as an institution, namely to the crucial element in Marx’s description of subsumption – the process through which the social relations of production penetrate the labour process itself. From this perspective, exploitation is closely linked with wage-labour. In the last decades, however, wage-labour has lost much of its centrality in industrial relations.

Following a critical political economy approach, our paper advance the hypothesis that there are forms of exploitation which are not predicated on wage-labour. Those, we argue, show a different logic than the one shaping subsumption. Today, capital must grant/impose to social cooperation a certain degree of