



Editorial

This inaugural newsletter of the transnational network for *Reconciling Work and Welfare in Europe* – RECOWE - presents the network and its benefits for researchers, policy-makers and civil society actors across Europe. This multi-annual project, a Network of Excellence (NoE), was launched on 1 October 2006 and is already contributing to the development of genuine inter-disciplinary academic dialogue around work and welfare, and to bringing together various types of actors that have a stake in these policies. The network not only aims to enhance coordination of research among the 29 universities or research institutions participating in the initiative, but also to extend beyond that to all European research centres working in the area of work and welfare. The network's main activities are organised around 4 thematic research strands (see interview with the General Coordinator, Denis Bouget, and Bruno Palier, Scientific Coordinator, for more details). Other initiatives include plenary conferences to help integrate the academic community in this area and to spread excellence in work and welfare issues; a data centre (EDACwowe) for co-ordinating the production of data on work and welfare, a publication and dissemination centre (PUDISCwowe), where this newsletter is produced; a training activities centre (TACwowe) to enhance mobility of doctoral and post-doctoral students; and a dialogue centre (DIACwowe) for organising an exchange of information and ideas between researchers and other actors.

Our regular newsletters will keep you informed of network news. They will be issued four times a year and subscription is free of charge.

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The Recwowe newsletter is published by the Observatoire social européen asbl
Editors: Philippe Pochet and Caroline de la Porte (contact: delaporte@ose.be)



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Executive Manager

David Imbert
Maison des Sciences de l'Homme
Ange Guépin, Nantes, France
david.imbert@univ-nantes.fr

Website : <http://recwowe.eu/>

This newsletter has been written by Daniel Clegg, Caroline de la Porte, Irene A. Glinos, David Natali and Philippe Pochet.

LAYOUT AND WEBMASTER:

Valérie Cotulelli and Renaud Smoes

1 - INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH: PRESENTING THE RECWOWE NETWORK

DENIS BOUGET (DB), NETWORK COORDINATOR AND BRUNO PALIER (BP), SCIENTIFIC COORDINATOR

by Caroline de La Porte



Denis Bouget, Network Coordinator

Partner 1
Maison des Sciences de
l'Homme Ange Guépin
Nantes, France

Question - What are the main objectives of the RECWOWE network?

DB/BP: RECWOWE is a Network of Excellence, created in the Framework Programme 6 of the European Research, for 5 years (2006-2011). The main objectives of RECWOWE are consistent with those of the broader EU strategy for research development. We seek firstly to improve the quality of research and secondly to enhance the integration and organisation of research at the European level.

Our network seeks specifically to have an impact on the analysis of work and welfare policies and to improve research strategies. Our aims are both scientific and organisational. From a scientific point of view, we first aim to strengthen the dialogue and constructive information exchange between two communities of scholars and researchers: one on work and labour market policies, the other on social protection issues. While they usually remain distinct, the ambition is to bring them together in a common research structure. In other words, we aim to ease the interaction between disciplines that tend to work on their own. This is in line with the aim of strengthening inter-disciplinarity among European networks of excellence. From an organisational point of view, we want to integrate research and researchers so that it becomes easier to develop comparative projects, to obtain comparative data, to disseminate comparative knowledge and to organise training.

Question – In more detail, what is the analytical perspective through which RECWOWE looks at work and welfare policies?

DB/BP: It seems to us that recent reforms in employment and social policy are related to a complex set of tensions which are usually not analysed from a global perspective. The first tension is between two key concepts which characterise the reform effort in many European countries: employment flexibility and security as well as social rights. The second tension, which has already attracted much scientific interest, focuses on the reconciliation between increasingly fluid family life and flexible labour markets. Many issues rise from that difficult combination, among others, employment conditions, working time and flexible contracts. The third tension is about how to adequately combine the quantitative aim of increasing employment rates and that of ensuring decent quality in work. This is a more recent issue for research that needs more focus and attention. The fourth tension is broadly defined in terms of the difficult interaction between old welfare institutions and new types of employment (labour market) institutions, and between the different actors invested in these. Of course there are many other potential conflicts in our field of research (and in our societies). An interesting tension is between the EU and Member States. What is the role of the EU and how could that be developed? And how can the EU play a relevant policy orientation or policy definition role for the various EU Member States that have different institutional roots. Another crucial tension concerns the relationship between work and welfare policies and those regarding immigrants. But our four main lines of analysis are quite holistic and allow for improving our understanding of the evolving European societies and policies.





Bruno Palier, Scientific Coordinator
Partner 2
Sciences-Po Paris

Question – Can you provide more details on the organisational aim of RECWOWE?

DB/BP: This is the second broad goal of our network: we aim at integrating the research activities on work and welfare at the European level, through the creation of a virtual research centre. RECWOWE brings together about 180 researchers from 17 European countries in representation of 29 academic and scientific institutions. RECWOWE is going to integrate many activities of all these different academic and research institutions, and to facilitate at the same time the dissemination of knowledge through the network.

Question - Can you give us some examples of this strategy?

DB/BP: RECWOWE's activities will focus on the creation of new databases and the integration of the existing ones at the European level. What is more, our network will be a fundamental pillar that aims to lead to the (inter-disciplinary) definition of new research themes and project proposals at national and European level.

Parallel to this, we are implementing a research activity for the dissemination of knowledge and the publication of research. Our network has also developed facilities to train young researchers and to improve the dialogue between academic centres, policy-makers and stakeholders.

These different activities are organised in RECWOWE through four key operation structures: the European Data Centre (called EDACwowe), for the development of databases on work and welfare; the Dialogue centre (DIACwowe) for facilitating the dialogue between different researchers and the actors involved in the issues (like social partners and civil society actors, etc.); the Publication and Dissemination Centre (PUDISCwowe); and the

Training Centre (TACwowe), which coordinates summer schools and doctoral workshops.

Question - That said, what is the most innovative trait of RECWOWE?

DB/BP: The first innovation is related to the issues at the core of our activity. What is innovative are less the topics, than the fact that we are organised so that people always work in synergy between the realm of work and the realm of social protection, instead of having two separate communities trying to communicate. As mentioned above, thanks to the focus on core tensions, we will shed more light on the interaction between work and welfare, which has received little attention in academic research. The second innovative aspect concerns the openness of the network to a growing number of research partners and to non-academic institutions, which can help to define and to investigate new issues and themes. The central aim is to facilitate the dissemination of research through the on-going dialogue with policy makers, stakeholders, social partners and civil society. Thirdly and consequently, the challenge is to steer such a complex research infrastructure and to identify ways to disseminate relevant knowledge across Europe. This involves encouraging researchers of different nationalities and with different scientific backgrounds to work together in a permanent and stable way. In sum, RECWOWE aims by 2011 to reach a better and more dynamic organisation of academic research on work and welfare at local, national and European levels.

Question - Will RECWOWE be the same at the end of this process? Or will there be a progressive integration of further actors?

DB/BP: Our network broadly aims to develop openness and interaction both from a scientific and organisational point of view. Our aim is to favour the broad interaction between disciplines and institutions and also to involve researchers and research teams which were not originally included in the network. We have developed this strategy to counteract the negative effects of scientific isolation.



Question – In that respect, do you see any risk of a two-level integration of European research institutes? Those with an access to the European network, and thus with the opportunity to be financed by the EU; and those which lack that European dimension and do not participate to that dynamics?

DB/BP: We do see the risk of the development of European research '*à deux vitesses*': the first group of research actors who are organised, integrated and recognised; the others (part of a second group) who develop their activity at local and/or national level, but who remain excluded from the international and European movement of cooperation and from the European networks. It is a risk and a challenge for us to avoid that scenario. It is too early to see how things will move forward, but we are all keen to reinforce the openness of the network, in particular for younger researchers who are starting their research career (in their PhD or post-doc period).

In order to monitor the extent to which the network effectively reaches its various aims, an advisory committee meets on a yearly basis to make suggestions on how we can improve

our work. The EU Commission also carries out various forms of monitoring (with external experts) to enhance the effectiveness of our strategies and to provide suggestions in that sense.

There are currently performance indicators for the integration of young researchers in the network; for the balance between men and women involved in our activity; and for the balance between scholars coming from countries with different traditions of research in the field.

Question - To conclude, what is your expectation for the success of RECOWE?

DB/BP: Our success will depend on the ability of the network not only to survive but also to regenerate itself well beyond the end of the 5 year term. Our ambition is to launch a new dynamic in research development on work and welfare through renewed forms of cooperation. We hope to see that kind of dynamic implemented in the future.



2 – NEWS FROM THE NETWORK

CONFERENCES - RECENT

— The first annual conference of RECOWE



The first annual conference of RECOWE, devoted to the "state of the art" in Work and Welfare issues, was held in Warsaw from 12 to 16 June, 2007.

After the Kick off Conference (KoC) organised by Sciences-Po Paris in December 2006, RECOWE has decided to organise a yearly Conference (second week in June).

The First Annual RECOWE Conference that was organised by the Warsaw School of Economics successfully met its scientific objectives. This consisted of presenting and developing an inter-institutional dialogue on the state of the art of the « work and welfare » literature, which is abundant and rich but often scattered. In the flexibility-security tension strand, the presentations contributed to unpacking the political rhetoric around activation and highlighting the ambiguities of the flexicurity concept. Other contributions addressed how to combine flexibility and security through economic, sociological, policy and gendered analyses. These themes and presentations are intertwined with policies for combining work and family life, addressed in the second thematic network. This includes the developments in many countries towards the privatization of child-care, and the deeply entrenched cultural and political roots within that process. The third panel focused specifically on the issue of quality in work, which is increasingly fragile with flexible (but often not very secure) work arrangements. A noteworthy contribution was made on the issue of the quality and quantity of work by Arne Kalleberg, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Finally, the fourth panel addressed the issue of the shift towards employment-friendly welfare states, that is promoted by the

OECD, the EU (through the European Employment Strategy), and most importantly domestic reform initiatives.

Aside rich thematic discussions, the conference also discussed and evaluated the various initiatives within the RECOWE network around data-production and dissemination activities. This included the development of the European data centre for work and welfare (Wim Van Oorschot, University of Tilburg and Torben Friedberg, SFI), the creation of the publication and dissemination centre (Daniel Clegg, University of Edinburgh and Philippe Pochet, OSE), the development of the training activities centre (Jochen Clasen, University of Edinburgh and Alex Fischer, Central European University) and the creation of the dialogue centre (Bruno Palier, Sciences-Po, Paris and Philippe Pochet, OSE). In addition, the four-day conference programme provided many opportunities for participants to meet informally and to discuss common research interests and envisage joint projects.

[Read more ...](#)

CONFERENCES - FIRST ANNOUNCEMENTS

— The Second Annual RECOWE Conference will take place in Oslo in June 2008, and will be organised by the [Samfunns-og naeringslivsforskning \(SNF\)](#) - Institute for Research in Economics and Business Administration, located in Bergen, Norway. During this Conference, the progress of the work of the network will be presented and discussed, further steps towards thematic, data-collection and organisational integration will be made. Emphasis will be made on the dissemination of the results.

— The annual ESPAnet conference is organising its 6th annual conference in Helsinki, from September 18 to 20, 2008, on the topic "Cross-border influences in Social Policy".

[General information...](#)



ACTIVITIES

➤ **Researcher-Practitioner Dialogue on flexicurity & quantity-quality in work 28-30 November 2007, Oviedo, Spain**

The University of Oviedo (Professor Rodolfo Gutierrez Palacios – rgutier@uniovi.es) and the Economic and Social Council of Asturias have launched an initiative to bring together researchers and practitioners (policy-makers and social partners). The themes that will be discussed are flexicurity, employment-friendly welfare policies, and how to strike a balance between policies aimed at enhancing the quantity and quality in employment, a particularly topical and controversial issue in Spain.

➤ **Doctoral Workshops (organised in the Training Activities Centre, TACwowe)**

The RECWOWE network has already been very active in training of PhD students. In doctoral workshops, students present their research and receive expert advice on their conceptual and empirical work as well as tips for publication in academic journals. The first such workshop was held at the [Masaryk University](#), Brno, Czech Republic on May 3-6 2007. The second, the "Development of Work and Welfare Reform in European Societies", took place on October 5-6 2007 at the [University of Hamburg](#).

➤ **Summer Schools (organised in the Training Activities Centre, TACwowe)**

The first ESPANET summer school took place at the University of Aalborg in 2005. After the success of the initiative, this specialized training activity was then pursued (and merged) as the RECWOWE/ESPANET summer school. It took place at the University of Edinburgh in 2007, and addressed the reform of welfare states and labour markets in a European and comparative perspective as well as focusing on policies in the area of pensions and child care. In addition, the summer school included practical training for the students regarding the development and use of data sets, indicators and surveys. Much time was also devoted to discussions in small groups around the students own research projects.

➤ **2008 Doctoral Summer School 16 and 17 September 2007, Helsinki, Finland**

The 2008 ESPANet summer school will take place in Helsinki on September 16 and 17, 2008 at STAKES, the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health. The doctoral workshop will in particular focus on flexicurity and family/work/employment regimes, but other topics will be discussed as well. For further information, contact Dr. Jussi Simpura (jussi.simpura@stakes.fi), [STAKES](#) or Professor Anneli Anttonen (anneli.anttonen@uta.fi), [University of Tampere](#).

TACwowe has now its own [website](#)

OTHER NEWS FROM THE NETWORK

All members of the RECWOWE network would like to congratulate Professor Giuliano Bonoli, from the Institut des Hautes Etudes en Administration Publique (IDHEAP) in Lausanne, who has won the prestigious National Latsis Prize for outstanding scientific achievement of researchers under the age of 40.

[Read more ...](#)



PRESENTING PARTNER INSTITUTES

— The Social Policy Subject Group in the School of Social and Political Studies, University of Edinburgh (partner No.29)



The University of Edinburgh is one of the oldest centres of expertise in social policy research and teaching in the United Kingdom, the subject having been formally established at Edinburgh in 1918

Today, the Social Policy Subject Group has 13 permanent academic members, and is part of the School of Social and Political Studies.

The research activities of the Social Policy Subject Group's members are organised around three thematic research clusters; **Families, Children and Welfare; State, Governance and Welfare;** and **Work, Economy and Welfare.** These core substantive research areas are all informed by a strong **International Comparative Perspective**, which is an overarching theme common to all the research in our subject group.

Besides activities in RECOWE, another major international project activity in the group is the overall coordination of the Anglo-German Foundation Programme 'Sustainable Welfare and Sustainable Growth' (Jochen Clasen, 2006-2009). Recent high-profile publications by members of the subject group include Castles, F. (ed.) 'The Disappearing State: Retrenchment realities in an Age of Globalisation' (Edward Elgar, 2007) and Clasen, J. (ed., with N. Siegel) 'Investigating Welfare State Change: The 'Dependent Variable Problem' in Comparative Analysis' (Edward Elgar, 2007).

As part of its vibrant research culture in social policy, the Social Policy Subject Group hosts a series of regular seminars, with recent and future guest speakers including internationally renowned scholars such as Peter Baldwin, Colin Crouch, John Hills and Bo Rothstein. It will also host the annual United Kingdom Social Policy Association conference in 2008 and 2009. Further details of its research activities and recent publications can be found [here](#).

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH'S ACTIVITIES IN RECOWE

The Social Policy Subject Group at the University of Edinburgh is co-coordinator of Strand 1 – Tensions between Flexibility and Security; co-coordinator of the Training Activities Centre (TACwowe); co-coordinator of the Publication and Dissemination Centre (PUDISCwowe); and coordinator of the Strand 1 task The Politics of Flexicurity in Europe.

Members of the Social Policy Subject Group participate in tasks right across the 4 RECOWE strands.

The University of Edinburgh's RECOWE team
Strand 1: Jochen Clasen, Daniel Clegg, Alexander Goerne, Alison Smith
Strand 2: Ingela Naumann, Fran Wasoff
Strand 3: Neil Fraser
Strand 4: Frank Castles, Richard Parry

In addition to [PhD training](#) and specialised supervision in a wide range of social policy areas, social policy at Edinburgh also has a flourishing programme of shorter [postgraduate courses](#) by both research and teaching, available full-time or part-time; the MSc by Social Research; the MSc in Childhood Studies; the MSc in Comparative Public Policy; and the MSc in Policy Studies. At undergraduate level they offer 4-year [MA degrees in Social Policy](#) in combination with a range of other subjects, including Law, Politics and Sociology. Students in social policy at Edinburgh join a large, diverse University with a current student population of more than 25,000, nearly 6,000 of which are international students drawn from 137 different countries.



3 – EUROPEAN NEWS

— Employment and social policy

Since the Lisbon Strategy was re-launched in 2005, aiming to boost economic and employment growth (and sidelining the social dimension of the reforms), flexicurity has received considerable political and policy attention. During the Presidency of Portugal to the European Council in the second half of 2007, there has been considerable activity in this area. The European Commission published a communication – [“Towards Common Principles of Flexicurity”](#) – on June 27th 2007, which seeks to specify common European policy objectives. The “flexicurity” concept has become an umbrella term used to designate first how to combine flexible contracts with job security. It also covers active labour market policies, comprehensive lifelong learning strategies and the income maintenance role of social protection systems. In the communication, the Commission proposed 10 common principles for flexicurity, including the need to strike an adequate balance between rights and responsibilities and to reduce the gap between precarious contractual arrangements and regular full-time secure contracts. The common principles also include policies to develop “internal flexicurity” (to improve conditions for employees to move up the career ladder) and “external flexicurity” (to improve the possibilities for workers to evolve in the labour market). The flexicurity principles also cover policies for developing gender equality and equal opportunities. Political momentum has been strong in this area, confirmed at the Conference of Employment and Social Affairs Ministers that took place in Lisbon on 13 and 14 September 2007. In addition, the Portuguese Presidency launched the first Forum on Social Services of General Interest on 17 September 2007 (under the auspices of the European Parliament). It

involved public authorities, European institutions and civil society actors.

[More information...](#)

The Presidency has also put the issue of Minimum Social Standards on the agenda, discussed in detail at the 6th European Round Table on Poverty and Social Exclusion (16 and 17 October, 2007).

[More information...](#)

The Commission, in collaboration with the Portuguese Presidency, is launching an initiative to strengthen the Social Dialogue in Europe. A conference on 29 and 30 November 2007 seeks to give a boost to this aim.

[More information...](#)

— Europe’s Social Reality

Roger Liddle and Frederic Lerais, 2007.

A stimulating consultation paper from the Bureau of European Policy Advisers (BEPA).

[Read the paper](#)

— Social Europe and Globalisation

A noteworthy study on the social impact of globalisation in the European Union (“Is Social Europe Fit for Globalisation?”) has been written by Iain Begg, Juraj Draxler and Jørgen Mortensen (Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels)

The report is financed by and prepared for the European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

[Full Report...](#)

4 – NEW PUBLICATIONS

NETWORK MEMBERS' PUBLICATIONS IN THE AREA OF WORK AND WELFARE



Investigating Welfare State Change: The 'Dependent Variable Problem' in Comparative Analysis
Jochen Clasen and Nico Siegel (eds.), 2007, Edward Elgar Publishing, 352 pages

This book tackles many of the thorny conceptual, analytical and empirical issues in comparative welfare state research, such as the 'dependent variable problem', issues related to the social expenditure approach and how to include aspects related to the quality of welfare policies in 'expenditure' driven analyses, notably social rights and structural needs. Various innovative methodological approaches to welfare state issues are developed in this excellent edited volume. These include how to analyze the evolution of welfare state generosity over time, how to measure change (and various types of conditionality of various schemes) and how to account methodologically and empirically for various degrees of change using the 'fuzzy-set methodology'. In sum, the book is a high quality contribution that provides responses to the most pressing challenges that all 'work-welfare' researchers face in their work.

[For more information...](#)



The Europeanisation of social protection
Jon Kvist and Juho Saari (eds.), 2007, Policy Press, Bristol, pp. 308

This book brings together high quality academic research with EU (social) policy. The book aims to identify the effect of the recent political developments at the EU level and EU-Member State policy commitments on the ongoing social policy reform process in the Member States. Political developments include the completion of the Internal Market, Economic and Monetary Union and the enlargement of the EU to include 27 Member States. Policy commitments refer notably to the Lisbon Strategy first established in 2000

as an institutionalised political opportunity structure for the coordination of economic, employment and social policies. Since then, its aims have been redefined (March 2005) and the policy tools to ensure uptake of the aims by Member States have been strengthened. But despite that, the knowledge of the actual influence of the EU on Member States' social policies has remained the object of lively debate along the dimensions of democracy, legitimacy, Member State sovereignty and the effectiveness of EU policies. In a step to move beyond that debate, this book – with contributions by high level academics who are social policy experts in their countries and who closely follow EU-national policy interaction – is a clear contribution for all researchers and policy makers, as well as civil society actors interested in this sensitive policy issue.

[For more information and to place an order...](#)



Vincitori e perdenti - Come cambiano le pensioni in Italia e in Europa

David Natali, 2007, Il Mulino, Bologna, 240 pages

In some European countries, public pension spending is increasing (up to 15% annual GDP). Pension schemes are a cornerstone of European societies and of the relationship between the state, market, civil society, family and individual citizens. This book is a guide to answer key questions related to the reform process across Europe. Concretely, it consists of the comparative analysis of the institutional and political dynamics of the pension reform process in five countries: France, Italy, Sweden, UK and Poland. In addition, it tackles a question that has too often remained on the margins of the pensions debate: that of the impact of the pension reforms on the standard of living of pensioners. This is an innovative contribution to a debate that has often remained within the paradigm of institutional stickiness and the financial sustainability of pension schemes.

[For more information and order...](#)





Gendering Citizenship in Western Europe: New Challenges for Citizenship Research in a Cross-national Context

Ruth Lister, Fiona Williams, Anneli Anttonen, Jet Bussemaker, Ute Gerhard, Jacqueline Heinen, Stina Johansson, Leira Arnlaug, Birte Siim and Constanza Tobio with Anna Gavanas (2007), The Policy Press, Bristol, 210 pages.

This collectively written, inter-disciplinary and cross-national study combines conceptual, theoretical and empirical material to study the various dimensions of citizenship in Europe. The central conception of 'citizenship' refers to rights and responsibilities, collective membership and participation. There is a particular emphasis on the sensitive issues of immigration and provision of childcare services. [To order...](#)



Social Developments in the European Union 2006

Christophe Degryse and Philippe Pochet (eds.), 2007, ETUI-REHS, OSE and Saltsa, Brussels, 239 pages

This 8th edition of yearly social developments in European Union is an essential read for anybody interested in a more detailed analysis of the fast-moving and complex social policy aspect of the EU. Also published in French.

[To order ...](#)

Good Governance via the OMC? The cases of Employment and Social Inclusion

Caroline de la Porte, 2007, *European Journal of Legal Studies*, 43 pages

This article focuses on how the EU, via the Open Method of Coordination, governs the employment and social inclusion policies of the EU Member States. In terms of policy coherence it shows that the conception of a full employment model developed at European level has been strengthened during the past decade. In terms of effectiveness, it shows that employment rates have been increasing in all Member States over the last 15 years, but the absolute figures hide precarious labour market contracts. In addition, poverty rates generally show an upward trend. Read [abstract](#) or download full article in English ([PDF](#)) or Italian ([PDF](#)).

Reforming the Bismarckian Welfare Systems, December 2007,

Special issue, *Social Policy and Administration*
Bruno Palier and Claude Martin (eds.).
[More information.](#)

This special issue analyzes the development of social programmes in Continental Europe over the last three decades. It demonstrates that, contrary to the conventional wisdom, Bismarckian welfare states have changed a lot. Retrenchment and institutional reform were undertaken in the 1990s; during the 2000s, structural reforms were implemented in line with the new global social policy agenda, including activation policies, the development of new funded schemes in pensions programmes, and opening up the market in health, child and elderly care.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS IN THE AREA OF WORK AND WELFARE



The Handbook of West European Pension Politics

Ellen Immergut, Karen Anderson and Isabelle Schulze (eds.) 2007, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 968 pages

This comprehensive book is an in-depth analysis of developments in pensions policy in sixteen western European countries (the 'old' EU member states and Switzerland). Adopting a holistic approach mainly based on historical institutionalism, the work is extremely homogeneous and provides interesting novelties by tracing institutional change in pension systems. The chapters present comparable data that illustrates precisely how pensions' systems have changed following waves of reforms. This book is a promising step beyond the traditional contributions on the 'stickiness' of pension programmes towards the dynamic analysis of the 'new politics' of welfare.

[For more information and order...](#)

