

## Reconstituting Democracy in Europe(RECON)

RECON is a five-year research project with 19 partner institutions and around 70 participating researchers across Europe. RECON covers a wide range of academic fields, from political science, sociology, linguistics, and anthropology, to information science, law and legal theory, and economics.

RECON is coordinated by ARENA – Centre for European Studies at the University of Oslo.

Yvonne Galligan heads WP 4 - Justice, Democracy and Gender in RECON. She is Reader in Politics at QUB and Director of the Centre for Advancement of Women in Politics. She is vice-president of the executive committee of the International Political Science Association, and member of a number of national and international associations in political science. She was head of the EU-funded EGG project. Dr. Galligan's research focuses on gender politics, comparative political representation, and gender and public policy in national and EU contexts.

Which form is the most robust? RECON assesses the options for reconstituting democracy through analyzing the EU's constitutionalisation process (WP 2); the institutional complex at the EU and member state levels (WP 3); the role and status of gender within the enlarged Europe (WP 4); the democratic quality and governing capacity of the Union within tax and fiscal policy (WP 7) and within foreign and security policy (WP 6); and the multilevel configuration of civil society and the public sphere (WP 5). It examines the effects of external transnationalisation on the EU and discerns democratic lessons from comparison with non-European complex multilevel entities (WP 9). RECON studies the enlargement process and the transition and consolidation of democracy in the new member states (WP 8). The aim is to identify strategies through which democracy can be strengthened and propose measures for rectifying institutional and constitutional defects in different policy areas.

The workshop is organized around a number of key themes, including:

- The evolution of gender equality in the EU
- Feminist perspectives on justice
- Gender in EU constitution-making
- Women's political representation
- Civil society mobilization
- Varieties of feminisms / gender identities

### Justice, Democracy and Gender

The multilevel institutional make-up of Europe raises a number of questions pertaining to gender equality, which is an essential component of a just and democratic society.

- What level(s) of governance is (are) the most relevant for the rectification of injustice and elimination of gender inequality?
- Are there significant differences in gender equality in the various regions of Europe?
- Recent research has shown that many member states still resist gender equality – in practice if not formally. Is there a systematic East-West or South-North bias?
- What is the relation between gender equality and the democratisation processes in the new member states and candidate countries?

The objectives of WP 4 are to explore the status of gender equality within the enlarged EU, to analyse what kind of gender policies can be justified with regard to the three RECON models, and to suggest recommendations for how gender equality can best be fostered within Europe and beyond.

WP 4 studies a number of questions pertaining to gender equality that are raised by the multilevel institutional make-up of Europe.

- What level(s) of governance is (are) the most relevant for the rectification of injustice and elimination of gender inequality? Are there significant differences in gender equality in the various regions of Europe?
- Recent research has shown that many member states still resist gender equality – in practice if not formally. Is there a systematic East-West or South-North bias?
- What is the relation between gender equality and the democratisation processes in the new member states and candidate countries?

WP 4 starts from the recognition that gender equality is an essential component of a just and democratic society. Its core objective is three-fold: (i) to explore the status of gender equality within the enlarged EU; (ii) to analyse what kind of gender policies can be justified with regard to the three RECON models; what policies do the different models give scope for, and for what reasons; and (iii) to arrive at specific recommendations for how gender equality can best be fostered within Europe.

WP 4 has a normative and an empirical component. The examination of the status of gender equality in Europe requires first a clarification of how best to conceive gender equality in normative terms. WP 4 undertakes to establish the assessment standards for gender equality in relation to alternative notions of justice. The three models of reconstituting democracy in Europe offer a set of distinctly different standards for evaluating gender equality, that is, with regard to justice as a matter of mutual advantage, as a matter of formal legal equality, and as a matter of mutual recognition. From the application of the RECON models to contemporary European reality we can also establish a set of recommendations for how best to promote gender equality within an enlarged EU.

With regard to the empirical component WP 4 proceeds with a policy analysis of the EU's approach to gender equality, its institutional arrangements and its main policy outcomes. It goes in detail in three critical gender policy areas: women's representation in decision-making, the gender pay gap, and gender-based violence. Which model of equality is embodied in these policies at EU and national levels? WP 4 seeks to determine whether the dominant model(s) at EU level has transposed itself to the national arena, or if there are tensions between different conceptions (models) of equality in multi-level governance.

WP 4 also addresses the discourse around gender justice and gender equality in the EU by focusing on identity formation and civil society activism. In close cooperation with WP 5 – Civil Society and the Public Sphere, WP 4 examines the role of civil society, and in particular the existence of a robust civil society engaging with elites on gender equality in the new member states and the candidate countries. In applying the normative standards for the assessment of the observed policy outcomes and effects, along with the findings of the observed discourse, RECON is able to recommend what kind of gender equality policies the EU should pursue in order to sustain democracy at all levels.