



AUC International Conference on Research in African Challenges (ICRAC)

Track P: Poverty, Social policy and Governance in Africa

SUB-TRACK P1: THE EVOLUTION AND CHANGES IN SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICIES IN THE CONTINENT

Chair: Dr. Ghada Barsoum

Co-chair: Dr. Andrew M. Fischer

There has been a “silent” revolution in social policies around the world, with countries in the South pioneering new models of interventions including conditional cash transfers; cash for work; and guaranteed employment programs. This track will seek to advance understandings of poverty, social policy and governance in Africa. As part of this track, we invite scholarly and policy-oriented articles to provide an analysis of the evolution and changes in social protection policies in the continent. Issues of cross-learning and south-to-south knowledge exchange are relevant to this discussion.

Biographies

Ghada Barsoum Ghada Barsoum is associate professor and tenured at the Department of Public Policy and Administration at the School of Global Affairs and Public Policy at The American University in Cairo (AUC). Her research focuses on issues of youth, gender, employment and poverty. She was recently the principal investigator of a study on informality in Egypt in collaboration with the UNDP regional office. Prior to joining AUC, She was research associate at the Population Council, West Asia and North Africa Office. Barsoum is the author of a book on the employment crisis of female graduates in Egypt and a number of papers in peer-reviewed journals.

Andrew M. Fischer is Associate Professor of Social Policy and Development Studies at the Institute of Social Studies (ISS), and laureate of the European Research Council Starting Grant, which he won in the 2014 round. He is also the founding editor of the book series of the UK and Ireland Development Studies Association, published by Oxford University Press, entitled *Critical Frontiers of International Development Studies*, and editor at the journal *Development and Change*. His forthcoming book, *Poverty as Ideology*, won the 2015 International Studies in Poverty Prize, awarded by the Comparative Research Programme on Poverty (CROP).

Dr. Fischer’s research and teaching are centrally concerned with the role of redistribution in development at local, regional and global scales. He examines this with respect to three strands: financial and fiscal processes; social policy (as one of the principle policy areas where redistribution is enacted at national scales); and productive development policy. These three strands are represented, for instance, by his current ERC Starting Grant is on “The Political Economy of Externally Financing Social Policy in Developing Countries,” which focuses on the emerging social protection agenda among donors in seven countries (Ecuador, Paraguay, Ethiopia, Ghana, Zambia, Cambodia and Philippines). His earlier



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work on the impact of Chinese regional development policies in the Tibetan areas of Western China (encompassing five provinces) also examined regional redistribution at a sub-national scale, in particular with respect to some of the dark sides of redistribution, and is well known for its critical engagement with concepts of social exclusion and marginalisation.

At ISS, Dr. Fischer led the establishment of the MA major in Social Policy for Development, which he convened from 2012 to 2014. He also convened the specialisation in Poverty Studies and Policy Analysis from 2009 to 2012. He has worked with and advised various multilateral agencies and NGOs, including UNRISD, UNW, UNDP, UNICEF, UNECOSOC, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch, and he has been involved in development studies or working in developing countries for 30 years, including seven years living and working in India and Nepal prior to his PhD at the London School of Economics.