

**8<sup>th</sup> Annual ESPAnet conference on: ‘Social Policy and the GlobalCrisis: Consequences and Responses’, September 2-4 2010, Budapest, Hungary**

Even Nilssen  
Stein Rokkan Centre for Social Studies, Bergen Norway

even.nilssen@uni.no

**Demographic crises and ageing policy ideas in the field of health and long-term care. Comparing the EU the WHO and the OECD.**

*Abstract*

During the last decades several international organizations have been concerned with ageing policies, focusing on different kinds of political areas such as work, poverty, pensions, health and long-term care. The conceptions of ‘productive ageing’ and ‘the burden of ageing’ (Walker 2009<sup>i</sup>) has dominated the global discourse on ageing policy in recent years and has to a large extent been attached to the more general discourse on ‘the sustainability of the welfare state’ which have gained prominence in the western world due to interpretations of the demographic development (crisis) in these countries. This paper elaborates on the basic framing and programmatic ideas (Ervik, Kildal & Nilssen 2009<sup>ii</sup>) regarding ageing policies in the field of health and long-term care as they are expressed in three important international organizations; the WHO, the EU and the OECD.

How are the challenges of ageing in relation to health and long-term care interpreted in these organizations, which problems and possibilities are defined and what kind of policy recommendations are made? Our first hypothesis is that there will be important differences between these organizations. The OECD is traditionally oriented towards economic problems while the WHO primarily addresses topics concerning health problems. In the EU questions comprising health and long-term care are integrated in the OMC on social protection and social inclusion (from 2004) focusing on combating poverty and modernizing welfare systems. However, our second hypothesis is that due to interpretations of the demographic development in the western world, the ideas of all organizations will, more or less, be influenced by the more general economic discourse on the sustainability of the welfare state.

---

<sup>i</sup> Walker, A. (2009): “Commentary: The Emergence and Application of Active Ageing in Europe.” *Journal of Ageing & Social Policy*, 21.

<sup>ii</sup> Ervik, R; Kildal N & Nilssen E (2009): *The Role of International Organizations in Social Policy*. Edward Elgar Publishing.