

Have your say on reinforcing Social Europe - submit your contribution

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Blanquerna School of Communications and International Relations

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- Industry
- Social partner
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- University
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- EU level
- national level
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- input for new initiatives at EU, national, regional or local level
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Already before the pandemic, during the economic downturn from 2008 onwards, the university social and political sciences sector in Europe has witnessed a process of precarization, due to mainly precarious conditions of mid-career scholars, who lack in funding opportunities, fixed contracts and economic stimuli to stay in the academia. If you consider that the main EU Commission's grants for career development have two strands - early career and advanced researchers - you would understand how this specific lack of consideration of mid-careers could be reflected also at national level. Such a situation entails for the entire EU region, but especially for the Mediterranean countries who already suffer an important discrimination in places where knowledge is produced at international level, that innovation is less 'institutionalized' as an engine of expanding debates and research findings. Advanced and senior scholars actually are resistant to important changes of intellectual frameworks, and early career scholars depend on seniors for advancements in their careers. However, those intellectual changes towards innovative frameworks are extremely necessary nowadays, and increasingly important with the pandemics. There is a crucial necessity today to understand how the social and political world is changing, but mid careers scholars' attempts to

pass new ideas remain frustrated. The only mid-career scholars who advance seem to be those who marry the intellectual environment provided by old schools of thought, or those who have important financial support from their families to resist precarization of contracts until an opportunity to fill a gap left by a senior is provided.

However, what happens with innovation? It dies. It dies because innovation in the social and political science is particularly provoked by a good knowledge of the streets and characteristics of the real social world. But today's midcareer scholars who can resist precarization come from well-off families who know very few of the world outside their privileged houses. Such a condition explains why they are unable to understand posttruth phenomena and the rise of farright and populist movements.

I have written in 2014 my first article on prejudice as a security threat and in 2017 I have published a book, in which I was anticipating the waves of white racism that we have witnessed in 2019. When in 2015 I said in a meeting at the UN: today we are considering xenophobia but tomorrow we will see important racist movements to emerge, I encountered resistance in the audience. They believed xenophobia was a limited phenomenon that could be stopped with some information campaigns. I said in that occasion that it would be pointless without serious reforms in support of good education programmes, a rehabilitation of intellectual figures at all levels (primary, secondary and tertiary education), the creation of stable jobs with important public investments, a reinforcement of public health sector (how useful would have it been today for reasons that we are all witnessing) and incentives to create stable jobs at all levels. All these measures however should concern the entire society and bring wellbeing to the now disappearing middle class.

Working classes can aspire to a better life only if they see that it exists a middle class they can join and which is worth the effort. At the moment, without a welloff middle class, there is no aspiration for working classes and there is no satisfaction for middle class. These, when both frustrated, will join the angry movements of populist and extremist parties that threaten our current political design of a peaceful and united Europe. And Russia provides financial and ideological funds through foundations and fake news to such movements so as to dismantle our institutions.

We need to counteract these mechanisms by giving inspirational figures of success who do not come from elitarian families. A working class person can 'smell' elites despite the filters that screens provide. It is not by chance that political figures such as Berlusconi, Johnson and Trump, despite they are definitely the expression of elites, "provide" an image of gross men, in which working class can see themselves. However, it is socially and politically unhealthy to pretend to be someone else with the only intention to win elections. We should create a better world of correct and legitimate channels for working classes and middle classes to prosper within two generations, to counteract current extremist political movements.

The best way to provide this opportunity lies in recovering the figure of intellectuals from middle classes, restablishing their legitimacy and dignity. The first way to do this is to allow midcareer professors -both women and men, although women are suffering most, to enjoy from true opportunities of establishing themselves as intellectual leaders of new generations representing different classes.

3. You can also [submit your contribution by email](#) to the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

Final questions

*** 1. How did you find out about this consultation?**

- Social media advertisement
- Advertisement in specialised magazines/ journals
- European Commission website
- Event I attended
- Word of mouth
- Other

*** 2. Has participating in this consultation changed your attitude towards the EU?**

- Yes, I have a more positive attitude towards the EU
- Yes, I have a more negative attitude towards the EU
- No, it has not changed my attitude towards the EU

Contact

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