

Abstract for the ESPAnet Conference 2010 Stream 12.2. Local care policies and care work in times of global crisis (Pfau-Effinger/Theobald)

Political participation of senior representants in elderly care policies in East and West Germany – a four cases comparison

In Germany as well as in other European societies representants of seniors interests have emerged and entered the governance of policies against elderly people on all governance levels. The local level seems to be of special interest for the analysis for its importance in policy implementation. Nevertheless especially for the local level there do not exist many systematic comparisons of the for the differences in the political participation of elderly interest representants in to the local governance structures. The paper analyses these differences on the example of care policies in four middle sized German cities and asks how the differences between the Western and the Eastern cases can be explained.

The analysis is based on 38 qualitative interviews with local experts and relevant political actors in four middle sized German cities as well as the analysis of protocols of the social committee (1995-2007). The data have been sampled during the project 'the local restructuring of elderly care- cultural bases, actors and conditions of action', funded by the German Research Foundation.

The findings indicate that the seniors interest representants in the western cases participate less active and less effective in the local policy-making than their eastern matches. This seems mainly caused by the enduring local korporatism and partly by the comparatively weak mobilisation of elderly interest representants in both Western cities. The higher degree of political participation of the representants of elderly interests of eastern cities seems at least partly caused by the interest of the political authorities to include consumer interests in the local policy process.

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