

Dr. Carina Marten

Research Assistant

Institute of Sociology

Georg-August-University Goettingen

Platz der Goettinger Sieben 3, 37073 Goettingen, Germany

Phone.: +49 (0) 551 / 39-4142

Mail: Carina.Marten@sowi.uni-goettingen.de

Paper Proposal for the ESPAnet 2010 Conference “Social Policy in Global Crisis: Consequences and Responses” in Budapest, Stream 16: Welfare State Attitudes and Economic Crisis: Consequences for Citizens Demands in Social Protection and Welfare Values?

Old versus Young? Age Related Welfare State Attitudes in Demographic and Economic Crisis.

In ageing societies the increasing old-age dependency ratio puts welfare states under rising financial pressure. Simultaneously, families with fewer children are faced with higher financial and caring responsibilities for their old-aged members. Thus, children and the elderly compete for restricted resources in welfare states (and families). Economic crisis has further aggravated the needs for reforms in financial support and care provision during these vulnerable positions in life cycle. The more or less shared responsibility for these age groups is increasingly questioned in European societies:

How are the demands for state intervention in terms of caring and paying for children and elderly in contrast to ascribed family responsibilities shaped across Europe? How do these welfare state attitudes change over time?

In times of economic crisis and increasing social insecurity, two contrasting developments can be expected: the claim for welfare protection of children and elderly among individuals will rise (increasing demand for de-familialism); whereas, on the institutional level the responsibility for welfare provision is given back into the families (increasing familialism). So far, research on attitudes towards welfare states concentrates on different policy fields, other national contexts, only one age group – either children or elderly - or has used different data sets. There are important findings, however, their international comparability is restricted. Further, apart from Blome/Keck/Alber 2008 authors have neglected the relationship between state *and* family responsibilities in terms of individual welfare in *both* age periods. The paper presented will give a broad overview of the state of the art referring to the research question. Rarely research – with an exception of Blome/Keck/Alber 2008 – has been conducted on the perceived relationship between state and family responsibilities in terms of individual welfare in both age periods. Thus, using different international comparable data sets (e.g. ISSP, EVS, ESS or SHARE), attitudes towards age related social policy measures like elderly care and pension systems on the one hand and childcare and family policies on the other hand will be compared in different national contexts. Within an own quantitative analysis attitudinal differences among age groups and between families versus childless people will be considered.