

Information on the PhD-Workshop

19-20 February 2025, Bremen

Diversity within and between life courses: Potentials and challenges for social policy

Social policy and its institutional consolidation in welfare states are intended to deal with social problems. Research shows that welfare states have a **standardising effect on life courses** through the definition of social problems by rewarding, enabling or sanctioning certain behaviours and by categorizing groups of people (e.g., in the definition of benefit requirements). Social change frequently poses new challenges and questions whether the solutions found with social policies are still appropriate. Over the past decades, visibility and awareness of different forms of **social diversity** have grown in European societies. Expectations of state and employer policies to consider diversity with respect to migration background, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, care responsibilities etc. are increasing, for instance through anti-discrimination measures as well as active support. One criticism towards existing welfare state configurations has long been that they are built around a **standard life course norm** including a gendered division of labour, stable full-time employment and familial care support. Not least, **welfare states reproduce inequalities**, for example in the labour market or in dividing unpaid work, although policies are often considered formally neutral. In some cases, policies openly discriminate by hierarchically sorting population groups into entitlement categories. All welfare states face challenges in deciding how much priority to put on **universal investment policies** that are assumed to help reduce later life course risks (e.g. childcare provision as an investment in children's skills and mothers' economic independence) as opposed to **policies that reduce the impact of specific adverse life events** (e.g. financial and instrumental support after divorce or separation). There are also pressing normative questions, for example regarding how **neutrality of the welfare state** should be pursued and how different interests should be considered.

Possible mismatches between policies and needs in diverse life courses pose challenges to policy making and policy analysis and critique: Which kinds of inequalities are to be addressed by the welfare state? For example, are care infrastructures and pension security linked with individual labour market participation patterns? How do social investment strategies correspond with employment histories, health and participation (in old age)? How do labour market regulations (e.g., retirement at 67) address social risks by gender and how do they account for migration history? Who campaigns for the recognition of diversity in the sphere of social policy? These questions serve as an outlook of what is to be discussed at the PhD workshop. Papers presented may also consider restricted welfare state finances, which together with increasingly diverse life courses may result in more instrumental individualised policies (e.g., providing information, advice, psychological support after parental separation) or in reducing financial support systems, because tailoring the latter may become more difficult given more diverse life situations (e.g., work-care arrangements of post-separation families).

The ESPAnet Germany PhD Workshop 2025 will be hosted by the German Institute for Interdisciplinary Social Policy Research (DIFIS) at *Haus der Wissenschaft* in Bremen on February 19 and 20, 2025.

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Wednesday, February 19, 2025

11:30 a.m. **Registration / Lunch snack**

12:00 p.m. **Welcome**

12:15 p.m. **Session 1**

William Fernandez Tinoco (Humboldt University of Berlin/ Hertie School): *Does Retirement Make People Happy? The Impact of Retirement and Partner Retirement on Life Satisfaction Using Panel Data and Fixed-Effects Individual Slopes* | Discussant: **Prof. Dr. Simone Scherger** (University of Bremen)

Dilare Ecenur Irbik (Free University of Brussels): *Ageing and well-being in later life in Europe: Mapping the topics for needs of older adults through a scoping review* | Discussant: **Prof. Dr. Sonja Blum** (Bielefeld University)

13:35

Coffee break

13:50

Session 2

Daria Frost (University of Mannheim): *Exploring the Pension Gap: How Welfare States Shape Retirement Security for Single Mothers* | Discussant: **Dr. Florian Blank** (WSI, Hans Böckler Foundation)

Clara Overweg (Humboldt University of Berlin/ University of Bamberg): *Decomposing Gender-Nativity Pension Gaps in Germany* | Discussant: **Prof. Dr. Wiebke Schulz** (University of Bremen)

15:10

Coffee break

15:25

Session 3

Sumia Akter (University of Turku): *Effect of Parental Leave Reform on Partnership Stability: Examining the Role of Education* | Discussant: **Prof. Dr. Hannah Zigel** (TU Dortmund University)

Miriam Gohl (University of Mannheim): *A Longitudinal Analysis of Multidimensional Child Poverty in Germany* | Discussant: **Prof. Dr. Olaf Groh-Samberg** (University of Bremen)

16:45

Session 4

Boudewijn Goos (VU Amsterdam): *"In This Society, You Don't Count If You Don't Work": Welfare Recipients' Perspectives on the Value of (Un)paid Work* | Discussant: **Prof. Dr. Frank Nullmeier** (DIFIS / University of Bremen)

Elena Höpfner (Institute for Employment Research): *Self- and Reciprocal Positioning of Front-Office Employees and Mothers of Young Children in German Job Centres* | Discussant: **Prof. Dr. Michaela Schulze** (University of Applied Labour Studies)

18:15

Dinner (optional, self-paying)

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Thursday, February 20, 2025

08:45 a.m. Registration / Coffee

09:00 a.m. Keynote: Katharina Spieß (Federal Institute for Population Research)

10:00 a.m. Session 5

Hanna Wierenga (University of Tübingen / Uppsala University): *Gender identity and depressive symptoms – a cross country comparison in Europe* | Discussant: **Prof. Dr. Gundula Zoch** (Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg)

Lina Tobler (University of Cologne): *The introduction of a minimum wage for vocational trainings: A policy evaluation with regard to training offers and take-ups* | Discussant: **Prof. Dr. Pia Schober** (University of Tübingen)

11:20 a.m. Coffee break

11:35 a.m. Session 6

Gonzalo Arevalo Iglesias (University of Bremen): *Family Old-Age Caregiving and Preferences for Family or Public Provision in France* | Discussant: **Prof. Dr. Katja Möhring** (University of Bamberg)

Daoyuan Ji (Constructor University Bremen): *A Study on the Impact of Floating Population on Access to Healthcare Resources in China under Healthcare Reform* | Discussant: **Dr. Johanna Fischer** (University of Bremen)

12:55 p.m. Wrap-up and Farewell

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Event organiser

This **ESPAnet Germany** workshop is a joint endeavour of the working group on welfare state research of the German Political Science Association (**DVPW**), the Social Policy Section of the German Sociological Association (**DGS**) and the European Social Policy Association (**ESPAnet**). It is organized by Florian Blank (WSI), Michaela Schulze (Schwerin), Katja Möhring (Bamberg), Hannah Zagel (WZB), Pia Schober (Tübingen) and Miriam Laschinski (DIFIS/Bremen) in collaboration with the German Institute for Interdisciplinary Social Policy Research (**DIFIS**).

Venue Address

Haus der Wissenschaft
Sandstraße 4/5
28195 Bremen

Bus/train stop: Schüsselkorb

Parking spaces:

Car: BREPARKhaus Am Dom

Bicycle: Fahrradparkhaus Am Dom

Contact / Event organisation

Miriam Laschinski
Mary-Somerville-Straße 7
28359 Bremen

+49 421 218-58568
miriam.laschinski@difis.org
Raum 7.4520

Further information

We have reserved a block of **hotel rooms for self-paying guests** at the following hotels, under the conditions listed below.

Vienna House Easy by Wyndham (Breitenweg 28, 28195 Bremen)

Single room: €84.00 including breakfast (plus Bremen City Tax)

Contact: info.easy-bremen@hrg-hotels.com

Booking code: Diversity within and between life courses: Potentials and challenges for social policy

Available until 22 January 2025

Aparthotel Adagio Bremen (Bahnhofplatz 41, 28195 Bremen)

Single or double room: €97.00 including breakfast (plus Bremen City Tax).

Contact: HA054@adagio-city.com

Booking code: DIFIS_ESPAnet_PhDWorkshop_022025

Available until 22 January 2025

Please contact us if you want us to cover your **travel expenses**.

Photo, film and audio recordings

Photographs, films and sound recordings may be made during the event, which may be used for public relations purposes and to document the event. For this purpose, the recordings may be published both on the Internet and in social media. In the event of a recording, we will actively point this out. By participating in the event, participants declare their consent to this.