

Paper presented at the WELLCHI Network Conference 2

**Well-being of children and labour markets in Europe
Different kinds of risks resulting from various structures and changes in the labour
markets**

*Centre for Globalisation and Governance, University of Hamburg
March 31 – April 1, 2006*

**‘Active citizenship’ the new paradigm of welfare state policies. What does it
mean for children?**

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Slide 1

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Hamburg**

**‘Active citizenship’ the
new paradigm of
welfare state policies.
What does it mean for
children?**

**International Conference on
‘Wellbeing of Children’
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Slide 2

central questions

- How did the cultural model of the citizen change to which welfare state policies refer?
- What are the consequences from a childhood perspective

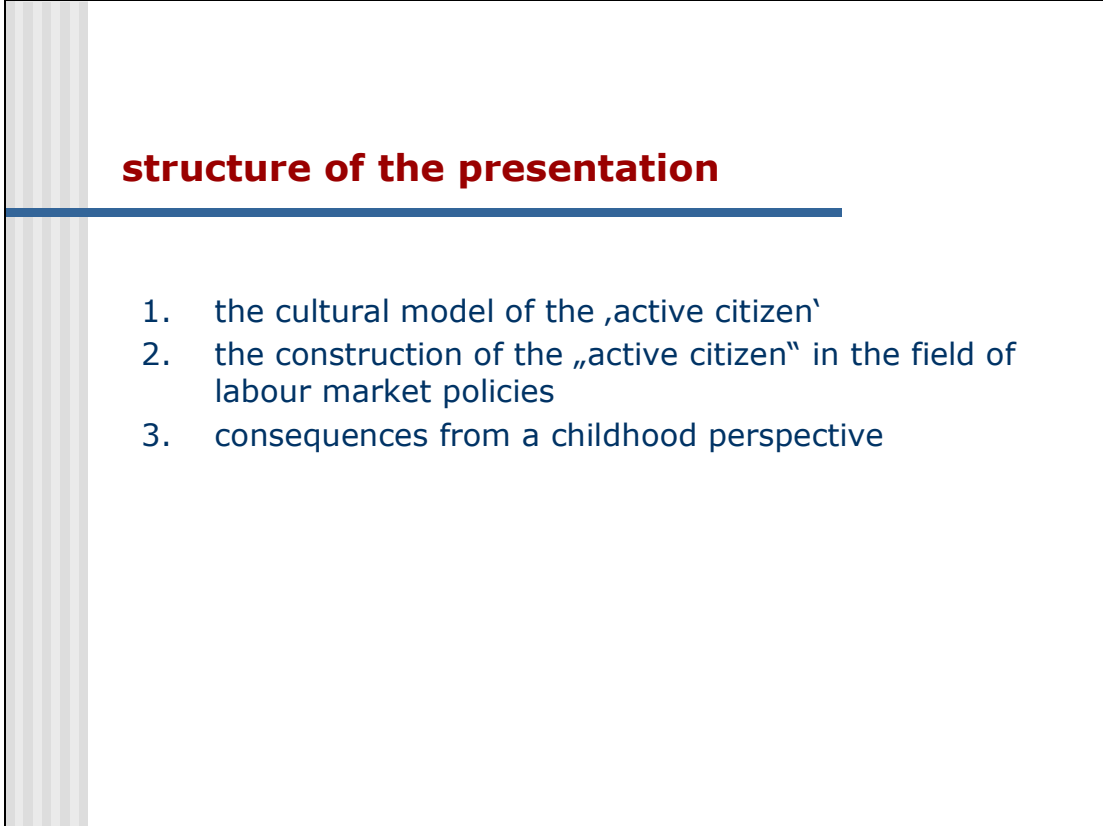
Slide 3

culture, welfare culture - definition

Culture: system of collective constructions of meaning by which human beings define reality. It includes stocks of knowledge, values and models – in brief: ideas (Neidhard 1992; Lepsius 1990; Archer 1995)

Welfare culture: the basic ideas in a society which are related to the welfare state and the ways it is embedded in society

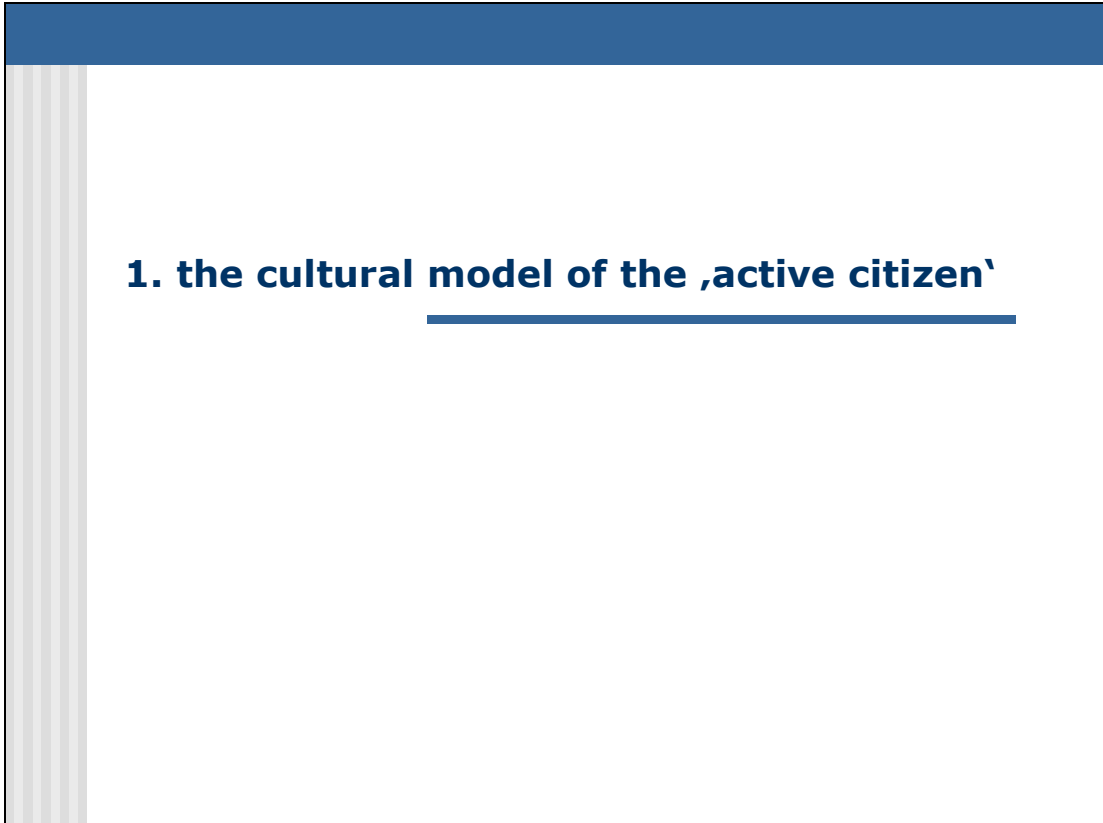
Slide 4

Slide 4 content: A slide with a white background and a black border. On the left side, there is a vertical decorative bar with a light gray background and several thin, vertical gray stripes. At the top, the text "structure of the presentation" is written in a bold, dark red font. Below this text is a horizontal blue line. Underneath the line, there is a numbered list of three items in a dark blue font.

structure of the presentation

1. the cultural model of the ‚active citizen‘
2. the construction of the „active citizen“ in the field of labour market policies
3. consequences from a childhood perspective

Slide 5

Slide 5 content: A slide with a white background and a black border. At the top, there is a solid blue horizontal bar. On the left side, there is a vertical decorative bar with a light gray background and several thin, vertical gray stripes. In the center, the text "1. the cultural model of the ‚active citizen‘" is written in a bold, dark blue font. Below this text is a horizontal blue line.

1. the cultural model of the ‚active citizen‘

,citizenship`

the ways the structural relationship of the individual member of society to the welfare state which is established by welfare state policies

(T.H. Marshall 1964; see also Andersen 2005; Andersen and Jensen 2002; Lister 2000)

basic assumptions

- The cultural values which form the basis of the relationship of the individual to the welfare state in relation to rights, duties and participation have changed in part.
- A cultural model of the citizen is on the way to develop which is called here the model of the ,active citizen`.
- The elements of the model are not in general new, but what is new is the focus of welfare state policies is more directed towards central elements of the ,active citizen`, particularly also in conservative and social democratic welfare states according to the ,regime`-approach of Esping-Andersen (1990, 1999).
- The development towards active citizenship is not unilinear, not irreversible, and in part contradictory.
- The ways the model of active citizenship is constructed varies in a cross-national perspective between welfare states.

the concept of the ‚active citizen‘ can be relevant at different levels ...

- the cultural values and models which are used as basis for discourse by main groups of political actors
- the cultural values and models in which the various policies are embedded and with which they are justified and legitimised
- as a model that is more implicitly constituted by the principles/logics of welfare state policies

The model of the ‚citizen‘ of fordist, industrial society

- The different states of the life course were structured by welfare state institutions.
- Social rights and decommodification were in the centre.
- Employment was the main basis of social rights for men.
- The housewife marriage was basis for deviated social rights for women.
- Voting and industrial relations were main arenas for participation.
- Childhood was embedded in the male breadwinner/female homcare family model in many countries.

the model of the ,active citizen` in post fordist service society

- The aspect of the self-reliance of the citizen is stressed.
- The duties of the citizen towards the welfare state are more than before stressed.
- It is expected that the citizen is him/herself responsible for the structuring of his/her life course (,director of one`s own patchwork biography` according to Beck 1992).
- Employment is more than before the basis of citizenship and includes women.
- The citizen is expected to be autonomous and flexible and not restricted by family responsibilities (see also Sennett 1999).
- The citizen is expected to act as consumer on ,welfare markets`.
- The ,active citizen is expected to organise for his/her own interests in civil society.

cultural basis of the model of the ,active citizen`

- neoliberal ideas about the strengthening of the role of the market and efficiency
- construction of the individual as ,rational actor` in neoclassical economics
- communitarian ideas which emphasize the self-organisation of the citizens in civil society and stress the duties via the community
- particular traditions of welfare values in the different national welfare states

2. the construction of the ‚active citizen‘ in the field of labour market policies

active citizens as ‚worker‘ citizens

- The labour force participation of all adults was promoted and reinforced – ‚activation policies‘ were important in this context.
- Social rights were more closely connected with employment and duties to participate in waged work.
- Other basis for claims to the social security system like marriage were weakened (for ex. in the German pension system).

contradictions in relation to family and care

- The construction of the active citizen as autonomous, comprehensively dedicated to working life and mobile contradicts in part to the time demand from family life and family responsibility
- Personal and financial autonomy is a main part of active citizenship; however, in part the principle of financial dependency of the care provider within the family was even strengthened in the framework of activation policies.

3. consequences in a childhood perspective

- childcare as a problem
- child poverty

childcare as a problem

- Children are more included into public childcare, particularly from 3-6 years.
- However, only in some countries was the trend towards the active citizen accompanied by the introduction of a comprehensive public childcare system.
- Substantial parts of childcare remained within the family, which has among others also cultural reasons. However, children can less than before rely on stable and reliable childcare arrangements within the family.
- As far as childcare is still family based (children under 3, after kindergarden/school care), children experience more heterogenous and flexible childcare situations with diverse persons of caregivers (parents, relatives, neighbours, babysitters, undeclared domestic servants ...).

increase in child poverty

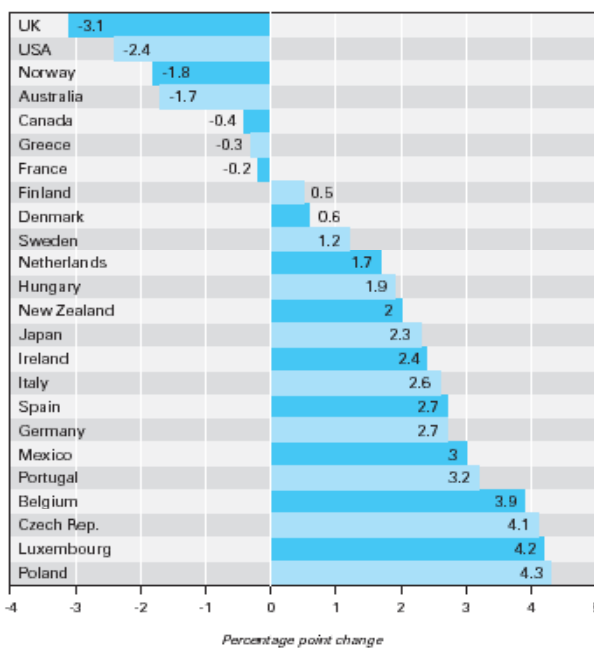


Figure 2 Changes in child poverty rates during the 1990s

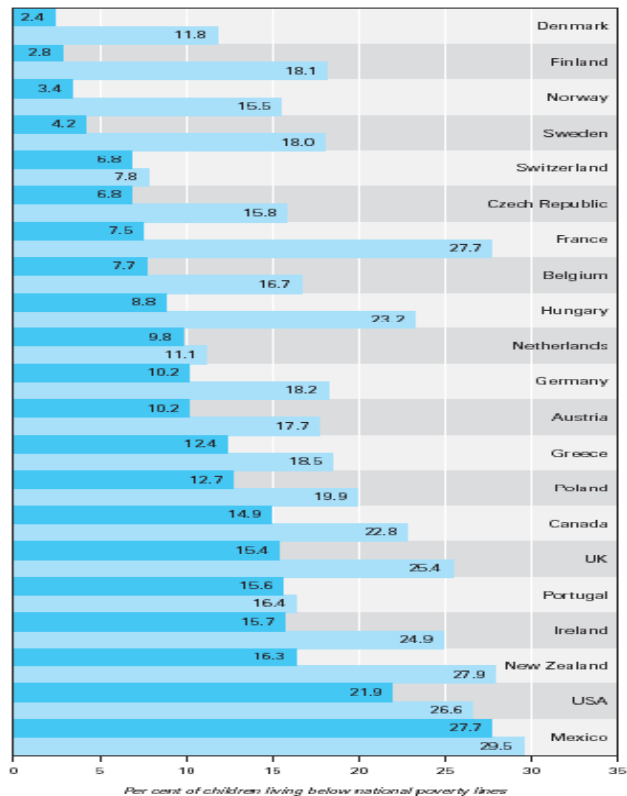
The bars show the rise or fall in child poverty rates in each country during the 1990s. (Details of the calculations and the years to which data refer are given on page 32.)

Source: UNICEF 2005

main reason for child poverty (UNICEF 2005)

- Higher government spending on family and social benefits is clearly associated with lower child poverty rates
- On average, government interventions reduce by 40 per cent the rates of child poverty that would theoretically result from market forces being left to themselves.
- Governments in the countries with the world's lowest levels of child poverty reduce 'market poverty' by 80 per cent or more. Governments in the countries with the world's highest poverty rates reduce 'market poverty' by only 10 per cent to 15 per cent.

Figure 9 The impact of taxes and transfers
The light blue bars show child poverty rates based on household incomes before government taxes and transfers while the dark blue bars show the rates after taxes and transfers (as in Figure 1). The poverty line in both cases is 50 per cent of median post-tax and transfer income.



Source: UNICEF 2005

welfare state policies that contributed to the increase in child poverty (OECD study of 2005)

- general decrease in unemployment benefits
- weakening of the possibility for parents to act as breadwinner

'Four out of 13 OECD countries for which 1990s data are available saw a decline in earnings for the lowest-paid 25 per cent of fathers. Seven countries saw a decline in earnings for the lowest-paid 10 per cent.
- weakening of the possibility for single mothers to act as breadwinners because of policies which strengthened the dependence of unemployed mothers on the male breadwinner income instead of unemployment benefits (mainly also in Germany)
- tightening of the duty of single mothers to take up employment, even if the possibility to find a job and public childcare were in part not increased

4. Welfare state policies that can contribute to avoid problematic consequences of 'active citizenship' for children

construction of the ,active citizen' as worker with family responsibility

- Relative high income substitute (= high degree of decommodification) for the unemployed (possibility of breadwinner role of unemployed)
- social rights for children to get care for all age groups
- social rights for parents to care, based on financial autonomy for caring parents – and accordingly ,real' option for choice between fulltime employment and temporary family childcare by parents.
- right for parents to working time reduction in order to care/to spend more time with the family

end

Strengthening of references of the traditional protestant rhetoric

„the one who does not want to work and to seek what is Ours is not my ,next‘. The one should not be supported who is not willing to take over the burden of work.

(Martin Luther)