

WORKSHOP 15

15. Voice and choice in health politics

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Over the last decades, citizens-patients in many Western countries have acquired (at least formally) more choice in health services and insurance due to more competition, privatization, or EU legislation. They have also been offered more opportunities to express their desires, grievances and concerns on health matters through patient empowerment policies. The workshop voice and choice in health politics explores how changing choice and voice options in Western healthcare systems interacts as well as impacts on the emancipation, political loyalties and preferences of citizens-patients, on their power relationship with other health actors such as doctors, and on the legitimacy of welfare states. Healthcare is the pre-eminent policy-area to explore the combined impact of market-oriented reforms and participatory policy-making, considering the number of possible combinations of choice and voice in one of the largest social-economic sectors, and the political sensitivity in a diversity of systems. The empirical focus of the workshop is on the interaction and impact of voice and choice, and on the justification of 'voice and choice reforms' in Western health politics. Theoretically, the workshop seeks to advance a comparative and comprehensive framework to explain how the various reforms and developments in Western health care systems are interlinked and impact on power relationships in and legitimacy of healthcare systems. The workshop therefore welcomes empirical, historical, and theoretical papers from scholars specialized in health issues, as well as in more general issues in political science such as citizenship, democratization, legitimacy, and market-state relations.