

Generational Politics

The Political-Sociological and Policy Consequences of Population Ageing

ECPR Joint Sessions, Lisbon 2009

Organizers:

Achim Goerres, PhD (LSE)

Faculty of Management, Economics and Social Sciences, University of Cologne, Germany
(Agoerres@uni-koeln.de)

NEW full contact details:

University of Cologne | Lehrstuhl für empirische Sozial- und Wirtschaftsforschung
Herbert-Lewin-Str.2 | 50931 Köln | Germany
Phone: +49 (0) 221 4702763 | Fax: +49 (0) 221 4702069
Internet: www.achimgoerres.de

&

Pieter Vanhuysse, PhD (LSE)

School of Political Sciences and Faculty of Education, University of Haifa, Israel
(pietervanhuysse@gmail.com)

Full contact details:

University of Haifa
School of Political Sciences and Faculty of Education
Mount Carmel 31905, Haifa, Israel
Phone: +972 547682974; Fax +972 48240911
Internet: <http://www.edu.haifa.ac.il/personal/pvanhuysse/index.htm>

‘There’s an iceberg dead ahead. It’s called global aging, and it threatens to bankrupt the great powers. As the populations of the world’s leading economies age and shrink, we will face unprecedented political, economic, and moral challenges. But we are woefully unprepared. Now is the time to ring the alarm bell.’

Peter Peterson (1999) *Gray Dawn:*

How the Coming Age Wave will Transform America - and the World

Motivation. Most of the advanced capitalist democracies are currently experiencing accelerated population ageing. This phenomenon fundamentally changes not just their demographic composition: it also can be expected to have far-reaching social and political and public policy consequences. Population aging poses new challenges and opportunities for policy-makers and it may alter the basic templates of distributional politics in these societies. To what extent are generational politics, political conflicts and policies with generational implications, different in rapidly ageing societies? So far, comparative political scientists and political sociologists have only partially analysed separate aspects of these large-scale changes, without trying to establish a broad research agenda. This Section on Generational Politics of the ECPR Joint Sessions aims to establish such an agenda. We aim to define and advance a number of dimensions for research and to propose the dominant theoretical hypotheses to guide this agenda.

Approaches. We are open to ideas and approaches from political sociology, political economy, comparative politics, positive and normative political theory, and public policy analysis. Papers are invited on all major conceptual and empirical aspects of the political and/or public policy implications of ageing societies. While we welcome both quantitative and qualitative approaches, we strongly encourage, and we intend to give priority to, papers that go beyond descriptive analysis of policy challenges and reforms in any given domain and that adopt an internationally comparative viewpoint. Similarly, we encourage submissions that pay explicit attention to carefully spelling out the causal mechanisms suggested to be at work in the politics-policy nexus, as well as the mediating effects of social and political institutions. We are interested especially in the following four main **themes**:

1. Policy constraints, institutions, and advanced welfare states: What are feasible policy reforms in ageing welfare states? How does aging affect the size of welfare state programs and of individual welfare state benefits? Of primary importance here are programs such as pensions, elderly care, and health care. In addition, how does ageing affect programs destined

for younger age groups, such as education spending from early childhood to higher education, as well as family and labour market spending? Do the pressures on government budgets emanating from population ageing clash with the increasing human capital demands of fast-changing knowledge economies? If so, are greying societies doomed to economic failure in future? How do institutions such as welfare regime type, type of democratic competition, constitutional/institutional structure of veto points, variety of capitalism, and other factors mediate between population aging and policy outcomes? What are the likely political causes and consequences and the economic costs and benefits of early retirement? See, for instance, Ebbinghaus (2006), Esping-Andersen (2008), Immergut et al. (2007), Lynch (2006), Pampel and Williamson (1989), Myles and Pierson (2001), Vanhuyse (2001; 2004; 2006, forthcoming [2008]).

2. Comparative analysis of the political consequences of ageing in “young” and “old” societies:

To what extent are the consequences of population ageing in relatively young societies different from those present in relatively old societies? How does ageing affect the template of distributional conflict, not just between generations, but also across lines of class, gender, and ethnicity? What are regional variations in the political impact of ageing? How to measure the "old age bias" of social policies and other public policies? How best to account for its incidence, historical development pathways, and cross-country variation? See, for instance, Anderson and Lynch (2007); Busemeyer, Goerres and Weschle (2008), Esping-Andersen and Sarasa (2002), Gallasso and Profeta (2007), Goerres (2007a, 2007b, 2008, forthcoming [2009]), Lynch (2006), Razin and Sadka (2007), Tepe and Vanhuyse (2008).

3. Aging and intergenerational relationships:

What set of policies are desirable and feasible to generate intergenerational justice? How does ageing affect power resources and intergenerational dynamics inside families, and thereby intra-family cash and kind transfers, inheritances, work-family balance decisions, and intra-household bargaining? What impact do policies have on fertility and family formation and vice versa? See, for instance, Brodmann et al. (2007), Castles (2003), Hoem (1993), Kohli (1999; 2004), Neyer (2003), Sabbagh and Vanhuyse (2008).

4. Empirical democratic theory: emergence and adaptation strategies of political actors:

How does population aging affect the logic of political conflict and the behaviour and strategies of political actors on the supply side (parties, governments) and on the demand side (voters, unions, movements, pressure groups)? Do demographic pressures lead to

retrenchment pressures in programs such as pensions? If so, how do politicians and parties frame, implement, and survive these pressures? Is the logic of blame avoidance different when governments need to cut benefits going to ever-growing electoral populations? On the demand side, what impact do old age interest groups have? How do trade unions deal with the challenges and opportunities of ageing societies? How do different age groups differ in their participation in and influence on politics? How does the social and political life of democracies change as a result of ageing? See, for instance, Anderson and Lynch (2007), Campbell (2005), Goerres (2007a, 2007b, 2008, forthcoming [2009]), Hecló (1988), Hinrichs (2002), Immergut et al. (2007), Myles and Pierson (2001), Tepe and Vanhuyse (2008), Vanhuyse (2006).

Proposals containing the title, name(s) of author(s), institutional affiliation(s) and a specifically worded abstract of a maximum of 350 words should be submitted by e-mail to both organisers. In addition, submitters should provide a few keywords on their research interests in the area of politics and public policies in ageing societies.

Organizers: Biographical information

Pieter Vanhuysse, PhD (*LSE*) is Lecturer at the University of Haifa. His work centres on the comparative politics of social policies, pensions, generational conflict, education, and human capital, and has appeared, inter al., in *Journal of Social Policy*, *Political Studies*, *Politics*, *Journal of European Public Policy*, *Europe-Asia Studies*, *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, *International Journal of Social Welfare*, and *Public Administration Review*. His CEU Press book on pensions and generational politics in East-Central Europe, *Divide and Pacify: Strategic Social Policies and Political Protests in Post-Communist Democracies*, was nominated for the American Sociological Association's Award for Distinguished Contribution to Scholarship, Section on Political Sociology, for 2006.

Achim Goerres, PhD (*LSE*) is Assistant Professor at the University of Cologne. His work focuses on politics and public policies in ageing societies, comparative political behaviour and public opinion research. His articles appeared, inter al., in the *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, *Electoral Studies* and the *Max Planck Discussion and Working Paper Series*. His PhD thesis *The Political Participation of Older People in Europe* was nominated for the Ernst B. Haas Award of the American Political Science Association in 2007 and will be published as a monograph by Palgrave Macmillan in 2009.

References

- Anderson K.M. and Lynch, J. (2007) 'Reconsidering seniority bias: Aging, internal institutions, and union support for pension reform,' *Comparative Politics*, 39(2): 189-208.
- Busemeyer, M. R., Goerres, A. and Weschle, S. (2008) 'Demands for Redistributive Policies in an Era of Demographic Aging: The Rival Pressures from Age and Class in 15 OECD Countries' *Max Planck Institute For the Study of Societies (MPIFG) Discussion Paper* 08(3).
- Brodmann, S., Esping-Andersen, G., Guell, M. (2007), 'When fertility is bargained: Second births in Denmark and Spain,' *European Sociological Review*, 23: 599-613.
- Castles, F. (2003), 'The World Upside Down: Below Replacement Fertility, Changing Preferences and Family-Friendly Public Policy in 21 OECD countries,' *Journal of European Social Policy*, 13(3): 209-27.
- Campbell, A.L. (2003) *How Policies Make Citizens*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Ebbinghaus, B. (2006) *Reforming Early Retirement in Europe, Japan and the USA*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Esping-Andersen, G. and Sarasa, S. (2002) 'The generational conflict reconsidered,' *Journal of European Social Policy*, 12(1):5-21.
- Esping-Andersen, G. (2008), 'Childhood investments and skill formation,' *International Tax and Public Finance*, 15(1): 19-44.
- Galasso, V. and Profeta, P. (2007) 'How does ageing affect the welfare state?', *European Journal of Political Economy* 23:554-563.
- Goerres, A. (2007a) 'Why Are Older People More Likely to Vote?' *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 9:90-121.
- Goerres, A. (2007b) 'Can We Reform the Welfare State in Times of "Grey" Majorities? The Myth of an Electoral Opposition Between Younger and Older Voters in Germany' *Max Planck Institute For the Study of Societies (MPIFG) Working Paper* 07(05).
- Goerres, A. (2008) 'The Grey Vote. Determinants of Older Voters' Party Choice in Britain and West Germany' *Electoral Studies* 27 (2):285-304.
- Goerres, A. (forthcoming [2009]). *The Political Participation of Older People in Ageing Europe*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Heclo, H. (1988) 'Generational Politics.' In J.L. Palmer, T. Smeeding and B. Boyle Torrey (eds) *The Vulnerable*. Washington DC: Urban Institute Press, pp. 381-411.
- Hinrichs, K. (2002) 'Do the old exploit the young? Is enfranchising children a good idea?' *Archives Europeennes de Sociologie*, 43(1):35-58.
- Hoem, J.M. (1993) Public Policy as the Fuel of Fertility: Effects of a Policy Reform on the Pace of Childbearing in Sweden in the 1980s, *Acta Sociologica*, 36(1):19-31.
- Huber, E. and Stephens, J (2001) *Development and Crisis of the Welfare State*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Immergut, E.M. Anderson, K.M., and Schulze, I. (eds) (2007) *The Handbook of West European Pension Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kohli, M. (1999), 'Private and Public Transfers between Generations: Linking the Family and the State. *European Societies* 1:81-104.
- Kohli, M (2004), Generational Changes and Generational Equity. In *The Cambridge Handbook of Age and Ageing*, edited by M. Johnson, V. L. Bengtson, P. Coleman and T. Kirkwood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press:
- Lynch, J. (2006) *Age and the Welfare State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Myles, J. and Pierson, P. (2001) 'The comparative political economy of pension reform' in P. Pierson (ed), *The New Politics of the Welfare State*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 305-333.

- Neyer, G. (2003) Family Policies and Low Fertility in Western Europe, MPIDR Discussion Paper 2003-021.
- Pampel, F. and Williamson, J.B. (1989) *Age, Class, Politics and the Welfare State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Razin, A. and Sadka, E. (2007) 'Aging population: The complex effect of fiscal leakages on the politico-economic equilibrium', *European Journal of Political Economy* 23:564-575.
- Sabbagh, C. & Vanhuyse, P. (2008), 'Intergenerational Justice Perceptions and the Role of Welfare Regimes: A Comparative Analysis of University Students,' Haifa University: working paper (downloadable at: www.SSRN.com).
- Tepe, M. & Vanhuyse, P. (2008), 'Are Mature Welfare States on the Path to the Politics of Gerontocracy? Evidence from 18 OECD Democracies, 1980-2002,' Free University of Berlin and Haifa University: working paper (downloadable at: www.SSRN.com).
- Vanhuyse, P. (2001) 'The political economy of pensions: Western theories, Eastern facts,' *Journal of European Public Policy* 8(5):853-861.
- Vanhuyse, P. (2004), 'The Pensioner Booms in Post-Communist Hungary and Poland: Political Sociology Perspectives,' *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 24(1-2): 86-102.
- Vanhuyse, P. (2006) *Divide and Pacify: Strategic Social Policies and Political Protests in Post-Communist Democracies*. Budapest-New York: Central European University Press.
- Vanhuyse, P. (forthcoming [2008]), 'Review Article: The New Political Economy of Skill Formation,' *Public Administration Review*, 68, September.