WORK PACKAGE 4

FRAMING LOCAL WELFARE: ANALYSIS OF THE WELFARE DISCOURSE IN MÜNSTER, GERMANY

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CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

1.1.   The Local Welfare System[1]

Münster as a relatively wealthy city (compared to other cities in North Rhine-Westphalia) has been characterized by a rather young and well-educated population, low unemployment rates and is considered a role model for the reconciliation of work and family life. Its economy is dominated by a strong tertiary sector with a large spectrum of both public and church administrations, university and other higher education, science, health care, communication, insurances and financial institutions. Therefore, Münster has not been hit as hard by economic crises as other cities.

For the three policy fields analysed in the WILCO project, different trends can be observed even though the target groups of measures from the three policy fields overlap to a large extent: young people with lower educational attainment, the long-term unemployed, single parents, migrants and the poor.

Regarding labour market policies, youth unemployment especially among less well-educated citizens is regarded as problematic. They have difficulties finding employment due to the large and flexible share of university students who are willing to work in precarious part-time employment. Since labour market policy has traditionally not been a local but national responsibility, there is no coherent philosophy of local labour market policy and the ESF is one of the main funders of local labour market projects.

In contrast to this, municipalities have for a long time been a driving force in the field of child-care. Making the reconciliation of work and family life possible for well-educated women has been the main objective in Münster. This aim is in line with the national legal requirement to increase the number of places in child-care for the under three year-olds. In this process, the welfare associations and other stakeholders such as parents' initiatives are strongly involved. The main cleavage in this field regards promoters of affordability and accessibility on the one and promoters of high-quality care on the other hand, while there is agreement on the overall need of a high amount of institutional child-care.

Münster is one of the few cities in Germany with a growing population. Together with relatively high incomes and a strong service sector, this leads to Münster being a profitable area for investments in the field of housing. In turn, this brings about high rents and a lack of affordable housing especially in areas close to the city centre. This brought forth a rather strong segregation between the well-to-do citizens in and around the centre and the poor and the unemployed in a few highly desolated suburban districts. The problems accumulating in these districts are addressed by different measures from the municipality and third-sector organizations. Among these are attempts to create a social mix through change of ownership and allocation of tenants, urban regeneration programmes and social institutions such as neighbourhood centres. Even though, housing has long been seen as a field where the municipality has little influence and it remains to be seen which role Münster will take up in it in the future.

1.2.   Discourse Coalitions in Münster

Welfare policy (just as any other policy field) is affected by certain norms, values and fundamental beliefs of the political actors about "reality". They are defined as "frames", which influence the actors' perceptions of political problems and their expectations regarding the effectiveness of possible solutions (Majone 1989; Rein/Schön 1991). Those

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[1] The data for this section has been taken from WILCO work package 3. For further information see WILCO Publication no. 24.

frames surface in the local welfare discourse and structure the political and public discussions. The discourse is to be understood as a system of rules, which are created and updated by a series of statements ("énoncés") and which define the sort of statements that can be uttered (Foucault 1997; Busse 2006). To understand the characteristics of the local welfare discourse is, therefore, crucial for the understanding of the policies and innovations in the social sector. It is this report's aim to provide an analysis of this discourse in Münster as well as an analysis of the role it plays in the formulation of local welfare policies.

The foundation of the political discourse in Münster is built by a very broad dominant cooperative advocacy coalition system. According to Paul A. Sabatier, such a coalition is defined as:

> *people from a variety of positions (elected and agency officials, interest group leaders, researchers, etc.) who share a particular belief system – that is a basic set of values causal assumptions and problem perceptions – and who show a non-trivial degree of coordination activity over time*. (Sabatier 1993: 25)

In Münster, the dominant coalition consists of local politicians of various political hues[2], leading administration officials as well as well-established members of civil society - including members of the local and regional media. These actors share a wide range of beliefs and core values. The coalition is, therefore, equipped with high intra-coalitional belief compatibility as well as a high degree of intra-coalitional coordination. This is achieved through trusted, inclusive consensus-oriented small cycles of negotiation in which decisions are usually developed and prepared. Decision implementation happens nearly exclusively within obliging legislative and administrative local institutions.

The predominant paradigm, in essence the "*deep core*" of the local coalition system, is a frame of municipal management that focuses all its resources on the target of improving the city's capacity for enhancing local (economic) growth and growth sustainment. Moreover, growth is perceived as the main factor of well-being and development. The main conditions for growth are seen as follows:

> (1) A high level of *competitiveness* in the competition over companies and citizens with other cities, achievable through improvement of hard and soft site factors.
> (2) A high level of *attractiveness* attained by means of city branding/marketing with a focus on the high quality of life and the special life style, as well as a "*festivilisation*" of city policies – the concentration on highly marketable, prestige projects and actions (Häußermann/Siebel 1993).
> (3) An approach to city management that creates a market-friendly environment - making the city a viable target for private *investment* and enabling its effects to benefit the whole community.

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[2] Politically, Münster has for a long time been dominated by the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) which has mostly held the majority in Münster alone or together with the Free Democratic Party (FDP). Only from 1994 to 1999 has the Social Democratic Party (SPD) formed the local government together with the Green Party (Die Grünen/GAL) and since 2009 in a de facto minority government. However, the cleavages between the main parties are comparatively small and rather focused on specific issues instead of ideological differences.

In the paradigm's logic all other considerations are of a secondary nature seeing as successful growth enhancement as well as a good economic performance are paramount to the realisation of other goals. This includes the consolidation of social problems which is addressed by a consistent competitiveness and investment approach.

In fact, this frame appears to be so widely accepted that it nearly excludes the debate of alternative approaches in the public sphere. As a consequence, actors who want to raise a social topic on the agenda which does not naturally fit the investment and competitiveness approach need to at least postulate their arguments in a way that fits the dominant framework. Otherwise their (single) dissenting voices would not be heard within the local context.

Regarding local welfare policies, the discourse structure gives rise to policies and measures that roughly fit a *prevention* frame. This means methods which are – usually - not taken out of the classic welfare or social policy toolbox but aim at ascertaining that all groups and individuals can benefit from the dominant approach – that anyone can participate as successfully as possible in the market. This carries the competitiveness frame from the city level forward to the individual level of each citizen.

The origins of the central frame laid out above follow the paradigms described in Harvey Molotch's "city as a growth machine" from 1976 (Molotch 1976). Influenced by the strategies and approaches used in larger urban spaces, the leading heads of the administration, politicians of both leading parties in the early 1980s (Christian Democratic Union and Social Democratic Party) and the very active local entrepreneurship joined forces to develop and establish the paradigm consensually from the early 1990's onward. In a later step, the important local university would be included most significantly in the person of the marketing expert Heribert Meffert who was the main consultant for the institutionalisation of an integrated city marketing office in the municipal administration in 2001. In recent years, the coalition concentrated on broadening its source of legitimacy by increasingly including citizens through engagement policies and in a few cases also through political participation.

The central approach outlined here is widely considered as a success story and as a result has increasingly gained acceptance over the years. Furthermore, this broad approval led to a significant stability of the frame in Münster since the early 1990s and continues to be carried out by the several political subsystems of the broader coalition system with only "cosmetic" modifications in rhetoric and action. An increasing number of policies as well as areas of life has been inducted into the frame's logic. Nevertheless, potential and apparent negative side effects are considered inevitable by the actors and are believed to disappear over time, especially if successful prevention policies can be implemented. Within these compounds, the collaborative actors' coalition is promoting a "winning" story and can be expected to further pursue this avenue of action.

2. WELFARE DISCOURSE IN THE THREE POLICY AREAS

2.1. Labour Market Policy

The investment and competitiveness frame in labour market policy in Münster is linked to the city's general economic and employment situation: compared to other cities in North-Rhine-Westphalia and in Germany as a whole, the group of people concerned by unemployment is smaller than average. Moreover, the city has a relatively small number of migrants. Most people living in Münster are financially well situated and highly educated. In order to maintain this standard, Münster wants to attract young and well-educated people and get them to stay in the city after finishing their studies or education.

Therefore, the frame of 'labour market policy as an investment into the future of the city' can be seen as a coherent consequence and is dominantly led by the local economy. As the parliamentary leader of the Social Democratic Party states: "Economic and labour market policy do not take place in Münster's town hall. That reflects the mentality of local politics to hand over labour market policy to the private sector; the economy that is responsible for creating jobs."[3]

This line of argument demonstrates that labour market policy is mostly seen as part of economic development and in particular the promotion of trade and industry. There is a broad consensus on the need to promote Münster both as part of a region (Münsterland) and as a city in order to attract a broader spectrum of investments. This follows the belief that investments and relocation of companies to the region will lead to the creation of new jobs and thereby help in overcoming unemployment.

Due to this, Münster is relying on "lighthouse projects" (such as the *Optionskommune*[4]) that aid in alleviating the obsolete image of 'Münster as an administrational town'[5]. In order to achieve this, the instrument of benchmarking was increasingly applied in the field of labour market policy: "Be brave, but face the benchmarking. At the end of the day the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs will publish how successful the city of Münster has been with regard to the set parameters. You are going to be measured by this."[6]

Resulting from the frame of competitiveness in the local discourse, several measures in the field of labour market policy follow the prevention approach. As a member of the Christian Democratic Union explains, "The issue of prevention has to take absolute priority in every area of labour market policy".[7]

Particularly, the issue of youth unemployment can be identified as a matter with a specific focus on prevention seeing as young people have poor access to the local job market in Münster. Youth unemployment can be identified as one topic that is broadly and continuously discussed in politics (municipal council; the committee of social policy, health and employment promotion) and administration (City of Münster: Office for School

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[3] „Weil Wirtschaftspolitik und Arbeitsmarktpolitik im Rathaus eher nicht stattfindet. Und das spiegelt auch so ein bisschen die Mentalität der Kommunalpolitik wider, diese Dinge sehr stark an den privaten Bereich abzugeben. An die Wirtschaft, die zuständig ist für Arbeitsplätze." (Interview with the parliamentary leader of the SPD).

[4] Within the model of the *Optionskommune*, the responsibility for the provision of basic social benefits for job seekers not covered by the unemployment insurance – for example the long-term and very young unemployed –are transferred from the federal to the local level. In the basic model, the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit*) is the leading institution in coordinating the supply of these social benefits in cooperation with the local administrations. Both institutions were legally obliged to establish joint institutions, called *Jobcenters* (Until 2010: "ARGE", an acronym roughly translated as syndicate between two institutions). When opting for the *Optionskommune* model in contrary, the municipality takes over the sole responsibility for both providing basic social benefits and organizing labour market re-integration measures for these job seekers. Therefore, in the model of the *Optionskommune*, a joint institution like ARGE is obsolete, and the *Jobcenter* is transferred to a municipal agency.

[5] „Münster ist eine Behördenstadt" (Interview with a member of the SPD).

[6] „Gehen Sie mutig dran, aber Sie müssen sich dem Benchmark stellen. Das heißt, am Ende der Tage wird auf der Seite des BMAS veröffentlicht […], wie erfolgreich die Stadt Münster war im Rahmen der gesetzten Parameter. Daran wirst du dich messen lassen müssen." (Interview with a Member of the German Parliament for the CDU).

[7] Die Frage der Prävention muss in allen Bereichen der Arbeitsmarktpolitik absoluten Vorrang erhalten." (Interview with a Member of the German Parliament for the CDU).

and Advanced Training), local media and party programs. Furthermore, both expert and focus group interviews showed that youth unemployment - especially the transition from school to labour - is seen as an important issue in the frame of prevention. Increasingly, measures have been taken that are built on the cooperation of different actors (economic, civil society, local administration) with different types of schools. A number of well-functioning and accepted projects can be identified that focus on either supporting the integration in the local job market by offering orientation and qualification or short term employment. Those measures aim at increasing young people's capacities to successfully participate in the job market and thereby support the frame of competitiveness. Prevention, moreover, serves the goal of meeting the future need for skilled employees.

A spokesperson of the Section for School, Advanced Training, Economy and School, Occupational Qualification explains that over the course of the last years the focus has shifted towards prevention and the idea of "becoming active before the damage has been done"[8] instead of supporting individual "problematic cases". The outstanding project in this area is the "Labour market initiative Münster" (*Arbeitsmarktinitiative Münster*) which was already established in the mid 90's under the coalition of the Social Democratic Party and the Green Party and is known as one of the most prestigious prevention projects in Münster. It targets different groups of pupils who "are still without an apprentice position and due to individual impairments or social disadvantages are in need of support in searching for an apprenticeship. Furthermore, the initiative targets youths that do not hold the required job qualifications and social skills necessary for a successful integration into the job market."[9]

Despite the focus on the issue of youth unemployment, one overarching impression remains and has been confirmed in various interviews: traditionally, labour market policy has been part of regional or federal politics which is why it has not been a classical local topic in the past:

> *As a city we are relatively new to the field of labour market policy. It has not been an active policy field in the last couple of years. That's why we were wondering whether the federal state would let us transform into an Optionskommune. We were not one of those cities that already had marked labour market policies as an important policy field in the past.[10]*

The situation described above is the reason why people and groups concerned with the needs of the unemployed in Münster have mostly not been able to make themselves heard in the local discourse. Civil society institutions in the field of labour market policies are

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[8] „…handeln, bevor das Kind in den Brunnen gefallen ist" (Interview with the head of the Section for School, Advanced Training, Economy and School, Occupational Qualification).
[9] "Zielgruppen dieses Aufgabenschwerpunktes sind Hauptschüler/-innen, Förderschüler/-innen und Schüler/-innen der Klassen in den Berufskollegs, die noch ohne Berufsausbildungsplatz sind und aufgrund individueller Beeinträchtigungen oder sozialer Benachteiligungen Unterstützung auf dem Weg in Ausbildung benötigen. Außerdem zählen die Jugendlichen dazu, die nicht über die für die Integration in den Arbeitsmarkt erforderlichen beruflichen Qualifikationen und sozialen Kompetenzen verfügen." (cf. Broschure of the Arbeitsmarktinitiative Münster, p. 11).
[10] "Wir sind ja als Stadt im Arbeitsmarkt eher neu. Arbeitsmarktpolitik ist in den letzten Jahren in der Stadt kein aktives Politikfeld gewesen. Deswegen waren wir auch gespannt, ob uns das Land optieren lässt. Weil wir jetzt nicht zu den Städten gehören, die das Thema Arbeitsmarktpolitik als wichtiges Politikfeld in den letzten Jahren platziert hatten." (Interview with the Head of the Department of Justice, Social Issues, Integration, Health, Environment and Costumer Protection).

weak compared to those in other policy fields, such as child-care policy. One exception is CUBA e.V. (*Cultur -und Begegnungszentrum Achtermannstraße e.V.*), an independent institution that supports the unemployed and tries to improve their individual situation. Here, citizens can lodge appeals regarding their unemployment allowances. Counsellors of CUBA e.V. subsequently try to clarify the situation with the people involved.

> *The procedure emerged as cooperation between politics and administration in Münster. It is effective. For citizens that feel left behind and misunderstood it offers the opportunity to gain attention. However, it is not based on making politics together with the citizens concerned.[11]*

With the transformation to the *Optionskommune*, responsibilities in the field of labour market policy were transferred from the regional and federal to the local level. Whereas the proponents of this transition are of the opinion that local responsibility encompasses better ways of taking care of unemployed as well as achieving a stronger focus on preventive work, opponents of this structure express concerns that local authorities were not aware of the responsibility and workload they have taken on.

> *I was worried that the issue of local labour market policy would be left behind and nobody except private initiatives would care for the opportunities that come along with it. Because it is hard work to deal with all these opportunities the Optionskommune can offer. So, I am not very optimistic that we are going to make any progress in the future.[12]*

Unfortunately, the concept of the *Optionskommune* was introduced very recently (January 2012), therefore – so far - it can only in theory be seen as a milestone. Consequences and outcomes for people concerned cannot be evaluated at this stage.

Seeing as labour market policy has not been an issue on the local level for a long time, no vital veto players can be identified. Traditionally, unions are supposed to offer advocacy functions for people concerned by unemployment. Furthermore, it is their job to expand preventive measures, in order to avoid unemployment in the first place. In Münster, unions are weakly positioned and integrated in processes of labour market policies. Combined with weak civil society institutions, not many actors have to be integrated in processes of labour market policies. It is only on few levels that some of them were asked for their opinion, such as the advisory board of the job centre (*Beirat des Jobcenters*)[13]. Here, various actors were brought to the table: "The composition of the advisory board included

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[11] „Das Verfahren ist in Kooperation von Politik und Verwaltung in Münster entstanden. Das Verfahren ist effektiv. Es schafft Gehör für Bürger die sich abgehängt oder unverstanden fühlen. Allerdings wird hier keine Politik direkt mit Bürgern gemeinsam gestaltet." (focus group interview I: counsellor of CUBA e.V.).
[12] "Ich hatte dann wieder die Befürchtung, dass so etwas [kommunale Arbeitsmarktpolitik, C.R.] irgendwie liegen bleibt und sich außer privater Initiativen kaum jemand so recht um die Möglichkeiten, die damit einhergehen [kümmert]. Weil das ist richtig Maloche, das ist Arbeit, sich da mit den Möglichkeiten, die die „Optionskommune" bietet, auseinanderzusetzen. Also dass wir da jetzt groß weiterkommen, da bin ich jetzt nicht sehr optimistisch." (focus group interview II: Professor at the Institute for Sociology, University of Münster).
[13] The advisory board is a consultative body that advises the job centre regarding the appropriate support and integration measures for the unemployed in Münster. It does not have any decision-making power. (source: http://www.stadt-muenster.de/jobcenter/organisation.html, accessed: 06/11/2012).

many different providers of job creation measures, counselling centres, the university, economy and chambers, and also the social sector was strongly represented."[14]

All in all, the impression prevails that the field of labour is mostly located at the administration level. This seems to lead to a lack of representation with respect to the interests of the unemployed: at this level, people unfortunately "do not speak the language of the people concerned. Not only do they not know how to address them, they do not speak their language".[15]

2.2. Child-care policy

The frame of competitiveness and the importance of economic growth can also be clearly identified in the discourse about child-care in Münster. Specifically the following three factors are highly frequent topics of discussed within this discourse: expansion of child-care facilities for the under-three-year-olds (a decision by the federal government and the states in 2007), quality standards of early education as well as the flexibility of child-care facilities.[16]

According to the dominant local frame, these issues are discussed with strong competition imagery at the local level. For example, the mayor describes child-care in the local newspaper as "[...] a factor of success – for all individuals as well as for the local society as a whole". Concerning the expansion of child-care facilities, the local authorities are working at "full power" to achieve the target coverage rate of 40 per cent (source: local media). Furthermore, the local authorities understand the field of child-care as a local policy for the future. "Münster has taken up the cause of the reconciliation of work and private life. This is the topic of the future per se"[17], a representative of the Family Office explains in an interview.

The adequate supply of child-care facilities, more flexibility as well as increasing quality standards are seen as important for the individual well-being of families as well as for improving the attractiveness of the whole city. All in all, a broad consensus about promoting child-care policy among the relevant actors from local politics, public administration as well as from organised civil society can be identified. In particular, the Christian Democratic Union - as the driving force within the municipality - focuses on two of these factors. Their program proclaims: "We want to continue our way consequently over the next legislative period: more flexibility in the facilities, more facilities provided by companies".[18] The Green Party underlines the significance of quality standards: "Child-

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[14] „Also die Besetzung des Beirates war, also bis vor der Option waren ja andere gesetzliche Grundlagen, waren ganz viele Beschäftigungsträger, waren Beratungsstellen, waren sicherlich auch Universität, Wirtschaft und also die Kammern, aber der soziale Bereich war relativ stark vertreten." (focus group interview II: District executive director of the Deutscher Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband).

[15] „Und auch nicht die Sprache. Nicht nur Ansprache, auch nicht die Sprache." (focus group interview II: Head of the „*Haus der Wohnungslosenhilfe*" (facility of the Bischof-Hermann-Stiftung for the support of the homeless)).

[16] Source: council documents of the municipal committee of children, youth and family at Münster, 2007-2011.

[17] „Münster hat sich ganz groß auf die Fahnen geschrieben, die Vereinbarkeit von Familien und Beruf. Das ist das Thema der Zukunft schlechthin." (Interview with a representative of the Family Office).

[18] „Diesen Weg wollen wir in der nächsten Wahlperiode konsequent fortsetzen: Mehr Flexibilität in den Einrichtungen, mehr betrieblich gestützte Einrichtungen" (party programme of the CDU, 2009).

care needs to be expanded while securing quality standards and retaining well-proven measures."[19]

As a consequence, therefore, the enhancement of the coverage rate of facilities for children under the age of three can be identified as a primary goal of Münster's child-care policy. At present, this rate is at 31 per cent. Until 2013, when the legal entitlement to child-care for this age-group will be introduced in Germany, the local authorities aspire to achieve a coverage rate of 35 per cent and 40 per cent in 2014[20]. Within the framework of this goal, the actors focus on a unique blend of offers by supporting the recruitment of child-minders (*Tagesmütter*), supporting existing parents' initiatives (*Elterninitiativen*) as well as the initiatives of the welfare associations (*freie Träger*).

Putting aside this main strategy, the agenda in the field of childcare, further includes policies aimed at prevention (all kinds of early interventions, for example these against child poverty). The idea is to reduce social inequality at an early stage according to the slogan "prevention instead of repair cost" (cf. the implemented local prevention concept in March 2010)[21]. However, no special lobby group can be identified that draws the public's focus towards these prevention issues. Therefore, these issues are not primarily proposed by politicians or civil interest groups. The head of the Youth Office puts it in a nutshell and refers to the more or less passive role of political parties: "Everybody supports it, but no one says it out loud"[22]. Thus, prevention policy is primarily steered and initiated by the local authorities. "We have to begin with prevention and must be careful not to lock the stable door after the horse has bolted. This is our standard"[23], the head of the Youth Office explained.

Although the local party programs include issues such as the fight against child poverty, drug rehabilitation and educational assistance, concrete initiatives often fail. In a conservatively oriented city, it is not surprising that parties on the left side of the political spectrum represent these issues more strongly. The Social Democrats: "We will clearly expand the assistance for families as well as the fight against child poverty with an emergency program"[24]. Furthermore, the Green Party has identified the linkage between child poverty and the necessity of prevention policy: "We want a child-related poverty prevention"[25].

Moreover, and in accordance with the identified steering role of the local authorities in prevention policies, they understand their role as partners, especially for actors from the organised civil society. For example, the Family Office plays an important role for socially disadvantaged families in Münster. The office is perceived as a kind of *"admission ticket"* (a representative of the Family Office explains) for entering the Youth Office. Another measure that the Youth Office has established are the so-called "prevention visits" to

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[19] „Die Kindertagesbetreuung muss unter Beibehaltung von Bewährtem und Sicherung von Qualitätsstandards ausgebaut werden" (party programme of Die Grüne/GAL, 2009).
[20] Source: WN 15/03/2012, *Nicht kleckern, sondern klotzen*.
[21] Source: council document of the 03/03/10 (municipal Committee of Children, Youth and Family).
[22] „Jeder trägt es, aber keiner vor" (Interview with the head of the Youth Office).
[23] „Das ist auch unser Standard: Mit Prävention anfangen, noch bevor das Kind in den Brunnen gefallen ist" (Interview with the head of the Youth Office).
[24] „Wir werden die Unterstützung für Familien deutlich ausbauen und die Kinderarmut in Münster mit einem Sofortprogramm bekämpfen." (party programme of the SPD, 2009).
[25] „Wir wollen eine kindsbezogene Armutsprävention" (party programme of Die Grünen/GAL, 2009).

parents (*Elternbesuche*) which offer *"support instead of control"*[26]. Since August 2008, a prevention team visits every family with a new born child in order to assist the parents with their child's education.[27]

Although the prevention approach focuses on socially disadvantaged families, we can nevertheless identify some existing interests in the field of child-care which seem to have only marginal chances of being heard by local authorities. A significant example is the group of socially disadvantaged single mothers and fathers. "There are often single mothers, who work part-time and receive supplementary funds from the job centre, they are very many, a very big group. Poverty among single parents is relatively high."[28]

They have to surmount bureaucratic obstacles (i.e. the parallel application process for child benefit and accommodation money, ALG II as well as the advance maintenance payment) and struggle with housing problems. Here, the local authorities and the association for single mothers and fathers have installed a housing project which brings together families and single parents (i.e. the project "care-free settlement"). [29] In contrast, however, to the identified issues following the frame of competitiveness in the field of child-care (facilities, flexibility, quality), these problems are not discussed by the municipal council.[30]

Furthermore, in the policy field of child-care an "approach of appeasement policy" seems to exist. Actors representing interests which are new in the field or/and which are without any powerful public support are not perceived as relevant partners. It seems as if the political and administrative actors try to integrate them at a level that is as low as possible (from informal working groups up to the exiting institutional framework, i.e. networks, municipal committees or working groups). However, there is a legal framework for participation in the field of child-care: according to § 78 SGB VIII (*Social Security Statute Book*) the public agencies (*öffentliche Träger*) have to set up working groups (*Arbeitsgemeinschaften, the so called "AG 78"*) with members from the established providers of youth welfare (*anerkannte Träger*) as well as from providers of publicly supported measures (*Träger geförderter Maßnahmen*). The aim of these groups is to monitor and coordinate the current policies in the field of youth welfare. Münster has set up six working groups on special social issues with representatives from public administration as well as from organised civil society.[31] However, new local actors with an interest in child-care policy regularly have to struggle in order to enter these working groups which mainly consist of established actors: when the city's parents' council was founded in 1993 (as a kind of self-help group with the goal to improve the quality of child-care facilities), it was very difficult for them to find their way into the AG 78 which took them until the year of 2003. "We are represented within the AG 78, but this was a tough

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[26] „Deshalb setzt die Stadt auf Unterstützung anstatt Kontrolle" (in: WN 05/06/2008, *Jugendamt will jedes Baby besuchen).*

[27] Source: Interview with a representative of the Family Office.

[28] „Ich habe oft alleinerziehende Frauen, die arbeiten Teilzeit und bekommen ergänzend vom Jobcenter Geld, ganz viele. Das ist eine ganz große Gruppe. Also, die Armut ist unter den Alleinerziehenden relativ hoch" (Interview with a staff member of the Association of Single Mothers and Fathers).

[29] Source: Interview with a staff member of the Association of Single Mothers and Fathers.

[30] These mentioned issues are not discussed in the council documents 2007-2011.

[31] These are the following groups: girls and boys/gender (*Mädchen und Jungen/Gender*), children and youth care (*Kinder- und Jugendarbeit*), children social work (*Kindersozialarbeit*), family support (*Familienförderung*), day care facilities (*Tagesbetreuung für Kinder*) and support for education (*Hilfen zur Erziehung*) (source: *www.muenster.de/stadt/jugendamt, accessed 24/10/2012*).

nut to crack (…). We were always close to the politicians, always in touch with them because our integration was not appointed by law."[32]

The representatives of the council describe that this working group offers them access to necessary information. For them, this group is presently the most important opportunity for discussions with representatives from public administration and local politics. Apparently, their entrance into the working group has resulted in a changed relationship of the parents' council to the local authorities. Today, the council members feel taken seriously and more or less perceive the representatives from local politics and public administration as partners. However, their additional efforts to secure a seat along with the voting rights associated with it on the municipal committee of children, youth and family have failed.[33]

2.3. Housing Policy

> *The local planners do not see much sense in focusing on social housing [...]. Public funding could not create a great number of accommodations. Therefore, the city relies on brisk activity of the free market to retain a high enough supply so that especially older, allegedly less sought after accommodations remain affordable.*[34]

Due to its distinct characteristics, the housing field very plastically shows the city-inherent discourse logic: we find both the main agenda setters aiming for market provision whenever possible and the 'prevention strategies' proposed by some involved local stakeholders. These are accepted within the main discourse frame when no alternative measures are possible.

Initially it was necessary, in the perception of the leading coalition, to start up an economic cycle in which the city would increase its competitiveness in acquiring private investments in the local (high end) housing market. This would then provide de facto economic growth and wellbeing to the community. Additionally, the new real estate would raise the overall prestige and attractiveness of the city – with that pulling in new investments to keep the cycle alive. Benefits of this process would come to all via the "trickle down" effects free market economy is believed to have. The aimed-at cycle is believed to be achieved and judged as functioning beneficially. "The housing market works by itself because demands are high. For the lower income section we have the city-owned housing association "Wohn+Stadtbau". But also if there is construction for the higher income section, other housing units will become available for the lower section and that benefits the market as a whole."[35]

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[32] „Wir sind in der AG 78 vertreten, das war aber auch eine harte Nuss da rein zu kommen (…) Immer nah dran an den Politikern, immer im Gespräch. Weil das vom Gesetz nicht vorgesehen ist." (Interview with a member of the City's Parents' Council).

[33] Source: Interview with a member of the City's Parents' Council.

[34] "Die städtischen Planer sehen allerdings wenig Sinn darin, stärker auf den sozialen Wohnungsbau zu setzen, wie Klaus Uplawski betont. Mit öffentlicher Wohnbauförderung könne man keine große Zahl von Wohnungen schaffen. So setzt die Stadt auf rege Neubautätigkeit auf dem freien Markt, um so letztlich das Angebot so groß zu halten, dass gerade die älteren, mutmaßlich weniger gefragten Wohnungen bezahlbar bleiben." (WN, 16/09/2011, *Wohnraum wird immer teurer - Stadt Münster setzt auf freien Markt).*

[35] „Der Wohnungsmarkt funktioniert von selbst, weil die Nachfrage groß ist. Für das untere Einkommenssegment gibt es die städtische Wohnungsbaugesellschaft Wohn+Stadtbau. Aber wenn für das höhere Einkommenssegment etwas gebaut wird, wird ja für das untere etwas frei, und das tut dann dem gesamten Markt gut." (Interview with the lead editor of the „Westfälische Nachrichten" in Münster).

A high standard of living and attractive housing options are a big part of the city's self-conception and are prominently featured in the city's marketing efforts. Larger and smaller urban development projects which regularly feature some kind of housing element in addition to their main purpose (e.g. commerce or entertainment) are of high interest to the local public - judged by the continuous and detailed coverage on such projects in the local media. Moreover, housing and urban development issues are debated rather fiercely and in length in the city council as well as in the prominently staffed subcommittee, often under the inclusion of many local entrepreneurial and administrational stakeholders.

Recently the focus of the openly carried out housing debates shifted away from initiating growth and development towards the effects the high demand for commodities has on the housing situation. Namely: (1) That affordable housing space is rare and hard to acquire for socially disadvantaged citizens,(2) that rents (for housing and business) are too high for healthy growth in the sector, as well as (3) the acknowledgement that certain 'neglected' neighbourhoods do not share those positive growth and development effects. These effects are generally accepted as facts.

The interpretation, however, of those facts varies strongly within the discursive coalition. Some argue that rising rents are in fact a positive indicator of a functioning approach. Many of those actors argue that the municipality would not at any rate be in a position to effectively influence the situation due to the characteristic of the housing field. "That is a problem recognized by nearly everybody; nevertheless, it is not really steerable. The more attractive a city is, the more expensive rents will be."[36]

In other opinions, advocates of the coalition claim that the city would have been able to do more in order to increase affordable housing yet gave up its prospects for action mostly due to budgetary restraints or by free choice in favour of market provision:

> […] All important projects in the last years have been investors' decisions. Basically, we did not put a municipal project through since the Municipal Library. Those were projects implemented by private investors or by the Catholic Church. But not by the municipality. And I think that is a huge danger in a city with that kind of financial volume.[37]

The newest discursive line of arguments acknowledges high rents as a problematic fact but claims that because of the profound values at the core of Münster's special political culture, important decision makers always have been and will remain vigilant in not permitting this development to seriously endanger the social balance in the city. From this argumentation follows a request for a more 'sustainable' growth (prevention of market failure) and a warning not to endanger the city's attractiveness through social cleavages.

> Sure, we need concepts, because people need to live somewhere
> and with that, for many years now, we have got a major problem.

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[36] „Das ist ein Problem was von den meisten erkannt ist aber nicht so richtig steuerbar. Desto attraktiver eine Stadt ist, desto teurer sind die Mieten." (focus group interview I: City Director of Münster).

[37] „[…]alle wichtigen großen Projekte der letzten Jahre, sind Investorenentscheidungen gewesen. Wir haben im Grunde genommen seit der Stadtbücherei kein großes kommunales Projekt mehr durchgezogen. Das waren Investordinge von Privatinvestoren oder von der katholischen Kirche. Aber nicht von der Stadt. Und ich finde, das ist für eine Stadt dieses Finanzvolumens eine Riesengefährdung." (focus group interview I: member of the state parliament of North Rhine-Westphalia for the CDU).

[…] At the same time prices on the housing market are on a successive rise, so that the city is in danger of only offering attractive and adequate housing options to certain kinds of higher incomes. And in future it will be especially older citizens who have fewer resources. And that is one of the major challenges for this city: to offer adequate housing supply to people who have less income. This is a major challenge to a city that wants to grow, that wants to be attractive. The city needs to hold some kind of a balance. And that is something that was remarkable in this city's development, that those responsible always kept an eye on developing this city in balance. And not to say: One group is important to us. The others need to see where they end up.[38]

The need to improve the situation in already segregated/neglected neighbourhoods with reactive measures is relatively undisputed in the political arena and the general public. In this context, several experts also refer to the term of a "*healthy mix*" (see above): they assume that if there is no such mix, people do not identify with their neighbourhood and owners do not invest into the housing stock as this may not pay off. In order to reach "*a healthy mix*" – considered as having positive social effects for the inhabitants in general – owners must be motivated to invest or ownership structures have to be changed. Especially foreign investment funds and bankrupt investors are thought of as a problem whereas regional commercial housing companies are considered as possible partners.

Moreover, and similar to this, sustainable neighbourhood development which is also considered as a kind of preventive "spatial" social policy seems not to be heavily disputed. Almost all parties present visions on this in their party programmes, accentuated with topics such as ecology or intergenerational coexistence according to their general profile. In addition to modernisation of the housing stock, public and commercial infrastructure is identified as crucial. However, with reference to financial restrictions the CDU programme curtails expectations: "Not all wishes will be fulfilled. Not everywhere a complete modern infrastructure [...] can be established."[39]

However, while the general need of sustainable neighbourhood development, a "healthy mix" of inhabitants and the need for affordable living spaces seem to be widely acknowledged, the distinct role of the municipality in achieving this is disputed. The question of how the lack of affordable housing shall or could be countervailed is clearly

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[38] „Ja, da sind aber mit Sicherheit Konzepte gefragt, weil nämlich die Leute irgendwo wohnen müssen und da haben wir jetzt ja schon seit einigen Jahren ein gravierendes Problem. […] Dabei gehen ja die Preise im Wohnungsmarkt sukzessive immer höher, sodass natürlich diese Stadt auch Gefahr läuft, nur noch für eine bestimmte Gruppe von etwas einkommensstärkeren Menschen adäquaten, attraktiven Wohnraum zu finden und für Menschen, die immer weniger Einkommen haben oder die weniger Einkommen haben, und zukünftig werden es sehr viele ältere Menschen sein, die weniger zur Verfügung haben. Für diese Menschen keinen oder nur keinen adäquaten Wohnraum haben und das, das ist eine der zentralen Herausforderungen einer Stadt, die wachsen will, die attraktiv sein will und die sich auch noch in eine Art Gleichgewicht bewegen will. Das ist das, glaube ich, was diese Stadt auch in ihrer Entwicklung ausgezeichnet hat, dass die, die Verantwortung getragen haben, eigentlich auch immer im Blick hatten, diese Stadt im Gleichgewicht zu entwickeln und nicht zu sagen: Eine Gruppe ist uns die wichtige. Der muss es gut gehen und der Rest muss gucken, wo er bleibt." (focus group interview I, head of the Department of Social Issues, Integration, Health, Environment- and Costumer Protection).
[39] „Nicht alle Wünsche werden erfüllt werden können. Nicht überall kann eine komplette, moderne Infrastruktur im Verkehrs-, Kultur-, Sport- und Sozialbereich geschaffen werden." (party programme of the CDU, 2009).

the main line of public political dispute in the field. Again, market provision is the main tendency. Members of the administration are convinced that 'the market works'[40] and that it provides the majority of Münster's housing stock. Attracting investors to build more houses and as a result of that creating a large enough housing supply to fit the actual demands of the changing markets (at the moment: more single housing close to the city centre) seems to be the preferred strategy of the Christian Democratic Union and the Free Democratic Party.[41] A member of the Christian Democratic Union adds: *"What we lack are not the properties, but the investors."*[42]

For the leftist parties and several other actors in contrast, however, the city itself is in charge of actively intervening in order to solve the problem: "We do not want a housing policy that leaves the housing market to the free play of forces. The city must secure affordable housing for everyone by means of an active policy."[43]

Moreover, Leftist parties criticize the current situation in terms of on-going segregation and propagate a policy "to regain the social balance"[44] seeing as "a healthy mix in all parts of the town"[45] is needed. In a housing agenda passed by the city council in early 2009, the intention for "additional efforts to counteract the decline in social housing stock"[46] as well as a crucial role of the public housing company *Wohn+Stadtbau* are mentioned. Yet, demands to include concrete numbers have been rejected by the majority of the Christian Democratic Union and the Free Democratic Party. The administration further counters the more interventionist ideas by emphasizing that public housing cannot create enough affordable accommodations.[47] As the City Director states: „*Simply providing cheap housing space in this city is also utopian.*"[48] Instead, the local authorities rather think it "*useful to support tenants with lower incomes with accommodation allowances.*"[49]

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[40] Klaus Uplawski (member of the Office for Urban Development, Urban and Traffic Planning) in WN, 28/05/2009, *Konfrontation in der Wohnungspolitik - Markt funktioniert (nicht)*.

[41] Source: WN, 10/02/2009, *Ab ins Mehrfamilienhaus: Koalition will Wohnungspolitik umstellen*.

[42] „Uns fehlen nicht die Grundstücke, sondern die Investoren." (Heinz-Dieter Sellenriek, chairman of the CDU parliamentary group in WN, 12/12/2007, *Investoren fehlen, nicht Grundstücke*).

[43] „Wir wollen eine Wohnungspolitik, die den Wohnungsmarkt nicht dem freien Spiel der Kräfte überlässt. Die Stadt muss mit einer aktiven Politik bezahlbaren Wohnraum für alle sichern." (party programme of the SPD).

[44] „Soziale Balance in Münster wiedergewinnen" (party programme of Die Grünen/GAL, 2009).

[45] „In allen Bereichen der Stadt eine gesunde Mischung" (party programme of the SPD, 2009).

[46] „In Fortsetzung des bisherigen Handlungsprogramms Wohnen werden zusätzliche Anstrengungen unternommen, dem Rückgang des Sozialwohnungsbestandes zu begegnen." (Proposal to the council A-R/0001/2009).

[47] Source: WN 16/09/2011, *Wohnraum wird immer teurer - Stadt Münster setzt auf freien Markt*.

[48] „Einfach günstigen Wohnraum zur Verfügung zu stellen ist in dieser Stadt aber auch utopisch." (focus group interview I, City Director of Münster).

[49] "Es ist eher sinnvoll, Mieter mit geringerem Einkommen durch Wohngeld zu fördern." (Dr. Winfried Michels, Institute for Settlement and Housing at the University of Münster, in: WN, 16/09/2011, *Wohnraum wird immer teurer - Stadt Münster setzt auf freien Markt*).

3. INNOVATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WELFARE DISCOURSE IN MÜNSTER

> *"Well, I say it again: Münster Marketing has forgotten welfare as a whole [...] in those agenda-setting processes it has not played any role at all."*[50]

> *"Marketing also contributes to the bisection of cities."*[51]

> *"[...] but when I imagine such a social city - that is not formulated by anyone here."*[52]

As outlined above, one dominant frame that is decisive for all argumentation can be identified in Münster: the frame of competitiveness and investment. This is the reference point to which everyone links their argumentation and their concerns. Within this discourse, social aspects appear as secondary and do not seem to be valid without being related to the dominant frame. This situation applies to the actors involved as well: put pointedly, their concerns will only be heard by employing arguments based on the question how the city of Münster can profit from certain social developments externally rather than focusing on the people that are concerned by these developments. Measures for the betterment of the situation of individuals are framed in the same logic - such as the fact that prevention and investment measures are undertaken to (re)establish the competitiveness of each and every citizen.

Even though the particular results from all three policy fields vary, two overarching questions appeared repeatedly in all three areas: *how can social innovations in Münster be established at all* and *how can a single project turn into a social innovation?*[53]

Unsurprisingly, the dominance of the frame also has implications for social innovations. Across all policy fields there are four conditions that can be identified which need to be realized in order to implement an innovation successfully in Münster:

1. *Funding:* There have to be sponsors for the projects in question who are convinced by the original idea and its conditions. They, furthermore, have to be market-compliant, meaning that they are familiar with the argumentation behind the investment discourse and understand this as a dominant basis for decision-making.

2. *Legitimation:* The basic legitimation for the social innovation is given and accepted by the people involved. Referring to our results from the different policy fields, a legitimation is given at the point when it is presented in the line of investment argumentation.

3. *Appeasement:* In Münster, social innovations which might challenge the dominant frame will only be supported if the innovators concede some of their resistance

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[50] „Also ich sag es nochmal, alleine Münster Marketing hat die komplette Wohlfahrt vergessen. [...] also in den damaligen Agenda Prozessen hat das überhaupt keine Rolle gespielt. (focus group interview II: District executive director of the Deutscher Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband).

[51] „Auch Marketing trägt zur Zweiteilung von Städten bei." (Interview with the Acting director of the neighbourhood centre „Begegnungszentrum Sprickmannstraße").

[52] „[...] aber wenn ich mir so vorstelle, so eine soziale Stadt, das formuliert hier ja so recht keiner." (focus group interview I: counsellor of CUBA e.V.).

[53] By social innovation, we understand new ideas which are institutionalized into new approaches and which need to reach a certain degree of diffusion to be labelled "innovation" (cf. Phills 2008).

against the frame in exchange for financial or advocatory sponsorship. The support granted then serves the appeasement of such possible opposition.

4. *Pragmatism towards problem solving:* Social innovations in Münster need to demonstrate a hands-on approach towards perceived problems at the local level. This relates to tangible target groups, deprived districts etc., while more visionary approaches hardly have any chance of success.

These conditions found in the different policy fields show how the dominant frame can present serious obstacles for some potential innovations while enabling others.

4. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS: CHANGES IN THE LOCAL WELFARE REGIME

In addition to the dominance of the frame of competitiveness, the analysis brought forward findings regarding a change in the local welfare regime. This can be summed up in the following thesis: in spite of scarce public resources, there is an increased exercise of influence by the state. This increased influence, where rules are often defined behind closed doors, goes largely unnoticed by the public because at the same time several forms of deliberative democracy and citizen participation are applied.

The influence by the state is mainly exercised indirectly. Local public actors increasingly look for partners among the local entrepreneurs, supra-regional actors or even international political actors to take matters into their hands or at least to provide funding for local projects. Within this type of partnership, the local authorities are striving to maintain (or in some cases regain) a high level of control and steering competence. At the same time, the involvement of different local, regional and global actors serves several purposes. On the one hand costs can be split or sometimes shed completely. On the other hand the participation can lend additional legitimacy to the measures and programmes. This is further increased by citizen participation if a need for ensuring public support for certain measures arises.

Michael Haus describes this multi-sectoral interaction of public and private actors as governance-arrangements (Haus 2005: 55). "Participation management" ("*Beteiligungs-management*") and the steering role of the leading political actors in these networks are two essential pillars of the concept. In Münster, the local political actors and public administration determine requirements (i.e. the demand for child-care facilities), set standards (i.e. development plans) and establish requirements for private actors in the fields of housing, labour market and child-care. The municipality's role is to supervise the actions of private actors and to ensure that the standards are implemented. The guidelines and norms seek to promote the overall aim of competitiveness on every level of society: every action shall ensure that each individual person as well as the community is able to participate successfully in the market, which is seen as helpful for the advancement of the social situation at the local level. With this rather preventive approach, long-term costs are expected to be lowered through a secure functioning of the market mechanisms. The head of Münster Marketing explains:

> *There must be a framework that offers incentives for investors. In the context of the development of the city centre 15 years ago we complained that there were no investments. But then it started to work due to a consequent development strategy and investments were indeed made. Today, it is not always the city itself who*

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invests. Rather, there must be a suitable climate for people to say: I dare to invest and I believe that I could achieve some profit.[54]

Related to the local discourse of competitiveness one can identify a specific type of participation policy. The established form of local democracy which is based on government by the people (sovereignty of the people) seems to change. According to Nullmeier et al. (2012: 14) the sovereignty of the people is counteracted by criteria of efficiency and effectiveness. The empirical analysis of our three policy fields supports the hypothesis that (important) political decisions which concern the development of the municipality as a whole are prepared and made outside the municipal council. A distinctive example is the implementation process of the "Optionskommune" which was outsourced to a separate steering committee. It seems as if the real decision-making process or at least its preparation is limited to a small select cycle of actors. A former local politician says: "The real decisions are made somewhere else. With reference to the composition of the several political fractions and the agreements within the municipal committees, they only have to attest whether anyone has mistaken his fraction's position."[55]

Contemporaneously, citizen participation is increasingly promoted at the local level. Participation understood as managing the processes of deliberation and decision-making is seen as an important contribution to "good governance" (Haus 2005: 45). In Münster, enabling the participation of the citizens is also seen as crucial for the success of local policies. A closer consideration of the three policy fields analyzed illustrates the central motives of the local authorities in promoting citizen participation projects. First of all, local issues and actions gain higher input-legitimacy by integrating the stakeholders in the policy-making process. Participation projects (i.e. participatory budgeting) prevent on the surface the erosion of the sovereignty of the people. The empowerment of the citizens should ensure their belief in the system of local politics and especially in local welfare policy. Furthermore, participation projects are seen as an effective instrument to prevent local conflicts about future policies at an early stage. Concurrently, however, they produce in practice a kind of "participation elite" ("*Beteiligungselite*" Nullmeier et al. 2012: 15) or "tyranny of the minority". ("*Tyrannei der Minderheit*" Haus 2005: 45). Often only a small circle of mainly well-educated citizens participate. Some local politicians in Münster call them "professional citizens" ("*Berufsbürger*"[56]). Socially disadvantaged people are usually not among this group. They are not structurally integrated into this regime which leads to a weak representation of their interests (Alisch 2004) combined with an enhancement of social inequality at the local level. A representative from a German welfare association states:

It is difficult to integrate citizens. In order to integrate citizens in local politics you have to develop new forms […]. This clientele I know from organized civil society does not take part in citizen participation projects. They do not get to know about this at all.

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[54] „Es müssen Rahmenbedingungen da sein, dass tatsächlich Anreiz ist, zum Beispiel in eine Innenstadtentwicklung, die wir vor 15 Jahren hatten, haben wir beklagt, dass es keinerlei Investitionen gab in der Innenstadt. […] Und dann hat das aber durch eine konsequente Innenstadtentwicklung funktioniert, dass die Investitionen eben doch gekommen sind. Es ist nicht die Stadt selber immer, die investiert. Es muss ein Klima da sein, dass Leute auch sagen: Ich traue mich, das zu tun und ich glaube auch, dass ich davon dann auch einen Gewinn habe und leben kann und so […]." (Interview with the head of Münster Marketing).

[55] „Aber die eigentlichen Entscheidungen sind doch längst ganz woanders gefallen und da wird nur noch so zu sagen notariell festgestellt, ob das, was man vermuten muss nach der Fraktionszusammensetzung, nach den Absprachen in den Fachausschüssen, ob da sich nicht einer getäuscht hat." (focus group interview I: member of the SPD).

[56] Focus group interview I: Head of Münster Marketing, member of the SPD.

> *Not because they are stupid, but this kind of address is not the right way to approach this target group.*[57]

Furthermore, some forms of citizen participation in Münster seem to rather serve as elements of an "appeasement policy" instead of offering real opportunities for exerting influence. They are applied when previous decisions need *ex post* legitimacy. An example of this is the *"Hafenforum"*. Stakeholders were invited to debate in open sessions and working groups the investors' plans for a shopping centre and a high-end housing project in the harbour area. The participants were not allowed to cancel the whole project but they could change a few aspects of the master plan in order to increase acceptance of the project.

A former politician picked up this aspect of how many citizen participation projects do not really empower citizens to decide about local politics: *"Citizen participation is not particularly bad because it does not work in real life at all."*[58] This shows how local authorities are striving to maintain their spheres of influence while using participation as a means to increase acceptance of the policies.

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[57] „Also[…], ist das schon einfach hier schwer die Leute zu beteiligen, also um die Leute zu beteiligen müsste man andere Formen […] das Klientel, das ich so kenne aus unseren Vereinen, das geht da nicht hin. Das erfährt davon erst einmal gar nichts. Nicht weil sie zu doof sind, aber das ist nicht die Ansprache." (focus group interview II : District executive director of the Deutscher Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband).

[58] „Die Bürgerbeteiligung ist deswegen nicht so besonders schlimm, weil sie im wirklichen Leben ja gar nicht funktioniert" (focus group interview I: member of the SPD).

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