

Pedagogising elder care. Sociology of continuous training as means to humanize care homes.

Medicalised care homes are often talked about with criticism, and demands for their improvement have been constant. A re-professionalisation of elder care workers through continuous training has imposed itself through a political and social consensus as one of the means to ensure such improvements.

Training institutes that provide training courses, and therefore partly implement this reform, insert themselves in interactions between residents, employees and managers with the goal to improve the lives of the elderly. This model of a dual reform of both care homes and of professional practices brings on a change in social relations and is structured by specific knowledge circulations. Knowledge exchanges take place in a field, that of ageing, where soft skills and know-how with and about the elderly are at stake.

The present sociological research will study this area in the French-speaking part of Switzerland and the reconfigurations brought on by continuous training. The study of both the production and reception of training programs offered by two different institutes in care homes will shed light on the cultural challenges faced by the ageing of the population, where research has ordinarily aimed the sanitary and economical effects of the phenomenon.

We will study to that end:

1. On a micro level, the reconfigurations of practices and social interactions among caregivers and residents and, secondly, the innovation work and the effects of management through skills in situations observed and thirdly in grey literature.

2. On an intermediate level (meso), the elaboration of knowledge, their process of validation and legitimation, of reproduction and distribution will be studied.
3. On a macro level, attention will be brought to institutional changes and the normalisation work that will come from these changes.

These three levels of analysis will allow us to jointly seize the evolution of training today in the field of ageing in institutions, as well as more general social reforms that this evolution stems from and participates in.

Research team

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