Abstract

This bachelor thesis explores institutionalised child care ("child care") for children under three years of age in the context of family policy German Democratic Republic (GDR). The thesis aims to not only describe the child care system, but also to assess its impact on the further evolution of child care for children under three years of age in reunited Germany. The thesis first examines East German family policy, including measures aimed at supporting women and mothers, as women's policy and child care were closely related. The second focuses specifically on the East German child care system for children under three years of age, which played an essential role in both family policy and employment policy of the state. This section analyses the system's significance in East German society and politics, escribes its structure and operation, and examines the known consequences of attending these child care facilities for the children themselves. The political and ideological significance of this system is also addressed at the end of this section. Finally, the thesis analyses the evolution of child care for children under three years of age after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the reunification of Germany. In this context, it briefly describes family policy, including child care, in West Germany, which differed significantly from that of East Germany, as became particularly evident in the post-reunification period. Drawing on the political and legal steps taken in this area in the early years after reunification, this thesis argues that the legacy of a strong East German child care system has significantly influenced the long-term evolution of child care for children under three throughout Germany.