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Agric. Econ. – Czech

Kučerová E.

Active social policy as a chance for endogenous rural development

Agric. Econ. – Czech, 48 (2002): 554-558

Since 1990s, the discussion about the Czech social policy emphasizes more the necessity to change this policy from passive state social policy towards an active social policy. The latter includes the activities of people in the frames of formal (e.g. NGOs) and informal groups,

and therefore also the concept of civic society is accentuated in this respect. Although this concept might be understood in different ways, its common characterization is a spontaneous non-political self-expression of individuals and their groups (the activity that was suppressed before 1989). Through the self-expression, the individuals realize their particular interests. When thinking about active social policy in the frames of civic society, we might assume that the conditions for its implementation are better for the actors in small rural communities. These more favourable conditions are assumed due to the traits of rural communities – e.g. personal, non-anonymous relations, good knowledge and familiarity with particular social problems, etc. However, the actors who try to contribute to active social policy are constrained/controlled in their activities by other community members. The level of these constraints depends on the configuration of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu). The author of the text is for more than one year involved in empirical research in one Czech village. Using qualitative methods she investigates various social events and

actors who participate in active social policy (in relation to those who are supposed to participate in this policy as responsible agents). The author assumes that the participation in active social policy is one of the sources of integrated endogenous rural development, while passive social policy (institutionally backed by the state) is more related to exogenous rural development. However, there is a question how the very actors (active members of rural community) do approach this participation and how the other members of rural community evaluate their activities in the sphere of social policy.

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