

Local politicians and the governance of social services

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Abstract

This paper studies, from the point of view of local politicians, the governance of social services in different municipalities and County Councils in Catalonia. The political dimension of local social services has rarely been studied and this article contributes to the understanding of which actors and what kind of relations are developed during the policy process. From a qualitative approach, the study is based on 17 in-depth interviews with local politicians, as well as two focus groups with managers and front-line social workers. The results reveal that local politicians do not have a long-term and strategic perspective, and that they feel more comfortable dealing with management rather than politics. At the local level, social services tend to be a depoliticized issue. Even though local politicians have a positive attitude to talk and work with all the actors, they fail to achieve regular coordination and engagement. **Key Practitioner Message**

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