

Title:

The institutional logic of welfare attitudes:
How welfare regimes influence public support

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Abstract:

Why are people who live in liberal welfare regimes so reluctant to support welfare policy? And why are people who live in social democratic welfare regimes so keen to support welfare policy? The article seeks to give an institutional account of these cross-national differences. Previous attempts to link institutions and welfare attitudes have not been convincing. The empirical studies have had large difficulties in finding the expected effects from regime dependent differences in self-interest, classinterest, and egalitarian values. This article develops a new theoretical macro-micro link by combining the literature on deservingness criteria and the welfare regime theory. The basic ideas is that three regime characteristics 1) the degree of universalism in welfare policy, 2) the differences in economic resources between 'the bottom' and 'the majority', and 3) the degree of job opportunities have profound impact on the public deservingness discussion and thereby on public support for welfare policy.