

Social Security and Social Justice.
European Welfare States, Conceptions of Social Justice and their Distributive
Consequences

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Abstract

The analysis deals with a cross-national analysis of the correlation between conceptions of social justice in different welfare state regimes and their distributive consequences. The theoretical background consists of a modified version of ESPING-ANDERSEN'S welfare state typology: it differentiates between a conservative model consisting of the South European *latin rim* states and a conservative-etatist variant, a liberal model including an additional individualistic, semi-etatist subtype, and the Scandinavian model. The following analysis evaluates the distributive consequences of social justice conceptions which can be identified within these different welfare states with special reference to different dimensions (such as labour market participation) and to different risk groups.

The welfare states are represented by Italy (*latin rim* model), Germany (conservative-etatist model), Norway (Scandinavian model) and the UK (individualistic semi-etatist model). The data-base consists of the ECHP and of the Norwegian Level of Living Studies which also contains a comparable panel component. The waves covering the years 1997 to 2001 are used. Besides the national level, also a regional level is considered using social assistance spell data (where available) for different European cities.

On the basis of the "life dimensions approach" (*Lebenslagenansatz*) which captures living conditions in several dimensions, the impact of social justice conceptions is identified for the dimensions of income, employment, health, education and housing, making use of descriptive models, but also of appropriate multivariate models (panel-logit models). The performance of the welfare state in guaranteeing minimum social standards as an additional aspect of distributional justice is evaluated as well, applying event-history models to comparative social assistance micro data (where available).

Preliminary results suggest that the Scandinavian model is the most successful in combating poverty and providing minimum social security standards. Thus, it comes closest to social justice conceptions. The performances of both the *latin rim* model and the conservative etatist model vary considerably with reference to regional differences within the countries, e. g. between East and West Germany or North and South Italy. Therefore they are only partly more successful in combating poverty than the liberal state; moreover, when considering other dimensions of distributive justice as labour market participation it becomes evident that their welfare state performance can be even worse.