

Gjøre endringer i emne ISV

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Emnekode / Course code *

Stv4313

Emnenavn / Course name *

The Welfare State and Democratic Legitimacy

Emneansvarlig(e) / Course convenor(s) *

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Jeg vil gjøre endring i / I want to change *

Kort om emne / Course content

Hva lærer du? / Learning outcome

Ny tekst "Kort om emne" / New text "course content" *

The welfare state took shape in Europe during the 19th and 20th century. It consists of social insurance/cash benefit schemes such as pensions, unemployment benefits, sick pay, parental leave, and social assistance, etcetera. It also consists of multiple public services like health care, elder care, childcare, and so on. It is no exaggeration to say that the welfare state fundamentally restructured Western societies. Today, roughly half of state expenditures, and up to around a third of GDP, in advanced industrial democracies concern the welfare state. This makes it a crucial topic for social and political science.

The course is about various legitimacy orientations among citizens in Western welfare states. On a concrete level, students learn about—and critically evaluate—the “state-of-the-art” in research on trends, causes, and consequences of various aspects of state legitimacy among the public. On a more general level, students use this knowledge as a lens for analyzing contemporary democratic conflicts and challenges. The course is structured around two “umbrella concepts”: welfare state support and political trust. Together, welfare support and political trust are indicators of whether the policies and politics of mature welfare states enjoy democratic legitimacy. The course revolves around trends, causes, and consequences of welfare state support and political trust.

Welfare state support includes support for, and evaluations of, redistribution and taxation policies. It also includes support for spending on specific areas and groups (e.g., health care, childcare, sick leave benefits, unemployment benefits, pensions, etcetera). Together, these topics are important components of the economic left-right conflict (or “first dimension” conflict).

Political trust involves generalized satisfaction with, and trust in, democratic institutions and actors. It also involves more diffuse support for democratic principles. Several of these topics are part of the increasingly influential “second dimension” conflict in Western democracies (a.k.a. the GAL-TAN dimension).

The course focuses especially on change in welfare state support and political trust. How much change is there at the individual and the systemic level? What factors explain change? And what are the consequences on other political and democratic outcomes of interest, for example support for populist parties.

The course is relevant for students of comparative politics as well as students of public policy/administration. It is both an advanced course in political behaviour/public opinion and an advanced course about the role of public policy in democratic legitimacy-building.

Organization

The lectures are grouped in three parts. Part I and II cover welfare support and political trust respectively. Here, we assess the extent and causes of change in state legitimacy, while gauging political and democratic consequences. The third part connects welfare support and political trust. Are these mainly two separate dimensions of state legitimacy or rather different sides of the same coin? Do they share important causes? Do they affect each other? For example, is political trust dependent on a well-functioning and strongly supported welfare state? Conversely, perhaps political trust—once it exists—builds continued support for welfare state? At the same time, perhaps political trust also helps unpopular welfare reform that is deemed “necessary” due to population ageing and other economic “reform pressures”?

Ny tekst "Hva lærer du" / New text "Learning outcome" *

Learning outcomes

Knowledge

- After the course you are expected to be able to explain:
- how welfare state support and political trust can be defined, what the key constituent dimensions are, and how they can be measured.
 - the state-of-the-art in research on trends, causes, and consequences of welfare support and political trust, as well as the relationships between the two.
 - how welfare state policies are changing and how citizens relate and react to these changes.

Skills

- After the course you are expected to be able to:
- analyze current real-world debates concerning change and stability in welfare state support and political trust, using insights from state-of-the art research.
 - analyze democratic implications of welfare state change.

Competences

- You will be able to:
- critically evaluate cutting-edge research using different methodological approaches.
 - synthesize, evaluate, and apply vast swathes of information.
 - engage in academic dialogue and mutual feedback

Annet

Not answered