

Title: **Deservingness opinions: a trend analysis of the Netherlands (1975-2006)**

Abstract

Although the order of what the public regards as more or less deserving needy groups has been readily established in the literature, the trend of these opinions in a changing economic and policy context has, up until now, not yet been examined. In this paper, we address this trend question using twenty-two waves of the repeated cross-sectional survey Cultural Change in the Netherlands (CCN, 1975-2006). We focus on the long term trend and short term fluctuations of the public's deservingness opinions and analyze which macro factors are related to these opinion changes through time. Preliminary results indicate that the overall trend of the past three decades shows an increasing percentage of people who feel that needy groups are deserving of more support than they receive. Furthermore, economic factors and not institutional changes seem to be most important in explaining the short term fluctuations of deservingness opinions around this trend: during economically prosperous times, the Dutch public finds needy groups deserving of more support than during economically difficult times.

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