

The Timing of Pro-Elderly Policy Cutbacks: An Event History Analysis of Aging Welfare States

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ABSTRACT: This paper investigates the politics of delays in pro-elderly social policy cutbacks in over twenty OECD welfare states since the late 1980s by using a method uniquely suited for investigating questions of timing - event history analysis. Event history analysis is a method concerned with the timing of the occurrence of certain events which has been introduced by Korpi and Palme (2003) to study replacement rates and by Hicks and Zorn (2005) and Tepe and Vanhuysse (2010) to analyze general social expenditures. Specifically, in this paper our dependent variable measures the duration of time a country will pass before experiencing a pro-elderly policy cutback event. In the context of fiscal austerity, policymakers are assumed to have a strong incentive to manipulate the timing of such welfare cutbacks strategically. Investigating small and large cutbacks in policies favoring elderly voters, we test to what degree, in addition to the usual socio-demographic and economic variables that drive pro-elderly policies in aging welfare states, explicitly political variables such as partisanship (ideology), electioneering (strategic timing), and institutional constraints (veto points) contribute to explain the timing of pro-elderly cutbacks.