1. General information

What is a welfare state and why does it exist in capitalist economies? Why did welfare states develop at such different speed and why have they become so different cross-nationally in their extent of generosity and redistribution? Do globalization and post-industrialization threaten welfare states? What are the most important current challenges to welfare policies, such as old age, unemployment or sickness insurance, and which policies present the most urgent needs for reform?

These are questions that are at the core of this seminar. Our goal is to reach a nuanced understanding of current welfare policy trends through cross-national comparison. Therefore, we will read and discuss both fundamental text of comparative welfare state analysis and recent theories and approaches in political economy. A special focus will be on selected countries, incl. Germany in comparative perspective.

The readings for this seminar are substantial and mostly in English. Successful participation includes a short oral presentation, a discussion paper, written discussion questions and active participation. For details on requirements, see part 4 of this syllabus.
2. Overview

Course block I: The development of Western welfare states in the 20th century: trends, types and typologies

Friday, July 1st
10.00-12.00 Session 1: Organization and introduction
13.30-15.30 Session 2: Determinants of welfare state development I: „Power resources“
16.00-18.00 Session 3: Determinant of welfare state development II: “Varieties of Capitalism” and Institutionalism

Saturday, July 2nd
10.00-12.00 Session 4: Country cases: Germany, UK, Sweden, Switzerland (Group work)
13.30-15.30 Session 5: Country cases: classification of policies, actors and processes
16.00-18.00 Session 6: Globalization and post-industrialization: Challenges to the welfare state?

Course block II: Welfare states in the post-industrial era: challenges and reactions

Friday, July 15th
10.00-12.00 Session 7: Politics of adaptation: stability or change?
13.30-15.30 Session 8: Politics of adaptation: new social risks and social investment policies
16.00-18.00 Session 9: Politics of adaptation: the dualization of welfare states?

Saturday, July 16th
10.00-12.00 Session 10: Conflict lines in the post-industrial “modernization” of welfare states
13.30-15.30 Session 11: Post-industrial welfare policy in selected countries: substantial reforms and institutional changes
16.00-18.00 Session 12: The future of the welfare state: „hot topics“
3. Detailed course program

Course block I: The development of Western welfare states in the 20th century: trends, types and typologies

Session 1: Organization and introduction
July 1st 2011, 10.00-12.00h

Session 2: Determinants of welfare state development I: “Power resources”
July 1st 2011, 13.30-15.30h

“Power resources” became the dominant approach in welfare state research in the 1980s. How do proponents of this approach explain welfare state development? What are the most important driving forces? Why and to what extent does the design and generosity of welfare policies vary between countries?
How benefits from the welfare state in Esping-Andersen’s three regimes?

Required readings:

Optional additional readings:
Session 3: Determinants of welfare state development II: “Varieties of Capitalism” and Institutionalism

July 1st 2011, 16.00-18.00h

The Power resources approach and Esping-Andersen’s typology have caused many debates and criticism. Two of these “answers” are alternative approaches in themselves: “Varieties of Capitalism” and institutionalist arguments.

a) proponents of institutionalist approaches argue that the analysis of power relations alone is not sufficient: political institutions have their own, independent influence on the design and size of welfare states. Which institutions are relevant? What does this argument change about the typology of Esping-Andersen’s three worlds of welfare capitalism?

b) To what extent is “Varieties of Capitalism VoC” an alternative to power resources and to institutionalist accounts of the welfare state? How do proponents of VoC explain the development of the welfare state? Who benefits from social policy? What are “institutional complementarities”?

How could we test which explanation of welfare state development (power resources, institutionalism, VoC) is the most accurate?

Required readings:


Optional additional readings


Session 4: Country cases: Germany, Switzerland, Sweden and the UK
July 2nd 2011, 10.00-12.00h

Group work in preparation of session 5
Preparatory reading see session 5

Session 5: Country cases: classification of policies, actors and processes
July 2nd 2011, 13.30-15.30h

Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK are typical examples of different welfare regime types. They differ both in the generosity and in the design of their welfare state institutions. Where do you place these country cases in the discussed typologies? Why?

How do we understand the specifics of particular welfare states? Why is redistribution low and social insurance strong in Germany? Why is it the other way around in Sweden and why has the Swiss welfare state developed so slowly? Why is social insurance weak in the UK, while benefits are highly redistributive?

How can we explain these differences and answer these questions in the light of the specific welfare state theories we have discussed so far? (power resources, institutionalism, Varieties of Capitalism)?

Which actors (political parties, trade unions, employer organizations, societal actors) were key in the development of social policy in these countries?

Required alternative readings (students will have to read two country chapters, which will be assigned to them depending on the group work in session 5):


Session 6: Globalization and post-industrialization: Challenges to the welfare state?

July 2nd 2011, 16.00-18.00h

The context of welfare policy has changed profoundly since the 1970s: while politics revolved around the extension and construction of the social security during the post-war years, the signs suddenly turned to financial consolidation and austerity from the 1980s onwards.

Where does this pressure on the welfare state come from? What exactly are the “challenges” that derive from globalization and post-industrialization on “industrial welfare states? To what extent are these challenges different according to different welfare regimes?

Required readings:


Optional additional readings


Course block II: Welfare states in the post-industrial era: challenges and reactions

Session 7: Politics of adaptation: stability or change?

July 15th 2011: 10-12h

How do welfare states react to the challenges of “permanent austerity”? Pierson has developed a “new politics”-argument of stability and inertia, which holds that welfare policies cannot be retrenched for institutional reasons. Clayton and Pontusson contradict this thesis on the basis of the power resources approach, and so do Allan and Scruggs. According to them, post-industrial politics is indeed characterized by welfare retrenchment. What are the political mechanisms these authors base their arguments on? Why do they reach such different conclusions?

Required readings:


Optional additional readings


A further strand in the recent welfare literature argues that there are new social risks which defy the pressure towards retrenchment, because they – quite contrarily – create pressure for new and additional social protection. What are new social risks? Who is affected by them and how do they differ from the “old” social risks? What are the chances that welfare states adapt to these new challenges?

Required readings:

Optional additional readings
Session 9: Politics of adaptation: dualization of welfare states

July 15th 2011: 16.00-18.00h

A rapidly growing literature argues that welfare states are becoming increasingly „dualized“: this means that they differentiate benefits and services between labor market insiders and labor market outsiders.

What do we mean by „dualization“? Which two groups are to be distinguished? Where does dualization come from? Is it structurally caused or politically made? Is dualization welfare retrenchment? Does it necessarily lead to more inequality?

Required readings:


Palier, Bruno and Kathleen Thelen (2010). “Institutionalizing Dualism: Complementarities and Change in France and Germany”.

Optional additional readings:


Session 10: Conflict lines in the post-industrial “modernization” of welfare states

July 16th 2011: 10.00-12.00h

Post-industrial welfare politics involves different political conflict lines and cleavages. Is the class conflict still relevant? Which other/new conflict lines structure postindustrial social policy reform processes?

What does this change in conflict lines imply for power relations between actors, coalitions and reform outputs?

Required readings:


Optional additional readings


Session 11: Post-industrial welfare policy in selected countries: substantial reforms and institutional changes in continental welfare states

July 16th 2011: 13.30-15.30h

How does the new context (austerity, new social risks, social investment, dualization) impact on the recent development of welfare states in continental welfare states, the most challenged regimes of all welfare states? Where were reforms strongest? Why do we observe different reform performances and trajectories?

How does the power balance change in the wake of reforms? Do trade unions loose power in continental Europe or do they retain an important place in the politics of welfare reform?

Required readings:


Optional additional readings

**Session 12: The future of the welfare state: “hot topics”**

**July 16th 2011: 16.00-18.00h**

Which topics will mark the agenda of welfare state research over the next few years? Which topics are under-represented on the welfare state research agenda? Here are two examples:

a) Immigration, right-wing populism and welfare policy  
b) Age and the welfare state: the grey power hypothesis

What are the problems and topics these contributions deal with? Why have these topics been underrepresented for such a long time? Where do you see the “hot topics” in welfare state research in the coming years?

**Required readings:**


**Optional additional readings**


4. Organization / Presentation and term paper

Registration
Registration is open through Studis until June 15th. All course material – slides, readings - will be available through Illias to registered students.

Oral presentations
Registered students need to give a short (max. 10 min) oral presentation on the topic (i.e. the readings) of one of the sessions. The presentation is NOT supposed to summarize the readings. Rather, students should present those 3-5 aspects they consider the most relevant in these readings. These can be points of criticism or positive aspects, or also just the most interesting or important aspects of a text. Thereby, they should argue a) what is said in the texts on this aspect, b) why they consider this relevant for the literature and c) why they personally consider this relevant.

Topics for oral presentations are distributed directly on a first come, first served basis. Students are asked to send an e-mail to Silja Häusermann, indicating three sessions in which they would like to present (if possible with a rank ordering).

Questions for discussion
Registered participants need to send in written questions and/or contributions for discussion for 5 of the 12 sessions on the electronic learning platform Ilias. You can choose the sessions for which you send questions freely. Deadline for sending in these questions is Wednesday before a course block, at noon.

Written term paper
Registered students need to write a term paper (5000-8000 words). The topic for the paper can be chosen autonomously, but needs to be discussed and agreed upon with Silja Häusermann.

The term paper needs a theoretically substantiated question, a discussion of the answers existing theory gives to this question (on the basis of readings from the seminar and additional, autonomously researched literature), and an empirical examination of the question (if possible on the basis of preexisting data). The paper can rely on qualitative or quantitative methods.

Please discuss your topic and outline with Silja Häusermann, either after our block course (between 6 and 7 pm on course days) or upon individual appointment. Before the discussion, please send a written proposal (1-3 pages) to Silja Häusermann with a question and an outline for the paper. Please let me know if you would like to discuss your paper after a day of course sessions, so that I can establish a schedule for appointments.

Deadline for these term papers is September 15th. Please send your paper as a pdf-File to Silja Häuserman directly.

Credit points
To receive the 6 credit points for this seminar, you need to fulfill all three parts satisfactorily (oral presentation, written questions for discussion, written term paper).