

Suggested topic for presentation:

When Redistribution Reduces Its Own Support: A Macro-Micro Analysis of Redistribution, Merit Beliefs, and Gender (von: Bianka Mey & Max Uhlig)

Abstract:

This study examines how public support for redistribution (*SFR*) interacts with existing redistributive policies across 29 European countries. Using European Social Survey data linked with OECD indicators, we estimate multilevel models to capture individual attitudes within national contexts. We find that *SFR* is lower in countries with more extensive redistribution, with gender differences that are statistically significant but economically modest. Crucially, the extent of redistribution moderates the role of meritocratic beliefs: individuals who reject merit-based views continue to demand more redistribution, even in highly redistributive settings. By contrast, individuals who endorse meritocratic views tend to reduce *SFR* as actual redistribution expands. These findings emphasize that institutional design — relative redistribution — conditions how normative beliefs shape public opinion, thereby sustaining or eroding support for welfare systems.