

Welfare State and Local Government: the Impact of Decentralization on Well- being

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Paper Abstract: In recent decades, EU welfare systems have been undergoing continuous reforms in the light of financial pressures. In some countries, this has been coupled with the devolution of responsibilities from the central to local governments. The shifting of welfare systems to the local level may have positive or negative consequences. On the one hand, decentralization is expected to better tailor welfare policies to the population specific needs; on the other hand, especially in the presence of weak supervision by the central government, it may lead to negative implications like territorial fragmentations and inequalities. The main objective of the paper is to explore the relationship between welfare state typologies - with different degree of decentralization - and the well-being of citizens in a selection of European countries. We adopt an interdisciplinary perspective, trying to link the complexity of juridical aspects to the statistical evidence provided by different sources of official statistics and results of quantitative analyses.