



The Risk of Social Policy?: The electoral consequences of welfare state retrenchment and social policy performance in OECD countries (Routledge Studies in the Political Economy of the Welfare State)

Nathalie Giger

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The Risk of Social Policy? uses a comparative perspective to systematically analyse the effects of social policy reforms and welfare state retrenchment on voting choice for the government. It re-examines twenty elections in OECD countries to show if and how social policy issues drive elections.

This book contributes to the existing literature by providing an empirical analysis of the electoral implications of social policy. Giger asks the basic research question: What are the electoral consequences of social policy performance and retrenchment? More specifically, the following questions are addressed in order to provide a systematic test of the topic: Is retrenchment indeed completely unpopular? Do people punish the government for bad performance in the field of social policy? And what are the political implications of such a punishment reaction; does it affect the government composition? It shows empirically that the risks of welfare state retrenchment to incumbent governments may be lower than previously thought, and presents a theoretical framework for re-examining the impact of retrenchment initiatives on election outcome.

Making an important contribution to studies in political economy and welfare by questioning the assumption that social policy is an inherently controversial policy field in times of elections, *The Risk of Social Policy?* will be of interest to scholars and students concerned with the interplay between government and citizens, social policy and voting behaviour, and the political economy of welfare.

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