

Abstract

This Master's Thesis studies the connection between welfare regime clusters, their institutions and public attitudes towards the free movement of workers in the European Union. It aims to analyse, whether welfare regime clusters can serve as a useful tool for understanding the cross-national differences in public opinion on intra-EU labour migrants. To do so the Thesis uses the institutional theory and looks at three dimensions of welfare state institutions – the universality of the welfare state, economic inequalities and job opportunities. The study is conducted on the case of eight (former and current) EU member states, which are divided into four pairs, each representing one of the welfare regimes – conservative, liberal, social democratic and Southern European. The Thesis concluded that neither clustering into welfare regimes, nor institutional dimensions represent a sufficient tool to explain the variations in attitudes between the chosen countries. Insufficiency of clustering was shown in the case of some countries, that are part of the same welfare clusters but show different levels of support for free movements of workers. Additionally, countries with the positions in the studied institutional dimensions which should lead to the most positive attitudes do not reach the predicted degree of support. On the other hand, some countries that should show more negative attitudes according to the degree of the universality, inequalities and job opportunities, express a more positive opinion than others with a more favourable situation for support.