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Social Insecurities and Fear of Crime: A Cross-National Study on the Impact of Welfare State Policies on Crime-related Anxieties

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Abstract

This article assesses the association between national welfare state regimes and public insecurities about crime across Europe. A multilevel analysis of respondents in 23 countries sampled in the 2004/05 European Social Survey finds a strong relationship between insecurities about crime and national levels of social expenditure and decommodification of social welfare policy. Some social protection measures are more strongly associated with national levels of fear of crime than others, especially public non-monetary support for children and families that strengthens the individual's capacity to cope with problems on their own. We conclude with the idea that state-level social protections may buffer the development of widespread fear of crime by increasing self-efficacy and thereby mitigating various social and economic fears.

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