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**Rethinking welfare reform as the politics of priorities:
conceptualization, measurement, implications**

Prof. Silja Häusermann

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Hörsaal 10, Rathausstraße 19, 1010 Vienna

Public opinion and individual-level preferences have become a key explanatory factor for policy development in many theories in the field of comparative political economy. However, most of these theories (e.g. the new politics of the welfare state, varieties of capitalism, or dualization theories) imply arguments on the relative importance of different (welfare) policy options for individuals, rather than mere position preferences. Standard surveys, however, are blind to such measures of relative importance.

In my talk, I will develop the conceptual change that a shift from position to priorities implies and discuss different experimental and observational measurement strategies to get at respondent's priorities on the basis of the ongoing ERC project "welfare priorities".

To illustrate the argument, I will present a paper on class differences regarding the importance attributed to social investment policies in Western Europe.

Silja Häusermann is a Professor of Political Science at the University of Zurich in Switzerland, where she teaches classes on Swiss politics, comparative political economy, comparative politics and welfare state research. Her research interests are in comparative politics and comparative political economy.
