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Reforming The German Welfare State: Why Germany Is Slower Than Its Neighbors

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Germany has been characterized as a country slow to reform its welfare system. Examining this popular conception, I find that the German efforts to cut welfare spending do not lag far behind its neighbors. The lag comes in the slower effort made in Germany to rethink the legitimizing principles of the social model and to change policies to promote the new idea of a welfare state. Combining a social constructivist with an institutionalist approach, I explain Germany's slow progress as a function of a welfare system whose legitimizing principle is income security rather than social citizenship.

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