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Cognitive Determinants of Healthcare System Evaluations: A Comparison of Eastern and Western European Countries

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Highlights

- Public healthcare evaluations follow a coherent cognitive reasoning.
- Main determinants of healthcare evaluations are perceptions of efficiency and equality.
- Regional differences are due to a more negative performance perception within Eastern Europe.
- Expectations of the government's role in providing healthcare are particularly high.
- Policy makers should improve healthcare system efficiency and equality in health treatment.

Abstract

Knowing the public opinion of healthcare is essential when assessing healthcare system performance; but little research has focussed on the links between the public's general attitude to the healthcare system and its perceptions and expectations of specific healthcare-related aspects. Using data from the fourth round of the European Social Survey 2008/09, we explore the cognitive determinants of global evaluations of the healthcare system in 12 Eastern and 16 Western European countries. We find that healthcare evaluations follow a *coherent cognitive reasoning*. They are associated with (i) *perceptions* of the performance of healthcare systems (i.e. efficiency, equality of treatment, health outcomes), (ii) *expectations* of the government's role in providing healthcare, and (iii) *reflections* on demographic

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