

Balancing equality, equity and need

Public opinion on distributive justice in the changing welfare state

Arno VAN HOOTEGEM

Proefschrift aangeboden tot het verkrijgen van de
graad van Doctor in de Sociale wetenschappen

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Chapter 1

General introduction

Justice in the eye of the beholder

1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

European welfare systems and the bases of social solidarity changed profoundly over the last decades. Particularly, two large parallel societal developments urge to re-think the fundamental social question, which first came to the fore in the 19th century and asked “how social solidarity can be defined and secured under the conditions of an industrial society” (Lorenz, 2016, p. 5). On the one hand, the shared social foundations underlying the development of the welfare state, which institutionalized the willingness to share social risks, have been eroded substantially (van der Veen, 2012). Indeed, processes of individualization sharpened the debate on the trade-off between individual or collective responsibilities to meet social needs by shifting the focus towards individuals themselves to supply a reasonable living standard (Beck, 2002). Collective risks became increasingly personal and transparent, thereby undermining the unconditional willingness to contribute for similar others (Rosanvallon, 2000). This personalization of social risks has also become observable in the discourses and design of welfare policies. The individualist perspective is for instance prevalent in neoliberal rhetoric that hold citizens themselves accountable for social problems and in welfare reforms that push individuals to take matters into their own hands (Dwyer, 2000; Wiggan, 2012).

On the other hand, processes of globalization reshuffled the organization of solidarity and welfare state distributions profoundly over the last decades (van der Veen, 2012). The increasing interconnectedness of people across the globe and growing flows of cross-national movements give rise to new challenges in dealing with redistribution in fundamentally multicultural societies. While the welfare state emerged from local initiatives and was later formally consolidated in institutions at the nation state level, internationalization and Europeanization put pressure on national benefit schemes and raise questions on whether social policies should not be organized on a supranational level (Ferrera, 2003). In addition, globalization issued the question whether non-national groups, such as immigrants and refugees, should be included in the circle of solidarity (Bommers, 2012). Although seemingly largely unfounded, there are increasing political concerns that multicultural societies with high ethnic and racial diversity undermine redistributive capacities, trust and social cohesion in Western societies (Kymlicka & Banting, 2006). This is for instance evident in emerging discussions on welfare chauvinism, which asks whether immigrants are deserving of state

support or should be excluded all together from social provisions (Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2012).

Although other societal transformations, such as the aging of populations and surging inequality rates, are naturally also important, these processes of individualization and globalization especially provide a context wherein there has been a re-interpretation of the dilemma of “who should get what and why” (van Oorschot, 2000). Essentially, this issue is about how to balance the benefits and burdens in society, which is captured by the notion of distributive justice (Rawls, 1972). The longstanding research tradition of distributive justice generally distinguishes three key principles that entail fundamentally different ways of balancing the scale of rights and obligations, and of distributing public resources: equality, equity and need (Deutsch, 1975). While equality grants equal resources to everyone without additional requirements, equity makes distributions contingent on contributions to the common good and the principle of need implies a more liberal form of distribution that is only granted to those who are truly poor or in need. Yet, besides regulating the division of publicly acclaimed funds, these principles of distributive justice entail distinct organizational logics of benefits and services in the welfare state (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002). Indeed, instead of merely dealing with the *delivery* of welfare provisions, they constitute the basis of different *types* of welfare systems (Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). In this sense, each of these principles is again up for discussion and connects to the question of how we want to design our welfare system in times when the original conditions of welfare state expansion no longer apply.

Although being particularly relevant in the current turbulent welfare climate, discussions on justice principles are not novel, but have been ongoing for centuries (Liebig & Sauer, 2016). Normative debates in social and political philosophy on which conditions have to be met in order to guarantee a just society have been going on for a long time and are far from over. Yet, now potentially more than ever, the issue of distributive justice becomes an abiding concern to ordinary citizens as well, as the question of how to assign right and responsibilities or balance benefits and burdens is central to many of the most important challenges arising from these processes of individualization and globalization. To begin with, individualization

has eroded traditional beacons of meaning and protection by changing social risks from being external to increasingly 'manufactured', predictable and personal (Giddens, 1999). In this light, the topic of distributive justice and the question of how to assign resources becomes increasingly important for individual citizens as well, as they bear larger responsibility in adjusting their life style, functioning independently in society and developing autonomy to ensure their well-being (Giddens, 1994; van der Veen, 2000). In addition, processes of globalization put citizens in networks spanning across countries and create dependencies across national borders, which necessitates to re-think how welfare is being allocated. This global dependency and its relevance for ordinary citizens became even clearer in light of the eruption of Covid-19 crisis, whereby questions on how to allocate vaccinations within and across societies as well as how hospital beds should be assigned became vital (Liu et al., 2020; Van de Walle, 2020).

As issues of distributive justice hence become crucial for the general public through these processes of individualization and globalization, philosophical theory on which principles are desirable from a normative point of view should increasingly be supplemented with empirical research on public opinion towards distributive justice. As a result, this dissertation tries to provide insight into European publics' support for the distributive justice principles of equality, equity and need in the welfare state. It offers a sociological account that assesses collective attitudes and norms on justice that drive behaviours and are themselves determined by the social structures and aggregates in society (Liebig & Sauer, 2016). In particular, this dissertation examines to what extent preferences for equality, equity and need vary across welfare benefit schemes and are combined into underlying belief systems, are explained by individual as well as country factors and are capable of predicting more concrete policy attitudes. Each of these objectives is elaborated upon in this introduction. Generally, however, there are at least four important advantages of studying accounts of distributive justice among the mass public and complementing the predominantly normative literature on social justice.

First of all, empirical accounts of justice and their integration with normative theories can be thought-provoking (Swift, 1999). Observing how the common public engages with topics related to equality, freedom and (re)distribution can shed new light on philosophical theories

and lead to new puzzles on how the social contract ought to be organized (Gaertner & Schokkaert, 2012). Second, this type of research identifies the feasibility constraints of normative theories and exposes their scope of applicability (Swift, 1999). As the feasibility of a political system at least partly depends on people's acceptance of public institutions and their underlying principles (Mau & Wrobel, 2006), these beliefs are crucial to dissect whether certain normative architectures can also be implemented in practice. Third, empirical justice research adds nuance, precision and most of all relevance to normative theories, which is of uttermost importance in social science research (Gerring & Yesnowitz, 2006; Perez & Fox, 2021). Using this type of data 'spotlights' issues that are relevant for normative theorizing by indicating that it has societal implications and is connected to a significant social problem (Perez, 2020). Last, and most relevant for this dissertation, distributive justice preferences are not only complementary to philosophical theories, but also offer a new perspective on public opinion towards the welfare state, social policies and different types of social security organization. As justice preferences correspond to more fundamental views on how the allocation of public resources should be institutionalized, they enable to uncover the political feasibility and legitimacy of various (re)distributions and hence different ways of balancing benefits and burdens in society. In particular, distributive justice may be able to offer a complementary view on several themes discussed in the traditional deservingness literature (van Oorschot, 2000). While deservingness is about the evaluation of the fulfilment of certain preconditions of social groups to be considered entitled to welfare support, distributive justice is related to evaluations of the intrinsic nature of the distribution of goods or conditions themselves (Cohen, 1979).

Yet, although empirical research on distributive justice is thus highly valuable both from an academic and a policy perspective, studies on public opinion towards distributive justice are rather scarce and generally do not live up to their potential. This is because of a number of crucial shortcomings in the literature, which are elaborated upon in more detail in this general introduction. I start, however, by further clarifying various perspectives on distributive justice and what public support for each of the principles entails, before turning to this overview of the existing literature and the central objectives of this thesis.

2. PERSPECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES OF DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

2.1. PERSPECTIVES OF DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

To begin with, it is fruitful to distinguish the central topic and concept of this dissertation from other interpretations of justice that are widely discussed in psychological and normative literatures alike. Distributive justice refers to questions about “the fair distribution of benefits and burdens, such as income, bonuses, and taxes” (R. Vermunt & Törnblom, 1996, p. 5). In this sense, this type of justice is about the outcomes of allocations and about the distributions that are realized when resources are assigned in line with guiding principles (Cropanzano & Ambrose, 2001). Distributive justice is often contested against procedural perspectives that deal less with the results of allocations as such. Procedural justice instead engages with the rules, processes or procedures through which certain allocations occur and that lead up to certain outcomes (Cropanzano & Ambrose, 2001; Tyler et al., 1997; R. Vermunt & Törnblom, 1996). These judgements on the fairness of the applied procedures in reaching decisions or certain distributions, stand relatively independently from the actual absolute or relative outcomes received (Molm et al., 2003). Although other perspectives certainly exist as well, the distinction between distributive and procedural theories has received most attention and is particularly relevant to assess justice in the welfare state. Nevertheless, despite the relevance of procedural perspectives also in sociological conceptions of justice (Liebig & Sauer, 2016), this dissertation unavoidably selects a particular vantage point and only concentrates on the topic of distributive justice.

However, even within theories of distributive justice, multiple angles and conceptions are pushed and investigated by scholars from various fields. An important distinction in this regard is for instance between micro- and macro-level theories of distributive justice, which each discuss separate themes and focus on varying kinds of preferences and behaviour (Sabbagh, 2001). While justice at a micro-level deals with the allocation of rewards or resources to individuals and is situated in personal relationships, macro-conceptions of justice deal with how scarce resources are distributed on an aggregate level in relation to society as a whole (Brickman et al., 1981; R. Vermunt & Törnblom, 1996). The former type usually involves clear personal stakes for the person involved, while the latter involves more distant evaluations of the societal distribution with more ambiguous individual consequences (Tyler et al., 1997).

Given that this dissertation is sociological in nature and attempts to grasp people's preferences for allocation rules in aggregate welfare state distributions, I exclusively adopt a macro-level theory of justice. This does not imply that no individual preferences or dividing lines are studied, but merely that only support for the principles governing societal distributions are studied instead of personal assignments of resources.

Besides the distinction between micro- and macro-perspectives, it is important to disentangle uni- and multidimensional theories of distributive justice (Sabbagh, 2001). Unidimensional conceptions assume that there is a single principle or criteria that is applied in assessing the fairness of the distribution of various types of resources. Equity theory, which postulates that people use the encompassing and single principle of equity by evaluating distributions in relation to the proportion between inputs and rewards, and utilitarianism, which states that the criteria of utility is the only standard to assess distributions, are examples of these unidimensional perspectives (Homans, 1974; Sabbagh, 2001; Soltan, 1986). Multidimensional theories, in contrast, explicitly recognize that there are multiple principles that can be deemed just to organize the allocation of scarce resources. This type of stance negates the integration of standards of evaluation into a single coherent normative theory (Sabbagh, 2001; Soltan, 1986). The three principles of equality, equity and need constitute the prime example of a multidimensional justice theory (Deutsch, 1975), as it recognizes that various ideals can simultaneously be considered just. Given that this dissertation focuses on these three principles that govern different types of welfare distributions, I necessarily adopt a fundamentally multidimensional perspective on distributive justice.

2.2. PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE

2.2.1. EQUALITY

Besides the concept of freedom, equality is perhaps one of the most widely covered ideas in the philosophical and political domain throughout history. There is a vast staple of normative theories discussing this principle, going all the way back to ancient Greeks such as Aristotle (von Leyden, 1985). Unavoidably, there are also many conceptions of equality and a plethora of interpretations of what an egalitarian society should look like in practice (Bell, 1978). However, for purposes of conceptual clarity when discussing this principle in the field of the

welfare state, a distinction between two forms of equality is particularly relevant: equality of opportunity and equality of outcome or result (Flora & Heidenheimer, 1981; Roller, 1995; Sachweh, 2016). Equality of opportunity refers to whether citizens have equal chances to obtain certain resources and acquire sufficient well-being, which has received a great deal of attention in various literatures and research traditions. This form still allows for inequality in income or wealth and status differences, as long as everyone has the same opportunity to achieve a particular social status. However, equality in outcomes or results is stricter, as it requires an equal redistribution of resources that is embedded into the welfare state. Here the focus is on guaranteeing that there is an equal disposal of resources, commodities and services (Flora & Heidenheimer, 1981, p. 24). Throughout this dissertation, I focus in particular on equality of results, as this connects closest to distributive justice that is oriented at outcomes instead of procedures as well as to many of the redistributive mechanisms in the welfare state.

As mentioned, the principle of equality is not just an ideal-typical normative idea, but is ingrained in a particular design of the welfare state. Specifically, it is the leading and predominant principle in social democratic or universal welfare systems that are oriented at an equal provision of welfare that does not depend on additional requirements (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Sachweh, 2016). This translates itself into universal, unconditional and citizenship-based social benefits that are aimed at promoting the general well-being and an adequate living standard that does not depend on people's participation in the market (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002). In terms of public support, it has been shown that support for a very strict form of equality that guarantees equal incomes is not immensely popular (Magni-Berton, 2019). However, in certain instances and for the distribution of specific welfare benefits, equality does receive a considerable degree of public support (Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013).

2.2.2. EQUITY

The concept of equity knows many interpretations as well and the principle has been used to refer to a variety of different ideas. Essentially, the way it is conceptualized in this dissertation, equity is based on the idea that benefits should be given on the basis of differences in performance or attributes (Miller, 1999). As a result, in this dissertation, equity is seen as the

idea that the distribution of resources should be made proportional to individuals' contributions to the common good, in terms of paid taxes, social security contributions or working trajectories for instance. This type of distribution has also been referred to by using other related concepts, such as reciprocity, desert or merit (Sachweh, 2016). Equity received a lot of attention by psychologists in the 1960s and 1970s, as they relied on equity theory which specified that inputs or contributions delivered should be proportional to the outcomes individuals eventually receive (Adams, 1965). As it received so much attention, it was often coined as the dominant principle, whereby equality and need were considered to be secondary distributive principles (Wagstaff, 1994).

Like equality, equity is the predominant principle governing welfare distributions in a particular type of social security system. Equity-related ideas determine the allocation of benefits and services in a conservative welfare regime, which is oriented at status preservation and rewarding previous contributions to the common good (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Sachweh, 2016). This system is grounded on horizontal redistribution that is organized from low- to high-risk groups (instead of purely between the rich and poor) and strongly relies on hierarchies according to status and class (Arts & Gelissen, 2001; Van Lancker & Van den Heede, 2021). The conservative or corporatist welfare state offers a Bismarckian interpretation of welfare that is based on social insurance logics, whereby individuals insure themselves against future risks by working and paying in to the system (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002). Some scholars have identified equity as the most or at least a very broadly supported principle (Aalberg, 2003; Marshall et al., 1999). However, the adopted survey items mostly referred to whether income differentials and rewarding hard work are considered to be legitimate, which might partly explain the broad support and does not necessarily say anything about the distribution of welfare benefits.

2.2.3. NEED

While equality and equity have received a great deal of attention, the principle of need is often ignored or considered to be a secondary principle in normative debates on distributive justice. In this sense, need is the least formalized principle and it is surrounded by a lot of ambiguities in terms of measurements and conceptualizations (Traub, 2020). This is in part because the

need principle is interpreted very differently when considering it on a more personal level in social relationships versus on a macro-level in governing welfare state distributions. On a personal or relational level, it is equated with solidarity, attention for personal needs and mutual affection. However, when discussing distributions in the welfare state on a macro-level, the principle equates with a much more residual form of redistribution that is only granted to those groups who are truly considered to be in need, such as the poor or disabled (Kittel, 2020). The principle of need is grounded on the idea that people should be able to acquire a “minimally decent life”, which can nevertheless be defined in a variety of ways (Miller, 1999, p. 210; Sachweh, 2016).

The need principle coincides with the organization of distributions in the third main welfare regime: the liberal system (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Sachweh, 2016). This type of welfare state starts from the assumption that acquiring a decent living standard is an individual responsibility and that only the truly deserving poor should be helped by the state (Arts & Gelissen, 2001). In practice, this is usually achieved by implementing means-tested benefits, which include checking available income and resources of beneficiaries before granting welfare state support. Need-based distribution is hence very selective in nature, and clearly demarcates between deserving and undeserving groups in society (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002). Given the ambiguities around the interpretation and measurement of the need principle, studies also find differing levels of public support for this distributive idea. While some authors conclude that it is the most preferred out of three (Arts & Gijssberts, 1998), others report lowest levels of public support for need-based welfare distributions in comparison to the two other justice principles (Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013).

3. PUBLIC OPINION TOWARDS EQUALITY, EQUITY AND NEED

In studying public preferences regarding distributive justice principles, there are particularly strong economic and psychological traditions. In economic research, preferences for efficiency and equality are often evaluated in types of dictator or ultimatum games where smaller samples of participants are expected to make trade-offs between various justice principles (Cappelen et al., 2007; Engelmann & Strobel, 2004; Fisman et al., 2017; Konow & Schwettmann, 2016). At the basis of this perspective usually lies a type of rational choice model, which

presumes that people to a certain extent act in accordance to the maximisation of their material self-interests. Although multidimensional justice models are recognized in the economic literature and increasingly other perspectives are also integrated within this tradition (Konow & Schwettmann, 2016), overall the small scale experimental settings based on rational choice models are unsuitable in themselves to answer which principles of distributive justice are accepted among the general public at large. In contrast, the psychological approach is more oriented at understanding individual cognitions, emotions and behaviours in relation to distributive justice (Gollwitzer & van Prooijen, 2016). Especially organizational psychology devotes a great deal of attention to justice perceptions in distributive outcomes at the workplace and its consequences for organizational, social and political motivations and behaviours (Alexander & Ruderman, 1987; Colquitt et al., 2001; Greenberg, 1990; Van Hootegem et al., 2021). Yet, this approach also does not put justice ideals in relation to broader societal structures and is insufficient to assess citizens' views on societal distributions as a whole instead of only in personal or employment relationships.

However, besides these economic and psychological vantage points, various sociological, social policy and political scholars have examined preferences for these three or a subset of the justice principles and hence contributed to the development of empirical accounts of justice (Aalberg, 2003; Arts & Gelissen, 2001; D'Anjou et al., 1995; Hochschild, 1981; Lewin-Epstein et al., 2003; Listhaug & Aalberg, 1999; Ng & Allen, 2005; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). There is nevertheless still strong variety across these studies in terms of adopted measurements, data sources, perspectives and empirical findings of which principle of distributive justice is most popular among the general public. Yet, most of this distributive justice research that dives into public preferences shares a number of characteristics that defines the state of the art of this scientific field. In contributing to the research tradition, this dissertation especially zooms in on a number of characteristics of various empirical studies that can be considered as barriers to a rich and full understanding of justice preferences in contemporary welfare states.

Preferences regarding justice ideals are usually conceptualized at a high level of abstraction, meaning that opinions on the distribution of wealth and income in society as a whole are

commonly examined. In their seminal study, Arts and Gelissen (2001) for instance conceptualize equality as eliminating income inequalities, equity as recognizing people on their merits and need as guaranteeing that basic needs are met. Similarly, in her book on justice preferences in comparative perspective, Aalberg (2003) measures equality as guaranteeing equal shares to everyone, while interpreting equity and need as letting people keep what they have earned and getting citizens what they need, respectively. From these examples, it should be clear that justice preferences are mostly put in relation to aggregate income distributions and are rarely connected to allocations of more specific benefits and services in the welfare arena. Although there are some expectations that do assess distributions within or across concrete welfare domains (Franke & Simonson, 2018; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013), applying justice criteria to practical contexts is more of an exception than the rule. In this sense, a rather one-sided conceptualization of justice preferences is offered in the literature that does not consider the potential dependency of fairness ideals on the distributive scenario under consideration.

Furthermore, in relation to this abstract conceptualization, studies try to answer which of the three principles of justice is the “fairest one of all” to govern the distribution of income and wealth (Konow, 2003). Although the question of which principle is most popular remains open to debate, most of the aforementioned research does try to decide on a single principle that the general public considers just in structuring the assignment of public resources. While some for instance conclude that equity is the predominantly or most widely preferred principle, others point to more support for equality or need (Aalberg, 2003; Arts & Gelissen, 2001; Marshall et al., 1999; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). Despite the relevance of establishing which idea creates most traction among the general public, this approach of pinning down a single principle largely ignores the potential for considerable heterogeneity and diversification in justice preferences. Even if overall a single principle can be appointed as gathering the largest support from constituents, which is questionable in itself given the context-dependency of justice, this still fails to acknowledge that individuals could combine multiple distributive ideas at once and not adhere to an unidimensional justice theory. While in the welfare state attitudes literature the potential to integrate and combine various attitudes in

underlying belief systems has been showcased (Houtman, 1997; Kankaraš & Moors, 2009; Roosma et al., 2014), this has largely remained unnoticed in the justice literature.

Not only do studies try to disentangle the degree to which these principles are corroborated and deemed just, some then zoom in on the dividing lines and the origins of conceptions of distributive justice. Social structural characteristics of individuals are the usual suspects in this regard, whereby the assumption is that people's social positions and personal experiences form how they conceptualize the balance between rights and obligations in society. Although this theory certainly explains some variability in public opinions, generally social status has a quite moderate or limited impact. D'Anjou et al. (1995) for instance conclude that social characteristics work less generally than expected, as income and class have limited or ambiguous relationships to justice preferences. In reaction to this, broader ideological frameworks that go beyond distributions as such are sometimes coined as an alternative that inform public preferences more strongly. However, despite the fundamental multidimensionality of ideologies and their divisibility in terms of economic as well as cultural aspects (Achterberg & Houtman, 2009), the available research largely operationalizes these broader beliefs as unidimensional political ideology or left-right placement (Aalberg, 2003; Arts & Gelissen, 2001; D'Anjou et al., 1995; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). Consequently, despite this developing trend to dissect the origins of justice preferences, a thorough analysis of the main dividing lines remains largely missing.

In addition to focusing on an individual justice perspective, a considerable body of research looks into how preferences vary cross-nationally. There has been a particularly strong focus on how preferences vary across different types of cultures, where citizens are socialized into inherently distinct social norms, religions, behavioural patterns and ways of thinking (e.g., Kashima et al., 1988; Murphy-Berman & Berman, 2002; K. Otto et al., 2011). On a European level, there has for instance been attention for justice divides between Western and Eastern Europe, where a gap in cultural values is expected to translate into profoundly distinct views on society and redistribution (Arts & Gijssberts, 1998; Gatskova, 2013; Matějů, 1993). Others look not necessarily at cultural values as such, but direct attention to the institutions that reinforce and disperse norms on what types of distributions are desirable as well as acceptable.

At the forefront of this approach is the link between welfare regimes and justice norms, where the question is whether the predominant institutionalized principle is also most broadly supported by the general public (Arts & Gelissen, 2001; Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). However, this is usually done quite rigidly by imposing the welfare structure on justice ideals, without determining in an exploratory fashion whether these preferences might follow alternative cross-national divisions. In this sense, insight is still lacking on how ideas about distributive justice are geographically dispersed and which cross-national cleavages exist.

Evidently, public opinions on distributive justice are not only structured by individual and contextual factors, but also determine outcomes themselves. Although a relatively limited amount of studies has explicitly investigated this, the role of distributive justice as a social force that determines behaviours and structures is recognized occasionally (Liebig & Sauer, 2016). Andreß and Heien (2001) for instance demonstrate that justice principles structure attitudes towards the welfare state, whereby people who prefer need and more egalitarian individuals support a stronger degree of government involvement. Also in terms of establishing who gains access to resources in the welfare state, the adherence to specific principles plays a role, as those in favour of need-based distribution are most likely to prefer barriers to social provisions for immigrants (Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2012). Nevertheless, justice principles have barely been put in relation to support for more contemporary welfare reforms that are particularly salient in the recalibration of European welfare states. Although Jaime-Castillo (2013) does indicate that support for solidarity principles structures the popularity of pensions reforms, this is not extended to other transformations of welfare provisions. This is a missed opportunity, as equality, equity and need are central to the current discussion of how to introduce new types of social policies that rebalance rights and responsibilities in society.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE DISSERTATION

4.1. OBJECTIVE 1: TOWARDS A DOMAIN-SPECIFIC AND DIFFERENTIATED CONCEPTUALIZATION

In debates on which principles are most desirable and just from a normative point of view, various theorists have recognized that justice ideals are fundamentally context-dependent. In

his influential book "Spheres of justice: A defense of pluralism and equality", Michael Walzer (1983) argues that distributive justice ideas are not universal, but depend strongly on the good under consideration. His pluralistic account mentions that fundamentally different rules are fair for various 'spheres of social justice', which encompass distinct social goods, such as money, kinship and love, power, food and so on. Similarly, Jon Elster (1992) defends a local perspective on justice that recognizes that various relatively autonomous institutions and sectors adopt fundamentally distinct principles of allocation. In contrast to Walzer who uses a purely normative approach, he demonstrates that in practice various goods are indeed distributed according to distinct distributive criteria. Although others have recognized this context-dependency as well, the work of Joseph Carens (2000) also deserves special mention, as he explicitly points out the advantages of this type of context-sensitive approach to justice. His work recognizes that this method allows to better understand abstract principles by seeing how they are applied in practice, to integrate new perspectives into existing theories and to more clearly grasp the limitations as well as scope of applicability of normative presumptions.

Similarly, Miller (1999) defends an account of distributive justice that acknowledges that the appropriateness of social justice principles depends on the particular context or types of human relationships involved. He extends this logic beyond normative theories of justice and argues that distributive preferences are also essentially pluralistic and context-dependent. People will generally not prefer a single principle for all types of distributions, but will instead invoke several distributional criteria across their distributive judgements (Miller, 1992, 1999). In addition, Miller (1992) stretches this pluralistic perspective by arguing that people can balance multiple criteria at the same time and that it is hence unlikely that a single universal principle is preferred. In this sense, pluralistic not only means that there can be varying distributive norms in society depending on the context, but also that a single individual could consider various principles to be just at the same time. This should not be surprising, as many normative theories of justice actually integrate multiple principles and im- or explicitly build upon multivarious criteria. The theory of prioritarianism for instance clearly integrates both elements of equality and need, as it values egalitarian distributions, but assumes that deviations from equality are permitted if they benefit those who are most strongly in need (Parfit, 1997; Rippon et al., 2017).

Yet, despite this theoretical recognition of justice pluralism, public opinion research that aims to uncover which of the three principles receives most popular support usually does not acknowledge that the same principles are unlikely to be supported evenly for all types of distributions (Aalberg, 2003; Arts & Gelissen, 2001; D'Anjou et al., 1995; Marshall et al., 1999). Instead, they seek out to identify which of the three principles of distributive justice is preferred most in absolute terms to govern societal distributions as a whole, without differentiating between different types of distributive spheres or social goods. However, this assumption is questionable, as Reeskens and van Oorschot (2013) illustrate that support for the principles differs depending on the welfare benefit under consideration. Yet, these studies also do not consider potential combinations of justice preferences and disregard the heterogeneity of support for the principles among the general public. As some authors have previously indicated that individuals regularly call upon different criteria in their distributive judgements (Franke & Simonson, 2018; Miller, 1992; Scott et al., 2001), the explicit consideration of the simultaneous applicability of multiple rules or standards becomes necessary (Leventhal, 1980; Mau & Wrobel, 2006). Ignoring this within-person diversity in opinions misrepresents the complexity of public support for different types of distributions. As Sachweh (2016, p. 294) summarizes very clearly: "A differentiated understanding of social justice is thus necessary in order to capture the specific configurations of justice principles encapsulated in different welfare arrangements".

As a result, the first objective of this dissertation is to provide a context-specific and differentiated conceptualization of distributive justice preferences. However, as this doctoral project deals with distributive justice in the realm of the welfare state, context-dependency is equated with domain-specificity meaning that distributive justice preferences are likely to vary across welfare domains. I do not conceptualize context-dependency, contrary to Walzer (1983) and Miller (1999), as the differential applicability of distributive principles to distinct social goods or types of human relations, but instead as the variability of distributive justice preferences across various welfare domains or social risks. Specifically, I investigate how preferences for the three distributive principles vary over three traditional social policy domains of health care, pensions and unemployment benefits. This nevertheless does not imply that no general fairness rules can be established, but captures "the impact of context on

the interpretation and application of general principles” (Konow, 2001; p. 139; Walzer, 1983). In addition to considering this domain-specificity, a differentiated account is offered by investigating how individuals combine preferences for the principles of equality, equity and need simultaneously. While some individuals may apply a single logic universally across distributions, others can call upon and balance differential criteria in their justice-related assessments. I aim to further disentangle these heterogeneous subgroups of individuals through the dissertation.

4.2. OBJECTIVE 2: OFFERING AN EXPLANATORY ACCOUNT OF DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE PREFERENCES

In John Rawls’ work (1972), he defends distributive justice judgements from behind a ‘veil of ignorance’ that are not clouded by one’s positions and perspectives. Conclusions on what constitutes the just basis for the distribution of resources in society should be made from an ‘original position’. Despite the relevance of this form of theorizing in light of developing a normatively acceptable conception of justice, we can expect that backgrounds and positions do play a role among the general public. Yet, insight into what exactly informs people’s preferences for distributive justice ideals remains underdeveloped. Especially in philosophical theory, explanatory accounts of common understandings of justice remain rather scarce, in spite of their potential to structure normative approaches and reveal biases (Elster, 1995). As a result, this project aims to provide insight into the main drivers that can explain justice preferences and reveal social as well as ideological dividing lines. In doing so, I distinguish between individual- and country-level determinants, to both dissect differences between groups and across various types of societies.

4.2.1. INDIVIDUAL FACTORS: SELF-INTEREST AND IDEOLOGY

To explain citizens’ preferences for the principles of equality, equity and need, I rely on two frameworks that have traditionally be employed to explain welfare attitudes: self-interest and ideology. To begin with, self-interest theory explains how social structural characteristics, such as income, education and welfare dependency, relate to views on welfare state distributions. Self-interest theory starts from the assumption that people operate as a ‘Homo Economicus’ (Kangas, 1997; Lindenberg, 1990). This implies that citizens are believed to primarily maximise

their own material interests by making rational cost-benefit calculations. In this regard, individuals should only support services and distributions that are believed to benefit themselves in the short- or long-term and disapprove of policies that imply personal disadvantages. This generally means that socio-economically vulnerable groups support redistribution and generous welfare policies more strongly, while advantaged groups would prefer more limited taxes and less vertical redistribution (Jaeger, 2006b; Roosma et al., 2016). Translated to justice preferences, this usually signifies that groups with a lower social status are expected to be more in favour of equality- or need-based distributions, while high status groups are more supportive of welfare in line with the principle of equity (Aalberg, 2003; Arts & Gelissen, 2001; D'Anjou et al., 1995; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). From this perspective, people do not judge from behind a 'veil of ignorance', but take their own interests and benefit calculations into account.

However, as self-interest in itself has relatively little explanatory power and fails to fully capture why people prefer certain distributions (Aalberg, 2003; Arts & Gelissen, 2001), a second framework is needed to explain justice preferences. The ideology framework assumes that people are not so much interest-maximising creatures, but can be described as 'Homo Sociologicus' (Kangas, 1997; Lindenberg, 1990). This model points to the importance of values and norms in shaping people's more concrete preferences and attitudes. Instead of purely being based on calculations of material benefits, views on welfare state distributions are argued to be embedded in coherent systems of political dispositions and normative orientations (Jaeger, 2006b; van Oorschot, 2006). While more specific attitudes could also feed into these broader ideological dispositions, generally individuals seem to be socialized in these more fundamental belief systems that span across life domains prior to formulating their opinions on more concrete welfare distributions (Jaeger, 2008). In particular, it has been shown that individuals with more right-wing orientations and who adhere more strongly to a free market ideology are more likely to prefer equity as a dominant principle, while more progressive groups are more inclined to opt for need- or equality-based distributions (Aalberg, 2003; Arts & Gelissen, 2001; D'Anjou et al., 1995; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). However, this left-right placement variable that is usually employed to measure the role of ideology is very ambiguous and can refer to many different concepts at the same time (Bauer et al., 2017).

As a result, to extend previous research I adopt a multidimensional approach to ideology that both distinguishes how cultural and economic dispositions, as mutually distinct dimensions of ideology (Achterberg & Houtman, 2009), translate into distributive justice preferences.

4.2.2. CONTEXTUAL FACTORS: THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Besides these individual factors, this dissertation aims to uncover which country characteristics explain why preferences for equality, equity and need diverge across European countries. As Rawls (1972, p. 3) himself remarked that “justice is the first virtue of social institutions”, particularly relevant in this regard is the link between institutional designs and justice preferences (Sachweh, 2016). As justice ideals essentially reflect preferences on types of welfare systems (Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013), the way the welfare state is actually being organized could influence beliefs on how it ought to be structured. Indeed, “the existing institutional design of a society and the rules and practices within these institutions reflect conceptions of justice at the collective or societal level” (Liebig & Sauer, 2016, p. 38), which could trickle down to citizens’ views on distributive justice in the welfare state. According to normative institutionalism and moral economy frameworks (Mau, 2003; Rothstein, 1998; Sachweh, 2012, 2016; Taylor-Gooby et al., 2018), institutions put forward certain norms and values that can be internalized by citizens through processes of socialization. As a result, the general public could conform to these moral principles and prefer types of distributions that are in line with the dominant organizing principles in welfare policies.

To establish the link between institutions and welfare preferences, usually it is investigated to what extent distributive preferences mirror the welfare regime typology laid out by Esping-Andersen (1990) (Andreß & Heien, 2001; Arts & Gelissen, 2001; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013; Svallfors, 1997). This is because each of the principles of distributive justice is dominant in one of the three originally identified types of welfare states and the general public could internalize the predominant distributive norms within their country. In particular, equality guides allocations of resources in social democratic welfare states, equity governs distributions in conservative regimes and need is the most outspoken principle in liberal systems (Arts & Gelissen, 2001; Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Sachweh, 2016). However, even within particular types of welfare states, there is still substantial heterogeneity in distributive norms (Sachweh,

2016), especially in more hybrid states that do not belong to one of the three welfare regimes types. This is for instance the case for Eastern European welfare states, where elements of both equity and equality have been integrated into the system (Arts & Gijsberts, 1998; Gijsberts, 2002; Matějů, 1993). As a result, to uncover the link between these institutional systems and distributive norms, more attention should be paid to how justice norms are combined instead of purely looking at aggregate support for each of the principles in the three ideal-typical welfare regime types. To consider this, the dissertation looks at configurations of justice preferences both at the individual- and country-level, and links them to institutional characteristics of European societies.

4.3. OBJECTIVE 3: INVESTIGATING THE CONSEQUENCES OF DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE PREFERENCES

Besides lacking insight into the driving mechanisms behind distributive justice preferences, these opinions on the principles are themselves insufficiently recognized as an explanatory framework able to explain more concrete views on social policies. Although justice ideals acts as types of social values that express “shared conceptions of the desirable” (Liebig & Sauer, 2016; Van Deth & Scarbrough, 1995, p. 28), the centrality of distributive justice in contemporary welfare debates has not been sufficiently acknowledged in the social policy literature. Yet, this is crucial to consider, as justice preferences can affect individual behaviours that in turn alter social structures and have profound societal consequences (Liebig & Sauer, 2016). While the consequences of perceptions of distributive injustice or imbalances between actual and just rewards have been well-studied in psychological literatures (Jasso et al., 2016), very few studies have looked into how preferences for these abstract principles that govern different types of distributions inform more concrete social policy and welfare attitudes (see Andreß & Heien, 2001; Jaime-Castillo, 2013; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2012 for exceptions).

The principles of justice could nevertheless be particularly relevant to understand which types of distributions people have in mind when formulating their opinions on particular social policies and could have substantial explanatory strength for a number of reasons. To begin with, equality, equity and need are embedded in the design of various institutional arrangements and provide the guiding principles on which social policies are based (Clasen &

van Oorschot, 2002). In this sense, the social justice principles match the (re)distributive goals that various institutional designs aim to achieve and correspond to the fundamental norms that policies set out. Indeed, justice ideals are intertwined with the programmatic background of policies and constitute one of the most important parts of the paradigms behind particular types of social benefits and services (Daigneault, 2014a). Consequently, by establishing the connection between justice ideas and policy preferences, we are also able to say something about to what extent the principles embedded in the normative architecture of programs find their way down into public opinions. Distributive justice principles can hence establish the link between institutional arrangements and policy preferences on a micro-level (cf., Hedegaard, 2014), by determining whether people adopt the predominant distributive norms put forward by social policies.

However, besides being embedded in the institutional architecture, justice principles could also have an important impact because they are central to many of the contemporary welfare debates. This is especially useful for relatively new types of welfare reforms that increasingly reinstate and reinterpret the question of “who should get what and why” (van Oorschot, 2000, p. 34). As distributive justice essentially deals with the issue of how to assign rights and responsibilities (Rawls, 1972), and contemporary policies are grounded in new ways of balancing these against each other, justice principles are an essential part of current discussions on the future of European welfare states. This is especially relevant in the context of the rise of new social risks that are not fully covered by traditional social competition schemes, which necessitates the introduction of innovative social policies that address these uncertainties that are intensified through processes of globalization and individualization. As these new risks challenge classical ways of organizing social solidarity and new types of social policies increasingly redesign the assignment of responsibilities (Taylor-Gooby, 2004; van der Veen, 2012), the principles of distributive justice that entail fundamentally different ways of institutionalizing risk pooling are cornerstones to these heated debates. Yet, the question remains whether these principles that are central to new welfare discussions and that policy-makers use as foundations also structure people’s opinions and beliefs about welfare instruments.

Consequently, the third objective of this dissertation involves exploring the role of distributive justice preferences as an explanatory framework for more specific preferences for different types of social policies. The focus is particularly on how preferences for equality, equity and need relate to three contemporary welfare reforms that are increasingly being implemented in European welfare states, each implying a renewed perspective on how rights and responsibilities should be balanced. Focusing on these relatively innovative policy instruments is particularly relevant, as there is little insight into the values structuring their public support as well as into the question of whether opinions towards these proposals are still based on the normative principles that underly their discourses as well as institutional architectures.

To begin with, attention is directed towards support for demanding activation policies, which are strongly politicized and aim to push people back into employment by means of work obligations and benefit sanctions (Bonoli, 2010; Eichhorst et al., 2008). These policies strongly rely on a shift from more traditional social compensation policies to increasing emphasis on work conditionality and self-reliance in the provision of social welfare, which implies a transformation from more equality-oriented distribution to equity- and need-based allocations of benefits (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Eichhorst et al., 2008; Ervik et al., 2015). Second, this dissertation studies how justice principles relate to support for basic income policies, which refers to an unconditional and universal cash benefit that is periodically given to everyone without work requirement or income test (Van Parijs & Vanderborght, 2017). Although basic income schemes have not yet been implemented on a full scale, they have been widely experimented with and have received a substantial degree of academic as well as political attention (Widerquist, 2018). Basic income proposals imply that a radical form of equality is pursued that does not rely on any contributions to the common good or levels of need anymore. Last, justice preferences are linked to support for means-tested benefits. These schemes rely heavily on the principle of need, as they imply that resources are only granted to those with insufficient means or income to acquire a decent living standard (Gugushvili & van Oorschot, 2020; van Oorschot, 2002). This encompasses a transformation towards more liberal forms of welfare that are much more selective in the granting of welfare support and increasingly distinguish between the deserving and undeserving poor (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002).

5. CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND EMPIRICAL CHAPTERS

As elaborated upon in the previous section, this dissertation aims to achieve three central objectives: (1) Offer a domain-specific and differentiated conceptualization of justice preferences that considers their dependency on the benefit under consideration and their internal combinations; (2) Discover the main explanations driving support for justice preferences both on an individual- and country-level by focusing on the social structure, ideology and institutional context; and (3) Reveal the consequences of preferences for equality, equity and need for more concrete social policy attitudes, with a particular focus on support for activation policies, basic income schemes and means-tested benefits. These objectives are visualized in Figure 1.1 and in what follows each of the empirical chapters of this dissertation are briefly discussed. For every empirical chapter the link is made explicitly to one of these objectives and their situation within the overall model of the thesis.

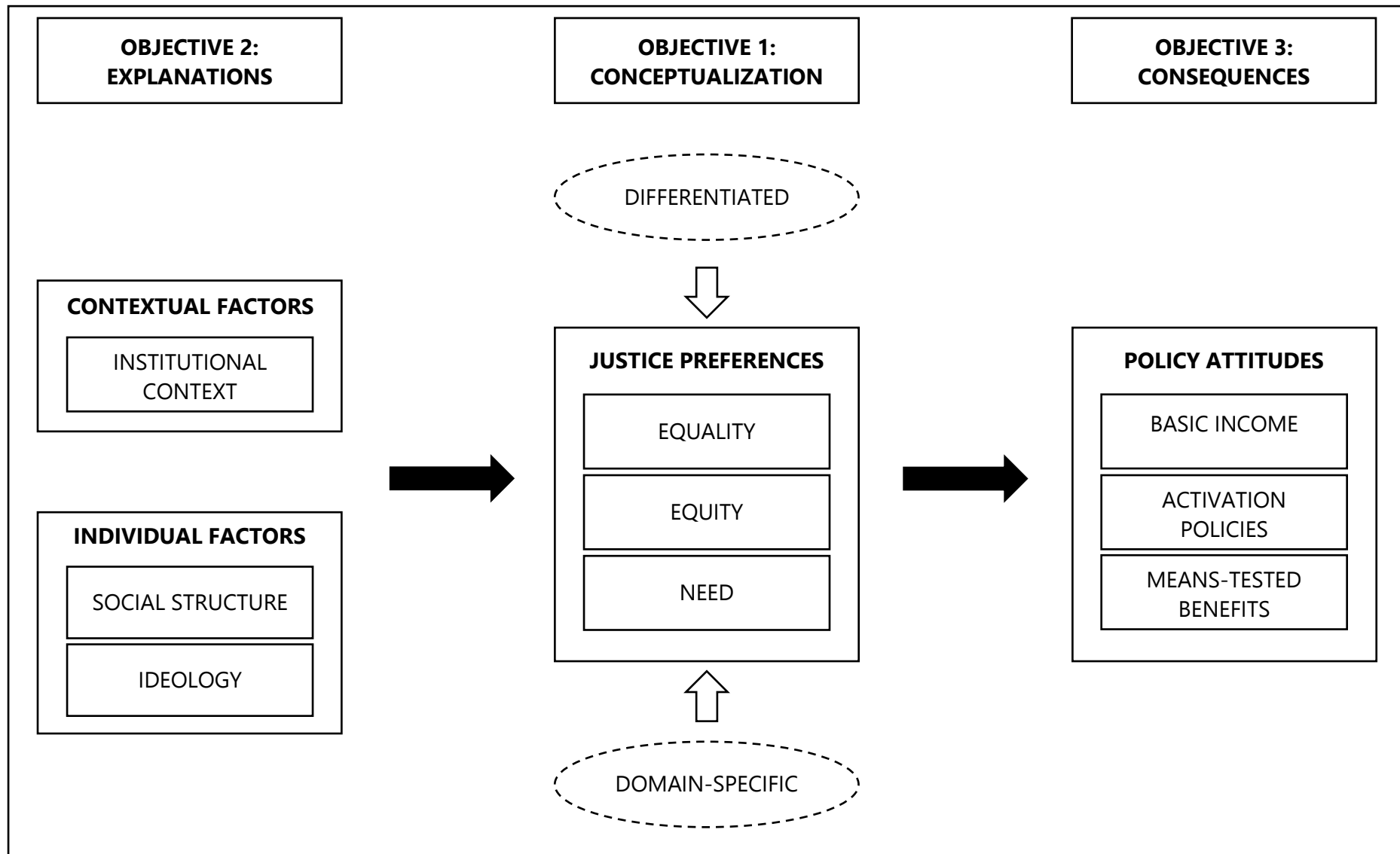


Figure 1.1. Visualization of the conceptual model of the dissertation

The first empirical chapter (Chapter 2) of this dissertation deals with the measurement of justice preferences, which is a necessary first step in order to accurately conceptualize them. Indeed, insight into the operationalization of preferences for equality, equity and need is a necessary requirement in order to accurately capture public opinions in the first place. In particular, Chapter 2 sets out to replicate and validate the Basic Social Justice Orientations (BSJO) Scale developed by Hülle et al. (2017) to measure support for equality, equity, need and a fourth principle of entitlement (which grants distributions based on people's status and privileges). This is particularly relevant, as a short version of this scale has been fielded in the ninth round of the European Social Survey, which is a large scale comparative survey that is used by a plethora of research and is also analysed in Chapter 5 of this dissertation. In Chapter 2, I argue that a more stringent validation of the BSJO scale is warranted by using a stricter methodology (i.e., Confirmatory Factor Analysis) and analysing a wider range of cases (i.e., both different countries and more various social groups). In doing this, renewed insight is given into the measurement and conceptualization of justice ideals.

After this exploration of the measurement of justice preferences, the second empirical chapter (Chapter 3) realizes objectives 1 and 2 of the dissertation. In the first place, the study investigates to what extent preferences for the three principles of distributive justice vary across various welfare domains that are connected to mutually distinct social risks and are institutionalized in line with different distributive norms in the Belgian welfare state. In particular, focus is directed towards justice preferences in the distribution of health care, pensions and unemployment benefits. While health care is connected to a prevalent and unpredictable social risk and is especially organized according to an universal logic, pensions and unemployment benefits are tied to risks that are considered to be more foreseeable or controllable and rely more strongly on a reciprocal logic in their organization (Giddens, 1999; Hinrichs, 1997; Mau, 2003; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). In a second step, this chapter reflects on how people combine preferences for the three principles across these welfare domains. Subgroups or configurations of justice preferences are created that refer to distinct ways of balancing support for equality, equity and need across health care, pensions and unemployment benefits. As a last empirical strategy and in connection to the second objective of the project, membership of these configurations is linked to the social structure in order to

assess self-interest theory and a number of ideological dispositions to evaluate the ideology framework (Arts & Gelissen, 2001; D'Anjou et al., 1995; Jaeger, 2006b; Ng & Allen, 2005; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013; van Oorschot, 2006). To sum up, the following three research questions are asked:

RQ1: *To what extent are preferences for the social justice principles dependent of the welfare domains?*

RQ2: *How do individuals combine preferences for the social justice principles across welfare domains?*

RQ3: *How are particular configurations of social justice preferences related to structural positions and ideological dispositions?*

Following this chapter on the domain-specificity of justice preferences, Chapter 4 also realizes objective 1 and 2. As benefit generosity is a fundamentally multidimensional concept that refers to the access of benefits as well as to their levels or amounts (Jensen et al., 2018; Korpi & Palme, 1998; A. Otto, 2018; Scruggs, 2006; van Oorschot, 2013), this distinction should also be considered in assessing people's preferences for different types of distributions. As the access and level of benefits are usually negatively correlated (van Oorschot, 2013), people might also hold radically different opinions in the principles governing who is entitled to benefits and those determining who gets most out of the system in terms of amounts. As result, in this chapter I aim to disentangle preferences for equality, equity and need in governing the access and level of benefits in two distinct ways. To begin with, the difference between access and level is studied in two welfare domains that relate to distinct types of social risks and that are institutionalized in different ways. In particular, to acquire a more encompassing picture of the access-level gap in various contexts, pensions and unemployment benefits are compared. Moreover, justice preferences in the access and level of both benefits are linked to social-structural and ideological determinants to see whether they have similar or radically different origins as well as to pin down whether they are structured around the same social or ideological dividing lines. By doing this, the following two research questions are being addressed:

RQ1: *To what extent are different justice principles (equality, equity and need) preferred to govern the access to and level of pensions and unemployment benefits?*

RQ2: *To what extent are these justice preferences in the access and level socially and ideologically stratified?*

Similarly to the previous two empirical chapters, Chapter 5 is connected to the first two objectives. However, instead of using a single country case, this empirical study is fundamentally comparative in nature. It starts from the observation that many studies try to construct so-called ‘worlds of welfare attitudes’, which refer to regional clusters with similar views on redistribution and solidarity (Andreß & Heien, 2001; Jaeger, 2009; Mehrtens, 2004; Svallfors, 1997, 2012). In this regard, scholars have especially tried to determine whether these worlds of attitudes coincide with the welfare state regime typology devised by Esping-Andersen (1990), with mixed evidence as a result. In this light, Chapter 5 sets out to adapt the available empirical strategy to reveal clusters of countries with shared ideas on (re)distributions. This is done by focusing on configurations or combinations of preferences for the principles of equality, equity and need, which not only reveal more fundamental opinions on how to organize distributions that bear a closer link to the regime typology (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Sachweh, 2016), but also are useful to inquire whether opinions mirror institutional norms in welfare states not clearly building on a single principle (e.g., Eastern European countries). Moreover, instead of assuming that worlds of justice preferences mirror the regime typology a priori, regional clusters are empirically constructed that allow for deviations from institutional patterns. To provide more insight into the driving forces behind these individual- and country-level configurations, they are then linked to the social structure, ideology and institutional characteristics. In particular, the chapter dives into the following two research questions:

RQ1: *Which individual profiles exist that combine preferences for the distributive justice principles of equality, equity and need in distinct ways?*

RQ2: *Which country profiles (i.e., worlds of distributive justice preferences) exist that cluster together societies according to their similar justice belief systems?*

Chapter 6 aims to shed light onto the consequences of justice preferences for a particular type of policy attitude and in this way contributes to the third objective of the dissertation. In particular, justice ideals are linked to support for demanding active labour market policies

(ALMPs), which are very strongly politicized and spreading across Europe. ALMPs introduce a new type perspective on welfare state distributions that transform the existing logic of traditional social compensation policies in two distinct ways (Maron & Helman, 2017; Romano, 2018). On the one hand, ALMPs imply a transformation from more solidary and unconditional welfare provisions to reciprocity-based logics that require work-based contributions to the social system in order to get help from the state (Béland & Cox, 2016; Daguerre, 2007; Hacker, 2006; Romano, 2018). On the other hand, they encompass a shift from collective responsibility in the occurrence of precarity to a more individualized approach in identifying the causes of unemployment (Dwyer, 2000; Romano, 2018). In this way, ALMPs are built on a particular new policy paradigm, which refers to ideas about the principles structuring policies as well as about the causes of the problems they address (Béland, 2005; Daguerre, 2007; Daigneault, 2014a; Hall, 1993). In this study, I aim to establish whether these ideological pillars of the paradigm behind ALMPS also shape their public support and whether citizens use these ideas to formulate their attitudes. As a result, the influence of the first pillar is operationalized by studying how equality, equity and need relate to support for ALMPs, as they essentially entail a move towards equity- and need-based distributions. The role of the individualized perspective on the causes of claiming benefits is inspected by examining unemployment attributions, which refers to collective or individual explanations of why people are in unemployment. To sum up, two research questions are formulated:

RQ1: *How are preferences for particular principles of distributive justice (equality, equity and need) related to support for demanding ALMPs?*

RQ2: *How do attributions of unemployment (individual blame, individual fate, social blame and social fate) influence support for demanding ALMPs?*

The last empirical chapter (Chapter 7) contributes to objective 3 by extending this analysis of consequences of justice ideas to two additional contemporary welfare reforms that are heavily debated and central in the redesign of future social security systems. In this study, I zoom in on support for demanding ALMPs, basic income schemes and means-tested benefits, which are in their ideal-typical design each built on a different distributive justice principle. While ALMPs are most strongly grounded on the principle of equity (see Chapter 6), basic income schemes mainly rely on an egalitarian conception of welfare and means-tested benefits clearly

connect to distributions on the basis of the need criterium. According to the moral economy and policy feedback literatures, citizens can pick up on these principles that lie at the foundation of policies and formulate their opinions in line with these normative ideas (Kumlin & Stadelmann-Steffen, 2014; Mau, 2004; Sachweh, 2012; Taylor-Gooby et al., 2018). In this sense, we would expect public opinions on these contemporary reforms to be based on their underlying justice norms. Yet, despite the embeddedness of the justice principles within the blueprints of each of these welfare reforms, they have not been fully institutionalized, are often debated from perspectives that conflict with their foundational principles and are implemented in a variety of ways that also go beyond their original objectives (Eichhorst et al., 2008; Marx et al., 2016; Raven et al., 2011; Sainsbury & Morissens, 2002; Zimmermann et al., 2020). To investigate this in more detail and determine whether support for the three reforms is still normatively founded, they are connected to support for equality, equity and need. In this way, the chapter provides an answer to the following research question:

RQ: *To what extent preferences for the principles of equality, equity and need explain support for means-tested benefits, activation policies and basic income schemes*

6. CONTEXT, EMPIRICAL STRATEGY, MEASUREMENTS AND METHODOLOGY

6.1. THE BELGIAN CONTEXT

As three of the empirical chapters are solely based on data from Belgium and two additional chapters include Belgium as one of the countries of study, it is worth elaborating on its institutional and political context. Institutionally, Belgium is characterized as a conservative welfare state, which is strongly built on the maintenance of status differences by linking social rights to class and status. The welfare system is hence characterized by a type of Bismarckian model and a strong Catholic tradition, which connects to a relatively traditional view on welfare provisions based on social insurance schemes (Esping-Andersen, 1990, p. 27). In addition, there is a strong institutionalized dialogue between labour unions and employer organizations in the welfare system, as social partners are heavily involved in the design and implementation of social policies (Cantillon et al., 2017). Overall, the Belgian social security logic strongly relates to the principle of equity and a quid-pro-quo welfare model that provides benefits and services proportionally to contributions made to the common good through for instance work trajectories (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002). This is for instance evident in the distribution of

pensions, which is organized as pay-as-you-go system where rights are being built up through working years and the amount is calculated on the basis of previous income to maintain an acquired living standard.

Despite the strong stability in income equality and poverty rates, and a seemingly 'frozen welfare state' pattern, the Belgian welfare state has undergone gradual changes over the last decades (Hemerijck & Marx, 2010). In light of growing demographic, economic, regional and European pressures, an increasing emphasis on selectivity in welfare provisions is being pursued. On the one hand, activating measures and work-related reforms are being pushed to induce work participation, cost containment and investments in human capital (Cantillon et al., 2017; Hemerijck & Marx, 2010). Although unemployment benefits remain unlimited in duration (Van Lancker et al., 2015), the state started to promote stricter eligibility criteria, monitoring and sanctioning of benefit claimants (Hemerijck & van Kersbergen, 2019; Nicaise & Schepers, 2015). On the other hand, there has been an increasing transition towards more targeted social policy measures, whereby distributions are more specifically oriented at the alleviating the needs of groups in vulnerable positions. This has mainly been achieved by implementing so-called 'targeting within universalism', whereby groups in need get extra help, through for instance supplementary child benefits and higher reimbursements in medical care for certain precarious segments of society (Cantillon et al., 2017). These transformations towards social policies that are more in line with equity- and need-based distributions make Belgium a particularly interesting case to study, as it indicates that all three principles of distributive justice are substantially debated and are all represented in institutional arrangements.

Politically, Belgium is a federal state and parliamentary democracy that has a compulsory voting system in place. Being a federal state, Belgium has strong political differences and dynamics according to the different language regions. Besides electing a federal government, citizens have to vote for regional governments that acquired increasing power over a series of state reforms. The latest Sixth State Reform of 2012-2014 has been especially determinative in this regard, where many responsibilities were transferred to the regional level and a further decentralization of social security schemes was installed (Béland & Lecours, 2017). In this

regard, Belgium is a clear example of ‘federalisation by disaggregation’, which implies that policies and competences are moved from the centre to the more decentralized level (Swenden et al., 2006). In this dissertation, I use data from Belgium collected after the elections of 2014 as well as data from after the elections of 2019. As a result, it is also worth contextualizing the dominant themes and rhetoric on the welfare state that occurred during these times. As a start, Figure 1.2. displays the positions of the Belgian parties on redistribution from the wealthy to the poor based on the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Jolly et al., 2022).

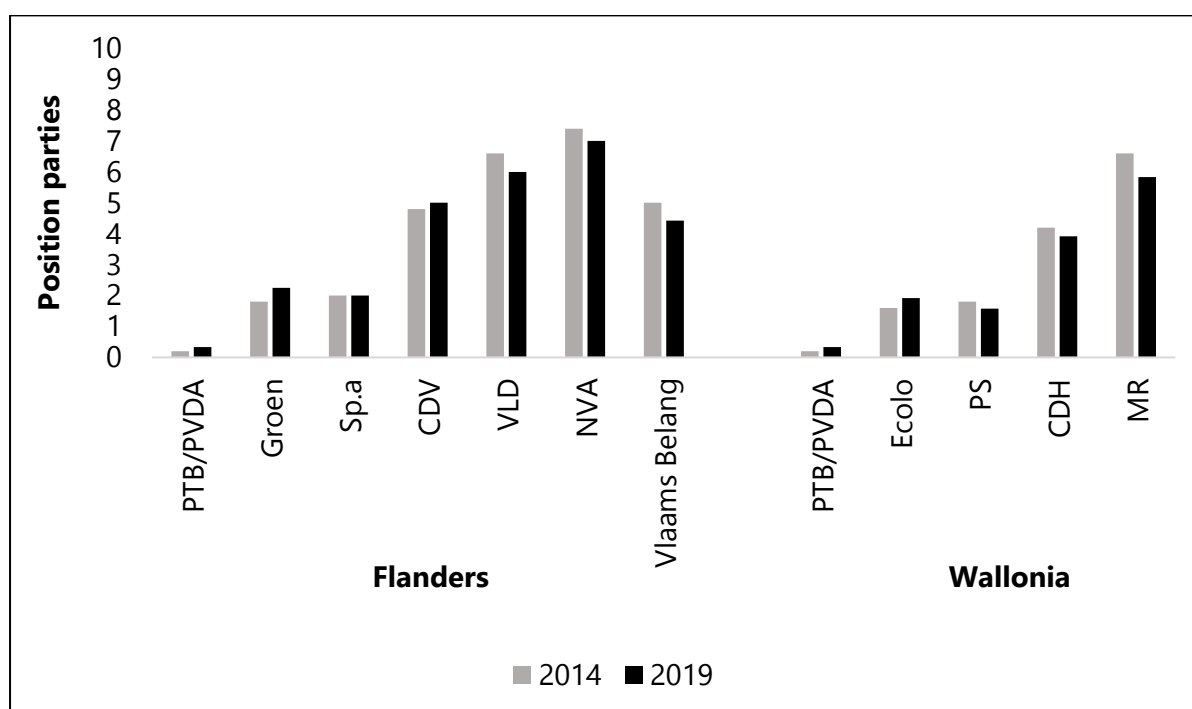


Figure 1.2. Position of Belgian parties on redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor in 2014 and 2019 (0 = strongly favours redistribution; 10 = strongly opposes redistribution)

The results from the expert survey demonstrate that most political parties have a relatively positive stance towards redistributing from the wealthy to the poor. Even the parties who are more on the opposing side do not score far above the midpoint of the scale, indicating that overall redistribution is accepted to at least some degree by most political parties in Belgium. The graph clearly demonstrates that overall parties in Wallonia are slightly more accepting of redistribution than most political parties in Flanders. The salience of redistributive issues on a political level nevertheless also becomes apparent when studying which themes citizens believed to be the most important in the electoral competition for both years. In 2014, people

indicated that employment, health care, pensions and education were the most important themes for vote choice (Abts et al., 2015). In 2019, citizens mainly pointed towards health care, economy and business, pensions, and environment and energy as dominant topics (Meuleman et al., 2021). In sum, this also indicates that welfare and redistributive issues were politically salient in both years.

6.2. EMPIRICAL STRATEGY

This dissertation adopts a purely quantitative approach based on large scale surveys for three distinct reasons. First, the goal is to uncover opinions on the three distributive justice in the public at large and to unravel structural dividing lines surrounding these justice preferences. By using as representative samples as possible with sufficiently large sample sizes, external validity is maximalised to generalize conclusions to the general public. Although this evidently depends strongly on the quality of the analysed surveys and does not necessarily say anything about the internal validity, the approach does enable to make broader claims on which principles are preferred among citizens of European countries, how they are structured and to what extent they are capable of explaining more specific policy attitudes. Second, as the principles are strongly theoretically established and there is a encompassing normative literature on their conceptualization and interpretation, they are suitable to be included in more deductive quantitative research. In this sense, large scale surveys allow to test the applicability and bounds of normative theories (Miller, 1992). Last, as surveys are regularly organized across various countries and facilitate the harmonization of data across contexts, they are particularly suitable to adopt a comparative perspective and link justice ideals to macro-level determinants. Although comparative qualitative research on distributive justice related topics can be highly relevant to reveal cross-national differences as well (Laenen et al., 2019; Taylor-Gooby et al., 2018), generally a higher number of countries can be examined when adopting a quantitative survey approach. In what follows, I describe the main surveys that are used throughout this thesis.

6.2.1. BELGIAN NATIONAL ELECTIONS STUDY 2014 AND 2019

The first survey that is used throughout several of the empirical chapters is the Belgian National Elections Study. This survey is collected in Belgium after the occurrence of the federal elections

and asks citizens who are entitled to vote about their opinions on a wide range of topics that are politically relevant and salient. Two-stage random sampling is used, whereby municipalities are first selected with a probability relative to the size of their population of 18 years and older, and individuals are then randomly drawn from them. In this regard, the National Register of Belgium functioned as the sampling frame. After selecting individuals, they are approached to conduct face-to-face interviews by means of Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI). To compensate for potential selective non-response and hence the under- or overrepresentation of certain groups in the sample, weights according to age, gender and education are applied throughout the various analyses. For the election study of 2014, a sample of 1901 individuals was realized and for the survey of 2019, in total 1659 individuals were interviewed. The election study of 2014 had a response rate of 47.18 percent, while the round of 2019 had a slightly lower response rate of 32.81 percent.

6.2.2. EUROPEAN SOCIAL SURVEY

The European Social Survey (ESS) is also used for three empirical chapters in this dissertation, although with varying numbers of countries involved. The ESS is a cross-national survey that is organized every two years since 2002 in more than 30 European countries, which asks people about their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. The quality of the ESS is closely monitored and improved by adopting strict translation procedures across countries, conducting face-to-face interviews and harmonizing data for all of the nations included. This survey always has a set of fixed questions that are included throughout all of the years as well as rotating modules, which differ per round and ask about a range of topical issues. In this dissertation data from the eighth (2016/2017) and ninth (2018/2019) round of the ESS are analysed, which include a rotating module on welfare attitudes and on justice beliefs, respectively. While only three countries from the eighth round are utilized (see further), for the ninth round the Belgian context is zoomed in on as well as all 29 countries for one empirical chapter. As the team organizing the ESS in Belgium included several additional questions on the justice principles that are not part of the main questionnaire, the Belgian sample can be used to assess the measurement validity of the justice scale.

6.2.3. CROSS-NATIONAL ONLINE SURVEY PANEL

The Cross-national Online Survey (CRONOS) panel is a web-based follow-up survey of the European Social Survey. After participating in the eighth round of the ESS (2016/2017), individuals in the United Kingdom, Estonia and Slovenia of 18 years and older were invited to fill out six short online follow-up questionnaires over a course of 12 months. The recruited respondents were hence the same individuals who already participated in the face-to-face main questionnaire of ESS. CRONOS asked over 100 questions on a wide range of topics, including test questions of the justice and fairness module implemented in the ninth round of ESS. Given that all CRONOS respondents filled out the eighth round of ESS on welfare attitudes, this data source makes it feasible to link ideas about justice to support for particular welfare reforms. Of the 5285 respondents (EE = 2019; UK = 1959; SI = 1307) that were interviewed in the main questionnaire of the eighth round of ESS, 2437 respondents (EE = 806; UK = 926; SI = 705) also took part in the CRONOS panel.

6.3. MEASUREMENTS

Given that various secondary data sources are used, the survey items operationalizing support for equality, equity and need naturally diverge across the empirical chapters. For several empirical chapters measurements based on the Basic Social Justice Orientations (BSJO) Scale (Hülle et al., 2017) are used, although in different versions and with varying items. As mentioned, Chapter 2 deals explicitly with the validity of this scale and exposes its limitations, which is used as input for the following chapters. Chapter 5 uses single items from the BSJO scale and operationalizes equality as providing an equal division of income and wealth, equity as rewarding those who work harder and need as giving resources unconditionally to those in need. While Chapter 7 also uses single items of this scale and opts for the same item of equity, for equality the item is used that states that differences between living standards should be small and for need the item mentioning that those having care responsibilities should receive special aid from the government. These differences between the employed measurements across these two chapters stem from availability in the surveys as well as from their appropriateness to answer the respective research questions.

The other chapters use self-designed items to measure the justice principles. Chapters 3 and 6 employ single item survey questions that require individuals to express their preferred principle in the distribution of health care, pensions or unemployment benefits: equal and reasonable benefits for everyone (equality), higher benefits for those who contributed more (equity) and minimal benefits for those in need (need). Chapter 4 uses single items that are formulated in accordance with the BSJO scale, but distinguish between the access and level of benefits. The items mention the distribution of pensions or unemployment benefits and measure support for: equal access/levels of benefits, access/higher levels for those who worked harder and access/higher levels for those who are poor and in need. Naturally, these different operationalizations across the empirical chapters could steer the results, which is important to consider. This is explicitly recognized across the various analyses and in the discussion of the main patterns.

6.4. METHODOLOGY

This project uses four distinct statistical methodologies to analyse the survey data and provide an answer to the central research questions. To begin with, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is applied throughout the empirical chapters. This technique assesses the validity of latent concepts that are captured by multiple items by evaluating whether or not these indicators truly measure a single underlying concept. CFA is a data reduction strategy that tries to capture covariances between certain observed variables in a more parsimonious way by finding a common factor that underlies their shared variance. However, in comparison to other data reduction techniques such as Exploratory Factor Analysis, the number of factors or latent concepts are defined beforehand on the basis of theoretical expectations instead of adopting a more inductive approach that starts from the data at hand. In addition, CFA is extremely useful as it allows to explicitly model and take into account measurement error. Throughout the dissertation, this method is used in order to capture, distinguish and test the validity of broader concepts that are probed by multiple indicators.

Second, closely connected to this, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is relied on to model relationships between various concepts and indicators. SEM is characterized by a measurement model, which is captured by CFA and encompasses latent concepts, and a

structural model, which expresses the relationship between various endogenous and exogenous variables. SEM is advantageous over classical regression techniques in the sense that it enables to simultaneously model multiple dependent variables and take their interrelationships into account, to include measurement models into structural pathways and hence consider the occurrence of measurement errors, and to distinguish between direct, total and indirect effects of independent variables on the outcomes of interest. SEM is in this dissertation mainly used to realize objective 2 and 3, whereby the relationships between certain latent concepts (e.g., ideological variables or support for ALMPs) and all three of the justice principles are expressed simultaneously.

However, besides these more variable-centred techniques, this dissertation thirdly makes use of the person-oriented method of Latent Class Analysis (LCA). In comparison to techniques such as CFA that assume homogeneity in the population, LCA tries to explicitly model heterogeneity in preferences. In particular, LCA aims to model subgroups in the population who combine certain attitudes, ideas or values in distinct ways (Collins & Lanza, 2010; Meeusen et al., 2018). Strictly speaking, LCA also differs from CFA for instance in the sense that it is based on categorical indicators instead of continuous measurements. Furthermore, it is less stringent, as LCA does not assume linearity and instead focuses on discovering more complex constellations of preferences and attitudes (Meeusen et al., 2018). This method is an exploratory and probabilistic technique, whereby it is difficult to predict beforehand how many groups or classes will be retrieved and where scores on the indicators are expressed in terms of conditional probabilities. LCA is adopted particularly to study configurations of justice preferences, which refers to subgroups of individuals who combine support for the principles of equality, equity and need in distinct ways. In this sense, it mainly contributes to the realization of objective 1 of this dissertation.

As an extension of this, Multilevel Latent Profile Analysis (MLPA) is also utilised to study configurations of justice preferences in cross-national perspective. The difference between LPA and LCA is that LPA is based on continuous indicators whereby different profiles are discovered with varying means on the indicators of interest, instead of distinct conditional probabilities (Collins & Lanza, 2010; Mäkikangas et al., 2018). In this dissertation, LPA is extended to a

multilevel context, which considers that individuals are nested within countries and that the distribution or prevalence of profiles can vary across countries. However, MLPA makes it possible to also explicitly model country-level profiles, which refers to geographical clusters of countries that share similar distributions or prevalence of the uncovered individual-level configurations or profiles (Mäkikangas et al., 2018; Ruelens & Nicaise, 2020). This is particularly relevant to assess whether or not patterns of justice configurations mirror divisions between different types of welfare states. As a result, this method is specifically useful to contribute to objectives 1 and 2 of this dissertation. Table 1.1 gives an overview of the various data sources, measurements and the methodologies applied in each of the empirical chapters.

Table 1.1. Overview of objectives, data, measurements and methods used in the empirical chapters

	Obj. 1	Obj. 2	Obj. 3	Data	Countries	Measurements	Method
Chapter 2	X			ESS 2018 (+ SOEP-IS & ALLBUS)	Belgium (+Germany)	BSJO scale	CFA
Chapter 3	X	X		BNES 2014	Belgium	Self-designed	LCA
Chapter 4	X	X		BNES 2019	Belgium	Self-designed	SEM
Chapter 5	X	X		ESS 2018	29 European countries	Single items BSJO	MLPA
Chapter 6			X	BNES 2014	Belgium	Self-designed	SEM
Chapter 7			X	CRONOS + ESS 2016	UK, Slovenia and Estonia	Single items BSJO	SEM

Note. Obj. 1 = Objective 1 (Conceptualization); Obj. 2 = Objective 2 (Explanations); Obj. 3 = Objective 3 (Consequences)

Chapter 2

Measuring public support for distributive justice principles

Assessing the measurement quality of the Basic
Social Justice Orientations scale¹

¹This chapter is based on an article published in International Journal of Public Opinion Research:

Van Hootegem, A., Meuleman, B., & Abts, K. (2021). Measuring public support for distributive justice principles: assessing the measurement quality of the Basic Social Justice Orientations scale. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 33(4), 986-997.

ABSTRACT

To measure support for four distributive justice principles, Hülle, Liebig and May (2017) validated the Basic Social Justice Orientations (BSJO) scale. Yet, research that tests the validity of the BSJO scale more rigorously is necessary, especially since four items are included in the European Social Survey (ESS). This contribution expands the validation of the BSJO scale by (1) assessing its validity on the basis of newly collected data from ESS-Belgium using Confirmatory Factor Analysis, and (2) examining the construct validity of the ESS four-item and the full BSJO scale. Our results indicate that, when assessed more strictly, the validity of the BSJO scale is more problematic than initially assumed.

1. INTRODUCTION

A growing body of research analyses public support for distributive justice principles (e.g., Aalberg, 2003; D'Anjou et al., 1995; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013), usually distinguishing the principles of equality, equity and need (Deutsch, 1975; Rawls, 1972). While the equality principle states that everybody should have the same access to certain resources, equity emphasizes the importance of distribution on the basis of proportionality and individual responsibility, and need encompasses a selective concern for those who are highest in need.

Empirically investigating public opinion towards distributive justice requires adequate measurement instruments. Although several surveys operationalize preferences for the distributive principles, the indicators used are often single items (e.g., Aalberg, 2003; Arts & Gelissen, 2001) that regularly only indirectly tap into the principles (e.g., Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). Moreover, existing measurements scales are usually designed to measure only one or two principles (e.g., D'Anjou et al., 1995; Davey et al., 1999) or incorporate preferences for multiple principles such as equality and need within one latent scale (e.g., Rasinski, 1987; Wegener & Liebig, 1995). In response to this lack of agreed-upon instruments, Hülle et al. (2017) developed the Basic Social Justice Orientations (BSJO) scale that measures preferences for equality, equity and need, and additionally includes the distributive principle of entitlement (which emphasizes ascribed social status as a basis for distribution; Miller, 1999). Hülle et al. (2017, p. 686) validate the BSJO scale in three German surveys and conclude that the scale is "an appropriately validated instrument for measuring preferences for the four basic justice principles".

Notwithstanding the importance of their work, further assessment of the measurement quality of the BSJO scale is warranted – in particular because four items of the BSJO scale (one per justice principle) are included in the module on justice and fairness of the European Social Survey (ESS) round nine (2018/19), which is likely to generate a staple of empirical research on social justice in the coming years. For several reasons, the knowledge base regarding the validity of the BSJO items provided by Hülle et al. (2017) has some limitations. First, the validation of the scale is based only on German data and confined to respondents working as employees. Given the claims that notions of distributive justice are socially, culturally and

institutionally informed (Arts & Gelissen, 2001; Morris & Leung, 2000; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013; Taylor-Gooby et al., 2018), it especially relevant to know whether the measurement instruments travel successfully to other national contexts and social categories. Second, and most importantly, the factorial validity of the scale is tested by means of exploratory techniques - to with principal component analysis (PCA) - which is less suitable to test a theoretically grounded measurement model (Brown, 2006; Fabrigar et al., 1999). In particular, by using orthogonal rotation, the authors make the assumption that the different dimensions of justice preferences are uncorrelated. This assumption is highly unrealistic (e.g., Laenen & Meuleman, 2018; K. Otto et al., 2011), which may introduce severe bias into the results (Fabrigar et al., 1999; Widaman, 1993). Consequently, an alternative approach that assesses the validity of the scale while considering the interconnectedness of preferences for the justice principles is warranted.

To remedy these shortcomings, our approach includes three types of analyses. First, we validate the scale on newly collected data in Belgium, i.e., a country with a diverging institutional design of welfare policies (Kammer et al., 2012). Concretely, we analyse the country-specific questions for ESS-Belgium that contain the full 12-item version of the BSJO scale by means of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Second, we address the construct validity of the short four-item version of the BJSO that is included in the ESS main questionnaire, by testing if using single items instead of latent constructs yields similar relationships between social justice preferences and relevant social structural and ideological predictors. Third, we replicate the validity analyses Hülle et al. (2017) carried out for two German datasets (SOEP-IS and ALLBUS data)², but this time for the whole adult population and using CFA (see Supplementary Analyses).

² Hülle et al. (2017) also analyse the first wave of the panel "Legitimation of inequality over the life span" (LINOS-1), but this data is, at the time of writing, not publicly available and could not be provided due to regulations regarding data protection.

2. DATA AND METHOD

2.1. DATASETS

The main analysis for this research note is carried out on the Belgian data from the European Social Survey round nine (2018/2019) (*dataset version 1.0*). Four BSJO items are included in the main questionnaire of the ESS (and are thus collected in all ESS countries). The Belgian ESS team added the eight remaining items of the full scale to the questionnaire as country-specific items. ESS in Belgium is a Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) survey among the Belgian resident population of 15 years and older. The data contains 1767 respondents selected by means of two-stage random sampling (response rate = 57.6%). The descriptive statistics of the sample are displayed in Table 2.5 in Supplementary Analyses.

2.2. INDICATORS

Each BSJO item asks respondents to indicate to what extent they consider a particular situation (that is linked to a justice principle) as just. Equality is measured by items referring to equal living conditions, equal distributions of income and wealth, and the desirability of minor income disparities. Need is operationalized through items mentioning taking care of those who are in need, securing the most basic services for all people and providing special benefits for caretakers. Equity is measured by items regarding higher earnings for hard-working people, letting income differences reflect performance, and people only receiving what they have acquired through their own efforts. Entitlement is operationalized by questions referring to advantages for respectable families, those with a higher societal status, and well-reputed and wealthy persons. The items are registered using a five-point scale (1 - strongly agree to 5 - strongly disagree).

Some of the items were slightly altered in the ESS data compared to the original wording of the BSJO scale. The first item measuring the principle of need (item E) was adjusted in the main questionnaire of the ESS. Instead of solely asking whether respondents agree with taking care of those in need, the item reads "*A society is fair when it takes care of those who are poor and in need, regardless of what they give back to society*". This reference to unconditionality was included in order to create more variance in responses and to probe a more outspoken orientation towards need. In addition, the last item of the entitlement principle (item F) was

slightly adjusted in the Belgian ESS. Instead of referring to the wealth and reputation that people have built up themselves, the item asks whether "*A society is just when children can profit from the reputation and wealth that their parents have built up.*" This alteration was made to improve the content validity of the scale, as this wording more clearly refers to ascription instead of achievement and thus matches the theoretical content of this principle more closely.

We also test whether the single items included in the ESS core module have the same construct validity as the full scale with four items per dimension (for the same analysis on ALLBUS and SOEP-IS data, see Supplementary Analyses). To do so, we link the justice principles to relevant social-structural and ideological predictors (Aalberg, 2003; Arts & Gelissen, 2001; D'Anjou et al., 1995; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013; van Oorschot et al., 2012). As structural characteristics, we use age, gender, education (three categories: lower and lower secondary, higher secondary, and tertiary), occupation (six classes based on the Erikson-Goldthorpe-Portocarero scheme: service class, white collar workers, blue collar workers, self-employed, unemployed, and the retired and other non-actives) and subjective income (four categories referring various degrees of difficulty to live on the present income). Ideology is operationalized through political left-right self-placement (eleven-point scale).

Table 2.1. BSJO scale for measuring order-related justice attitudes

Justice principle	Item code	Wording
Equality	C	It is just if all people have the same living conditions
	K	It is just if income and wealth are equally distributed among the members of our society*
	G	<i>A society is just if there are only minor income disparities between people</i>
Need	E	A society is just if it takes care of those who are poor and needy*
	J	It is just if people taking care of their children or their dependent relatives receive special support and benefits
	A	<i>A society is just if all people have sufficient nutrition, shelter, clothing as well as access to education and medical care</i>
Equity	B	It is just if hard working people earn more than others*
	I	It is just if every person receives only that which has been acquired through their own efforts
	H	<i>A society is just if differences in income and assets reflect performance differences between people</i>
Entitlement	D	It is just if members of respectable families have certain advantages in their lives*
	L	It is fair if people on a higher level of society have better living conditions than those on the lower level
	F	<i>It is just if people who have achieved good reputation and wealth profit from this later in life</i>

Note. Items in italics are not included in the ALLBUS 2014 data; Items are asked in alphabetical order for ALLBUS 2014 and SOEP-IS 2012; For the ESS, items with an asterisk were included in the main questionnaire and all the other items were included in alphabetical order in the Belgian country-specific questionnaire.

Source: Hülle et al. (2017)

3. RESULTS

3.1. MEASUREMENT QUALITY OF THE BSJO: CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

To (re-)assess the reliability and validity of the BSJO scale, we apply CFA. Compared with the PCA used by Hülle et al. (2017), this approach has the advantage that it (1) provides the opportunity to translate the underlying theoretical model into testable hypotheses; (2) relaxes the unrealistic assumption of unrelated latent concepts; and (3) allows a more stringent evaluation of model fit (Brown, 2006; Hu & Bentler, 1999). To enhance the comparability of our findings with the work of Hülle et al. (2017), we also re-analyse the data by means of PCA and re-run CFA on the shortened eight-item survey battery – see Supplementary Analyses. All presented models are estimated by Mplus (version 8.3; Muthén & Muthén, 2017).

We start from a four-factor model (one factor per distributive principle) without cross-loadings or error correlations. The adequacy of the model is evaluated by (1) verifying whether the standardized factor loadings are larger than .40, and (2) assessing several indices that quantify the fit of the measurement model. As a measure of global fit, we inspect the Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA), which expresses the discrepancy between observed covariances and the covariances implied by the linear model (should be below .06; Brown, 2006; Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hu & Bentler, 1999). The Comparative Fit Index and the Tucker-Lewis Index (CFI and TLI) evaluate the fit of the hypothesized model relative to a more restricted baseline model (both should exceed .95) (Brown, 2006; Hu & Bentler, 1999). In subsequent steps, we remove poorly performing items and implement model re-specifications that improve fit in a theoretical meaningful way. Table 2.2 provides fit indices for each step in this model fitting procedure.

Table 2.2. Fit indices of the measurement models obtained through CFA for ESS-Belgium 2019

	χ^2	$\Delta\chi^2$	df	Δdf	CFI	ΔCFI	TLI	RMSEA	$\Delta RMSEA$	Model changes
Model 1	416.441	-	48	-	0.828	-	0.764	0.066	-	
Model 2	360.841	-55.600	38	-10	0.840	0.012	0.769	0.069	0.003	- item E
Model 3	219.510	-141.331	29	-9	0.889	0.049	0.828	0.061	-0.008	- item F
Model 4	146.652	-72.858	21	-8	0.915	0.026	0.854	0.058	-0.003	- item I
Model 5	36.265	-110.387	11	-10	0.976	0.061	0.954	0.036	-0.022	- items D and L

Note. χ^2 = Chi-square value of the measurement model; $\Delta\chi^2$ = Change in chi-square model in comparison to the previous measurement model; df = Degrees of freedom of the measurement model; Δdf = Change in degrees of freedom in comparison to the previous measurement model; CFI = Comparative Fit Index of the measurement model; ΔCFI = change in the CFI value in comparison to the previous measurement model; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index of the measurement model; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation of the measurement model; $\Delta RMSEA$ = change in RMSEA value in comparison to the previous measurement model; '- item' refers to the elimination of an item with a specific code from the measurement model and '+ r_{error} ' indicates the inclusion of an error correlation between items with specific codes

The CFA evidences that the four-factor solution is not acceptable. Item E - that was reformulated - loads poorly on the latent concept (.31). In a second step this item is omitted from the analysis, which slightly improves model fit. After omitting item E, a second indicator of the need principle (item J) has a weak loading (.37), but is preserved for reasons of model identification. Yet, modification indices suggest that especially the entitlement item F is contaminated by other justice principles (namely equality and need). As a result, this item is removed from the measurement model. This still does not yield adequate model fit and the modification indices suggest that item I of the equity principle cross-loads on both the entitlement and the equality factor. Consequently, it is also removed from the measurement model. Despite these re-specifications, the TLI is still low and the modification indices suggest that the two remaining items of entitlement also seem to load on the equity and equality principles, which is not theoretically defensible. The final measurement model, which necessarily eliminates the whole entitlement factor, describes the correlations between the indicators appropriately.

Table 2.3. Factor structures and standardized loadings on the basis of the confirmatory factor analyses on the ESS-Belgium data (N = 1764)

Item code	Equality	Need	Equity
C	0.755	-	-
K	0.633	-	-
G	0.617	-	-
E	-	-	-
J	-	0.427	-
A	-	0.530	-
B	-	-	0.482
I	-	-	-
H	-	-	0.534
D	-	-	-
L	-	-	-
F	-	-	-
r need	0.497	1	
r equity	-0.086	0.327	1

Note. 'r' refers to the correlation between justice principles and 'r_{error}' refers to error correlation between items with specific codes

Table 2.3 provides the parameter estimates for the final model. Compared to the findings of Hülle et al. (2017), our results sketch a far less optimistic perspective of the validity of the BSJO scale. CFA reveals that the correlations between the indicators do not follow the pattern assumed by the four-factor model in several respects. To begin with, the principle of entitlement cannot be properly distinguished. The indicators are contaminated by the other justice principles, showing that entitlement is not a distinctly measurable factor (re-analyses of the SOEP-IS and ALLBUS data yield similar findings; see Supplementary Analyses). The measurement properties of the indicators for the three principles are not optimal either. Various indicators have weak factor loadings and, because items are excluded, some latent concepts are measured by means of two items only, which is far from ideal for scale validation.

3.2. USING SINGLE ITEMS INSTEAD OF LATENT CONCEPTS: CONSTRUCT VALIDITY

In contrast to the main questionnaire of ESS that only contains four BSJO items (items K, E, B and D), the Belgian ESS data contains all 12 items, which allows us to investigate the implications of using single items instead of latent factors. First, it should be noted that the items included in the main questionnaire seem to capture specific aspects of the justice principles, as they are not always clear-cut indicators of the four principles. Item E (representing need) is precisely the indicator that was omitted in the CFA, due to a weak factor loading. Item K loads sufficiently strongly on the equality factor but, based on our analysis, item C would have been a better candidate to represent the concept of equality (see also analyses SOEP-IS and ALLBUS in Supplementary Analyses). Item B does load on equity, but the loading (.48) is not particularly strong and reveals a large degree of random measurement error. The quality of the entitlement item D is hard to evaluate, since an acceptable factor solution could not be formulated.

These results cast doubt on the validity of some of the single items selected in ESS to measure the justice principles or at least show that they capture specific aspects of each of the justice principles. To determine the implications of using the single items as indicators for the justice principles per se (as many researchers will), we compare relevant explanation models using single items versus latent factors as dependent variables– see Table 2.4. This test uses Structural Equation Modelling, so that it is possible to take into account the measurement models for the latent variables (incorporating random measurement errors) and to estimate coefficients for all three justice principles simultaneously. The parameter estimates are based on standardization of the dependent variable and the metric independent variables. The dummy variables are not standardized, so that these coefficients refer to the number of standard deviations by which a particular category differs from the reference group.

Table 2.4. Standardized effect parameters of the structural equation models for the single items (N = 1677) and latent concepts (N = 1678) of the distributive principles (ESS-Belgium)

	Single item equality	Latent concept equality	Single item need	Latent concept need	Single item equity	Latent concept equity
Gender						
Woman (ref.)						
Man	-0.135**	-0.179***	0.008	-0.090	0.110*	0.226**
Age	0.056*	0.026	0.126***	0.030	0.012	0.049
Education						
Lower (secondary)	0.154*	0.168*	0.064	-0.148	0.047	0.148
Higher secondary (ref.)						
Tertiary	-0.252***	-0.454***	0.175**	-0.011	-0.034	-0.014
Subjective income						
Comfortable (ref.)						
Coping	0.191***	0.221***	0.074	-0.099	-0.060	0.128
Difficult	0.255***	0.388***	0.030	0.174	0.027	-0.116
Very difficult	0.243	0.325*	0.067	0.759***	-0.091	-0.062
Occupation						
Service class	-0.196	-0.048	0.169	0.342	-0.091	0.069
Blue collar (ref.)						

White collar	-0.075	-0.085	0.015	-0.022	0.014	0.034
Self-employed	-0.215*	-0.370**	0.258**	-0.001	0.135	0.216
Unemployed	-0.075	0.000	0.278*	0.245	0.045	0.065
Retired/Inactive	-0.141	-0.119	0.068	0.021	0.020	-0.050
Region						
Flanders	-0.324***	-0.258***	-0.123*	-0.201*	-0.041	-0.057
Francophone Belgium (ref.)						
Left-right placement	-0.131***	-0.151***	-0.161***	-0.090*	0.099***	0.225***

Note. * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$; For both the single items and the latent concepts, the regression coefficients were estimated for the three dependent variables simultaneously through structural equation modelling; The structural equation model with the single items obtains perfect fit with the data; The fit of the structural equation model with latent concepts is: $X^2 = 157.584$; $df = 67$; $CFI = 0.942$; $TLI = 0.897$; $RMSEA = 0.028$. Only the TLI of this model is slightly too low, but this might be related to high model complexity through the inclusion of many dummy variables. The modification indices do not reveal local misfit or theoretically defensible alterations that would ameliorate the fit substantially

For the principle of equality, both approaches yield similar results in terms of the significance of parameters. However, the strength of the effects differs more profoundly. While age has a stronger impact for the single items, the parameters for the higher educated, those who perceive their financial situation to be very difficult, and the self-employed are considerably larger for the latent variables. Although item K was not the most clear-cut and highest loading indicator of the equality-principle, there is strong conceptual overlap between the formulation of the single item and the theoretical content of the latent concept, which might in part explain the relatively equivalent results. The differences are clearest in the case of need. The only similarity is that Francophone Belgians and left-wing individuals favour need-based distribution more irrespective of the measurement, but even for these variables the strength of the relationships differs. When single item E is used, strongest support for need is found among older respondents, the self-employed and unemployed individuals. When need is measured as a latent variable, the lowest subjective income group shows much higher support (.07 vs .76) for the principle of need (while no effect of age or occupation is detected). These differences might arise because the items capture different conceptualizations of the need principle. While item E in ESS mentions that people in need should receive help even without contributing to society, the latent concept comprises two items that express more vague support for alleviating basic needs. Consequently, the principle of need seems to be interpreted differently when measured through the single item included in the main questionnaire of ESS than when measured by the other two items. Regarding the principle of equity, although right-wing respondents support reciprocity-based distribution more for both measurements, the regression coefficient is twice as large for the latent variable (.10 vs .23). The relationship with gender also differs, as men show much higher support for equity when inspecting the latent variable. Overall results are nevertheless relatively similar for equity, which might in part be related to the similar conceptual interpretation of the item B and latent concept in terms of proportionality and self-responsibility.

The observed differences between single items and latent concepts does not imply that the validity of these indicators is problematic per se. However, these results evidence clearly that the single items cannot be taken as pure and internally consistent reflections of the justice

principles. The items capture particular aspects of the justice principles, and users of these items should be aware of their conceptual and empirical distinctiveness.

4. CONCLUSION

Our results cast several doubts on the claim that the BSJO items are internally consistent and clear-cut measurements of the four abstract principles of social justice. First, using CFA instead of PCA (see Hülle et al., 2017)³, our study reveals that the proposed four-factor model is not able to describe the observed correlational structure. The principle of entitlement could not be recovered and also for the three other factors, items had to be deleted or model re-specifications were necessary. These issues are not related to cross-cultural differences in interpretation of the items, since measurement problems appear to the same extent in the German datasets as in ESS-Belgium (see Supplementary Analyses).

These results have important repercussions for future social justice research. First, the single items selected in the ESS main questionnaire might be appropriate indicators to reflect the equality and equity principles. In the case of need and entitlement, the situation is more complex. The ESS item for need yields markedly different relationships with social structural and ideological variables, which evidences that it captures a specific aspect of need-based reasoning rather than the abstract principle of need per se. ESS users should be aware of this potential mismatch between empirical content and theoretical concept, and of the distinct conceptual interpretation of the specific item.

Our analysis also has broader implications for the conceptualization and measurement of justice orientations that reach beyond the ESS items. First, we are not able to distinguish the entitlement principle. This could be due to unclear item formulation, but might also reflect that citizens do not perceive entitlement to be a distinct distributive principle. The three classical principles -equality, equity and need (Deutsch, 1975)- are easier to retrieve in opinion data, probably because these dimensions are more explicitly crystallized in people's attitudes.

³ Yet, even PCA on the full ALLBUS and SOEP-IS datasets (instead of on the subset of working population) indicates measurement issues – see Supplementary Analyses for a more detailed discussion.

This might also be related to presence of these three types of justice as foundational principles of the welfare states (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002), unlike the principle of entitlement.

Second, the differential functioning of particular items for need in the BSJO scale sheds light on conceptual ambiguity in its operationalization. While in the domain of the welfare state, need-based distribution typically implies a limited type of redistribution that installs means-tested benefits and encourages private insurances (Arts & Gelissen, 2001; Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Esping-Andersen, 1990), the BSJO need items refer to a more generous type of welfare state that provides a basic provision level for all citizens. Instead of residualism or selectivism, this formulation entails a rather extensive redistribution and also appeals to the principle of equality (as shown by the strong correlations between need and equality). To overcome this conceptual ambiguity, item E was formulated in a more outspoken manner in ESS. Yet, this adaptation resulted in low internal consistency with the other items. In order to differentiate more clearly among the distributive justice principles, a stricter operationalization of the need principle is warranted.

This research note revisited the factor analytic approach on which the BSJO scale was developed (Hülle et al. 2017). Yet, this is by no means the only useful perspective on measurement quality. Our contribution does show that the BSJO scale items do not function as internally consistent indicators that can be subsumed under a latent variable representing a justice principle as such. Scholars should hence be careful treating the items as unambiguous indicators of the more encompassing latent concepts. Other types of analyses on the basis of these data might nevertheless still be appropriate (e.g., using person-centred approaches or focusing on single dimensions of justice principles) and can still yield meaningful insights in citizens' opinions regarding social justice. Besides the empirical and statistical arguments, theoretical considerations should have a prominent place in discussions on measurement. In this sense, it is noteworthy that although the need item included in the main questionnaire of ESS might be inappropriate from the perspective of factor analysis, conceptually it comes closest to the principle of need of the three items. The item for equity included in the ESS is both empirically appropriate and theoretically credible, as it consistently loaded strongly and connects closely to the idea of proportionality and self-responsibility. For equality, item C

(equal living conditions) appears to be a better candidate to represent the concept, as it both empirically and conceptually represents the equality principle. While the BSJO scale and the ESS-items should hence certainly not be discarded, future users should become aware of the particular interpretations of these items.

Overall, our analyses confirm that preferences for justice principles are complex, multidimensional and interrelated, which makes it intricate to construct a measurement scale that unambiguously distinguishes all the different justice principles. In this regard, although this study indicates limitations of the BSJO scale, it has nevertheless important merits as one of the only systematized attempts to operationalize support for the principles of equality, equity and need. Rather than disregarding the BSJO scale entirely, it could be improved to further disentangle preferences for the justice principles on the basis of theoretical reflections and empirical tests. The findings presented in this chapter offer a point of departure.

5. SUPPLEMENTARY ANALYSES

In the supplementary analyses, we expand our analyses in several ways: (1) we replicate all analyses of the ESS-Belgium data also on the two of the original datasets analysed by Hülle et al. (2017), namely the SOEP-IS and ALLBUS data; (2) we re-analyse the data using PCA instead of CFA; (3) we perform CFA on the eight-item survey battery instead of on the full scale.

5.1. REPLICATION ANALYSES ON SOEP-IS AND ALLBUS DATA

5.1.1. DATASETS AND MEASURES SOEP-IS AND ALLBUS

Besides the ESS-Belgium data, all analyses are replicated on two additional datasets. First, the German General Social Survey (ALLBUS) of 2014 is a CAPI survey among German residents 18 years and older selected by means of two-step random sampling (response rate = 35%). The included BSJO items are only presented to a random half of the respondents (leading to N = 1738). We weigh all ALLBUS analyses with the east-west weighting variable (v870). Second, the innovation sample of the Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP-IS) is a CAPI survey collected in 2012/2013 by means of random-route sampling and separate address random sampling among the German resident population of 16 years and older residing in private households

(response rate household = 34.7%; response rate individual = 90.9%). Also here, only a randomly selected subset of the sample is presented with the BSJO scale (N = 1644 respondents). Note that for the ALLBUS data only eight of the twelve items were included in the questionnaire (see Table 2.1 in main text) and that for the SOEP-IS data, standard errors were corrected for the clustering of respondents within households.

Apart from minor changes for the ESS-items, the same indicators are used to measure the justice principles in SOEP-IS and ALLBUS data (see discussion and Table 2.1 in main text), with a similar five-point answer scale for ALLBUS and a seven-point scale (1 - do not agree at all to 7 - agree completely) for the SOEP-IS. To assess the construct validity and compare regression results for latent concepts and single items, the same independent variables as for ESS-Belgium are used. The descriptive statistics for these variables for each of the three datasets are displayed in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5. Descriptive statistics for the three datasets

	SOEP-IS 2012	ALLBUS 2014	ESS-Belgium
	<i>Mean/%</i>	<i>Mean/%</i>	<i>Mean/%</i>
Gender			
Woman	52.1%	49.3%	50.9%
Man	47.9%	50.7%	49.1%
Age	50.720	48.980	47.910
Education			
Lower (secondary)	15.5%	10.9%	27.1%
Higher secondary	61.0%	53.6%	37.3%
Tertiary	23.6%	35.5%	35.6%
Occupation			
Service class	5.2%	6.4%	3.9%
White collar	25.6%	27.3%	24.1%
Blue collar	20.7%	17.2%	14.4%
Self-employed	4.5%	4.6%	8.2%
Unemployed	4.7%	4.1%	4.7%
Retired/Inactive	39.4%	40.3%	44.9%

Note. Means are given for metric variables and percentages per category for categorical variables; The classification scheme for educational attainment is somewhat different across the datasets, which explains part of differences in the representation of the educational groups. For ALLBUS and ESS data those completing no, only primary education or lower secondary education are labelled as 'lower' educated, those completing upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education are categorized as 'higher secondary', and those completing short-cycle tertiary education or higher are labelled as 'tertiary'. For SOEP-IS data, those completing no or general elementary are categorized as 'lower', those completing middle vocational education or Abitur are labelled as 'higher secondary', and those completing higher vocational or higher education as 'tertiary'. For the occupational classification ISCO codes were used in all three samples, but the necessary variables about the main activity of a respondent also differed slightly between data sources.

5.1.2. CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS ON SOEP-IS AND ALLBUS DATA

Similarly to the ESS-Belgium data, we conduct Confirmatory Factor Analyses on the SOEP-IS and ALLBUS data. Both model fit and standardized factor loadings are inspected to evaluate the adequacy of the measurement models. We start from a four-factor model without cross-

loadings and error correlations. Table 2.6 displays the fit indices for each of the steps in the fitting procedure.

Table 2.6. Fit indices of the measurement models obtained through CFA for SOEP-IS and ALLBUS data

	X^2	ΔX^2	df	Δdf	CFI	ΔCFI	TLI	RMSEA	$\Delta RMSEA$	Model changes
<i>SOEP-IS 2012</i>										
Model 1	639.057	-	49	-	0.682	-	0.572	0.086	-	
Model 2	337.888	-301.169	39	-10	0.812	0.130	0.735	0.068	-0.018	- item F
Model 3	294.739	-43.149	30	-9	0.821	0.009	0.731	0.057	-0.011	- items I
Model 4	160.068	-134.671	22	-8	0.877	0.056	0.799	0.062	0.005	- item K
Model 5	41.634	-118.434	11	-11	0.961	0.084	0.925	0.041	-0.021	- items D and L
<i>ALLBUS 2014</i>										
Model 1	228.004	-	18	-	0.738	-	0.592	0.082	-	
Model 2	95.688	-132.316	9	-9	0.827	0.089	0.712	0.075	-0.007	- items D and L
Model 3	52.713	-42.975	8	-1	0.911	0.084	0.833	0.057	-0.018	+ r_{error} K-B
Model 4	33.071	-19.642	7	-1	0.948	0.037	0.889	0.046	-0.011	+ r_{error} C-E
Model 5	13.738	-19.333	6	-1	0.985	0.037	0.961	0.027	-0.019	+ r_{error} C-B

Note. X^2 = Chi-square value of the measurement model; ΔX^2 = Change in chi-square model in comparison to the previous measurement model; df = Degrees of freedom of the measurement model; Δdf = Change in degrees of freedom in comparison to the previous measurement model; CFI = Comparative Fit Index of the measurement model; ΔCFI = change in the CFI value in comparison to the previous measurement model; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index of the measurement model; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation of the measurement model; $\Delta RMSEA$ = change in RMSEA value in comparison to the previous measurement model; '- item' refers to the elimination of an item with a specific code from the measurement model and '+ r_{error} ' indicates the inclusion of an error correlation between items with specific codes

Table 2.6 indicates that the four-factor model in the SOEP-IS is problematic in several respects. Not only are fit indices very far from approaching the thresholds of acceptable fit; two items have unacceptably weak factor loadings – item F of the entitlement factor (.07) and equity-item I (.31). Since these indicators do not measure the intended latent concepts, they are excluded in the subsequent measurement models. Equity-item H has a loading slightly below .40 (.38), yet we prefer to maintain this weak indicator so that we can continue working with a latent variable. The resulting third measurement model still has a poor fit (see CFI and TLI), indicating that the measurement model is not able to reproduce the observed correlations adequately. The modification indices suggest cross-loadings for equality-item K on the three other latent factors and for the two remaining items of entitlement (D and L) on equality. However, these cross-loadings are theoretically not defensible: The indicators were developed to measure particular justice principles but are apparently contaminated by conceptually distinct concepts. Items K, D and L are therefore removed step-by-step, which results in a good fitting final model (with three factors, since all indicators of entitlement are removed).

CFA for the eight items in the ALLBUS data show great similarities with the SOEP-IS.⁴ First, the fit of the four-factor model is unsatisfactory as well. Second, item I loads insufficiently (.29) on the equity factor; Yet we maintain the indicator to still be able to estimate a latent factor. Third, also here modification indices show that entitlement items D and L load on the equality and equity factors. However, even after the exclusion of D and L (and hence, the removal of the complete entitlement factor), CFI, TLI and RMSEA are still unsatisfactory. Additional inspection of the misfit leads to the detection of a negative error correlation ($r_{error} = -.43$) between equity item K (hard work should lead to higher earnings) and equality item B (wealth should be distributed equally). This negative correlation can be understood from the radically opposing ways of allocating material resources implied by these items (i.e., inequality vs equality). A fourth model adds a positive error correlation ($r_{error} = .15$) between equality item C stating that living conditions should be equal and need item E indicating that the poor should be taken

⁴The ALLBUS data contains 2 items per concept only, which can lead to Heywood cases (that is, negative estimates for residual variances and standardized factor loadings greater than 1). To avoid this, we fixed the two factor loadings per concept to be equal.

care of. With some goodwill, we can interpret this correlation as expressing that equal living conditions can be achieved through the improvement of the living standard of those at the lower end of the social ladder. A fifth model adds a negative error correlation ($r_{error} = -.25$) between the equity item B (hard work should lead to higher earnings) and equality item C (living conditions should be equal). This negative correlation could be justified similarly to the previous error correlation between the items of equality and equity. Although this final model fits the data, it is not parsimonious; it is far removed from the theoretical typology; and it contains various error correlations that are debatable. Table 2.7 provides the estimates of the standardized factor loadings, inter-factor correlations and error correlations for the final measurement models in the two datasets.

Table 2.7. Factor structures and standardized loadings on the basis of the confirmatory factor analyses on the three datasets

Item code	SOEP-IS 2012 (N=1641)			ALLBUS 2014 (N=1735)		
	Equality	Need	Equity	Equality	Need	Equity
C	0.630	-	-	0.618	-	-
K	-	-	-	0.608	-	-
G	0.472	-	-	-	-	-
E	-	0.639	-	-	0.491	-
J	-	0.513	-	-	0.584	-
A	-	0.603	-	-	-	-
B	-	-	0.669	-	-	0.448
I	-	-	-	-	-	0.281
H	-	-	0.338	-	-	-
D	-	-	-	-	-	-
L	-	-	-	-	-	-
F	-	-	-	-	-	-
r need	0.486	1		0.193	1	
r equity	0.062	0.629	1	0.204	0.340	1
r _{error} <i>K - B</i>		-			-0.430	
r _{error} <i>C - E</i>		-			0.154	
r _{error} <i>C - B</i>		-			-0.248	

Note. 'r' refers to the correlation between justice principles and 'r_{error}' refers to error correlation between items with specific codes

Table 2.7 indicates that the conclusions on the basis of the SOEP-IS and ALLBUS data are very similar to the ones obtained for the analysis on ESS-Belgium. For both datasets, the entitlement factor was not distinguishable either and several indicators had weak factor loadings with a high degree of random measurement error. Moreover, for the SOEP-IS data multiple items had to be omitted from the measurement model and for the ALLBUS data, acceptable model fit could only be obtained by including error correlations for which the theoretical justification is sometimes shaky, thereby potentially leading to an overfitted model (Brown, 2006).

5.1.3. CONSTRUCT VALIDITY FOR SOEP-IS AND ALLBUS DATA

To also assess the construct validity of the scale for the SOEP-IS and ALLBUS data, the impact of the social structure and political ideology on the latent concepts and single items of equality, equity and need are compared. The same indicators are used as for the ESS-Belgium data and the results are displayed in Tables 2.8 and 2.9.

Table 2.8. Standardized parameters of the structural equation models for the single items (N = 1506) and latent concepts (N = 1506) of the distributive principles (SOEP-IS)

	Single item equality	Latent concept equality	Single item need	Latent concept need	Single item equity	Latent concept equity
Gender						
Woman (ref.)						
Man	-0.090	-0.165*	-0.040	-0.125	0.111*	0.149
Age	-0.140***	-0.087	0.060	0.076	0.049	0.117*
Education						
Lower (secondary)	0.345***	0.072	-0.005	-0.052	0.019	-0.026
Higher secondary (ref.)						
Tertiary	-0.065	-0.348***	-0.146*	-0.245**	-0.151*	-0.218*
Satisfaction income	-0.087***	-0.056	0.047	0.042	0.031	0.069
Occupation						
Service class	-0.357***	-0.223	0.117	0.059	-0.042	0.124
Blue collar (ref.)						
White collar	-0.195*	-0.107	-0.023	0.051	0.004	0.058
Self-employed	-0.334**	-0.556*	0.002	-0.081	0.091	0.276
Unemployed	-0.023	0.056	0.069	0.329	-0.137	-0.345
Retired/Inactive	0.006	-0.055	0.042	0.021	0.056	0.118

Note. * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$; For both the single items and the latent concepts, the regression coefficients were estimated for the three dependent variables simultaneously through structural equation modelling; The structural equation model with the single items obtains perfect fit with the data; The fit of the structural equation model with latent concepts is: $X^2 = 143.070$; $df = 51$; $CFI = 0.908$; $TLI = 0.836$; $RMSEA = 0.035$. Only the TLI of this model is too low, but this might be related to high model complexity through the inclusion of many dummy variables. The modification indices do not reveal local misfit or theoretically defensible alterations that would ameliorate the fit substantially; Note that instead of a subjective income indicator, satisfaction with personal income on an eleven-point scale is included (0 = low satisfaction; 10 = high satisfaction); Education was also categorized slightly different compared to the ESS-Belgium data, as those completing no or general elementary are categorized as 'lower', those completing middle vocational education or Abitur are labelled as 'higher secondary', and those completing higher vocational or higher education as 'tertiary'.

Table 2.9. Standardized parameters of the structural equation models for the single items (N = 1587) and latent concepts (N = 1587) of the distributive principles (ALLBUS 2014)

	Single item equality	Latent concept equality	Single item need	Latent concept need	Single item equity	Latent concept equity
Gender						
Woman (ref.)						
Man	-0.045	-0.065	-0.061	-0.072	-0.021	0.016
Age	-0.071*	-0.110**	0.054	0.116**	0.140***	0.323***
Education						
Lower (secondary)	0.175	0.146	-0.087	-0.338*	-0.042	0.040
Higher secondary (ref.)						
Tertiary	-0.162**	-0.198*	0.046	-0.098	0.046	-0.161
Subjective income	-0.148***	-0.142***	0.022	-0.003	0.040	0.042
Occupation						
Service class	-0.279*	-0.206	-0.124	-0.151	0.148	-0.301
Blue collar (ref.)						
White collar	-0.208*	-0.172	0.016	0.053	0.014	-0.254
Self-employed	-0.293*	-0.288	-0.100	-0.331	-0.009	-0.141
Unemployed	-0.024	-0.026	-0.048	-0.106	-0.365*	-0.721*
Retired/Inactive	-0.126	-0.096	0.049	0.015	-0.087	-0.259

Left-right placement

-0.135***

-0.214***

-0.066*

-0.134***

0.135***

0.342***

Note. * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$; For both the single items and the latent concepts, the regression coefficients were estimated for the three dependent variables simultaneously through structural equation modelling; The structural equation model with the single items obtains perfect fit with the data; The fit of the structural equation model with latent concepts is: $X^2 = 146.515$; $df = 39$; $CFI = 0.861$; $TLI = 0.712$; $RMSEA = 0.042$. Both the CFI and TLI of this model are too low, which indicates that the previously obtained measurement model might still not be ideal. The modification indices do nevertheless not reveal local misfit or theoretically defensible alterations that would ameliorate the fit substantially; Note that subjective income is measured slightly different than for ESS-Belgium, as it is operationalized by asking respondents how they would evaluate their total household income (1 = much too low; 5 = much too high)

Similarly to Table 2.4 in the main text (which was only for ESS-Belgium data), Tables 2.8 and 2.9 compare the results of structural equation models with the single items and latent concepts as dependent variables for the SOEP-IS and ALLBUS data. Table 2.8 indicates that in contrast to the ESS-Belgium data where especially differences with regard to the principle of need were observed, for SOEP-IS data the main differences are found for equality. In ESS most variables had a uniform impact on the single item and latent concept of equality, but for SOEP-IS several variables have a rather different impact. While age, income, being lower educated, being part of the service class and being a white collar worker only have a significant impact on the single item for equality, being higher educated and gender only significantly relate to the latent concept. With regard to need, most variables do not have a significant impact for neither the single item nor the latent concept. Only with regard to the impact of having a higher education level a difference is observed, as the regression coefficient is considerably larger for the latent concept (-.15 vs -.25). For the principle of equity, gender has a significant impact for the single item and age for the latent concept. Except for the significant impact of a higher educational level on both the single item and the latent concept, all other variables are insignificant for both operationalisations. Apart from the differences in coefficients for the principle of equality, overall these results are relatively similar to the one's obtained for ESS-Belgium. The difference for equality might nevertheless be related to the fact that the single item for equality (item K) was not part of the latent concept of equality for the SOEP-IS data, while it did load strongly on the joint factor for ESS-Belgium (see Table 2.3 in the main text). Simultaneously, the stronger similarity between the latent concept and single item of need in the SOEP-IS data might be related to the incorporation of the single item into the latent concept.

For the ALLBUS data, we see more similarities for the principle of equality, as age, education, subjective income and political ideology have a rather uniform impact on the single item and latent concept. This is largely in line with the findings from the ESS-Belgium data. Only with regard to the occupational stratification some differences are observed. For the principle of need more differences are apparent, as age and education only have a significant impact for the latent concept and the coefficient for the political ideology is about twice as large for the latent principle (-.07 vs -.13). While these differences are in line with the finding that for ESS-Belgium many parameters functioned differently for the single item and latent concept of

need, there are simultaneously many variables that do not have a significant impact on neither the single item nor the latent concepts for ALLBUS. For the principle of equity, age, being unemployed and political ideology are the only significant predictors for both the single item and latent concept. Although the effect sizes are considerably larger for the latent concept, overall this is line with the finding from ESS-Belgium and SOEP-IS that relatively little differences are observed for the equity principle.

5.2. PCA ANALYSIS

Besides conducting the same analyses as for ESS-Belgium, we further replicate of the work of Hülle et al. (2017) by conducting PCA for the complete SOEP-IS and ALLBUS data (instead of restricting it to the working population). For ESS-Belgium, we perform a similar analysis. Once we determine the number of components that should be withheld, we conduct PCA with orthogonal rotation on the specified number of components. The PCAs are conducted in SPSS (version 25).

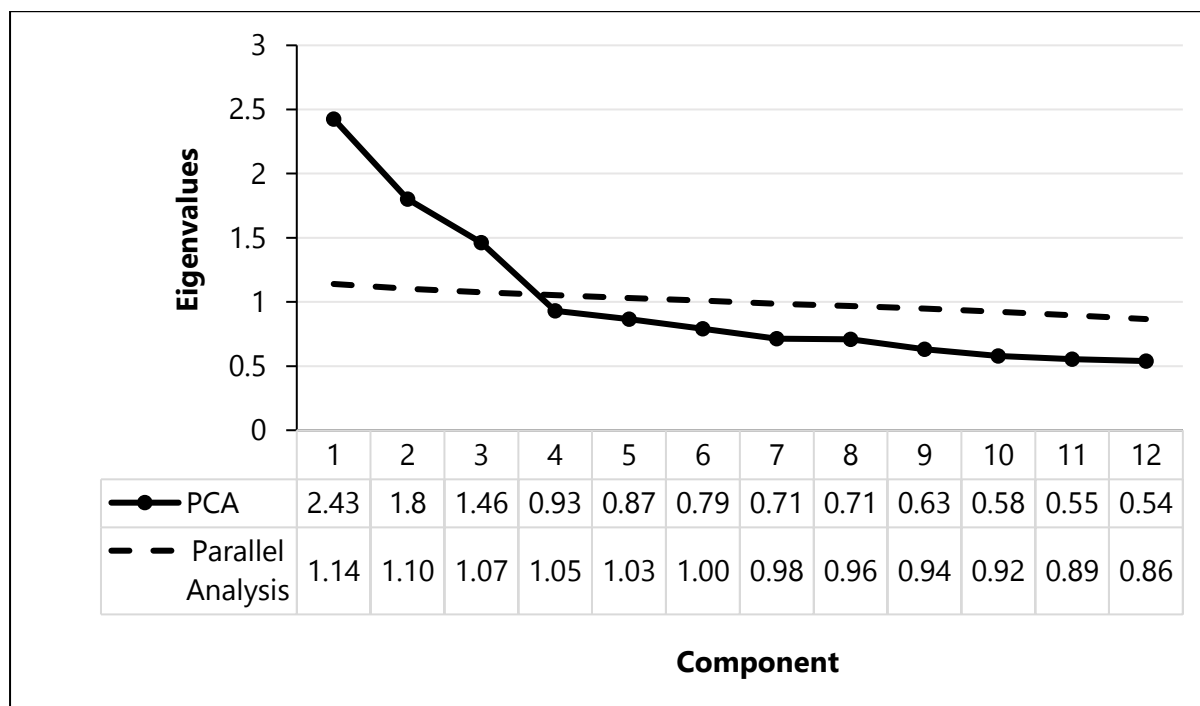


Figure 2.1. Scree plot of PCA and parallel analysis for SOEP-IS data

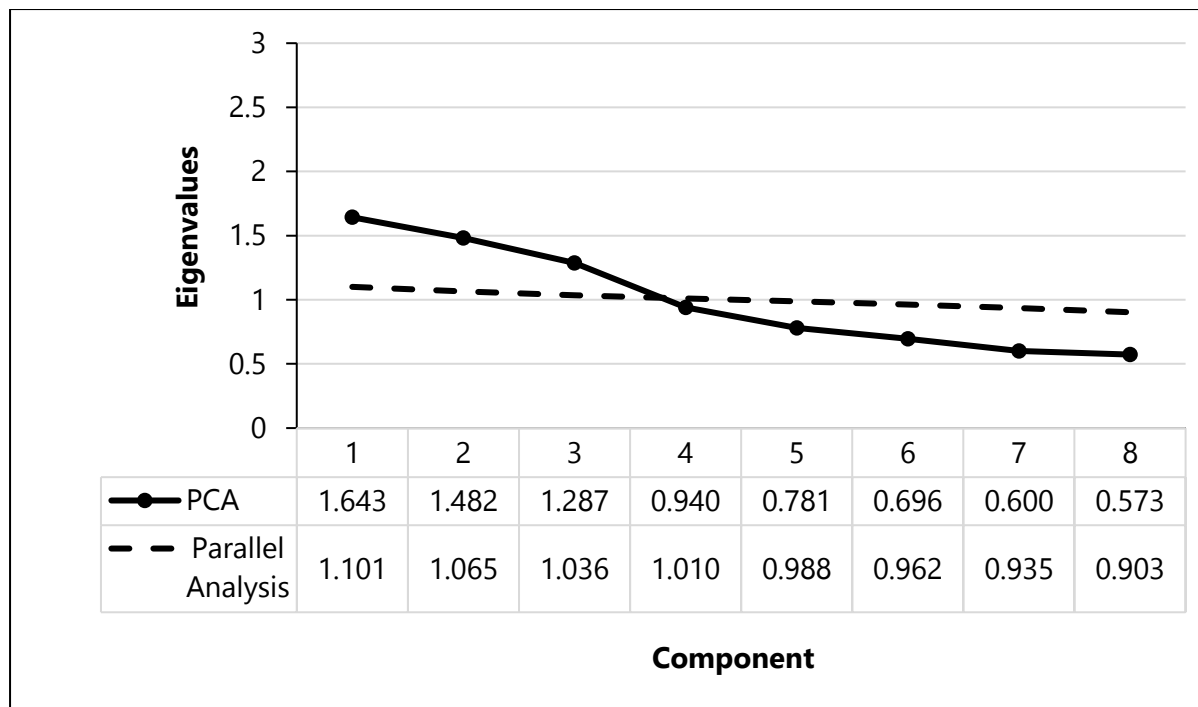


Figure 2.2. Scree plot of PCA and parallel analysis for ALLBUS data

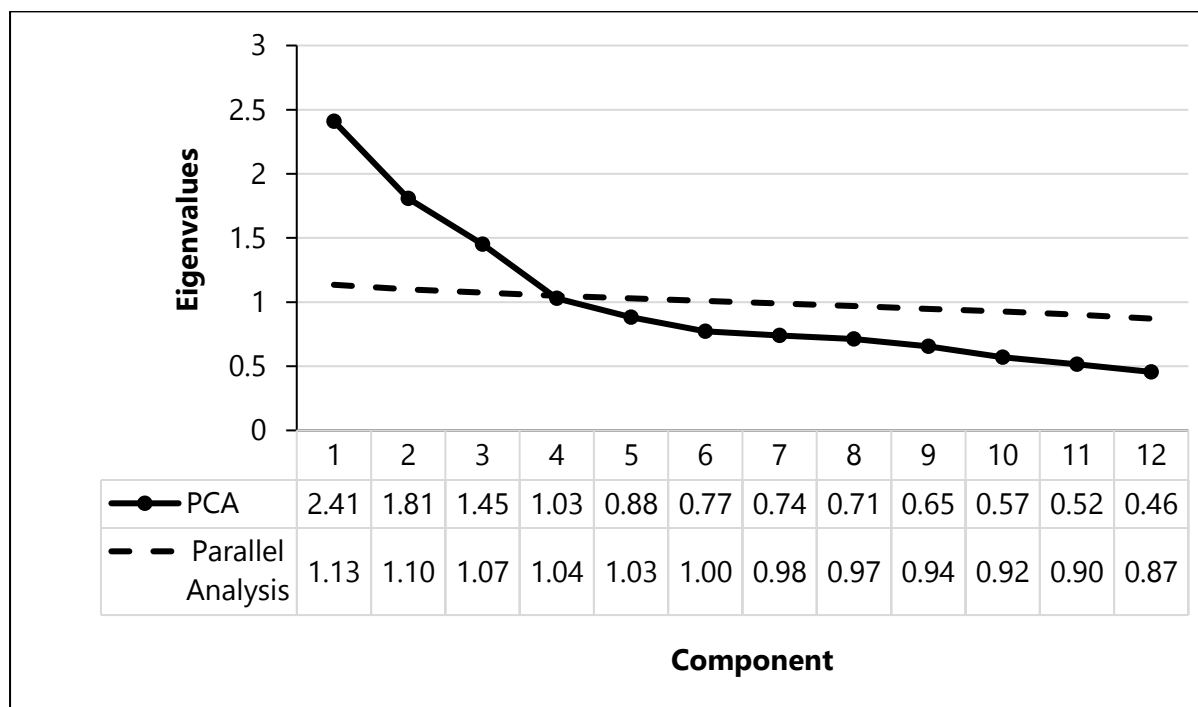


Figure 2.3. Scree plot of PCA and parallel analysis for ESS-Belgium data

As a first step in the PCA, we determine the number of components that should be maintained. For this, we rely on the Kaiser criterion (eigenvalue > 1) and scree plots with parallel analysis that are visualized in Figures 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3. Parallel analysis generates random data similar

to the actual data to compare the eigenvalues of the actual and the random data. Components are preserved as long as their eigenvalues are larger than the ones generated from the random data (O'Connor, 2000). Contrary to the findings of Hülle et al. (2017)⁵, for the ALLBUS and the SOEP-IS data all criteria legitimate the preservation of only three components. Only three eigenvalues meet the Kaiser-criterion, there is a clear break in the scree plot for the fourth component and only the eigenvalues of the first three components are larger for the actual than for the random data. As a result, we decide to retain three components (instead of four as Hülle et al., 2017). The Kaiser criterion suggests that four components can be distinguished for the ESS-Belgium data. However, the scree plot and parallel analysis indicate that only three components should be preserved. There is a clear break in the scree plot for the fourth component and its eigenvalue is smaller for the actual data than for the randomly generated data.

⁵ The different result for the SOEP-IS data might also relate to the choice of Hülle et al. (2017) to only analyse eight of the twelve items that were included in the questionnaire (see Table 2.10).

Table 2.10. Component loadings for the PCA solution with three components on the three datasets

Item code	SOEP-IS 2012 (N=1515)			ALLBUS 2014 (N=1682)			ESS-Belgium (N=1695)		
	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
C	0.708	0.137	-0.105	0.712	0.266	-0.029	0.722	-0.064	0.191
K	0.747	-0.157	0.201	0.803	0.027	0.118	0.736	-0.068	0.119
G	0.657	0.116	-0.024	-	-	-	0.700	-0.080	0.069
E	0.271	0.581	-0.268	0.125	0.706	-0.118	0.368	0.122	-0.233
J	0.133	0.572	-0.247	0.016	0.739	-0.004	0.367	0.340	0.191
A	0.230	0.589	-0.231	-	-	-	0.445	0.335	0.372
B	-0.093	0.677	0.041	-0.546	0.407	0.259	0.004	0.668	-0.033
I	0.157	0.413	0.126	0.000	0.287	0.489	0.068	0.547	0.354
H	-0.241	0.473	0.259	-	-	-	-0.124	0.716	0.117
D	0.285	-0.055	0.727	0.285	-0.228	0.722	0.111	-0.033	0.758
L	-0.151	0.068	0.786	-0.230	-0.146	0.719	-0.093	0.178	0.739
F	-0.169	0.635	0.168	-	-	-	0.388	0.180	0.502

Note. PCA with orthogonal rotation; Loadings above 0.40 in bold

Table 2.11. Component loadings of the principal component analyses conducted by Hülle et al. (2017)

	LINOS-1 (N=4457)				ALLBUS 2014 (N=1036)				SOEP-IS 2012 (N=1515)			
	Comp. 1	Comp. 2	Comp. 3	Comp. 4	Comp. 1	Comp. 2	Comp.3	Comp. 4	Comp. 1	Comp. 2	Comp.3	Comp. 4
C	0.724	0.153	0.060	-0.017	0.698	0.230	0.009	-0.012	0.690	0.190	0.297	-0.251
K	0.810	0.022	-0.095	0.038	0.821	0.017	0.076	0.041	0.794	-0.010	-0.106	0.153
G	0.716	0.136	0.005	-0.110	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
E	0.157	0.742	-0.099	-0.041	0.089	0.790	-0.172	-0.066	0.137	0.780	0.017	-0.133
J	0.037	0.636	0.096	-0.052	0.031	0.752	0.125	-0.053	-0.001	0.773	-0.021	-0.074
A	0.183	0.554	0.030	-0.040	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
B	-0.220	0.140	0.674	-0.001	-0.474	0.312	0.407	0.146	-0.321	0.468	0.508	0.166
I	0.219	-0.174	0.763	0.039	0.049	-0.049	0.932	0.033	0.074	-0.035	0.889	-0.016
H	-0.323	0.124	0.550	0.210	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
D	0.117	-0.039	-0.023	0.852	0.274	-0.082	0.048	0.809	0.417	-0.123	-0.005	0.670
L	-0.260	-0.065	0.172	0.692	-0.322	-0.015	0.030	0.770	-0.130	-0.061	0.013	0.854
F	-0.239	0.311	0.336	0.394	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note. The original authors only looked at the size of the eigenvalues to decide on the number of components. For the ALLBUS and the SOEP-IS data components with eigenvalues higher than 0.96 and 0.95 respectively were maintained.

Table 2.10 displays the component loadings for the recovered components (which can be compared to the results obtained by Hülle et al. (2017) that are displayed in Table 2.11). While the equality, equity and entitlement components are relatively well recovered for the ESS-Belgium data, the principle of need cannot be properly distinguished. The first two items of the principle of need do not load adequately on any of three components (item E and J) and the third item (item A) loads strongly on the component with the items of equality. The analysis also reveals that other items load quite strongly on unintended components. The third item of the entitlement component, for instance, has a moderate positive loading (.39) on the principle of equality and the second item of the principle of equity loads relatively strong on the entitlement component. The results of the Belgian data do not systematically differ from the ones obtained from the German surveys, as analyses on the ALLBUS and SOEP-IS data do not offer strong support for the validity of the scale either. In the ALLBUS data, the concept of equality is clearly distinguished, but the two items that are supposed to measure equity also load substantially on the need and entitlement components respectively. The indicators of entitlement have substantive cross-loadings with unintended components. Similarly, the PCA on the SOEP-IS data indicates that while the principle of equality is measured relatively well, the items of the three other principles do not unambiguously distinguish the intended components. The items of need and equity load strongly on the second component together with the last item of entitlement. The results for all three datasets indicate that also the application of PCA on the general populations casts serious doubt on the validity of the four-tier factor structure.

5.3. CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS ON EIGHT-ITEM SURVEY BATTERY

As a last robustness check in assessing the validity of the measurement scale, we also conduct CFA on the eight-item battery for the SOEP-IS and ESS-Belgium data.

Table 2.12. Fit indices of the measurement models obtained through CFA (two-item latent concepts)

	X^2	ΔX^2	df	Δdf	CFI	ΔCFI	TLI	RMSEA	$\Delta RMSEA$	Model changes
<i>SOEP-IS 2012</i>										
Model 1	220.184	-	18	-	0.771	-	0.643	0.083	-	-
Model 2	101.016	-119.168	9	-9	0.836	0.065	0.727	0.051	-0.032	- items D and L
Model 3	5.166	-95.85	3	-6	0.992	0.156	0.984	0.021	-0.030	- items C and K
<i>ALLBUS 2014</i>										
Model 1	228.004	-	18	-	0.738	-	0.592	0.082	-	-
Model 2	95.688	-132.316	9	-9	0.827	0.089	0.712	0.075	-0.007	- items D and L
Model 3	52.713	-42.975	8	-1	0.911	0.084	0.833	0.057	-0.018	+ r_{error} K-B
Model 4	33.071	-19.642	7	-1	0.948	0.037	0.889	0.046	-0.011	+ r_{error} C-E
Model 5	13.738	-19.333	6	-1	0.985	0.037	0.961	0.027	-0.019	+ r_{error} C-B
<i>ESS-Belgium 2019</i>										
Model 1	187.766	-	15	-	0.827	-	0.677	0.081	-	-
Model 2	87.281	-100.485	9	-6	0.868	0.041	0.779	0.070	-0.011	- items D and L
Model 3	51.790	-35.491	8	-1	0.926	0.058	0.861	0.056	-0.014	+ r_{error} C-B
Model 4	28.108	-23.682	7	-1	0.964	0.038	0.923	0.041	-0.015	+ r_{error} I-E

Note. X^2 = Chi-square value of the measurement model; ΔX^2 = Change in chi-square model in comparison to the previous measurement model; df = Degrees of freedom of the measurement model; Δdf = Change in degrees of freedom in comparison to the previous measurement model; CFI = Comparative Fit Index of the measurement model; ΔCFI = change in the CFI value in comparison to the previous measurement model; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index of the measurement model; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation of the measurement model; $\Delta RMSEA$ = change in RMSEA value in comparison to the previous measurement model; '- item' refers to the elimination of an item with a specific code from the measurement model and '+ r_{error} ' indicates the inclusion of an error correlation between items with specific codes

To provide additional insight into the comparability of the results across the different samples, Table 2.12 provides fit indices for each of the steps in the model fitting procedure on the shortened eight-item BSJO scale. Note that for ALLBUS the results are the same as in the main text, as this dataset only includes eight out of the twelve items. For the SOEP-IS data a four-factor model where the items only load on their respective latent concept fits the data inadequately. Additional inspection of the misfit leads to the conclusion that both items of the entitlement factor (D and L) are cross-loading on multiple other latent concepts. These items are, consequently, eliminated from the measurement model, which nevertheless still does not lead to acceptable values for the CFI and TLI. The modification indices reveal that both items of equality (C and K) cross-load on the principles of equity and need, which necessitates their removal from the model. The final model with only latent concepts for the principles of equity and need fits the data properly. For ESS-Belgium, the initial measurement model also indicates poor fit. A closer examination reveals that the entitlement items (D and L) load on other concepts, which warrants their elimination. The second model still fails to reproduce the observed correlations adequately and suggests the estimation of an error correlation between items C and B. A third model thus includes a negative error correlation ($r_{error} = -.25$) between the equity item B (hard work should lead to higher earnings) and equality item C (living conditions should be equal). As this model still does not yield satisfactory fit with the data, a final model is estimated that includes an error correlation ($r_{error} = -.15$) between item equity-based item I stating that people should only receive what has been acquired through their own efforts and need-based item E stating that the poor should be taken care of.

Table 2.13. Factor loadings on the basis of the two item-scales for the three datasets

Item	SOEP-IS 2012 (N=1641)			ALLBUS 2014 (N=1735)			ESS-Belgium (N=1764)		
	Equality	Need	Equity	Equality	Need	Equity	Equality	Need	Equity
C	-	-	-	0.618	-	-	0.720	-	-
K	-	-	-	0.608	-	-	0.652	-	-
E	-	0.566	-	-	0.491	-	-	0.385	-
J	-	0.640	-	-	0.584	-	-	0.464	-
B	-	-	0.541	-	-	0.448	-	-	0.506
I	-	-	0.378	-	-	0.281	-	-	0.434
D	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
r need	-	1		0.193	1		0.479	1	
r equity	-	0.651	1	0.204	0.340	1	0.307	0.320	1
r _{error} K - B		-			-0.430			-	
r _{error} C - E		-			0.154			-	
r _{error} C - B		-			-0.248			-0.236	
r _{error} I - E		-			-			-0.152	

Note. 'r' refers to the correlation between justice principles and 'r_{error}' refers to error correlation between items with specific codes

Table 2.13 displays the standardized loadings for each of these final factor solutions. Although the results are slightly different from those of the twelve-item battery, overall the same conclusions can be drawn. The entitlement factor had to be eliminated in each of the datasets and the equality principle even had to be omitted for the SOEP-IS data. Furthermore, the item E of need has a rather weak loading for the ESS data and item I of equity loads improperly for both the ALLBUS and SOEP-IS datasets. The estimation of error correlations was also necessary in both ALLBUS and ESS-Belgium, which does not lead to theoretically meaningful and parsimonious measurement models. Overall, these analyses also indicate that the validity of the BSJO scale is not as strong as previously suggested.

Chapter 3

Differentiated distributive justice preferences?

Configurations of preferences for equality, equity and need in three welfare domains⁶

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ABSTRACT

Empirical public opinion research on distributive justice often does not acknowledge that individuals' social justice preferences may strongly depend on the particular type of distribution at stake and therefore does not take into account the multiplicity of justice principles that people may simultaneously apply in their distributive judgements. As a result, to contribute to the understanding of differentiated justice preferences, we analyse citizens' preferences for the principles of equality, equity and need in the three welfare domains of health care, pensions and unemployment benefits. In particular, this chapter provides insight into the domain specificity of distributive justice preferences, into specific configurations or combinations of justice preferences across domains and into the social and ideological basis of these configurations. On the basis of data from the Belgian National Elections Study of 2014, we conduct a three-step latent class analysis. Results show that the distributive justice principles are preferred to a different extent for various welfare domains and that there is a substantial proportion of respondents that combines different principles of justice across welfare domains. This study also demonstrates that configurations are mainly structured by ideology instead of the social structure.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of welfare state retrenchment, the social question “who should get what and why?” comes back to the fore (van Oorschot, 2000, p. 34). In this context, the notion of distributive justice, which pertains to how the resources of our welfare state should be distributed appropriately, structures contemporary discussions (Mau & Veghte, 2007). Generally, the social justice literature refers to three principles of distributive justice: equality, equity and need, with each principle implying a different logic of allocating benefits, goods and services (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Deutsch, 1975). The logic of equality (of outcomes) means providing social welfare for all citizens when they are confronted with a certain risk, while disregarding additional requirements. The principle of equity conceives contributions as a prerequisite for having access to the resources of the welfare state, while the need principle entails a selective concern to those highest in need of assistance.

Besides the extensive body of normative theories of social justice (see Cullen, 1992 for an overview; Miller, 1992; Rawls, 1972), an increasing number of studies investigate which principles of social justice are preferred by the public at large (Aalberg, 2003; Liebig & Sauer, 2016; Mau & Veghte, 2007; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). Although the existing research evidences what types of welfare distributions are considered as just by the public and how normative principles are applied in practice (Miller, 1992; Swift, 1999), it fails to fully grasp to what extent individuals’ social justice preferences depend of the particular distribution at stake. Notwithstanding Walzer’s (1983) and Miller’s (1999) call for a pluralist conceptualization of distributive justice, the explicit connection between contexts and preferences has only seldom been empirically examined (Bicchieri, 2006; Scott & Bornstein, 2009). True, various studies, especially qualitative research, have illustrated the co-existence of various justice ideals in societies (i.e., the multidimensionality of justice; Cappelen et al., 2007; Leventhal et al., 1980; Taylor-Gooby et al., 2018). Other studies focus on individual allocation decisions in different circumstances and relationships (Brickman et al., 1981; Deutsch, 1975; Hegtvedt & Cook, 2001; Mikula, 1980; Tyler et al., 1997) Yet, empirical work that systematically dissects how preferences regarding the distribution of collectively available resources are context-dependent is largely lacking (Bicchieri, 2006; Sachweh, 2016; Scott & Bornstein, 2009). This is unfortunate, because the assumption that people apply the same distributive justice principles universally across

different welfare distributions (e.g., Aalberg, 2003; Arts & Gelissen, 2001; D'Anjou et al., 1995; Marshall et al., 1999) is questionable, as interpretations of and preferences for justice principles can depend on the welfare domain under consideration (Hochschild, 1981; Mau & Sachweh, 2014; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013).

Our study examines to what extent different popular preferences on the distribution of welfare state resources are context-dependent, combined with each other, and socially and ideologically stratified. To begin with, we analyse citizens' preferences for the principles of equality, equity and need in the three welfare domains of health care, pensions and unemployment benefits (cf., Walzer, 1983). This allows us to answer a first research question, namely *to what extent are preferences for the social justice principles dependent of the welfare domains?* Second, our analysis goes beyond the idea that individuals use a single rule, criterion or principle in their justice-related assessments, and investigates the combinations of multiple distributive rules or standards that persons apply, which offers a much more realistic perspective of justice preferences (Leventhal, 1980). Using a person-centred approach (cf., Collins & Lanza, 2010; Meeusen et al., 2018) we construct a typology of social justice configurations that answers the question *how individuals combine preferences for the social justice principles across welfare domains* (cf., Franke & Simonson, 2018). Third, we investigate *how particular configurations of social justice preferences are related to structural positions and ideological dispositions* (Arts & Gelissen, 2001; D'Anjou et al., 1995; Ng & Allen, 2005). Focusing on the traditional explanatory frameworks of the welfare state attitudes literature, i.e., self-interest and ideology, (Jaeger, 2006b; Roosma et al., 2013, 2014) allows to gain better understanding of what motivates individuals to combine justice principles simultaneously in distinct ways.

To answer the research questions, we use Belgium as a research site, which is a federal state in Western-Europe with a relatively extensive welfare state that is characterized as a conservative welfare regime (Esping-Andersen, 1990). In particular, we employ survey data of the Belgian National Elections Study 2014 (Abts et al., 2015). Questions regarding social justice preferences in the domains of pensions, health care and unemployment are analysed by means of three-step Latent Class Analysis (LCA). This allows us to explore the domain-specificity of

the social justice principles, construct a typology of configurations of distributive justice preferences and investigate their social-structural and ideological determinants.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE PREFERENCES IN THE WELFARE DOMAINS OF HEALTH CARE, PENSIONS AND UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

The social justice literature generally identifies three principles of distributive justice (Deutsch, 1975), which not only refer to more abstract ideal types of welfare distribution, but are also strongly embedded in institutional designs of European welfare states (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Sachweh, 2016). While distributive justice preferences have been defined in various ways (see for instance Sabbagh & Schmitt, 2016), we use the concept to refer to fundamental and long-lasting beliefs on the legitimacy of the various distributive logics through which a welfare state allocates benefits and services. First, the principle of equality, here understood as equality in outcomes rather than equality in opportunities (Sachweh, 2016), posits that all citizens should be treated equally within welfare distribution and receive the same level of social welfare when confronted with a certain risk, without reference to additional requirements. Second, the principle of equity makes distributions dependent on previous contributions to the common good. Equity can mean that benefits are proportional to one's paid taxes, welfare contributions and/or labour market participation. Third, the principle of need entails a primarily and selective concern to citizens highest in need. Need-based distribution focuses exclusively on groups in need (such as the disabled or the poor) with the goal of providing sufficient resources to alleviate their basic needs.

A growing body of public opinion research tries to uncover which of these three principles receives most public support to form the basis of welfare systems. Although most studies assume that citizens put forward a single principle that they apply uniformly to various domains or social risks, Michael Walzer (1983) argues in favour of a broader context-dependent account of distributive justice, which recognizes that different criteria are applicable to the distribution of distinct social goods. Walzer's concept of 'spheres of justice' implies that social justice principles are specific rather than universal in the sense that their concrete meaning and interpretation depends crucially on the contexts and cases they are

applied to (Konow, 2001, p. 139). Although the idea of pluralism has been embraced by various justice scholars (Deutsch, 1975; Hegtvedt & Cook, 2001; Mikula, 1980; Miller, 1992; Tyler et al., 1997), context-dependency has only seldom been systematically tested in the field of the welfare state attitudes (Bicchieri, 2006; Sachweh, 2016; Scott & Bornstein, 2009).⁷

In this study, we translate the idea of context-dependency to the realm of the welfare state by focusing on domain-specificity and investigating how distributive justice preferences vary across the domains of health care, pensions and unemployment benefits. Applied to these domains, (1) equality implies that everyone receives the same health care, pensions or unemployment benefits, irrespective of requirements or contributions (equality of outcomes); (2) equity indicates that those who have contributed more to the system receive better state-provided health care, higher pensions and more generous unemployment benefits; and (3) the distribution according to need allocates only health care, pensions and unemployment benefits to those who have insufficient resources to be self-reliant. To uncover which principle(s) prevail in each of the domains, we focus on their corresponding social risks, i.e., sickness, retirement and unemployment. These risks are characterized by very distinct modes of operation and conceptions of social justice (Bonoli, 2006; Mau, 2003) and could therefore invoke differential justice norms and legitimize different types of distribution (Bicchieri, 2006; Elster, 1992; Hegtvedt & Cook, 2001).

In particular, the three social risks differ in terms of perceived level of predictability, locus of control and prevalence. First, risks that are considered *predictable* facilitate a logic of making distribution conditional on previous contributions – i.e., the equity principle (Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). Income losses can be foreseen when risks are predictable, which stimulates individual responsibility and precautionary actions like ensuring a consistent labour market trajectory (Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). Second, the *locus of control* deals with the

⁷ This is in part because the concept of pluralism has been conceived in many different ways, but only seldom in terms of the context-dependency of justice principles (De Bres, 2012). Instead pluralism commonly refers to various grounds of justice-related judgements (ground pluralism; De Bres, 2012; Rippon et al., 2017), to multiple actors who can be subject of justice decisions (subject pluralism; De Bres, 2012) or to the mere co-existence of various justice ideals in societies (multidimensionality of justice; Cappelen et al., 2007; Leventhal et al., 1980; Taylor-Gooby et al., 2018).

question whether individuals are responsible themselves for their needy situation. The expectation that benefit claimants are personally responsible for their own situation fosters the belief that they are undeserving of generous welfare support and that distribution should become more selective, as reflected in the principles of need and equity (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Kluegel & Smith, 1986; Lepianka et al., 2009). Third, risks that are believed to be *prevalent* facilitate the introduction of equal distribution of resources, as these risks affect almost the entire population and equality-based systems are meant to promote the general well-being (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002). Similarly, in case of high risk exposure, individuals are more likely to distribute broadly and to insure collectively (Cusack et al., 2006; Sevä, 2009).

Sickness is largely considered *unpredictable*, as it is labelled as an 'external risk' that befalls individuals unexpectedly (Giddens, 1999; Hinrichs, 1997). Although the development of genetic research and screening has rendered disease increasingly predictable and preventable (Bernts, 1988), the population at large still perceives an important element of (un)fortune in matters of sickness and health. The impossibility of fully predicting sickness decreases the support for a system that restricts health care on the basis of previous contributions (equity). Despite the increasing privatization of health insurance and growing emphasis on individual responsibility (Paz-fuchs, 2011; ter Meulen, 2015; ter Meulen & Maarse, 2008), there is still a fundamental normative standard that the sick are generally not held accountable for their disadvantageous situation (Jensen & Bang Petersen, 2017; Mau, 2003, p. 166). This general perception of *limited internal control* decreases support for conditional health care arrangements. Moreover, sickness is a relatively unavoidable part of people's lifecycle and a *highly prevalent* risk (Green-Pedersen & Jensen, 2019; Hinrichs, 1997; Jensen, 2012; Mau, 2003). This furthers the support for the egalitarian provision of health care. Thus, since sickness is mostly considered to be unpredictable, largely uncontrollable and highly prevalent, we expect strong public preferences for the principle of equality in this domain.

Because retirement is a *foreseeable* part of most people's life (Mau, 2003, p. 147), individuals are generally expected to anticipate this risk (Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013), which legitimizes distribution based on previously earned rights. The idea of 'earned benefits' coincides with an equity-based logic that makes the level of pension benefits dependent on

previous contributions (Mau, 2003). At the same time, while old age itself is unavoidable and retirement is *external to individuals' control*, individuals are held responsible to participate in the labour market or to accumulate individual savings to prevent the loss of a reasonable life standard after retirement (Hinrichs, 1997; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). This component of individual responsibility is increasingly emphasized by focusing on active aging, which aims to maximize the well-being and participation of elderly citizens (Walker, 2008). However, a large majority of the population still believes that pensions should be collectively organized (Gelissen, 2001). Being an integral part of most individuals' life course, retirement is also *relatively prevalent* (Green-Pedersen & Jensen, 2019), which implies that collective insurance schemes seem to be beneficial for almost everyone. As retirement is considered almost fully predictable and individuals are seen as personally responsible for building up pension rights, the principle of equity is expected to be preferred most.

Last, the risk of unemployment fluctuates according to macro-economic circumstances and is therefore, according to most people, largely *unpredictable* (Hinrichs, 1997; Mau, 2003). A considerable share of the population considers unemployment to be self-inflicted (Hinrichs, 1997; van Oorschot & Roosma, 2017), hold the unemployed responsible for their situation and blame them for not actively seeking a job (Dwyer, 2000). Although social opportunities and social exclusion in the labor market are to a certain extent socially stratified by age, social class and ethnicity (Mythen, 2005), many citizens perceive unemployment as something within individuals' control instead of being caused by social fate (Furåker & Blomsterberg, 2003). This perceived *high level of internal control* is expected to stimulate preferences for need- or equity-based distributions, as these entail a focus on individual responsibility through self-reliance and labour market participation respectively (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002). In addition, unemployment is generally perceived as an anomaly rather than a normal part of people's lifecycle (Green-Pedersen & Jensen, 2019; Jensen, 2012). Unemployment is generally *less widespread* than sickness and old age, which makes support for an extensive equality-based unemployment benefit system improbable (Hinrichs, 1997). As unemployment is largely considered to be within the control of individuals and as extensive government intervention is limitedly supported, the principles of need or equity are anticipated to receive more popular support over equality.

Table 3.1. summarizes the postulated relationship between perceived characteristics of social risks (predictability, locus of control and prevalence) on the one hand, and social justice preferences on the other. In the case of sickness, the high prevalence combined low predictability and external locus of control stimulates preferences for the principle of equality. In the case of old age, especially the predictability fosters support for equity-based distribution. In the case of unemployment the high perceived level of individual responsibility stands out, which delegitimizes the principle of equality and makes preferences for equity and need more likely. Note that the expectations about the characteristics of these social risks are especially conceived in relative terms to the other two social risks and should not be interpreted categorically. The influence of these characteristics is not tested empirically, as they are used to formulate theoretical predictions about the preferred principles for each social risk or welfare domain.

Table 3.1. Perceived characteristics of social risks and social justice preferences per welfare domain

Welfare domain	Social risk	Predictable	Locus control	Prevalent		Justice principle
Health care	Sickness	--	--	++	→	Equality
Pensions	Retirement	++	-	+	→	Equity
Unemployment benefits	Unemployment	-	++	-	→	Equity/need

2.2. CONFIGURATIONS OF DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE PREFERENCES

Acknowledging domain-specificity is crucial, but it does not yet reveal the full variety and complexity of distributive justice preferences. While some individuals may apply the same justice logic universally across distributions, others call upon different criteria in their various distributive judgements (Franke & Simonson, 2018; Miller, 1992; Sachweh, 2012; Scott et al., 2001). Franke and Simonson (2018), for instance, show that people often combine different and sometimes even seemingly 'inconsistent' or 'contradictory' social justice beliefs regard old-age provisions (cf., Converse, 2006). Ignoring this within-person diversity in opinions misrepresents the complexity of public support for different types of welfare distribution. More

than merely mapping the within-person diversity in preferences for social justice principles, we aim to uncover the specific configurations or combinations of justice preferences. This enables to construct a typology of subgroups of individuals who combine distributive justice preferences across domains in similar ways. Contrary to so-called variable-centred approaches that consider support for particular principles or domains as separate dimensions (e.g., Hülle et al., 2017; Meuleman et al., 2020), this person-centred approach has the benefit of uncovering the ideological coherence of individuals' justice preferences (Franke & Simonson, 2018). Because the person-centred paradigm is largely exploratory, it is difficult to predict exactly which configurations of interconnected principles will be retrieved. However, based on theoretical considerations, the following configurations seem likely.

First, in line with a great share of research into general support for social redistribution and the role of government (Jaeger, 2006b, 2012; Roller, 1995; van Oorschot & Meuleman, 2012), we expect to find a subgroup of individuals who endorse the principle of equality across welfare domains. This is because various previous studies illustrate that large shares of the population endorse the reduction of inequalities and sees an important role for the government herein (Meuleman, 2019; Roosma et al., 2013, 2014). Regardless of the specific context, a majority of citizens endorses extensive government intervention across different welfare domains, including health care, pensions and unemployment benefits (Jaeger, 2012). Although real equality in outcomes is unlikely to be broadly supported (Aalberg, 2003; Marshall et al., 1999), there is a relatively high support for reduction of social inequality and for bringing arrangements (more) in line with the principle of equality (Magni-Berton, 2019; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). This suggests that a subgroup of the population is likely to support the universal application of the equality principle.

Besides the uniform applicability of equality, we also expect more differentiated combinations of social justice principles. A second anticipated configuration combines a preference for equality in health care with preferences for equity in pensions and need or equity in unemployment benefits. This configuration takes the different expectations about predictability, internal control and prevalence of each social risk into consideration and prefers distinct principles accordingly. This profile may fit with the institutionalized differentiation of

justice logics within the designs of health care, pensions and unemployment in conservative welfare state regimes. Access to health care is relatively universal, while the height of pension benefits is related to the contributions paid during the working years and unemployment benefits are initially proportional to the last earned income (equity) and decrease gradually to subsistence level (need) (Gerken & Merkur, 2010; Gieselink et al., 2003; Van Lancker et al., 2015). Because welfare and justice beliefs are embedded in policy contexts (Elster, 1992; Hegtvedt & Cook, 2001; Kumlin & Stadelmann-Steffen, 2014), public opinion might partly be in line with the institutional design of each of these welfare domains.

A third configuration is expected to combine preferences for equality in the domains of health care and pensions with support for equity or need in the distribution of unemployment benefits. The logic of this configuration is in line with deservingness literature, which illustrates that a large proportion of people see the elderly and the sick as equally deserving of welfare support, while the unemployed are considered less deserving (Green-Pedersen & Jensen, 2019; Laenen & Meuleman, 2017; van Oorschot, 2000). This distinction between sickness and retirement, on the one hand, and unemployment, on the other hand, coincides with the rationale behind *luck egalitarianism*, which only considers deviations from equality to be legitimate when the risk is within the control of individuals (Brouwer & Mulligan, 2018; Rippon et al., 2017). As the unemployed are especially considered to be personally responsible, this logic could only consider deviations from equality for the distribution of unemployment benefits to be just.

2.3. AN EXPLANATORY ACCOUNT OF DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE CONFIGURATIONS

In addition to constructing a typology of configurations in justice preferences, this contribution also tries to explain why individuals adhere to a particular social justice configuration. Drawing on previous research into welfare attitudes and distributive justice preferences (D'Anjou et al., 1995; Meuleman et al., 2020; Ng & Allen, 2005; van Oorschot, 2010), we consider the impact of social structural characteristics as well as ideological beliefs. Contrary to previous studies, however, we identify the structural and ideological factors that explain why individuals opt for a specific combination of principles, rather than analysing the principles or domains separately. However, since our exploratory approach makes it difficult to formulate explicit hypotheses,

we apply the explanatory frameworks to more general orientations towards equality, equity and need instead of to specific configurations.

A first line of argument stresses that distributive justice preferences are socially stratified and thus related to social structural characteristics of individuals (Aalberg, 2003; D'Anjou et al., 1995; Ng & Allen, 2005). Persons with a higher level of education and income were found to be more supportive of equity-oriented distribution, while individuals with a lower socio-economic status are more inclined to prefer equality- or need-based distribution (Aalberg, 2003; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). This pattern of stratification in distributive justice orientations can be understood from self-interest mechanisms. The higher support for equity-based distributions among well-off groups can be related to their higher personal interest in distribution proportional to past contributions (Arts & Gelissen, 2001; D'Anjou et al., 1995; Miller, 1992; Ng & Allen, 2005). Lower-status groups, on the other hand, benefit more from equality- or need-based distribution (Arts & Gelissen, 2001; D'Anjou et al., 1995; Miller, 1992). Therefore, we expect higher status groups to be more likely to be equity-oriented in one or more domains, while lower status groups would be more likely to be directed at equality or need.

The second framework to explain patterns of distributive justice preferences refers to ideology (Arts & Gelissen, 2001; Ng & Allen, 2005). According to this framework, social justice preferences are embedded in a broader system of coherent normative and political orientations (Jaeger, 2006b; van Oorschot, 2006). To test the ideology hypothesis, most empirical studies have focused on left-right placement. As right-wing individuals are less egalitarian and adopt more conditional notions of solidarity (van Oorschot, 2006), they are expected to be more equity- and need-oriented. However, at least three other ideological dispositions - namely authoritarianism, economic liberalism and utilitarian individualism - can be linked theoretically to distributive justice preferences as these dispositions relate closely to the question of how to balance rights and responsibilities (Rawls, 1972).

Authoritarianism refers to an "intolerance of deviance and a submissiveness to authorities" (Staerklé et al., 2012, p. 89) and is consequently related to support for distribution that is

conditional on conformity to prevailing norms (Staerklé et al., 2012). By defending reciprocal duties, authoritarianists are more likely to be equity-oriented and to support welfare support contingent on labour market participation and the fulfilment of social obligations (Achterberg et al., 2014). Economic liberalism encompasses a preference for limiting government distribution and allocating welfare through market mechanisms (Dwyer, 2000; Friedman, 1967; Nozick, 1974). Therefore, economic liberalism is conducive to distributing only to those who cannot obtain a reasonable living standard through participation in a market economy (cf., Friedman, 1967) and, hence the principle of need. Utilitarian individualists stress personal responsibility and the importance of rewarding hard work, accomplishments and merit (Halman, 1996; Mascini et al., 2013; Staerklé, 2009). As a result, persons with a utilitarian individualist disposition are more likely to be equity-oriented, as equity underlines the significance of achievements and performances. To make sure these ideological dispositions and the justice principles themselves do not just measure support for government involvement in different welfare domains, we also control for support for government intervention (Roller, 1995).

3. DATA AND METHOD

3.1. DATA

We use data from the Belgian National Elections Study of 2014 (BNES), which was conducted among Belgians who were qualified to vote in the federal elections of 2014. Respondents were selected through two-stage random probability sampling and data were collected by means of computer assisted personal interviewing (CAPI). The National Register of Belgium served as the sampling frame. The data collection resulted in a total number of 1901 respondents (response rate: 47.5%). Cases with missing values on an independent or all dependent variables are excluded from the analysis, which results in a final sample size of 1898 respondents. Post-stratification weights for gender, age and education are applied to correct for differential non-response.

3.2. INDICATORS

3.2.1. DEPENDENT VARIABLES

We use three items to assess which principle of justice people prefer in the domains of health care, pensions and unemployment benefits. For each domain, respondents are asked to choose between either an equality-, an equity- or a need-based distribution.⁸ The question for each domain was formulated as follows: *"The government can organize health care/pensions/unemployment benefits in different ways. According to you, what should the government do?"*. Answer categories started with *"The government should (only) provide"* and the subsequent wordings are displayed in Table 3.2, together with the proportion of respondents opting for each principle. Note that responses to these items might be contaminated by support for government involvement in the provision of health care, pensions and unemployment benefits. To have a clearer interpretation in terms of justice principles, we control for this disposition in our explanatory analysis.

3.2.2. INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

First, socio-economic status is operationalized by occupation, education, income and welfare dependency. Occupation is divided into five classes based on the Erikson-Goldthrope-Portocarero class scheme, which distinguishes between: the service class, blue collar workers (reference category), white collar workers, the self-employed and the economically inactive (including students) (Ganzeboom & Treiman, 1996). Education is divided into three distinct categories: lower secondary education or less, higher secondary education (reference category) and tertiary education. Income is measured as the net equalized household income and is divided into four quartiles. A separate category is added for the relatively large group of respondents with a missing value on income (11 percent of the sample). Welfare

⁸ Originally each question also included an answer category for people who thought the government should not organize any distributions. However, due to a very low proportion of individuals opting for this category (approximately 1 percent for each welfare domain), this option is converted to a missing value. Note that respondents can only mark one answer category for each of the three questions. Although it is possible for respondents to combine principles across the three questions, they cannot apply multiple principles within a welfare domain. This of course entails a more restrictive approach and ideally a differentiation within domains would have been enabled as well. For the purpose of this study, however, the operationalization suffices, as we want to comprehend which principles are dominant within domains and how people combine distributive criteria across domains.

dependency is measured by asking respondents whether they or a household member received a welfare benefit, such as income support, an unemployment benefit or a work disability allowance in the last two years. Gender, age and region (Flanders vs. Francophone Belgium) are included as control variables.

Left-right placement is measured by a single item on a 11-point scale with higher values pointing to a higher identification with a right-wing ideology. The three other ideological dimensions are measured by means of multiple agree-disagree items (5-point scales). Authoritarianism is measured by three items that ask to what extent problems can be solved by getting rid of immoral people, obedience and respect for authority are important virtues and laws should become stricter. Economic liberalism is operationalized by two items gauging whether individuals think that the government should intervene less in the market and that businesses should get more freedom. Utilitarian individualism is measured by three items asking whether respondents believe that everyone has to defend their own interests, that personal success is more important than good relations and that everything resolves around one's own interest. Finally, government intervention is measured by three items (11-point scale) probing to what extent individuals believe that the government is responsible for providing a reasonable pension, affordable health care and a reasonable living standard for the unemployed, respectively. A simultaneous confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the four latent concepts shows that the items measure the intended latent concepts adequately ($X^2=100.609$; $df=38$; $RMSEA=0.029$; $CFI=0.977$; $TLI=0.967$; $SRMR=0.028$) and that all factor loading are sufficiently strong (see Appendix Table A1 for question wordings and more details on the CFA). To include these latent concepts as predictors of class membership, the factor scores of this measurement model are saved and included in the regression analysis.

3.3. STATISTICAL MODELLING

To answer the research questions, we conduct a three-step latent class analysis (LCA) (Vermunt, 2010). This person-centred approach empirically constructs a typology of distributive justice preferences, uncovers how people combine different principles across welfare domains and shows how preferences with a particular configuration are linked to the structural and ideological predictors. A first step estimates latent class models and determines

how many latent subgroups are required to represent the variety in justice preferences across welfare domains. After the determination of the best latent class solution, a second step consists of determining for every individual what the most likely class membership is. Third, most likely class membership is predicted in a multinomial regression model while considering the classification errors that are made when assigning respondents to classes. Specifically, we conduct a stepwise multinomial regression analysis first adding the structural characteristics and later including the ideological dimensions to uncover whether the social-structural effects are attributable to ideological differences between social strata. All analyses were conducted in Mplus 8.2 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017).

4. RESULTS

4.1. DESCRIPTIVE OVERVIEW

Table 3.2. provides an overview of the preferences for the distributive justice principles across the three welfare domains. In line with some previous studies (e.g., Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013) but in contrast to others (e.g., Aalberg, 2003), the principle of equality is widely endorsed across the welfare domains investigated here. The high level of support might be due to the relatively moderate description of equality in our items. Previous studies that probe support for equality in outcomes in a strict sense report lower levels of support (Aalberg, 2003; Marshall et al., 1999). In the domains of health care, pensions as well unemployment benefits, the egalitarian distribution clearly receives the highest level of support. Nevertheless, the distributions of justice preferences vary strongly across the welfare domains. While a vast majority (82.0%) prefers the equality-based distribution in health care, just over half of the respondents opt for equality in the domains of pensions (58.4%) and unemployment (52.2%). The principle of equity is relatively popular in the fields of pensions (36.9%) and unemployment (29.0%). While the need principle is preferred only marginally in case of health care and pensions, almost one fifth of the sample prefers this social justice principle as a fundament for distribution in the field of unemployment.

Table 3.2. Question wordings and percentages of respondents opting for equality, equity and need in the three welfare domains

Question wording	Principle of distributive justice	Percentage of respondents
<i>Q67- Health care</i>		
"Minimal basic health care for people who are truly in need"	Need	8.1
"Better health care for people who have earned and contributed more"	Equity	9.9
"Equal and reasonable health care for everyone"	Equality	82.0
<i>Q93 – Pensions</i>		
"A minimal pension for the poor elderly, which only covers their basic needs"	Need	4.6
"A higher pension for people who have earned and contributed more"	Equity	36.9
"A reasonable pension for all, which is equal for everyone"	Equality	58.4
<i>Q113 – Unemployment benefits</i>		
"A minimal unemployment benefit for the unemployed who are in real need"	Need	18.8
"A higher unemployment benefit for people who have earned and contributed more"	Equity	29.0
"A reasonable benefit for all the unemployed, which is equal for everyone"	Equality	52.2

Note. Percentages are weighted for age, gender and education

These differences show that distributive justice preferences are indeed domain-specific, and can be interpreted in terms of the predictability, locus of control and prevalence of the

different social risks. That almost all respondents opt for the principle of equality in the domain of health care can be understood from the perceived low predictability and control combined with the high prevalence of sickness. The believed predictability of retirement might explain why a larger proportion of people prefers equity-based pension systems. Contrarily, the high level of perceived internal control and individual responsibility associated with unemployment (Dwyer, 2000; Hinrichs, 1997; van Oorschot & Roosma, 2017) might be responsible for driving a substantial proportion of respondents away from equality towards the principles of need and equity. It is also remarkable how public preferences seem to partly mirror the institutional designs of the three welfare domains (cf., Taylor-Gooby et al., 2018), pointing to potential feedback effects between welfare attitudes and social policies (Kumlin & Stadelmann-Steffen, 2014). While the high support for the principle of equality in the distribution of health care might be due to the large universality of the Belgian health care system, the relatively large proportion of preferences for equity in the distribution of pensions might be connected to the strong contributory logic inherent to pension systems of conservative welfare states.

4.2. CONSTRUCTION OF A TYPOLOGY OF JUSTICE CONFIGURATIONS: LATENT CLASS ANALYSIS

To see how justice preferences cluster together across domains, we use LCA. The best class solution is determined by comparing several fit indices of models with differing number of classes (Nylund et al., 2007). We examine the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), the sample size-adjusted BIC (aBIC) (which should all be as low as possible) and the entropy (which should be as high as possible). The Lo–Mendell–Rubin likelihood ratio test (LMR LRT) provides a formal statistical test of the fit of a given class model relative to a model with one class less. The fit indices of the different class models are displayed in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3. Fit statistics for different latent class solutions

	AIC	BIC	aBIC	Entropy	LMR LRT
2 Classes	8726.344	8798.475	8757.174	0.576	0.000
3 Classes	8650.136	8761.107	8697.567	0.672	0.000
4 Classes	8656.676	8806.487	8720.708	0.730	0.249
5 Classes	8669.990	8858.641	8750.623	0.715	1.000

Note. Chosen class-solution in bold

The three-class solution has the lowest AIC, BIC and aBIC, and performs significantly better than a two-class solution (p -value LMR LRT < 0.05). While the four-class solution is characterised by the highest entropy, it does not perform significantly better than the three-class solution and it is characterised by higher values for the three information criteria. Although the three-class model contains a class that constitutes only 4.4 percent of the sample, this small subgroup is still theoretically meaningful (see below). Hence, the three-class solution is chosen as the final model.

Table 3.4. Class sizes and conditional probabilities of the three-class solution

	Egalitarian universalists	Meritocratic selectivists	Residual selectivists
Class size	0.666	0.290	0.044
Health care			
Equality	0.926	0.648	0.559
Equity	0.030	0.247	0.119
Need	0.044	0.106	0.322
Pensions			
Equality	0.788	0.157	0.441
Equity	0.196	0.843	0.038
Need	0.016	0.000	0.521
Unemployment			
Equality	0.753	0.085	0.195
Equity	0.129	0.689	0.139
Need	0.118	0.226	0.666

Table 3.4 displays the conditional probabilities and class sizes for each of the three classes. These conditional probabilities show what the probability is that members from a particular class prefer particular distributions and are thus helpful in determining the substantive interpretation of the classes.

The *egalitarian universalists* make up approximately 67 percent of the sample and are most likely to endorse the principle of equality across the three domains. This configuration encompasses an outspoken and universal egalitarianism that does not differentiate between target groups (cf., Nielsen, 1979). Choices for equity- or need-based redistribution are unlikely among this subgroup. That these egalitarians comprise more than half of the sample, is in line with the high prevalence of the principle of equality in each of the three welfare domains and with the existence of a substantial group that prefers to reduce inequalities and encourages extensive government intervention across domains (Jaeger, 2012; Magni-Berton, 2019).

We label the second group (29%) as *meritocratic selectivists*, as these respondents differentiate between welfare domains but also have an outspoken orientation towards the principle of equity. This group combines support for a system based on personal contribution for the distribution of pensions and unemployment benefits with support for egalitarian health care. Note that although the principle of equality is most popular for health care, the meritocrats have a higher probability of opting for equity in this domain compared to the other two classes.

The last subgroup, called *the residual selectivists*, was not anticipated and includes only about 4 percent of the respondents. The individuals who adopt this residual logic are strongly inclined to support need-based pensions and unemployment benefit systems. The focus on those in the highest need of assistance boils down to a residual welfare state that restricts its efforts to people who are absolutely unable to obtain a means of living via market mechanisms. However, this class is also selective, as it differentiates between domains and combines preferences for the need principle in pensions and unemployment with support for equality in health care (although less outspoken than for the two other classes).

The retrieved typology with three subgroups confirms partially, but is not fully conform to the profiles set out in the theoretical section. As expected, we do find a subgroup of individuals who consistently applies equality across welfare domains. Furthermore, the presence of the two other groups underscores our expectation that a considerable share of individuals indeed prefers different justice principles depending on the social risk. Yet, the existence of the residualist class was not anticipated. These results might, however, also partly be related to the question wording and format in our survey. The wording of the answer category referring to the equality principle mentions that everybody should get equal and reasonable health care, pensions or unemployment benefits. The reference to a "reasonable level" of benefits might have stimulated respondents to select this answer category and lead us to overestimate the percentage of respondents preferring equality. Nevertheless, these results do illustrate that there is indeed a large proportion of respondents that systematically prefers equality as well as a substantial group of individuals that combines multiple principles across welfare domains.

4.3. PREDICTING CLASS MEMBERSHIP: EFFECTS OF SOCIAL STRUCTURAL POSITIONS AND IDEOLOGICAL DISPOSITIONS

Table 3.5 displays the results of the stepwise multinomial regression explaining class membership. The effects are displayed as logit parameters and as odds ratios, with the egalitarian universalists serving as reference category. In the first model, only the structural characteristics are included as predictors; in the second step the effects of ideology are added to the model. Note that the standard errors for the category of residual selectivists are relatively large because of the small size of this group.

Table 3.5. Multinomial logistic regression of social structure and ideology on latent classes (N=1898) (reference category = egalitarian universalists)

	Meritocratic selectivists						Residual selectivists					
	<u>Model 1</u>			<u>Model 2</u>			<u>Model 1</u>			<u>Model 2</u>		
	Logit	SE	OR	Logit	SE	OR	Logit	SE	OR	Logit	SE	OR
<i>Social structure</i>												
Gender												
Woman (ref.)												
Man	0.174	0.159	1.190	0.218	0.168	1.243	0.760*	0.351	2.139	0.852*	0.367	2.344
Age	-0.005	0.005	0.995	-0.008	0.005	0.991	0.000	0.011	1.000	-0.007	0.012	0.993
Education												
Lower (secondary)	-0.023	0.205	0.978	0.015	0.218	0.943	-0.595	0.523	0.552	-0.455	0.540	0.635
Higher secondary (ref.)												
Tertiary	0.026	0.199	1.027	0.130	0.209	1.333	-0.169	0.357	0.844	0.028	0.395	1.029
Income												
Quartile 1 (ref.)												
Quartile 2	0.625**	0.243	1.868	0.533*	0.247	1.679	-0.545	0.696	0.580	-0.531	0.660	0.588
Quartile 3	0.822***	0.247	2.275	0.641*	0.253	2.014	0.178	0.571	1.194	-0.047	0.538	0.954
Quartile 4	0.956***	0.268	2.601	0.786**	0.276	2.531	0.806	0.480	2.239	0.549	0.508	1.732
Missing	0.969***	0.297	2.636	0.886**	0.311	2.421	1.213*	0.501	3.364	1.268*	0.596	3.553
Occupation												

Blue collar (ref.)												
Service class	0.099	0.238	1.104	0.102	0.251	1.170	0.657	0.561	1.928	0.381	0.565	1.463
White collar	0.257	0.231	1.293	0.261	0.242	1.425	1.010	0.639	2.745	0.721	0.700	2.056
Self-employed	0.399	0.286	1.491	0.241	0.295	1.246	1.271	0.697	3.567	0.621	0.711	1.861
Inactive	0.260	0.281	1.297	0.147	0.307	1.213	0.947	0.547	2.578	0.473	0.616	1.604
Welfare dependency												
No benefit (ref.)												
Benefit	-0.146	0.189	0.864	-0.076	0.199	0.934	0.174	0.380	1.191	0.377	0.366	1.458
Region												
French region (ref.)												
Flanders	-0.995***	0.157	0.370	-1.115***	0.173	0.329	-1.173***	0.356	0.309	-1.289***	0.383	0.276
<i>Ideology</i>												
Left-right placement				0.105**	0.038	1.111				0.214*	0.097	1.239
Authoritarianism				0.394	0.284	1.483				1.685*	0.765	5.391
Economic liberalism				-0.137	0.239	0.872				1.187**	0.432	3.276
Utilitarian individualism				0.103	0.160	1.108				-1.167**	0.390	0.311
Government intervention				-0.246**	0.087	0.782				-0.540**	0.188	0.582

Note. SE= standard error; OR= odds ratio; * p≤0.05; ** p≤0.01; *** p≤0.001;

The first model illustrates that structural characteristics only have limited power explaining social justice configurations. Nevertheless, some variables do have a significant impact, which shows that instead of judging from behind a 'veil of ignorance' (Rawls, 1972), the social position of individuals partly informs their distributive judgements. Individuals in higher income quartiles are more likely to adhere to the configuration of meritocratic selectivists than to the egalitarian universalist one. The highest income quartile, for instance, differs with almost 1 logit from the lowest quartile, which means that these high-income respondents are 2.6 times more likely to adhere to the meritocratic class instead of the egalitarian subgroup compared to the lowest income group. A possible explanation is that high-income groups benefit more from equity-based distributions, which inclines them to adopt more conditional notions of solidarity (Arts & Gelissen, 2001; D'Anjou et al., 1995; Miller, 1992; Ng & Allen, 2005). However, the impact of the income variable might also be related to the higher exposure of this group to competitive relationships, which fosters support for a principle that stimulates similar modes of conduct (Miller, 1992). The self-interest mechanism is not confirmed for education, occupation and welfare dependency, however. Men are more likely than women (2.1 times) to apply a residual selective instead of an egalitarian universal logic, which could be attributed to the higher support of women for an extensive government through their higher benefit from state-provided services (Sainsbury, 1996). In addition, Flemish respondents are less likely than Francophone Belgians to belong to either one of the differentiating classes. At first sight, this finding is surprising given the weaker economic situation in Francophone Belgium (Billiet et al., 2006), which should heighten interests in equality-based distributions. However, higher unemployment rate in Francophone Belgium may increase also the visibility of people on social benefits and the worries about its effects (Billiet et al., 2015). This concern about the dependency of benefit claimants might limit the willingness to provide extensive benefits and strengthen preferences for conditional or residual redistributions. The second model illustrates that the limited effects of these structural characteristics remain significant after introducing the effects of ideology, which indicates that the social stratification of justice preferences is not attributable to ideological differences.

The second model shows that ideological dispositions are of crucial importance to understand respondents' preferences for particular justice configurations. First, right-wing individuals are

over-represented among the meritocratic and residual selectivists. This is in line with research suggesting that a right-wing ideology includes more conditional or residual conceptions of solidarity and a stronger reluctance towards egalitarianism and redistribution (Jaeger, 2008; van Oorschot, 2006). Second, authoritarianism affects the likelihood of belonging to the residual class most strongly (OR = 5.4). The more likely adherence to the residual selectivist class and the absence of a relationship with the membership of the meritocratic class is not conform our theoretical expectations. However, this might be because authoritarianism encourages a selective distribution to deserving individuals that comply with dominant norms (Staerklé et al., 2012), which might solely refer to those needy who truly cannot acquire a reasonable living standard. Third and as expected, with an odds ratio of 3.3, economic liberalism strongly heightens the probability of being residual selectivist (but has no impact on belonging to the meritocratic group). Individuals who underscore market-based allocation of goods prefer a more minimal form redistribution that targets only those who cannot gain a reasonable living standard through participation in the market economy (Friedman, 1967). Fourth, utilitarian individualism decreases the likelihood of adhering to residual selectivists (OR=0.3). We would expect utilitarian individualism, through its emphasis on individual responsibility, to heighten instead of lower support for moderate government intervention. However, this counter-intuitively negative relationship might be related to the importance of rewarding hard work and personal success in utilitarian individualism, as this is believed to be realized to a larger extent when everyone receives equal benefits than if only the neediest or poor receive benefits. Last, support for government involvement lowers the likelihood of membership of both selectivist classes relative to the egalitarian universalist class. This is not surprising, as equality-based distributions often require more government involvement and welfare states that function in accordance to equality are characterized by a higher degree of decommodification (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Sachweh, 2016). However, controlling for support for government involvement does not make the impact of the social structural and ideological characteristics insignificant. This indicates that, while our measurement of justice preferences is related to support for government intervention, the two instruments possess sufficient discriminant validity and that the reported effects of social structural and ideological variables are not driven by the overlap between both concepts.

While Table 3.5 compares membership of both selective classes to the egalitarian class (the reference category), the comparison of the meritocratic with the residual selectivist class gives some additional insights. The logit parameters, standard errors and odds ratios are displayed in Appendix Table A2. When comparing these configurations, the social structure does not have any significant influence, illustrating that the meritocratic and residual selectivist configuration have a similar socio-economic basis. The ideological variables differentiate more clearly, as economic liberalism stimulates and utilitarianism decreases the likelihood of adhering to the residual instead of the meritocratic selectivist configuration. This is in line with the emphasis in economic liberalism on a selective targeting at those who cannot acquire a reasonable living standard through participation in a market economy and the focus of utilitarian individualism on hard work and individual responsibility rather than on relieving the needs of the poorest groups.

5. CONCLUSION

The objectives of this study were threefold. First, we aimed to offer a domain-specific approach to distributive justice by recognizing that social justice preferences are dependent of the type of distribution at stake (cf., Walzer, 1983). Empirically, this chapter investigated whether preferences for equality, equity and need diverge across the welfare domains of health care, pensions and unemployment benefits. Second, this study sought to reveal to variety of distributive justice preferences by determining how people combine multiple criteria when making justice-related judgements. Using a LCA approach, we uncovered subgroups of individuals with different configurations of distributive justice preferences. Third and last, we tried to explain adherence to these differing configurations by focusing on two explanatory frameworks referring to social structure and ideology.

Our results illustrate that preferences for equality, equity and need can indeed be domain-specific. Although equality was the most popular principle in each of the welfare domains, the proportions of people opting for each principle varied substantially. The criterion of equity was preferred more for pensions and the principle of need received substantial support for the distribution of unemployment benefits. Domain-specific justice preferences could be summarized into three justice configurations, namely an egalitarian universalist, a meritocratic

selectivist and a residual selectivist type. By uncovering the existence of multiple patterns of distributive justice preferences, our study demonstrates that the implicit assumption that all individuals apply one abstract social justice principle to all types of distributions is fundamentally flawed. Instead, we find that a substantial proportion of individuals cares about which target groups or social risks are the subject of distributive judgements and adapts their preferences accordingly (Mau & Veghte, 2007). To provide insight into which types of welfare distribution people prefer, it is crucial that this domain-specificity as well as these patterns of distributive justice preferences are considered. Last, it became apparent that especially ideological dispositions, in terms of a right-wing ideology, authoritarianism, economic liberalism, utilitarian individualism and support for government involvement, drive these configurations of distributive justice preferences.

However, certain specific conclusions of this study should not be generalized too broadly. Although the Belgian case offers an interesting starting point to investigate distributive justice preferences in advanced welfare states, it is also embedded in a particular institutional context. To begin with, as mentioned, the Belgian social security system is organized in such a way that while equality is represented quite strongly in the provision of health care, equity is structuring the distributions of pensions and unemployment benefits (Gerkens & Merkur, 2010; Gieselink et al., 2003; Van Lancker et al., 2015). In this regard, our results suggest some policy feedback effects (Kumlin & Stadelmann-Steffen, 2014) as the distributive justice preferences seem to be adaptive to the institutional context and individuals are internalizing the norms inherent to important welfare institutions (Arts & Gelissen, 2001; Koster & Kaminska, 2012; Taylor-Gooby et al., 2018). For this reason, the particular context of our study may explain why there was a relatively large subgroup that preferred equality in health care and equity in the domains of pensions and unemployment benefits. In addition, Belgium is generally categorized as a conservative welfare state (Esping-Andersen, 1990), which indicates that many of its institutions operate in a way closely related to the justice principle of equity (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Sachweh, 2016). Together with its high equality of benefits and a high social expenditure rate (Esping-Andersen, 1990; OECD, 2019), this might explain why most respondents preferred either equality or equity in the three welfare domains.

Besides, the presented research has some limitations because of the particular survey context. To begin with, our measurements of the distributive justice preferences might explain some of the unexpected results. The framing of the equality principle in terms of support for the provision of reasonable health care, pensions and unemployment benefits, might lead us to overestimate support for equality. Besides, individuals were also only allowed to choose one principle, which made combinations of distributive justice preferences within domains impossible. In reality, people might even combine principles within domains (Franke & Simonson, 2018), but this is invisible with this instrument. Because of this methodological restriction, we probably overestimate consistency in preference for a particular justice principle. In addition, we presented the principles as abstract ideas about preferred benefit allocation, disregarding the particularities and modalities of welfare distribution in concrete situations. The lack of reference to the modalities that activate the principles in particular and concrete situations, in terms of for instance the level of the benefit, the scope of justice or the production phase, might also explain the existence of a relatively large cluster of people who are in some way oriented towards the principles of equality and equity.

Notwithstanding these limitations, this study sheds light on possible directions for future research. First, it would be useful to explore how preferences for the three social justice principles or configurations of distributive justice preferences vary cross-nationally. This would also allow to further explore how the institutional context affects distributive justice preferences (cf., Arts & Gelissen, 2001). Second, future research would benefit from an analysis on how people combine principles not only across but also within domains (cf., Franke & Simonson, 2018). Last, a further exploration of the determinants as well as the consequences of distributive justice preferences would be fruitful. Of the explanatory factors put forward in this chapter, only few proved to have a substantial impact and, as a result, deeper insight into the roots of distributive preferences is crucial. In turn, as distributive justice is central to so many contemporary welfare discussions (Mau & Veghte, 2007), these preferences and configurations are likely to shape more specific welfare attitudes or policy preferences.

Chapter 4

Two faces of benefit generosity

Comparing justice preferences in the access and
level of welfare benefits⁹

⁹ This chapter is co-authored with Koen Abts and Bart Meuleman

ABSTRACT

Scholars acknowledge that welfare generosity is a fundamentally multidimensional concept that refers both to the access to benefits and to its levels or amounts. Yet, in analysing public support for welfare, this distinction is largely disregarded. To gain a fuller picture of attitudes towards welfare redistribution, this study explicitly compares both constituting elements and examines which distributive justice principles - that is, equality, equity and need - are preferred to govern the access to versus levels of benefits. This chapter evaluates this distinction in two different distributive contexts (i.e., pensions and unemployment benefits) and contrasts social structural as well as ideological dividing lines. For that purpose, data from the Belgian National Elections Study 2019 is analysed. The results indicate that the access to and level of benefits are clearly distinct dimensions in public opinion, as distinct justice principles are preferred for both policy dimensions. In addition, structural equation models illustrate that the access dimension is more ideologically structured, while preferences regarding the level of benefits are more strongly stratified along social-structural lines. Overall, the results imply that social justice preferences are clearly different depending on whether the access or the level of benefits is considered. This distinction should be taken into account in welfare attitudes research.

1. INTRODUCTION

The social policy literature widely acknowledges that the concept of welfare generosity is not unidimensional, but has two distinct faces: it encompasses the access people have to particular social benefits as well as the level of the benefits (Jensen et al., 2018; Korpi & Palme, 1998; A. Otto, 2018; Scruggs, 2006). While access refers to the breadth of coverage of welfare provisions (who is entitled to acquire a benefit?), level relates to the amount (what do benefit recipients actually receive?) (van Oorschot, 2013). These two components are crucial ingredients in the resurging question “who should get what and why” that guides welfare reform (van Oorschot, 2000). While the *who*-component clearly pertains to the issue of which groups should have access to national circles of solidarity, the *what*-dimension connects to the identification of meaningful thresholds of benefit levels.

How the general public thinks about the who- and what-components of welfare design is a crucial factor affecting the legitimacy and feasibility of social policies. Yet, instead of fully engaging with both components, most welfare attitudes research tends to focus on people’s generic support for redistribution and the role of government in implementing social policies (Andreß & Heien, 2001; Blekesaune & Quadagno, 2003; Jaeger, 2006a; Svallfors, 1997). Although exploring to what extent the public supports redistribution and government involvement has merit, these studies do not fully grasp contemporary welfare debates. Support for government intervention to redistribute does not indicate preferences regarding the concrete modalities of benefit systems. Instead, zooming in on both the preferred access to and level of benefits connects more closely to the fundamental issue of how to organize future welfare distributions. Furthermore, as the access to and level of benefits are generally negatively correlated (i.e., high coverage coupled with low amounts and vice versa) and the general public can evaluate various policy design dimensions separately (Gallego & Marx, 2017; van Oorschot, 2013), people could have distinct opinions regarding the access to and level of benefits. This warrants disentangling these two dimensions of benefit generosity in welfare attitudes research.

In addition to providing much-needed insight into public preferences of the who- and what components, the current study also caters for the why-factor in the “who should get what and

why” question. The *why* refers to the normative criteria that are invoked to establish the access and level dimensions and hence legitimize the reasons for certain social categories to acquire particular amounts of public resources. This study takes this issue into account by comparing preferred justice principles of equality, equity and need (i.e., *why*) in determining the access to (i.e., *who*) and level (i.e., *what*) of benefits. Instead of merely measuring support for the *degree* of redistribution, these principles refers to fundamentally distinct *types* of organizing the access to and level of social benefits (Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013).

To investigate which justice beliefs are prevalent in governing the access to and level of benefits, we study two welfare domains that are institutionalized in different ways and connected to different types of social risks: pensions and unemployment benefits (Arndt, 2017; Jensen, 2012). Not only are justice preferences themselves fundamentally reliant on the welfare benefit under consideration (Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013), the distinction between access and levels might be sharpened or weakened depending on the type of social risk. Besides establishing the access and level distinction in two distributive contexts, we explore whether preferences for both policy design dimensions are linked to ideological and social dividing lines. Preferences for the access dimensions could for instance be more strongly ideologically debated, while discussions on amounts might be more strongly structurally stratified with differing degrees of proximity to benefits and interests in actual amounts (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2021; Hedegaard, 2014).

In sum, we try to answer two general research questions: (1) To what extent are different justice principles (equality, equity and need) preferred to govern the access to and level of pensions and unemployment benefits?; and (2) To what extent are these justice preferences in the access and level socially and ideologically stratified? For this purpose, we analyse data from the Belgian National Elections Study 2019.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. PUBLIC PREFERENCES ON THE ACCESS AND LEVELS OF BENEFITS

Most existing public opinion studies that assess the legitimacy of the welfare state fail to distinguish between various components of distributions and are hence unable to establish in detail which aspects of social policy designs the public actually finds attractive. Particularly important is the distinction between two fundamental faces of benefit generosity: the access to and level of benefits (Jensen et al., 2018; Korpi & Palme, 1998; A. Otto, 2018; Scruggs, 2006; van Oorschot, 2013). These two aspects are institutionalized in different ways and are expected to be appreciated differently by the general public. Gallego and Marx (2017) for instance illustrate that labour market reforms that increase the generosity of benefit amounts are most popular, while simultaneously a restriction in the access to those in need is the most preferred option. Although this indicates citizens might hold different preferences regarding the access to and level of benefits, systematic comparisons of both policy design dimensions are still lacking. To remediate this shortcoming, we zoom in on public preferences regarding different distributive mechanisms that regulate the coverage and amounts of welfare benefits.

In particular, we study citizens' views on which principles of distributive justice should govern the access to and level of welfare benefits: equality, equity and need (Deutsch, 1975). First, equality means that all citizens are guaranteed equal access to social protection or are entitled to an equal share of benefits and services, without any additional requirements. Second, equity implies that only individuals who have contributed sufficiently to society, in terms of social security contributions, working trajectories or paid taxes, are covered by social programs or receive more generous benefits. Last, the principle of need allocates welfare resources only to those who are in need, such as the poor or the disabled, or provides larger benefits amounts to compensate for the perils of precarious groups. While previous research has examined support for justice principles in governing the level of benefits (Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013), no explicit comparison has been made between preferences for these justice principles with regard to both their access and levels. Analysing differences in justice preferences regarding these two policy dimensions is nevertheless crucial to understand public welfare support, as the questions of who should get access and what these persons should receive refer to fundamentally different debates.

The debate on how the access to social benefits and services should be arranged, is usually grounded on the divides between universalism, social insurance and selective targeting (Korpi & Palme, 1998; Laenen & Gugushvili, 2021). While universal social policies are oriented at all citizens, social insurance is meant for those who have built up sufficient rights through work contributions and targeted benefits are only for specific groups, such as those with insufficient personal resources. Although there is an ongoing debate about which types of policies are most popular, benefits that are universal in coverage are generally expected to gather more public support (Hedegaard, 2014). Not only are they able to align stronger interests from different social groups, they are also considered to be superior in terms of procedural and substantive justice (Korpi & Palme, 1998; Laenen & Gugushvili, 2021; Rothstein, 1998). In terms of the distributive justice principles, equality in access comes down to universalism, while equity reflects a social insurance logic and need entails more targeted benefits for those in real need (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002).

With regard to the level of benefits, the discussion usually revolves around the distinction between flat-rate and earnings-related benefits (Korpi & Palme, 1998). Flat-rate benefits give an equal amount to everyone, while earnings-related schemes vary the amount given according to previous earnings or work trajectories. Here the principle of equality coincides with a flat-rate scheme that gives everyone the same amount and the principle of equity corresponds to an earning-related benefit that rewards those who have contributed more (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002). When the principle of need can also govern the level of benefits, this translates into higher benefits for lower-income groups for instance.

2.2. ACCESS AND LEVELS IN TWO DISTRIBUTIVE CONTEXTS: PENSIONS AND UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Justice preferences and welfare attitudes depend strongly on the domain under consideration and on the design of a social policy (Gallego & Marx, 2017; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013; see Chapter 3). Indeed, standards of social justice do not apply universally, but vary depending on the context and the good being distributed. As a result, preferences for equality, equity and need in governing the access to and level of benefits can also be expected to vary across benefit schemes or welfare domains (Andersen, 2011; Hedegaard, 2014). To take this domain-

specificity into account, we compare justice preferences for the access and level between pensions and unemployment benefits. After all, these two benefit schemes refer to distinct types of social risks that vary on a number of important characteristics (Arndt, 2017; Green-Pedersen & Jensen, 2019; Jensen, 2012; van Oorschot & Meuleman, 2012).

In the Belgian welfare state - the context of this study - the institutionalised logics governing the access and levels differ greatly between pensions and unemployment benefits. To begin with, pensions are connected to the life course-related risk of retiring or ageing, which is an unavoidable and normal part of the lifecycle (Green-Pedersen & Jensen, 2019). In this sense, this benefit scheme responds to a social risk that is widely prevalent, which leads most individuals to have a strong interest in broad access to pensions (Jensen, 2012). However, beyond self-interest, the elderly are regarded as highly deserving of welfare support, as they are not in control of their situation and are perceived to be grateful (Meuleman et al., 2020; van Oorschot, 2006). This is also reflected in the Belgian pension system, as entitlement can already be obtained from the moment someone has worked a single day and the access to pensions is hence almost entirely universal. According to policy feedback theories, citizens can adjust their preferences to be in line with institutional designs and the norms they encapsulate (Kumlin & Stadelmann-Steffen, 2014; Mau, 2004; Rothstein, 1998). Based on policy feedback and the predominant characteristics of this type of social risk, we would expect the principle of equality to be predominantly supported to govern the access to pensions. However, once this universal access is granted, the justice logic of determining the level of pension benefits is quite different. Retirement is fully predictable, which fosters the belief that individuals should participate in the labour market (Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). Indeed, this logic is embedded in the Belgian welfare state, as pensions are earnings-related based on the number of working years and employment trajectories. Following this, we would expect that the principle of equity is preferred for the levels of pensions. In this sense, a clear gap between justice preferences on the access and levels of pensions is expected.

Unemployment benefits are associated with a labour market-related social risk, as unemployment does not occur as an intrinsic part of everyone's lifecycle but is fundamentally tied to one's position in the labour force. As unemployment is especially prevalent among low-

income groups (Cusack et al., 2006; Jensen, 2012), this skewed social stratification weakens broad interests in encompassing social protection against this risk (Jensen, 2012). In addition, there is a strong sense of internal control in unemployment, as the belief that it is self-inflicted and that the unemployed could find a job if desired is relatively widespread (Furåker & Blomsterberg, 2003; Meuleman et al., 2020). Institutionally, access to unemployment benefits is not universal in Belgium, but contingent of having worked or contributed a minimum period to become covered and be eligible for unemployment protection (Van Lancker et al., 2015). These elements related to both the institutionalization and the characteristics of the underlying social risk might stimulate public preferences for organizing access to unemployment benefits around the principle of equity. In terms of levels, the Belgian system of unemployment benefits is founded on the principles of equity and need. Benefit levels are determined in line with the previous earnings of the benefit claimant and also differentiate with regard to needs (e.g., family status). As a result, one could expect that considerable proportion of citizens prefer equity or need to govern the levels of unemployment benefits - although previous research has shown that the equality for unemployment benefit levels is widely supported as well (Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013; see Chapter 3). This patterns also implies that we expect smaller differences in preferences for justice principles governing the access versus level of unemployment benefits compared to pensions.

2.3. COMPARING SOCIAL AND IDEOLOGICAL DIVIDING LINES

As a last step in the comparison, we analyse how justice preferences regarding the access to and level of benefits are driven by indicators of self-interest and ideology (Aalberg, 2003; Arts & Gelissen, 2001; Jaeger, 2006b; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). First, the self-interest framework assumes that individuals make cost-benefit calculations and support policies of which they are likely to be(come) beneficiaries (Jaeger, 2006b; Kangas, 1997). Groups with a higher socio-economic status are generally found to be more in favour of equity, while deprived groups gravitate more towards equality and need (Aalberg, 2003; Arts & Gelissen, 2001; D'Anjou et al., 1995; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). Second, the ideology framework assumes that social policy preferences are a function of broader coherent systems of political norms and values (Jaeger, 2006b; van Oorschot et al., 2012). Right-wing individuals, for instance, tend to adopt more restricted notions of solidarity, which potentially leads to less

support for egalitarian distributions and a stronger popularity of allocations according to the principle of equity or need (Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013; van Oorschot, 2006).

We expect that the access to benefits is most clearly structured along ideological dividing lines, whereby the more conditional interpretations of solidarity among right-wing and authoritarian individuals translate into higher support for targeting of benefits over universalism (cf., van Oorschot, 2006; see Chapter 3). Defining who is a member of a group and hence entitled to support from the state is at the centre of ideological contestation, with new right-wing parties challenging the definitions of which groups are deserving or undeserving to enjoy the fruits of welfare redistribution (cf., De Koster et al., 2013). Such conflicts on the deservingness of groups and the debate between targeting versus universalism is strongly ideologically driven and introduces a substantial degree of partisan conflict between left and right (Ennsner-Jedenastik, 2021). Being strongly ideologically polarized and related to fundamentally different views on who should be in the circles of solidarity, personal interests are expected to play a secondary role in justice preferences regarding the access to benefits. In addition, individual stakes might be less clear in the access dimension and there could be broader interests in universalism for various social groups (Laenen & Gugushvili, 2021). In this sense, for the access dimension we expect ideological differences to trump social stratification in justice preferences.

In contrast, once the fundamental debate on *who* should get access to benefits is settled, the question *what* these beneficiaries should get arises. We argue that preferences regarding the levels of benefits are more strongly driven by self-interest motivation than by ideological concerns since personal interests might be more transparent when discussing actual benefit amounts. Research indeed confirms that people's degree of proximity or direct interest into welfare provisions forms their attitudes about the level of benefit schemes (Hedegaard, 2014). However, while various social groups might still benefit from relatively broad access, we expect stronger socio-economic divisions in the criteria governing the levels, where earnings-related versus flat-related benefits clearly have distinct implications for how much different groups actually receive. Although disputes about levels are certainly still ideologically driven (Jensen & Kevins, 2019; Pedersen, 2019), this might constitute less of a polarized issue than the access

to welfare. Ennsner-Jedenastik (2021) indeed indicates that there is a much more blurred ideological gap in debates on the level or degree of redistribution. In sum, for the level of benefits we expect especially social stratification to occur and to observe a less strong ideological differentiation than for the access dimension.

To assess these social and ideological cleavages for both the access and level, they are again studied in the specific contexts of pensions and unemployment benefits. This enables to establish whether the differences in the determining factors of justice preferences in the access as well as level hold across distributive contexts or whether they are specific to the benefit under consideration. Given that the access and level seem most distinct for life course-related social risks (cf., previous section), the distinctiveness of the strength of ideological and social structural predictors between the access and level is expected to be largest for pensions.

3. DATA AND METHOD

3.1. DATA

This study uses data from the Belgian National Elections Study 2019, which is a large probability-based survey conducted in Belgium. The National Register functioned as the sampling frame to select individuals of 18 years and older who were entitled to vote in the federal elections of May 2019. A two-stage random sampling design was used, whereby a response rate of 32.81 percent was achieved. Due to the covid pandemic during the fieldwork period, respondents were interviewed by means different survey modes, namely Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (a mix of face-to-face and videocalls) as well as Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing. All respondents who participated in the interview also received a follow-up drop-off questionnaire with additional survey questions (including items on the justice preferences). In total a number of 1659 respondents participated in the main interview, of which 1129 individuals completed the drop-off survey. Post-stratification weights (for age, gender and education) are applied to correct for selective non-response.

3.2. INDICATORS

3.2.1. DEPENDENT VARIABLES

Our dependent variables are support for the justice principles in governing (1) the access to and (2) the levels of benefits. For the access as well as the level dimension, three justice principles are presented (equality, equity and need) to the respondent, who is invited to rate how just s/he deems this situation to be (on a five-point answer scale, from 'very unjust' to 'very just'). The specific benefit that is referred -pension vs. unemployment benefit- is randomized over respondents in a split-ballot experiment. Every respondent is thus asked six questions: access as well as level for each of the three justice principles applied to a single benefit context. Questions wordings and percentages of respondents perceiving the different principles as just are displayed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Question wordings and percentage of respondents considering distributive principles as just

<i>To what extent do you think that the following situations are just or unjust?</i>	Pensions (% just)	Unemployment benefits (% just)
Equality access - That everyone gets equal access to pensions/unemployment benefits	58.3	56.1
Equality level - That the level of pensions/unemployment benefits is equal for everyone	38.5	49.6
P-value McNemar test for difference between access & level	0.000	0.000
Equity access - That only people who have worked hard enough get access to pensions/unemployment benefits	32.0	32.9
Equity level - That people who have worked harder receive higher pensions/unemployment benefits	56.4	41.3
P-value McNemar test for difference between access & level	0.000	0.000
Need access - That only the poor and people in need get access to pensions/unemployment benefits	4.6	14.2
Need level - That people who are poor and in need receive higher pensions/unemployment benefits	15.5	22.3
P-value McNemar test for difference between access & level	0.000	0.000

3.2.2. INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Two ideological dimensions are included as independent variables in our regression models. Left-right placement -as a broad indicator of political ideology- is measured by a single item on an eleven-point scale (0 = left; 10 = right). As a cultural dimension of ideology, we additionally include authoritarianism to predict justice preferences. Three five-point items

(disagree-agree) are used to measure this concept, which probe whether respondents think that most problems would be solved if we could get rid of immoral and dishonest people, that obedience and respect for authority are important virtues and that laws should become stricter. To test the measurement validity of this ideological dimension, we conduct a multi-group Confirmatory Factor Analysis for respondents who received questions on pensions and on unemployment benefit. A scalar invariant model that restricts loadings and intercepts to be equal across group shows good fit with the data (Chi-square = 3.809; df = 4; RMSEA = 0.000; CFI = 1.000; TLI = 1.000; SRMR = 0.037). Table A3 in Appendix shows that the first item of the authoritarianism scale has a rather weak loading (<.40). As all other loadings are sufficiently high and using only two items for a latent concept leads to problems of model identification, we proceed with this model and save the factor scores (to reduce the complexity of the final model) to be included in the regression models.

The social structure is operationalized by education, employment situation and subjective income. For education, we create the following three categories: no to lower secondary, higher secondary (reference category) and tertiary education. Current employment situation is divided into three categories and hence operationalized by two dummy variables: the employed (reference category), pensioners and the inactive (including students, the unemployed, disabled, ...). Subjective income is used instead of objective income, because the latter variable suffers from a high degree of item non-response. The subjective income variable distinguishes between individuals who indicate that they have more than enough and can easily save or have sufficient to get by without difficulties (high income; reference category), and individuals who have just sufficient to get by or who regularly have difficulties getting by. In addition to these social structural variables, the models control for gender (female = reference category), age and region (Flanders = reference category; Francophone Belgium).

3.3. STATISTICAL MODELLING

To answer our research questions, two distinct approaches are utilized. To start with, we provide a descriptive overview of preferences for equality, equity and need in governing access and levels, and compare them for both pensions and unemployment benefits (Table 4.1). To assess whether the percentage of respondents that rates a particular situation as just differs

across the access and level dimension, a series of McNemar tests are conducted. The McNemar test is chosen because of the paired nature of the comparison (a single respondent rates the level as well as the access) (McNemar, 1947). In this case, the test is used to assess whether the marginal distribution of a particular item is different depending on whether the access or level dimension is referred to. When this null hypothesis is rejected, there is significant difference in justice preferences between access and level. As a second step in the analysis, a multigroup structural equation model (SEM) is estimated that compares the impact of the social structure and ideology between respondents who answered questions on the access and levels of pensions versus on unemployment benefits. These coefficients are evaluated for all six dependent variables simultaneously. Descriptive statistics were generated using SPSS version 27 and all other analyses were conducted in Mplus version 8.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017).

4. RESULTS

4.1. COMPARING OPINIONS ON THE ACCESS AND LEVEL IN TWO WELFARE DOMAINS

Table 4.1 displays the percentage of respondents considering equality, equity and need as (very) just in governing the access to and level of pensions and unemployment benefits. Note that individuals are asked to report support for each principle separately, which means that percentages do not necessarily sum up to 100. For the access to pensions, a majority of 58 percent considers it to be just to guarantee equal coverage spanning everyone. This is in line with the strong interests across groups in broad access to pensions due to its high prevalence as well as with the institutional design of relatively universal access to pensions in Belgium. When the level of unemployment benefits is considered, however, only 39 percent considers equality just. A majority prefers to install earnings-related benefits in line with the principle of equity (56 percent). This preference can be understood from the strong predictability of this social risk and the institutional logic of earnings-related pensions in Belgium that takes into account previous income as well as work trajectories in calculating levels of pensions. Making the access to (rather than the level of) pensions dependent on this reciprocal logic is, however, only supported by about a third of respondents. The proportion considering the principle of need as just is relatively marginal for both the access and levels of pensions, but there is still a

stronger degree of support for need in the level (16 percent) than for access (5 percent). According to the McNemar tests, all differences in justice preferences between the access and level dimensions of pensions are strongly significant.

For unemployment benefits, we also see noteworthy differences between the popularity of the principles governing the coverage and amounts; yet they are less outspoken. As for pensions, equality in access is most broadly supported (56 percent). This is contrary to what was expected and is not aligned with the socially stratified nature of this labour-specific risk and the institutional organization of unemployment benefits in Belgium. Also regarding the benefit levels, equality is the most popular justice principle (about half of the respondents considers this principle as just). The dominance of support for flat-rate unemployment benefits is somewhat surprising, given the strong sense of perceived internal control in facing unemployment as well as the predominance of equity and need to set the levels of this benefit in the Belgian welfare state. Furthermore, we observe that distribution based on equity and need is more popular when the level of benefits is concerned instead of the access to benefits. For both justice principles, the difference between access and level equals almost 10 percentage points (for equity: 33 versus 41 percent; for need: 14 versus 22 percent). These differences are significant for both the access and the level dimensions. Note that need-based distribution is more popular when unemployment benefits are concerned instead of the pensions.

In sum, we can conclude that the support for the principles governing the access and level differs in both distributive contexts and that it is highly relevant to distinguish the two faces of benefit generosity.

4.2. THE SOCIAL-STRUCTURAL AND IDEOLOGICAL CONFLICTS SURROUNDING OPINIONS ON ACCESS AND LEVEL

As a next step, we analyse whether justice preferences for the access and level dimensions are differently related to social-structural and ideological predictors. Table 4.2 displays the unstandardized regression effects of social-structural and ideological variables on preferences for equality, equity and need in governing the access and levels of benefits. Respondents in

the condition referring to pensions and unemployment benefits are treated as two groups in a multigroup SEM in order to facilitate comparison between the two experimental conditions.

We start by looking at preferences for the equality principle in the case of pensions. Only three determinants predict support for equal access and equal levels similarly. Those with a tertiary education as well as younger respondents and right-wing individuals are less inclined to consider equality as a just basis for both policy dimensions. This can be understood in terms of the lower interest these groups have in broad redistribution and their more conditional notions of solidarity, respectively (Jaeger, 2006b; van Oorschot, 2006). For the equality in access and levels, pensioners are less likely to consider this just than those in employment, which is relatively surprising and counter to their own interest (yet this relationship is insignificant for the levels of pensions). However, the effects of income and authoritarianism differ substantially across the access and level dimensions, which illustrates that different forces are at play. Authoritarianism has a strong negative impact on support for equality in the access dimension, but is not significantly related to preferences for equality in the level dimension. This confirms the expectation that discussions on the coverage of pension are more strongly rooted in ideological factors than debates on pension levels. For the level dimension, we observe stronger social-structural gradients: Men and higher income individuals are less inclined to support equal benefit levels, which aligns to their own interest. As soon as the ideologically-loaden access debate is settled, material interest apparently come into play in determining justice preferences regarding the level of pensions (cf., Hedegaard, 2014).

For the principle of equity for pensions, the social-structural and ideological effects are more similar in terms of their statistical significance. Older respondents, more left-wing and less authoritarian individuals are less inclined to support reciprocity both in access and levels, which broadly confirms both the ideology and self-interest theses. However, we again observe that the ideological effects are considerably stronger when the access dimension is concerned, thereby confirming that there seems to be stronger ideological debate surrounding access than levels (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2021). The main difference regarding equity is that lower education decreases support for equity in the levels of pensions, but does not affect preference for equity in the access to benefits. This demonstrates that the social stratification seems to be

slightly stronger for levels than for access. Regarding the need principle, we observe outspoken differences between the access and level, as only political ideology works the same for both policy dimensions (i.e., right-wing respondents are less supportive of need-based distribution). However, in contrast to equity and equality, the ideological stratification is stronger for the levels of pensions than for access. In addition, lower educated individuals are more inclined to support need in access, while older respondents and the inactive are more in favour of higher benefits for those in need.

In sum, the patterns for pensions are largely in line with the expectations of the self-interest and ideology frameworks. The results also clarified that especially for equality and equity, the access dimension is more strongly ideologically debated, while the level aspect follows more social structural dividing lines. This provides further evidence that the discussion on whether to choose universalism, social insurance or need-based targeting, and which groups are deserving of welfare support is heavily disputed across ideological lines, while discussions on how to establish benefit levels display a less clear ideological gap. Besides, it illustrates that personal stakes might be much clearer for benefit amounts when the more fundamental debate on who are members of redistributive circles has been decided upon. The need principle provides an exception to this pattern. This could be related to the more ambiguous conceptualization of this principle that can be interpreted in various ways (Kittel, 2020; see Chapter 2).

Also in the case of unemployment benefits, there are relevant differences between the access and level dimensions. Authoritarianism significantly predicts lower support for both equality in access to and levels of unemployment benefits, but the effect is larger for the access than for the levels. In addition, lower educated individuals, those from Wallonia and left-wing individuals are more supportive of equality in access, which is conform to the self-interest and ideology theses. For the level, we only observe that individuals with tertiary education are less in favour of equality than those with higher secondary education. This illustrates that while the stronger ideological contestation in the access becomes evident once more, the social stratification in justice preferences is not necessarily larger for the level dimension. In terms of support for the equity principle, less differences between access and level are observed, as

only political ideology has a significant influence on equity preferences. Regarding the access as well as the levels, right-wing individuals are more conditional and hence are more supportive of distributions that install a quid-pro-quo welfare model. However, the coefficient is considerably larger for the access than for the level. For the need principle, only region significantly shapes support for both dimensions, whereby individuals living in Wallonia are less likely to prefer need-based access and levels for unemployment benefits. In addition, those with a low income are only significantly more supportive of higher benefits for those who are more strongly in need, which is also conform to self-interest theory.

In the distributive context of unemployment benefits, it thus also becomes clear that the access dimension is more strongly ideological polarized. This is once more in line with the prediction that there is a broader ideological gap surrounding the fundamental debate on who is entitled to welfare support (Ennsner-Jedenastik, 2021). However, contrary to pensions, the stronger social stratification for the level dimensions was not observed in the context of unemployment benefits. This corresponds to the smaller overall differences between the access and level dimensions for unemployment benefits than for pensions, which was reported in the previous section.

Table 4.2. Unstandardized regression coefficients of the social structure and ideology on preferences for equality, equity and need in governing the access to and level of pensions and unemployment benefits ($N_{\text{pensions}} = 465$; $N_{\text{unemployment}} = 500$)

	Equality access	Equality level	Equity access	Equity level	Need access	Need level
Pensions						
Gender						
Female (ref.)						
Male	-0.165	-0.416***	0.190	0.155	0.006	-0.075
Age	0.013**	0.015**	-0.009*	-0.008*	0.006	0.012***
Education						
Lower	-0.055	0.194	0.142	-0.272*	0.234*	0.135
Higher sec. (ref.)						
Tertiary	-0.378**	-0.316*	0.102	-0.028	-0.141	-0.015
Employment						
Employed (ref.)						
Pensioner	-0.314*	-0.313	0.185	0.194	0.049	0.126
Inactive	0.010	-0.151	-0.069	0.127	0.167	0.421**
Income						
Low income	-0.011	0.284*	0.199	-0.126	0.069	0.134
High income (ref.)						
Region						

Flanders (ref.)						
Francophone Belgium	0.144	-0.165	-0.124	0.165	-0.193*	-0.323**
Left-right	-0.078***	-0.058*	0.125***	0.054*	-0.002	-0.021
Authoritarianism	-0.403*	-0.285	0.659***	0.508**	-0.164	-0.166
R²	0.103	0.131	0.132	0.075	0.095	0.140

*Note.** p≤0.05; ** p≤0.01; *** p≤0.001;

	Equality access	Equality level	Equity access	Equity level	Need access	Need level
<u>Unemployment benefits</u>						
Gender						
Female (ref.)						
Male	0.112	-0.105	-0.035	0.002	0.052	-0.006
Age	-0.002	0.006	0.000	0.001	-0.001	0.005
Education						
Lower	0.387**	0.103	0.128	-0.067	0.155	-0.011
Higher sec. (ref.)						
Tertiary	0.188	-0.399***	-0.153	0.146	-0.175	-0.052
Employment						
Employed (ref.)						
Pensioner	0.036	0.009	-0.013	0.038	-0.055	-0.007
Inactive	0.218	0.189	-0.067	0.036	0.157	0.026
Income						
Low income	0.008	-0.061	0.068	0.303*	0.052	0.212*
High income (ref.)						
Region						
Flanders (ref.)						
Wallonia	0.220*	-0.134	-0.121	-0.134	-0.283**	-0.195*

Left-right	-0.070**	-0.040	0.138***	0.089***	0.006	-0.034
Authoritarianism	-0.614**	-0.526*	0.005	0.070	0.115	-0.224
R²	0.113	0.073	0.112	0.063	0.063	0.044

Note. * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$;

5. CONCLUSION

The two faces of benefit generosity, namely the access to and level of benefits, are recognized extensively in the social policy literature (Jensen et al., 2018; Korpi & Palme, 1998; A. Otto, 2018; Scruggs, 2006; van Oorschot, 2013). Yet, public opinion research that analyses people's support for redistribution and government responsibility in implementing social policies, does not explicitly recognize the distinction between both dimensions. In this way, existing studies fail to separate the questions of *who* should acquire resources from *what* amount should be provided. Nevertheless, these two questions are at the forefront of contemporary welfare debates and are primordial in unravelling the types of distributions being supported (van Oorschot, 2000). To fill this gap, this chapter provides insights into the distinction between justice preferences regarding the access to and level of benefits. Concretely, we study public support in the two distributive contexts of pensions and unemployment benefits and compare the social structural and ideological dividing lines.

A descriptive overview revealed that public opinions regarding access and level are clearly distinct, as different redistributive principles were considered just for both dimensions of benefit generosity. For pensions, equality was most broadly supported in governing the access, while equity was most popular to govern how benefit levels are established. This is in line with the strong prevalence and simultaneous predictability of the associated life course-related social risk of retiring as well as with the institutional logics according to which the access and level are actually determined in the Belgian welfare state. For unemployment benefits, equality was considered the fairest principle for both the access and level, but there were still considerable differences: When the level was concerned instead of access, the popularity of the equality principle decreased, while equity and need became more popular. The importance of the distinction between access and levels was further demonstrated by the finding that the access dimension is more strongly rooted in ideological predictors (especially authoritarianism), while the level dimension is structured more strongly along a social gradient. The social stratification of the level dimension was, however, especially outspoken in the domain of pensions and surfaced less clearly for unemployment benefits. All in all, these findings illustrated the relevance of distinguishing opinions on the coverage of social schemes and the amount of benefits.

These findings support the multidimensional nature of welfare attitudes and demonstrate that merely focusing on aggregate support for redistribution or government involvement misses important internal differentiation in public preferences (Roosma et al., 2013). When for instance discovering high support for the role of government in organizing redistribution, this does not yet indicate who should be granted how much and which allocation mechanisms are actually (dis)liked. In this sense, we go a step further by indicating that policy design characteristics and distinct aspects of benefit generosity matter in understanding what types of distributions the public actually prefers (cf., Gallego & Marx, 2017). This is especially essential in an era where the question is not so much anymore whether redistribution *should* be institutionalized, but where debates especially revolve around *how* to organize this in a way that guarantees that acceptable amounts are given to rightfully deserving social groups (van Oorschot, 2000).

However, the distinction between the access and level is not only important to provide a clearer perspective on welfare state legitimacy, but also to further our understanding of how policies and institutions impact public ideas. As mentioned, the policy feedback literature assumes that institutional norms and ideas can be taken over by citizens, leading to the conformation of public preferences to the predominant institutional logics (Kumlin & Stadelmann-Steffen, 2014; Mau, 2004; Rothstein, 1998). In unravelling policy feedback effects, it can be crucial to distinguish the access to and level of social policies, as a (dis)match between preferences and institutions depends on the dimension under consideration. If we for instance disregard the difference between the access and level and find highest support for the principle of equity in governing the distribution of pensions overall, it is unclear whether this is line with institutional norms as the access is mostly universal and the level is strongly reciprocity-based. This might also partly explain why it is often difficult to establish a clear link between welfare regimes typologies, which include both access and level dimensions to categorize social security systems, and public opinions (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Kumlin & Stadelmann-Steffen, 2014; Svallfors, 2012). Instead the institutions-preferences link could be situated more strongly on a meso-level that considers the design characteristics and multidimensionality of benefits and services (Laenen, 2018).

Chapter 5

Worlds of distributive justice preferences

Individual- and country-level profiles of support
for equality, equity and need¹⁰

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ABSTRACT

Based on welfare regime theory, scholars have tried to understand cross-national differences in solidarity by constructing 'worlds of welfare attitudes'. Most studies use a variable-centred logic to examine quantitative differences in support for the delivery of welfare provisions. Yet, the worlds of attitudes approach implies that qualitatively distinct logics of social justice exist. Thus, an alternative person-centred approach is needed that uncovers clusters of beliefs about the preferred type of welfare system. This chapter assesses individual- and country-level profiles of preferences for the principles of equality, equity and need to dissect worlds of distributive justice preferences. Multilevel latent profile analysis is applied to European Social Survey data (2018/2019). Results reveal four individual profiles that each combine distinct preferences for equality, equity and need. On the basis of the distribution of these individual profiles, three country profiles or worlds of distributive justice preferences are identified, which are not institutionally structured.

1. INTRODUCTION

In light of the growing availability of cross-national survey data on welfare opinions, scholars in the field of comparative social policy have shown great interest in unravelling whether citizens of various European countries are fundamentally united or divided in their solidarity notions and welfare distribution preferences (Arts & Gelissen, 2001; Svallfors, 2012). These preferences do not only explain diverging policy outputs and welfare structures across countries, but also determine opportunities to achieve effective (re)distribution and the political feasibility of social policies (Brooks & Manza, 2007; Svallfors, 2013). Esping-Andersen's (1990) typology, which distinguishes different worlds of welfare each implementing a qualitatively different institutional logic, is often used as a master frame to interpret cross-national differences in attitudes on welfare and redistribution. Numerous studies have attempted to identify so-called 'worlds of welfare attitudes' (Andreß & Heien, 2001) - that is, clusters of countries with similar ideas about social solidarity, welfare policies and redistribution (Andreß & Heien, 2001; Mehrtens, 2004; Moretti & Whitworth, 2019; Svallfors, 1997, 2012). Their underlying theoretical argument is that, because citizens are socialized in the distinct institutional logics and varying roles of state, market and family, regime types are reflected in citizens' normative beliefs and preferences (Jaeger, 2006a). Empirical analyses, however, show mixed and inconclusive findings, as citizens' attitudinal patterns often bear little connection to Esping-Andersen's ideal-typical welfare regimes (Jaeger, 2009; Jordan, 2013; Kumlin & Stadelmann-Steffen, 2014; Svallfors, 2012).

The current study argues that the inconclusive empirical evidence does not necessarily invalidate the idea of typologies for public preferences regarding welfare and redistribution. However, compared to currently available research, the empirical strategy of the 'worlds of welfare attitudes' literature needs to be adapted in two ways. First, most of the studies focus on the same set of items that probe aggregate support for income redistribution, the role of government in reducing income differentials and government responsibility in providing jobs (Andreß & Heien, 2001; Dallinger, 2010; Mehrtens, 2004; Svallfors, 1997). This narrow operationalization in terms of attitudes reflecting the optimal degree of redistribution and government involvement is not ideally suited to comparing fundamental evaluations of how social solidarity should be organized. As a result, to provide a more meaningful picture of

differences in welfare preferences between European publics, this chapter examines preferences for different *types* of welfare systems (i.e., principles of distributive justice) instead of support for the mere *delivery* of welfare provisions (Arts & Gelissen, 2001; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013, p. 1174). Second, the available research divides citizens' preferences into separate attitudinal dimensions (e.g., preferences on the degree or range of redistribution) and assesses quantitative differences on these isolated dimensions across regime types (Roosma et al., 2013). This variable-centred perspective assumes that populations living within the same welfare system hold homogenous attitudes and that a single welfare state conception is predominant within each society. As this approach has little to say about 'worlds of attitudes' that imply the existence of qualitatively distinct belief systems and a variety of logics of social justice (Jaeger, 2009), I adopt a person-centred approach which considers heterogeneity in the population by bundling interconnected beliefs into attitudinal profiles (cf., Kankaraš & Moors, 2009; Likki & Staerklé, 2015; Roosma et al., 2014). Such belief systems might be more appropriate to understand the link between attitudes and the institutional context, especially in more hybrid welfare states without a single dominant institutional logic (Arts & Gijssberts, 1998).

This study contributes to the 'worlds of attitudes'-literature by addressing these two shortcomings. To sketch a picture of variety in solidarity notions across Europe, I analyse public preferences for three basic principles of distributive justice, namely equality, equity and need. While equality promotes adequate living conditions for all citizens, equity and need allocate resources to those who have contributed sufficiently and only to those who are in need, respectively (Deutsch, 1975). These principles probe fundamental orientations on how (re)distribution should be organized in society and act as "shared conceptions of the desirable" (Liebig & Sauer, 2016; Van Deth & Scarbrough, 1995, p. 28). Equality, equity and need constitute the guiding principles in different types of welfare states and hence shed light on the fundamentally different ways of institutionalizing social solidarity in European societies (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Sachweh, 2016). Furthermore, investigating justice preferences instead of mere support for the degree of redistribution is useful, as justice ideals constitute social forces that shape more specific welfare views that may determine the feasibility and legitimacy of a series of more concrete policies and welfare reforms. Specifically, I analyse how

endorsement of these three principles is combined into distinct profiles that grasp underlying belief systems to discover ‘worlds of distributive justice preferences’. Separate typologies are constructed at the individual- and the country-level to take into account how attitudinal patterns may differ across both levels (Ruelens et al., 2018).

Concretely, this novel approach allows me to answer the following research questions: (1) *Which individual profiles exist that combine preferences for the distributive justice principles of equality, equity and need in distinct ways?* and (2) *Which country profiles (i.e., worlds of distributive justice preferences) exist that cluster together societies according to their similar justice belief systems?* To address these questions, I apply multilevel latent profile analysis (Mäkikangas et al., 2018) on data from 29 countries of the European Social Survey round 9 (2018-19).

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. WORLDS OF DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE PREFERENCES

The ‘worlds of welfare attitudes’ literature attempts to determine whether clusters of countries with similar welfare and solidarity notions can be uncovered that follow the welfare regime typology. The assumption is that institutionalized forms of stratification and societal integration constitute socializing forces, and that beliefs adapt to the social values propagated by welfare systems (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Jaeger, 2006a; Kumlin & Stadelmann-Steffen, 2014). However, empirical support is mixed. While some studies do find stronger support for redistribution in social democratic welfare states and less support in liberal regimes (Andreß & Heien, 2001; Svallfors, 1997), others point to weaker clustering of attitudes around welfare state typologies (Dallinger, 2010; Mehrtens, 2004; Moretti & Whitworth, 2019).

Despite the relevance of identifying groups of countries with similar belief systems, these studies face some unresolved methodological issues. On the one hand, they presume that most Western-European countries can be treated as ideal-typical representations of the welfare regimes. This approach, however, disregards the possibility of geographical clustering around non-institutional dividing lines (Jaeger, 2006a). On the other hand, these studies usually include only support for redistribution or government intervention as dependent

variable, which focuses on differences in the degree of redistribution without taking into account preferences for different types of distribution that more clearly distinguish various kinds of welfare states (Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). Essentially, these studies seem to underestimate heterogeneity both in attitudes and in country-level typologies (Jordan, 2013).

Consequently, as an alternative, this study evaluates individual- and country-level typologies of preferences for the distributive justice principles of equality, equity and need. Equality posits that all citizens should be treated equally within distributions and receive the same share of public resources. Equity entails that the allocation of resources depends on previous contributions to the common good, in terms of paid taxes, social security contributions or labour market participation. The principle of need prioritizes the allocation of public resources to individuals who are in need, such as the disabled and the poor. These three classical principles of distributive justice do not only capture broader rationales of how the burdens and benefits in society should be balanced (Rawls, 1972), but also embody the distinct institutional logics of welfare regimes and, hence, allow to assess preferences for different types of welfare systems (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Sachweh, 2016). While support for equality can be interpreted as a preference for a universalist welfare system that provides welfare to all citizens, support for equity implies a positive inclination towards a social insurance logic and support for need usually translates into sympathy for a more liberal form of redistribution (Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). The direct link of justice principles to these distinct organizing logics makes them particularly suitable to explore worlds of attitudes that potentially mirror institutional configurations.

Although evidence suggests that people can reconcile different welfare ideals and balance multiple distributive norms (Franke & Simonson, 2018; Kankaraš & Moors, 2009; Likki & Staerklé, 2015; Roosma et al., 2014), broader belief systems that integrate multiple preferences are only seldom reviewed. The standard variable-centred approach, which merely studies quantitative differences in separate attitudinal dimensions and assumes homogeneity in the population, thus misses important insights (Jordan, 2013). A person-centred approach that condenses interconnected justice preferences into distinct attitudinal profiles, in contrast, unveils qualitatively different belief systems and logics of social justice. These diversified

profiles may be especially appropriate to non-West-European welfare states, where the integration of different distributive ideas into single belief systems is more common (Arts & Gijssberts, 1998; Gatskova, 2013; Matějů, 1993). However, even in Western-European countries, citizens can combine egalitarian ideas with equity- or need-based norms (Franke & Simonson, 2018). Consequently, the present study aims to derive profiles of individuals who combine preferences for the three distributive justice principles in distinct ways.

These individual profiles are, however, not necessarily appropriate to describe patterns at the country-level. Blindly generalizing these attitudinal profiles to a higher level provides an insufficient empirical basis to dissect comparative logics of social justice, as it creates the risk of committing aggregation errors (Ruelens et al., 2018). As different typologies can be found at different levels of the data (Ruelens & Nicaise, 2020), it is crucial to assess country profiles in themselves. To realize this, I empirically validate a typology that identifies clusters of societies or so-called 'worlds of distributive justice preferences', which differ in their distribution or prevalence of individual profiles. These worlds of justice preferences hence group together societies that share similar underlying social justice belief systems. Although the empirical identification of country typologies is becoming increasingly prevalent in the classification of welfare states (for an overview see Arts & Gelissen, 2002), public opinion research rarely empirically defines country profiles (for exceptions see Da Costa & Dias (2015) and Moretti & Whitworth (2019)). This analytical strategy is nevertheless crucial for identifying similar response patterns across both individuals and countries (Ruelens & Nicaise, 2020).

2.2. INDIVIDUAL PROFILES: COMBINING EQUALITY, EQUITY AND NEED

To answer the first research question and to grasp underlying belief systems, a typology of individual profiles that combine preferences for equality, equity and need in distinct ways is constructed. As mentioned, individuals do not always adhere to a single welfare ideal, but can apply multiple distributive ideas simultaneously (Kankaraš & Moors, 2009; Likki & Staerklé, 2014; Roosma et al., 2014; Scott et al., 2001). Although thus far only two studies have systematically investigated profiles of justice preferences (Franke & Simonson, 2018; see Chapter 3), both studies find profiles that build on a single justice principle as well as profiles that combine multiple logics simultaneously. In what follows, this chapter discusses all the

profiles that would be theoretically plausible to discover (see Table 5.1 for an overview). However, as an exploratory approach is adopted and predicting which of these theoretical profiles will be actually retrieved among the general public is intricate, no hypotheses are formulated as to which of them can be effectively empirically identified. The sole expectation is that there will be both profiles preferring a single principle as well as combinatory distributive logics.

Building on the findings of previous research, I expect to find at least one profile that relies on a single principle with little reference to other distributive ideas. First, an egalitarian profile is plausible to be retrieved, as a substantial group of individuals prefers redistribution, strong government involvement and the equalization of outcomes (Jaeger, 2012). Even though radical equality is generally not strongly supported (Magni-Berton, 2019), this subgroup could prioritize equality and considers deviations in line with need or equity as illegitimate. Second, certain individuals could be purely meritocratic and support distribution fully in line with individual efforts and work trajectories. This profile would fit in with the observation that equity generally receives high public support and is regularly preferred as the only distributive rule (Aalberg, 2003; Arts & Gelissen, 2001; Franke & Simonson, 2018). Although the principle of need is more commonly integrated with support for other distributive logics (e.g., Scott et al., 2001), a profile determined by a distributive logic purely based on the provision of basic needs is also theoretically plausible. This coincides with a type of sufficientarianism, whereby the focus is not so much on inequalities or work, but on guaranteeing that everyone has a sufficient living standard (Rippon et al., 2017).

However, profiles that simultaneously combine multiple principles are also anticipated. Individuals might, for instance, internalize a belief system that integrates preferences for the principles of equality and need, which would be an expression of a prioritarian logic that only considers deviations from equality legitimate when it advances the well-being of the worst-off (Rippon et al., 2017). Empirically, scholars have indeed shown that a preoccupation with need often goes hand in hand with support for the reduction of inequalities and an egalitarian justice ideology (Franke & Simonson, 2018; Hülle et al., 2017; Scott et al., 2001). A profile balancing the principles of equity and need is also probable, because people are willing to

distribute to those in need such as the sick and elderly, but are at the same time stricter towards those who are understood as not contributing to society (Laenen & Meuleman, 2017; van Oorschot, 2000). This corresponds to a selective logic that rejects universalism and distinguishes between groups on the basis of work histories and levels of need. Besides these subgroups that are most plausible to be actually retrieved, theoretically a pluralist profile that prefers all principles and a profile that combines equality with equity are also possible. While the former could imply the existence of a subgroup that tailors the choice of principles to specific situations and does not a priori rule out any of the norms, the latter could correspond to a form of luck egalitarianism, whereby “the levels of advantage held by different persons are justified if, and only if, those persons are responsible for those levels” (Knight, 2009, p. 1).

Table 5.1. Overview of the theoretically plausible individual profiles

	Equality	Equity	Need
Single principle			
Egalitarians	High	Low	Low
Meritocrats	Low	High	Low
Sufficientarianists	Low	Low	High
Multiple principles			
Pluralists	High	High	High
Luck egalitarians	High	High	Low
Prioritarianists	High	Low	High
Selectivists	Low	High	High

Previous research has shown that justice preferences are structured according to social and ideological lines (Aalberg, 2003; Arts & Gelissen, 2001; Franke & Simonson, 2018; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). Thus, the roles of social structure and ideology are included in the model to explain membership of the profiles that are eventually retrieved. The social stratification of distributive justice preferences is often interpreted based on self-interest theory, which posits that individuals prefer distributions that yield personal benefits (Aalberg, 2003; Arts & Gelissen, 2001; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). Indeed, individuals in precarious situations are more likely to internalize belief systems with a high degree of support for equality or need, while

those with a strong socio-economic position are more inclined to support equity-based distributions (Aalberg, 2003; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). The stronger integration of distinct welfare ideas among lower-status groups might also cause these groups to adopt a combinatory logic (Achterberg & Houtman, 2009). Second, the framework of ideology assumes the embeddedness of justice preferences in broader normative dispositions and political orientations (Arts & Gelissen, 2001; Franke & Simonson, 2018). Right-wing respondents might, for instance, be more likely to belong to profiles that express high support for equity or need and that balance multiple principles, as they adopt more selective notions of solidarity and favour multiple distributive ideals (van Oorschot, 2006; see Chapter 3).

2.3. COUNTRY-LEVEL PROFILES: AN INSTITUTIONAL DIVIDE?

Instead of merely aggregating these individual profiles to the country-level, a typology of societies should be constructed in itself to relax the assumption that similar patterns emerge at both levels (Ruelens et al., 2018). Although these worlds of distributive justice preferences differ according to the distribution of the individual profiles and hence cluster together societies that share a similar representation of justice belief systems, different types of profiles can emerge at the societal level. In line with the literature on 'worlds of welfare attitudes' (Andreß & Heien, 2001; Mehrtens, 2004; Svallfors, 1997), welfare regime theory and normative institutionalism provide theoretical guidance in formulating which worlds of distributive justice preferences might exist. These frameworks assume a two-way connection between opinions and institutions, as moral beliefs and policy preferences not only impact policies, but are themselves also adapted to the solidarity and justice norms embodied by institutions (Laenen, 2018; Mau, 2004; Rothstein, 1998). Institutions can socialize citizens within normative frameworks and shared conceptions of social justice, which define desirable states of affairs and serve as motivational pillars in the formation of individual preferences (Mau, 2004; Svallfors, 2006; Taylor-Gooby et al., 2018). According to these theories, individuals use institutions as a frame of reference in determining which types of welfare provisions are appropriate, thereby leading to the conformance of public opinion to the moral ideas encapsulated in institutions (Eder, 2017; Jaeger, 2006a). Based on this reasoning, two types of country-level profiles or worlds of justice preferences could exist.

As elaborated above, the institutional logics of various European welfare states strongly build upon one of the three distributive justice principles. In particular, equality, equity and need are embedded in the design of the ideal-typical social democratic, conservative and liberal welfare regimes, respectively (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Liebig & Sauer, 2016; Sachweh, 2016). As these welfare states might socialize individuals within their respective predominant institutional logic (Taylor-Gooby et al., 2018), I expect to find a higher prevalence of attitudinal profiles that are clearly grounded on a single justice principle. In line with welfare regime theory, this would mean that social democratic welfare states have a strong representation of profiles with a strong preference for equality, while the conservative and liberal regimes are characterized by a higher prevalence of profiles favouring equity or need, respectively. As a result, countries that are typically treated as representatives of the ideal-typical regimes could constitute separate worlds of justice preferences in which profiles primarily relying on one of the three principles are overrepresented and combinatory justice patterns are considerably less prevalent.

In addition, I expect to find – particularly for more hybrid welfare states – one or more country-level profiles where attitudinal profiles that integrate multiple principles are strongly represented. The Eastern European countries could, for instance, belong to these country profiles, as they do not clearly fit in with the ideal-typical regimes and are not clearly grounded on one predominant justice principle (Eder, 2017; Stambolieva, 2015). While Eastern European societies were especially oriented towards the principle of equality under the communist regime, these states increasingly transitioned into market economies after the fall of the Iron Curtain (Arts & Gijsberts, 1998; Jakobsen, 2011). Mirroring this transformation, meritocratic or neo-liberal norms started to emerge alongside egalitarian ideals in post-communist welfare states. A so-called ‘split consciousness’ has arisen, as considerable proportions of Eastern European citizens simultaneously adhere to competing justice norms (Arts & Gijsberts, 1998; Gatskova, 2013; Matějů, 1993). Equivalently, Mediterranean countries might belong to a country-level profile with a higher representation of profiles integrating support for multiple distributive principles, as their welfare institutions are grounded on both egalitarian and meritocratic elements (Sachweh, 2016).

To test whether the worlds of distributive justice preferences are truly institutionally determined, three institutional characteristics are included as contextual predictors. The reasons for selecting these particular characteristics are twofold. First, they are able to distinguish various institutional logics, as they constitute the ideal-typical characteristics of distinct welfare regimes and have been used to measure welfare state differences (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Jaeger, 2006a). Second, and connected to this, these predictors link to the logics behind the various distributive norms and have already been linked to justice preferences or welfare attitudes, which increases their potential explanatory relevance (Jaeger, 2006a; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). To begin with, the role of social expenditure rates is tested. Although a very crude measurement, social expenditures explain variation in welfare opinions (Jaeger, 2006a; Jakobsen, 2011). In line with the norm-shaping function of institutions, higher social spending might increase support for the principle of equality (Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). This might lead more generous welfare states to form worlds of distributive justice preferences with a stronger representation of belief systems building on (combinations with) equality. Second, the predictive power of the share of welfare receipts due to social contributions is tested. This social insurance logic is an important institutional characteristic that influences the perceived fairness of welfare policies (Laenen, 2018). As a stronger earnings-related logic stimulates support for the principle of equity (Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013), a higher share of social contributions is expected to facilitate a strong representation of attitudinal profiles grounded on equity. Last, I focus on the share of expenditure devoted to means-tested benefits. Means-tested benefits erode a universalist conception of the welfare state (Rothstein, 1998) and might hence stimulate selective beliefs building on equity and/or need.

3. DATA AND METHOD

3.1. DATA

Data from the European Social Survey (ESS) round 9 collected in 2018/2019 is analysed (dataset version 3.0; doi: 10.21338/NSD-ESS9-2018). The ESS consists of probability-based samples of the resident population (15 years and older), interviewed using face-to-face surveys. Data from 29 European countries is used: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia,

Lithuania, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom. The total sample consists of 49519 respondents, for which design weights are applied. Table A4 in Appendix displays the descriptive statistics for each of these countries.

3.2. INDICATORS

3.2.1. DEPENDENT VARIABLES

Three items that measure support for equality, equity and need are included to construct profiles of justice preferences, which were developed as part of the Basic Social Justice Orientations Scale (Hülle et al., 2017). The questions are all answered on five-point agree-disagree answer scales and are reversed so that higher values indicate more support for the principles. The first item probes support for equality by asking whether “a society is fair when income and wealth are equally distributed among all people”. The question operationalizing support for equity is formulated as follows: “A society is fair when hard-working people earn more than others”. The last item measures support for need by asking whether “A society is fair when it takes care of those who are poor and in need regardless of what they give back to society”. Note that these single item measurements capture only one particular dimension of each justice principle. The item for equality refers to a strict egalitarian distribution, the equity item mentions the reward of hard work instead of previous contributions to the common good as such and the need-item includes a component of unconditionality, which should be considered when interpreting the results (see Chapter 2).

3.2.2. INDIVIDUAL INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Social structure and political ideology are included as individual predictors. Socio-economic status is operationalized by education, occupation and income. Education is divided into three categories: no to lower secondary education, higher secondary education (reference category) and tertiary education. Six occupational categories are constructed in line with the Erikson-Goldthorpe-Portocarero scheme (Ganzeboom & Treiman, 1996): the service class, white collar workers, blue collar workers (reference category), the self-employed, the unemployed, and the retired and other non-actives. Income is measured by making use of a subjective income

question to limit the number of missing values. The following four income categories are distinguished: living comfortable on present income (reference category), coping on present income, finding it difficult on present income and finding it very difficult on present income. Political ideology is operationalized as left-right placement, which is measured by a single item on an eleven-point scale (0 = left; 10 = right). Gender (female = reference category) and age are also included as individual control variables.

3.2.3. CONTEXTUAL INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Three contextual variables are included to predict adherence to the country-level profiles. Besides the theoretical reasons for selecting these indicators, the availability of data on these institutional characteristics for all 29 countries included in the ESS was an important motivation for their inclusion. First, expenditure rates on social protection benefits as a percentage of GDP are used to operationalize the impact of institutions. These values are retrieved from the Eurostat database of 2017 (Eurostat, 2017b), as there is no data available for 2018 in most countries. Second, the percentage of welfare receipts stemming from social contributions is calculated. Using data from Eurostat (2017a), this statistic assesses the prevalence of a social insurance logic. Last, the percentage of social expenditure devoted to means-tested benefits is included as a predictor, which is also based on Eurostat (2017b) data.

3.3. STATISTICAL MODELLING

To construct individual- and country-level profiles of justice preferences, multilevel latent profile analysis is applied. Despite its extremely useful ability to empirically define latent profiles at different levels of the data, this innovative person-centred method has only seldom been used in the social sciences generally and in the welfare attitudes literature specifically (cf., Ruelens & Nicaise, 2020). Similar to latent class analysis that is used for categorical outcomes, latent profile analysis identifies subpopulations that are homogeneous in terms of their mean scores on a number of selected continuous variables (Mäkikangas et al., 2018). In a multilevel context, latent profile analysis can both be implemented in a parametric (i.e., random means or odds of membership of the different individual latent profiles merely vary across countries) and non-parametric way (i.e., a second latent profile model is specified at the country-level) (Henry & Muthén, 2010). A non-parametric approach that thus specifies

country-level clusters is not only more theoretically relevant to evaluate worlds of justice preferences, it also makes less stringent assumptions about the distribution of random means of the individual profiles than the parametric approach. By specifying a multinomial instead of a normal distribution, this approach is less computationally intensive and results in a more abstract and interpretable country-level solution (Ruelens & Nicaise, 2020).

To clarify the logic behind this method, the approach for a four individual- and three country-level profile solution (see results) is visualized in Figure 5.1. Individual profiles (PW) are constructed on the basis of differences in the means of the items for equality, equity and need, and individual-level covariates (XW) are used to predict membership of these profiles. The T – 1 random means of these individual profiles (PW#) are then used as indicators of the profiles at the country-level (PB), which are predicted on the basis of contextual independent variables (XB). The country-level profiles are characterized by different distributions of these random means, which correspond to different log-odds of membership of the individual latent profiles. Essentially, these separate country-level profiles thus group together societies that have a similar distribution of individual profiles or underlying belief systems (Henry & Muthén, 2010, p. 5). In addition to freely estimating means, item variances were freed across profiles to reduce bias and achieve a better representation of the data (Mäkikangas et al., 2018). The analyses were conducted in Mplus version 8.3 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017).

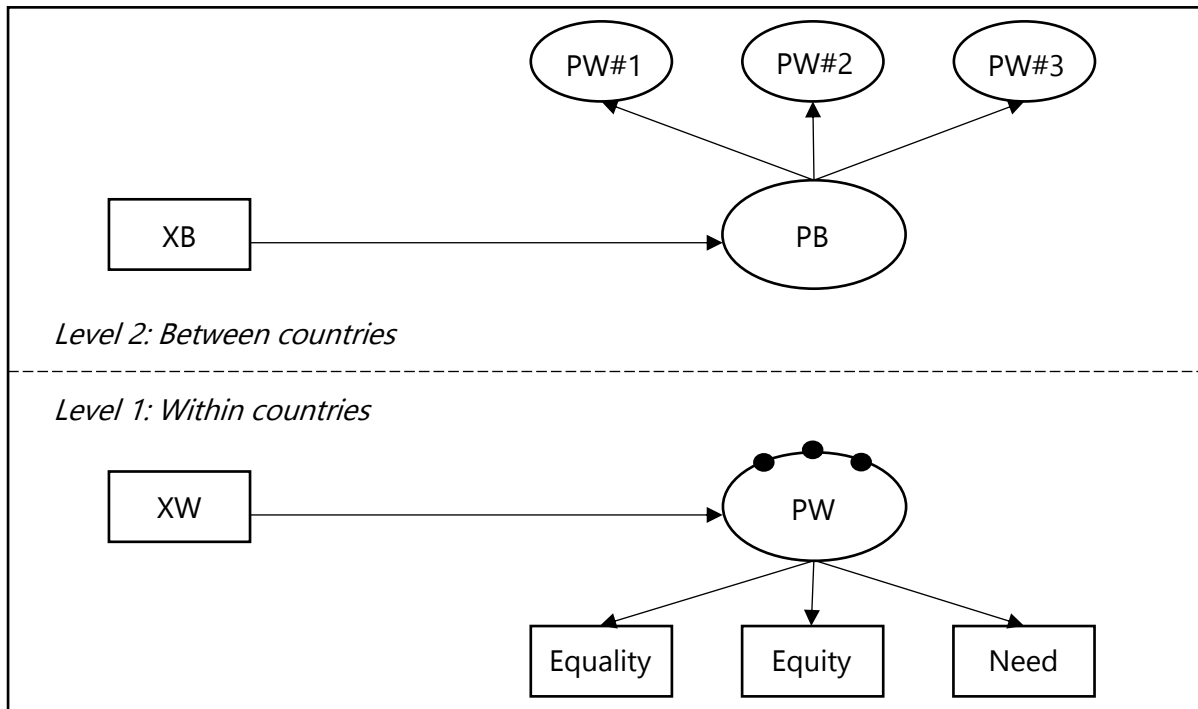


Figure 5.1. Visualization of a multilevel latent profile analysis approach¹¹

4. RESULTS

4.1. INDIVIDUAL PROFILES

First, I discuss the individual-level solutions obtained on the basis of the pooled dataset (cf., Mäkikangas et al., 2018). The final profile solution is decided upon by comparing the fit indices of multiple models with different numbers of profiles (Nylund et al., 2007). In particular, the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), the sample size-adjusted BIC (aBIC) (which should all be as low as possible) and entropy (which should be as high as possible) are examined. The theoretical relevance, the size of the smallest profile and Lo–Mendell–Rubin likelihood ratio test (LMR LRT), which provides a formal statistical test of the fit of a given model relative to a model with one profile less, are also inspected. Table 5.2 displays the values for these fit statistics and Figure A1 in Appendix visualizes an elbow plot of the AIC, BIC and aBIC for the various latent profile solutions. The point where the elbow plot flattens out offers an important indication of the optimal number of profiles (Mäkikangas et al., 2018).

¹¹ The filled circles refer to the random means of the individual-level profiles (three random means for four individual profiles) that are used to define the country-level latent profiles.

Table 5.2. Fit statistics for the individual-level and country-level latent profile solutions

	AIC	BIC	aBIC	Entropy	LMR LRT	Smallest class
<i>Individual</i>						
2 profiles	380702.738	380817.128	380775.814	0.524	0.000	0.314
3 profiles	372965.276	373141.261	373077.701	0.653	0.000	0.261
4 profiles	370618.789	370856.369	370770.562	0.727	0.000	0.071
5 profiles	369323.831	369623.005	369514.952	0.749	0.000	0.043
6 profiles	368236.234	368597.003	368466.704	0.735	0.000	0.021
<i>Country</i>						
2 profiles	366558.780	366831.556	366733.038	0.822	-	0.380
3 profiles	364571.544	364879.517	364768.287	0.857	-	0.175
4 profiles	364031.218	364374.387	364250.445	0.873	-	0.175
5 profiles	363568.962	363947.329	363810.674	0.882	-	0.164

Note. Chosen profile-solutions in bold

The four-profile solution appears to be the most appropriate, as the slope of the elbow plot levels out after four profiles, the entropy is higher compared to the solutions with two or three profiles, and the smallest profile is statistically and theoretically meaningful. The LMR LRT is significant each time, but this might be attributed to the large sample size (Morin et al., 2016). As a result, the four-profile solution is chosen as the final model. Figure 5.2 displays the mean scores, prevalence and labels for these individual profiles.

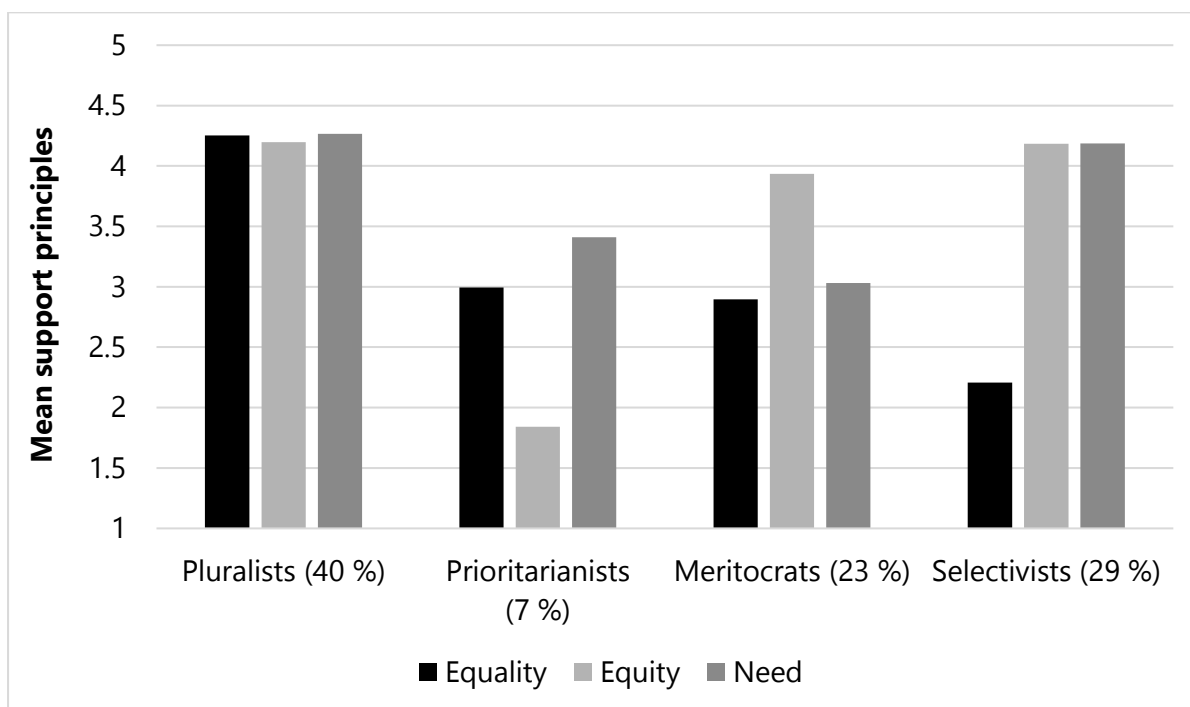


Figure 5.2. Means on equality, equity and need for the four-profile solution

The first profile, *the pluralists*, comprises 40 percent of the sample and combines all distributive justice principles simultaneously. This attitudinal profile integrates equivalently high support for equality, equity and need, and balances multiple justice principles in distributive evaluations. These individuals might, for instance, prefer different justice principles depending on the particular situation, as none of the justice principles are ruled out a priori.

The second profile is labelled as *the prioritarianists* and only encompasses 7 percent of the whole sample. This profile adopts a belief system that combines moderate support for equality with support for the principle of need, while disregarding the principle of equity. This is conform to the normative theory of prioritarianism, which favours equality, but considers deviations from equality legitimate if it is beneficial to the well-being of those who are highest in need (Rawls, 1972; Rippon et al., 2017). Equity- or merit-based inequalities are nevertheless strongly discouraged.

The third subgroup, which consists of almost a quarter of the sample (23 percent), is described as *the meritocrats*. This profile supports only one of the distributive justice principles strongly

and seems less inclined to combine multiple principles. Equality and need are not favoured, while equity receives a high degree of support. Citizens belonging to this profile prefer to make welfare dependent on previous contributions.

The last profile, *the selectivists*, encompasses 29 percent of the sample and combines strong support for equity- with a preference for need-based distributions. The principle of equality, in contrast, is not deemed appropriate to govern the allocation of public resources. As equity distinguishes between those who contributed and those who worked insufficiently, and the principle of need only targets those who are deserving and in need, this profile is highly selective in the granting of state support (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002). Even though the need-item is partly formulated in unconditional terms, it still entails support for selective welfare distribution targeted at those who are in need.

These four profiles are in line with the expectation that there are profiles integrating multiple principles as well as profiles only relying on strong support for one of the three principles. Although the absence of an egalitarian profile is rather surprising, there is a large share of individuals who belong to the pluralist profile, which also strongly supports equality. The strict item formulation in terms of the equal distribution of income and wealth might also partly explain why support for this principle is not more widely represented (Magni-Berton, 2019).

4.2. COUNTRY-LEVEL PROFILES

As the existence of four individual profiles does not imply that similar constellations will be found on a higher level, the profiles at the country-level have to be assessed in their own right. The best solution is decided upon using the same criteria as for the individual profiles (see Table 5.2). Each of these solutions includes four individual profiles, as the different country-level profiles are constructed on the basis of the distribution of these individual profiles. The entropy and the size of the smallest profile complicate the demarcation between the different solutions, as there are only minor differences between them. However, the elbow plot visualized in Figure A2 in the Appendix clearly indicates that the slope levels out after the three-profile solution and that the fit statistics decline sharply between the two- and three-profile solution. As a result, three country-level profiles are maintained. Figure 5.3 visualizes

the distribution of the individual-level profiles for these three worlds of distributive justice preferences.

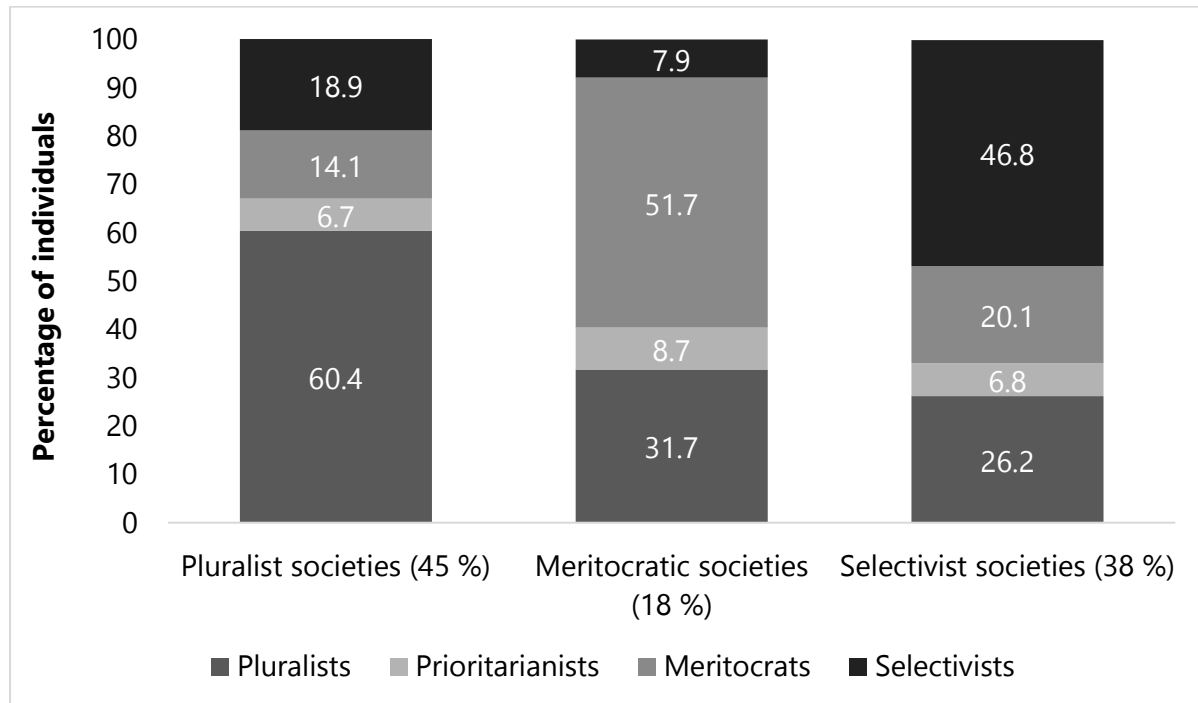


Figure 5.3. Distribution of the individual-level profiles for the three country-level profiles

The first country-level profile consists of slightly less than half of the countries in the sample (45 %). This world of distributive justice preferences groups together societies in which the individual pluralist profile comprises about 60 percent of the sample. Hence, these countries are referred to as pluralist societies. They are characterized by a strong representation of belief systems combining support for equality, equity and need simultaneously.

The second country-level profile comprises 18 percent of the countries and is labelled meritocratic societies, as there is a overrepresentation of the individual profile, which strongly supports the principle of equity (52 %). The selectivist profile is particularly small in these societies, indicating that equity is indeed more often preferred in itself than in combination with need.

The last country-level profile groups together 38 percent of the countries and includes societies for which the selectivist profile is especially prevalent, as it is represented by 47 percent in these societies. These selectivist societies have the lowest proportion of profiles integrating support for all three principles simultaneously. Note that the prioritarian profile is equally represented in each of the country-level profiles.

Similar to the individual-level and in contrast to the welfare regime typology (Esping-Andersen, 1990), there is no egalitarian or universal world of justice preferences. The principle of equality is nevertheless popular in pluralist societies, even though this is always in combination with other distributive justice principles. To determine how these worlds of distributive justice preferences are clustered, the countries belonging to each of these profiles are geographically visualized in Figure 5.4.

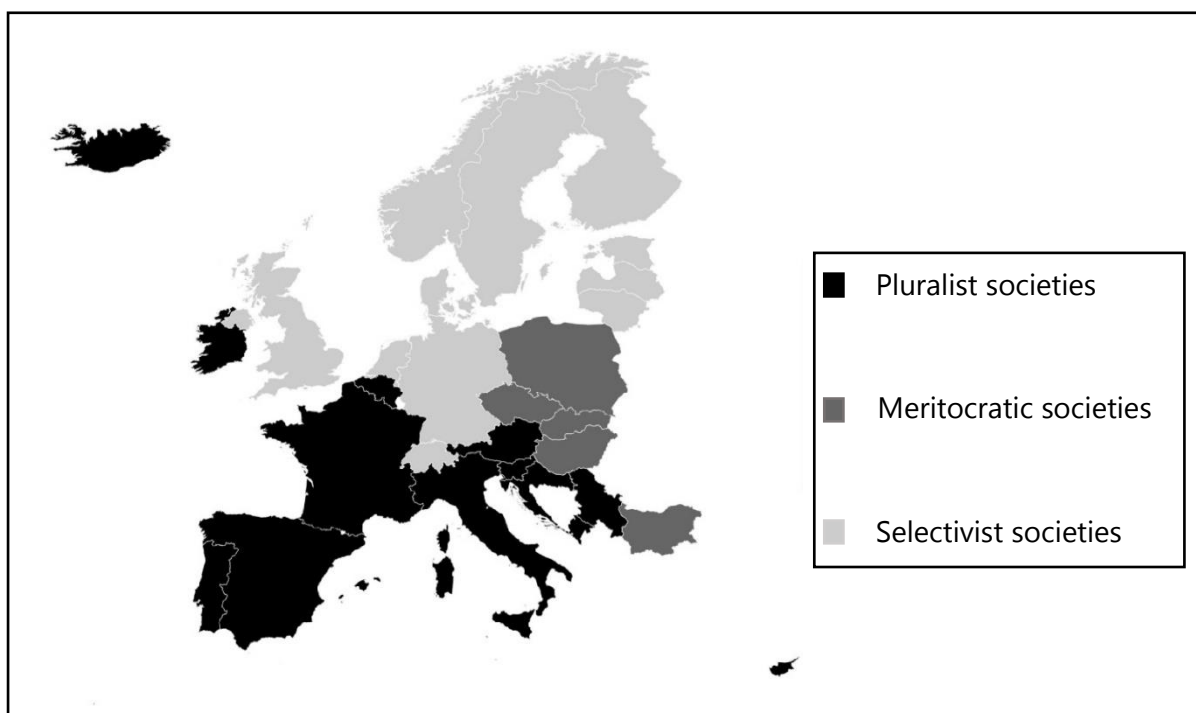


Figure 5.4. Geographical visualization of the three worlds of distributive justice preferences

Figure 5.4 reveals, in contrast to expectations, that the three worlds of distributive justice preferences do not cluster around the welfare regime typology. The Scandinavian countries, as typical representatives of the social democratic welfare regime, the United Kingdom, as a

common illustration of the liberal regime, as well as Germany, which usually constitutes the prime example of a conservative welfare regime, are all selectivist societies. Although selectivist societies did have the lowest representation of belief systems integrating support for all three principles simultaneously, this still disputes the thesis that single justice principles would be preferred in the ideal-typical welfare regimes (Arts & Gelissen, 2001; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013; Taylor-Gooby et al., 2018). That especially Mediterranean and Eastern-European countries are pluralist societies is, nevertheless, partly in line with the expectation that hybrid welfare states know a stronger representation of differentiated beliefs. However, simultaneously, several Central-Eastern European countries belong the meritocratic societies where the profile primarily supporting equity is most strongly represented, which does not support the split-consciousness thesis (Arts & Gijssberts, 1998; Gatskova, 2013; Matějů, 1993). The absence of a clear link with the welfare regimes does, however, not imply that these worlds of justice preferences do not follow clear dividing lines in Europe. Instead of being institutionally determined, the worlds seem to be structured according to regional or cultural divides. There are clear geographical patterns that distinguish North-Western, South-Eastern and Central-Eastern European clusters. The worlds of distributive justice preferences thus reveal three European regions with culturally shared belief systems on how solidarity and welfare distribution should be organized.

4.3. INDIVIDUAL- AND COUNTRY-LEVEL PREDICTORS

As a last step, predictors of membership of the individual- and country-level profiles are explored. Because of the different profile structure on both levels, the individual dependent variable is membership of the pluralist, selectivist and prioritarianist profile (relative to the meritocratic profile), while membership of the pluralist and selectivist societies (relative to the meritocratic societies) is predicted on the country-level. Table 5.3 displays the logit coefficients of this multilevel multinomial regression model, which uses the starting values obtained in the final multilevel latent profile solution to ensure that profiles do not change when adding predictors (Mäkikangas et al., 2018).

Table 5.3. Multilevel multinomial regression on individual- and country-level latent profiles (individual meritocratic profile and meritocratic societies as reference categories) ($N_i = 40971$ and $N_c = 29$)

	Pluralists	Selectivists	Prioritarianists
<i>Individual variables</i>			
Gender			
Female (ref)			
Male	0.089	0.383***	-0.020
Age	0.012***	0.007**	0.007*
Education			
Higher secondary (ref)			
Lower (secondary)	0.240**	-0.283**	0.248*
Tertiary	0.017	0.525***	0.229*
Subjective income			
Comfortable (ref)			
Coping	0.025	-0.394***	-0.101
Difficult	0.207*	-0.523*	-0.075
Very difficult	0.363*	-0.297	0.110
Occupation			
Blue collar (ref)			
Service	-0.128	0.793***	0.252
White collar	-0.012	0.391**	0.110
Self-employed	-0.200*	0.350**	-0.123
Unemployed	0.164	0.195	0.558***
Retired/non-active	-0.111	0.405**	0.172
Left-right placement	-0.122***	0.016	-0.088***
	Pluralist societies	Selectivist societies	
<i>Country variables</i>			
Social expenditure	0.156	0.186	
Social contributions	-0.035	-0.080	
Means-tested benefits	0.129	0.064	

Note. * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$

Table 5.3 shows that social structure is significantly related to the individual profiles. To begin with, older respondents, the lower educated and those who have more difficulties on their present income are all more likely to belong to the pluralists instead of to the meritocrats. The higher probability of those with a vulnerable socio-economic status to internalize a pluralist belief system is in line with the stronger value pluralism among this group (Achterberg & Houtman, 2009). In contrast, men, older respondents, higher educated individuals, those living comfortably on their present income and those who are not blue collar workers or unemployed are more likely to belong to the selectivist profile than to the meritocratic one. For the prioritarian profile, older respondents, the highest and lowest educational categories and the unemployed are more likely to belong to this profile instead of the meritocratic one. These results are especially in line with self-interest theory, as the selectivists exhibit the lowest support for equality and even the meritocratic profile displays higher support for this distributive principle. As expected, the profiles are also ideologically determined, as right-wing individuals are less likely to belong to the pluralist and prioritarian profiles than to the meritocrats, which might be related to their more conditional notion of solidarity (van Oorschot, 2006).

In addition, the results indicate that the institutional characteristics do not predict membership of the worlds of distributive justice preferences, as none of the coefficients of the contextual predictors are significant. Although statistical power might be too limited with 29 countries, these insignificant coefficients are in line with the geographical plot of the worlds of distributive justice preferences. These findings are at odds with normative institutionalism and welfare regime theory, which state that public opinion conforms to the norms encapsulated and pushed forward by institutions (Jaeger, 2006a; Laenen, 2018; Mau, 2004; Rothstein, 1998). The distinct worlds of attitudes are less institutionally embedded than expected and seem to be more strongly structured according to cultural or regional dividing lines.

5. CONCLUSION

Previous research interpreted cross-national differences in solidarity notions using the welfare regime typology of Esping-Andersen (1990) by identifying so-called 'worlds of welfare attitudes'. However, by only focusing on separate attitudinal dimensions that measure

preferences for the mere *delivery* of welfare provisions, these studies failed to grasp cross-national differences in qualitatively different logics of social justice that measure support for distinct *types* of welfare systems. In reaction to these shortcomings, the present study adopted a person-centred perspective to construct separate individual- and country-level typologies of preferences for the fundamental justice principles of equality, equity and need. On the individual-level, profiles of individuals that combine preferences for equality, equity and need in distinct ways are analysed to grasp underlying justice belief systems. On the country-level, profiles or worlds of distributive justice preferences that differ in the representation of these individual profiles were evaluated. The construction of these individual- and country-level profiles was realized by applying the innovative technique of multilevel latent profile analysis on European Social Survey data from 29 European countries.

The results of the present study identify four individual profiles that combine preferences for the principles of equality, equity and need in distinct ways: a pluralist profile that combines support for all principles simultaneously, a prioritarian profile that moderately supports equality and need, a meritocratic profile that only favours equity-based distributions and a selectivist profile that prefers both equity and need. On the basis of the relative prevalence of these profiles, three country-level profiles or worlds of distributive justice preferences were uncovered. In addition to a pluralist world consisting of societies with a strong representation of belief systems relying on support for all principles, a meritocratic world with a strong representation of the meritocratic profile and a selectivist world with a high prevalence of the selectivist profile, were found. In contrast to welfare regime theory and normative institutionalism (Jaeger, 2006a; Laenen, 2018; Mau, 2004; Rothstein, 1998), these worlds of distributive justice preferences did not follow the regime typology or institutional dividing lines. Although partial support was found for a stronger combinatory logic in hybrid welfare states, such as the Mediterranean and Eastern-European countries (Arts & Gijsberts, 1998; Gatskova, 2013; Matějů, 1993), such support was not observed in several Central-Eastern European countries.

These results shed new light on the regional clustering of welfare-related attitudes. When evaluating worlds of attitudes on the basis of profiles that consider underlying belief systems

and the interconnectedness of preferences for the justice principles, a divide in opinions between the different welfare regimes is not found. There seems to be a thin link between welfare regimes and preferences for the principles of equality, equity and need (Arts & Gelissen, 2001; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). The absence of a relation between institutions and public opinion could nevertheless be related to the macro-level perspective of our study. Indeed, previous research has suggested that welfare regimes are just too broad and that there is still important variation in welfare programmes within certain types of social security systems. As a result, policy feedback effects and the institutions-attitudes nexus could manifest itself more strongly at a meso- or welfare program level (Laenen, 2018).

Instead of an institutional stratification, countries cluster together into geographical or cultural regions, as the worlds of justice preferences seem to largely coincide with the regions of North-Western, South-Eastern and Central-Eastern Europe. The clustering bears important similarities to the division of Europe in cultural or religious regions as presented for instance by Inglehart and Welzel (2005). The clustering of selectivist societies into a North-Western region is for example in line with the shared Protestant history in these societies, wherein individualism and work have been argued to play important roles. Similarly, the pluralist societies to a large extent coincide with the Catholic cultural zone, where besides equity and need, collective responsibility and equality seem traditionally more strongly embedded (Andreß & Heien, 2001; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). The existence of a Central-Eastern region and the fragmentation of post-communist countries across the pluralist and meritocratic societies is not in line with these previously identified cultural divides, but does conform to the greater ideological variety across these countries and the strong adherence to meritocratic norms in the Central-European countries (Hadarics, 2016). As the justice principles constitute types of social values (Liebig & Sauer, 2016), the worlds of distributive justice preferences thus reveal cultural divides in solidarity and justice patterns across Europe.

However, the employed empirical measurements might skew the findings of this chapter (see Chapter 2). The strong wording of the equality-item in terms of the equal distribution of income and wealth might for instance explain the absence of an egalitarian profile as well as a universalist world of justice preferences, as a strict form of egalitarianism is generally less

popular (Magni-Berton, 2019). The equity item referred to rewarding those who work harder, which only indirectly taps into people's preferences for distributing welfare resources to those who have contributed more to the common good. In addition, while in actual welfare state distributions the principle of need usually takes the form of targeting low-income groups, stimulating private insurance schemes and allocating means-tested benefits (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002), the item used to evaluate need in this study refers to preferences for a more generous type of redistribution that takes care of those in need regardless of what they give back. This particular interpretation might have steered the retrieved profiles. Despite these item formulations, the individual profiles retrieved in this chapter do overlap with previous findings of studies that use different measures for equality, equity, and need (Franke & Simonson, 2018). Future research would nevertheless benefit from replicating these analyses with measurements that more clearly reflect the logics behind the different redistributive designs in the welfare state.

Chapter 6

The ideological roots of the activation paradigm

How justice preferences and unemployment attributions shape public support for demanding activation policies¹²

¹² This chapter is co-authored with Federica Rossetti, Koen Abts and Bart Meuleman

ABSTRACT

Research either focused on self-interest or generic ideologies to explain attitudes towards demanding active labour market policies (ALMPs). This chapter focuses instead on how support for these policies is rooted in the underlying policy paradigm. We link attitudes towards ALMPs to two pillars of the activation paradigm: distributive justice and unemployment attributions. Structural equational modelling is employed on data from the Belgian National Election Study 2014 (N=1901). Individuals supporting the principles of need and equity and who blame the unemployed are more supportive of demanding activation. These frameworks and hence the policy paradigm thus have substantial predictive power.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, European welfare states have moved from 'passive' social policies to more 'activating' measures (Cox, 1998; Graziano, 2012) that aim to increase labour participation among people who are dependent on social security or social assistance benefits (Boland, 2015; Bruttel & Sol, 2006; van Berkel & Borghi, 2008, p. 332). This 'activation turn' comprises a variety of policy measures that can be classified into two types of active labour market policies (ALMPs), namely enabling policies, focusing on investments in human capital, and demanding policies, which opt for negative incentives to push people into employment (Bonoli, 2010; Bruttel & Sol, 2006; Daguerre, 2007; Eichhorst et al., 2008). This chapter focuses on the latter, as demanding ALMPs have been more frequently adopted and heavily politicized. While this has drawn scholarly attention to their implementation, consequences and legitimacy (Fossati, 2018; Knotz, 2018), far less is known about the ideological origins of their public support. As ALMPs are amongst the most prominent 'new' types of social policies that declare a break with traditional compensation policies and openly call into question deeply entrenched institutions that handle unemployment (Häusermann, 2012; Maron & Helman, 2017, p. 406), understanding their support base is primordial to grasp the legitimacy of contemporary welfare systems and political feasibility of future reforms.

To capture the ideological roots of support for demanding ALMPs, our study investigates how its underlying policy paradigm informs public preferences. We assume that the paradigmatic ideas on the organizing principles and the problems behind a specific policy (Béland, 2005, 2016; Daigneault, 2014a; Hall, 1993) are especially relevant to dissect ideological support for ALMPs, as the activation debate occurs on a more specific level that does not fully equate with traditional distributive and ideological conflicts. Instead, it elicits strong tensions on the fundamental "goals, rules, and resources of unemployment policies" by dealing with issues of how to get people into work who are in control of their situation in need and hence deemed undeserving of welfare support (Maron & Helman, 2017, p. 407). Previous research demonstrates that besides social-structural characteristics, ideological factors, such as right-wing orientations and anti-egalitarianism are strong predictors of support for demanding ALMPs (Fossati, 2018; Laenen & Meuleman, 2018; Roosma & Jeene, 2017). However, simultaneously, the introduction of ALMPs is cross-cutting established cleavage structures,

and is a relatively new reform with unknown modalities and consequences (Deeming, 2015; Häusermann, 2012; Maron & Helman, 2017), which makes these ideological dispositions in themselves potentially insufficient to fully understand their support base. Instead, policy paradigms may be better equipped to reveal the idiosyncratic ideological controversies surrounding the contemporary activation debate as well as to unveil the ideological roots of public support for ALMPs.

After all, demanding ALMPs are not neutral policy measures, but entail a break with the traditional vision on the desired organization of welfare state distribution as well as on the causes behind welfare dependency (Romano, 2018). On the one hand, the paradigm redesigns the blueprint of contemporary welfare states by changing their underlying conceptions of social justice (Sachweh, 2016, p. 309). ALMPs are part of a rethought social contract, which shifts the logic from “all-in-the-same-boat” to “give back to society” philosophy (Béland & Cox, 2016; Daguerre, 2004; Hacker, 2006, p. 34; Romano, 2018; Sachweh, 2016). This turn implies a shift away from the principle of equality towards equity- or need-based distribution. On the other hand, this paradigm encompasses a particular view on the causes behind social neediness and welfare dependency that emphasizes individual responsibility for dealing with the consequences of social risks and the punishment of groups who fail to comply with welfare requirements (Dwyer, 2000; Romano, 2018). This policy paradigm considers unemployment not as a transitory misfortune or as a result of structural injustice, but attributes unemployment to the behaviour and morality of the individual (Dwyer, 2000; Webster, 2019, p. 325).

This study investigates to what extent the core ideas of this policy paradigm shape citizens’ support for demanding ALMPs and in this way contributes in to the literature in important ways. First, analysing policy paradigms from an attitudinal perspective allows us to uncover to what extent the policy paradigms are echoed among the general public. As a result, we can determine the broader “acceptance and likely embedding of workfare values and principles in the collective psyche” (Deeming, 2015, p. 880). Second, the explanatory power of the policy paradigm approach is tested, which seems more suitable to grasp support for contemporary welfare reforms beyond the classic left-right divides. As ALMPs are being pursued by parties across the ideological spectrum and cut across traditional distributive conflicts between capital

and labour that mark the left-right divide (Cronert, 2020; Deeming, 2015; Häusermann, 2012), the conventional ideological variables could be insufficient to fully grasp the reasons for supporting these policies.

Concretely, this chapter addresses the following research questions: (1) How are preferences for particular principles of distributive justice (equality, equity and need) related to support for demanding ALMPs? (2) How do attributions of unemployment (individual blame, individual fate, social blame and social fate) influence support for demanding ALMPs? To answer both research questions, structural equation modelling on data of the Belgian National Election Study 2014 is conducted. Before elaborating on the potential effects of distributive justice preferences and unemployment attributions, this chapter expands on the policy paradigm behind demanding activation.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. THE POLICY PARADIGM BEHIND DEMANDING ACTIVATION

The recent history of the European welfare states has been characterized by a so-called 'activation turn' (Bonoli, 2010, p. 435) that aims to make citizens economically self-reliant by increasing their labour market participation (van Berkel & Borghi, 2008). Activation of the jobless can take place through two distinct approaches. Enabling ALMPs focus on investments in human capital to promote the employability of the jobless, whereas demanding ALMPs emphasize coercive elements, such as benefit cuts, obligatory training programs and sanctions for those who do not comply with obligations (Bruttel & Sol, 2006; Daguerre, 2004; Eichhorst et al., 2008; Seikel & Spannagel, 2018).

Despite cross-national variations in the use of specific policy instruments, especially the demanding variant of ALMPs have been implemented across European countries (Dingeldey, 2007; Knotz, 2018). These policies are embedded in a specific policy paradigm, i.e., an interpretive framework consisting of a set of ideas about the organizing principles behind policies as well as about the nature and causes of the problems they address (Béland, 2005, 2016; Daguerre, 2007; Daigneault, 2014a; Hall, 1993). The broader policy paradigm of demanding activation emphasizes paid work and individual accountability (Daguerre, 2007).

The two constituting elements are (1) a transformation in the balance between universality and conditionality, and (2) a shift in responsibility from the state to the individual.

Concerning the trade-off between universality and conditionality, the activation turn implies a renewed focus on selective distribution that aims to cut welfare benefits, or at least match welfare rights with obligations (Seikel & Spannagel, 2018). Demanding ALMPs reinsert the market principle into government policy and promote a re-commodification of labour (Boland, 2015, p. 335). This approach marks an end of the “something for nothing” welfare state era and calls for welfare distribution only to those recipients that are willing to work (Béland & Cox, 2016; Daguerre, 2004, 2007, p. 12). As a result, the activation turn alters the organizing policy principles by shifting from universal towards reciprocal or residual forms of welfare that differentiate between various types of beneficiaries and restrict the scope of distribution.

With regard to the responsibility of state vs. individual, the paradigm of demanding activation entails a transformed outlook on the very nature and causes of social risks. The activation turn emphasizes individual responsibility and labels welfare dependency as a ‘personal failing’ (Watts & Fitzpatrick, 2018). Demanding ALMPs strongly problematize the presumed overuse of welfare benefits by attributing poverty and unemployment to individual characteristics, such as a poor work ethic (Daguerre, 2007; Fossati, 2018).

Given this paradigmatic background of demanding ALMPs, this chapter hypothesizes that people’s support for these policies can be understood as a function of specific ideological dispositions. Individuals’ preferences for distributive justice principles as well as the causes to which they attribute unemployment, are crucial ideological factors shaping support for demanding forms of activation. Yet, these key dimensions of the activation paradigm have been largely overlooked and it hence remains unclear to what extent this programmatic discourse structures policy preferences towards ALMPs (cf., Deeming, 2015). Notwithstanding the predictive power of general ideological dispositions (e.g., left-right placement, authoritarianism or work ethic) (Fossati, 2018; Laenen & Meuleman, 2018), the activation debate does not coincide with the traditional normative divides and is not a conventional redistributive issue. Instead of building on classical ideological discussions on how to

compensate income losses in the welfare state or on how to mitigate the relationships between labour and capital, the activation debate resolves around how to increase labour market participation and distinguish deserving from underserving groups (Deeming, 2015; Gingrich & Häusermann, 2015). Empirical studies have shown that ALMPs are equally being pursued by left-wing parties, albeit often in distinct forms, and that the political space is restructured around these issues (Cronert, 2020; Deeming, 2015; Häusermann, 2012; Maron & Helman, 2017). As a result, to understand the conflicts that are at the forefront of the activation debate and to grasp the public controversies going beyond traditional ideological cleavages, we should concentrate on the more specific ideas connected to the underlying policy paradigm.

2.2. BALANCING THE RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE UNEMPLOYED: THE ROLE OF DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

Considerations of distributive justice are not only central to the question how social rights and obligations should be balanced, but these principles are also a defining element of policy paradigms (Daguerre, 2007; Daigneault, 2014a; Dingeldey, 2007; Romano, 2018). Distributive justice literature generally distinguishes three principles that refer to distinct ways of allocating benefits, goods and services. First, the principle of equality (of outcomes) distributes equally to all citizens who are confronted with a certain risk, irrespective of additional requirements. Second, the principle of equity makes distribution conditional on past contributions, which implies that benefits are proportional to previously paid taxes, welfare contributions and labour market participation. Last, the principle of need entails a selective concern for citizens highest in need only, with the goal of providing sufficient resources to alleviate their basic needs.

The activation turn implies a shift from more equal and universal distribution to more conditional (cf., equity) or selective (cf., need) welfare provision, boiling down to a fundamental alteration of the underlying conceptions of distributive justice (Buchanan, 1990; Ervik et al., 2015). Demanding ALMPs are rooted in the idea of 'justice as reciprocity', which legitimizes a new type of conditional contract between citizens and the welfare state (Béland & Cox, 2016; Buchanan, 1990; Daguerre, 2004; Dingeldey, 2007; Ervik et al., 2015). This reciprocity-based approach to social rights and quid-pro-quo welfare model is constructed on the logic of equity

(Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002). Because equity constitutes a core component of the ideological paradigm of the activation turn, support for demanding activation is expected to be especially strong among individuals who endorse the principle of equity. Empirically, this thesis is supported by recent findings (Laenen & Meuleman, 2018), where a positive relationship is reported between support for the deservingness criterion of reciprocity and the justification of stricter welfare conditionality.

Besides equity, also the principle of need is closely intertwined with the activation discourse that stresses the importance of returning to forms of informal solidarity and of prioritizing individual rather than governmental responsibility to tackle social risks (Eichhorst et al., 2008; Fossati, 2018; Romano, 2018). The principle of need similarly relies on the notion of self-reliance in the provision of a sufficient living standard (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002). Moreover, ALMPs aim to cut welfare benefits by increasingly differentiating between deserving and undeserving recipients, of which the former are given access to benefits while the latter are punished for their prolonged neediness (Dwyer, 2000; Romano, 2018). This policy orientation is in line with need-based distribution that implies more selective and residual welfare state provision (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002). Consequently, demanding ALMPs are likely to appeal to individuals in favour of need-based allocation of benefits.

Contrary to equity or need, the principle of equality disregards selective requirements for access to welfare and emphasizes unconditionality. This principle contrasts with ALMPs that are grafted onto a radical departure from universal and unconditional rights (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Hibbert, 2007). Making access to welfare dependent on strict behavioural requirements conflicts with a conception of rights as being absolute and universal (Watts & Fitzpatrick, 2018). As a result, a preference for equality-based distribution might go hand in hand with less support for demanding activation. Those who favour egalitarian distribution prioritize rights to welfare over work obligations, as the latter are affecting the principle of social equality itself (Houtman, 1997).

In sum, regarding the social justice orientations persons who prioritize the principles of equity (Hypothesis 1) or need (Hypothesis 2) over equality are expected to be more likely to support demanding ALMPs.

2.3. BLAMING THE UNEMPLOYED? THE ROLE OF UNEMPLOYMENT ATTRIBUTIONS

According to the activation paradigm, control and individual responsibility are essential criteria to differentiate between categories of benefit claimants (Daguerre, 2007; Dwyer, 2000; Romano, 2018). Since a policy paradigm not only specifies the goals of a policy, but also incorporates worldviews that define the very nature and causes of social problems (Daigneault, 2014; Hall, 1993, p. 279), individuals' beliefs regarding the main causes of unemployment may reinforce or temper support for demanding ALMPs. Based on the literature on attributions of poverty (Feagin, 1972; Lepianka et al., 2009; van Oorschot & Halman, 2000), individuals' explanations of why a person falls into unemployment can be articulated alongside two axes: (1) the individual-social axis, referring to the question whether factors internal or external to the individual cause the condition of unemployment; and (2) the blame-fate axis, attributing unemployment to either controllable vs. inevitable events. Combining both axes yields four types of unemployment attributions: individual blame, individual fate, social blame and social fate (van Oorschot & Halman, 2000). While the individual blame type attributes unemployment to the laziness and the unwillingness of the unemployed to find a job, individual fate conceives unemployment as personal misfortune. The social blame type finds the cause of unemployment in social injustice and structural social exclusion. Attributions to social fate indicate that unemployment is believed to be caused by unavoidable and uncontrollable societal processes (cf., Lepianka et al., 2009; van Oorschot & Halman, 2000).

According to the paradigm underlying the punitive approach to activation, individual failings and a weak work ethic are the main causes of unemployment (Boland, 2015; Daguerre, 2007), and sanctions and benefit cuts are seen as effective means to force passive welfare dependents back into employment (Dwyer, 2000). Support for demanding ALMPs can thus be understood in terms of a hardening of attitudes towards the unemployed that attributes unemployment to a lack of responsibility and moral hazard (Fossati, 2018). This argument fits with empirical research evidencing that unemployed persons are seen as less deserving when they are

believed to be responsible for their own neediness. This higher perceived control and lower deservingness in turn reflect in higher support for the introduction of benefit obligations (Roosma & Jeene, 2017).

Although especially individual blame-attribution is expected to incite support for demanding activation, emphasizing individual fate might also go hand in hand with heightened support for work obligations. ALMPs are closely linked to a general shift towards individualism (Ervik & Kildal, 2015), as they assume that individuals are able to actively take up their personal responsibility by re-entering the labour market (Bonvin, 2008). Even though the individual fate type does not blame the unemployed, solutions are still sought in the realm of the individual.

Attributing unemployment to a lack of jobs (social blame) or to social transformations (social fate) is contrarily harder to reconcile with a preference for demanding ALMPs. Emphasizing high unemployment rates or the insufficient availability of jobs decreases victim-blaming and leads to a higher perceived deservingness of the unemployed (van Oorschot & Meuleman, 2014). This might in turn reflect in stronger sympathy with the main target group of ALMPs and lower support for welfare conditionality (Dwyer, 2000). Similarly, when risks are considered to be 'an accident of fate', the take-up of collective responsibility tends to be strong (Giddens, 1999), which is in contrast to the turn towards individual responsibility in the activation paradigm (Bonvin, 2008; Ervik & Kildal, 2015). Furthermore, external attribution lowers the legitimacy of inequalities (cf., Schneider & Castillo, 2015) and thus weakens the legitimacy of policies that imply a turn away from equality.

Concretely, we hypothesize that people who attribute unemployment to individual blame will show higher support for the activation of benefit claimants than those who attribute it to social fate or social blame (Hypothesis 3). Also, those who ascribe unemployment to individual fate will have a stronger preference for demanding activation compared to people who attribute it to social fate or blame, but the difference will be smaller than for individual blame (Hypothesis 4).

2.4. CONVENTIONAL EXPLANATORY MECHANISMS: SELF-INTEREST AND IDEOLOGY

Instead of concentrating on the ideological components of the policy paradigm, existing empirical research on support for ALMPs has focused on the role of two theoretical frameworks that are traditionally used to explain welfare state attitudes: self-interest and ideological beliefs (Fossati, 2018; Kootstra & Roosma, 2018). First, self-interest theory postulates that demanding ALMPs are opposed by disadvantaged individuals in precarious economic situations, who are generally beneficiaries of unemployment benefits (Fossati, 2018). Following a rational-choice logic that is based on cost-benefit calculations, actual or potential welfare beneficiaries might thus be more negative towards ALMPs that potentially limit benefit access or levels (Carriero & Filandri, 2018; Kootstra & Roosma, 2018). The explanatory framework of ideology, in contrast, assumes that welfare preferences are especially embedded in a broader set of values and norms. In line with this theory, individuals with certain general ideological beliefs – that is, right-wing oriented, with strong authoritarian values and a high work ethic – are found to be more supportive of demanding ALMPs (Fossati, 2018; Kootstra & Roosma, 2018; Laenen & Meuleman, 2018; Roosma & Jeene, 2017).

Traditional ideological frameworks cannot be overlooked in the analysis of support for demanding ALMPs. However, these ideological dispositions are so encompassing that they struggle to grasp the politicization and ideological contestation specific to the activation debate. This is especially true because discussions on activation mainly resolve around issues of reciprocity as well as the deservingness of benefit claimants, instead of being centred around traditional themes and distributive conflicts that characterize the political divide between left and right (Deeming, 2015; Häusermann, 2012; Maron & Helman, 2017). As a result, in themselves these theoretical frameworks fall short on clarifying the specific ideological divides and roots of public support for demanding activation. The analysis of this study will take these traditional mechanisms into account to test whether the pillars of the activation paradigm should be included on top of the existing mechanisms.

3. DATA AND METHOD

3.1. DATA

To answer our research questions, data of the Belgian National Election Study 2014, conducted among Belgians qualified to vote, is analysed. The National Register functioned as the sampling frame and two-stage random probability sampling was used. By means of Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI), a sample of 1901 respondents (response rate: 47.5 percent) was realized. Post-stratification weights on the basis of age, gender and education are applied.

3.2. INDICATORS

3.2.1. DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Support for demanding ALMPs is measured by six Likert-type items (five-point disagree-agree answer scale). These items inquire whether respondents endorse the following series of demanding measures: limiting unemployment benefits to two years, imposing obligations to accept any job or to enrol in re-education programs, implementing stricter government control on job-seeking behaviour and harsher punishment if duties are not performed, and obliging people with a minimum income to do community work. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is conducted to test whether these items measure a single latent construct. Modification indices suggest an error correlation between the items on stricter government control on job-seeking activities and harsher punishment ($r = 0.33$), which can be explained by the fact that both items refer to the punitive strictness of government. Table 6.1 displays the percentages of respondents agreeing, the factor loadings and the questions wordings for each of the six items. The measurement model shows adequate fit and all items load strongly on the joint latent construct, which testifies to the measurement quality of our scale.

Table 6.1. Factor loadings, questions wordings and percentages of respondents agreeing for each item of demanding active labour market policies (N=1900)

Question wording	% (completely) agree	Factor loadings
Q114_1 - Unemployment benefits should be limited to a maximum of two years.	45.2	0.555
Q114_2 - People with a minimum income should be obliged to do community work.	70.4	0.666
Q114_3 - Long-term unemployed should be obliged to accept any job, even if they earn much less than before by doing so.	64.0	0.704
Q114_5 - Long-term unemployed should be obliged to re-educate themselves, otherwise they lose their social benefits.	73.8	0.522
Q115_2 - The government should control more strictly whether the unemployed sufficiently apply for jobs.	80.3	0.579
Q115_3 - Social benefit beneficiaries who do not perform their duties should be punished more harshly.	71.2	0.565
Error correlation between Q115_2 and Q115_3		0.329

Note. Fit indices of the measurement model for support for demanding ALMPs: $\chi^2 = 12.731$; $df = 8$; CFI = 0.997; TLI = 0.994; RMSEA = 0.018; SRMR=0.013

3.2.2. INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Distributive justice preferences are operationalized by a question gauging directly how government should organize the allocation of unemployment benefits. The answer categories (see Table 6.2) refer to preferences for the principles of equality, equity or need.¹³ This measure thus applies the justice principles to unemployment benefits, which is important as justice preferences can be contingent on the welfare domain (Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013).

¹³ Originally there was also a fourth answer category, which stated that the government should not provide unemployment benefits. However, this is converted to a missing value due to a very small proportion of respondents (0.8%) opting for this answer

Unemployment attributions are measured by asking respondents what they think the most important reason is that people in our society are unemployed (cf., van Oorschot & Halman, 2000). The answer categories refer to attributions of individual blame, individual fate, social blame or social fate. Table 6.2 displays the wordings of the answer categories for the distributive justice as well as the unemployment attribution item.

Besides these two ideological dimensions related to the policy paradigm, three more generic ideational beliefs are also included that were found to be relevant in previous research. First, political left-right placement is measured on an eleven-point scale (from 0=left to 10=right). Second, work ethic is measured by four statements (five-point disagree-agree answer scale) referring to work as a necessary condition to develop talents, the stigma of receiving money without working for it, and work as a duty towards society and a priority in life. Third, authoritarianism is operationalized by three items mentioning that obedience and respect for authority are important virtues, that laws should become stricter and that problems can be solved by getting rid of immoral people. A CFA model with both scales simultaneously included shows good fit and yields sufficiently large factor loadings (see Table A5 in Appendix for question wordings, factor loadings and fit indices). These findings evidence the reliability and validity of the work ethic and authoritarianism scales.

The social structural position of individuals is operationalized by their occupational class, income, education, welfare dependency and current unemployment status. Occupational class is divided into five categories on the basis of the Erikson-Goldthorpe-Portocarero class scheme (Ganzeboom & Treiman, 1996), which distinguishes between service class, blue collar workers (reference category), white collar workers, the self-employed and the inactive (including students). Income is measured as the net equalized household income and is divided into four quartiles. A missing category for income is added to limit the number of deleted cases due to non-response on this sensitive item. Educational level is divided in three categories: lower (secondary) education, higher secondary education (reference category) and tertiary education. Welfare dependency is operationalized by asking respondents whether someone in their household received a welfare benefit (such as income support, an unemployment benefit or a work disability allowance) in the last two years. The model also includes a dummy

to indicate whether someone is currently unemployed. Gender, age and region (Flanders vs. Francophone Belgium) are included as additional control variables.

3.3. STATISTICAL MODELLING

To analyse support for demanding ALMPs, we use structural equation modelling (SEM). SEM allows to assess structural pathways between constructs, while taking random measurement error into account through the use of latent variables. The fit indices of the explanation model ($\chi^2 = 800.919$; $df = 271$; CFI = 0.904; TLI = 0.875; RMSEA = 0.032; SRMR = 0.026) illustrate that the model fits the data adequately. Only the TLI (0.875) is low, but the modification indices indicate no substantial local misfit in the model. All analyses are conducted in Mplus version 8.2 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017). To deal with the limited amount of item non-response, Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML) estimation is used (meaning that only cases with a missing on all items for the dependent variable or a missing on one of the exogenous variables are excluded from the model). The parameter estimates are based on standardization of the dependent variable and the metric independent variables. The dummy variables are not standardized, so that these coefficients refer to the number of standard deviations a particular category differs from the reference group.

4. RESULTS

4.1. DESCRIPTIVE OVERVIEW

Before discussing the results of the SEM, this chapter provides a descriptive overview of support for demanding ALMPs, distributive justice preferences and unemployment attributions. The proportions of respondents agreeing with each item, as displayed in Table 6.1, reveal that there is a high level of public support for demanding activation measures (see also: Carriero & Filandri, 2018; Houtman, 1997; Kootstra & Roosma, 2018). Although agreement is slightly lower for limiting unemployment benefits over time, the other demanding ALMPs measures are supported by half to more than two thirds of the respondents. Apparently, welfare conditionality towards the unemployed is largely accepted among the respondents in our sample.

Table 6.2. Wording and percentage of respondents opting for each answer category of unemployment attributions and distributive justice preferences

Wording	Category	% of respondents
<i>Distributive justice</i>		
A reasonable benefit for all the unemployed, which is equal for everyone	Equality	52.2
A higher unemployment benefit for people who have earned and contributed more	Equity	29.0
A minimal unemployment benefit for the unemployed who are in real need	Need	18.8
<i>Unemployment attributions</i>		
Because they don't try hard enough to find a job	Individual blame	30.0
Because they have bad luck and misfortune in their lives	Individual fate	10.8
Because there is a lack of available jobs	Social blame	35.6
Because, in a modern society, this is simply unavoidable	Social fate	23.7

The percentages of respondents opting for each category of distributive justice and unemployment attributions are displayed in Table 6.2. Over half of the respondents prefer the equality principle for the allocation of unemployment benefits. The strong support for the principle of equality as well as for demanding ALMPs indicates that rights and obligations for the unemployed are overall both strongly supported, which is in line with previous findings (Houtman, 1997). The other two social justice principles are also preferred by a substantial proportion of respondents. While 29 percent prefers to distribute benefits in accordance with past contributions, about one fifth of the sample prefers a residual and selective benefit scheme that is solely targeted at those who are most in need. With regard to the unemployment attributions, most respondents identify a general lack of jobs (social blame) as the main cause of unemployment. About a third of the respondents attributes unemployment

to individual blame, which illustrates that a relatively large proportion believes that unemployment is caused by laziness or a lack of willpower of individuals. The two fate attributions are least popular. These descriptive statistics show considerable variation in the ideological outlooks of the respondents: each of the categories of distributive justice preferences and unemployment attributions is preferred by a considerable proportion of respondents.

4.2. EXPLAINING SUPPORT FOR DEMANDING ACTIVATION

Table 6.3 displays the regression coefficients of the model predicting support for demanding ALMPs. First, in line with previous findings (Fossati, 2018; Laenen & Meuleman, 2018), the model indicates that structural characteristics are significantly related to support for demanding ALMPs. Some results are in line with self-interest theory. Persons in the highest two income quartiles score higher (0.15 and 0.12 standard deviations, respectively) on public support for ALMPs than those in the lowest quartile, which is in line with their more limited interest in unconditional welfare provisions. The lower support of older respondents and individuals living in Wallonia might be interpreted as a self-interest effect as well, as unemployment rates are higher among older individuals and in this region of Belgium (International Monetary Fund, 2019). In addition, the coefficients for unemployment and welfare dependency show that the unemployed and benefit recipients score much lower on support for demanding ALMPs than the employed and those not receiving benefits. However, the effects of other social structural predictors are insignificant or have a sign that contradicts self-interest theory. The higher support among women and the lowest support of individuals belonging to the service class, for instance, seems to run counter to what is assumed to be their welfare interest. The insignificance of the education parameters also indicates that not all groups who are more likely to become unemployed support ALMPs less than groups who experience less risk exposure. Clearly, social structural predictors that reflect self-interest can only explain a limited part of the puzzle of how support for demanding ALMPs takes shape.

Table 6.3. Structural equation model predicting support for demanding active labour market policies (N=1901)

Variables	Regression coefficient
Gender	
Woman (ref.)	
Man	-0.052*
Age	-0.093***
Education	
Lower (secondary)	-0.038
Higher secondary (ref.)	
Tertiary	0.052
Income	
Quartile 1 (ref.)	
Quartile 2	0.059*
Quartile 3	0.151***
Quartile 4	0.115***
Missing	0.088
Occupation	
Blue collar (ref.)	
Service class	-0.076*
White collar	0.002
Self-employed	0.043
Inactive	-0.031
Welfare dependency	
No benefit (ref.)	
Benefit	-0.126***
Unemployed	
Yes	-0.137***
No (ref.)	
Region	
French region (ref.)	

Flanders	0.126***
Left-right placement	0.117***
Work ethic	0.266***
Authoritarianism	0.317***
Distributive justice in unemployment	
Equity	0.096***
Need	0.142***
Equality (ref.)	
Unemployment attributions	
Individual blame	0.149***
Individual fate	-0.015
Social blame	-0.061
Social fate (ref.)	
R²	0.528

Note. * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$; Fit of the full structural equation model with support for demanding ALMPs as dependent variable: $\chi^2 = 800.919$; $df = 271$; CFI = 0.904; TLI = 0.875; RMSEA = 0.032; SRMR=0.026

Second, the model uncovers that left-right self-placement, authoritarianism and work ethic have a significant positive impact. The higher support for activation of right-wing individuals might be related to their more conditional thinking about solidarity (van Oorschot, 2006), although it remains largely unclear what this relation with highly generic left-right placement exactly encompasses. The higher support of individuals who value a strong work ethic is in line with their strong focus on paid work as a moral duty, while the positive relationship with authoritarianism seems to be related to the preference for punitive roles of authorities towards those who do not comply with dominant norms, including welfare beneficiaries not conforming to the norms of self-reliance (Dwyer, 2000; Laenen & Meuleman, 2018). These results evidence that the ideological characteristics are still important predictors of support for the punishment of undeserving benefit claimants.

Third and most importantly, the analysis confirms that the two dimensions behind the policy paradigm - namely distributive justice preferences and unemployment attributions - are

essential predictors of support for demanding ALMPs on top of social structural variables and generic ideological dispositions. Support for demanding ALMPs is significantly and substantially stronger among individuals who prefer equity-based instead of equality-based distribution (Hypothesis 1), confirming that the principle of equity is a key element in the reciprocal philosophy behind the activation paradigm (Buchanan, 1990; Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Ervik et al., 2015; Houtman, 1997). Moreover, also respondents who prefer the need principle favour demanding ALMPs more strongly than those who prefer equality-based distribution (thus confirming Hypothesis 2). The effect parameter for need is slightly, but significantly, larger than the one for the principle of equity ($b=0.14$ vs $b=0.10$; p -value difference test=0.03). This demonstrates that besides attracting support from those who desire a conditional welfare contract, ALMPs gain also support among those who prefer selective distributions, means-tested policies and welfare cuts (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002). This illustrates that support for demanding ALMPs also has firm roots in beliefs that the undeserving unemployed should be self-reliant (Romano, 2018). In this sense, they receive support across multiple distributive justice segments of the population, which might partly explain their wide popularity.

In addition, the results indicate that welfare conditionality relates to public images of the unemployed. Conform to Hypothesis 3, individual blame attribution significantly reinforces preferences for demanding activation: respondents who see laziness or a lack of motivation as the primary cause of unemployment are more likely to support ALMPs, confirming its close connection with moralizing unemployment and welfare sanctioning as measures to combat laziness and structural dependency (Dwyer, 2000; Fossati, 2018). Contrary to Hypothesis 4, however, respondents who attribute unemployment to the misfortune of individuals (individual fate) do not support ALMPs more than individuals who see social fate or social blame as its primary cause. Individual unemployment attributions thus only induce support for demanding activation when combined with a blaming perspective. Additionally, the social blame and social fate attributions do not differ significantly and connect to relatively low support for ALMPs.

5. CONCLUSION

This study expands previous research on public support for demanding ALMPs by scrutinizing the ideological roots of support for activation. Instead of focusing exclusively on generic, often-used predictors to explain social policy attitudes – self-interest indicators and general ideological dimensions – two pillars of the policy paradigm of demanding activation are crucial to understand its legitimacy: distributive justice and unemployment attributions. These frameworks inherently connect to the shift in the balance between universality and conditionality and in the responsibility from the state to the individual.

The results indicate that support for the forced reintegration of the jobless in the labour market is embedded in preferences regarding distributive justice and views on the primary causes of unemployment. A preference for equal distribution is linked to reduced support for demanding ALMPs, while a preference for the need- or equity-based distribution brings about higher support. The effect of the principle of need is even slightly stronger than that of equity, which indicates that a focus on self-help, individual responsibility and minimal welfare distribution are central elements in the justification of the sanctioning of undeserving benefit claimants. Moreover, attitudes towards demanding policies are shown to be strongly rooted in the idea that the unemployed are to blame personally for their neediness. Among persons attributing unemployment to individual fate, social fate or social blame, support for demanding ALMPs is considerably lower. The representation of a moral hazard as the primary cause of unemployment is not only a key component of the activation paradigm, but also a constituent element of its public support (Fossati, 2018).

These findings evidence that the ideological paradigms on which social policies are grounded (Béland, 2005, 2016; Daigneault, 2014a; Hall, 1993) are crucial to understand their legitimacy and support base. While this approach appears to be particularly relevant for new types of reform that challenge existing institutional structures and are strongly politicized—such as demanding ALMPs (Maron & Helman, 2017), it could be extended to other social policy reforms. For instance Daigneault (2014b) identifies two other policy paradigms besides the workfare framework that structure the debate behind the allocation of social assistance, which could equally guide their ideological support. Our study thus offers the starting point for a

new interpretation of the ideology framework that can also be extended to other forms of welfare provisions and help understand the ideological controversies surrounding public opinion on particular social policies.

Claims about causality can nevertheless not be made here, as it is well possible that policy makers appeal to already existing sentiments and feedback effects between institutions and public opinions might exist (Kumlin & Stadelmann-Steffen, 2014). Despite the inability to disentangle the link between policy paradigms and public sentiments, it seems most likely that interpretation effects are at play, whereby policies and political discourses – i.e., the demanding activation paradigm - provide the public with ways to interpret the goals and problems of unemployment policies (Pierson, 1993). Indeed, we assume that ideological positions are shaped by policy paradigms and can change throughout interpretations and interactions with the government and policies (Kumlin, 2006). Yet, despite the uncertainty around the mechanisms at play, the results convincingly indicate that policy paradigms are crystalized in the ideological roots of policy support.

The strong connection of support for activation with the principle of need and individual blaming has important implications. As the principle of need justifies the replacement of universal and reciprocal welfare policies with means-tested programs, support for demanding ALMPs seems to be linked to the adherence to a liberal view on the welfare state (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002). This indicates that the public might not consider demanding ALMPs to be complementary to more universal schemes, but rather as a way of replacing them. In addition, as attributions evoke and reinforce stereotypes about target groups, ALMPs are embedded in stereotypical images of the unemployed as being lazy and dependent. The reliance of both support for ALMPs and the activation paradigm itself (Daguerre, 2007) on these stereotypes may have important repercussions, as policies can restrict the opportunities and resources of stigmatized groups, and worsen stigma-related problems (Link & Hatzenbuehler, 2016).

Despite some peculiarities of its unemployment benefit system, Belgium is a well-suited context to examine support for demanding ALMPs. After a long period of reluctance and

fragmented policy momentum (Hemerijck & van Kersbergen, 2019), activation measures have been especially implemented since 2004 with a strong boost from 2012 onwards (Van Lancker et al., 2015). The finding that public support for demanding policies is embedded in the pillars of activation paradigm even in Belgium, a country characterized as a conservative welfare state regime with a rather recent history in activation policies, suggests that this link might be even stronger in countries with a longer tradition of activation or neoliberal policies. However, at the same time, the data was collected just after the federal and regional elections of 2014 where ALMPs constituted a controversial and important issue, which might have increased the saliency of the activation paradigm and socialized citizens stronger into these ideas and values. Future research would thus benefit from expanding these analyses to other countries and from adopting a comparative perspective.

Chapter 7

Weakly institutionalized, heavily contested

Does support for contemporary welfare reforms
rely on norms of distributive justice?¹⁴

¹⁴ This chapter is co-authored with Koen Abts and Bart Meuleman

ABSTRACT

Three reforms that each appeal to a different logic of (re)distribution are strongly politicized in contemporary welfare states: means-tested benefits, activation policies and basic income schemes. While the policy design of means-tested benefits relies on the distributive justice principle of need, activation policies are intrinsically related to the principle of equity and basic income schemes depend on equality. Based on the moral economy and policy feedback literatures, which assume that public opinion adapts to the normative conceptions of justice encapsulated by institutions, attitudes towards these welfare reforms are expected to be grounded on these distributive logics. However, as these reforms are weakly institutionalized and their underlying principles are politically contested, the normative foundation of their public support remains unclear. This study investigates how distributive justice preferences shape support for these proposals by applying structural equation modelling on data from the online CRONOS panel linked to the European Social Survey round 8 (2016/2017). Results indicate that only basic income schemes and activation policies are to some extent connected to each of the justice principles. Overall, this study nevertheless indicates that the justice principles have limited explanatory power, which confirms that attitudes towards contemporary welfare reforms rely very weakly on justice norms.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last decades, we have witnessed intense debates on welfare reforms that fundamentally reinterpret the social contract between citizens and the state. Much-debated proposals such as the means-testing of benefits, the activation of benefit recipients and the implementation of basic income schemes aim to recalibrate the balance of burdens and benefits of social welfare but appeal to very different logics of (re)distribution (Borosch et al., 2016; Gugushvili & van Oorschot, 2020; Häusermann, 2012; Van Parijs & Vanderborght, 2017). Means-tested benefits primarily rely on the distributive justice principle of need by only granting benefits to those with insufficient financial resources (Marx et al., 2016; van Oorschot, 2002). Activation policies attempt to increase labour market mobilization by making access to unemployment benefits increasingly restrictive and conditional (Bonoli, 2010; Eichhorst et al., 2008; van Berkel & Borghi, 2008) and are rooted in the principle of equity. By granting an unconditional income to all citizens without means test or work requirement, basic income schemes subscribe to the principle of equality (Van Parijs & Vanderborght, 2017).

Such logics of distributive justice not only structure the blueprints of these policy reforms (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Ennser-Jedenastik, 2018; Ervik et al., 2015; Gugushvili & van Oorschot, 2020; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013; Van Parijs & Vanderborght, 2017), but also serve as normative reference points for the public at large. According to the moral economy and policy feedback theories, mass attitudes towards welfare do not merely reflect material interests and cost-benefit calculations. Instead, public opinions are grafted on the moral principles and social norms that are embodied by welfare institutions and policies (Kumlin & Stadelmann-Steffen, 2014; Mau, 2004; Sachweh, 2012; Svallfors, 2006; Taylor-Gooby et al., 2018). This argumentation postulates that public support for a particular welfare policy depends substantially on the distributive justice principles that are ingrained within their ideal-typical design.

In the case of traditional policy domains, such as pension or unemployment systems, the relevance of justice preferences for public support has been evidenced empirically (Andreß & Heien, 2001; Jaime-Castillo, 2013; Lewin-Epstein et al., 2003). It remains unclear, however, to what extent attitudes towards newer welfare reforms are rooted in social justice beliefs as well.

After all, recent or planned reforms might not yet be sufficiently institutionalized for citizens to be socialized within their underlying conceptions of fairness (Raven et al., 2011). This might certainly be the case for basic income proposals, but also means-tested benefits and activation policies are still being experimented with in many different forms and with a variety of policy instruments (Eichhorst et al., 2008; Marx et al., 2016; Sainsbury & Morissens, 2002). Furthermore, while the architecture of new welfare policies is also built on normative justice ideals, this is less the case for their actual implementation. In practice, welfare policies often come with unintended side-effects that complicate the realization of their central redistributive goals. Furthermore, the heated public debates on welfare reforms often refer to a host of alternative solidarity principles and citizens seem to apply a variety of heuristics in formulating their opinions (Arni et al., 2013; Perkiö et al., 2019; Rossetti, Abts, et al., 2020; van Oorschot, 2002; Wiggan, 2012; Zimmermann et al., 2020).

This empirical study analyses to what extent support for welfare reforms - that are heavily contested and weakly institutionalized - is rooted in social justice beliefs. Concretely, we investigate *to what extent preferences for the principles of equality, equity and need explain support for means-tested benefits, activation policies and basic income schemes*. Shared conceptions of justice constitute the pre-eminent moral foundation of welfare attitudes and exploring this relationship hence enables to answer whether attitudes towards these policies have a strong or weak normative foundation (Mau, 2004; Sachweh, 2012; Taylor-Gooby et al., 2018). This study contributes to the literature for three reasons. First, we are able to evaluate the legitimacy and hence political feasibility of three prominent contemporary reforms that are founded on very different principles of welfare distribution. Second, related to this, the simultaneous investigation of attitudes towards these three crucial reforms provides novel insight into the diffuse or specific drivers of support for each of them. Finally, we contribute to the moral economy and policy feedback literature by testing whether their logics also apply to rather weakly institutionalized yet highly debated welfare policies. To realize this empirically, we analyse data from the CRONOS panel (that is linked to the European Social Survey data of round eight) by means of structural equation modelling.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. *CONTEMPORARY POLICY REFORMS: MEANS-TESTED BENEFITS, ACTIVATION POLICIES AND BASIC INCOME SCHEMES*

We distinguish three particularly politicized policy trends that each recalibrate the traditional social contract substantially. First, one can observe that means-tested benefits (that is, taking the financial resources of benefit claimants into account to grant welfare support) are being introduced for new target groups and on a wider scale (Borosch et al., 2016; Gugushvili & van Oorschot, 2020; van Oorschot, 2002). Means-tested benefits are implemented in many different forms, but the most important distinction is between benefits based on resource tests that restrict access to those in poverty and based on affluence tests that exclude the well-off (Sainsbury & Morissens, 2002). We focus particularly on the former, as discussions on the deservingness of the poor have generally been more salient and politicized than debates about the wealthy (Skilling & McLay, 2015). These types of means-tested benefits target low-income households and aim to offer poverty relief by implementing vertical redistribution (Marx et al., 2016). Although means-tested benefits are generally selective in nature and associated with a liberal welfare model, they could be combined with universal entitlements to realize effective redistribution (Gugushvili & van Oorschot, 2020; Marx et al., 2016). Yet, the practice of means-tested benefits is often criticized for demotivating the poor, obstructing social participation and creating a non take-up of social rights (van Oorschot, 2002).

Activation policies, as a second reform, set out to decrease welfare dependency by stimulating economic self-reliance and labour market participation (Borosch et al., 2016; Häusermann, 2006, 2012; van Berkel & Borghi, 2008). Usually two forms of activation policies are distinguished: enabling policies that focus on investments in human capital; and demanding activation policies that apply benefit cuts and sanctions to push people into employment (Bonoli, 2010; Eichhorst et al., 2008). Especially the latter are subject of intense political debates. Demanding activation is an umbrella term, as it includes a multitude of different measures, such as restrictions on the level and duration of benefits, sanctions for non-compliance and mandatory participation programs (Eichhorst et al., 2008). Demanding activation policies contain elements that appeal to a social insurance logic as well as to neoliberal discourses that individualise the causes and solutions for unemployment (Wiggan,

2012). While demanding activation policies do encourage people to leave unemployment, critics argue that they simultaneously tend to reduce the job quality and employment stability of those mobilized into paid work (Arni et al., 2013).

As a third policy reform, basic income schemes are gaining momentum among a wide audience of policy makers, politicians and academics. In its ideal-typical form a basic income refers to a periodic cash payment provided to all citizens on an individual basis without means-test or work requirements (Van Parijs & Vanderborght, 2017). Although basic income schemes have to date not been fully implemented, there has been a plethora of real-life experiments and a strong societal debate on whether or not its introduction is feasible as well as desirable (Widerquist, 2018). The debates on basic income schemes stretch beyond the universal and egalitarian objectives of this scheme and include questions of how they affect people's work ethic and to what extent they are effectively able to reduce poverty (Perkiö et al., 2019; Zimmermann et al., 2020). Indeed, there are many varieties of basic income proposals that deviate from the ideal-typical proposal (De Wispelaere & Stirton, 2004). A participation income, which is conditional on participation in socially appreciated activities and a targeted basic income, which excludes people with an income above a certain threshold, are just two examples of types of basic income that diverge from the ideal-type.

2.2. THE NORMATIVE FOUNDATIONS OF CONTEMPORARY WELFARE REFORMS: THE ROLE OF DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

The design of the three above-mentioned reforms is based on three distinct principles of distributive justice that guides the allocation of goods and services in the welfare state, namely equality, equity and need (Deutsch, 1975). While equality grants resources to all citizens without additional requirements, equity makes distribution dependent on contributions to the common good. On a societal level, the need principle entails a selective and liberal type of distribution that only allocates resources to deserving groups in need (Kittel, 2020). Since the principles of equality, equity and need provide the normative foundation of the three welfare reforms (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Ennsner-Jedenastik, 2018; Ervik et al., 2015; Gugushvili & van Oorschot, 2020; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013; Van Parijs & Vanderborght, 2017), the welfare attitude literature assumes that citizens' policy preferences tend to align -to a certain

degree- with the dominant moral principles embedded in institutional arrangements (Kumlin & Stadelmann-Steffen, 2014; Mau, 2004; Sachweh, 2012; Taylor-Gooby et al., 2018).

The moral economy and policy feedback literatures argue that institutions socialize citizens within normative frameworks and shared conceptions of social justice, which define desirable states of affairs and serve as a reference point in the formation of individual preferences (Mau, 2004; Sachweh, 2012; Taylor-Gooby et al., 2018). As welfare policies can function as norm-shaping institutions, individual attitudes are assumed to be structured by existing welfare arrangements and to align with the (distributive) logics inherent to policy designs. In the case of traditional welfare arrangements, this claim has been corroborated repeatedly (Andreß & Heien, 2001; Jaime-Castillo, 2013; Lewin-Epstein et al., 2003). However, it remains unclear whether this logic also applies to more recently expanded, less institutionalized welfare policies. Indeed, Raven and colleagues (2011) demonstrate that while policy feedback effects do occur for well-established welfare arrangements, relatively recent welfare proposals have not yet been sufficiently institutionalized to impact citizen's opinions.

In this chapter, we revisit the study of normative foundations of welfare reforms by investigating to what extent citizens' attitudes towards means-tested benefits, activation policies and basic income schemes are shaped by norms of (re)distributive justice. The three contemporary welfare reforms described in the previous section are each anchored on a distinct principle of social justice. On the one hand, one could hypothesize that the main underlying justice principle constitutes a solid normative foundation, in the sense that support for a policy reform is driven by the preference for the justice principle to which the reform refers. Yet, on the other hand, arguments exist that expect a weaker normative foundation. As the concrete operationalization and implementation of the reform measures are often quite diverse (De Wispelaere & Stirton, 2004; Eichhorst et al., 2008; Sainsbury & Morissens, 2002), it might impede the socialization within a single redistributive logic and provoke interpretations from a variety of perspectives. Furthermore, the normative anchoring of policy reforms among the general public could be obstructed by the unintended outcomes arising from their implementation and alternative solidarity principles surfacing in public discourses. In other words, weak institutionalization and political contestation of policy reforms could hinder the

crystallization of public opinion along the principles that form the bedrock of their moral foundation. Below, we apply this argumentation to the cases of means-tested benefits, activation policies and basic income schemes (see Table 7.1 for a summary of our expectations).

First, means-tested benefits are strongly based on the need principle, since these policies target those who are considered to be truly deserving by making the distribution of resources dependent on income or wealth (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Ennser-Jedenastik, 2018; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). However, weak institutionalization, variations in concrete implementation and political contestation might blur the exclusive link between preferences for the need principle and support for means-tested benefits. Critics of means-testing argue that it creates poverty traps, leads to larger non take-up of benefits and stigmatizes claimants, which are all counterproductive to helping those in need (van Oorschot, 2002). Advocates argue that this reform tries to reduce inequalities by implementing vertical distributive mechanisms. This might lead citizens who support egalitarian distributions to favour means-tested welfare as well (Gugushvili & van Oorschot, 2020). Preferences for the principle of equity are not likely to be linked to support for means-tested benefits, as this reform does not consider the previous contribution record of citizens, but only their current levels of need.

Second, activation policies rely most clearly on the principle of equity, as both value labour market participation and contributions to the common good (Béland & Cox, 2016; Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Ervik et al., 2015; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). Activation policies are rooted in the idea of 'justice as reciprocity', which is grounded on a conditional contract between citizens and state (Ervik et al., 2015). However, political proponents of demanding activation refer also to the principle of need to justify its implementation. Need-based distribution is selective in nature and encourages self-reliance, which connects closely to the political aims of activation policies (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Dwyer, 2000; Fossati, 2018). The principle of equality fits less closely for activation policies. Aspiring to make the allocation of resources dependent on strict behavioural requirements clashes with an egalitarian conception of universal rights (Watts & Fitzpatrick, 2018).

Last, basic income schemes relate most clearly to the principle of equality, as this universal and unconditional benefit is granted to everyone without requirements (Van Parijs & Vanderborght, 2017). Given that basic income is a radical manifestation of universalism (Birnbaum, 2012; Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002), egalitarian-minded individuals should be more likely to favour a basic income. Even though need generally equates with more selective welfare state distribution, a broader conception of need as a solidaristic responsibility to care for others is regularly called upon to defend a basic income (Rossetti, Roosma, et al., 2020). However, a basic income scheme is considerably more at odds with equity-based distribution as it violates logics of contribution and contradicts the idea of a work society that upholds the moral duty to work as a fundamental part of the social contract (Rossetti, Roosma, et al., 2020). Although some types of basic income proposals do appeal to logics of conditionality and selectivism (De Wispelaere & Stirton, 2004), its ideal-typical form is argued to undermine the central elements of equity.

Table 7.1. Expected relationships between distributive justice preferences and support for contemporary welfare reforms

	Equality	Equity	Need
Means-tested benefits	+	-	++
Activation policies	--	++	+
Basic income schemes	++	--	+

Note. ++ = strong positive relationship; + = positive relationship; -- = strong negative relationship; - = negative relationship

2.3. TRADITIONAL EXPLANATORY FRAMEWORKS: SELF-INTEREST AND IDEOLOGIES

Although we focus especially on the normative foundations of support for the three contemporary welfare reforms, we also control for the role of alternative frameworks explaining welfare attitudes. First, to explain why social groups hold particular welfare attitudes, self-interest theory argues that welfare policies and redistribution are supported by (potential) beneficiaries of social benefits and services (Jaeger, 2006b; Roosma et al., 2014). Cost-benefit calculating individuals are assumed to prefer policies that allow them to maximise their personal utility. Following this logic, vulnerable social groups could express more support for means-tested benefits that are solely targeted at those in need as well for basic income

schemes that provide an unconditional income for all citizens, while disfavoured demanding activation that constrains the level and duration of benefits (Gugushvili & van Oorschot, 2020; Rossetti, Roosma, et al., 2020; Vlandas, 2020). Yet, the relationship between the social structural indicators and preferences for policy reform measures is not always clear-cut. Lower social strata could for instance oppose means-tested benefits that facilitate further welfare backlashes and basic income proposals that are likely to replace existing unemployment benefit schemes, while accepting activation policies that seem to trigger economic self-reliance and overcome social stigma (Fossati, 2018; Kangas, 1995; Vlandas, 2020).

A second framework explains welfare preferences by looking at ideological outlooks rather than self-interested calculations. According to this approach, attitudes are driven by coherent systems of cultural and political motivations (Staerklé et al., 2012). The ideology approach assumes that policy preferences do not necessarily reflect material interests, but are embedded in a broader set of political norms (Jaeger, 2006b). In empirical research, political left-right placement is often used as a broad ideological indicator. This perspective expects left-wing individuals to be more in favour of basic income schemes, while right-leaning individuals should be prone to support activation policies and means-tested benefits, as they rely on conditional and selective solidarity notions that are more strongly internalized by the political right (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; van Oorschot, 2006). However, alternative patterns could possibly emerge as well. Support for the introduction of a basic income is, for instance, heavily contested among certain segments of the political left and these schemes equally appeal to right-wing ideals, such as efficiency and individual freedom (Chrisp & Martinelli, 2019; Schwander & Vlandas, 2020). Activation policies that promote social investment and re-integration programs might similarly be supported by leftist segments and means-tested benefits can also appeal to progressive ideas by trying to alleviate poverty (Gugushvili & van Oorschot, 2020; Häusermann, 2012).

3. DATA AND METHOD

3.1. DATA

This chapter uses data from the Cross-National Online Survey (CRONOS) panel, which is an online probability panel constructed as a follow-up of the European Social Survey (ESS) round

eight (2016/2017). ESS consists of probability-based samples of the resident population of 15 years and older that are interviewed by means of face-to-face surveys. After completing the interview of the ESS, respondents from Estonia (EE), United Kingdom (UK) and Slovenia (SI) that are 18 or older were invited to participate in six online surveys spread out over a time period of twelve months. In this chapter, data from the third wave of CRONOS is used, which is linked to the data from the main questionnaire of the ESS round eight. Of the 5285 respondents (EE = 2019; UK = 1959; SI = 1307) that were interviewed in the face-to-face stage of ESS, 2437 respondents (EE = 806; UK = 926; SI = 705) participated in CRONOS. As the inquiry of this study is not comparative, our analyses are conducted on the pooled dataset (yet taking country fixed effects into account). Design weights were applied in the analyses to control for unequal probabilities of selection in the sampling design.

3.2. INDICATORS

3.2.1. DEPENDENT VARIABLES

This study includes three dependent variables, which were all included in the face-to-face ESS survey (full sample): support for means-tested benefits, activation policies and basic income schemes. A preference for means-tested benefits is operationalized by the following single item: "Would you be against or in favour of the government providing social benefits and services only for people with the lowest incomes, while people with middle and higher incomes are responsible for themselves?". Answer are administered on a four-point scale, ranging from "Strongly against" to "Strongly in favour".

Support for activation policies is measured by three items, which ask what should happen to the unemployment benefit of a benefit claimant who turns down a job because it pays a lot less than they earned previously, who turns down a job because it needs a much lower level of education or who refuses to regularly carry out unpaid work in return for unemployment benefit. The four answer categories range from "This person should lose all their unemployment benefit" to "This person should be able to keep all their unemployment benefit" and are reversed so that higher scores refer to more support for activation measures. These questions were part of a survey experiment, in which respondents were randomly assigned to four conditions wherein the characteristics of the benefit claimant varied

("Someone", "Someone in their 50s", "Someone aged 20-25" and "A single parent with a 3-year old child"). Since the main analytical interest is not in differences across these categories, assignment to these experimental conditions is included as a control variable in the structural model. Measurement invariance is tested for this latent concept across the three countries (see Table A6 in Appendix). As the metric invariant model shows good fit and strong factor loadings in each of these countries (see Table A7 in Appendix), factor scores for this model are saved and included in the final regression model.

Finally, support for basic income schemes is measured by asking respondents to what extent they support implementing a basic income that has the following characteristics: a monthly income granted by the government, which replaces many other social benefits, guarantees a minimum standard of living, gives everyone the same amount regardless of whether or not they are working, lets people keep the money they earn from other sources and is paid by taxes. Answers are registered on a four-point scale, ranging from "Strongly against" to "Strongly in favour".

Table 7.2 provides descriptive statistics for support for each of the reforms. On average each of these welfare reforms receives a moderately high and very similar degree of public support, although the standard deviations reveal slightly larger differences in the level of variation. While the variation in preferences for means-tested benefits and basic income schemes is relatively similar, the polarization in opinions appears to be largest for the implementation of benefit sanctions. The correlations indicate that attitudes towards these welfare reforms are hardly related. There are very weak, yet significant, positive correlations between support for means-tested benefits and support for both activation policies ($r = 0.05$) and basic income schemes ($r = 0.04$), whereas the association between attitudes towards activation and a basic income is insignificant and negative ($r = -0.03$). This indicates that people do not really seem to formulate their attitudes towards these reforms in a very encompassing way, but rather in isolation from each other.

Table 7.2. Descriptive statistics for attitudes towards means-tested benefits, activation policies and basic income schemes on the pooled dataset

	Means-tested benefits	Activation policies¹⁵	Basic income
Mean	2.400	2.408	2.490
Standard deviation	0.759	0.945	0.750
N	5081	4917	4979
Correlation activation	0.047	1.000	-
Correlation basic income	0.043	-0.027	1.000

3.2.2. INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Preferences for the distributive justice principles of equality, equity and need are each measured by a single item on a five-point agree-disagree answer scales and are only included in the CRONOS sample, stemming from the BSJO scale (Hülle et al., 2017). Although the CRONOS sample includes two questions per distributive justice principle, assessments of measurement quality indicate that these items cannot be integrated into single and unambiguous latent concepts (see Chapter 2). As an alternative, single items are chosen that provide the clearest indicator of each distributive principle. For equality, respondents are asked whether they believe that “For a society to be fair, differences in people’s standard of living should be small”. For equity, the item states that “A society is fair when hard-working people earn more than others” and for need it is formulated as follows “A society is fair when people who look after their children or their relatives in need of care receive special support and financial benefits”. Scores are reversed so that higher values point to more support for each of these principles.

In addition, the social structure and left-right position are used as explanatory variables. All of these variables were included in the full sample of ESS round eight. The social structure is operationalized by education, occupation and subjective income. Three educational categories

¹⁵ To calculate the mean of activation policies, we average the scores across the experimental conditions. No distinction is hence made in this descriptive overview between the various categories of benefit claimants that are mentioned in the question wording.

are created: no to lower secondary education, higher secondary education (reference category) and tertiary education. On the basis of the Erikson-Goldthorpe-Portocarero scheme (Ganzeboom & Treiman, 1996), occupation is divided into six categories: the service class, white collar workers, blue collar workers (reference category), the self-employed, the unemployed and the retired and other non-actives. To limit the number of missing values, income is measured on a subjective rating scale. We differentiate between the following three income categories: living comfortable on present income (reference category), coping on present income and finding it (very) difficult on present income. Political ideology is measured as left-right placement, which is operationalized by a single item on an eleven-point scale (0 = left; 10 = right). Gender (female = reference category), country (UK; Slovenia; Estonia = reference category) and age are included as control variables. Descriptive statistics for all the study variables per country are displayed in Table A8 in Appendix.

3.3. STATISTICAL MODELLING

Because of the considerable drop-out between the face-to-face survey and wave 3 of CRONOS, information for the distributive justice items is missing for 53.9% of the ESS respondents. Instead of conducting complete case analysis (that assumes that the missingness is completely at random), we use multiple imputation (MI) techniques. Multiple imputation encompasses replacing the missing values by multiple draws from a distribution conditional on the known information, thereby creating multiple datasets. Despite the relatively high share of missing values for the justice preferences, correctly conducting MI is still superior to complete case analysis, which has more stringent missing data assumptions, can result in biased estimates and reduces power substantially (Azur et al., 2011; Graham, 2009).¹⁶ After the

¹⁶ In particular, MI by chained equations is implemented, which models the variables with missing data conditional on other variables in the data by means of regression models. In contrast to other imputation techniques, the chained equations approach allows to include different types of variables without assuming that all of them follow the same statistical distribution (e.g., joint normal distribution) (Azur et al., 2011). To reduce bias, we include all variables in the imputation procedure that are used in the subsequent analysis as well auxiliary variables that are predictive of missingness or are correlated with variables analysed in the final model (Azur et al., 2011; Collins et al., 2001; Graham, 2009). Besides the study variables, the following auxiliary variables are included: political interest, political trust, political powerlessness, social trust, absence from voting in last election, religiosity, beliefs on procedural justice, beliefs on procedural injustice, belief in meritocracy, the distributive justice items not included in the final model, beliefs in a just world and four questions filled in by the interviewer about the respondent's behaviour (e.g., motivation and understanding). Rather than using generalized recommendations about

imputation stage, structural equation modelling (SEM) was applied across all of the imputed datasets to obtain averaged estimates of regression coefficients. We specifically apply SEM, to estimate regression coefficients on support for all three welfare reforms simultaneously. Model fit is nearly perfect ($df = 6$; $RMSEA = 0.000$; $CFI = 1.000$; $TLI = 1.089$; $SRMR = 0.002$), which is because the model is almost entirely saturated due to a lack of the inclusion of a measurement model (support for activation is saved through factor scores).

4. RESULTS

Table 7.3 displays the results from the structural equation model that predicts support for means-tested benefits, activation policies and basic income schemes. The regression coefficients are based on standardization of the dependent variable and the metric independent variables. The dummy variables are not standardized, so that these parameters refer to the number of standard deviations a group differs from the reference category.

the number of datasets that should be imputed, the ideal number of imputations was calculated by a two-stage procedure relying on a quadratic rule (von Hippel, 2020). Based on the data at hand, 260 imputed datasets were concluded as being more than sufficient.

Table 7.3. Standardized regression coefficients for a structural equation model averaged over the imputed datasets (N = 4392)

	Means-tested benefits	Activation policies¹⁷	Basic income schemes
<i>Social justice principles</i>			
Equality	0.041	-0.054*	0.091***
Equity	0.005	0.102***	-0.067**
Need	0.010	-0.065*	0.079**
<i>Social structure & ideology</i>			
Gender			
Female (ref.)			
Male	0.000	-0.008	0.046
Age	0.087***	0.052**	-0.093***
Education			
Lower (secondary)	0.080	0.064	0.041
Higher secondary (ref.)			
Tertiary	-0.117**	-0.117**	-0.050
Subjective income			
Comfortable (ref.)			
Coping	0.035	0.008	0.054
(Very) difficult	0.124*	-0.199***	0.137*
Occupation			
Service	0.006	-0.181*	-0.042
Blue collar (ref.)			
White collar	-0.139**	-0.063	0.068
Self-employed	-0.033	-0.081	0.059
Unemployed	0.007	-0.214*	0.095

¹⁷ For support for activation policies, the experimental conditions of the survey question were included as covariates. However, as support for means-tested benefits and basic income schemes were not regressed on these conditions and they do not constitute the primary research interest of this chapter, they have been omitted from the table.

Retired/non-active	0.054	-0.072	0.066
Country			
Estonia (ref.)			
United Kingdom	0.140***	-0.026	0.105*
Slovenia	-0.113*	-0.030	0.395***
Left-right placement	0.042*	0.084***	-0.061***
R²	0.043	0.057	0.069

Note. * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$;

Table 7.3 shows, to begin with, how the distributive justice preferences relate to support for the three welfare reforms, which enables to analyse their normative foundations. Contrary to our expectations, preferences for equality, equity and need do not have a significant impact on public support for means-tested benefits. Although the principle of need clearly structures the ideal-typical design of this reform (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Ennsner-Jedenastik, 2018; Gugushvili & van Oorschot, 2020), citizens do not appear to base their opinions on its underlying redistributive logic. This might be in part related to the lack of full institutionalization of this reform, which obstructs a strong socialization within the principle structuring its blueprint (Raven et al., 2011). In addition, the ineffective realization of the outcomes set out by the need principle in terms of guaranteeing better well-being for those in need (van Oorschot, 2002), might lead people away from bearing this normative idea in mind when formulating their opinions. Despite the finding of previous research that means-tested benefits are also defended from an egalitarian point of view (Gugushvili & van Oorschot, 2020), a preference for the principle of equality does not stimulate support for this welfare reform. Preferences for equity do not explain why people accept or reject means-tested benefits either. Given these statistically insignificant coefficients and the low explained variance, attitudes for means-tested benefits appear to be only limitedly structured by the normative principles.

As expected, activation policies appeal to a logic of reciprocity that it is built into the design of this policy (Ervik et al., 2015). The regression coefficient for equity is significant but weak in strength ($b = 0.10$), which indicates that the main redistributive logic on which demanding activation is founded only limitedly forms attitudes towards this welfare reform. A preference

for the principle of equality, in contrast, significantly lowers support for work obligations for the unemployed ($b = -0.05$). Although this coefficient is also relatively small, the relationship is as anticipated and is conform the observation that support for work obligations and for broad government redistribution are generally negatively associated (Laenen & Meuleman, 2018). While a preference for need-based distribution has a significant impact, the coefficient is, contrary to what was expected, negative ($b = -0.07$). Despite the strong neoliberal elements in the activation discourse (Wiggan, 2012) and the differentiation between deserving and undeserving recipients that characterizes both need-based distribution and demanding activation (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Dwyer, 2000; Fossati, 2018), opinions on this welfare reform are negatively and only weakly related to the need principle. The combination of being implemented in many different forms that often deviate from the core distributive principle underlying its design and of being surrounded by varying political interpretations (Eichhorst et al., 2008; Wiggan, 2012), appears to make support for activation only limitedly related to the normative principles of social justice.

Consistent with our expectation, support for a basic income scheme is especially stimulated by a preference for the equality principle ($b = 0.09$). Yet, once more, the relationship is not necessarily substantial in strength, which indicates that the foundation of the ideal-typical basic income on a radical form of freedom and equality not fully consolidates into a normative basis for its public support (Van Parijs & Vanderborght, 2017). The relationship with equity is, as anticipated, negative ($b = 0.07$), which might stem from the criticism on the unconditional nature of basic income schemes that does not consider previous contribution records. Although there are types of basic incomes that do rely more strongly on conditionality and heuristics of reciprocity also permeate discussions on the introduction of this proposal (De Wispelaere & Stirton, 2004; Perkiö et al., 2019; Zimmermann et al., 2020), support for an ideal-typical basic income is negatively, yet weakly, associated with a preference for equity-based distribution. Last, the regression coefficient of the need principle is small and positive ($b = 0.08$), indicating that basic income schemes not only connect to egalitarian values, but are also argued by its proponents to function as effective means to help those in need (Birnbaum, 2012). All of the relationships are relatively weak, which is not surprising for a reform type that

has not been institutionalized at all and where citizens are exposed to a lot of varying interpretations of its design.

Next we shift attention to the regression coefficients of the social structural variables on support for each of the policy reforms, as controls. For means-tested benefits, older respondents and those having difficulties on their present income express more support, while respondents with tertiary education and white-collar workers are significantly less in favour of this reform than those with higher secondary education and blue-collar workers, respectively. These findings are in line with the self-interest thesis, as vulnerable groups in more precarious positions, such as the elderly and low-income individuals, generally have a stronger interest in targeted welfare directed at those with insufficient financial resources (Gugushvili & van Oorschot, 2020). In addition, while older respondents express more support for activation policies, those in the highest educational category, individuals who have difficulties on their present income and both the service class and the unemployed are significantly less in favour of benefit sanctions and work obligations. Although the lower support for activating measures of low-income groups and the unemployed are conform their self-interest (Fossati, 2018), the higher popularity among older respondents and those who have not completed tertiary education contradicts this thesis. However, the larger support among those who have not completed tertiary education might be related to their stronger authoritarian dispositions and support for a work ethic (Rossetti, Abts, et al., 2020). For basic income schemes only age and income have a significant impact: younger respondents and those having difficulties on their present income express more support for the introduction of unconditional and universal social protection. The relationship with income is in line with self-interest theory, but the higher support of younger respondents is more ambivalent. The country parameters indicate that respondents from the United Kingdom are more willing to implement means-tested benefits and basic income schemes and Slovenian individuals are more supportive of basic income schemes and less in favour of means-tested benefits than Estonian respondents.

Political ideology has a significant, yet moderate, impact on support for each of the policy reforms. Right-wing individuals express more support for means-tested benefits and activation policies, while left-wing individuals are more in favour of a basic income. These results are in

line with the predominant expectations, as means-tested benefits and activation policies rely on more conditional and selective notions of solidarity that especially appeal to the political right and basic income schemes traditionally find most support among the left (Chrisp & Martinelli, 2019; Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Fossati, 2018; Rossetti, Abts, et al., 2020; van Oorschot, 2006; Vlandas, 2020).

5. CONCLUSION

Means-tested benefits, activation policies and basic income schemes are increasingly debated and put forward as viable welfare reforms. The ideal-typical design of each of these reforms relies on a different redistributive logic and hence on one of the distributive justice principles of equality, equity and need. According to the moral economy and policy feedback literatures, citizens are socialized within these normative principles and use them as motivational reference points in formulating their opinions. However, as these proposals are not yet fully institutionalized and their normative roots is often contested in their implementations as well as discourses, the general public might not be as strongly socialized within these logics of distributive justice and might interpret these reforms differently. As a result, this chapter examined the normative foundations of contemporary welfare reforms by considering the impact of preferences for equality, equity and need on support for means-tested benefits, activation policies and basic income schemes. We applied structural equation modelling on data from the online CRONOS panel that is linked to round eight of the European Social Survey.

Results indicated that for means-tested benefits none of the distributive justice principles exert a significant influence. In spite of the strong reliance of the policy design of means-tested benefits on the need-principle (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Ennser-Jedenastik, 2018; Gugushvili & van Oorschot, 2020), its public opinion is not grounded on this justice ideal. Support for activation policies was slightly higher among those preferring the principle of equity to organise the allocation of public resources. Yet the weak relationship indicates that activation policies do not necessarily strongly build upon the underlying justice conception that values contributions to the common good and puts forward a quid-pro-quo welfare model (Ervik & Kildal, 2015). Although we also anticipated that the principle of need would

stimulate support for the introduction of work obligations and benefit sanctions, preferences for need-based as well as equality-based distribution lowered support for activation policies. For basic income schemes, all relationships were as expected, as equality and need significantly strengthened positive opinions on basic income proposals, while a preference for equity weakened its popularity. Yet as for the other welfare reforms, the relationships with the justice principles were not very strong, which indicates that public support for a basic income only limitedly builds on the normative principles inherent to its institutional blueprint. In addition to the justice preferences, self-interest and ideology had a significant, yet moderate, impact on attitudes towards each of these policy reforms.

All in all, public opinion on means-tested benefits, activation policies and basic income schemes is not strongly crystallized according to social structural, ideological or distributive dividing lines. Indeed, debates on these new types of policy reforms do not only seem to partly transcend traditional class coalitions and partisan alliances (Häusermann, 2006; Häusermann et al., 2020), but also to not be fully based on the classical organizing principles of the welfare state (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002). Each of the reform types are not fully institutionalized yet, are debated from a whole array of perspectives and are interpreted with reference to many different heuristics (Arni et al., 2013; Perkiö et al., 2019; Rossetti, Roosma, et al., 2020; van Oorschot, 2002; Wiggan, 2012; Zimmermann et al., 2020), which might explain why these attitudes are not strongly consolidated according to the normative foundations of their ideal-typical design. As the moral economy and policy feedback arguments seem to only limitedly offer an explanation for why these reforms are supported, future research would hence benefit from a further dissection of the central mechanisms driving preferences for each of these proposals.

Chapter 8

General conclusion and discussion

1. GENERAL CONCLUSION

As laid out at the start of this dissertation, processes of individualization and globalization altered not only the nature of social risks and problems, but also the types of answers provided by the welfare state. In this context, analysing preferences for the distributive justice principles of equality (i.e., equal resources for all), equity (i.e., resources in relation to contributions) and need (i.e., resources for those most in need) becomes crucial to interpret public responses to the question of “who should get what and why” (van Oorschot, 2000). As a result, this dissertation provides a renewed understanding of public opinion on the distributive justice principles by pursuing three objectives that are realized by means of six empirical chapters. First, a domain-specific and differentiated account of justice preferences is explored by studying how support for these principles depends on the welfare benefit under consideration and are combined in internally consistent belief systems. Second, the structuring forces behind preferences for the three principles are assessed through linking them to the social positions as well as ideology on the individual-level and to the institutional context on the country-level. Last, this dissertation aims to pin down the consequences of justice ideals, by investigating whether they explain support for more concrete welfare reforms. In this final chapter, the main findings and contributions in relation to these objectives are summarized. Moreover, the implications, limitations and avenues for future research are discussed.

2. WHAT TO CONCLUDE? THE MAIN FINDINGS

2.1. DOMAIN-SPECIFIC AND DIFFERENTIATED PREFERENCES

As a first objective, this dissertation explores whether preferences for equality, equity and need vary when different welfare domains or types of distributions are being judged. Previous research mainly assumes that citizens prefer a single abstract principle universally, without applying justice ideals differently in varying contexts or without differentiating between distributions that address distinct social risks (Aalberg, 2003; Arts & Gelissen, 2001; D’Anjou et al., 1995; Marshall et al., 1999). Although normative theory recognizes that the applicability, legitimacy and fairness of social justice principles rely heavily on the context and socially valued resources being allocated (Carens, 2000; Elster, 1992; Miller, 1999; Walzer, 1983), public opinion studies insufficiently explore whether this translates to public preferences regarding the three foundational principles of welfare state organization (Reeskens & van Oorschot,

2013; Sachweh, 2016). The recognition of context-dependency or domain-specificity is nevertheless crucial to understand the resurgence of the fundamental social question and the legitimacy of welfare distributions, as distinct dilemmas and debates arise depending on the target group, social risk and hence benefit scheme being considered.

The results of this dissertation demonstrate that justice preferences are in fact fundamentally domain-specific and that this should be considered when analysing which types of welfare distributions are considered most legitimate. Chapter 3 illustrates that the general public supports equality, equity and need to different extents when applying them to the distributions of health care, pensions and unemployment benefits. Although equality is most preferred to govern the allocation of each of them, the principles are still balanced differently depending on the welfare domain, which illustrates their domain-specificity. In particular, the proportions of support for each of the principles differ greatly between the varying welfare benefits that are connected to distinct social risks with varying characteristics. While an overwhelming majority opts for equality for the organization of health care, support for equity is considerably more prevalent for pensions as well as unemployment benefits. The principle of need is moderately popular only to govern the allocation of unemployment benefits and is limitedly supported for the other two domains. This domain-specificity is further proved in Chapter 4, where a further distinction is made between justice preferences governing the access as well as level of unemployment benefits and pensions. While equality is again most broadly supported to govern the access of both pensions and unemployment benefits, equity is most popular to determine the level of pensions and equality is preferred for the level of unemployment benefits. However, preferences for the three principles differ not only between this labour market-related risk that is specific to people's position in the work force (i.e., unemployment) and life course-related risk that is intrinsic to life itself (i.e., retirement), the gap between preferences on the access versus level also varies across both types of benefits. For pensions there is a clear divide between preferences for equality, equity and need structuring their access versus the level, while for unemployment benefits the differences are far less outspoken.

Yet, besides zooming in on the domain-specificity of justice preferences, the dissertation aims to comprehend to what extent citizens combine preferences for multiple principles at once in underlying belief systems. Connected to the assumption that principles cannot be applied differently across distributive scenarios, previous research in a single breath presumes that citizens prefer a single principle instead of integrating support for multiple justice ideals at once (Aalberg, 2003; Arts & Gelissen, 2001; D'Anjou et al., 1995; Marshall et al., 1999; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). This approach is highly unrealistic, as it disregards the internal heterogeneity in justice preferences by ignoring that the public regularly builds upon multiple ideals simultaneously (Franke & Simonson, 2018; Leventhal, 1980; Scott et al., 2001). As a result, a systematic investigation of which groups or belief systems exist that combine justice ideas in mutually distinct ways is carried out to better understand the full complexity and range of preferences for the three principles in turbulent and changing institutional climates. Welfare states themselves often integrate multiple principles within their distributions and allocation schemes, as social democratic welfare states for instance often also include income-related elements in granting benefits (cf., need) and liberal regimes regularly rely on conditional aspects, such as work requirements, to acquire benefits as well (cf., equity) (Sachweh, 2016). In this sense, to determine what types of welfare systems are considered just, it is also relevant to interpret belief systems building on manifold justice norms at once.

Two empirical chapters of this dissertation illustrate exactly that people are capable of and do balance different principles simultaneously, in varying ways. Chapter 3 demonstrates that citizens do so across welfare domains and hence combine principles depending on the context or situation at hand. In particular, three groups of belief systems are retrieved: one that consistently only prefers equality in governing the distribution health care, pensions and unemployment benefits, and two that balance equality in health care with equity or need in the other two domains. These findings indicate that while there are indeed individuals who seem to only prefer a single principle to govern various welfare distributions, there is a considerable representation of citizens who are more selective and differentiating in which principles they consider to be fair. Similarly, in Chapter 5 it becomes apparent that apart from applying multiple distributive ideas across concrete distributive contexts, more than one principle is regularly integrated in underlying belief systems on a more abstract level that deal

with the distribution of income and resources in society as a whole instead of for a specific benefit scheme. While there is one belief system that strongly supports only equity out of the three principles, three other ones exist that combine support for two or even all three principles simultaneously. As a result, both on a more applied and an abstract level, people can prefer a single principle, but also certainly balance various justice ideals at the same time.

2.2. EXPLANATIONS OF JUSTICE PREFERENCES

2.2.1. INDIVIDUAL EXPLANATIONS: SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND IDEOLOGY

Besides dissecting this domain-specificity and differentiated account of justice preferences, cleavages along which differences in justice opinions crystalize are explored as a second objective. Although in the welfare attitudes literature there is a strong focus on the individual determinants structuring public opinions (Jaeger, 2006b; van Oorschot, 2006), very little insight has been provided in the structuring forces behind preferences for equality, equity and need. Even though explanatory accounts are crucial to understand justice ideals besides descriptive and normative approaches (Elster, 1995), they have been underdeveloped. To answer to this shortcoming, this dissertation evaluates the role of two classical frameworks that have been used extensively to explain attitudes towards welfare provisions: self-interest and ideology (Jaeger, 2006b, 2008; Kangas, 1997; Staerklé et al., 2012; van Oorschot, 2006). In doing so, innovative information is provided on which divides exist in current welfare debates and which camps are radically opposed or united in their views on the re-organization of the allocation of public resources.

To begin with, the self-interest framework assumes that people base their opinions on rational cost-benefit calculations and support systems that maximise their own material interests. To test this in the case of distributive justice preferences, social structural characteristics are linked to support for the different types of welfare distributions. Chapters 3 and 5 connect the social structure to the underlying interconnected belief systems that are retrieved, and a relatively limited explanatory role of these characteristics is uncovered. Although the retrieved patterns are largely in line with self-interest, whereby individuals in more precarious positions are more likely to adhere to belief systems integrating higher support for equality and need and advantaged groups tend to support beliefs based on a strongly equity-oriented rhetoric, all in

all the explanatory power is moderate. Instead of linking the social structure to belief systems that encompass combinations of preferences for the three principles, Chapters 2 and 4 study self-interest based explanations for support for each of the principles separately (i.e., not in combination to each other). Also here, the justice preferences are not very strongly stratified, which shows that social positions only moderately inform people's judgements. This is largely in line with the broader welfare state attitudes literature, which indicates that self-interest is not fully capable of explaining public opinions (e.g., Gallego & Marx, 2017; van Oorschot et al., 2012). Yet, it does become apparent that out of the three principles support for equality is especially socially structured, while for equity and need relationships are more ambiguous. Potentially, the abstract and encompassing nature of justice preferences where personal stakes are less transparent than for concrete social policies or benefit schemes, provides legitimation for why self-interest in itself is insufficient to understand the popularity of equality, equity and need.

The ideology thesis, as a second framework, assumes that preferences are embedded in broader political and moral dispositions that are more general and go beyond redistributive issues. In this sense, justice ideals are not structured solely by personal interests, but are part of more encompassing beliefs on the desired functioning of society that provide a lens through which reality is perceived and ascribed meaning to. The findings from Chapter 3 indicate that justice preferences are indeed strongly embedded in ideological dispositions. Left-right placement, authoritarianism, economic liberalism and utilitarian individualism all relate to these belief systems. This finding illustrates that a more refined approach to measuring ideology that distinguishes various dimensions is crucial to understand the dispositions on which justice preferences are grounded. That each of these ideological beliefs relate to social justice preferences indicates that they are not only economic in nature, but also rely on more cultural conceptions (Achterberg & Houtman, 2009). This is also corroborated in Chapter 4, where besides left-right placement, justice preferences both in the access and level of pensions and unemployment benefits are rooted in authoritarianism as a cultural ideological dimension. Although only political ideology is included in Chapters 2 and 5, it becomes evident also here that justice preferences are embedded in broader ideological worldviews.

2.2.2. COUNTRY PREDICTORS: INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

On a higher level, to understand why the popularity of the three principles diverges across countries, this dissertation aims to answer whether these differences mirror distinct institutional designs across countries. The foundation of the welfare regimes or types of welfare states on each of the three principles leads to the expectation that citizens support the predominant organizing standard within their own social security system (Clasen & van Oorschot, 2002; Esping-Andersen, 1990). According to normative institutionalism and moral economy literatures people are indeed socialized within normative frameworks that are put forward by institutions, after which they internalise these norms so that personal preferences start to conform to the institutional status quo (Kumlin & Stadelmann-Steffen, 2014; Mau, 2003, 2004; Rothstein, 1998; Svallfors, 2006; Taylor-Gooby et al., 2018). However, to test this, previous research has mainly imposed rigid welfare regime typologies on public preferences in order to assess whether justice preferences follow institutional contexts. In exploring the role of institutions and policy feedback effects, this dissertation opts for a more open-ended approach that does not impose overlap between regimes and public preferences, as is usually done. Instead, it allows to assess whether the representation of justice belief systems naturally clusters geographically around various types of welfare states or whether different patterns emerge along alternative contextual dividing lines.

The results of Chapter 5 indicate that there is relatively little overlap between institutional contexts on each of the principles and justice preferences. The representation of the uncovered belief systems does not cluster naturally around the welfare regime typology or types of welfare states, which is in line with the mixed evidence and relatively thin link uncovered between institutions and preferences in the welfare attitudes literature (Jaeger, 2009; Jordan, 2013; Kumlin & Stadelmann-Steffen, 2014; Svallfors, 2012). The findings of the chapter indicate that a number of countries with very distinct organization of their social security that are grounded on dissimilar justice norms still share an equivalent prevalence of justice belief systems, which points to a limited mirroring of public preferences according to the justice norms built into institutional blueprints. Instead, the beliefs seem to be organized geographically, where divisions between North-Western, South-Eastern (i.e., Mediterranean and several Eastern-European countries) and Central-Eastern (i.e., mostly the Visegrád

countries) Europe exist. While in North-Western Europe there is especially high support for combinations of equity and need, the other two regions are characterized by high support for all principles simultaneously and strong support for equity as the only justice principle, respectively. This points to the existence of more cultural divisions in justice preferences instead of institutional cleavages according to the welfare regimes. The weak connection between welfare systems and justice beliefs could nevertheless also be related to the macro-level of these institutions, which could be too encompassing for citizens to pick up on norms from. Although this is not tested in this dissertation, it is plausible that policy feedback instead occurs more strongly on a meso-level or in relation to the normative principles embedded in particular social policies (Laenen, 2018).

2.3. CONSEQUENCES OF JUSTICE PREFERENCES

As a last objective, the consequences of justice preferences for more specific policy attitudes are analysed. Although scholars recognize that justice attitudes serve as social forces that shape individual behaviours and eventually even impact economic, political and social structures (Liebig & Sauer, 2016), empirical research on justice as an explanatory framework in itself is insufficiently developed. While some studies do illustrate that justice or solidarity principles structure welfare opinions (Andreß & Heien, 2001; Jaime-Castillo, 2013; Lewin-Epstein et al., 2003), they mainly focus on traditional social policy domains where the establishment and institutionalization of the justice principles is evident and long-standing. Yet, the persistence of justice norms in opinions is particularly relevant in light of contemporary welfare debates on retrenching and redesigning existing schemes. Here the question arises whether people still use these normative ideas as motivational pillars in formulating and expressing their thoughts on contemporary reforms and policies. In this regard, throughout various empirical chapters, the consequences of justice preferences for attitudes towards renewed welfare reforms are studied in order to better capture the centrality of distributive justice in topical discussions on how rights and responsibilities should be balanced as well as on how scarce resources should be allocated.

Chapter 6 of this dissertation links justice preferences as well as unemployment attributions to support for demanding active labour market policies (ALMPs), as these dimensions

operationalize the ideological pillars of the underlying policy paradigm of activation measures. The empirical findings show that besides individual blaming perspectives, support for ALMPs is closely connected to support for the principles of equity and need. This illustrates the predictive role of justice preferences also in opinions on a more contemporary welfare reform. Yet, instead of only relating to the principle of equity on which the policy design of ALMPs is most clearly grounded, the need principle surfaces most strongly in these attitudes towards activation. Opinions are hence also structured by other distributive norms that surface regularly in the discourse surrounding activation, instead of only by the principle inherent to its policy design. Chapter 7 further explores this by linking preferences for abstract conceptualizations of equality, equity and need to support for three contemporary welfare reforms: demanding ALMPS, basic income schemes and means-tested benefits. Although each of the principles are embedded in the policy design of one of these reforms, they might not yet be sufficiently institutionalized and too strongly contested in discourses as well as their implementation for citizens to have justice ideals in mind when formulating their opinions towards these policies. Results indicate that the three principles moderately shape support for demanding ALMPs and basic income schemes, but bear no relationship to attitudes towards means-tested benefits. Overall, however, the results indicate that the abstract justice principles only limitedly explain support for these contemporary welfare reforms that seem to lack a clear normative crystallization.

3. WHAT TO LEARN FROM IT? THE RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF JUSTICE PREFERENCES

This dissertation shows that the principles of distributive justice are central to contemporary welfare debates in the recalibration of contemporary social security systems. Essentially, justice principles can be seen as types of values that refer to “shared conceptions of the desirable” (Liebig & Sauer, 2016; Van Deth & Scarbrough, 1995, p. 28), which are domain-specific, differentiated, socially as well as ideologically structured and predictive (to a certain extent) of more specific policy attitudes. Haller (2002) distinguishes three types of values with different levels of abstractions which are useful to understand the level at which justice principles come in: universal, societal and situational values. While universal values (highest abstraction) comprise the most basic human values that are accepted across civilizations and situational

values (lowest abstraction) refer to attitudes towards social behaviour in concrete circumstances, societal values (in-between abstraction) imply more applied values that are valid in a specific societal context but are still shared by larger populations.

Justice principles are usually treated as types of universal values functioning on the same level of abstraction as human values, which are broadly shared across contexts. Most public opinion studies for instance ask citizens about their justice preferences for the distribution of income and wealth in society as a whole (e.g., Aalberg, 2003; Arts & Gelissen, 2001; Hülle et al., 2017), which is of course very generalized and abstract for citizens to grasp. Instead this dissertation shows that justice principles are better categorized as types of societal values that are valid in particular societal contexts and shared by various segments of the population (Haller, 2002; Jo, 2011). This does not imply that the principles are only relevant in highly specific circumstances, but merely that they are weighed and balanced in varying ways depending on context (Konow, 2001). However, this raises the question: Does future research require a fundamental re-identification of the level of abstraction at which justice principles occur to better understand their applicability, determinants and consequences? On the basis of the results of this dissertation, a number of arguments in favour of an affirmative response to this question can be provided.

To begin with, we illustrate that measuring preferences for the justice principles in too universal terms is challenging in itself. Defining support for each of the principles in relation to opinions on aggregate societal distributions led to measurement issues, probably due to conceptual ambiguity and fluidity. This is most evident for the need principle that is so broadly defined in terms of providing basic social provisions for everyone that it is intricate to distinguish sufficiently from the other two justice ideals. Instead when conceptualizing need in a welfare context, it refers to a clearly distinct and residual way of distributing resources (Kittel, 2020). In this sense, the justice principles could be difficult to grasp by the general public when defined so universally and encompassing, which translates into issues in designing indicators that accurately capture preferences for equality, equity and need. Although this is not tested directly in the dissertation, people's opinions on governing principles for concrete types of distributions could be much easier to measure and interpret.

A further defence of justice principles as types of societal values is provided by the variation of preferences across welfare domains, which illustrates that they are indeed not necessarily universal but assessed in light of the distribution at hand (Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). Not only does the weight of the different justice principles vary across benefits that cover distinct social risks, people also combine different principles across these welfare domains. Although Chapter 5 illustrates that the public is also capable of combining abstract justice norms that are not applied to particular welfare domains and integrating them into internally coherent belief systems, it is still much more complex to interpret them and to understand whether they truly are independent of the distributions under consideration. While these more universal belief systems can say something about cultural variation in values, they are more difficult to comprehend in terms of preferences for types of welfare state organizations and distributions. The more applied values in relation to the welfare domain to which “relevant social actors, the institutions of the welfare state and concrete policy measures refer” instead constitute a much more relevant backdrop against which to understand welfare discourses and policy designs (Jo, 2011; Pfau-Effinger, 2005, p. 4; van Oorschot et al., 2008).

This abstract conceptualization might nevertheless also partly explain the absence of a relationship between institutional structures and justice preferences. While the overarching nature of the independent variables (e.g., the welfare regimes) is uttered as a cause for the absence of a relation between preferences and institutions (Laenen, 2018), the overly abstract interpretation of the dependent variable (in this case the justice preferences) is rarely recognized. When understanding both preferences and institutional indicators in relation to more concrete welfare domains, the relationship between both could be much more outspoken (cf., Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2013). Similarly, in connection to the social structure, conceptual obscurity at both sides of the relationship can occur that partly explains the absence of a strong dyad between structural positions and justice ideas. Instead of objective social positions as such, subjective experiences of disadvantage and new types of material insecurity could for instance matter in explaining what types of distributions are preferred (Achterberg et al., 2011; Cusack et al., 2006; Hacker et al., 2013). On the dependent variable side, social conflict could occur more strongly in relation to welfare priorities and in particular domains, instead of over overly abstract redistributive principles (Häusermann et al., 2021).

This would tie in with the conclusion that justice principles are societal values, which are “held by certain groups or populations” instead of being shared by everyone (Haller, 2002, p. 143).

Last, the findings in relation to consequences of justice preferences provide an indication that a too encompassing view on the principles might be less suitable. When conceptualizing equality, equity and need as universal values that refer to societal distributions as a whole, their predictive power for more concrete attitudes towards welfare reforms is moderate at best. Instead, as societal values that connect closely to a particular welfare domain and zero in on a policy paradigm or ideological discourse, the justice principles are much more capable of explaining why citizens support contemporary social policies. However, even then values are not activated automatically, but depend on contextual variables that create saliency of values and reinforce their cognitive link to more specific views on social policies (Kulin & Svallfors, 2013). In the Belgian context, activation policies and its underlying paradigm (of which justice principles are a part) were for instance politicized and made salient in the federal elections, which could partly explain why justice ideas become relevant in connection to the popularity of demanding activation. This activation of the cognitive link between justice principles and welfare reforms could be more absent in the UK, Slovenia and Estonia, which could partly explain why no relationship between justice preferences and support for welfare reforms is retrieved in Chapter 7. Yet, whether or not the principles are interpreted from a domain-specific perspective that connects more closely to the idiosyncratic debates occurring around each of these welfare reforms, might equally play a crucial role.

All in all, the results of this dissertation hence point towards the importance of a context-dependent approach to justice preferences to understand their conceptualization, explanations and consequences. In this sense, it argues that theorizing the justice principles in relation to the distribution of income and wealth generally in society and approaching it from such a broad angle might have more limited worth in itself than previously assumed. Instead, justice preferences should be understood as fundamental societal values that occur and are recognized across societies and situations, but are debated and balanced differently across distributive spheres as well as opposing social groups (Haller, 2002; Jo, 2011). Although in some scenarios it might still be worth looking at the principles on a more abstract level, for

instance to reveal more fundamental cultural differences across countries or to understand preferences in countries with a less developed welfare state, a context-dependent approach to distributive justice appears to be much more fruitful to actually understand which types of distributions the general public prefers.

4. WHERE TO TAKE IT FROM HERE? THE AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This dissertation of course leaves ample room for future studies to further develop the distributive justice literature. While the resurgence of distributive justice as a central topic was connected to processes of individualization and globalization, further efforts could be pursued to specifically capture justice preferences in relation to these societal transformations. First, the measurement of justice preferences could be further developed and tested in relation to the distribution of various welfare benefits. Although the first empirical chapter is devoted to the validation of the Basic Social Justice Orientations (BSJO) Scale (Hülle et al., 2017), the scale has clear flaws. While some items seemed appropriate to measure support for equality, equity and need, they could overall only limitedly be integrated in overarching latent concepts. Yet, due to the scarcity of useful data to assess justice preferences, items of the scale were nevertheless used in two of the chapters. As mentioned, the formulation of the items for need were particularly intricate, as some of the measurements referred more to need as a care for the basic provisions of everyone, while others interpreted need as a residual form of distributions implemented in liberal welfare schemes (cf., Kittel, 2020). Based on the findings of this dissertation, future studies should be aware that the conceptualization of justice preferences, which extend to their measurement as well, can strongly determine the results achieved. In this sense, developing a new scale that is more appropriate to test justice preferences in specific contexts would provide less biased insight into what types of distribution the public actually prefers.

Second, there should be more explicit engagement with how far these justice principles reach and to whom solidarity applies, especially in a globalized context wherein the inclusion of new social groups into welfare state distributions is up for debate. Justice is increasingly not only covering what should be distributed, but in light of globalizing landscapes also entails “disputes about who should count as a member and which is the relevant community” (Fraser,

2005, p. 72). In this light, more attention should be given to the so-called scope of justice, which refers to the boundary of justice wherein “moral values, rules, and considerations of fairness apply” (Opotow, 1990, p. 3). Although an insufficient and underdeveloped empirical analysis of the scope of justice is characteristic of the whole literature (Hafer & Olson, 2003), this dissertation did not engage with the question of how broadly the three principles of distributive justice span. Some could for instance consider the justice principles inapplicable to particular ‘undeserving groups’ in the welfare state, such as immigrants. This is evident for the principle of equality, which is regularly considered to be only applicable to those who have acquired citizenship status in a country and not to various outgroups (Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2012). Moreover, it might be especially in relation to these types of issues that differences in opinions across groups could occur, as various social strata foster distinct interests in restricting the access of particular outgroups. Further research is hence needed to disentangle which groups are actually within the scope of justice for each of the principles. Qualitative research that open-endedly asks citizens which groups they have in mind when formulating their justice judgements could be particularly useful in this regard.

Yet, besides globalization, individualization boosted the relevance of distributive justice by making risks personal and eroding the collective willingness to contribute for similar others (Beck, 2002; Giddens, 1999; Rosanvallon, 2000). This transformation coupled with the transition to a post-industrial economy, gave rise to new types of social risks that are particularly salient in the current welfare climate. These encompass for instance the reconciliation of work and family, possessing low skills and insufficient social security coverage (Bonoli, 2005). However, despite the particular relevance of these contemporary insecurities, this dissertation studied domain-specific support for the three distributive justice principles in relation to the three traditional welfare domains of health care, pensions and unemployment benefits. Although this dissertation does relate justice preferences to contemporary welfare reforms as well, future research should still assess the domain-specificity of justice in relation to these new types of social risks to acquire a richer understanding of the centrality of distributive justice at the edge of current welfare debates. These could for instance encompass child and elderly care services, social assistance schemes and income supplements (Häusermann, 2012). Herein, it is also worth distinguishing between attitudes towards cash benefits and services, which could invoke

different opinions (cf., Eick & Larsen, 2021). Although it would be highly relevant to engage with these new types of social risks and the distinction between benefits and services, preferences for equality, equity and need are not yet investigated in these contexts.

Last, other conceptions of justice beyond distributive conceptualizations should be explored, especially since these are essential in light of societal changes. While organizational research for instance demonstrates a strong interconnectedness of procedural and distributive justice (Hauenstein et al., 2001), the fairness of processes is not addressed in this dissertation. These perceptions of fair treatment are nevertheless important in interactions with the government and welfare state (Kumlin, 2004; Rothstein, 1998) and should hence be considered in providing a full picture of justice preferences in relation to social security systems. As a result, my approach evidently offers a one-sided perspective and ignores that the principles can be applied differently in relation to procedures relative to outcomes. In the wake of individualization and globalization, beliefs in meritocracy for instance become increasingly important, which refer to the idea that talent as well as merit are or should be the decisive factors in establishing who acquires certain resources (Mijis, 2019). Public evaluations of meritocracy, which connect closely to a procedural perspective as well as equality of opportunities instead of equality in results (Roller, 1995), have important societal consequences. Indeed, when there is a strong acceptance of the idea that everyone can make it if they want to, this can lead to undermining the self-esteem of lower-ranked groups and thereby facilitate populist or authoritarian backlashes as well as polarization (Roex et al., 2018; Sandel, 2020). In this sense, these procedural perspectives might explain even more of societal processes and should hence be considered to gain a full understanding of justice and its consequences.

5. WHAT TO DO WITH IT? THE POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this dissertation do not only have theoretical implications, but practical consequences as well. First of all, connecting back to the added value of empirical work for philosophical theories of justice, insight into these public preferences regarding distributive justice can indicate which types of distributions and normative models are actually feasible for policy making (Swift, 1999). This is relevant because the opinions of the general public can

shape policies both through elections and by pressuring politicians already in office (Brooks & Manza, 2007). Furthermore, as public preferences can co-determine the feasibility of new types of social policies instead of more traditional schemes, they are crucial to understand the legitimacy of potential future directions that policymakers can take (Raven et al., 2011). Various social policies are grounded in one of the three principles and hence the findings of this dissertation provide insight into which types of distributions and schemes attract public approval. In this light, especially policies built on the principles of equality or equity have the potential of acquiring legitimacy, as need is generally preferred to a lesser extent.

However, it is important for policymakers and politicians to realize that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach might not work to build broad support coalitions in practice. As the preferences for the three principles depend on the welfare domain under consideration, the type of distribution that will be most feasible to implement depends on which social risk is being evaluated. This indicates that restrictive welfare reforms based on conditionality for instance might be supported for certain policies, but cannot be adopted as a hard line across all instances. As this dissertation shows, pushing reciprocity or equity-based elements could be attainable for unemployment-related schemes, but is unlikely to gather public legitimacy in health care policies. This does not apply solely across different benefit schemes and services, but the differentiation in distributive principles is also important to consider within the design of one social policy. As both this dissertation and previous studies indicate, the public evaluates distinct policy design dimensions in varying ways (Gallego & Marx, 2017; Vandenbroucke et al., 2018). Making policies unequal in access might invoke more opposition than differentiating in levels of benefits according to equity or need.

Contextual variables also play a role in making values more salient and strengthening the cognitive link between these ideas and more concrete policy attitudes (Kulin & Svallfors, 2013). Political discourses that explicitly refer to the justice principles in designing social policies could thus intensify the saliency of these distributive ideas, which might also leave a mark on how people think about reforms. As shown in this dissertation, establishing broader policy paradigms that define the organizing principles as well as nature of social risks related to social policies could provide an important steppingstone in implementing policies that are backed

up by the general public (Béland, 2005; Daigneault, 2014a; Hall, 1993). Moreover, the justice principles seem to be less disputed across social classes than more concrete social policies, which heightens their potential to serve as 'coalitions magnets' that appeal to various individuals and groups who would otherwise be in opposition to each other (Béland & Cox, 2016). In sum, making the justice principles salient and explicitly referring to these types of societal values in connection to social policies might widen the social basis and hence feasibility of welfare reforms in contemporary welfare states.

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Appendices

1. APPENDIX CHAPTER 3

Table A1. Question wordings and standardized factor loadings for utilitarian individualism, authoritarianism and economic liberalism (N=1900)

	GI	UI	AU	EL
Q53 - Make sure that the elderly have a reasonable pension	0.751			
Q54 - Make sure that everyone has affordable health care	0.742			
Q55 - Make sure that the unemployed have a reasonable living standard	0.418			
Q64_1 - 'Humanity', 'brotherhood' and 'solidarity' are all nonsense. Everybody has to take care of themselves first and defend their own interests.		0.749		
Q64_2 - Striving for personal success is more important than ensuring good relations with your fellow man.		0.657		
Q64_3 - In our society everything revolves around one's own interest, power and material success. That is why it is better to take care first and foremost of oneself.		0.717		
Q64_4 - Most of our social problems would be solved if we could somehow get rid of the immoral, crooked people.			0.481	
Q64_5 - Obedience and respect for authority are the two most important virtues children have to learn.			0.702	
Q64_6 - Laws should become stricter because too much freedom is not good for people.			0.629	
Q88_1 - Society would be better off if the government intervenes less in the market.				0.623

Q88_4 - Businesses should get more freedom. 0.624

Therefore, regulations for businesses should be reduced.

Correlation utilitarian individualism	-0.070	1		
Correlation authoritarianism	0.143	0.503	1	
Correlation economic liberalism	-0.122	0.397	0.284	1

Note. $\chi^2= 100.609$; $df=38$; $RMSEA=0.029$; $CFI=0.977$; $TLI=0.967$; $SRMR=0.028$; GI =Government involvement; UI = Utilitarian individualism; AU = Authoritarianism; EL = Economic liberalism

Table A2. Multinomial logistic regression of social structure and ideology on the residual selectivist class relative to the meritocratic selectivist class (N=1898)

	Residual selectivists					
	<u>Model 1</u>			<u>Model 2</u>		
	Logit	SE	OR	Logit	SE	OR
<i>Social structure</i>						
Gender						
Woman (ref.)						
Man	0.587	0.351	1.798	0.635	0.361	1.886
Age	0.005	0.011	1.005	0.001	0.012	1.001
Education						
Lower (secondary)	-0.572	0.521	0.564	-0.470	0.531	0.625
Higher secondary (ref.)						
Tertiary	-0.195	0.354	0.822	-0.102	0.388	0.903
Income						
Quartile 1 (ref.)						
Quartile 2	-1.170	0.699	0.310	-1.064	0.657	0.345
Quartile 3	-0.645	0.582	0.525	-0.689	0.546	0.502
Quartile 4	-0.150	0.486	0.861	-0.236	0.500	0.790
Missing	0.244	0.514	1.276	0.382	0.593	1.465
Occupation						
Blue collar (ref.)						
Service class	0.557	0.563	1.746	0.279	0.562	1.322
White collar	0.753	0.633	2.122	0.460	0.677	1.584
Self-employed	0.872	0.700	2.393	0.380	0.711	1.463
Inactive	0.687	0.550	1.987	0.325	0.611	1.384
Welfare dependency						
No benefit (ref.)						
Benefit	0.321	0.380	1.378	0.453	0.362	1.573
Region						

French region (ref.)						
Flanders	-0.178	0.347	0.837	-0.173	0.372	0.841
<i>Ideology</i>						
Left-right placement				0.109	0.095	1.115
Authoritarianism				1.291	0.739	3.636
Economic liberalism				1.324**	0.445	3.758
Utilitarian				-1.269***	0.377	0.281
individualism						
Government				-0.295	0.168	0.745
involvement						

Note. SE= standard error; OR= odds ratio; * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$;

2. APPENDIX CHAPTER 4

Table A3. Questions wordings and factor loadings for authoritarianism in the samples receiving questions on pensions and on unemployment benefits

	Authoritarianism	
	Pension sample	Unemployment sample
Most of our social problems would be solved if we could somehow get rid of the immoral, crooked people	0.370	0.357
Obedience and respect for authority are the two most important virtues children have to learn	0.519	0.441
Laws should become stricter because too much freedom is not good for people	0.737	0.721

Note. Chi-square = 3.809; df = 4; RMSEA = 0.000; CFI = 1.000; TLI = 1.000; SRMR = 0.037

3. APPENDIX CHAPTER 5

Table A4. Descriptive statistics for each of the 29 countries included in European Social Survey round 9 (2018/2019)

	Sample size	Mean equality	Mean equity	Mean need	Social expenditure (as % GDP)	Percentage expenditure on means-tested benefits	Percentage receipts social contributions
Austria	2499	3.349	4.279	4.060	28.6	9.4	63.4
Belgium	1767	3.443	3.985	3.855	27.2	5.2	58.9
Bulgaria	2198	3.401	4.017	3.651	16.5	3.0	56.2
Croatia	1810	3.709	3.966	3.851	21.2	4.7	60.0
Cyprus	781	3.717	4.052	4.060	18.2	14.8	47.8
Czech republic	2398	3.036	3.809	3.351	18.0	2.2	74.9
Germany	2358	3.067	4.047	3.987	28.5	12.6	65.1
Denmark	1572	2.579	4.044	4.048	30.5	36.4	18.9
Estonia	1904	2.696	4.065	3.778	15.8	0.6	77.0
Finland	1755	2.943	3.782	3.845	30.1	6.6	45.7
France	2010	3.785	4.110	4.017	31.7	11.0	60.3
Hungary	1661	3.392	3.869	3.489	18.1	4.4	66.7
Iceland	861	3.427	3.905	4.128	23.4	24.4	38.1

Italy	2745	3.922	4.040	4.020	27.8	7.9	50.2
Ireland	2216	3.448	3.885	3.898	14.4	27.8	39.2
Latvia	918	3.137	4.149	3.857	14.6	1.4	58.9
Lithuania	1835	2.749	3.847	3.632	14.4	2.8	75.4
Montenegro	1200	3.547	3.919	3.924	17.2	2.3	65.8
Netherlands	1673	2.719	3.810	3.803	27.6	14.9	61.1
Norway	1406	2.564	3.903	4.014	27.9	3.2	44.3
Poland	1500	3.250	3.970	3.515	19.60	5.10	68.7
Portugal	1055	3.874	3.824	3.981	23.6	8.1	46.6
Serbia	2043	3.543	4.039	3.843	19.0	4.7	64.5
Slovenia	1318	3.731	4.038	4.001	22.3	8.5	69.5
Slovakia	1083	3.479	3.870	3.461	17.7	4.0	70.8
Spain	1668	3.584	3.874	4.032	23.0	12.6	58.3
Sweden	1539	2.812	3.879	4.013	28.2	2.5	47.1
Switzerland	1542	3.199	3.864	3.991	26.1	7.7	65.3
United Kingdom	2204	3.167	3.811	3.775	26.1	16.5	37.3

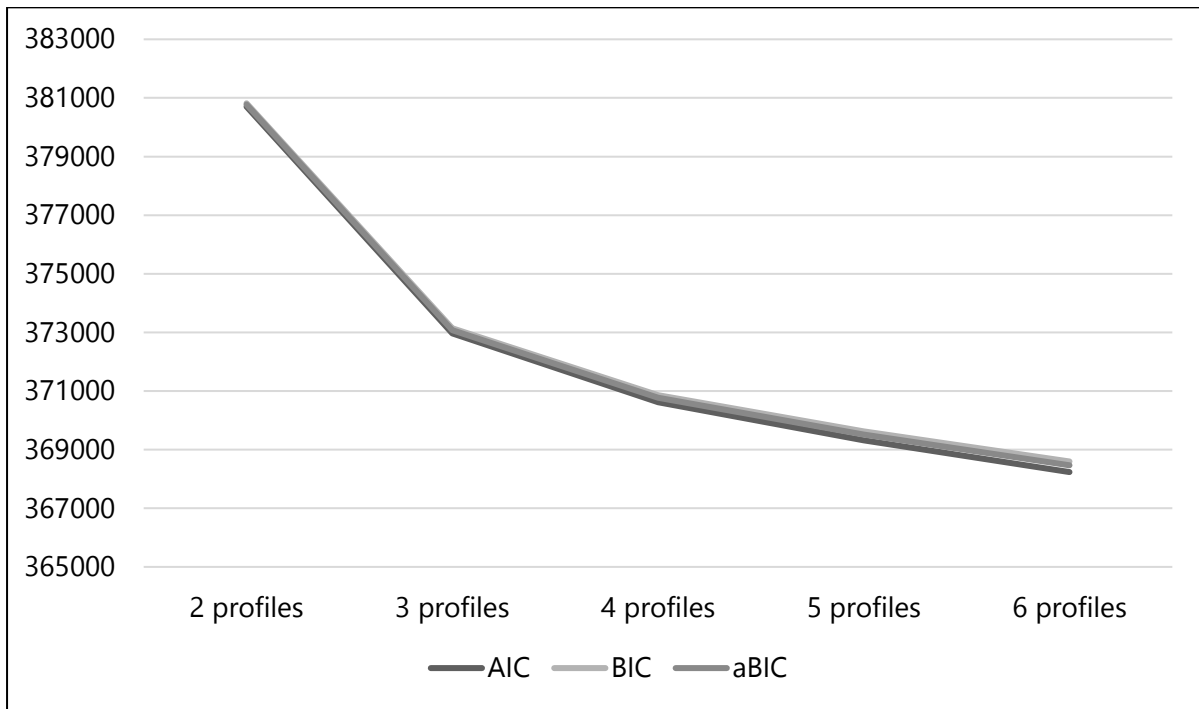


Figure A1. Elbow plot for the individual-level latent profile solutions

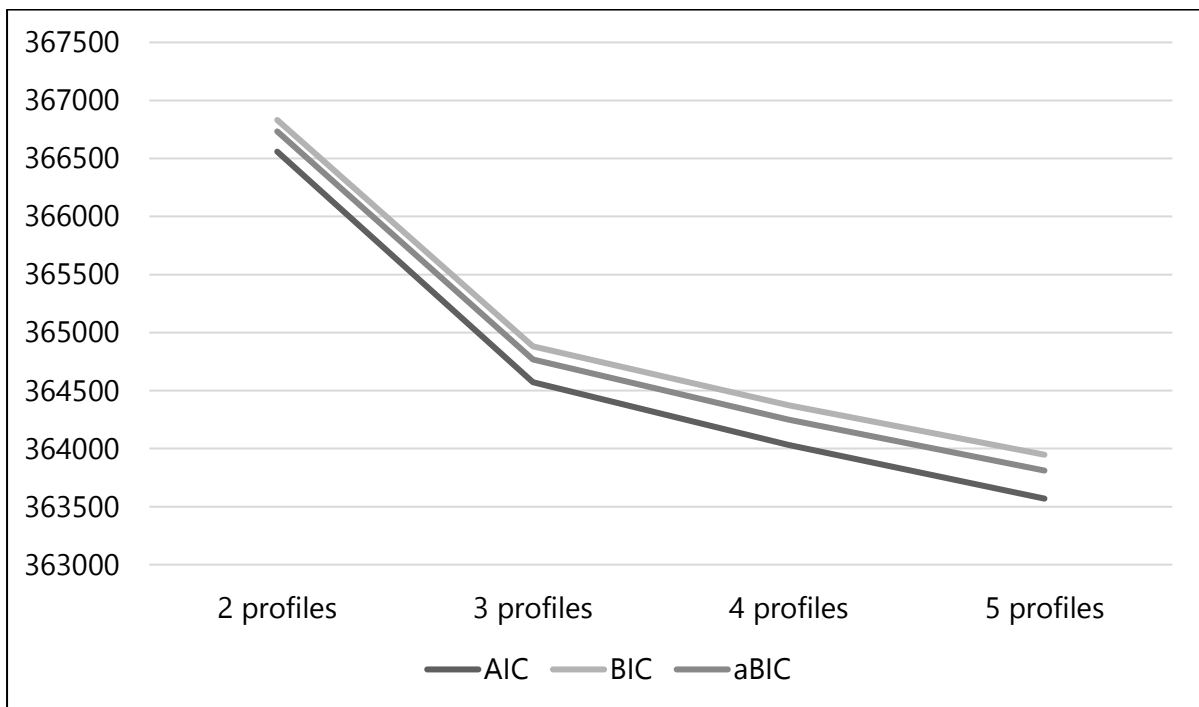


Figure A2. Elbow plot for the country-level latent profile solutions

4. APPENDIX CHAPTER 6

Table A5. Question wordings and standardized factor loadings for work ethic and authoritarianism (N=1900)

	Work ethic	Authoritarianism
Q58_1 - To completely develop your talents, you need a job	0.413	
Q58_2 - It is embarrassing to receive money without having had to work for it	0.406	
Q58_3 - Work is a duty towards society	0.633	
Q58_4 - Work should always come first, even if it means less leisure time	0.685	
Q64_4 - Most of our social problems would be solved if we could somehow get rid of the immoral, crooked people.		0.460
Q64_5 - Obedience and respect for authority are the two most important virtues children have to learn.		0.679
Q64_6 - Laws should become stricter because too much freedom is not good for people.		0.668
Correlation		0.577

Note. Fit of the measurement model for work ethic and authoritarianism: $\chi^2 = 46.218$; $df = 13$; CFI = 0.977; TLI = 0.962; RMSEA = 0.037; SRMR = 0.023

5. APPENDIX CHAPTER 7**Table A6.** Measurement invariance for the latent concept of support for activation policies

	Chi²	Df	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	SRMR
Configural invariance	0.000	0	0.000	1.000	1.000	0.000
Metric invariance	4.213	4	0.006	1.000	1.000	0.012
Scalar invariance	728.480	10	0.205	0.651	0.686	0.216

Table A7. Question wording and standardized factor loadings of support for activation policies for the metric invariance model

	Estonia	United Kingdom	Slovenia
They turn down a job because it pays a lot less than they earned previously?	0.800	0.809	0.758
They turn down a job because it needs a much lower level of education than the person has?	0.814	0.822	0.804
They refuse to regularly carry out unpaid work in the area where they live in return for unemployment benefit?	0.528	0.532	0.472

Table A8. Descriptive statistics for all study variables per country

	United Kingdom			Slovenia			Estonia		
	Mean	SD	% missing	Mean	SD	% missing	Mean	SD	% missing
Means-tested benefits	2.450	0.745	4.3	2.320	0.784	5.8	2.410	0.753	2.2
Activation policies¹⁸	2.581	0.856	1.2	2.944	0.867	2.2	2.031	0.898	1.1
Basic income schemes	2.450	0.773	5.5	2.690	0.725	7.9	2.410	0.722	4.7
Gender (female ref.)	0.455	0.498	0.0	0.458	0.498	0.0	0.458	0.498	0.0
Age	48.740	18.590	1.8	49.060	18.659	0.0	49.650	18.993	0.0
Education (higher secondary ref.)									
Lower (secondary)	0.314	0.464	2.9	0.217	0.412	0.3	0.191	0.393	0.0
Tertiary	0.419	0.493	2.9	0.256	0.437	0.3	0.297	0.457	0.0
Subjective income (comfortable ref.)									
Coping	0.412	0.492	1.3	0.404	0.491	0.8	0.583	0.493	0.0
(Very) difficult	0.114	0.318	1.3	0.133	0.339	0.8	0.261	0.439	0.0
Occupation (blue collar ref.)									
Service	0.035	0.183	2.7	0.045	0.207	0.6	0.048	0.214	0.5

¹⁸ Also here, we use the baseline experimental condition where no specific target group is mentioned to calculate the mean of activation policies. The percentage of missing information is based each time on the item with the highest degree of missingness

White collar	0.271	0.444	2.7	0.183	0.387	0.6	0.212	0.409	0.5
Self-employed	0.099	0.299	2.7	0.073	0.260	0.6	0.078	0.269	0.5
Unemployed	0.043	0.202	2.7	0.055	0.229	0.6	0.035	0.185	0.5
Retired/non-active	0.427	0.495	2.7	0.473	0.499	0.6	0.398	0.490	0.5
Left-right placement	4.900	1.824	9.4	4.790	2.307	18.1	5.350	1.956	13.7
Equality	3.426	0.987	66.5	3.868	0.915	56.1	3.462	0.926	70.3
Equity	3.901	0.777	66.5	4.071	0.829	56.1	4.188	0.690	70.2
Need	3.954	0.802	66.6	3.951	0.801	56.0	4.285	0.700	70.2

**6. DOCTORATEN IN DE SOCIALE WETENSCHAPPEN EN IN DE SOCIALE EN
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Dutch summary

Maatschappelijke ontwikkelingen zoals individualisering en globalisering leiden tot een herinterpretatie van de fundamentele vraag hoe herverdeling moet georganiseerd worden. Individualisering zorgt ervoor dat risico's in toenemende mate als een persoonlijke verantwoordelijkheid worden gezien en ondermijnt daarbij de collectieve bereidheid om bij te dragen voor anderen. Globalisering, op zijn beurt, verbindt mensen in mondiale netwerken en roept vragen op omtrent de reikwijdte van solidariteit in de huidige maatschappij. In de context van deze transformaties, vindt een herstructurering van het sociale contract van de georganiseerde moderniteit plaats. Dit brengt vernieuwde discussies met zich mee omtrent distributieve rechtvaardigheid, i.e., hoe de kosten en baten van ons verzorgingsstaatsysteem op een rechtvaardige manier verdeeld kunnen worden. Drie principes van distributieve rechtvaardigheid worden onderscheiden: (1) gelijkheid: dezelfde sociale welvaart voor alle burgers, (2) reciprociteit: verdelingen die afhankelijk zijn van bijdragen en (3) behoefte: een selectieve focus op burgers in nood.

Hoewel politieke theoretici en filosofen hebben geprobeerd om te beantwoorden welke van deze principes het meest rechtvaardig is vanuit een normatief standpunt, blijft empirisch onderzoek naar de publieke opinie omtrent deze principes onderontwikkeld. Het is nochtans relevant en noodzakelijk om aandacht te besteden aan publieke voorkeuren naar de principes, aangezien distributieve rechtvaardigheid in toenemende mate belangrijk wordt voor gewone burgers. Gegeven dat processen zoals individualisering en globalisering het traditioneel sociale contract in vraag stellen en ondermijnen, hebben burgers duidelijke en groeiende belangen in de (her)organisatie van de allocatie van maatschappelijke goederen om het collectieve welzijn te garanderen. Om deze reden onderzoekt dit doctoraat vanuit een sociologische invalshoek publieke opinies en voorkeuren omtrent de principes van gelijkheid, reciprociteit en behoefte in verzorgingsstaatsdistributies.

Om dit inzicht te verschaffen, probeert dit doctoraat drie tekortkomingen van voorgaand onderzoek te remediëren. Om te beginnen veronderstellen studies meestal dat burgers de voorkeur geven aan één enkel principe dat op alle soorten verdelingen kan worden toegepast. De populariteit van de drie principes wordt vergeleken, zonder rekening te houden met het feit dat steun voor de principes afhankelijk kan zijn van het betrokken publiek goed en zonder

te overwegen dat burgers mogelijks steun voor meerdere principes tegelijkertijd kunnen combineren. Ten tweede, is er te weinig inzicht in de factoren die distributieve rechtvaardigheidsvoorkeuren kunnen verklaren. Het blijft grotendeels onduidelijk welke individuele en Europese breuklijnen bestaan in voorkeuren voor gelijkheid, reciprociteit en behoefte. Ten slotte, erkennen studies distributieve rechtvaardigheid niet als mogelijks verklaringmechanisme om steun voor hedendaagse verzorgingsstaats hervormingen te begrijpen. Aangezien distributieve rechtvaardigheid centraal staat in huidige verzorgingsstaatsdebatten en sociaal beleid vaak gebaseerd is op een van de principes, zouden ze ook verbonden kunnen zijn met publieke opinies naar deze hervormingen en beleidsvormen.

In respons tot deze drie tekortkomingen, tracht dit project bij te dragen tot de literatuur door drie objectieven te realiseren. Ten eerste, conceptualiseert en onderzoekt dit project distributieve rechtvaardigheidsvoorkeuren met behulp van een context-gevoelige en gedifferentieerde benadering. Dit houdt in dat wordt onderzocht of de principes in verschillende mate gesteund worden afhankelijk van het verzorgingsstaatsdomein (i.e., gezondheidszorg, werkloosheidsuitkeringen en pensioenen) en of burgers steun voor meerdere principes tegelijk combineren in onderliggende overtuigingsystemen. Ten tweede, onderzoekt dit doctoraat de individuele en macro-level verklaringen van distributieve rechtvaardigheidsvoorkeuren. Er wordt gekeken of sociale posities en ideologische overtuigingen kunnen verklaren waarom bepaalde individuen meer of minder steun uitdrukken voor gelijkheid, reciprociteit en behoefte. Om verschillen in rechtvaardigheidsvoorkeuren te begrijpen over landen heen, wordt geïnspecteerd of de institutionele context waarin burgers gesocialiseerd worden een invloed heeft op welke principes populairder zijn. Als derde objectief linkt dit project voorkeuren voor gelijkheid, reciprociteit en behoefte aan steun voor vernieuwde verzorgingsstaats hervormingen om de verklaringskracht van distributieve rechtvaardigheidsvoorkeuren te exploreren. Er wordt specifiek ingezoomd op steun voor activeringsbeleid, een basisinkomen en inkomensgerelateerde uitkeringen, aangezien elke van deze beleidsterreinen bouwt op één van drie principes.

De bevindingen tonen aan dat rechtvaardigheidsvoorkeuren inderdaad domein-specifiek zijn en dat burgers in staat zijn om steun voor meerdere principes tegelijk te balanceren. Steun voor gelijkheid, reciprociteit en behoefte variëren voor gezondheidszorg, werkloosheidsuitkeringen en pensioenen. Dit toont aan dat het wel degelijk uitmaakt welk verzorgingsstaatsdomein beoordeeld wordt. Daarnaast blijken sommige burgers slechts één principe rechtvaardig te vinden, terwijl anderen steun voor twee of soms zelfs alle principes tegelijk integreren in onderliggende overtuigingsystemen. Met betrekking tot de verklaringsmechanismen, demonstreren de resultaten dat sociale posities slechts matig samenhangen met rechtvaardigheidsvoorkeuren, maar dat deze opinies wel sterk ideologisch zijn ingebed. Verschillen over landen heen hebben een geringe connectie met de institutionele context, maar lijken vooral culturele patronen en breuklijnen over Europa te volgen. Ten slotte, blijkt de verklaringskracht van distributieve rechtvaardigheidsvoorkeuren kleiner dan verwacht. Hoewel de principes in het domein van werkloosheidsuitkeringen in staat zijn om steun voor activeringsbeleid te voorspellen, zijn de relaties met steun voor de andere verzorgingsstaathervormingen beperkter. Doorheen deze resultaten verschaft dit doctoraat belangrijke nieuw inzichten in distributieve rechtvaardigheidsvoorkeuren in de context van een veranderende verzorgingsstaat.

