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Doctoral Dissertation

EMPIRICAL STUDIES  
ON  
SOCIAL SOLIDARITY  
AND  
THE POLITICS OF REDISTRIBUTION

2013

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## ABSTRACT

Throughout the chapters, this paper addresses the role of social solidarity (or social atomisation) in the formation of welfare preferences in contemporary democratic welfare states. A brief outline of each chapter is given in the following paragraphs.

### Chapter 1. Escaping the Curse of Economic Self-interest

Despite the general consensus that individualistic utility-optimising behavior reduces popular support for the welfare state, we still know little about how and to what extent such negative effects of self-interested calculus are mediated by other attitudinal factors, particularly solidaristic values and principles. Using individual-level data from the Japanese General Social Survey, this chapter seeks not only to qualify existing findings on welfare preference formation but also to explore the hypothesis that the negative impact of economic self-interest is offset or moderated by solidarity-oriented values and beliefs. It finds that the oft-made claim that material interest and individualistic ideologies undermine welfare support can be replicated in the context of Japan. The results also provide evidence in support of the liberal nationalist contention that popular discourse on welfare is significantly directed by a sense of national unity. Data from Japan also elucidate the fact that a strong sense of social trust significantly weakens the salience of self-oriented cost-benefit calculations. These findings suggest that solidarity-related variables such as national identity and interpersonal trustworthiness should receive more attention in future research on welfare attitudes.

### Chapter 2. Does Immigration Erode the Multicultural Welfare State?

The second chapter examines the effects of immigration-generated ethnic diversity on welfare attitudes across 19 OECD countries. Many scholars have documented that cultural heterogeneity is negatively associated with public support for redistributive government, the evidence for which is still open to question. This study specifically focuses on the mediating effects of multiculturalism and explore whether the impact of immigration differs in the context of strong multiculturalism. The multilevel analysis of ISSP survey data shows that there is no consistent negative link between ethnic diversity and public support for social welfare policies. The results also reveal that the interaction between immigration and multiculturalism has a negative effect on popular support, but that the negative relationship disappears when the generosity of social security policies is taken into account. The chapter concludes that the claimed detrimental effects of ethnic plurality and multiculturalism are not strongly supported in the context of OECD member states.

### Chapter 3. Economic Stratification, Decommodification, and Public Demand for Redistribution

This chapter examines the mediating effect of welfare regime variations on the relationship between economic stratification and popular discourse on redistribution. Earlier comparative research on welfare preferences has focused on individuals' utilitarian motivation and institutional environment. This project links, both theoretically and empirically, these two approaches that have developed more or less independently by assessing whether the welfare attitudes of individuals in different social strata differ depending on the welfare regime contexts within which they are situated. Drawing data on 15 advanced Western democracies, the empirical analysis shows that income class and social policy institutions are indeed significant predictors of public responses towards redistributive government. Most importantly, this study reveals that the link between income strata and welfare discourse is significantly mediated by the structure of welfare state institutions. The negative impact of economic stratification on redistributive support is more salient in highly decommodified welfare states than in their market-based liberal counterparts. These findings suggest that the universalist arrangement of social policy schemes widens the attitudinal cleavage between the rich and the poor.

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## INTRODUCTION



The main purpose of this study is to investigate how public attitudes and perceptions towards redistributive government policies are shaped and institutionalised in social, economic, and political discourse in contemporary capitalist democracies. This work rests on the basic notion that the welfare state, either explicitly or implicitly, presupposes a shared sense of social solidarity and collective responsibility across socioeconomic and ethno-cultural boundaries, such as between rich and poor, young and old, men and women, labour market insiders and outsiders, natives and immigrants, etc. The nation-states have historically been consolidated through the incorporation of inner differences into a homogeneous community (Marshall 1950). A strong sense of nationality, or a sense of national identity, is a prerequisite for building stable public acceptance and support for redistributive government designed to help underprivileged fellow-citizens (Miller 1995; Offe 2000). However, existing research on the welfare state have often considered the formation of welfare preferences as an interest-driven economic phenomenon and have shed little light on the linkage between individual support for redistribution and a shared sense of national community. Political economists argue that social policy preferences are formed through self- or group-interested utilitarian motivations (e.g. Roberts, 1977; Romer, 1975). For instance, Meltzer and Richard (1981) argued that the levels of income redistribution are directed by the political struggle of utility-maximising individuals. People with below-median income are predicted to be more in favour of income redistribution, while individuals with above-median income favour lower tax burdens and less government expenditure (Baldwin, 1990; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Kangas, 1997; Korpi, 1981). This study reaffirms the significance of individual utility-based bargaining in the politics of redistribution, but it also emphasises the fact that public attitudes towards the welfare state are significantly influenced, or mediated, by solidarity-related principles and norms (chapter 1), ethno-demographic environment (chapter 2), and routinised welfare state policies (chapter 3).

In the first chapter, I examine the hypothesis that the detrimental impact of individual utilitarian motivations is offset or moderated by solidarity-oriented values and beliefs. The analysis of data from a Japanese social survey demonstrates that public acceptance of redistribution is significantly influenced by non-individualistic attitudes, national identification and interpersonal trustworthiness. In fact, individuals with solidarity-oriented characteristics, such as collectivist orientations, national identity, and

generalised trust, are more likely to have pro-welfare attitudes. Interestingly, the results show that a strong sense of social trust significantly moderates the salience of self-oriented cost-benefit calculations. As the economic theory suggests, individuals with higher economic status tend to have lower levels of support for social welfare policies. However, such a downward impact of economic stratification is less prominent among people with a strong sense of social trustworthiness when compared with those who distrust others. These results suggest that the formation of welfare preferences cannot be reduced to a mere political bargaining among utility-optimising individuals. Rather, the popular perceptions towards the welfare state are closely linked with ‘interest-neutral’ moral values and ethics such as collectivist attitudes, national identity, and social trust, which have been often ignored by the previous research in this field.

However, some commentators warn that immigration-generated ethnic diversification undermines such solidaristic values and principles, thereby reducing general public support for redistributive government (Baldwin and Rozenberg, 2004; Goodhart, 2004). We started from the basic assumption that the welfare state presupposes a homogeneous and well-consolidated national community. However, the human dimension of globalisation, as seen in the mass movements of people across national borders, and the multiculturalist demarcation of liberal principles along ethno-cultural boundaries might challenge the welfare state project by disintegrating the historically formed aggregate of people. The second chapter takes up this issue and examines the impact of ethno-cultural diversity and multiculturalist policy contexts on public perceptions towards the welfare state. The results show that mass preferences for social policy settings are *not* significantly explained by the influx of immigrants and ‘excessive’ multiculturalism. While the interaction term between ethnic diversity and multiculturalism exerts a significant negative influence on public attitudes towards redistribution, the reverse relationship disappears when accounting for the effects of other potential micro and macro determinants, in particular, the context of social policy development (i.e. generous social security schemes). The coefficient of social policy expenditure is positive and highly significant, while controlling for other potential determinants. These results imply that more attention has to be paid to the different levels of social policy expenditure rather than the different levels of ethno-cultural heterogeneity.

These results in the second chapter lead us to the next question: how and to what

extent do the arrangements of social policy institutions affect public attitudes towards redistribution? More specifically, do the attitudinal orientations of individuals in different social strata differ depending on the social policy frameworks within which they are situated? Self-interest theorists argue that economic status (or social class) is a significant predictor of welfare preferences. On the other hand, regime theorists suggest that human behaviours and attitudes are endogenous to established social structures and greatly vary across different institutional environments. The primary aim of the third chapter is to link these two theoretical traditions that have been often discussed separately. I do this by assessing the mediating impact of welfare regimes on the linkage between economic position and individual attitudes towards redistribution across 15 OECD member states. The cross-national analysis reveals that pro-welfare discourse is more prevalent in redistributive welfare states (e.g. social democratic welfare states) than less decommodified societies (e.g. market-based liberal welfare state), and that the negative effect of economic stratification is conditional and varies greatly across different regime settings.



## CHAPTER 1

### Escaping the Curse of Economic Self-interest: An Individual-level Analysis of Public Support for the Welfare State in Japan

(Forthcoming: *Journal of Social Policy*, Cambridge University Press)





## 1.1 Introduction

Public support towards social welfare programmes for the less well-off is the essential basis for a robust welfare state in advanced democracies (Brooks and Manza, 2006). Without shared empathy for the principles of social citizenship, which are the core elements of the welfare state (Marshall, 1950), it is difficult to sustain any redistributive government schemes. This is particularly important for advanced industrialised democracies where the gap between the haves and the have-nots has widened substantially in recent years. As reported in *Divided We Stand: Why Inequality Keeps Rising* (OECD, 2011), the average Gini coefficient in OECD member countries rose by nearly 10 per cent over the past two decades, and the average wage of the richest group is now almost nine times higher than that of the poorest group. Taylor-Gooby's (2011) recent work suggests that greater disparity in the allocation of material interests and opportunities can lead to public distrust in government institutions, which implies a potential threat to the foundation of social solidarity on which the welfare state is based. Furthermore, if individual policy preferences are motivated by one's economic position (Romer, 1975; Roberts, 1977; Meltzer and Richard, 1981), greater income stratification would result in serious social cleavages in political interest and pervasive class-based politics. In this context, the question as to how individuals shape their perceptions and preferences towards redistributive policies, which is directly linked with the legitimacy of the welfare state, is timely and of growing academic and policy importance.

Although significant advances have been made in our understanding of welfare attitudes, much work remains to be done in this area before a more complete picture can be drawn. My study builds on prior contributions but aims to offer several important extensions. First, studies on welfare preferences have been conducted mostly in North American and Western European contexts and the question of whether their findings are transferable to other cultural settings remains unanswered. For instance, several studies in the United States have argued and empirically demonstrated that economic individualism, a peculiar feature of American political culture (Tocqueville, 2001 [1835-40]; Lipset, 1979; McClosky and Zaller, 1984), explains Americans' traditional opposition to the welfare state (Feldman and Zaller, 1992; Feldman and Steenbergen, 2001). However, we still do not know whether the negative link between economic

individualism and welfare support is indeed a consequence of unique American culture or a product of a more generalisable rule. By analysing the Japanese General Social Survey, I will qualify and confirm such results in the United States in the light of additional evidence from another (non-Western) industrialised country.

The second issue involves the operationalisation of economic self-interest. Previous research has argued that welfare support is inversely related with individual self-interest (e.g. Bean and Papadakis, 1998; Hasenfeld and Rafferty, 1989). To test the negative relationship between welfare views and self-interest, many existing studies have relied on ‘household income’ as the indicator of economic stratification. As some scholars point out, however, the multidimensional aspects of material interest cannot be captured by a single measure like family income (Gilens, 1996). For a more comprehensive understanding of the utilitarian hypothesis, this article compares various patterns of self-oriented incentives, such as the objective, subjective, and dynamic dimensions of class strata.

The third extension is concerned with the potential role of national identity in welfare preference formation. Liberal nationalist theorists argue that a strong sense of national identification fosters a sense of collective solidarity and helps maintain a functioning welfare state (Miller, 1995; Tamir, 1993). However, only recently has the connection between welfare support and national identity been subjected to empirical testing (e.g. Martinez-Herrera, 2004; Shayo, 2009), and accordingly the hypothesis remains empirically underspecified (Johnston *et al.*, 2010). My study provides new evidence for this developing argument.

Finally, I explore the linkage between public opinion and social capital. Students of social capital argue that the prevalence of interpersonal trust is a significant source of altruistic, pro-welfare orientations. However, while considerable interest has been directed towards the theories of social capital, surprisingly little attention has been paid so far to the empirical investigation of the association between welfare support and social trust. This study contributes new empirical evidence on the roles of perceived trustworthiness in welfare attitude formation.

The main purpose of this paper is two-fold. First, I qualify the popular claim that individual welfare views are shaped by both utilitarian motivation and economic individualism, and then test the alternative theories about the role of national identity and social trust. Second, I examine whether the negative impact of individualistic

orientations can be offset or weakened by solidarity-oriented values and beliefs, such as a sense of national unity and generalised trust. This article argues that the findings in the US literature that self-preserving and individualist attitudes reduce welfare support can be replicated in Japan, and that, as proponents of liberal nationalism claim, a sense of national identity is indeed a significant predictor of redistributive support. It also reveals that the relationship between self-interest and welfare discourse is significantly mediated by social trust, and that patterns of individual reaction to redistributive government vary greatly between low- and high-trust clusters.

## 1.2 Theories of Welfare Policy Support

There are two main lines of theorisations as to why welfare preferences differ markedly among individuals. The first strand adduces that mass attitudes toward welfare policies are affected by economic self-interest. This line of research argues that economically underprivileged individuals have greater incentive to accept redistribution than do those with richer material resources. The second strand suggests that ‘interest-neutral’ moral values and ethics, such as economic individualism, communal identity, and social solidarity, are of crucial importance in shaping public discourse on redistributive issues. I expand on each of these approaches in turn below.

*Economic self-interest.* Scholars have paid a great deal of attention to the utilitarian nature of individuals in the politics of redistribution. Traditional economic models assume that rational, informed individuals behave in a way that maximises their utility functions (Romer, 1975; Roberts, 1977). For instance, Meltzer and Richard (1981) theorise that the proportion of income redistribution is determined by the economic position of utility-maximising voters. In an equilibrium choice of preferences, individuals with below-median income are expected to be more in favour of higher taxes and more transfers, while voters with above-median income prefer tax reduction and less social expenditure. The welfare state literature also suggests that mass attitudes towards redistribution are determined by one’s group/class interest or the division of labour (Baldwin, 1990; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Kangas, 1997; Korpi, 1981). People in lower socioeconomic strata tend to be more vulnerable to unemployment, sickness, poverty, and other potential social risks compared with those in higher classes, and thus are more likely to favour greater social protection provided by the government. In

contrast, members of higher social classes, who have access to abundant economic resources and opportunities, can satisfy their basic needs without any assistance from government welfare programmes, and therefore are less inclined to express positive responses towards the welfare state. Likewise, some analysts claim that the future expectation of one's economic situation is equally important, as are present actual conditions. It is assumed that people who predict their household financial situation to become worse than it is today tend to be more sympathetic to redistributive spending than individuals who think they are less susceptible to the expected vicissitudes of the market (Gilens, 1996; Rehm, 2009). In short, the economic perspective of individual behaviour basically argues that the major concern for individuals is, for the most part, simply whether they benefit from the welfare state (recipients) or not (contributors). If this is the case, the recent widening income disparity in OECD countries casts a shadow over the future of industrialised welfare states because greater inequality and social stratification may lead to an individualistic, conflict-oriented welfare state, in which individual actors form their policy preferences based primarily on organised interests.

The empirical literature provides compelling evidence that utilitarian motivation matters. A number of researchers have confirmed that high-income individuals are less supportive of welfare provision than those on the lower end of the income scale (Bean and Papadakis, 1998; Bobo and Kluegel, 1993; Hasenfeld and Rafferty, 1989; Jacoby, 2000; Jæger, 2006b). It has also been substantiated that members of higher social strata are less likely to be supportive of redistributive policies compared with those who are from working class and poor backgrounds (Jæger, 2006a; Linos and West, 2003; Papadakis, 1993; Svallfors, 2004). Furthermore, several empirical studies demonstrate that the expectation of higher future household income indeed lessens the individual support for social spending (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2005; Rehm, 2009).

*Economic individualism.* Another theoretical explanation contends that public opinion on redistribution is significantly affected by individualist values and beliefs (Blekesaune and Quadagno, 2003; McCloskey and Zaller, 1984; Sniderman and Hagen, 1985). For instance, Feldman and Zaller (1992) argue that the ambivalent feelings of people towards social welfare policies are rooted in certain types of ideological orientation, particularly economic individualism. Two different pathways have been proposed: descriptive and normative accounts (Gilens, 1995). 'Descriptive individualism' highlights the centrality of individual work ethic and self-guided

improvement. It understands that economic well-being is a consequence of hard work and sacrifices, and that the poor, the unemployed, and the socioeconomically disadvantaged are responsible for their own economic misfortunes and vicissitudes. In this perspective, the responsibility for one's economic success/failure and personal welfare rests ultimately with the individual. On the other hand, 'normative individualism' contends that an economic actor has a right to improve one's economic circumstances without being hampered and restricted by coercive state intervention. This conception of individualism argues that the role of government should be limited to promoting and maintaining individual rights and the health of the market. It, in principle, opposes to state intervention in the 'fair' socioeconomic stratification order and emphasises that it is not the government's responsibility but the business of private realms to promote the well-being of individuals and families. Explanations differ, but the core assumption of economic individualism is that the acceptance or resistance of individuals towards redistributive welfare policies is directed by individualist ideologies and norms.

Previous empirical studies provide substantial evidence that people who stress the virtue of hard work, personal responsibility, and self-reliance express resistance to redistributive policies (Feldman and Zaller, 1992; Fong, 2001; Hasenfeld and Rafferty, 1989; Kluegel and Smith, 1986). The literature also confirms that those who put greater emphasis on the role of individuals and private sectors rather than government in the provision of welfare are less supportive of egalitarian goals (Feldman and Zaller, 1992; Feldman and Steenbergen, 2001).

*A sense of national unity.* How then can we escape from the 'curse of individuality'? To overcome such utilitarian motivation and individualist values people would have to shift their concerns from their mere utility-optimising calculus and social atomisation to a broader sympathetic perspective that incorporates public interest and communal values. One possibility is that a sense of national identity may motivate individuals to act in a more reciprocal and altruistic manner. This insight comes from the ideas of liberal nationalism. Liberal nationalist thinkers have sought to connect traditional liberal principles with communitarian values such as identity, culture, and social solidarity. They assume that a sense of national unity is a necessary prerequisite for implementing the ethical objectives of liberalism, including redistributive justice and, in practice, the functioning of collectively financed welfare schemes. A common

national identity is expected to serve as the social glue that binds ‘dispersed’ individuals to a national community, which helps cultivate a sense of moral responsibility and mutual obligations among citizens (Miller, 1995; Tamir, 1993). Thus, individuals with a strong sense of national identity are predicted to be more likely to show an unselfish concern for the welfare of co-nationals and prioritise the ‘common good’ of the society over individualistic self/group-oriented benefit calculations. As Miller (1995) puts it:

In states lacking a common national identity...politics at best takes the form of group bargaining and compromise and at worst degenerates into a struggle for domination. Trust may exist within the groups, but not across them.

While conventional liberalism does not differentiate between ‘fellow nationals’ and ‘fellow human beings’, liberal nationalism clearly draws a line between members and non-members/outsideers (Friedman, 1996). Liberal nationalists argue that the legitimacy of the welfare state presupposes a distinct, consolidated national entity in which member citizens share a common heritage, experience, and destiny. This is why some liberal nationalists worry about the influx of immigrants/outsideers as a challenge to the nation-building project and warn that an excessive multicultural society might result in a fragmentation of the national community (Baldwin and Rozenberg, 2004; Goodhart, 2004).

Despite the theoretical and logical basis for the linkage between national identity and welfare views, the existing empirical literature provides no consistent evidence that a sense of national unity actually matters. For instance, based on a public opinion survey in Britain, Martinez-Herrera (2004) finds no discernible evidence that national identification is related with the probability of welfare policy support both in England and in Scotland. Using cross-national data from the World Values Survey, Shayo (2009) demonstrates that a sense of national pride in fact *reduces* public support for the welfare state. By contrast, a recent empirical study of Johnston *et al.* (2010) provides some evidence in support of the connection between national identity and welfare preferences in Canada. Their analysis finds that the interaction between economic position and identity exerts a positive influence upon popular discourse on redistribution, suggesting that the negative impact of economic self-interest can be weakened by a strong sense of national identity among Canadian citizens.

*Social trust.* Another theory for welfare policy support comes from the social

capital literature. Students of social capital suggest that a sense of social trustworthiness may have positive repercussions upon public discourse concerning redistributive government. This line of approach argues that generalised trust, which reflects a sense of social solidarity, cultivates a shared sense of moral responsibility for the well-being of underprivileged fellow citizens. Individuals are expected to be more likely to fulfill their duties of citizenship and contribute to the ‘common good’ of society if they trust their fellow members to act collectively and in solidarity rather than cheat or free-ride on the efforts of others (Rothstein and Uslander, 2005). Miller (1995) argues that a sense of national identity fosters mutual trust among citizens, and that such confidence in other community members generates public empathy for collectively financed risk-sharing arrangements. In short, individuals with high propensities to trust others are predicted to be less antagonistic towards redistributive policies.

This social capital perspective provides an alternative theoretical framework for understanding individual preferences for the welfare state, but very little empirical evidence has been provided so far. Soroka *et al.* (2007), which is one of few existing empirical efforts, reports that there is a positive linkage between interpersonal trust and popular acceptance of employment insurance and health care programmes, providing some support for Miller’s argument that mutual trust generates pro-welfare orientations.

### 1.3 Data and Measurements

The data analysed in this study come from the 2008 Japanese General Social Survey (JGSS).<sup>1</sup> The JGSS is a nationwide cross-sectional survey of non-institutionalised Japanese adults aged between 20 and 89, which has been conducted periodically since 2000 by the JGSS Research centre at Osaka University of Commerce. The survey provides rich information on Japanese attitudes, beliefs, sentiment, and a number of socio-demographic background characteristics. The JGSS 2008 covered a total of 4,220 respondents, with a response rate of 58.2 per cent for Form A ( $N = 2,060$ ) and 60.6 per cent for Form B ( $N = 2,160$ ).<sup>2</sup> The sample size included in my analysis ranged from

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1 Although the latest version of this survey series is the JGSS 2010, I decided to use the JGSS 2008 because several items concerning people’s nationalistic orientations are only available in the 2008 survey that incorporates the EASS (East Asian Social Survey) 2008 Culture Module.

2 The JGSS 2008 was conducted by means of personal face-to-face interviews and two types of self-administered questionnaires: forms A and B (different sets of randomly distributed data).



1,359 to 1,429, depending on the model estimated.

For the dependent variable, *support for redistributive policies*, I used a single response question: ‘What is your opinion of the following statement? —It is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences in income between families with high incomes and those with low incomes.’ Respondents were given five choices: ‘agree’ (coded 5), ‘somewhat agree’ (4), ‘neither agree nor disagree’ (3), ‘somewhat disagree’ (2), and ‘disagree’ (1). The question wording probes into the general attitudes of Japanese citizens toward redistributive government.<sup>3</sup> More than 60 per cent of respondents answered that they agreed or at least somewhat agreed with redistributive government, while only a small portion of people (less than 10 per cent) expressed opposition (‘disagree’ and ‘somewhat disagree’) to egalitarian policies. Around 30 per cent of respondents adopted a neutral position (‘neither agree nor disagree’) on the issue of redistribution.

Regarding the operationalisation of *economic self-interest*, much of prior research has solely relied on the objective measure (i.e. household income) and has not paid enough attention to the other important conceptual dimensions such as the subjective and dynamic nature of individual self-interest. As Gilens (1996) puts it:

...income represents only a “snapshot” of a respondent’s economic status; recent changes in income or future expectations may be more directly tied to perceptions about potential benefits from welfare or burdens from taxes. ...income represents an objective measure of a respondent’s social condition but does not directly tap his or her *perceptions* of the potential personal economic costs and benefits of welfare or the likelihood of that those costs or benefits will be realized (595; italics in the original).

Given the multi-faceted nature of economic self-interest, we cannot capture its complexity only by a single indicator such as family income. To make sure that my self-interest measures represent the entire domain of the construct, I used a set of eight different questions that tap into the extent to which respondents evaluate, perceive, or

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3 Public responses toward the welfare state may differ depending on the particular field of welfare policy—for example, health care, education, employment, and pension (Feldman and Zaller, 1992) or the specific form of redistribution—the transfer of income from the rich to the poor (i.e. interpersonal redistribution) or between different periods within one’s own lifetime (i.e. intrapersonal redistribution) (Sandmo, 1999). However, due to data availability I decided to focus on a single general question on income redistribution. In this respect, it must be acknowledged that my analysis does not reflect the more detailed internal variation within social welfare policies.

expect their current and future financial conditions. Table 1 presents the question wording for each of these measures and its response categories. Question [1] is a typical economic status variable often labelled as ‘household income’ and used as an objective and direct indicator of individual economic well-being.<sup>4</sup> As Gilens (1996) notes, it is possible that people might overestimate or underestimate their economic situation within society, and thus there may exist a cognitive gap between actual and perceived economic positions (see also Dean, 1998: 134). To capture such subjective aspects of economic self-interest, I included questions [2] to [5], in which respondents were asked to self-rate their income levels, social class levels, and their satisfaction with their current financial situation. The dynamic dimensions of self-interest were assessed by questions [6] to [8], which asked whether the respondents’ financial situation had worsened in the last few years, whether they had chances to improve their quality of life, and whether they had positive expectations about their future financial situation. Respondents with high scores in each of these eight indicators are assumed to have less incentive to support redistributive government provision, and those who scored low are expected to be more in favour of reducing income inequality.

As argued in the previous section, there are two types of individualism: normative and descriptive. However, the latter conception, ‘descriptive individualism’, which is “a belief that economic success or failure can in fact be attributed to individual talent and effort” (Gilens, 1995: 1003), cannot be captured sufficiently with the survey questions available in the JGSS data set. Therefore, I focus on the normative conception of individualism, which is “a value orientation consisting of a preference for individual rather than government responsibility for economic well-being” (Gilens, 1995: 1003). To measure the respondents’ (*normative*) *individualist orientations* I combined the following four questions: ‘Who (governments or individuals/families) do you think should be responsible for “livelihood of the elderly”, “medical and nursing care of the elderly”, “education of children”, and “raising and taking care of children”?’ Responses are given on a five-point scale, with higher scores indicating stronger individualistic

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4 Using household income as an economic self-interest measure makes the implicit assumption that earned family income is equally accessed and shared by all household members. If the sharing of benefits within the household unit is noticeably unbalanced and unequal (e.g. between males and females), redistributive issues might be perceived differently by each individual member of the *same* household. In this sense, it must be noted that this analysis is based on the assumption that respondents under different within-household circumstances do *not* give inaccurate or biased answers to the redistribution question.

tendencies. The four individualism items form a reliable scale with a Cronbach's alpha of .67 (see Appendix Table A1).

For the measurement of *a sense of national unity*, I used three questions in which respondents were asked whether they agreed with the following statements: 'Japan should limit the import of foreign products in order to protect its national economy', 'Japan should follow its national interests even if these would lead to conflicts with other nations', and 'Increased exposure to foreign films, music and books is damaging our own culture'. These items were designed to tap into the respondents' sense of national community, which acknowledges the special interests of member citizens (or the nation) and the survival of their economic and cultural solidarity. Seven response categories were provided, from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree', and respondents who selected 'strongly agree', 'agree', or 'somewhat agree' to any of the three questions were coded 1, and 0 otherwise. Finally, *generalised trust* was measured by a standard question often used in the social capital literature: 'Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted?'<sup>5</sup> Respondents who selected 'yes' were coded 1, and those who selected 'no' or 'depends' were coded 0.

I also included a series of demographic controls: gender (1 = female, 0 = male), age (in years), educational attainment (dichotomous variables: high, medium, low), marital status (married, single, separated/divorced), employment status (employed, unemployed, out of the labour force or others), urbanisation (a four-point scale from 1 = countryside to 4 = big city), and political ideology (a five-point progressive-conservative scale, with higher scores indicating greater identification with conservative). The predictor variables used in my analysis are weakly associated with one another, with all coefficients well below |.50|.

## 1.4 Results

I begin by testing the economic hypothesis that popular discourse on welfare policies is determined by utility-optimising orientations: those who have richer socioeconomic

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5 The 'generalised trust' question has often been used as a standard indicator that taps the defining feature of social capital (Nannestad, 2008). However, it should be noted that, given the absence of a generally accepted definition of social capital (Fine, 2001), the operationalisation of the concept as 'generalised trust' is at best arbitrary.

resources express less support for redistributive government. I first developed equations that incorporate one of the eight economic self-interest items specified earlier, along with demographic variables as controls. I do this because, as argued before, it is possible that the impact of utilitarian motivation might differ across different dimensions of the self-interest concept.

Table 2 presents the results of ordered probit estimation of the economic models. The results demonstrate that each of the eight self-interest variables strongly influences on redistributional support. The coefficient of each self-interest measure is persistently negative and highly significant ( $p < .001$ ) even after controlling for demographic determinants. These findings are not only consistent with previous empirical studies of similar results (Hasenfeld and Rafferty, 1989; Svallfors, 1997) but also provide a qualification to Gilens' (1996) argument that the subjective and dynamic aspects of social strata equally matter.

All the self-interest variables are strongly correlated with one another ( $r = .135-.556$ ,  $p < .01$ ; see Appendix Table A2). One possible explanation for such high correlations among self-interest items stems from the potential overlap of these indices. To provide more parsimonious and interpretable models, I conducted a principal components analysis (PCA) to reduce the dimensions of the self-interest concept into a smaller set of components. The PCA of the eight items yielded a single factor that reflects a mix of the measures related to utility-maximising attitudes. I termed this new composite index ESI (economic self-interest), which ranges from  $-2.565$  to  $3.470$ , where higher scores indicate higher socioeconomic positions. The ESI scale showed good internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of .69 (see Appendix Table A3).

Figure 1 shows how levels of welfare support vary depending on the ESI scores. Here, the ESI index is converted into a four-point scale, with '1' showing the bottom quartile, '2' the lower middle quartile, '3' the upper middle quartile, and '4' the top quartile. Among those who scored lowest (labelled '1.00'), nearly half (49.15 per cent) explicitly agreed with the statement 'It is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences in income between families with high incomes and those with low incomes'. On the other hand, only around 20 per cent of respondents who scored highest (4.00) expressed strong support ('agree') for redistributive government. This provides a clear demonstration that levels of support substantially vary across different ESI clusters.

To confirm these results, the same model in Table 2 (i.e. one self-interest variable and demographic controls) is re-estimated by replacing the self-interest item with the aggregated ESI index (model 1 in Table 3).<sup>6</sup> As anticipated, the estimation results show that the ESI variable has a highly significant negative impact on popular support for redistribution at the .001 level, suggesting that the likelihood that a citizen is a non-supporter of redistribution significantly rises with higher levels of socioeconomic position. From these findings, it is quite evident that economic self-interest actually exerts a systematic and sizeable negative influence on pro-welfare discourse.

Next, to test alternative theories of welfare policy support, I added the measures of individualism, nationalism, and social trust into model 1, respectively (models 2 to 4 in Table 3). The second equation (model 2) reveals that the coefficient of individualism is negative and highly significant at the .001 level, even after accounting for the ESI variable and demographic controls. These outcomes suggest that being an (normative) individualist indeed decreases the probability of a person having positive feelings towards redistribution. The next concern is whether nationalistic ‘we’ consciousness plays a significant role in determining levels of welfare support. If the proposition of liberal nationalism is correct, individuals with a strong sense of national identity would express less antipathy towards the welfare of co-nationals. As the results of model 3 (Table 3) show, this seems to be the case. The coefficient of the identity variable is positive and highly significant, while controlling for the ESI measure and control factors.<sup>7</sup> This lends credence to the liberal nationalist view that a sense of national unity matters. In contrast, no significant main effect was found for the social trust variable (model 4 in Table 3), indicating that interpersonal trust does not have a direct impact on popular discourse.

Table 3 also reveals the significant effects of demographic variables: Older persons

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6 The ESI index consists of eight different JGSS variables related to economic self-interest. Six of them were available in both forms A and B. However, two variables (‘changes in economic situation’ and ‘satisfaction with financial situation’) were only available in Form A. For this reason, when the eight variables were integrated as a composite index, a half of the data (Form B) could not be included. This means that the ESI index was created by using only Form A data. Because “Form A was randomly distributed to a half of the sample, and Form B was distributed to the rest of the sample” (JGSS Research Center, n.d.), the sample used for creating the ESI index can be considered to be legitimate representative of the entire population.

7 Due to data availability, in models 3 and 6, principle components analysis (PCA) was performed on six items—items ‘changes in economic situation’ and ‘anxiety about future economic situation’ were excluded. The Cronbach’s alpha is .66.

prove to be more supportive of redistributive government. Urban and conservative people are more likely to hold antipathy towards egalitarian policies. Many other demographic variables are marginally significant or bear at best very tenuous relationships with redistributive support. It also has to be noted that throughout the three models, the standard error of the ESI coefficient (estimated in model 1) remains largely unaffected by the inclusion of any of the three additional factors in the equation.

Thus far, we have seen that policy preferences to welfare spending are significantly directed by economic self-preserving attitudes. The popular belief that mass attitudes are affected by utility-optimising concerns appears to be well-founded. The next question for us is whether such a negative relationship between self-interest and welfare support varies depending on levels of individualism, national identity, and social trust. Here, I predict that the detrimental effects of self-oriented attitudes are offset or moderated by weak individualism, strong national identification, and high levels of generalised trust. Table 4 presents the results. Model 5 is identical to model 2 in Table 4 but adds the non-individualism variable and the interaction term between non-individualism and the ESI index. As predicated, the model confirms a significantly positive impact of non-individualism, but find no significant effect of non-individualism on the relationship between ESI and support. Likewise, model 6 shows that while the main effect of national identity remains robustly positive, the negative impact of ESI is not significantly mediated by a sense of national unity. In model 7, however, I find some evidence for the moderating effect of social trust on the ESI-support connection. The model demonstrates that the ESI-support link is indeed significantly mediated by a sense of interpersonal trustworthiness ( $p < .05$ ). This indicates that the negative impact of ESI on welfare support is more prominent and straightforward among individuals who trust others less. Therefore, it is a possibility that if one distrust others, getting more socioeconomically advantaged makes him or her far less sympathetic towards redistributive government and the well-being of other fellow citizens.

Figure 2 illustrates the simulated impacts of the three interaction terms. Again, overall we see that individuals with higher scores in the ESI index are less likely to support redistribution. The first figure (top left) shows the massive downward effect of individualistic orientations on support: being an individualist lowers dramatically the probability of high support by approximately .300 points. However, the non-individualism variable seems to have little interacted impact on the ESI-support

relationship. The second figure (top right) demonstrates that, as estimated before, a strong sense of national unity significantly increases individual support, whereas the interaction effect appears marginal.

As shown in the third figure (bottom left), the social trust variable is a significant moderator of the detrimental ESI impact on support. It seems that economic self-interest matters less for people who think that most people can be trusted than for those who do not think so. Within the high-trust group, the shift from the lowest to the highest ESI score reduces the probability of high support by .237, from .719 to .481. By contrast, within the low-trust cluster, a shift from lower to upper socioeconomic status results in a significant drop in support by .596, from .840 to .244.

## 1.5 Discussion and Concluding Remarks

This article examined the sources of substantial variation in welfare views among Japanese citizens. Using data from the JGSS 2008, this analysis confirms the oft-made claim that the willingness to support the welfare state is directed by utilitarian motivation and individualist political culture. The two main novel findings of my study are that, first, a sense of national identity has a powerful influence on public perceptions, and, second, the corrosive impact of material interest is significantly mediated by a sense of social trustworthiness.

The implications of these results are potentially significant. First, this article treats ‘economic self-interest’ as a multidimensional concept that encompasses a broad array of utilitarian concerns. I developed a more nuanced and comprehensive set of indicators for self-interest assessment and evaluated social strata not only by objective but also by subjective and dynamic dimensions that have often been overlooked in previous empirical investigations. In this sense, my findings show that the negative relationship between economic position and welfare support is robust to alternative definitions of social stratification.

Second, the analysis provides strong evidence for the hypothesis that (normative) individualism is negatively related with pro-welfare attitudes. Many scholars have argued and substantiated that the key of Americans’ opposition to anti-poverty policies lies in historically formed individualist ethos, such as a belief in the free market and a persistent suspicion of big government (Lipset, 1979; Feldman and Zaller, 1992;

McClosky and Zaller, 1984). My findings in Japan suggest that these results in the United States are not necessarily an ‘American exceptionalism’ but can be replicated in the context of non-American (and even non-Western) society.<sup>88</sup>

In addition, this study offers empirical evidence in favour of the proposition that a sense of national unity enhances citizens’ willingness to accept the welfare state. Liberal nationalist philosophers claim that national identity helps build an overarching concern among community members for economically disadvantaged co-nationals, but the empirical results have been mixed and sometimes contradictory. While Shayo (2009) finds an inverse link between national pride and acceptance of redistribution, Johnston *et al.* (2010) conclude that national identity can play some role in generating pro-welfare discourse. One explanation for these inconsistent results may lie in the different variables used to operationalise ‘national identity’ (Johnston *et al.*, 2010). In this study, for instance, the identity concept was operationalised by three items that gauge the respondents’ perceptions and feelings towards the protection of their national economy, the importance of national interests, and the continuity of their own culture. These measures are more specific than those used in earlier research in that the term ‘nation’ or ‘country’ was paraphrased into more concrete expressions, such as ‘national economy’, ‘national interests’, and ‘our own culture’. Another possible explanation derives from the fact that the three items used in my analysis are not designed to *directly* tap the respondents’ identification with or sense of belonging to the nation but rather are designed to capture the respondents’ nationalistic concerns for their collective economic security, shared interests, and traditional culture. In this respect, my analysis is based on the implicit assumption that such nationalistic views are based on strong identification with the national community.

The most striking finding in my analysis is the role of generalised trust. The social capital literature argues that the prevalence of interpersonal trust in a society fosters cooperative social relationships, mutual assistance, and reciprocal concerns, thereby facilitating the resolution of collective action problems. As we have seen, the effect of

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8 However, it must be noted that my analysis does not take into account the structural and socio-cultural contexts in which individuals are embedded. Even if similar results were obtained in different cultural contexts (i.e. the US and Japan), it does not necessarily mean that people in these countries perceive or evaluate government redistribution in the exact same manner because individual preferences might be significantly influenced by a particular cultural value system and institutional framework.



economic self-interest is consistently negative and highly significant. It seems that rational individuals with privileged market positions are not willing to contribute to the funding of redistributive programmes. If every individual behaves in such a way that maximises his or her material benefits, welfare preferences would be fragmented along socio-economic cleavages or organised interests. Given the fact that the distribution of earnings in Japan, along with some of other advanced democracies, has become increasingly unequal over the last few decades, the interest-based politics of redistribution may serve to undermine social cohesion and, consequently, the political legitimacy of collectively financed welfare schemes. Nevertheless, the findings of this analysis show that the assumed negative association between utilitarian motivation and welfare support is *conditional*, and the detrimental impact of economic self-interest is significantly moderated by perceived trustworthiness. This implies that a sense of social solidarity may help solve social dilemmas by cultivating less self-centred awareness among citizens. Interestingly, these findings echo those from the qualitative research conducted by Dean (1998). Based on data collected via in-depth interviews, he finds that, compared to those who are rich, poor respondents are more inclined to support redistribution but, paradoxically, are less likely to accept solidaristic values and principles on which the welfare state rests. As his findings (and the results of this study) show, popular discourse is a complex and often contradictory mixture of moral repertoires (Dean, 1998). In this sense, future research on popular attitudes concerning the welfare state may have to pay more attention to the complex intersection (i.e. interaction) between solidarity-oriented altruism and individualistic instrumentalism.

Here, we have to acknowledge the contextual significance of these findings drawn from Japanese social survey data. Despite the recent influx of immigrants, Japanese society remains predominantly monocultural and racially homogeneous compared to other Western democracies. In this respect, the words such as ‘social cohesion’ and ‘nationalism’ could be ‘race-coded’ in the Japanese context in that these concepts might be interpreted more narrowly as ‘racial solidarity’ and ‘ethnic nationalism’ rather than in more inclusive and multicultural fashions.<sup>9</sup> If these concepts are translated in such a

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<sup>9</sup> In this context, it should be acknowledged that, due to the lack of data available, the operationalisations of ‘trust’ and ‘nationalism’ are rather crude and fail to capture the conceptual difference between multicultural and exclusive (or ethno-culturally selective) forms of national/social solidarity. For example, the national identity questions do not clarify whether the wordings such as ‘national’ and ‘our’ include non-Japanese residents (e.g. newcomer

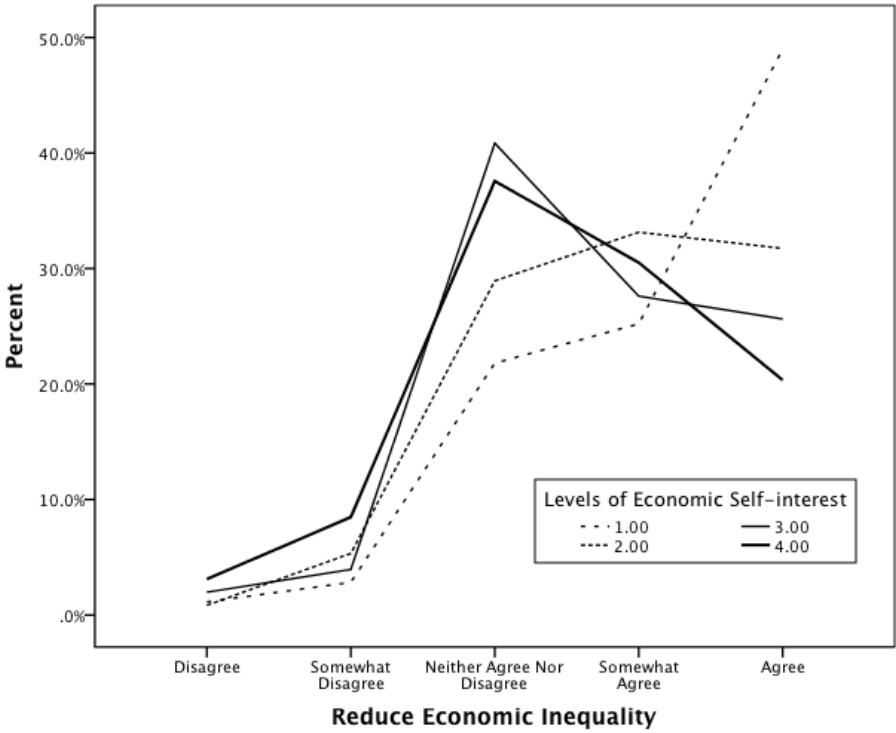
way, the findings in my analysis would immediately imply a trade-off dilemma between redistribution and multiculturalism because the furthering of any redistributive goals presupposes a culturally homogeneous community. Therefore, it must be noted that my results should not be understood *only* within contexts of particular political discourse—for example, the claim that inner cultural differences should be diminished for protecting state welfare (Banting *et al.*, 2006) or the belief that immigrants should be excluded from full access to tax-financed welfare benefits (i.e. welfare state chauvinism; see Andersen, 2007).

In short, what I have shown in this article is that while self-preserving attitudes indeed exert negative effects on individual support, solidarity-related variables such as a sense of national unity and social trust can have a favourable impact on welfare views in a direct or indirect way. These findings suggest that future research on the welfare state should pay more attention to solidaristic values and beliefs; however, with careful attention to the potential implications of these discourses such as exclusionary forms of ‘collective solidarity’.

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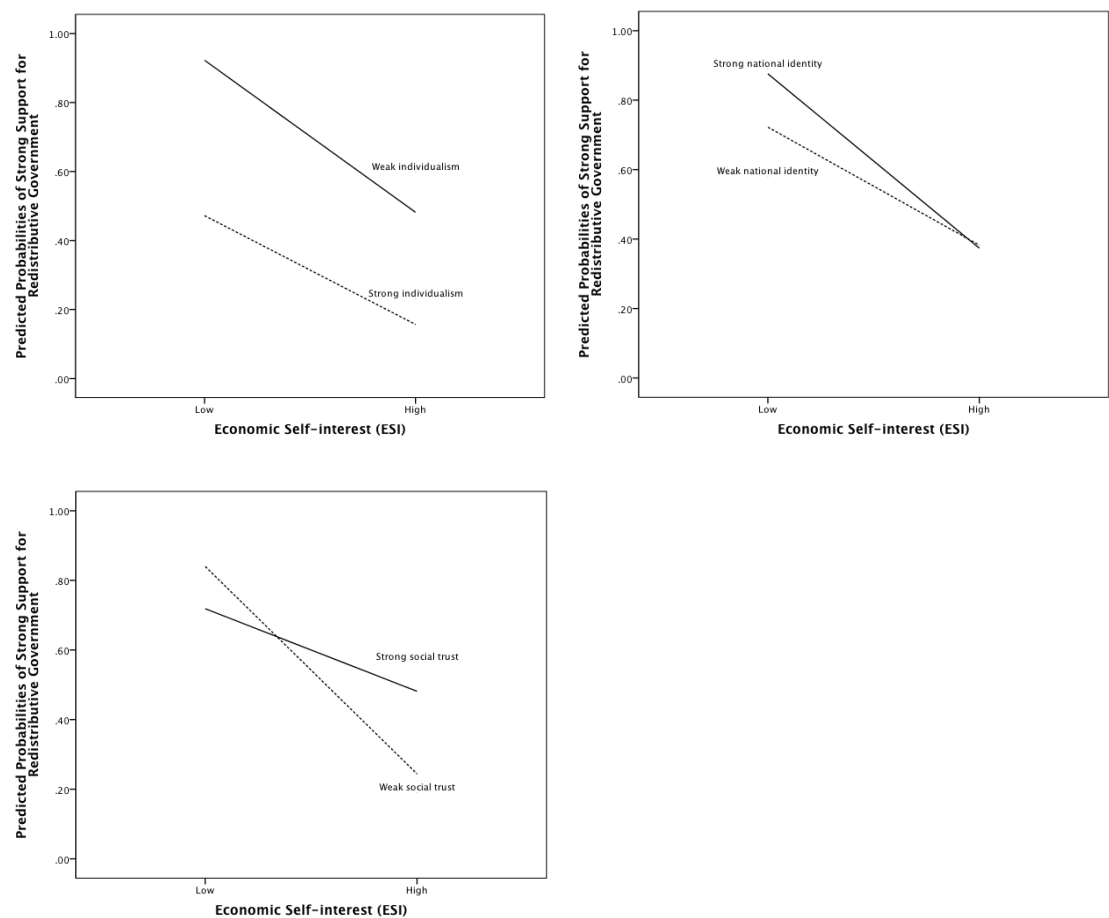
immigrants) or not. Likewise, the social trust question is also unclear what the part ‘most people’ refers to (only Japanese natives or not) when it asks ‘Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted?’

Figure 1.1 Support for redistributive policies, by ESI levels



Notes: N = 1,419.

Figure 1.2 Mediating effects of non-individualism, national identity, and social trust



*Notes:* Predicted probabilities holding all other variables at their means are presented. Coefficients are taken from models 5-7 (probit). ‘Low’ in the horizontal axis indicates the minimum score of ESI, while ‘High’ corresponds to its maximum score. The solid line represents the predicted probabilities at the highest value of each indicator (i.e. non-individualism, national identity, and social trust), and the dotted line shows those at the lowest value.

Table 1.2 Eight items on economic self-interest and their choice options

	Response categories				
	Greater incentive to support redistribution	2	3	4	Greater incentive to oppose redistribution
	coded 1				5
[1] Which one of the following best describes your annual household income last year? Please answer the income before deducting taxes. Include income not only from your jobs, but also from all other sources such as stock shares, pensions, and real estate.	A 19-point scale from 'None' (1) to '23 million yen or over' (19)				
[2] Compared with Japanese families in general, what would you say about your family income?	Far below average	Below average	Average	Above average	Far above average
[3] If we were to divide the contemporary Japanese society into the following five strata, which would you say you belong to?	Lower	Lower middle	Middle	Upper middle	Upper
[4] If we were to divide the contemporary Japanese society into the following ten strata, which would you say you belong to?	A 10-point scale from 'Bottom' (1) to 'Top' (10)				
[5] How much satisfaction do you get from the following area of life?—The current financial situation of your household.	A five-point scale from 'Dissatisfied' (1) to 'Satisfied' (5)				
[6] During the last few years, has your financial situation been getting better, worse, or has it stayed the same?	A three-point scale from 'Getting worse' (1), 'Stayed the same' (2), and 'Getting better' (3)				
[7] In your opinion, how much opportunity would you say there is in the Japanese society to improve the standard of living for you and/or for your family?	Not sufficient at all	Not very sufficient	Neither sufficient nor insufficient	Somewhat sufficient	Sufficient
[8] Do you feel anxious about your economic situation in the future?	I feel very anxious	I feel somewhat anxious	I have mixed feelings	I don't feel anxious very much	I don't feel anxious at all

*Notes:* The scores for item responses [3], [4], [5], and [7] were reversed to maintain consistent direction. The values of question [6] were recoded as 'Getting better' 1 = 3, 'Getting worse' 2 = 1, and 'Stayed the same' 3 = 2.

*Source:* JGSS 2008.

Table 1.3 Effects of economic self-interest items on distributional support

Independent variables	coef.	s.e.	Log pseudo-likelihood	Pseudo R-squared	N
Household income	-0.034**	(0.010)	-1813	0.015	1,404
Self-rated income level	-0.187***	(0.054)	-2501	0.025	1,944
Self-rated class (5-pt. scale)	-0.263***	(0.035)	-2501	0.027	1,945
Self-rated class (10-pt. scale)	-0.089***	(0.016)	-2510	0.020	1,940
Satisfaction with financial situation	-0.126***	(0.023)	-2504	0.021	1,940
Changes in economic situation	-0.170***	(0.040)	-2530	0.017	1,950
Opportunity for better quality of life	-0.169***	(0.030)	-2510	0.021	1,945
Anxiety about future economic situation	-0.212***	(0.028)	-2513	0.027	1,956

*Notes:* Robust standard errors are given within parentheses. Every model includes all demographic controls except reference categories (male, high education, married, employed).

\*\*p < .05; \*\*\*p < .001.

Table 1.4 Determinants of support for redistributive policies

Independent variables	Model 1 ESI Only		Model 2 Individualism		Model 3 National Identity		Model 4 Social Trust	
	oprobit	probit	oprobit	probit	oprobit	probit	oprobit	probit
Economic self-interest (ESI)	-0.259*** (0.034)	-0.233*** (0.038)	-0.234*** (0.035)	-0.208*** (0.039)	-0.221*** (0.033)	-0.198*** (0.038)	-0.259*** (0.035)	-0.235*** (0.039)
Individualism			-0.183*** (0.025)	-0.181*** (0.027)				
National identity					0.187** (0.060)	0.299*** (0.071)		
Social trust							0.036 (0.076)	0.069 (0.088)
Female	-0.111# (0.063)	-0.205** (0.076)	-0.099 (0.064)	-0.194** (0.077)	0.035 (0.060)	0.032 (0.073)	-0.108# (0.063)	-0.201** (0.076)
Age	0.008** (0.002)	0.007** (0.003)	0.007** (0.003)	0.006** (0.003)	0.008** (0.002)	0.007** (0.003)	0.008** (0.002)	0.007** (0.003)
Medium education	-0.018 (0.066)	-0.069 (0.080)	-0.024 (0.067)	-0.030 (0.081)	0.006 (0.064)	0.063 (0.077)	-0.015 (0.067)	-0.063 (0.080)
Low education	0.333 (0.430)	-0.195 (0.398)	0.418 (0.437)	-0.125 (0.402)	-0.565 (0.348)	-0.390 (0.353)	0.328 (0.430)	-0.209 (0.397)
Single	-0.059 (0.110)	-0.049 (0.121)	-0.008 (0.112)	-0.006 (0.123)	-0.208** (0.104)	-0.175 (0.118)	-0.060 (0.110)	-0.051 (0.121)
Separated/divorced	-0.055 (0.100)	-0.024 (0.124)	-0.008 (0.101)	0.024 (0.126)	-0.167# (0.096)	-0.212# (0.112)	-0.055 (0.100)	-0.026 (0.124)
Unemployed	-0.122 (0.303)	0.034 (0.349)	-0.153 (0.294)	-0.005 (0.342)	0.234 (0.222)	0.208 (0.272)	-0.116 (0.304)	0.046 (0.349)
Out of labour force/others	-0.066 (0.072)	-0.025 (0.089)	-0.026 (0.073)	0.016 (0.090)	0.004 (0.068)	0.011 (0.086)	-0.070 (0.072)	-0.030 (0.089)
Urbanisation	-0.050 (0.031)	-0.064# (0.037)	-0.062** (0.031)	-0.078** (0.038)	-0.080** (0.031)	-0.056 (0.037)	-0.049 (0.031)	-0.063# (0.037)
Conservative	-0.083** (0.038)	-0.108** (0.040)	-0.052 (0.038)	-0.075# (0.041)	-0.056 (0.037)	-0.052 (0.039)	-0.082** (0.038)	-0.106** (0.040)
Threshold 1	-1.993 (0.192)		-1.920 (0.192)		-1.906 (0.206)		-1.990 (0.192)	
Threshold 2	-1.344 (0.188)		-1.250 (0.188)		-1.245 (0.196)		-1.340 (0.188)	
Threshold 3	-0.096 (0.180)		0.037 (0.180)		0.036 (0.190)		-0.094 (0.180)	
Threshold 4	0.699 (0.179)		0.858 (0.180)		1.012 (0.191)		0.702 (0.180)	
Constant		0.261 (0.204)		0.128 (0.208)		-0.011 (0.205)		0.251 (0.204)
Log pseudolikelihood	-1741	-878	-1695	-848	-1776	-896	-1739	-876
Pseudo R-squared	0.030	0.040	0.051	0.067	0.029	0.041	0.030	0.040
N	1,367	1,367	1,359	1,359	1,429	1,429	1,365	1,365

Notes: Results from ordered probit and (binary) probit regressions are presented. The (McFadden's) pseudo  $R^2$  for the models is .029-.051 (oprobit) or .040-.067 (probit) and the models successfully classify 39.58-43.05 per cent (oprobit) or 63.52-66.20 per cent (probit) of the outcomes. Robust standard errors are given within parentheses. For the probit models, the dependent variable is recoded into a binary variable (a dummy equaling one if a respondent 'agrees' or 'somewhat agrees' with the redistribution question, zero for the other three answer categories).

#p < .10; \*\*p < .05; \*\*\*p < .001.

Table 1.5 Determinants of support for redistributive policies

Independent variables	Model 5 Interaction with Non- individualism		Model 6 Interaction with National Identity		Model 7 Interaction with Social Trust	
	oprobit	probit	oprobit	probit	oprobit	probit
Economic self-interest (ESI)	-0.235*** (0.035)	-0.210*** (0.039)	-0.218*** (0.033)	-0.197*** (0.038)	-0.303*** (0.038)	-0.280*** (0.044)
Non-individualism	0.184*** (0.025)	0.182*** (0.027)				
ESI × Non-individualism	-0.011 (0.026)	-0.013 (0.027)				
National identity			0.186** (0.060)	0.300*** (0.071)		
ESI × National identity			-0.090 (0.061)	-0.093 (0.071)		
Social trust					0.004 (0.078)	0.036 (0.088)
ESI × Social trust					0.176** (0.081)	0.176** (0.085)
Female	-0.098 (0.064)	-0.193** (0.077)	0.037 (0.060)	0.034 (0.073)	-0.107# (0.063)	-0.201** (0.076)
Age	0.007** (0.003)	0.006** (0.003)	0.008** (0.002)	0.008** (0.003)	0.008** (0.002)	0.007** (0.003)
Medium education	0.023 (0.067)	-0.031 (0.081)	0.006 (0.064)	0.062 (0.077)	-0.015 (0.067)	-0.064 (0.080)
Low education	0.423 (0.438)	-0.120 (0.403)	-0.554 (0.345)	-0.380 (0.354)	0.338 (0.434)	-0.201 (0.400)
Single	-0.010 (0.112)	-0.008 (0.123)	-0.204# (0.104)	-0.170 (0.118)	-0.057 (0.109)	-0.048 (0.121)
Separated/divorced	-0.010 (0.101)	0.021 (0.126)	-0.167# (0.096)	-0.210# (0.112)	-0.052 (0.100)	-0.025 (0.125)
Unemployed	-0.151 (0.295)	-0.002 (0.343)	0.234 (0.222)	0.214 (0.271)	-0.144 (0.310)	0.019 (0.357)
Out of labour force/others	-0.026 (0.073)	0.016 (0.090)	0.001 (0.068)	0.008 (0.086)	-0.062 (0.072)	-0.022 (0.089)
Urbanisation	-0.063** (0.031)	-0.079** (0.038)	-0.081** (0.031)	-0.055 (0.039)	-0.050 (0.031)	-0.064# (0.037)
Conservative	-0.053 (0.038)	-0.076# (0.041)	-0.058 (0.037)	-0.054 (0.039)	-0.079** (0.038)	-0.103** (0.040)
Threshold 1	-1.919 (0.192)		-1.790 (0.205)		-1.974 (0.193)	
Threshold 2	-1.249 (0.188)		-1.128 (0.193)		-1.324 (0.188)	
Threshold 3	0.037 (0.180)		0.152 (0.189)		-0.073 (0.181)	
Threshold 4	0.858 (0.180)		1.129 (0.190)		0.725 (0.181)	
Constant		0.127 (0.208)		-0.194 (0.203)		0.224 (0.205)
Log pseudolikelihood	-1695	-848	-1775	-896	-1736	-874
Pseudo R-squared	0.051	0.067	0.030	0.042	0.032	0.042
N	1,359	1,359	1,429	1,429	1,365	1,365

Notes: Results from ordered probit and (binary) probit regressions are presented. The (McFadden's) pseudo  $R^2$  for the models is .030-.051 (oprobit) or .042-.067 (probit) and the models successfully classify 39.41-43.19 per cent (oprobit) or 63.00-65.92 per cent (probit) of the outcomes. Robust standard errors are given within parentheses. Prior to the creation of interaction terms, the key variables (i.e. ESI, non-individualism, and social trust) were mean-centred to reduce potential multicollinearity problems. For the probit models, the welfare support variable is recoded into a binary variable (a dummy equaling one if a respondent 'agrees' or 'somewhat agrees' with the redistribution question, zero for the other three answer categories). The aggregated variable of individualism was recalculated with reverse-scored response categories (i.e. 1 = 5, 2 = 4, 3 = 3, 4 = 2, 5 = 1), labelled 'non-individualism'.

#p < .10; \*\*p < .05; \*\*\*p < .001.



## Appendix

TableA1. Factor loadings on individualism scales

Variable Code	Items	Factor Loading
OP5SRWFY	Livelihood of the elderly	.67
OP5SRMDY	Medical and nursing care of the elderly	.71
OP5CCED	Education of children	.74
OP5CCARE	Raising and taking care of children	.74

*Notes:* Cronbach's alpha = .67. *N* = 1,359.

Table A2. Bivariate correlations among eight self-interest indices

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
I. Household income	1.00							
II. Self-rated income level	0.556**	1.00						
III. Self-rated class (5-pt. scale)	0.407**	0.547**	1.00					
IV. Self-rated class (10-pt. scale)	0.377**	0.409**	0.476**	1.00				
V. Satisfaction with financial situation	0.250**	0.437**	0.422**	0.337**	1.00			
VI. Changes in economic situation	0.141**	0.316**	0.281**	0.203**	0.385**	1.00		
VII. Opportunity for better quality of life	0.135**	0.209**	0.299**	0.163**	0.240**	0.168**	1.00	
VIII. Anxiety about future economic situation	0.161**	0.363**	0.434**	0.281**	0.468**	0.384**	0.219**	1.00

Notes: \*\*p < .01 (two-tailed).

Table A3. Factor loadings on economic self-interest scales

Variable Code	Items	Factor Loading
SZHSINCM	Household income	.60
OP5FFINX	Self-rated income level	.80
OP5LVK	Self-rated class (5-pt. scale)	.69
OP10LVL	Self-rated class (10-pt. scale)	.79
ST5ECNY	Satisfaction with financial situation	.67
OP3ECN3A	Changes in economic situation	.53
OP5CHNCA	Opportunity for better quality of life	.38
AXECNSF	Anxiety about future economic situation	.64

Notes: Cronbach's alpha = .69.  $N = 1,419$ .

## CHAPTER 2

### Does Immigration Erode the Multicultural Welfare State? A Cross-national Multilevel Analysis in 19 OECD Member States

(Forthcoming: *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Routledge)



## 2.1 Introduction

The recent growing mobility of global migrants has provoked a lively debate over the impact of increasing ethno-cultural diversity on social solidarity on which the welfare state is based. Several scholars and commentators argue that ethnic heterogeneity is negatively associated with pro-welfare orientations, such as government social spending and individual support for redistributive welfare policies (Alesina and Glaeser, 2004; Banting et al., 2006; Goodhart, 2004; Soroka et al., 2006). If the harmful effects of ethnic diversity are true, they seem to be a serious obstacle for most industrialised welfare states whose populations have become increasingly multicultural through the recent influx of immigrants. In this article, I focus on public attitudes toward government welfare programs and examine the contention that increasing cultural differences undermine public acceptance of redistributive government.

The relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and support for redistribution has been verified in several empirical studies (Stichnoth and van der Straeten, 2011). However, considering that there exist some evidence-based challenges against this claim (e.g. Johnston et al., 2010; Mau and Burkhardt, 2009; Soroka et al., 2004), further comparative research remains to be done before the association is conclusively established. To provide a more complete picture of this issue, I extend previous research in several important ways. First of all, prior research has been conducted mostly in the context of one country, particularly the United States (e.g. Alesina and Glaeser, 2004). One concern of this study, therefore, is to explore whether the negative linkage between diversity and popular support for egalitarian policies is transferable across different countries, especially across OECD member states. Second, scholars point out that the relationship between diversity and public attitudes is contingent upon institutional contexts. Banting et al. (2006), for example, contend that multiculturalism is of crucial importance in explaining the causal mechanism behind the relationship between diversity and redistribution. Moreover, Rothstein and his colleagues argue that the impartiality of administration and the generosity of social welfare policies also have significant effects on people's perceptions and attitudes towards the welfare state (Kumlin and Rothstein, 2005; Kumlin, 2002; Rothstein and Stolle, 2003; Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005). As these researchers note, however, the effects of institutional factors lack adequate evidence and remain empirically underspecified. This study aims to

provide additional empirical evidence on this issue by examining the effects of multiculturalism and other structural determinants on the willingness of citizens to support egalitarian schemes. A third extension is the operationalisation of ethnic heterogeneity. Much of existing research has not distinguished historically formulated cultural differences from ethnic diversity driven by recent immigration. My analysis focuses exclusively on ethno-cultural differences generated by the inflows of *non-Western* immigrants. This paper highlights ‘non-Western’ immigrants because it assumes that they are more visible and ‘threatening’, and most importantly, more likely to be reliant on the welfare schemes of their destination countries (Hooghe et al., 2009; Kesler and Bloemraad, 2010; Mau and Burkhardt, 2009; Soroka et al., 2004). Finally, this article employs multilevel regression modelling (Hox, 2010; Snijders and Bosker, 1999), which allows us to estimate the effects of both individual- and aggregate-level characteristics simultaneously and overcome the ecological and individual fallacy problems of prior investigations.

## 2.2 Does Ethnic Heterogeneity Erode the Welfare State?

In recent years, academics and policy-makers have paid increasing attention to the impact of ethno-cultural heterogeneity on social solidarity and common identity. For many researchers, the major concern is that the more ethnically plural the society becomes, the less support people would have for social welfare provisions. Marshall (1950) argues that the social rights of citizenship, or the unity of the welfare state, have historically been consolidated through the incorporation of inner differences into a homogeneous national community. Some scholars contend on normative grounds that the conception of distributive justice is based on a clear demarcation between community members who are fully entitled to enjoy state social benefits and non-members, or outsiders, who are ruled out or partially protected from the system (Blake, 2005; Nagel, 2005; Walzer, 1983). Miller (1995) claims that the development of national consciousness and a solid sense of membership and belonging enhance public acceptance of government welfare programmes designed primarily to help poor fellow-citizens who share similar values and beliefs. This line of reasoning stresses that a functional welfare state presupposes a shared identity of its citizens as well as a strong sense of commonness cultivated within a closed society (Offe, 2000). McPherson et al.

(2001) point out the somewhat discriminative nature of human attitudes, or the principle of homophily—that is, members of one group are inclined to favour in-group homogeneity and express stronger aversion and distrust towards dissimilar out-group members (see also Uslaner, 2012). Luttmer (2001)’s work substantiates that people’s support for welfare spending is determined by interpersonal preferences toward own or other racial groups, demonstrating that individuals show greater acceptance of welfare spending when the proportion of welfare recipients from their own racial group increases. As these scholars suggest, if the cultural unity of the nation-state is an essential basis for a well-functioning redistributive state, it is a possibility that individuals in culturally plural societies become more reluctant to accept their mutual obligations and to sacrifice their own benefits (e.g. through taxes and transfers) to improve the lives of their fellow citizens.

In the past few decades, the human dimension of globalisation, as seen in the mass movements of people across national borders, has dramatically changed the social and political landscape in which the welfare state is placed. The influx of immigrants has increased the ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity of populations, and has made well-consolidated nation-states less homogenous and more susceptible to external factors. As a general pattern, immigrants from non-Western countries tend to have lower educational attainment and are more vulnerable to an unstable labour market compared with their native counterparts. This implies that newcomer residents are more likely than the native population to rely on and benefit from the welfare system. Thus, anti-welfare conservatives have strategically *racialised* the distributive issue by emphasising the ethnic dimension of antipoverty policies, while for progressives who simultaneously pursue social solidarity and cultural diversity, this is a trade-off dilemma, because if the claim is true, heterogeneity undermines a consolidated shared identity, which buttresses a robust welfare state (Goodhart, 2004). Moreover, in multicultural societies, labour advocacy organisations and related political discourse might be divided along ethnic and racial lines, which makes it more difficult for policy-makers to focus on social reforms without being distracted by inter-cultural disputes (Banting, 2005).

The evidence remains mixed regarding the proposition that increases in diversity erode social solidarity and the welfare state. Alesina and Glaeser (2004) find a negative correlation between racial diversity (the percent black) and support for welfare policies across US states, suggesting that the distinct level of racial fractionalisation is the



primary obstacle for the United States to adopt generous welfare schemes common in relatively homogeneous European societies. They argue that anti-welfare political discourse closely linked with racial rhetoric and imagery has long played a key role in the American politics of redistribution. Gilens (1996)'s work demonstrates that white Americans who express more stereotyped racial attitudes—blacks are lazy and lack work ethics—are less likely to favour social programmes that, they consider, disproportionately benefit African Americans. The negative association between diversity and public acceptance has also been identified in non-American societies. In her recent work, 'Even in Sweden', Eger (2010) finds that Swedish residents in culturally diverse communities tend to have less support for universal social spending than those living in homogenous areas. A study in Germany (Stichnoth, 2012) shows that the proportion of unemployed foreign workers in the unemployed population is negatively associated with the natives' support for government welfare policies for the unemployed. In their cross-national analysis in Europe, Senik et al. (2009) find that the alleged negative connection between immigration and public support cannot be observed in the European context, but that native individuals with negative views toward immigrants are less likely to support the welfare state. Similarly, Larsen (2011) finds that negative perceptions toward out-group members lower the people's willingness for welfare policies in Britain, Sweden, and Denmark, arguing that the alleged reverse relationship between diversity and welfare support is replicated in the European context.

However, these arguments are not without critics. Soroka et al. (2004) maintain that ethnic and cultural contexts have little to do with public attitudes towards the welfare state, but that interpersonal trust is a most significant factor in explaining popular support. Mau and Burkhardt (2009) argue that, although there is a negative link between ethnic plurality and welfare support across European countries, the effects are alleviated or disappear after controlling for other macro factors, such as economic inequality, left/right cabinet composition, unemployment rate, and type of welfare regimes. Furthermore, using data from Canada, Johnston et al. (2010) show that although anti-immigrant sentiment may erode popular support for the welfare state among white Canadians, a strong sense of national identity lessens anti-immigrant sentiments and antipathy toward redistributive policies. These empirical findings suggest that the claimed negative association could be spurious and the negative effects

of cultural plurality may be moderated or disappear when other contextual determinants are taken into account.

Thus, it seems that existing research provides no clear-cut answer to the question of whether there exists a negative connection between ethnic diversity and welfare support in a consistent and generalisable manner. This paper seeks to reconcile the seemingly contradicting empirical findings by providing an evidence-based argument that people's responses to immigration-generated heterogeneity differ depending on institutional settings.

### 2.3 Structural Contexts and Welfare Attitudes

As many researchers have examined, if ethnic diversity affects individual perceptions of government redistribution, then other spatial contexts would also matter. As historical and sociological institutionalists believe, human attitudes and behaviour are embedded in certain historical and social conjunctures. The preferences and actions of individual agents are influenced by and shaped within certain past experience and societal environment. I do not think that such contextual factors directly affect public support for welfare policies, but it is assumed that they do have significant mediating effects on the linkage between ethnic diversity and public perceptions. The critical question for us, therefore, is: in what *contexts* does the positive or negative relationship between diversity and support for welfare politics hold? To address this question, I propose to focus on multiculturalism as the most important contextual determinant. When we explore the linkage between ethno-cultural diversity and the welfare state, it seems almost inevitable to take into account government cultural schemes designed to accommodate ethno-cultural differences, namely, multiculturalism policies (MCPs).

#### *Multiculturalism policy*

The effect of MCPs on social solidarity and welfare attitudes is quite controversial and there is no theoretical agreement among scholars. One could assume that MCPs alleviate the tension between the majority and cultural minorities and help facilitate the social integration of newcomer immigrants into the larger society. The adoption of MCPs reduces the majority's hostile sentiment and fear toward out-group members and

prevents immigrant minorities from feeling marginalised and excluded from institutions and processes of the dominant community (Banting et al., 2006). This line of argument emphasises that MCPs can help build an ethnically mosaic national identity without politicising the ethno-cultural dimension of public services (Larsen, 2011). Another hypothesis, the so-called ‘corroding effect’, argues that MCPs, on the contrary, erode the social fabric of community. In ethnically homogeneous societies, people support government welfare policies because they see such policies as necessary to help their underprivileged fellow citizens who share the same cultural and racial background. MCPs accentuate ethnic and racial differences, rather than communal similarities, and, as a consequence, reinforce a sense of ‘them-and-us’ among community members (Banting et al., 2006). This argument stresses the importance of an overarching common identity and a shared cultural framework and warns that excessive multiculturalism may corrode common values and ethics (Baldwin and Rozenberg, 2004; Goodhart, 2004).

Existing empirical research for the link between multiculturalism and redistribution does not support either side. Banting et al. (2006) demonstrate that there is no statistically significant association between MCPs for immigrant minorities and the growth of social spending between 1980 and 2000 across Western democracies. While their study finds that the trade-off between multiculturalism and actual social spending does not exist, empirical evidence for the impact of multiculturalism on the cognitive side of redistribution (i.e., people’s acceptance of egalitarian policies) is still scarce and empirically untested, and thus remains largely open to further empirical investigation.

As a preparation for my statistical analysis, I clarify here what I mean by ‘multiculturalism policy’. The term ‘multiculturalism’ encompasses a broad range of programmes and policy initiatives, and there is no consensus on a single agreed-upon definition among scholars. Since the primary goal of this study is to shed light on the mediating effect of multiculturalism on the link between ethnic diversity and support for redistributive government, I focus specifically on immigration-related multicultural policies designed to accommodate and integrate members of immigrant communities into the host society. To this end, I somewhat narrowly define ‘multiculturalism’ as the belief of recognising and respecting the presence of immigration-generated ethno-cultural differences in the society by securing the social rights of immigrant minorities. By so doing, I can concentrate directly on the social-welfare dimension of multicultural policies—the extent and breadth of social welfare benefits given to

immigrant residents. These arguments provide us with the following first hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 1:* Immigration-induced ethnic heterogeneity in the context of strong multiculturalism policies closely linked with the social-welfare rights of immigrants lessens public support for redistributive government policies.

### *Alternative theories*

To avoid drawing misleading conclusions on the effects of ethnic diversity and MCPs, I also consider other national variations that may better explain the levels of public support for egalitarian schemes. The first alternative contextual factor consists of economic conditions, particularly, economic wealth and income distribution. I predict that material prosperity is negatively associated with public acceptance of redistribution. A possible causal explanation for this is that people's socioeconomic needs in wealthier countries are *relatively* more fulfilled than in countries with inhospitable and impoverished conditions, and thus government egalitarian policies are of less critical importance for people living in rich advanced societies. Another potential determinant of public support is the degree of income disparity. It is assumed that the disproportionate distribution of economic resources would have a positive impact upon popular support for arrangements to redress distributive injustice. One hypothesis is that, as a general pattern, in an unequal society more people tend to become 'losers' in the individualistic competitive market, and these poor individuals are more likely to demand more redistribution and social protection. This in turn increases public demand for social welfare policies as a whole.

Additionally, I take into account three institutional and policy contexts that may affect individual responses towards anti-poverty programmes. First, I hypothesise that there is a positive association between the effectiveness of public policies and popular support. Norris (2012) finds that the effective distribution of public goods and services in bureaucratic democracies is positively associated with several aspects of human development such as longevity, child mortality, and health. I extend this argument and predict that the effective delivery of civil services has a desirable impact not only on actual human development scores but also on public perceptions of welfare policies. It is assumed that individuals would be more in favour of redistributive government if

they perceive that civil services are effective and trustworthy. Second, previous literature suggests that inclusive and egalitarian welfare schemes spur pro-welfare orientations (Jordan, 2010; Mau and Burkhardt, 2009). Scholars argue that unlike selective means-tested social programmes, universalistic social welfare policies integrate the society without drawing lines along social, racial, and class cleavages. This helps create a sense of shared destiny among citizens and thereby enhances a sense of communal solidarity (Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005; Svallfors, 2004). Jordan (2010) points out that the universal welfare system blurs the line between net contributors and net beneficiaries to the welfare services, mitigating the value conflicts between the rich and the poor. His empirical analysis proves that hierarchical welfare systems, which embrace all citizens as beneficiaries of public health care services, enhance people's support for national health care programmes. Larsen's recent (2011) empirical work also shows that public acceptance of poverty reduction targeted on immigrant groups is more likely in countries with generous welfare policies, such as Sweden and Denmark, than in relatively more liberal counterparts, like Britain and the United States, implying that the attitudes and perceptions of individuals in these Scandinavian societies might be under the influence of institutional and policy contexts of this region. Third, I also consider the possibility that the impartiality of government institutions has a positive impact on popular support. Rothstein and Teorell (2009) argue that an impartial administration that effectively protects individual rights and controls corruption helps cultivate social solidarity and generalised trust. This theory assumes that personal contacts with social services and street-level bureaucrats positively affect people's perceptions and attitudes toward the civil service system, thereby cultivating a sense of communal solidarity and providing a fertile soil to develop generalised trust (Kumlin 2002; Kumlin and Rothstein, 2005). I apply this argument to the issue of welfare attitudes and predict that an impartial government is an important engine not only for generating social trust but also for enhancing public acceptance of government social policies. These statements lead to the following additional hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 2:* The negative interaction effects of ethnic heterogeneity and multiculturalism remain to hold even after taking into account other macro-factors: (a) economic conditions; (b) effective public policies; (c) generous social security schemes; and (d) impartial administration.

## 2.4 Data and Measures

To test the hypotheses presented above, I combine related data from multiple sources. For the attitudinal and demographic measures, I rely on micro data from the 2009 Social Inequality IV module of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP). This survey, conducted in 38 countries between February 2008 and November 2010, covers the topic of public attitudes and perceptions toward social disparity and government responsibility. For the aggregate-level measures, I collected relevant macro data from various organisations—the World Bank (2005a; 2005b), the OECD (2005), the Quality of Government Institute (2011), the Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty (2007), and the Migration Policy Group and the British Council (2007). I include in the dataset 18,511 observations from 19 OECD countries for which I have data for all dependent and independent variables required for the models. The countries subjected to the analysis include 12 Western European democracies (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom), four Eastern European countries (the Czech Republic, Poland, the Slovak Republic, and Slovenia), and three non-European advanced societies (Australia, Japan, and the United States).<sup>1</sup>

### *Dependent variable*

To measure individual support for government redistributive schemes, I use a response question from the ISSP 2009, in which respondents were asked, ‘To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? —It is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences in income between people with high incomes and those with low incomes.’ Response categories are indicated in a five-point scale, from

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<sup>1</sup> As Kreft (1996) argues, for a multilevel regression analysis, the ideal number of community-level observations is at least 30 groups, each comprising at least 30 individuals (called the 30/30 rule). In my analysis, the total number of individual respondents for each OECD country is sufficient to meet the criterion on sample size, whereas the number of cluster-level units seems too small (around 20 countries) to generate a reliable parameter estimate. The most important implication of the limited number of group-level units is that it makes the analysis more vulnerable to the impact of outliers. Therefore, I examined the scatter plot of the relationship between diversity and public support and removed two obvious outliers, Estonia and Israel from the dataset.

‘strongly disagree’ (coded 1) to ‘strongly agree’ (5), with higher scores representing greater support for egalitarian policies. The degree of popular support for redistribution varies greatly across 19 OECD countries. The average levels of public support are highest in Portugal (4.37), Slovenia (4.33), and France (4.11), while, at the other end of the scale, Norway (3.27), Denmark (3.26), and the United States (2.69) mark relatively low levels of support for anti-poverty government policies.

### *Explanatory variables*

My major independent variable of concern is ethno-cultural diversity driven by the global mobility of immigrants. Prior research has often relied on the Herfindahl index of ethnic fractionalisation developed by Alesina et al. (2003). However, this indicator does not differentiate between historically structured and immigration-generated ethnic diversity. To concentrate on the impact of global immigration on public support, one can use the International Migrant Stock indicators measured by the United Nations. The UN indicators provide us with a set of useful measures of ethnic diversity, particularly, the proportion of immigrants in the total population, which seems to best capture the national variation of immigration-induced ethnic heterogeneity. However, this measure does not distinguish between immigrants from advanced societies and those from developing nations. As I have argued in the theoretical part, it is assumed that immigrants from poor countries are more likely to be the beneficiaries of welfare schemes because of their relatively low educational attainment and limited work opportunities. In this sense, prior comparative research on welfare attitudes is based on the implicit assumption that most immigrants are from less developed non-Western societies. Therefore, in my analysis, I propose to use the share of *non-Western* immigrants in the total population as the proxy of ethnic diversity. Using a dataset from the Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty (2007), I created a new diversity measure that removed immigrants from advanced Western democracies—Western European countries<sup>2</sup>, Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. Figure 1 (left side) presents the bivariate correlation between the levels of ethnic diversity and the average scores of support for redistribution. The figure shows

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2 The Western European countries excluded from the diversity dataset are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and the United Kingdom.

that immigration-generated heterogeneity is negatively and significantly correlated with public support for redistributive schemes ( $r = -.493$ ,  $p < .05$ ).<sup>3</sup>

Another key independent variable is a multiculturalism policy. To operationalise multiculturalist policy orientation, I use data from the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), as led by the Migration Policy Group and the British Council since 2004.<sup>4</sup> The MIPEX is designed to assess the degree of migrant integration policies across 31 different countries by enumerating seven policy categories: labour market mobility, family reunion for third-country nationals, education, long-term residence, access to nationality, and anti-discrimination. Each main category is further divided into four sub-categories, and thus the index is composed of 28 items in total. Instead of using the summary score of the index, which is the simple average of all the seven category scores, I decided to use the item 'Rights Associated with Status' from the Family Reunion category, which assesses the extent to which the government is willing to secure immigrants' resident status and access to various social goods such as education, employment, social security/assistance, healthcare, and housing. This item best captures the nature of government welfare programmes for immigrant residents in each country and hence most contributes to the public perception of government social policies in multicultural contexts. Countries that scored highest on the index are Australia, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, and the United States (83.3 to 100), while the scores are lowest in Denmark, Japan, the Slovak Republic, and Switzerland (33.3 to 41.7). As shown in Figure 1 (right side), the association between multiculturalism and welfare support is rather weak and not statistically significant ( $r = -.100$ ,  $p < .68$ ). This indicates that multiculturalism policy per se has little impact on people's view on redistribution.

As argued in the previous section, I control for several macro-level variables that

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3 Of course, the observed bivariate negative correlation can be spurious. For example, it is worth noting that when we look at social democratic welfare societies such as Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Austria (labelled as DK, NO, SE, and AT in Figure 1), the relationship appears linearly positive, suggesting that other important factors may be at work.

4 As an alternative measure of multicultural policy for immigrant minorities, we can also use the Multiculturalism Policy (MCP) Index, developed by Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka (The dataset is available from the Queen's University website at: <http://www.queensu.ca/mcp/index.html>). However, the MCP data are only available for limited parts of the world (i.e. 21 Western democracies) and do not have policy indicators that assess the extent to which immigrants have access to social goods such as employment and healthcare. Therefore, I decided to use the MIPEX dataset, which covers more than 30 countries and includes an index item that taps the levels of government social welfare policies for immigrant residents.



may better contribute to the explanation of welfare support. To examine the effects of economic conditions, material prosperity and income inequality were operationalised. As the indicator of a country's economic wealth, we use gross domestic product (GDP) per capita on a purchasing-power-parity (PPP) basis in current international dollars obtained from the World Bank (2005a). The second component, income disparity, is measured by the Gini coefficient (World Bank various years), a commonly used indicator for capturing the degree of unequal income distribution across countries. For the indicator of the quality of public policies, I use data from the Worldwide Government Indicators (WGI) project led by the World Bank (2005b). The WGI data provide rich information about the quality of governance on six different dimensions: voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption. I use the 'government effectiveness' indicator that measures the extent to which civil service is perceived to be fair and effective in terms of its formulation and implementation.<sup>5</sup> As the measure of generous social security schemes, I use the percentage of GDP spent on public social protection (OECD 2005), which could reflect different welfare regime types across countries (Gesthuizen et al. 2009).<sup>6</sup> Finally, to test the effect of impartial administration, I rely on data from the Quality of Government Institute (2011). I use the index of impartiality, which assesses the extent to which government officials treat citizens impartially when they implement laws and policies.

While the main purpose of this article is to uncover the effects of national variations, it is also important to avoid the danger of overestimating the impact of aggregate-level factors. As such, I also control for several individual-level characteristics relevant to welfare attitudes: sex (female = 1, male = 0), age (in years), educational attainment (0 = 'no formal qualification' to 5 = 'university degree completed'), self-rated economic status (1 = 'bottom/lowest' to 10 = 'top/highest'),

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5 It must be noted that the quality of public policies in society is always difficult to measure in an objective and consistent manner. In fact, the WGI index is quite subjective in that its scores are calculated based on people's *perceptions* towards government institutions.

6 The scores vary greatly within the three types of welfare states classified by Esping-Andersen (1990): social democratic, conservative, and liberal welfare states. As a general pattern, the scores were high in social democratic countries such as Sweden (29.1), Austria (27.4), Denmark (27.2), and Belgium (26.4), moderate in conservative welfare regimes like Finland (26.0) and Japan (18.6), and low in liberal welfare states such as the United Kingdom (20.6) and the United State (15.8).

marital status (married, single, widowed/separated/divorced), employment status (employed, unemployed, out of the labour force), and religious affiliation (Roman Catholic, Protestant, other religious groups, no religion).

## 2.5 Results

The primary goal of this paper is to shed light on the effects of contextual factors, most notably, multiculturalism, on the link between diversity and public support for anti-poverty policies by analysing cross-national nested data. For that purpose, I used multilevel modeling (random intercept models), which allows us to take into account the hierarchical structure of the ISSP 2009. I first estimated the empty model (model 0 in Table 1), in which no variables are included, to examine the level of variation in the target variable at the aggregate level. The between-country variance for the dependent variable is statistically significant at the .05 level, indicating that sampled individuals are embedded in and affected by different initial conditions.<sup>7</sup> In model 1, all individual-level variables were added to the fixed-effect part of the empty model. The results confirm previous empirical research on welfare attitudes: Women and older respondents are more likely to be supportive of social welfare policies. People with higher education and economic status are less likely to support redistribution. Those out of the labour force have higher support levels than do employed workers. Respondents affiliated with left-leaning political parties also have significantly greater favour for redistribution than those who have right political affiliations. Being a Protestant is negatively associated with being supportive of egalitarian schemes. In model 2, I added one country-level variable: ethnic heterogeneity. The results show that immigration-generated ethnic diversity has a significantly negative impact on popular support for redistributive government even when controlling for all relevant individual-level factors.

I now turn to the mediating effects of multiculturalism on the association between diversity and support. In Table 2, I report the results of additional models for assessing

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<sup>7</sup> This implies that sampled individual respondents should not be considered as ‘atomised entities’ but ‘social animals’ who are structurally embedded in social and cultural contexts. In this respect, traditional individual studies can lead to the individual fallacy, in which relationships between characteristics of group-level units are erroneously inferred from data about individuals.

the impacts of contextual determinants. The results of model 3 show that the negative effect of ethnic diversity (model 2 in Table 1) remains to hold even after adding the multiculturalism variable and the interaction term between multiculturalism and ethnic heterogeneity. The most important finding in this model is that, although the multiculturalism variable itself does not have any significant impact, the interaction between diversity and multiculturalism has a negative and statistically significant effect on public demand. Figure 2 illustrates the simulated mediating impact of multiculturalist policies on the relationship between heterogeneity and support. The simulation demonstrates that while ethnic diversification slightly reduces the predicted probability of support by .03 from .33 to .30 in the context of weak multiculturalism, it reduces the probability by .25 from .51 to .26 in more multiculturalist societies (the interaction effect is  $-.23$  points). These results suggest that ethnic plurality in the context of strong multicultural policies can undermine public acceptance of redistributive government (Hypothesis 1).

However, as argued in the theoretical section, to validate these reverse relationships shown in models 2 and 3 we need to consider other important national variations. The next important question to ask, therefore, is: do the negative relationships survive even after controlling for other contextual determinants, namely, economic conditions, effective public policies, social security schemes, and impartial administration?

Additional models with several contextual variables were estimated to examine the contributions of such alternative national contexts. As the results of model 4 in Table 2 indicate, the direct effect of ethnic heterogeneity disappears when controlling for two economic indicators—economic prosperity and income disparity. This finding suggests that the willingness of citizens to support redistribution can be explained by economic conditions (particularly, GDP per capita) rather than by ethnic differences. On the other hand, the interaction term between diversity and multiculturalism is still negative and statistically significant, lending some support to hypothesis 2(a). Throughout models 5 to 7, three institutional and policy contexts are also taken into account. The results of models 5 and 7 reveal that both the effectiveness of public policies and the impartiality of government have no significant impact on the attitudinal dimension of redistribution. Again, the interaction term remains negative and statistically significant while adding either of these two institutional factors. However, when I add the generous social

protection variable (model 6), the detrimental diversity-multiculturalism interaction effect loses statistical significance. The social security variable is positive and highly significant at the .05 level. This evidence suggests that the interacted impact is no longer strongly warranted, and that welfare support can be predicted by the generosity of welfare spending. To examine the substantive relevance of these contextual determinants, the changes in predicted probabilities of high support ('agree' and 'strongly agree') were calculated by moving each of the independent variables of interest from its minimum to its maximum value. As shown in Table 3, the most significant variable is obviously generous social protection. The predicted probability increases by around .25 percentage points from .25 to .50 when the generosity variable shifts from its minimum to its maximum score. The results also reveal that the size of downward effects is relatively greater in GDP per capita and ethnic diversity. These variables reduce the probability of support by .24 and .16 points, respectively. Economic inequality (i.e., gini coefficient) is also among the most notable predictors (the difference is .12 percentage points), while other variables—multiculturalism, effective government, and impartiality—seem to have little impact on public acceptance of redistribution. From these findings in Tables 2 and 3, hypotheses 2(b) and 2(d) are supported, while hypothesis 2(c) is rejected.

## 2.6 Discussion and Concluding Remarks

This study aimed to advance existing comparative research on the relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and welfare support. Using data from the ISSP 2009, I conducted a series of multilevel analyses on the mediating effect of multiculturalism policies across 19 OECD countries. The findings provide us with a clearer picture of the diversity/redistribution connection and some important implications.

I first analysed the individual-level effects on support. The results were reasonable and consistent with earlier studies: Women, older people, the less educated, the poor, non-workers, and supporters of left-wing parties are less resistant to government redistributive policies. However, some results in this paper have somewhat disproved previous conclusions. The negative effect of ethnic diversity disappears when economic conditions are controlled for, suggesting that the claimed relationship between diversity

and welfare support can be spurious in the case of OECD member states. This evidence does not necessarily challenge the validity of previous studies in the American context (e.g., Alesina and Glaeser, 2004) but tells us that the negative association between immigration and support is not evidently generalisable across different national contexts. I also find that, while the multiculturalism variable itself has no explanatory power, the interaction term between heterogeneity and multiculturalism is constantly negative and statistically significant in several models even after taking into account economic conditions and two institutional contexts—effective public policies and impartial administration. These results indicate that the coexistence of strong multiculturalism and high levels of ethnic diversity may have debilitating effects on public acceptance. However, the interacted effect does not remain to hold when the social security variable is added. This suggests that it is not multiculturalist policies in the context of growing global mobility, but instead, generous social protection that is more significant in explaining public demand for redistribution.

In this analysis, two key concepts, namely, ethnic diversity and multiculturalism, are conceptualised more narrowly and straightforwardly than in previous studies. I specifically focus on the share of *non-Western* immigrants in the population as the proxy of heterogeneity, because it is posited that non-Western new arrivals are not only more visible and subject to greater attention from native citizens but are more likely to be reliant on the welfare system. On the other hand, using the MIPEx dataset, multiculturalism policy is captured by the extent to which the government provides immigrants with secured resident status and access to a set of social goods such as employment and health care. Rather than use a summary score that is the simple mean of various types of multiculturalist policy scores, I concentrate on a particular item most relevant to the welfare benefits of immigrant residents, thereby exploring the causal mechanism behind the connection between MCPs and welfare support more efficiently and directly. The adoption of such alternative definitions implies that the similar results in previous empirical studies are robust to more specified and straightforward operationalisations of the key terms.

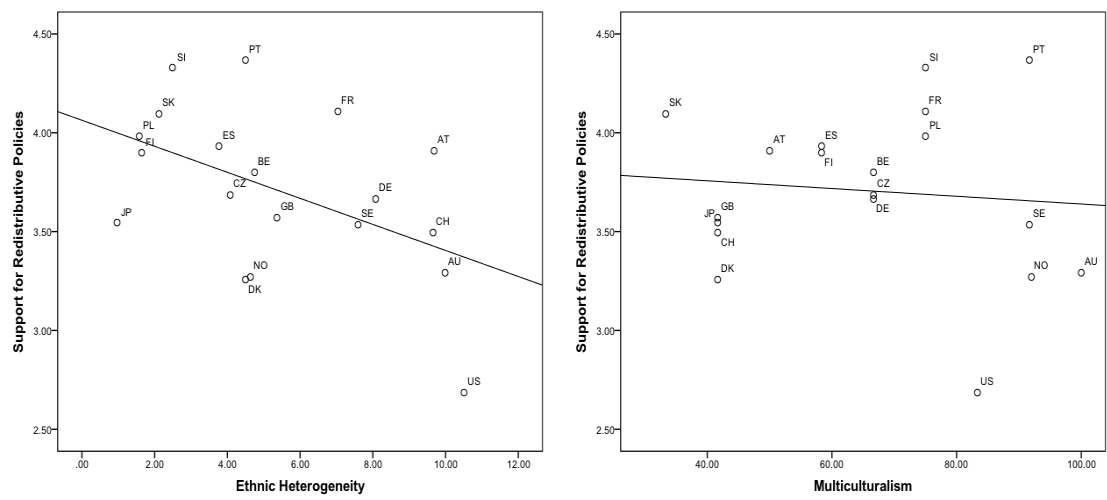
Some important caveats to my analysis merit consideration. First, I restricted my analysis to 19 OECD member states for which I had all the required data to test my models. Therefore, the inclusion or exclusion of certain countries might affect regression parameters and hence lead to different conclusions. Such small-N studies are

always vulnerable to the effects of potential third countries. While ethnic diversity measures are available for a large number of nations (e.g. UN migrant stocks indicators), quantitative data for multiculturalism policies are available for only a limited number of countries, most of which are industrialised European societies. For this reason, I had no choice but to exclude some non-European OECD member states such as Chile, New Zealand, South Korea, and Turkey from the ISSP dataset. The analysis in this paper therefore suggests that further development of multiculturalism indicators would permit a more robust understanding of the association between MCPs and welfare attitudes in follow-up research.

It also has to be acknowledged that my study is based on the implicit assumption that immigration-driven ethnic heterogeneity is perceived at the national level. This study does not take into account the subnational spatial variations, such as the differences between municipalities or local communities. Since levels of ethnic plurality can vary markedly from place to place, not only between but within nation-states, it is more plausible to distinguish residents in highly ethnically diverse communities and those in less culturally plural areas within a country, because we cannot assume that people experience ethnic heterogeneity in the same manner across distinct subnational units in which levels of ethnic heterogeneity can greatly differ. Therefore, when new data become available, future research could use statistical modelling that captures more complex hierarchical data structures.

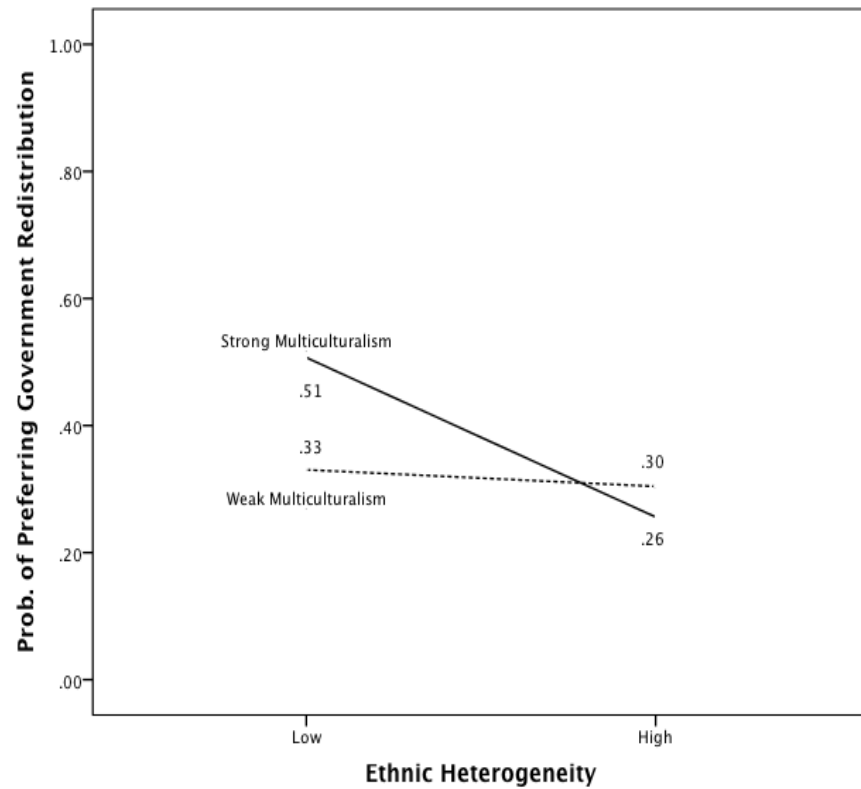
In short, further developments are needed to validate the results of my investigation, but I hope my analysis offers a reasonable starting point for examining the linkage between diversity/multiculturalism and public attitudes toward the welfare state. What I have revealed in this study is that ethnic heterogeneity and multiculturalism do not pose negative effects on public acceptance of redistributive government in a consistent and generalisable way. Increased cultural and ethnic plurality driven by recent non-Western immigrants might entail unintended or undesired social consequences in industrialised societies by affecting almost every aspect of our social, economic, and political endeavours. However, the findings in this comparative research show that the pessimistic linkage between immigration and the multiculturalist welfare state is not strongly supported at least in the case of 19 OECD countries.

Figure 2.1 Bivariate Correlations between Diversity/Multiculturalism and Support for Redistribution



Notes: R-squared ( $R^2$ ) = .24 (diversity and support) and .01 (multiculturalism and support). Included countries are as follows: Australia (AU), Austria (AT), Belgium (BE), the Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DK), Finland (FI), France (FR), Germany (DE), Japan (JP), Norway (NO), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), the Slovak Republic (SK), Slovenia (SI), Spain (ES), Sweden (SE), Switzerland (CH), the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States (US). N = 18,511.

Figure 2.2 Mediating Effect of Multiculturalism on the Relationship between Diversity and Support for Redistribution



*Notes:* Predicted probabilities of supporting or strongly supporting government redistribution. All other explanatory variables are held constant at their mean (continuous variables) or median values (dichotomous variables). Coefficients are taken from model 3 in Table 2. The solid line shows the predicted probability of support in the context of strong multiculturalism (the 75th percentile of the scale), while the dotted line depicts the probability in the context of weak multiculturalism (the 25th percentile). ‘Low’ in the horizontal axis corresponds to the 25th percentile of the ethnic diversity variable, while ‘High’ represents the 75th percentile of the scale.



Table 2.1 Determinants of Support for Redistributive Government

	Model 0	Model 1	Model 2
<i>Level 1: Individual characteristics</i>			
Sex (ref. Male)			
- Female		0.131*** (0.016)	0.131*** (0.016)
Age		0.001** (0.001)	0.001** (0.001)
Educational attainment		-0.096*** (0.006)	-0.096*** (0.006)
Self-rated economic status		-0.094*** (0.005)	-0.094*** (0.005)
Marital status (ref. Married)			
- Single		0.038* (0.022)	0.038* (0.022)
- Widowed/Separated/Divorced		0.022 (0.022)	0.022 (0.022)
Employment status (ref. Employed)			
- Unemployed		0.051 (0.040)	0.051 (0.040)
- Out of labour force		0.041** (0.019)	0.041** (0.019)
Political affiliation (ref. Other/non-partisan)			
- Left		0.277*** (0.029)	0.278*** (0.029)
- Center/Liberal		-0.057* (0.032)	-0.057* (0.032)
- Right		-0.282*** (0.030)	-0.282*** (0.030)
Religious group (ref. other religions)			
- Roman catholic		-0.050 (0.036)	-0.048 (0.036)
- Protestant		-0.129** (0.037)	-0.129** (0.037)
- No religious affiliation		-0.044 (0.034)	-0.044 (0.034)
<i>Level 2: Country characteristics</i>			
Ethnic heterogeneity			-0.067** (0.027)
Threshold 1	-1.722 (0.092)	-1.791 (0.103)	-1.790 (0.093)
Threshold 2	-0.973 (0.091)	-0.972 (0.102)	-0.971 (0.092)
Threshold 3	-0.452 (0.091)	-0.431 (0.102)	-0.430 (0.092)
Threshold 4	0.599 (0.091)	0.669 (0.102)	0.670 (0.092)
Between-country variance	0.156** (0.052)	0.162** (0.055)	0.126** (0.044)
-2 log likelihood	207,971	171,194	171,207
N (individuals)	18,511	18,511	18,511
N (countries)	19	19	19

*Notes:* Results from multilevel ordered probit estimation. Standard errors are presented in parentheses. Continuous variables at the individual level are group-mean-centered, while those at the country level are centered at their grand mean (see Enders and Tofighi, 2007; Hofmann and Gavin, 1998).

\*p < .10; \*\*p < .05; \*\*\*p < .001. N = 18,511 (19 countries).

Table 2.2 Determinants of Support for Redistributive Government

	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
<i>Level 2: Country characteristics</i>					
Ethnic heterogeneity	-0.075** (0.027)	-0.035 (0.029)	-0.044 (0.028)	-0.046* (0.026)	-0.035 (0.030)
Multiculturalism	0.003 (0.004)	0.004 (0.003)	0.005 (0.003)	0.002 (0.003)	0.004 (0.004)
Ethnic heterogeneity × Multiculturalism	-0.003** (0.001)	-0.002** (0.001)	-0.003** (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.002** (0.001)
GDP/capita		-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)
Gini		0.001 (0.015)	0.007 (0.015)	0.017 (0.015)	0.001 (0.016)
Effective civil service			0.362 (0.245)		
Generous social security schemes				0.037** (0.017)	
Impartial administration					0.013 (0.218)
Threshold 1	-1.835 (0.091)	-1.834 (0.079)	-1.838 (0.077)	-1.818 (0.073)	-1.827 (0.156)
Threshold 2	-1.015 (0.090)	-1.015 (0.078)	-1.019 (0.076)	-0.999 (0.072)	-1.007 (0.156)
Threshold 3	-0.475 (0.090)	-0.475 (0.078)	-0.479 (0.076)	-0.459 (0.072)	-0.467 (0.156)
Threshold 4	0.625 (0.090)	0.625 (0.078)	0.622 (0.076)	0.642 (0.072)	0.633 (0.156)
Demographic controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Between-country variance	0.110** (0.041)	0.076** (0.030)	0.069** (0.029)	0.058** (0.024)	0.082** (0.034)
-2 log likelihood	171,274	171,318	171,321	171,335	171,304
N (individuals)	18,511	18,511	18,511	18,511	18,511
N (countries)	19	19	19	19	19

*Notes:* Results from multilevel ordered probit estimation. Standard errors are presented in parentheses. Continuous variables at the individual level are group-mean-centered, while those at the country level are centered at their grand mean (see Enders and Tofighi, 2007; Hofmann and Gavin, 1998). Every model includes all individual-level variables except the reference categories (male, married, employed, other/non-partisan, other religions).

\*p < .10; \*\*p < .05; \*\*\*p < .001. N = 18,511 (19 countries).

Table 2.3 Estimates of Changes in Predicted Probabilities

	Prob. (Lower CI; Upper CI)		Difference
	Min. score	Max. score	
Ethnic diversity	0.45 (0.27; 0.63)	0.29 (0.16; 0.45)	-0.16
Multiculturalism	0.36 (0.22; 0.53)	0.38 (0.22; 0.56)	0.01
Gini	0.32 (0.18; 0.51)	0.45 (0.29; 0.61)	0.12
GDP/capita	0.49 (0.22; 0.77)	0.25 (0.12; 0.42)	-0.24
Effective government	0.38 (0.15; 0.68)	0.36 (0.16; 0.60)	-0.02
Generous welfare spending	0.25 (0.14; 0.39)	0.50 (0.31; 0.69)	0.24
Impartial administration	0.42 (0.25; 0.60)	0.34 (0.17; 0.55)	-0.08

*Note:* Other explanatory variables including demographic controls are held constant at their mean (continuous variables) or median values (dichotomous variables).

## CHAPTER 3

Economic Stratification, Decommodification, and Public Demand for  
Redistribution: A Comparative Analysis in 15 Advanced Industrial Democracies



### 3.1 Introduction

This article builds on two traditions of prior research that have been applied to understanding the formation of welfare preferences in advanced Western democracies. One tradition posits that individual preferences are self-/group-interested, fixed, and exogenously determined. Socially vulnerable individuals are often predicted to be more likely to take a pro-welfare stance than low-risk categories (e.g. Meltzer and Richard, 1981). In the other tradition, policy preferences are assumed to be endogenous to the institutional structure of the welfare schemes in which they operate. This institutionalist approach argues that the relative levels or patterns of redistributive support vary systematically across different welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Svallfors, 1997; Arts and Gelissen, 2001).

Based on these two lines of argument, this paper aims to offer three contributions to this field. First, it theorises the relationship between attitudinal patterns and social policy institutions, and proposes an alternative hypothesis on cross- and within-national differences in individual attitudes towards the welfare state, building on previous work on popular discourse and regime effects (in particular, Edlund, 2007, ch. II). Second, to this end, this article synthesises, both theoretically and empirically, the two traditions that have developed more or less independently, by examining how and to what extent the attitudinal orientations of individuals in different social strata differ depending on the social policy frameworks within which they are situated. While the existing empirical work on self-interest theory has successfully demonstrated that there is a negative connection between income class and welfare policy support (e.g. Hasenfeld and Rafferty, 1989), it remains largely untested whether the downward effect of class strata varies across different institutional settings. Third, to operationalise welfare regimes, which have often been measured based on problematic regime clustering (Jæger, 2006), this article uses the Comparative Welfare Entitlements Dataset developed by Lyle Scruggs. This comparative data set includes valuable information on variations in the arrangement of welfare state institutions across advanced industrial democracies—particularly the decommodification index. These data were married with cross-country public opinion data from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP).

The empirical results of this article reveal that the relationship between class strata and individual support for redistribution is significantly mediated by the structure of welfare state institutions. Indeed, I find that the negative impact of economic stratification is significantly more salient in highly decommodified societies than in more market-oriented liberal contexts. This result implies that universalist welfare schemes widen the attitudinal distances among citizens with different material resources.

### 3.2 Theoretical Perspectives on Welfare Attitudes

In this study, the sources of popular demand for redistribution are examined through the lens of two existing theoretical approaches. One camp assumes that utilitarian motivation is the primary driving force behind people's acceptance/resistance of redistributive policies. The other stresses that individual preferences are influenced by social and political relationships inherently interwoven into welfare state institutions. In the following paragraphs, I unpack each of these two theoretical traditions in turn and provide three testable hypotheses.

#### Individual Economic Self-interest

Much of the discussion about popular discourse on welfare has centred around the utilitarian nature of human behaviour. This line of argument emphasises individual self-interest as the major motivating factor in decisions to support/oppose tax-financed social security. Individuals are assumed to be well-informed, rational agents who act strategically and pursue their goals in a manner that maximises their utility. It is posited that individual preferences on redistribution are formed through cost-benefit calculation—whether or not the expected benefits from the welfare state outweigh the expected costs (e.g. tax and transfer payments). Therefore, individuals in higher social strata are predicted to be less supportive of redistributive policies because they are less likely to become the potential recipients of welfare benefits.

In a similar vein, the political economy literature assumes that the need for egalitarian policies is motivated by self-/group-interested concerns. Meltzer and Richard

(1981) theorised that under universal suffrage and majority rule, the public demand for redistribution is determined primarily by the welfare-maximising preferences of median-income voters. They argued that below-median constituents are expected to accept redistributive taxation, whereas above-median citizens are more in favour of tax cuts and less spending on social welfare services. These utility-based arguments have received empirical confirmation in several previous studies (e.g. Hasenfeld and Rafferty, 1989).

### Institutionalised Social and Political Relationships

Another line of argument sees the structure of social policy institutions as the crucial determinant of individual behaviour. This approach, prompted by Esping-Andersen (1990, 1999), advances the notion that different types of welfare system can lead to distinct forms of social structuring, political discourse, and public attitudes (Korpi, 1980; Korpi and Palme, 1998; Pierson, 2001; Rothstein and Steinmo, 2002). Institutions affect the collective understanding of redistributive justice and the principle of ‘appropriateness’, for example, how and to what extent the well-being of the least well-off in society should be secured through statutory intervention or market-based solutions (Edlund, 1999; Offe, 1994).

This literature suggests that different setups of the welfare state generate specific social stratification and mobility patterns (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Universalistic principles of social citizenship are often deemed to mobilise broad cross-class alliances and instill a sense of social solidarity across traditional socioeconomic cleavages. Contrary to means-tested transfer schemes, the comprehensive welfare state incorporates all citizens without accentuating disparities between net contributors and net beneficiaries (Pierson, 1996). Because social welfare programmes in the universal welfare state are generously designed to cover the entire population instead of explicitly ‘labelling’ the target group (i.e. the marginalised), the expected costs and benefits of the welfare state are less visible and incalculable for both manual and white-collar workers (Rothstein, 1998). In other words, the universalist welfare state blurs the boundaries between social groups with different socioeconomic backgrounds and generates a seamless and integrated public demand for redistribution. By contrast, in selective



welfare states, identities are constructed along a constellation of class interests and often lead to group-based political conflicts between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Edlund, 1999). Residual welfare systems divide, implicitly or explicitly, welfare recipients and non-recipients and hence tend to be associated with greater class polarisation in preferences and interests.

The existing comparative research on welfare state that attempts to provide empirical foundations to the regime hypothesis is generally divided into two camps in terms of its main purpose. One line of research primarily aims to uncover how *levels* of public support for redistributive policies vary across welfare regimes. In this literature, the levels of public acceptance are hypothesised to be higher in social democratic welfare states than in conservative corporatist or selective liberal contexts. Countries are often classified according to Esping-Andersen’s regime typology, and the effects of regime dummies are estimated with pooled data. Some of these studies have demonstrated that citizens in universalistic welfare states are indeed more prone to favour government welfare provision than those in their minimalist liberal counterparts (Andreß and Heien, 2001; Arts and Gelissen, 2001; Gelissen, 2000; Svallfors, 1997). The other line of empirical work examines whether recognisable *patterns* of welfare attitudes exist among social groups within each welfare regime type. The main interest of this literature is not only the differing strengths of welfare support but includes how the attitudinal orientations of social groups can vary across regime clusters. Cross-national data, such as from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), are often analysed separately for several (or sometime a few) advanced democracies, each representing a particular welfare regime (i.e. social democratic, liberal, or conservative). The parameters of social group dummies (e.g. gender, social class, private/public sectors, unemployed, labour market insiders/outside) are predicted to have different magnitudes and directions across distinct regime types. This line of research tends to reach the conclusion that there are no apparent patterns in group-attitudes across different welfare policy settings. Svallfors (1997), therefore, concluded that while the aggregate means of redistributive support differ clearly between welfare regimes, the attitudinal stances of social groups (e.g. gender and class) are comparatively uniform; across different regime contexts, socially vulnerable groups such as the unemployed and the poor, are consistently more likely to opt for egalitarian

policies (see also Bean and Papadakis, 1998; Edlund, 1999; Gelissen, 2000; Svallfors, 2003).

In short, earlier research has tended to conclude that public acceptance of redistributive government is indeed more prevalent in social democratic societies than in selective liberal welfare states, whereas it is still largely underspecified whether systematic differences in attitudinal patterns actually exist between social groups across different regime types. More importantly, no empirical work has ever successfully provided concrete evidence that a shared cross-class acceptance of redistributive policies, which has often been assumed as the primary source of strong support, is actually observed among citizens embedded in universalist welfare systems.

### An Alternative Interpretation and Hypotheses

To advance the existing comparative research, I propose an alternative reasoning on the link between class politics and popular discourse based on Edlund's (2007, ch. II) argument that provides an important starting point here. In social sciences, it is often assumed that modernisation and economic progress dampen traditional class conflict (Lipset, 1968). However, Edlund (2007, ch. II) maintained that class politics is still fresh and vital in advanced egalitarian societies and even suggested that attitudinal class divisions are expected to be more salient in social democratic welfare states than in minimalist liberal contexts. Edlund suggests that the universal welfare state does not diminish but rather highlights class-based politics because of its extensive and redistributive characteristic. In the encompassing welfare state, where the provision of social goods is a matter of social citizenship, a broader menu of welfare issues are debated in arenas of political discourse, and these are subject to greater class-interested political pressures than in the means-tested liberal welfare state, where welfare issues are relatively a matter of private concern. Svallfors's (2004) empirical analysis partly endorsed this line of theorising when he substantiated that the attitudinal cleavage (i.e. the gap in support levels) between social strata is clearly greater in Sweden, a country often labelled as the prototype of the social democratic welfare state, than in any other types of welfare regime (i.e. Germany, Britain, and the United States) (see also Kumlin and Svallfors, 2007, ch. II; Taylor-Gooby, 2011).

This alternative hypothesis sharply contrasts with the prediction that institutionalised social citizenship masks and substantially diminishes the salience of class politics. The regime hypothesis has explained that the encompassing welfare state facilitates political coalitions across traditional identity boundaries and embodies institutionalised solidarity and assistance. This theory posits that ‘class-free’ coalitions produce general acceptance of welfare policies and pro-welfare orientations among citizens. However, if Edlund’s (2007, ch. II) argument is correct, the explanation that broad alliances produce popular support for redistributive government seems no longer warranted. How then can we understand the pervasive pro-welfare attitudes in universalist welfare states? One possible answer is that the distinct levels of welfare support among socially vulnerable people who greatly benefit from the generous welfare system explain, to a significant degree, the general public acceptance in social democratic societies. In other words, the gap in popular support between different welfare regimes is rooted in the divergent levels of public support between the *lower* income groups across different regime contexts.

The size of the welfare clientele that benefits from state-financed redistribution is relatively large in universalist, social democratic regimes, and thus the aggregate acceptance of redistribution is expected to be higher in such welfare states than in minimalist liberal societies (Kluegel and Miyano, 1995; Pierson, 2001). In universalist welfare contexts, the welfare clientele includes not only those who are vulnerable to social risks but also better-off individuals. The popular explanation has argued that the universal nature of decommodified welfare states creates cross-class uniformity in welfare preferences. If this is the case, individuals with privileged market positions are also expected to accept state redistribution in the similar manner that those who are more susceptible to market risks do. However, this expectation seems unfounded. As the self-interest theory argues, individuals with higher socioeconomic profiles are less likely to favour welfare provision, and this inverse relationship between pro-welfare discourse and class strata is empirically observable across different regime types, *including* social democratic welfare states (Andreß and Heien, 2001; Arts and Gelissen, 2001; Bean and Papadakis, 1998; Svallfors, 1997). If so, it is more plausible to consider that attitudinal class divisions remain persistent even in highly egalitarian societies, and the general acceptance of redistribution in the comprehensive welfare state can be

explained by the distinct levels of support from vulnerable individuals who greatly benefit from its generous social security system. As the institutional feedback theory suggests, individuals embedded in certain structural contexts experience and interpret institutional outcomes (e.g. social protection and cash benefits), and this process shapes unique attitudinal patterns towards welfare policies and organised interests. Individuals under precarious situations in universalist welfare societies are willing to accept government redistribution because of their expectation of receiving generous welfare benefits or their actual experience of the universalist welfare system, which is less likely to happen in market-based societies. This in turn widens the preference gap between ‘heavy users’ (e.g. the poor, the unemployed, and the elderly) and ‘light users’ (i.e. the non-needy) of welfare services within a social democratic framework. As a consequence, the expected negative effect of economic stratification (suggested by the economic self-interest theory) is bound to be greater in universalist welfare regimes because the overall support from the major beneficiaries is ‘too high’.

This explanation does not necessarily challenge the contention that the encompassing welfare state can instill a sense of social solidarity and altruistic concerns across different social strata (Marshall, 1950; Titmuss, 1968). It is *not* to argue that attitudinal distances are more salient in universal welfare states, and, therefore, that public acceptance is weaker in these regime contexts. Rather, the overall levels of support are assumed to be higher in universalist welfare regimes than in their liberal counterparts *both* among those in high- and low-income classes. However, due to the negative impact of the self-interest mechanism and the ‘welfare experience’ of socially vulnerable individuals, the attitudinal gap between the rich and the poor is ‘destined’ to be larger in countries with extensive systems of social protection. Hence, the theoretical extension here is not the prediction itself that welfare support is stronger in encompassing welfare states but the interpretation of *why* this is so. The arguments in this section are summarised in the following three hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 1:* Individuals with higher class status decrease their support for state redistribution.

*Hypothesis 2:* Individuals embedded in highly decommodified societies are more prone to favour state redistribution.

*Hypothesis 3:* The relationship between economic stratification and welfare discourse is mediated by the structure of social policy institutions: the downward impact of income strata is greater in decommodified universalist societies than in more market-based liberal contexts.

### 3.3 Data and Methods

To test the hypotheses above, I use the ‘Role of Government IV’ module of the 2006 International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), which provides rich information about public attitudes and perceptions towards government responsibility for various kinds of welfare disparities in society. I confine the analysis to advanced capitalist democracies on which the welfare regime theory is initially based (Esping-Andersen, 1990): Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States (15 countries).

The *dependent variable* of this study—public acceptance of government redistribution—was measured by a single question addressed to the respondents: ‘On the whole, do you think it should or should not be the government’s responsibility to reduce income differences between the rich and the poor?’ The response categories are as follows: ‘definitely should be’ (coded 4), ‘probably should be’ (3), ‘probably should not be’ (2), and ‘definitely should not be’ (1). The question wording taps respondents’ *overall* acceptance of state-financed egalitarian welfare schemes. In this article, to make the understanding of estimation results as precise as possible, I focus exclusively on one response question that measures general welfare attitudes rather than analysing multiple dependent variables regarding public support for particular social policy fields or integrating a set of different attitudinal variables.

The general preference indicator (i.e. redistribution question) has often been used as the dependent variable in previous empirical studies (e.g. Jæger, 2006, 2009; Svallfors, 1997), but such a general question may fail to capture more nuanced aspects of welfare policy preferences, in particular, the perceptions towards more detailed areas of welfare policies, such as health care, unemployment, and pensions. However, this article sticks to the redistribution question for two reasons. First, using one general

indicator provides more parsimonious models and facilitates the interpretation of estimated outcomes. As some scholars have pointed out, the indecisive conclusion of the existing comparative research on welfare regime arise from the confusing operationalisations of ‘welfare preference’ (Jæger, 2006, 2009; Larsen, 2008). By strictly focusing on the oft-used general measure, this paper seeks to avoid potential problems caused by different measurements of the same construct. Second, as mentioned before, one purpose of this study is to test the regime hypothesis that the structure of policy arrangements shapes recognisable patterns of public preferences towards egalitarian schemes. Of course, it is a possibility that individuals might alter their perceptions towards the welfare state depending on a particular area of social policies. However, no existing regime theory has ever taught us how and why certain welfare regime contexts impinge on people’s attitudes towards *specific* areas of welfare policies. Thus, I decided not to specify further the dependent variable (i.e. welfare preference) without specifying the explanatory side (i.e. regime theory).

*Economic stratification.* The ISSP contains country-specific variables coding respondents’ gross household incomes (before taxes and other deductions). To make the family income data comparable across countries, the scores of each variable were recoded into 9-quantiles. The income-class variable therefore taps respondents’ *relative* positions in the income distribution within their own countries. In previous empirical studies on economic self-interest models, household income has commonly been used as a proxy for the concept of economic stratification and material circumstances (Gilens, 1996).

Alternatively, social/class strata can be operationalised based on occupational classifications (Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1992; Ganzeboom and Treiman, 1996). However, as Linos and West (2003) have shown, the occupational clusters used in previous studies (e.g. Svallfors, 1997) do *not* necessarily reflect (and are inconsistent with) class cleavages in the real world such as differing levels of education and income. Given that ‘[a] good measure of class should create categories that distinguish groups of individuals with different levels of education, income, and self-reported social status’ (Linos and West, 2003: 396), it seems more feasible to use a more sensitive and straightforward measure of social stratification. Furthermore, using a single numeric variable as the index of class strata (rather than the use of a set of occupational class

dummies) greatly facilitates the creation of an interaction term between income class and welfare regime (used for testing Hypothesis 3).

*Decommodification.* To test the institutional feedback hypothesis that routinised arrangements transform individuals' attitudinal patterns towards redistributive government, we need a valid and reliable measure that captures cross-national variation in the quality of social security benefits and services. While no consensus exists among scholars on the method to measure this highly multidimensional and controversial concept, the existing comparative welfare state research has traditionally used two general strategies: one quantitative and the other qualitative. The first strand of the literature focuses on various types of social spending as indicators of varying types of welfare system. Here, it is assumed that the different levels of government expenditure reflect the different qualities of welfare regimes. However, this approach has often been criticised as possibly leading to invalid inferences (see Korpi and Palme, 2003: 426-7; Scruggs and Allan, 2006: 56). The second tradition of comparative research follows Esping-Andersen's trichotomous typology or its derivatives. In this popular approach, capitalist democracies are clustered into three (or more) 'qualitatively' distinct categories. The effects of regime variations on public opinion are assessed by either estimating cross-country data separately for the representative of each particular regime type (e.g. Svallfors, 1997; Linos and West, 2003) or estimating the parameters of regime dummies with pooled data (e.g. Arts and Gelissen, 2001). However, as Jæger (2006) points out, in this approach, *ideal types* of welfare regime (argued in Esping-Andersen, 1990, 1999) are often misinterpreted as *real entities*, and individual countries are treated as perfect or *de facto* representatives of distinct welfare regimes (see also Svallfors, 1997: 285-6). The notion that welfare states are qualitatively classifiable is based on the implicit assumption that internal consistency or homogeneity exists within each regime cluster, and, consequently, potential variations in inner differences are largely ignored. As a matter of fact, the regime clustering of democratic welfare states itself has long been a controversial issue in the field of comparative welfare state research (Ferragina and Seeleib-Kaiser, 2011). Given the limited number of regime representatives (i.e. advanced Western democracies) in each regime cluster, the inclusion or exclusion of one outlying country can significantly change estimation outcomes and thus lead to misleading inferences.

To avoid these potential problems, I propose the use of the decommodification index, which taps ‘the degree to which individuals, or families, can uphold a socially acceptable standard of living independently of market participation’ (Esping-Andersen, 1990: 37). The decommodification index, originally developed by Esping-Andersen (1990) as a raw indicator for regime clustering (which is often mired in reductionism), is designed to reflect the defining features of different social policy structures. In highly decommodified societies, most typically exemplified by Scandinavian countries, the well-being of citizens, irrespective of one’s labour market status (i.e. employed or unemployed), is adequately protected by publicly financed welfare programmes. On the other hand, in the least decommodified contexts, such as Anglo-Saxon liberal welfare regimes, the benefit transfers by the government are marginal, and individuals/families are more susceptible to the vagaries of market forces. In this article, I use the updated version of the decommodification index recalculated by Lyle Scruggs, which is a replication of the original calculation by Esping-Andersen (1990) with more recent data sources (i.e. the years 1971-2002).<sup>1</sup> The detailed calculation process is presented in Appendix Table A1. Finally, a set of control variables at the individual level are also introduced into the analysis to isolate the effects of other potential determinants.<sup>2</sup> Appendix Table A2 shows the descriptive statistics for all variables used in this study. Ordered probit methods are used for the ordinal nature of welfare support categories. To address the heteroscedasticity issue induced by the nested data structure of the ISSP, robust standard errors clustered by country are calculated. For a robustness check, binary probit models are also applied on the same equations. In addition, multilevel generalised linear models (random intercept models) were also performed to account for the clustered sampling design and to determine the robustness of the ordered and binary

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1 The dataset is publicly available from Scruggs’s website at <http://sp.uconn.edu/~scruggs/>.

2 Educational attainment was measured by six categories, which ranged from ‘no formal qualification’ (coded 0) to ‘university degree’ (5). To assess the effect of individuals’ employment status, three dichotomous variables were used: ‘unemployed’, ‘out of labour forces or others’, and ‘employed’ (used as the reference category). Union membership was gauged with three categories: ‘currently a member’ (coded 3), ‘once a member, but not now’ (2), and ‘never a member’ (1). The effect of household size was tested by a question on the total number of persons living in the household. On this question, respondents were given 36 response options, ranging from ‘1 person’ (coded as 1) to ‘36 persons’ (36). Those who selected ‘10 persons’ or more than 10 persons (i.e. 11-36 persons) were coded as 10 because only a marginal proportion of respondents (.093 percent) reported having more than 10 household members. The respondent’s age (in years) and gender (men as the reference category) were also included.



probit estimation results.

### 3.4 Findings

Hypothesis 1 predicts that individual support for redistribution is inversely associated with one's position in the income distribution in society. I first conducted a preliminary test of this prediction. Figure 1 shows the aggregate means of individual support in four different income clusters, from Q1 (the lowest quartile) to Q4 (the highest quartile), across 15 advanced democracies. The results indicate that the average levels of support are clearly higher in low-income groups than in high-income categories. Interestingly, the rank order between the four income clusters is consistent across the sample countries with *no exception*. These results generally endorse Hypothesis 1.

While the rank order is persistent across countries, however, there exist some notable cross-national variations. The attitudinal cleavages between the lowest and the highest income clusters are largest in New Zealand, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Denmark, and smallest in Japan, Germany, Switzerland, and Ireland. For example, the gap in aggregated support levels between the poorest and the richest groups is less than .50 points in Japan, whereas the distance stretches to almost double (around 1.00) in New Zealand. More specifically, the gaps in support levels between the highest income group (Q4) and the rest (Q1-Q3) are remarkably large in countries such as Denmark, the Netherlands, and Norway, all of which are often classified as representatives of a social democratic welfare regime. The institutional feedback literature argues that the universalist welfare state provides a generous standard of eligibility for all member-citizens without accentuating class divisions and hence generates a shared acceptance of the welfare state. However, as Figure 1 shows, the responses towards egalitarian policies are not shared between individuals with differing levels of material resources in all the sample countries, including social democratic societies.

Hypothesis 2 proposes that pro-welfare attitudes are more prevalent in countries with higher levels of decommodification. Figure 2 illustrates the relationships between

the levels of decommodification<sup>3</sup> and the aggregate means of support in the four income clusters (Q1-Q4). To take into account the effects of economic stratification, the relationships are plotted separately for each income category. As displayed in Figure 2, overall, decommodification is positively correlated with pro-welfare discourse in every income cluster. The important point here is that the relationship becomes more evident and clear-cut as the income level goes down from Q4 (the wealthiest group, bottom right) to Q1 (the poorest group, top left). In fact, the linear R-squared values are apparently higher in lower income clusters: .09 (Q4), .28 (Q3), .32 (Q2), and .34 (Q1). It seems that the generosity of social welfare policies plays a key role in the formation of pro-welfare orientations among low-income groups, but that universalist schemes do not necessarily help create a shared welfare acceptance among high-income earners.

To ensure these preliminary results, a series of ordered and binary probit models are estimated. Models 1-3 in Table 1 are the results of ordered probit estimation, and models 4-6 are those of binary probit estimation. A set of relevant demographic variables—gender, age, education, employment status, household size, union membership, and religious affiliation—are included as controls in each model. Standard errors are corrected for potential heteroscedasticity problems caused by the hierarchical structure of the ISSP data.

Model 1 presents a test of Hypothesis 1. The results demonstrate that income class independently contributes to the formation of popular discourse on redistribution; high-income individuals are significantly less likely to favour egalitarian policies than are those with lower economic resources. Model 2 introduces the decommodification variable as another key explanatory factor. The coefficient for the welfare regime measure is positive and highly significant, suggesting that individuals situated within a universalist welfare setting are more likely to accept egalitarian goals. This lends some credence to Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3 suggests that the relationship between class strata and popular discourse varies across institutional contexts. The negative influence of economic

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<sup>3</sup> The score varies markedly across 15 advanced democracies, ranging from 17.9 in Australia (the least decommodified) to 37.3 in Norway (the most decommodified). The index is high in social democratic welfare states such as Denmark (34.9) and Sweden (32.5), moderate in corporatist welfare states like Germany (30.2) and France (27.0), and low in liberal welfare regimes epitomised by the United States (18.1).

stratification, confirmed in model 1 above, is predicted to be greater in decommodified welfare states than in market-oriented societies. The results of model 3 begin to provide an answer to this proposition. Model 3, which is identical to model 2 but adds a multiplicative interaction term between income class and decommodification, reveals that the class-support relationship is significantly mediated by institutionalised patterns of state welfare provision. This indicates that the detrimental impact of economic stratification is expected to be more pronounced in countries with high levels of decommodification. This lends some credence to the contingent causal mechanism proposed in Hypothesis 3. All the parameters in models 1-3 remain robustly intact when the same equations are estimated alternatively by binary probit models (models 4-6)<sup>4</sup> or by multilevel random intercept models (reported in Appendix Table A3).

To assess the substantive effect of the interaction term, the predicted probabilities were calculated based on the estimated coefficients in model 3. Figure 3 illustrates the changes in the probability of high support for government inequality reduction when the income class variable shifts from the poorest (coded 1) to the richest scale (9) both in states with the highest (37.3 in Norway) and the lowest decommodification scores (17.9 in Australia). The horizontal axis represents the minimum and maximum values of the income class variable, while the vertical axis shows their corresponding probabilities. The solid line indicates the probabilities in the highest decommodification context, and the dotted line corresponds to those in the lowest decommodification context.

The simulation results clearly show that a move from the bottom to the top income-class category remarkably reduces the predicted probability of an individual favouring egalitarian schemes in both institutional contexts (solid and dotted lines). Figure 3 also suggests that decommodified countries are predicted to have higher probabilities of strong support, irrespective of the income class scale. The most important outcome here is the interaction effect of economic stratification and decommodification. While a change from the lowest to the highest-class category decreased the predicted probability by about .217 points, from .393 to .176, in the context of low decommodification, it reduced the probability by approximately .360

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4 For probit models, the four-point scale dependent variable is recoded into a binary measure that is equal to one if the respondent thinks it 'definitely' or 'probably' should be the government's responsibility to reduce income differences between the rich and the poor, and zero otherwise.

points, from .587 to .227, in the context of high decommodification (the interaction effect is, therefore, about  $-.143$  probability points). Within the low-income class, the generous arrangement of welfare schemes seems to significantly affect individual perceptions towards redistributive government. In fact, while the probability to strongly favour redistribution is nearly .60 in the decommodified context, it drops to less than .40 in the non-decommodified context (the gap is around .20). On the other hand, within the high-income cluster, the impact of regime types appears relatively minor; the probabilities of strong support are rather low in *both* welfare policy contexts at around .23 and .18, respectively (the difference is only .05).

These results suggest that popular discourse on welfare is significantly more susceptible to economic strata in universalist welfare states than in market-based countries. As we have seen, the attitudinal gap between low-income individuals situated within different institutional settings is remarkably large. By contrast, high-income earners seem to take a similar attitudinal stance towards redistributive government independently from the welfare policy context in which they are embedded. Accordingly, the impact of class cleavages in terms of income strata tends to be more prominent in highly decommodified societies.

### 3.5 Concluding Remarks

Earlier comparative research on welfare state has focused on individuals' utilitarian motivation and institutional environment. This article combines these two theoretical traditions by analysing the mediating impact of welfare regimes on the relationship between income strata and public acceptance of redistribution. The empirical findings systematically support the view that economic self-/class-interest reduces individual support for redistributive government. This gives clear evidence for the interpretation advanced in the field of political economy; that is, individual preferences for egalitarian policies greatly differ across the income scale (e.g. Meltzer and Richard, 1981). Focusing particularly on decommodification, this study also reveals that pro-welfare discourse is indeed more prevalent in redistributive welfare states. This provides some evidence in favour of the institutionalist notion that the structure of social policy institutions shapes individual choices and behaviour. Based on these findings, this

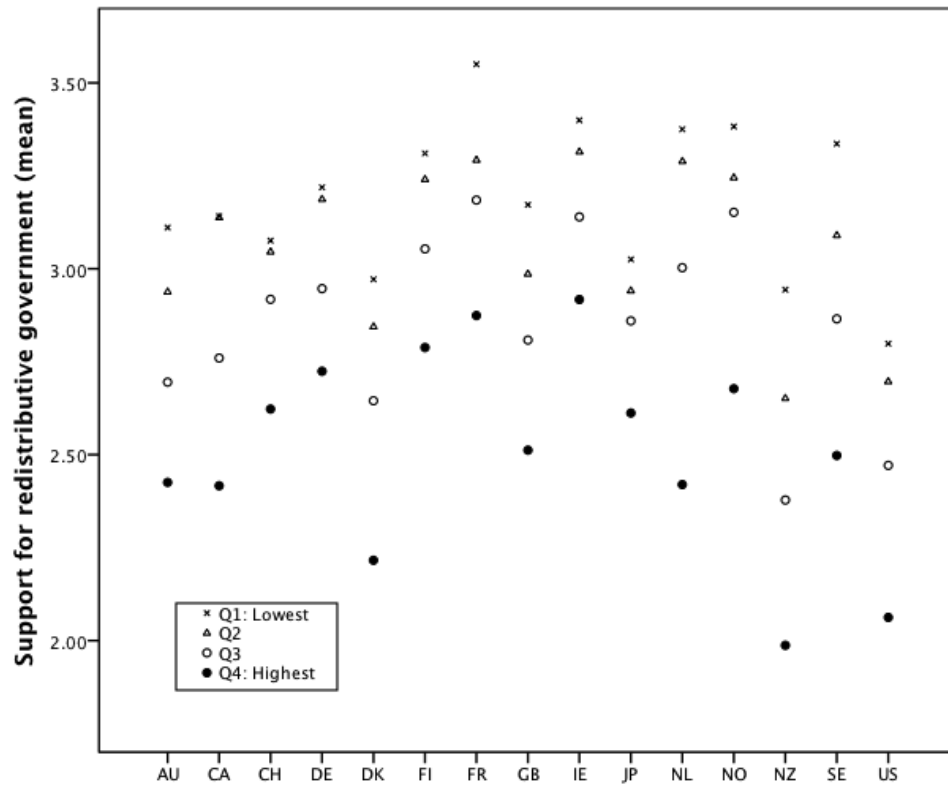
article advances and verifies a more intricate and contingent causal mechanism, namely, the proposition that the negative effect of economic stratification is conditional and varies greatly across different regime settings. The results show that material circumstances do have an indirect impact on popular discourse; the downward influence of class strata is significantly greater in universalist welfare states.

One crucial implication of this article is that institutional contexts indeed channel people's attitudes and perceptions. The existing comparative research has met with mixed findings on the connection between welfare regimes and popular discourse. Unlike most previous empirical efforts, this study pays attention not only to the direct but also to the indirect effect of material interest and demonstrates that the relationship between income strata and public opinion is significantly mediated by the structure of social policy institutions. In this respect, individual actors cannot be assumed as atomised entities but rather are contextualised in initial structural conditions. The findings also imply that the impact of class strata follows more complex causal processes than previously understood. The institutionalist accounts of welfare attitudes have argued that the higher levels of redistributive support in universalist welfare states are explained by the shared acceptance of welfare schemes across class boundaries. However, this article finds that class attitudes in the encompassing welfare state are not uniform but significantly differ across income categories. These results do not necessarily contradict the view that a universalist welfare state cultivates communal solidarity and altruistic norms among citizens. My analysis shows that public support for egalitarian policies tends to be stronger in decommodified welfare settings *both* in high- and low-income classes. This might be explained by a strong sense of 'we-ness' among citizens in social democratic welfare states. However, the pervasive acceptance in universalist societies are, for the most part, caused by the distinct level of welfare support from socially vulnerable individuals who have experienced, or expect to experience, generous social security benefits.

A few caveats should be mentioned here. First, my measure of economic self-interest is rather crude. In this study, social/class stratification was operationalised as income strata. However, economic self-interest is a multifaceted concept that encompasses broad cognitive domains, such as subjective class identification and future expectation of household's financial condition (Gilens, 1996). In this respect, the

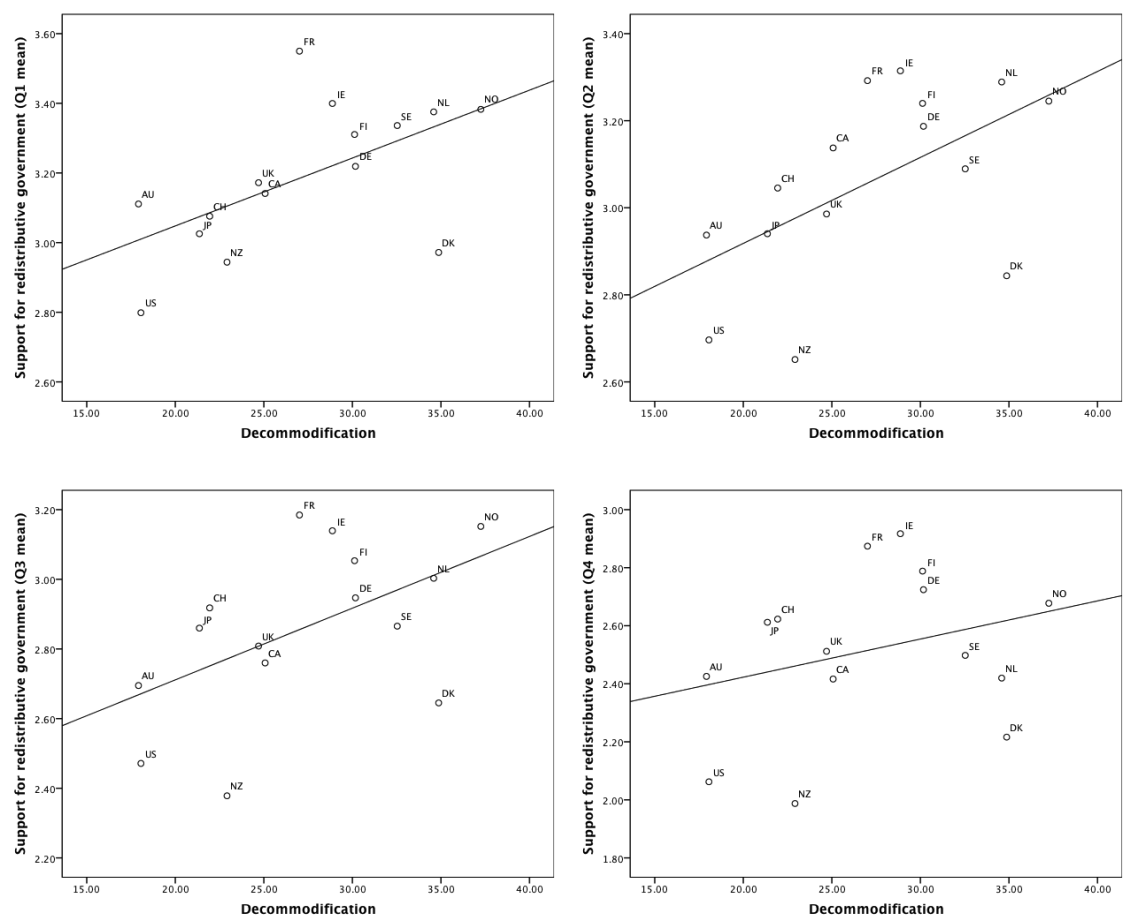
findings drawn from this study will require further confirmation with alternative measurements of social stratification. Second, my analysis is static in that it heavily relies on indicators measured at one point in time. Attitudinal patterns and the quality of social policy institutions cannot be assumed to be time-invariant (Scruggs and Allan, 2006). To get a more accurate picture of the influence of class stratification on subsequent changes in redistributive preferences, follow-up research could track changes in the key variables over time and assess the underlying causal mechanisms through longitudinal model designs.

Figure 3.1 Support for government redistribution, by income class, in 15 Western democracies



*Note:* The countries included are: Australia (AU), Canada (CA), Switzerland (CH), Germany (DE), Denmark (DK), Finland (FI), France (FR), Great Britain (GB), Ireland (IE), Japan (JP), the Netherlands (NL), Norway (NO), New Zealand (NZ), Sweden (SE), and the United States (US).

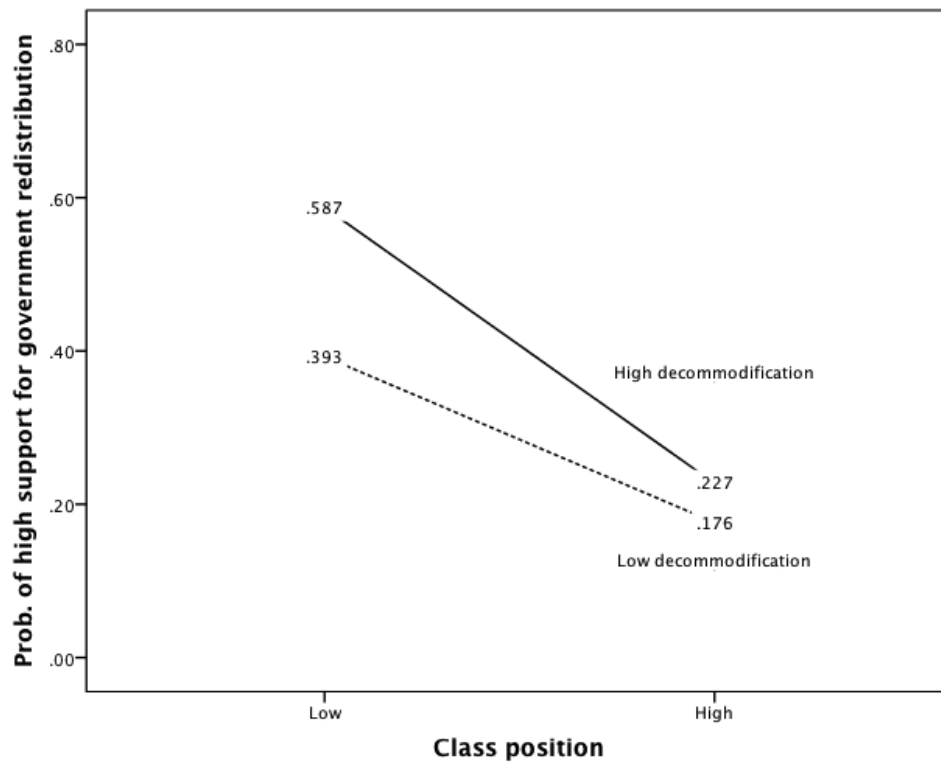
Figure 3.2 Support for government redistribution and decommodification



Note: Household income scores are recoded into four quartiles (Q1-Q4).



Figure 3.3 Mediating effect of decommodification on the relationship between income strata and support for redistribution



*Note:* Predicted probabilities of respondents thinking it should definitely or probably be the government's responsibility to reduce income differences between the rich and the poor. Other variables are held constant at their means.

Table 3.1 Determinants of support for government redistribution

Independent variables	Ordered probit			Binary probit		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Income strata (9pt-scale)	-0.096*** (0.008)	-0.100*** (0.007)	-0.100*** (0.007)	-0.096*** (0.009)	-0.100*** (0.009)	-0.101*** (0.009)
Decommodification		0.017** (0.006)	0.017** (0.006)		0.018** (0.007)	0.018** (0.006)
Income strata × Decom			-0.002** (0.001)			-0.002# (0.001)
Female	0.163*** (0.032)	0.164*** (0.034)	0.166*** (0.035)	0.185*** (0.033)	0.187*** (0.035)	0.188*** (0.036)
Age	0.002 (0.001)	0.003# (0.001)	0.003 (0.001)	0.002 (0.001)	0.003# (0.001)	0.003# (0.001)
Educational attainment	-0.094*** (0.015)	-0.087*** (0.015)	-0.087*** (0.015)	-0.111*** (0.020)	-0.102*** (0.020)	-0.103*** (0.020)
Unemployed	0.182*** (0.049)	0.156** (0.051)	0.153** (0.051)	0.233** (0.083)	0.208** (0.081)	0.206** (0.079)
Out of labour force	-0.011 (0.037)	-0.034 (0.035)	-0.039 (0.038)	0.006 (0.056)	-0.017 (0.051)	-0.022 (0.053)
Household size	0.030** (0.008)	0.034*** (0.009)	0.036*** (0.010)	0.034** (0.010)	0.039*** (0.010)	0.040*** (0.010)
Union membership	0.174*** (0.028)	0.133*** (0.024)	0.133*** (0.024)	0.189*** (0.035)	0.145*** (0.027)	0.145*** (0.027)
Protestant	-0.172** (0.077)	-0.213** (0.067)	-0.209** (0.066)	-0.218** (0.092)	-0.262** (0.081)	-0.259** (0.080)
Other religious affiliations	-0.025 (0.070)	-0.013 (0.059)	-0.014 (0.058)	-0.023 (0.091)	-0.010 (0.079)	-0.012 (0.078)
No religion	-0.046 (0.082)	-0.050 (0.075)	-0.050 (0.075)	-0.085 (0.092)	-0.089 (0.084)	-0.089 (0.084)
Threshold 1	-1.568 (0.072)	-1.153 (0.165)	-1.140 (0.168)			
Threshold 2	-0.720 (0.072)	-0.301 (0.167)	-0.288 (0.171)			
Threshold 3	0.136 (0.074)	0.560 (0.183)	0.574 (0.188)			
Constant				0.750*** (0.083)	0.307 (0.208)	0.294 (0.207)
Log pseudolikelihood	-17,848	-17,784	-17,777	-8,527	-8,477	-8,475
N (individuals)	14,036	14,036	14,036	14,036	14,036	14,036
N (countries)	15	15	15	15	15	15

*Note:* Results from ordered probit and binary probit estimation. Cluster-robust standard errors are given within parentheses. Prior to the creation of the interaction term, the variables (i.e. income strata and decommodification) were mean-centred to reduce potential multicollinearity problems.

#p < .10; \*\*p < .05; \*\*\*p < .001.

## Appendix

Table A3.1 Calculation of the decommodification index

The decommodification index is constructed based on several definitive features of three core areas of the welfare state, namely, unemployment, sickness, and pensions. Each of these social insurance programmes is assessed by replacement rates, eligibility rules, and the scope of entitlements. The calculation process is as follows:

**Decommodification index** = Unemployment + Sickness + Pensions

**Unemployment** =  $(RR * 2 + DL + QP + W) * CR$

- Replacement rate (RR): the ratio of the after-tax benefit paid to an average-wage worker to their after-tax income
- Duration limit (DL): the number of weeks for which benefits are paid
- Qualifying period (QP): the duration of insurance (weeks) required for entitlement
- Waiting (W): the number of waiting days before payment
- Coverage rate (CR): the percentage of workers covered by unemployment pay

**Sickness** =  $(RR * 2 + DL + QP + W) * CR$

- Replacement rate (RR): the ratio of the after-tax benefit paid to an average-wage worker to their after-tax income
- Duration limit (DL): the number of weeks for which benefits are paid
- Qualifying period (QP): the duration of insurance (weeks) required for entitlement
- Waiting (W): the number of waiting days before payment
- Coverage rate (CR): the percentage of workers covered by sick pay

**Pensions** =  $\{(MRR + SRR) * 2 + QP + EF\} * TR$

- Minimum pension replacement rate (MRR): the ratio of the after-tax benefit paid to a worker above the standard retirement age to their after-tax income
- Standard pension replacement rate (SRR): the ratio of the after-tax benefit paid to a fully insured average-wage worker to their after-tax income
- Qualifying period (QP): the duration of insurance (weeks) required for entitlement
- Employee funding (EF): the ratio of employees to total payroll contributions
- Take-up rate (TR): the percentage of people over 65 years old covered by pensions

*Note:* Values more than one standard deviation below the mean are coded as 1, those within one standard deviation of the average as 2, and those more than one standard deviation above the mean as 3, except for the coverage/take-up rates (percentage). For more details, see Scruggs and Allan (2006).

Table A3.2 Summary statistics

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>
Support for redistribution	2.87	1.01	1.00	4.00
Income strata (9pt-scale)	5.06	2.58	1.00	9.00
Decommodification	27.16	6.12	17.92	37.25
Male (ref.)	0.49	0.50	0.00	1.00
Female	0.51	0.50	0.00	1.00
Age	48.05	15.95	15.00	97.00
Educational attainment	3.13	1.483	0.00	5.00
Employed (ref.)	0.66	0.47	0.00	1.00
Unemployed	0.03	0.17	0.00	1.00
Out of labour force	0.31	0.46	0.00	1.00
Household size	2.68	1.38	1.00	10.00
Union membership	1.82	0.86	1.00	3.00
Roman catholic (ref.)	0.21	0.41	0.00	1.00
Protestant	0.45	0.50	0.00	1.00
Other religious affiliations	0.07	0.26	0.00	1.00
No religion	0.27	0.44	0.00	1.00

*Note:* N = 14,036.

Table A3.3 Multilevel multinomial ordered probit and binary probit estimations

Independent variables	Multilevel ordered probit			Multilevel binary probit		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Income strata (9pt-scale)	-0.100*** (0.007)	-0.100*** (0.007)	-0.101*** (0.007)	-0.104*** (0.008)	-0.105*** (0.008)	-0.105*** (0.008)
Decommodification		0.016** (0.007)	0.016** (0.007)		0.016# (0.009)	0.016# (0.009)
Income strata × Decom			-0.002** (0.001)			-0.001# (0.001)
Female	0.168*** (0.034)	0.168*** (0.034)	0.169*** (0.035)	0.188*** (0.035)	0.188*** (0.035)	0.189*** (0.036)
Age	0.003** (0.001)	0.003** (0.001)	0.003** (0.001)	0.003** (0.001)	0.003** (0.001)	0.003** (0.001)
Educational attainment	-0.082*** (0.014)	-0.082*** (0.014)	-0.083*** (0.014)	-0.088*** (0.016)	-0.088*** (0.016)	-0.088*** (0.016)
Unemployed	0.172*** (0.048)	0.171*** (0.048)	0.168** (0.049)	0.209** (0.067)	0.208** (0.067)	0.206** (0.066)
Out of labour force	-0.025 (0.027)	-0.026 (0.027)	-0.032 (0.029)	-0.016 (0.044)	-0.017 (0.044)	-0.021 (0.046)
Household size	0.031** (0.010)	0.032** (0.010)	0.034** (0.010)	0.042*** (0.010)	0.042*** (0.010)	0.044*** (0.010)
Union membership	0.159*** (0.017)	0.157*** (0.017)	0.158*** (0.017)	0.184*** (0.020)	0.183*** (0.020)	0.183*** (0.020)
Protestant	-0.080# (0.042)	-0.083# (0.042)	-0.080# (0.042)	-0.105** (0.041)	-0.107** (0.041)	-0.105** (0.041)
Other religious affiliations	0.112** (0.046)	0.111** (0.046)	0.111** (0.046)	0.121** (0.057)	0.121** (0.058)	0.121** (0.057)
No religion	0.050 (0.054)	0.049 (0.054)	0.050 (0.054)	0.019 (0.050)	0.018 (0.050)	0.019 (0.050)
Threshold 1	-1.630 (0.085)	-1.627 (0.082)	-1.116 (0.098)			
Threshold 2	-0.763 (0.085)	-0.760 (0.081)	-0.249 (0.100)			
Threshold 3	0.111 (0.082)	0.114 (0.082)	0.625 (0.097)			
Constant				0.215** (0.093)	0.212** (0.097)	0.209** (0.097)
Intercept variance	0.047** (0.018)	0.040** (0.016)	0.040** (0.016)	0.060** (0.024)	0.054** (0.022)	0.054** (0.022)
Log pseudolikelihood	-46,953	-46,958	-47,011	-24,122	-24,126	-24,145
N (individuals)	14,036	14,036	14,036	14,036	14,036	14,036
N (countries)	15	15	15	15	15	15

*Note:* Results from multilevel ordered probit and multilevel probit estimations (random intercept models). Robust standard errors are given within parentheses. Prior to the creation of the interaction term, the variables (i.e. income strata and decommodification) were mean-centered to reduce potential multicollinearity problems.

#p < .10; \*\*p < .05; \*\*\*p < .001.

## CONCLUSION



Here, I summarise the overall flow and unity of the whole argument. Throughout the chapters, this paper has examined the causal mechanism behind the formation of individual welfare preferences in light of social solidarity (chapter 1), ethno-demographic diversity (chapter 2), and welfare regimes (chapter 3). The separate chapters of this research are distinct and independent, but are closely entwined with one another. This research paper consistently focused on how individual preferences for redistributive policies are shaped and differ within and across advanced democratic societies. As shown in the right side of Figure 4.1, the dependent variable was always individuals' general attitudes towards redistributive government ('support for redistributive government policies'). The individual-level data used for each chapter come from the Japanese version of the General Social Survey (GSS) and the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) that is administered as part of the GSS. Therefore, the question wordings of the dependent variables are literally identical or, at least, semantically the same as presented below:

*Chapter 1:* 'It is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences in income between families with high incomes and those with low incomes?'

*Chapter 2:* 'It is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences in income between people with high incomes and those with low incomes?'

*Chapter 3:* 'On the whole, do you think it should or should not be the government's responsibility to reduce income differences between the rich and the poor?'

As listed in the left side of Figure 4.1, I attempted to explain this single variable ('public support for redistribution') from the two groups of micro-level determinants ('economic class' and 'solidarity-oriented values and beliefs') and a couple of macro-level variables ('ethnic diversity' and 'welfare regimes'). My arguments always started from one question: whether and to what extent do 'economic class' and self-interested human attitudes exert a negative impact on individual perceptions towards redistributive policies? (the direct effect of 'economic class' on the 'support for redistributive government policies' in Figure 4.1). The results of my analyses in the three chapters repeatedly provided clear-cut evidence in support of this view and demonstrated that individual actors behave in a way that maximises their utility functions (i.e. individual/class benefits). In fact, underprivileged social class members



tend to be more in favour of redistribution because they generally expect to benefit from social welfare policies, whereas individuals with privileged market positions are likely to express opposition to the view that it is the government responsibility to secure the wellbeing of its citizens because they identify themselves as the net contributors rather than the potential beneficiaries of the welfare state.

However, it is too simplistic to consider that individuals shape their behaviours and attitudes solely based on their socio-economic attributes, such as income, social class, or the expected benefits of redistributive government. The main interest of this research is to shift our concerns from the mere utility-optimising calculus of ‘welfare gains and losses’, which implies an atomisation of social bonds and trusting relationships, to a broader sympathetic perspective that incorporates public interest and communal values. From this point of view, the first chapter hypothesised that the reverse relationship between economic position and support for redistribution is mediated, or alleviated, by the solidarity-related variables (i.e. non-individualist attitudes, national identity, and social trustworthiness) in the context of Japanese society. I found that while the coefficients of these variables are indeed consistently positive and statistically significant throughout different models, social trust has an *indirect* impact on the linkage between ‘economic class’ and ‘support for redistributive government policies’. These results in the first chapter suggest that although people’s attitudes towards redistribution are driven by the political bargaining among utility-maximising individuals, the welfare state is, at the same time, sustained by ‘centripetal social forces’ such as mutual trust and social solidarity. These findings drawn from Japanese social survey data are consistent with those of previous quantitative analyses conducted in other industrialised democracies such as the United States and Canada (Hasenfeld and Rafferty, 1989; Johnston et al., 2010; McCloskey and Zaller, 1984). Therefore, the results of the one-country analysis in Japan are not the idiosyncratic product of a particular cultural context.

In chapter 2, I evaluated the corrosive effects of immigration-induced diversity and multicultural policies on the strength of social solidarity on which the welfare state rests. As summarised in Figure 4.1, according to some scholars and observers, ethno-cultural diversity and multiculturalism are assumed to corrode welfare institutions by degrading national identity and cohesiveness that have been historically consolidated in the nation-state building process. If the detrimental effects of ethnic diversity and

multiculturalism are true, this is likely to pose a potential challenge to the primary conclusion of this paper—social solidarity is a necessary condition for successful welfare institutions. As I argued in chapter 2, the impacts of ethnic diversity and multiculturalism are relatively trivial when compared with those of social expenditure (‘generous welfare schemes’). In short, I established the view that a shared sense of social solidarity sustains the welfare state in chapter 1, and then offered a defense of this view by responding to the theory that immigration erodes the multiculturalist welfare state in the following chapter.

The arguments in chapter 3 are also closely related with those of chapter 1 in that both chapters argue the politics of redistribution with a particular focus on the concept of social solidarity. In essence, chapter 3 analyses the role of social policy regimes in welfare preference formation. According to the institutional feedback theory, different setups of welfare system lead to distinct forms of social structuring, political discourse, and even public perceptions towards the welfare state. Institutional scholars posit that the comprehensive welfare state (e.g. social democratic societies) blurs the cleavages between traditional social classes in society and generates a shared acceptance of redistributive government. On the other hand, in means-tested welfare schemes (e.g. market-based liberal societies), identities are formed along class interests thereby dividing the population into welfare recipients and non-recipients and leading to greater social polarisation. In other words, universalist welfare states are associated with centripetal social impulses (i.e. social solidarity), whereas liberal welfare states are related with centrifugal social forces (i.e. social atomization/polarisation). This line of theory in chapter 3 once again leads us to examine the tension between centripetal and centrifugal forces in democratic welfare states as I depicted in Figure 4.1. In this respect, all the chapters are motivated in one way or another by a deep concern for how and to what extent the process of welfare preference formation is linked to the cognitive boundaries of ‘we’ and ‘them’.

Figure 4.1 Flow of Ideas and Arguments

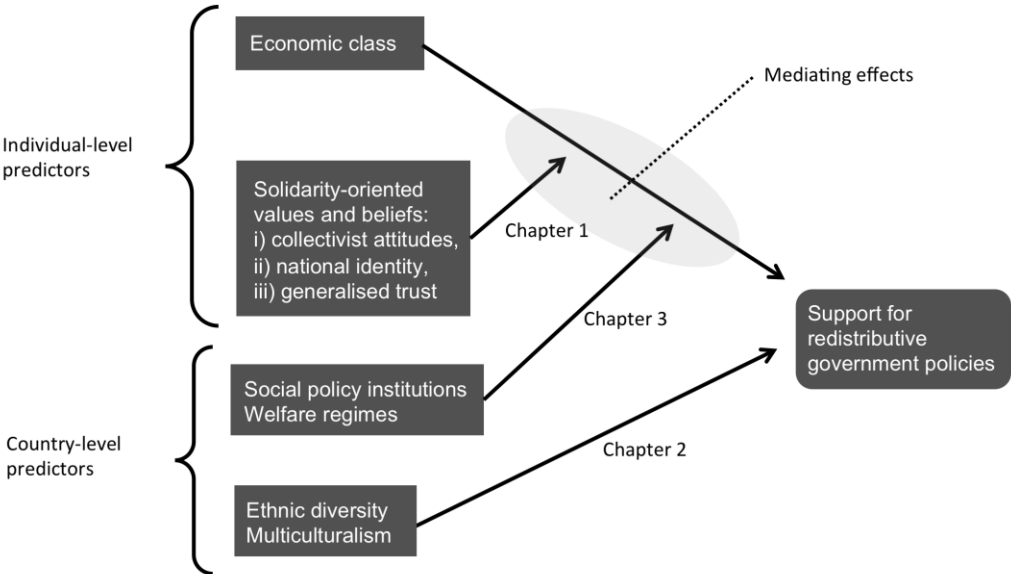
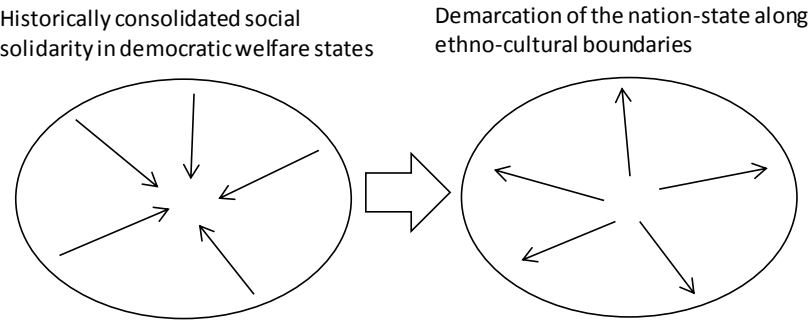


Figure 4.1 Centripetal and Centrifugal Forces Operating in the Welfare State



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## Conclusion

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