EuSocialCit

European Social Citizenship

35 years of public opinion surveys and European social citizenship: What can we conclude?

Authors

Gianna M. Eick

Marius R. Busemeyer

Brian Burgoon

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Authors: Gianna Maria Eick is postdoctoral researcher at the University of Konstanz. Marius Busemeyer is Professor of Political Science at the University of Konstanz. Brian Burgoon is Professor of International and Comparative Political Economy at the University of Amsterdam.

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Summary

What type of European social citizenship does the public across the European Union (EU) prefer on the national- and EU-levels? This paper empirically investigates the development of public opinion towards European social citizenship from 1985 to the present from a birds-eye perspective. The paper summarizes the large literature on welfare attitudes, adds new empirical evidence and points towards potential future research areas. To do that, we will review, consolidate and valorise existing large-scale quantitative research on the perceptions, attitudes and preferences of EU citizens concerning social rights. It does so by drawing on and expanding a newly-compiled database, the Comparative Social Citizenship Dataset (CSCD), that brings together existing country-year macro data on policies, regulations, laws, social, economic and political conditions relevant to social rights, as well as public opinion data on these matters. Based on analyses of these CSCD measures, the paper focuses on painting a broad picture of a European social citizenship model from the perspective of public opinion, i.e. individual citizens' perceptions and preferences.

First, the paper identifies critical perceptions, attitudes and preferences related to the future of European social citizenship. The European public shows overall high and relatively stable levels of support for more government redistribution from 1985 to the present, not only in general but also across different policy fields, such as education, employment and family policies. Particularly in countries with higher levels of exposure to social risks, such as income inequality or unemployment, public opinion is favourable towards more government redistribution – a pattern suggesting associations between institutional arrangements and public opinion. The results also demonstrate that many EU citizens generally support a stronger involvement of the EU in social policy matters, including sub-fields such as education, employment and family policy arrangements.

Second, the paper explores the convergence versus divergence of public opinion on social citizenship across and within EU member states from 1985 to the present. Our analysis reveals some (upward and downward) convergence trends across countries and time in attitudes and preferences, which might indicate the emergence of a public support base for a more comprehensive European welfare state model. These trends were reinforced during the post-crisis years after 2007/2008 (financial crisis) and, potentially, through the development and establishment of the social pillar of European integration in the 2010s. However, the convergence trends vary across different policy fields. While social investment policies, such as education or Active Labour Market Policies, enjoy increasing levels of support, we see opposite trends for unemployment benefits. This may be explained by changes in European welfare states that placed greater emphasis on individual responsibilities and social investment policies. Related to the overall convergence trend within EU member states, some socio-economic cleavages are declining over time, particularly educational cleavages. This could signal a broader coalition in support of more social policy involvement of the EU, possibly because of the stark increase of employment risks across different groups.

To sum up, the patterns presented here suggest that the CSCD is a valuable data source for exploring the public opinion on social citizenship. Still, more quantitative and qualitative data, especially on policy trade-offs, is needed to inform future EU policy-making. This is an issue that will be further explored in later papers of this Work Package. We find an overall emerging European welfare solidarity across and within EU member states and growing public support of a European welfare state model. Importantly, the paper demonstrates that such preferences increase in times of rising social risks and crises, which has important implications for social citizenship during and after the current Covid-19 pandemic.

35 years of public opinion survey and European social citizenship: What can we conclude?

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Web address	For more information about the EuSocialCit project, please visit www.eusocialcit.eu. EuSocialCit's output can also be found in its community on Zenodo: https://zenodo.org/communities/eusocialcit.

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1. Introduction

On the one hand, the Covid-19 pandemic has increased pressures on welfare states across the European Union (EU). On the other hand, the crisis has further emphasised the high need and demand for generous social policy measures and for the further implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (Taylor-Gooby et al., 2017; Laenen et al., 2020; Lengfeld and Kley, 2021). While we know that the public holds strong preferences for generous welfare states across Europe, public and political debates often focus on patterns of resistance towards the welfare state and its beneficiaries, such as welfare chauvinism, i.e., the preference to grant entitlements to rights and access to welfare state benefits only to the members of one's own national/ethnic community (Eick and Larsen, 2021), welfare populism, namely the combination of egalitarianism and a critical view pertaining to the welfare state (Taylor-Gooby and Leruth, 2018) and welfare Euroscepticism according to which the process of European integration constitutes a threat to welfare states (Leruth et al., 2017). Thus, it may not come as a surprise that EU citizens often do not act on their preferences for generous welfare states but instead vote for parties that support welfare state retrenchment (Tober and Busemeyer, 2020).

Considering that European welfare states have undergone significant transformations across Europe over the past 35 years (Laenen et al., 2020), this paper will investigate the public opinion on European social citizenship, i.e. the allocation of welfare resources within countries in the EU but also the degree to which the EU should take responsibility for the social rights of its citizens across time and countries. This is because, while most welfare resources in EU member states are still allocated within countries, the EU increasingly intervenes in welfare reforms within and across its member states (Bruzelius and Seeleib-Kaiser, 2020). Policy makers in the EU are interested in and sensitive to the attitudes, preferences and perceptions of their constituents on a range of policy fields, including welfare reforms. Accordingly, from a welfare state perspective, much can be gained by further gaining insights into citizens voices on European social citizenship.

Since the early analyses of the 1980s, the field of comparative welfare attitudes has developed considerably. The field has become explicitly rather than implicitly comparative, using country variation as a key analytical tool. Furthermore, it has moved from comparing compiled single-country studies, first to a comparison of welfare regimes and then on to the analysis of feedback-effects and other explanatory institutional mechanisms (Svallfors, 2010). It has become increasingly methodologically sophisticated and it has made the transition from data poverty to relative data abundance. In particular, large survey programmes, such as the European Social Survey (ESS), the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), or the Eurobarometer, allow not only for cross-country but also over-time comparisons, which can bring valuable insights to the evolution of public opinion towards European social citizenship. However, more trade-off and experimental data is only just emerging in this field, such as the Investigating in Education survey (INVEDUC) or the "welfarepriorities" survey introduced and discussed below.

Specifically, this paper will study the perceptions, attitudes and preferences of EU citizens towards social rights and the involvement of the European Union, to identify a profile of the demands for change and reforms. In order to do that, this paper will take a birds-eye perspective on public opinion towards European social citizenship. The paper summarizes the large literature on welfare attitudes, adds new empirical evidence and points towards potential future research areas. To do that, we will review, consolidate and valorise existing large-scale quantitative research on the perceptions, attitudes and preferences of EU citizens concerning social rights. Overall, this working paper identifies opportunities and constraints for furthering the EU social agenda and implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights. This paper will answer the following research questions:

- How can we measure "social citizenship" with opinion survey data?
- How do EU citizens perceive existing social rights over the past 35 years?
- What is the degree of satisfaction and dissatisfaction among EU citizens, and what do they "demand" and prefer in terms of policy priorities?
- Do we find differences in perceptions, attitudes and preferences across different regions in the EU (for example, North, East, South, West)?
- Do we find differences in perceptions, attitudes and preferences across different sub-sectors of the welfare state (for example, social transfers versus social investment)?
- What evidence is there for or against the achievement of convergence of perceptions, attitudes and preferences across the EU? Is there a basis for describing an existing or emerging European solidarity, or do we instead see more divisions across EU member states?
- Did social cleavages on perceptions, attitudes and preferences towards European social citizenship converge or diverge within EU member states? And were old cleavages (such as education and income) replaced through new cleavages (such as ideology)?
- To what extent do these trends change during and since the crisis years (2007-2008) that have so fundamentally shaken the political and social thinking and policy development surrounding social rights?

We answer these questions in the next seven sections. In Section 2, following this introduction, we set up the knowledge background for our empirical work: The section discusses the development trajectory of public opinion on European social citizenship since the mid-1980s and summarizes discussions around the convergence of perceptions, attitudes and preferences within the EU across countries and across different socio-economic groups. Section 3 briefly introduces the country-year individual-level empirical data, which is part of the Comparative Social Citizenship Database (CSCD). This dataset informs our H2020 project "The future of European social citizenship" (EUSOCIALCIT) collaboration, including this paper's empirical work. The paper's remaining sections then draw on this CSCD to illustrate key trends in public opinion overall across countries and across different social groups in Europe in the EU since the 1980s. Section 4 presents cross-country aggregates of public opinion towards social citizenship on the national level, focusing on opinions on general redistribution, government intervention and across social-policy categories, the extent of potential convergence and the general orientation of the public concerning different government sectors. Sections 5-7 continue the aggregated portrait of social-rights opinions but focus on social policy across three policy fields: education, employment and family policy. The exploration into such issue-specific detail clarifies how

major trends in public opinion are developing in Europe, potentially shaping or being shaped by important contexts explored within the EUSOCIALCIT framework. Section 8 concludes with a brief recap and mediation on the future of the empirical study of social citizenship.

2. Theorising public opinion on European social citizenship

The point of departure for this paper is the emergence of what can be considered as a new Social Question in Europe, reproducing in a new appearance the double challenge of economic disruption and social/institutional reconstruction within individual EU countries and across the EU. Like the broader EUSOCIALCIT collective project of which this paper is a part, our conceptual position in the debates on social citizenship is to develop a 'resource-based and multi-level conception of social rights' (Vandenbroucke et al., 2020). This conception is central to our ongoing articulation and empirical analysis of how to promote social rights in the EU, including developing EU-level competencies and policy-regulatory arrangements.

In line with our 'resource-based and multi-level conception of social rights', we define public attitudes as crucial to *normative resources* that foster the realisation of social rights. We see resources in general as features of individuals, groups, governments or broader polities that undergird the power of individuals to claim and act upon social rights. Such resources can be *instrumental resources*, involving organizational or individual capacities to understand or gain access to and take up social rights provisions. They can also be *enforcement resources*, involving organisational or individual capacities to monitor and compel/coerce compliance with social rights provisions. *Normative resources*, in contrast, involve an organisation or individual standards that legitimate a given level or set of social rights. While all such resources should be seen from the perspective of (more or less) empowered individuals, the basis of such empowerment can reside in properties of not only individuals but also groupings (e.g. union organizations, political parties) and government institutions (e.g. policies promising potential access to social rights benefits). Normative resources can involve not only material and institutional manifestations – that is, formal legal edits or goals set out in policies, regulations or constitutions – but also ideational manifestations: widely-shared attitudes in a polity (e.g. a region, a party, and particularly a nation-state) that legitimate a given form or level of social rights. For instance, near-unanimous belief that government should provide universal healthcare is important alongside a law or regulation mandating such universal healthcare – though both are normative resources on universal healthcare as a social right.

Our previous EUSOCIALCIT paper *Measuring social citizenship in social policy outputs, resources and outcomes across EU member states from 1985 to the present* (Eick et al., 2021), laid the empirical groundwork to investigate European social citizenship from 1985 to the present, but focused on policy ouput and outcomes rather than public opinion. The previous paper had already introduced our newly-compiled database, the Comparative Social Citizenship Dataset (CSCD), that brings together *key measures concern three categories central to the EUSOCIALCIT's resource-based conception of social rights: (1) policy outputs, including policy provisions and spending measures seeking to foster social rights; (2) outcomes, societal conditions like poverty and inequality relevant to the societal value-*

added of social rights; and 3) resources on which citizens and policymakers draw that drive and give policy force to social rights (including public opinion).

Eick et al. (2021) develops two essential findings. First, convergence trends indicate the emergence of a European welfare state model and not a race to the bottom in social rights. These trends mainly were observed for the pre-crisis years before 2007/08. In contrast, divergence in outputs, resources and outcomes increased somewhat again after that, even though EU-level efforts to establish and expand the social pillar of European integration intensified significantly in the 2010s. Whether there is recalibration, i.e. redistribution of resources from one social policy area to another, is difficult to say. However, our analysis confirms a particular trend from social transfers to social investments (see Baiocco et al., 2021 for more details on changing social investments from our EUSOCIALCIT project). Second, the paper also explored essential macro-level connections between social-rights resources, outputs and outcomes. With respect to links between outputs and outcomes, bivariate macro-level associations suggested that social policy spending measures – both aggregate measures of social policy effort and also more broken-down measures focused on education, employment and family policies – may considerably improve inequality outcomes over time, including reducing poverty risk and mitigating income and gender inequalities. And as for links between resources and outputs, macro-level associations suggest examples of how instrumental, normative and enforcement resources as distinguished in our research shape spending meausures of welfare effort. Finally, focusing on how resources might moderate the links between outputs and outcomes, we saw how critical welfare-spending measures that are social-rights outputs can have quite disparate implications for outcomes like poverty and inequality, depending on these same measures of resources.

In this deliverable, we build on and expand the perspective of our previous paper by using broader measures of public opinion on European social citizenship, complementing the CSCD database. The question for this present paper is then how the resource-based framework plays out with respect to broad measures of public opinion. Exploring this question in more detail, as outlined in the introduction, will bring us closer to identify what citizens want and what member states and the EU are delivering in terms of social policy.

Perceptions, attitudes and preferences are often diffuse, multi-faceted, multi-dimensional, or downright contradictory (Oskamp and Schultz, 2005; Roosma et al., 2013; Cavaillé and Trump, 2015). The literature usually assumes that public opinion is very hard to change (Svallfors, 2010). So why does the analysis of public opinion matter for the development of European social citizenship from 1985 to the present? First and foremost, democracy is built on the premise that majority public preferences are represented, which also applies to welfare state policy. Still, whether this is truly the case remains a longstanding debate in European democracies. The main controversy involves the question of whether the public opinion on social policies encourages policymakers or rather constrain policymakers to adapt current social policies in line with public preferences. In this way, public opinion often functions as a counterweight to abrupt policy changes, or – alternatively – it may become the driving force for policy change if welfare states need to be adapted to changing socio-economic contexts. There is an extensive and growing literature on measures of substantive representation that tries to empirically trace links (or their absence) between public opinion measures of support for

policies on the one hand and actual policy changes for the same policies on the other hand (Brooks and Manza, 2003; Schakel et al., 2020). While many of these studies find that public opinion and policy are indeed linked, some also find that the links between public opinion and policy are unclear or non-existing (Erikson et al., 2002; Brooks and Manza, 2003; Soroka and Wlezien, 2009; Schakel et al., 2020; Schakel 2019). Usually, this is because the data in the field is limited, making it difficult for researchers to trace causal relationships (Kenworthy, 2009), or because policies and policymaking institutions can create their own support (van Oorschot and Meuleman, 2014).

Recent literature has also shown that public opinion can depend on salient events, for example the financial crisis 2007-2008 (Chung and van Oorschot, 2011). More specifically, Busemeyer et al. (2020) find that public opinion has the most significant influence on policy-making when salience on an issue is high (for example, the financial crisis 2007/2008) and public preferences on that issue are coherent. In contrast, when issues are salient but preferences are conflicting, party politics have a more substantial influence on policy-making. When issue salience is low, the authors find that interest groups are dominant in influencing policy-making. This confirms that public can also be a driver of policy changes, but only under certain conditions. Consequently, the attitudes of EU citizens may be a resource and part of the opportunity structure for EU actors bent on challenging the institutionalized status quo and effectuating political change on the national and the EU-level.

One of the most persistent debates around public opinion and policy making in democracies concerns whether political representation is equal in such systems. While more research is needed to reach conclusions for the political representation across EU member states, the main finding thus far is that the average voters and particularly less affluent citizens have less influence on policy-making than citizens who are part of the elite or at least more affluent (Kenworthy, 2009; Schakel et al., 2020). Such findings make even more clear why the analysis of public opinion over long periods of time matters: long-term analyses of the trends in attitudes make it more difficult to confuse elite opinions and strategies with the views of the larger public. Elites often claim to be speaking on behalf of majorities or larger groups, and this kind of research helps us to judge whether that is true or not (Svallfors, 2002). This is particularly the case for social policy-making at the EU level, as it is often claimed that it is driven by European elites and not so much by the larger public across the EU (Katz, 2001). These claims are linked to the question of whether existing social arrangements are legitimate or not. Are existing social arrangements actually normatively based in citizens' views or are they only approved because citizens do not see any alternatives or believe that action is fruitless? To what extent is public opinion an independent driving force of policy change, and to what extent is it dependent on elite cues and framing? Are institutions considered to be fundamentally just or not? Comparative welfare state research also asks us to judge public policies not only by their distributive effects or by their economic efficiency but by their normative effects on the larger public. Do these policies tend to promote intolerance, the exclusion of others and self-centeredness, or do they tend to nurture tolerance, solidarity and civic-mindedness? These seem to be fairly fundamental questions for a democratic polity in the EU and have profound implications for the democratic process.

Notably, the field produced some conclusions about the overall support for the welfare state across Europe. Encompassing welfare policies, which are collectively financed and publicly organized, have

been found to enjoy a high degree of overall support from European citizens (Sainsbury, 2001). However, we also know from the literature that public support for welfare policies varies significantly across policy areas and welfare state regimes (Roosma et al., 2013; Cavaillé and Trump, 2015). While important conclusions already emanated from different data sets and various comparisons and differed in substance and emphasis, advanced analyses, explanations, and interpretations still lag behind. To address the theoretical rationales that can explain attitudinal formation and change within the EU, this section offers a short overview of the literature on public opinion and European social citizenship and elaborates on a set of common key findings from these studies, which we will use as points of departure for our paper. The following subsections will deal with the dominant welfare attitudes studies. The three most prominent rationales for explaining individual's support for the welfare state are (2.1) self-interest, (2.2) ideologies and (2.3) institutional differences. While it may be the case that attitudes towards European social citizenship are determined by different factors than general welfare state attitudes, we still believe that existing research on the latter is helpful to develop theoretical expectations regarding the former. Lastly, Section 2.4 will elaborate on the main gaps we identified in the field related to the convergence of public attitudes on European social citizenship.

2.1 Self-interest rationales

Self-interest rationales argue that individuals that are most likely to benefit from welfare state resources will be the ones most supportive of the welfare state and specific social policies (Knijn and van Oorschot, 2008; Svallfors, 1997). This means net receivers of welfare benefits and services (such as pensioners) and net payers (such as employed taxpayers) have different interests regarding the generosity of welfare resources and consequently different opinions on that matter. Consequently, the self-interest rationales explain how the individual demand for government redistribution is reflected by individuals' position in the labour market and their exposure to social risks related to that (Kangas, 1997; Jæger, 2006a; Rehm, 2009).

The self-interest argument has been used as a basis for many empirical studies across different social policy fields. For example, people from a lower social class are usually more in favour of government redistribution, and people from a higher social class are usually more in favour of market-based solutions (Svallfors, 1997). Unemployed people usually support employment policies that protect their standard of living, while employed people and particularly affluent workers support generous policies for the unemployed less as these might increase their taxes or social security contributions (Rehm, 2011). Women are usually more supportive of family-related policies than men because women are more likely to rely on such policies at some point in their lives (Svallfors, 1997). After all, they are likely to hold the primary responsibility for providing care to children. Notably, women demand policies in order to preserve their skills during career breaks and policies that help to mobilize their skills in the labour market (Garritzmann and Schwander, 2020). Finally, older people usually support pension policies more than younger people though the support for pension schemes is strong amongst both groups as everyone expects to benefit from such schemes at some point in their lives (Ferrera, 1993; Bonoli and Häusermann, 2009).

2.2 Ideology rationales

Besides self-interest, another predictor for individual support for welfare policies are ideological positions (Blekesaune, 2013; Edlund, 2006). Ideology rationales entail that political socialisation shapes the core values of individuals, such as progressive versus conservative. These, in turn, are assumed to affect critical perceptions, attitudes and preferences, such as the demand for government redistribution or trust in government institutions (van Oorschot, 2002; Jakobsen 2010). Since ideological positions are not completely endogenous, previous studies have used a range of factors that are associated with individuals' support for a specific social policy or welfare states more broadly, amongst others: political partisanship (Goerres and Tepe, 2012), economic individualism (Blekesaune, 2013), egalitarian views towards gender (Pfau-Effinger, 1998), and socio-tropic factors, such as income equality or education (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Reeskens and Meuleman, 2012). Furthermore, the apparent support for welfare policies coexisted with considerable ambivalence regarding several aspects of welfare policies. Quite widespread suspicions about welfare abuse and cheating, for example, and concerns about bureaucracy and inefficiencies in the public sector can lower overall support for the redistributive and risk-reducing aspects of welfare policies (Roosma et al., 2013).

Research has shown that policies such as healthcare, education, pensions benefits or families receive more public support than policies such as unemployment benefits (Busemeyer et al., 2018a). Such findings are often explained through the deservingness theory (van Oorschot, 2006; Laenen et al., 2019; Heuer and Zimmermann, 2020). This theory argues that public support for welfare beneficiaries who are perceived as deserving for different reasons (such as the sick and old) is higher than the support for welfare beneficiaries who are perceived as undeserving (such as the unemployed or migrants). The literature has been examining five deservingness criteria that may explain this differentiation in public opinion: (1) the welfare receivers' level of need, (2) the attitude of the welfare receiver (i.e. gratefulness), (3) the level of control (the responsibility of the welfare receiver for their neediness), (4) the reciprocity of giving and receiving and, finally, (5) the criterion of identity, or in other words, the similarity or proximity between the net receivers of welfare benefits and services and the net payers (van Oorschot, 2000).

2.3 Institutional rationales

On the contextual level, institutional rationales serve as predictors for the public demand for government redistribution. Some institutional rationales start from a self-interest perspective, others emphasize the ideological perspective, and others involve both. We will elaborate on a range of institutional rationales in this subsection.

To start, some studies predict an almost mechanical relationship between the public demand for government redistribution and macro-economic factors and social conditions. For example, studies argue that the public demand for government redistribution is higher in countries with higher levels of income inequality, typically measured using the Gini-Index, and vice versa (Dallinger, 2010; Dion and Birchfield, 2010; Finseraas, 2009). Other studies argue that the public demand for government redistribution has a negative relationship with economic growth, typically measured by the change in

GDP (Dallinger, 2010; Dion and Birchfield, 2010). Using a similar argumentation, studies argue that the public demand for government redistribution (across different policy areas) increased in bad times when the economic conditions are poor or when unemployment levels are high and vice versa (Blekesaune, 2007; Dallinger, 2010).

Institutional rationales also argue that the public demand for government redistribution is affected by the size and organization of the welfare state. In line with this, the welfare regime theory explains public opinion for welfare policies with their institutional arrangements (such as organization of the welfare state), and their political (such as power of right-wing parties) and cultural history (such as religious composition) (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Jæger, 2006a; Svallfors, 1997). Related to this, researchers found clear differences in support for welfare policies, depending on whether they are provided universally or selectively (Rothstein, 1998). Universal encompassing programmes such as pensions and healthcare receive strong support, while more targeted or selective policies such as unemployment benefits and social assistance are usually supported less (Svallfors, 2012; Brady and Bostic, 2014). Furthermore, the literature argues that social investment policies (such as education or childcare) gain in popularity over more traditional social transfers policies (such as unemployment benefits or social assistance) (Bonoli, 2013; Hemerijck, 2013; Eick and Larsen, 2021). This is because expanding social investments may have the potential to diminish social inequalities as well as to promote growth in service-based knowledge economies.

Another line of literature deals with the relationship of institutions and public feedback towards their outcomes, namely policy feedback effects. These are often framed with two different conceptions: First, the positive (Piersonian) policy feedback, which assumes self-reinforcing effects and second, the negative (thermostatic) feedback, which assumed self-undermining effects (Fernández and Jaime-Castillo, 2013; Jacobs and Weaver, 2015). However, Busemeyer et al. (2019) aim to move beyond these two distinctions and develop a more granular typology of policy feedback effects: (1) accelerating, (2) self-reinforcing and self-undermining, (3) specific and general, as well as (4) long- and short-term dynamic feedback. Accelerating feedback effects can be found in young and less institutionalised elements of the welfare state. Even though education as such is a well-established policy area, the recent turn from the transfer-heavy welfare state model towards the social investment welfare state is still relatively young in many European welfare state, such that increasing spending levels on social investment might lead to support for even more spending. The traditional feedback effects (Piersonian and thermostatic) appear to be more commonly found in more traditional and established social policies, such as unemployment insurance or pension schemes. These results align with the popularity of social investment policies mentioned above and support the view that policies that promote human capital accumulation are particularly suited for the service-based knowledge economies (Busemeyer, 2015; Hemerijck, 2013).

A relatively new line of research studies variations in public support for the welfare state while taking into account the multi-level character of welfare provision in the EU. Within the EU, welfare policies can be implemented both at the national and the supranational EU-level (Burgoon, 2009; Hemerijk, 2012) (and sometimes at the regional level as well). This provides the unique opportunity for EU-policy makers to create innovative, supranational policy tools that help to improve social policies across

member states (Petmesidou, 1996; Annesley, 2007; Zeitlin, 2005). In light of this development, public opinion on these possibilities is receiving more attention. On the one hand, academic and public debates argue that there is growing Euroscepticism, also in relation to the Europeanisation of welfare (Leruth et al., 2017). On the other hand, the early research on an EU-led welfare state in general shows such a model to be quite popular (Baute and Meuleman, 2020; van Oorschot and Roosma, 2021). Especially in times of crises, such as the current Covid-19 pandemic, research shows that transnational solidarity across European countries increases (Koos and Leuffen, 2020). Furthermore, Baute et al. (2019) show – at least for Belgium – that there are spill-over effects in welfare attitudes from the national to the EU-level, which can be explained through the EU pursuing similar welfare objectives than the national welfare state. Still, if the public perceives these two levels of governance as competing against each other or even as canceling each other out, welfare attitudes are less likely to spill over from the national to the EU level.

2.4 Convergence versus divergence of public opinion

While the existing literature already offers important insights into self-interest, ideology and institutional mechanisms associated with public opinion on European social citizenship, this paper will focus on one area where further theoretical and empirical contributions are lacking: convergence versus divergence of public opinion on European social citizenship across countries and time on European social citizenship. Convergence of public opinion would indicate stronger support for a genuinely European model of the welfare state, whereas continued divergence of welfare state attitudes would signal the dominance of policy-feedback effects of particular national welfare state models.

There are by now several data collections that repeat cross-sectional surveys over time. Section 3 of this paper will describe that these datasets still have some drawbacks, which can probably explain why studies using them are relatively scarce. Maybe, for this reason, the few studies that do study welfare attitudes across time cover mostly general government redistribution on the national level (Burgoon et al., 2012; Jæger, 2013; Schmidt-Catran, 2016). Generally, the studies demonstrate increasing preferences for government redistribution across time, but more detailed and differentiated over-time studies across different policy areas (Roosma et al., 2013; Cavaillé and Trump, 2015) are still lacking. This paper contributes to closing this gap by taking a birds-eye perspective on developments and variations in welfare attitudes on the national and supranational levels across time. Specifically, we ask: how do EU citizens perceive existing social rights over the past 35 years? What is the degree of satisfaction and dissatisfaction regarding welfare provision among EU citizens? And, what do they "demand" and prefer in terms of policy priorities? Do we find differences in perceptions, attitudes and preferences across different regions in the EU (for example, North, East, South, West)? Do we find differences in perceptions, attitudes and preferences across various sub-sectors of the welfare state (for example, social transfers versus social investment)?

This paper also aims to take a birds-eye perspective in relation to institutional factors and advance the understanding of how the EU has already shaped welfare attitudes over the past 35 years. Emerging literature has demonstrated that public support for democratic values gradually increases for each

year that a country is a member state of the EU (Oshri et al., 2016). Importantly, it could be argued that the longer a country is a member state of the EU, the more public values adapt to the values of the founding countries of the EU (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands). In comparison to other member states of the EU, these six countries still appear to be relatively homogenous in the EU when examining the public opinion in different areas (Akaliyski, 2019). While the literature on democratic and cultural values has already shown some evidence for convergence over the last decades across EU member states, there is a lack of systematic evidence of these phenomena on welfare attitudes.

The trajectory of European economic and social policy has demonstrated that social policy convergence does not happen automatically but requires decisive political action (Eick et al., 2021). While the literature has found trends of convergence and divergence of welfare systems across the EU (see also Eick et al., 2021), we still know little about the evolution of public preferences regarding welfare systems across the EU. As mentioned before, over the past 35 years, a range of political, economic and social challenges have threatened the cohesion in the EU. The congruence of values and public opinion across EU member states may be essential in order for the EU to successfully address these challenges and achieve further integration (Habermas, 2012; Hien 2017; Guiso et al., 2016).

In particular, institutional theories suggest that welfare attitudes may trickle down vertically from the EU institutions to its member states (Akaliyski, 2018), even though the mechanism behind these supposed trickle down effects remains unclear for the moment. This perspective implies the possibility of welfare attitudes convergence among the member states. In line with Tober and Busemeyer (2020), it can be argued that EU (economic) integration has triggered more demand for social protection throughout the EU. This may lead to an upward convergence of social policy demand, in particular in countries with a hitherto less generous welfare state. Furthermore, at the same time, political pressure was put on the EU to develop the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) to buffer its economic liberalization agenda. Given the functional imperatives of the Single Market, the emergence of some kind of EU-led welfare initiative seemed like the consequential next step. This means upward convergence regarding strengthening a European social citizenship model could be interpreted as policy feedback from economic liberalization. Since we demonstrated in Eick et al. (2021) that there is indeed an emergent European welfare state model, the feedback effects from individual member states' welfare states should matter increasingly less (i.e. people are less tied to their particular welfare model). Consequently, these arguments should speak for an (upward) convergence of preferences for a European social citizenship model. To the contrary, it can also be argued that EU enlargements may have led to a diversification of welfare traditions and norms, which may be related to a divergence of welfare attitudes. Still, in spite of these national differences, we might be observing the emergence of a joint understanding of what social citizenship defined at the EU level is supposed to be about. Furthermore, there might be valuable cross-national or cross-regional differences that explain convergence/divergence with some regions showing signs of greater convergence compared to others. For this reason, it is necessary to explore some of the factors that shape convergence/divergence across the EU, both with regard to general welfare state attitudes as well as with regard to support for European social citizenship.

In this paper, we argue that the convergence versus divergence part of the story deserves more attention across the EU and across time as it can give important insights into the future of European social citizenship. We would interpret evidence for a convergence of welfare states across EU countries and across social groups as an early indication of the emergence of a genuinely European social policy dimension. Consequently, this paper asks: What evidence is there for or against the achievement of welfare attitudes convergence within the EU and relative to non-EU states? Is there a basis for describing an existing or emerging European model of welfare attitudes, or do we instead see evidence for continued divergence in welfare attitudes? To what extent do these trends change during and since the crisis years 2007/2008 that have so fundamentally shaken the political and social thinking and policy development surrounding social rights?

In a similar manner, it can also be imagined that convergence within countries may play an important role for the future of European social citizenship. While emerging literature has argued that a range of self-interest, ideology and institutional factors have shaped and changed social cleavages and welfare values, there is a lack of systematic evidence of these phenomena across time. This is particularly important taking into account that we have been confronted with challenges for social policy over the past 35 years that diffuse the relationship between need and risk: Covid-19 pandemic, globalisation, the rise of the service and knowledge-based economy, the fourth technological revolution, growing migration flows and rapid socio-demographic changes. The post-2007/2008 crisis and the ensuing Great Recession brought additional problems and challenges: declining incomes, rising inequality and poverty, increasingly precarious work and reduced capacity of welfare systems to secure economic and social stability (Taylor-Gooby et al., 2019). Do crises enhance cleavages (because people compete for fewer resources)? Or do they mitigate cleavages (because of cross-class solidarity)? The Great Recession may have brought more divergence in policies (because of different fiscal resources for social policy across the EU's member states, see Burgoon et al., 2020), but maybe not in terms of preferences because it has increased the risks across the board. The studies on the impact of the crisis on attitudes demonstrate that individual attitudes towards employment benefits change depending on their economic situation. For example, the loss of a job has been found to increase individual support for government provision of unemployment benefits, either in the long- or short-term in the wake of the financial crisis 2007/2008 (Naumann, 2016; Margalit, 2013).

Consequently, this paper investigates the evolution of social cleavages and values towards the welfare state over the past decades. In particular, we ask whether social cleavages on welfare attitudes increased or decreased within welfare states. And we ask whether old cleavages (such as income or class) were replaced by new cleavages (such as ideology or education). In other words: Do we observe continued political conflict or more solidarity? In the following Section 3, we introduce the data that we use to explore these issues.

3. Introduction to the survey element of the CSCD

To address attitudinal formation and change issues, a comparative perspective is particularly fruitful to understand the driving forces of attitudes better. By comparing attitudes on both national and EU-led welfare policies across countries, we hope to shed light on trends and social processes behind attitudinal patterns. Unfortunately, the field was for a long time marked by lack of data. While reasonably good data had been available for a considerable time for such issues as social mobility, income distribution and economic indicators of all sorts, even by the late 1980s, the situation was substantially worse when it came to comparing attitudes across countries and only a few researchers attempted such research (for an overview see Svallfors, 2010). This state of affairs has completely changed over the past 35 years with the establishment and growth of data production collaborations such as the European Social Survey, the International Social Survey Program and the Eurobarometer. Such survey programmes offer us time-series and comparative data to examine the public opinion towards European social citizenship. Additionally, researchers collect more specific comparative surveys carried out by individual researchers (Busemeyer et al., 2018; Nicoli et al., 2019; Häusermann et al., 2020). In other words, the field is now data-rich compared with the past. Nonetheless, there are deficiencies concerning the availability of time-series and comparative data of sufficient specificity that will be explored subsequently.

This paper expands the Comparative Social Citizenship Dataset (CSCD)[1] and adds another layer: the individual-level perspective of public opinion across EU member states. The CSCD brings together existing country-year macro data on policies, regulations, laws, social, economic and political conditions relevant to social rights with individual-level survey data on these matters. This dataset's key categories of measures concern three categories central to the EUSOCIALCIT's resource-based conception of social rights: (1) policy outputs, including policy provisions and spending measures seeking to foster social rights; (2) outcomes, societal conditions like poverty and inequality relevant to the societal value-added of social rights; and 3) resources on which citizens and policymakers can draw to promote social rights (including, most importantly, public opinion). Our plan for this paper is not to initiate any expensive, large-scale fielding of new survey instruments. Instead, we will consolidate the goldmine of information in existing, multi-country public opinion survey data. As explained before, only a few (representative) surveys allow the exploration of public opinion towards European social citizenship both across countries and across time. For this report, we focus on the following:

- International Social Survey Programme (ISSP): http://w.issp.org/menu-top/home/
- European Value Survey (EVS): https://europeanvaluesstudy.eu/
- European Social Survey (ESS): https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/

[1] For details on this dataset, see Eick et al. (2021). The dataset will also be available for public/scientific use in due time.

- Eurobarometer: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/be-heard/eurobarometer

Additionally, we include the following trade-off and experimental data that is that is crucial for advancing the field:

- Investing in Education in Europe (INVEDUC): https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/SDesc2.asp?DB=E&no=6961
- European unemployment risk sharing (EURS): https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/2USGRG
- Welfarepriorities: http://welfarepriorities.eu/

To tackle our research questions, we link multi-country and multi-wave survey data from these datasets, starting with the year 1985 and ending with 2020. The CSCD starts in 1985 for several reasons. On the one hand, this is the time when more multi-country and multi-wave data becomes available. On the other hand, this is the time that can be seen as the heyday of the EU, with important treaties (e.g., Schengen) and enlargements. On the contrary, recently the EU has been confronted with several crises (financial, refugee, Brexit, Corona-19 pandemic) that the CSCD also captures. The multi-wave measurements here end pre-Covid, but in future stages of the project, we may be able to include more recent datasets in the analyses of our Work Package. The specific results sections contain more information on which specific variables from the above-listed data sets were used for the analyses and why.

Concerning the EUSOCIALCIT project, this paper focuses mainly (but not exclusively) on attitudes towards desired welfare state outputs and less on attitudes towards outcomes and resources (further info in the concept in this project, Burgoon 2021; Vandenbroucke et al., 2021). This is mainly because of data availability since most survey data focuses on understanding what citizens demand from their governments regarding actual policy-making or data availability. In the next step of our work package, we will link this survey data to qualitative focus group data to further investigate links and (in-)congruences between outputs, outcomes and resources.

As we did in Eick et al. (2021), we also use aggregated data for this paper. Specifically, apart from calculating overall year-means and country-year-means, we also calculate group-means across different socio-demographic groups, such as male versus female, old versus young, employed versus unemployed etc. ('don't know' answers were treated as missing values). The advantage of these aggregates for our study is that we can analyse the birds-eye perspective of public opinion towards European social citizenship, which is often neglected in scholarship in favour of more detailed analyses of particular individual determinants of preferences at specific points in time. Furthermore, scholars often use different measures for welfare state support, for instance, measures composed of multiple individual indicators (Svallfors, 2003; Roosma et al., 2013) or some kind of latent construct (Andress and Heien, 2001). This has made comparisons between different studies difficult and the accumulation of findings slow. Consequently, we do not create latent constructs with the chosen dependent variables in this paper to have more nuanced findings that are more comparable.

Before we proceed to the analysis, we want to clarify some issues on our data, particularly related to gaps in the data. A first issue relates to the lack of longitudinal panel data across countries, which is largely missing. A prominent exception is the EU-SILC data, but this household panel dataset focuses on socio-economic outcomes and does not contain questions on political attitudes. Existing longitudinal national data sets such as the Allbus in Germany or the British Social Attitudes survey in the UK do provide detailed data on attitudes, but do not allow for cross-national comparisons. While the more recent rounds of the large survey programmes, such as the WVS, the ESS and the ISSP, include a large number of countries that are sufficiently institutionally specific, such data is missing for earlier time periods (the 1980s, 1990s). Furthermore, these large-scale surveys only sometimes contain questions that can be used to track social policy attitudes over time (see below). For this reason, when possible, we include multiple waves of large-scale surveys in our analysis. However, sometimes this is not possible since the field is still growing, and surveys have recently covered more specific questions about policies and trade-offs.

Another downside is that even for the largest survey programmes country coverage varies over time. For example, the ISSP ran the questions on the role of government five times between 1985 and 2016. However, not every round with these same questions includes the same countries. Only four countries (Australia, Germany, Great Britain, USA) are included in all rounds. Furthermore, the programmes do not include all EU countries and changing compositions of EU countries for each round. This makes it hard to examine trends in public opinion across the EU, and ideally, a comparison between the EU and other OECD countries. Moreover, a comparative panel would allow the establishment of the time order of events, making it possible for the analyst to establish causal effects. This would be the ideal kind of data. To our knowledge, no such dataset exists on different welfare attitudes. Moves to redress these data gaps would add a new dimension to research in this field.

Consequently, we want to simply justify and explain our pragmatic approach in classifying countries in the following analyses (when necessary), which is based on the membership composition of the EU but also needs to acknowledge gaps in data availability. We are, of course, aware of the fact that the membership composition of the EU has changed and expanded (with the sole exception of the UK leaving the EU in 2020) since the mid-1980s (see Table A1). Still, we compute regional averages for different country clusters within the EU based on these countries' geographical and cultural proximity, essentially keeping membership in different regional clusters constant across time and independent of the fact when precisely countries formally joined the EU. In other words, our averages (both overall and region-specific) are computed based on EU membership between the years 2004 and 2020. This approach implicitly adopts a somewhat broader perspective of what 'European' social citizenship is about, going beyond but still centering on EU membership. Related to that, we explained above that not all survey programmes include precisely the same countries for each round. Thus, we selected only countries included in at least two rounds.

The second issue is about harmonising the different data sets. A way to circumvent the lack of data mentioned above would be to harmonise data within and across survey programmes further. For example, all the above-listed data sets have similar variables on general preferences for government

redistribution, even though the exact question wording and scaling often differ across or even within survey programmes. For example, the Eurobarometer included many questions on European social citizenship but the wording and scaling change over the years, making harmonisation difficult. As mentioned above, researchers argue that we would still look at the same dimension of welfare attitudes when the question-wording changes slightly (Roosma et al., 2013) and the scales could be recoded. However, in the remainder of this paper, we abstain from such an approach to reduce methodological complexity. In other words, we only use questions for which the wording and answer options are precisely the same.

Third, we use a descriptive approach to provide our birds-eye perspective of public opinion towards European social citizenship. While the aggregation method is often used for public opinion research in this field (Eger et al., 2020), aggregating individual-level data is occasionally criticised. However, the advantage for this analysis was twofold: a) aggregated data can provide salient measurements of the policy attitudes of interest, and b) representative samples provide a reasonable estimate for such aggregates for particular country-years (and/or sub-groups within country-years). As the descriptive approach is important for the analyses, we use the appropriate design weights, provided by the surveys, in order to ensure that our estimates are as representative as possible.

Fourth, a more experimental or qualitative approach could give insight into the diffuse, ambivalent, or downright contradictory nature of perceptions, attitudes and preferences (Taylor-Gooby et al., 2020). For example, a growing literature examines trade-off effects regarding social citizenship (Busemeyer and Garritzmann, 2017). This literature demonstrates, amongst other things, that citizens might be less willing to expand welfare state generosity once they realise that this means paying more taxes. Because of a lack of data, we can only include a few trade-off items in this paper and refrain from a qualitative approach for now. However, this paper will help develop cross-national and cross-institutional focus groups in the next step within our Work Package.

Finally, we point to the role of context when we examine perceptions, attitudes and preferences on European social citizenship. For a start, when we analyse public opinion of different socio-economic groups over time, we need to be aware that changes in public opinion towards European social citizenship may be either related to individuals changing their preferences over time or simply because of the changing socio-economic composition within countries or sub-groups. Given the lack of genuine panel data, we cannot distinguish clearly between these two dynamics, as we will discuss further in Section 4.3 of the paper. Furthermore, we point to the role of salience when we examine perceptions, attitudes and preferences on European social citizenship. Some EU countries may have been faced with issues that others did not face (as much). For example, the financial crisis affected specific groups across the EU to a different extend (Chung and van Oorschot, 2011). For these reasons, it is essential to control for cyclical and demographic factors when assessing the impact of public opinion on the further development of social citizenship. This is not easy because of data limitations we discussed already. As mentioned before, in the remainder of this paper, we focus on descriptive analyses of trends. Still, more sophisticated, regression-based analyses will be implemented at a later stage of the project.

4. Measuring public opinion I: overall trends for social citizenship

Our analysis begins with the dominant trends and trajectories in the development of the most salient public opinions on social rights covered by our data: perceptions, attitudes and preferences on general government redistribution in EU member states since the early 1980s. In sub-section 4.1, we focus first on overall trends in public support for the government's responsibility in reducing income differences – a broad and widely used measure for overall welfare state support. In sub-section 4.2, we then focus on whether there are indications of convergence of public opinion regarding general government redistribution across the European Union, which in turn could signal the advent of a genuinely European dimension of social citizenship. We also consider developments in the preferences of European social citizenship across different policies, including health, unemployment, education and pension. Finally, in sub-section 4.3, we examine the convergence of public opinion regarding general government redistribution across different social groups (for example, pro-EU versus anti-EU or rich versus poor). This way, we can find out who favours social citizenship and shifts from one position to another.

4.1 Overall welfare attitude trends

In this section, we analyse data from the European Social Survey (ESS) from 18 EU countries collected every two years from 2002 to 2018. The ESS includes one item that taps into public preferences for redistribution which has been collected in each of the nine waves. Specifically, respondents were asked to state their level of agreement with the following statement: ‚The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels.' (see also Burgoon et al., 2012; Jæger, 2013; Schmidt-Catran, 2016).

Figure 1 shows that individuals across the EU tend to support the government in reducing income differences. The levels of support for income redistribution overall increased in the EU over the past 20 years. Considering that we are looking at a variation of 0,15 on a 1-5 scale over 20 years, this is not a dramatic increase. Still, as mentioned before, it is typical for attitudes to remain fairly stable over time, and European welfare states have a longstanding history of enjoying high levels of support (Sainsbury, 2001). An interesting observation from Figure 1 is that support for income redistribution rises, especially after the financial crisis of 2007/2008. While the increase seems relatively small (from 3.8 to 3.9 on the scale), this increase is the largest during the whole time period between 2002 and 2018. Overall, the result is in line with the literature that demonstrates increasing perceptions of economic deprivation during the financial crisis 2007/2008 (Taylor-Gooby et al., 2020; Laenen et al., 2020; Lengfeld and Kley, 2021). Furthermore, the increased support for income redistribution may also be explained by the loss of control individuals suffered through the crises. In other words, the need for welfare support may have been regarded less as a matter of individual responsibility than before (van Oorschot, 2000). Importantly, this does not appear to be an incidental finding in the ESS sample. We also observed such trends in other longitudinal data sets, such as the International Social

Survey Programme (ISSP), which includes the same question with the same answer categories since 1987.

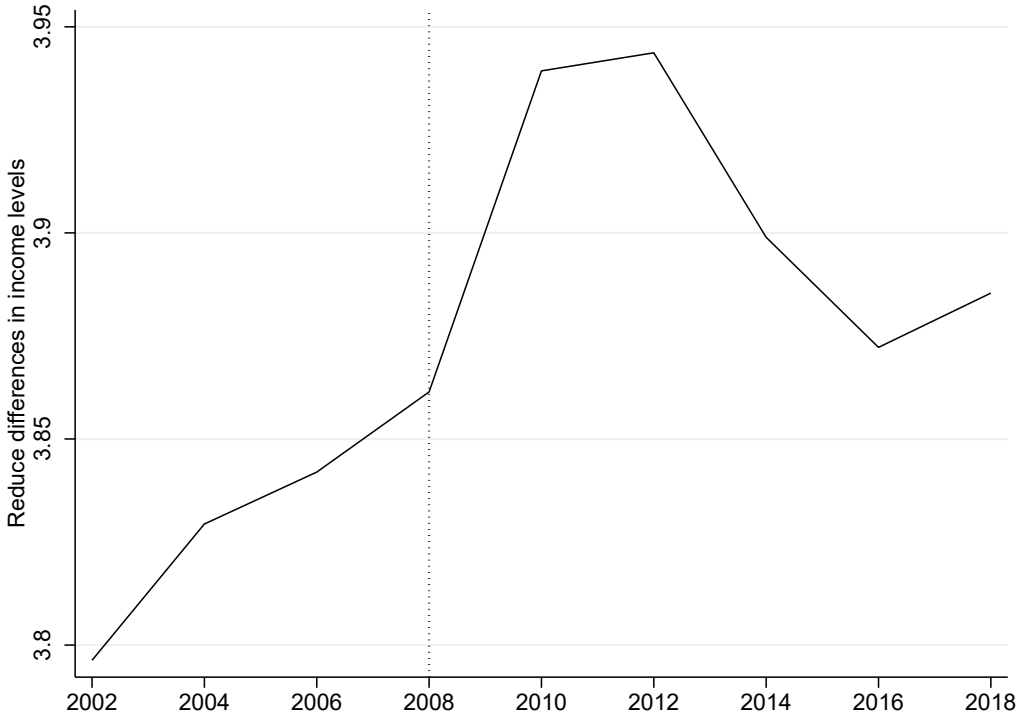


Figure 1. "Government should reduce differences in income levels" (mean), 2002-2018.
Data: European Social Survey, 1 = disagree strongly to 5 = agree strongly, dotted line indicates the financial crisis in 2008.

Figure 2 disaggregates average preferences to show the varying trends in spending across five EU regions: North, East, South, West and Anglo. For our purposes, "North" refers to the three Nordic EU members: Denmark, Finland and Sweden. "East" refers to Central and Eastern European member-states: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. "South" refers to Cyprus, Italy, Malta, Spain, Portugal and Greece. "West" refers to Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, and "Anglo" refers to Ireland and the United Kingdom. The region values are calculated through the mean of all country-values in the specific region. As demonstrated in Table 1 in the Appendix, EU memberships across regions have changed since 1985. To briefly reiterate, rather than (re-)calculating averages for the different European regions depending on changing membership, we see the EU as an alterable entity defined by geographical proximity and culture (Castles, 1993).

Looking at how the levels of support for government redistribution developed across regions, we find that where redistribution is already higher/more salient, people support the further reduction of income differences less and vice versa. These results for most regions resonate with the idea that economic and social macro-level conditions are related to public preferences for redistribution (Dallinger, 2010; Dion and Birchfield, 2010; Finseraas, 2009). However, observing a low demand for redistribution in the Anglo countries resonates more with the welfare regime theory, predicting that

the demand for redistribution will be lowest in such a low-spending Liberal regime (Finseraas, 2009; Jæger, 2006b). Furthermore, Figure 2 shows that much of the overall increase in support for redistributions seems to be driven by the "West".

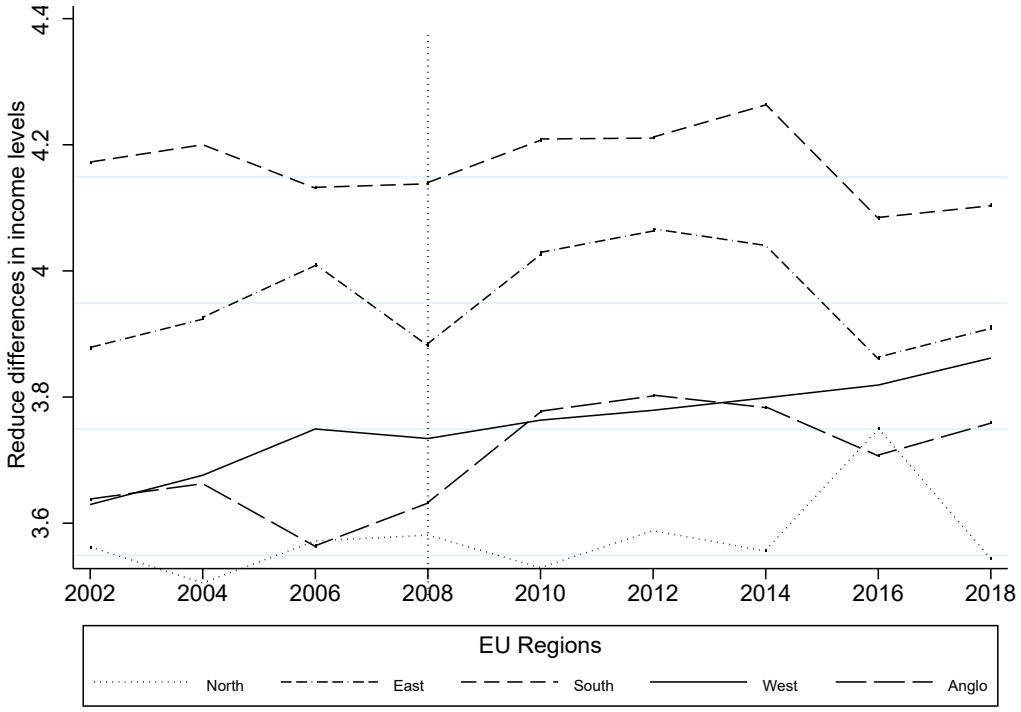


Figure 2. "Government should reduce differences in income levels" (mean) in EU regions, 2002-2018.
Data: European Social Survey, 1 = disagree strongly to 5 = agree strongly, dotted line indicates the financial crisis in 2008.

Finally, this paper does not focus on the way macro-factors shape public opinion. As mentioned before, this is an issue, which will be further explored in later deliverables of this Work Package. However, we have two comments on this: First, the public opinion findings agree with our findings on social expenditure trends (Eick et al., 2021). These have remained relatively stable up until the beginning of the global economic and financial crisis after 2007/2008. Not surprisingly, average levels of spending moved up significantly in the wake of the crisis, both due to a shrinking (or less increasing) GDP as well as higher levels of total social spending. In recent years, spending levels have declined again. However, they are still significantly above the pre-crisis levels, and of course, due to the Corona-19 pandemic, they are very likely to increase again in future years. Possibly, we could also conclude that the public support for redistribution (overall) increases constantly. Still, regarding policy output we observe more divergence after the 2007/2008 crisis because of the different fiscal capacities of the welfare states and different problem pressures.

Second, we explore the association between income inequality on the country level and overall support for redistribution. We measure income equality using the Gini index of equivalised disposable income (OECD database, 2020). Figure 3 demonstrates a strong relationship between support for government redistribution and income inequality. In other words, higher levels of income inequality generate higher public demand for redistribution, while lower levels of income inequality generate a

lower demand (Jæger, 2013). Of course, more in-depth analysis is necessary to make such comparisons more robust. Nevertheless, even such simple snapshots suggest a significant relationship between income inequality and public support for redistribution across the EU. It would also be interesting to examine how the Covid-19 pandemic impacts the evolution of attitudes towards general redistribution across the EU. Still, we expect similar or even more defined patterns than we observed for the 2007/2008 crisis.



Figure 3. Relationship between attitudes on "Government should reduce differences in income levels" and Gini.

Data: European Social Survey 2018, 1: disagree strongly to 5: agree strongly.

4.2 Convergence and divergence in welfare attitude across countries

Common core (welfare) values are considered important for the EU's survival, particularly since the UK citizens voted in 2016 to leave the political union (Inglehart and Baker, 2000; Taylor-Gooby et al., 2017; Akaliyski, 2018). As explained in Section 2.2 of this paper, institutional theories suggest that welfare attitudes may trickle down vertically from the EU institutions to its member states (Akaliyski, 2018). This perspective implies the possibility of welfare attitudes convergence among the member states. However, EU enlargements led to a diversification of welfare traditions and norms (Akaliyski, 2018), which may be related to a divergence of welfare attitudes. In this sub-section, we ask what evidence there is for or against the achievement of convergence of such attitudes, whether there is a basis for describing an existing or emerging European solidarity, or whether we instead see more divisions across EU member states.

There are different ways to gauge convergence, here we employ a so-called β-convergence test. β-convergence implies that convergence occurs when units of observation (here countries) with a lower starting value in a particular indicator experience above-average growth in this indicator in the following time period (here survey waves). Usually, β-convergence tests are used to examine economic convergence (Barro and Sala-i-Martin, 1992, 1995). Economic convergence can, for example, indicate a catch-up process where poorer countries experience higher levels of economic growth in the subsequent period. In contrast, richer countries grow slower over time, contributing to a catching up of more impoverished regions to the more affluent regions. This idea can also be applied to the development of public attitudes towards the welfare states, using the adequate theories. Graphically, a possible catch-up process can easily be spotted when adding past levels of a particular indicator (here attitude-levels) on the x-axis and the increase in that indicator for the subsequent time period on the y axis. Convergence ("catching up") occurs if we can observe a strong negative association between these two variables (Holzinger et al., 2007).

Figure 4 displays the relationship between the attitude 'Government should reduce differences in income levels' in 2002 and the change in that attitude between 2002 and 2018. This technique helps identify β-convergence, which occurs when country cases displayed a low value on a particular indicator (in our case: mean attitude) in the past display above-average positive changes in this indicator over time. And indeed, Figure 4 reveals a strong negative and statistically significant association between past levels of attitudes toward income differences and subsequent changes, indicating that support for redistribution has grown in particular in countries where it had been particularly low to start with. Overall, this might indicate a certain degree of harmonization of welfare state preferences and attitudes across European countries. Such a process, particularly in times of crisis, has the potential to strengthen both European integration as well as EU legitimacy.

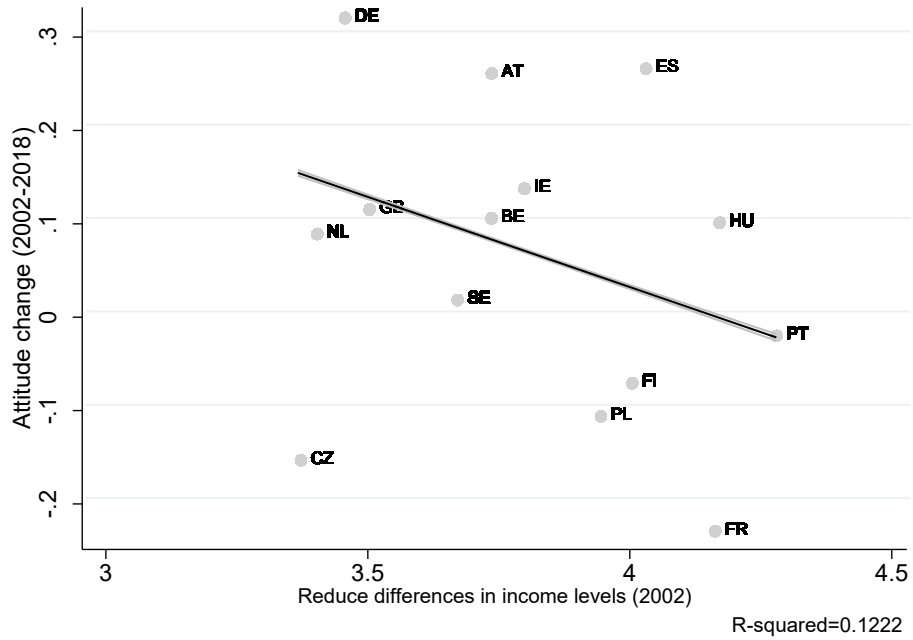


Figure 4. Relationship between "Government should reduce differences in income levels" (mean) (2002) and the change in that attitude (2002-2018).

Data: European Social Survey, 1 = agree strongly to 5 = disagree strongly.

Figure 5 takes another look at the potential convergence of attitude towards reducing income levels. It displays the yearly mean absolute deviation of countries from the cross-country average in attitudes on this issue.[2] Looking at developments in EU member states, Figure 5 reinforces and clarifies what we found above, i.e. a clear trend of convergence in attitudes across EU member states. Putting these trends into perspective, Figure 5 also displays a trend curve for European countries that are not part of the EU. Here we can see that the level of convergence across EU member states is more stable than for non-EU countries. While the ESS only includes a few European countries (which creates less robust findings) and in some of which we might expect spill-over effects, we find similar trends using the ISSP, which includes a bigger and more global sample. Furthermore, it needs to be taken into account that the status quo in European welfare state is already a rather well-developed and generous model, which might depress demand for further redistribution compared to countries, in which the welfare state is not yet fully developed.

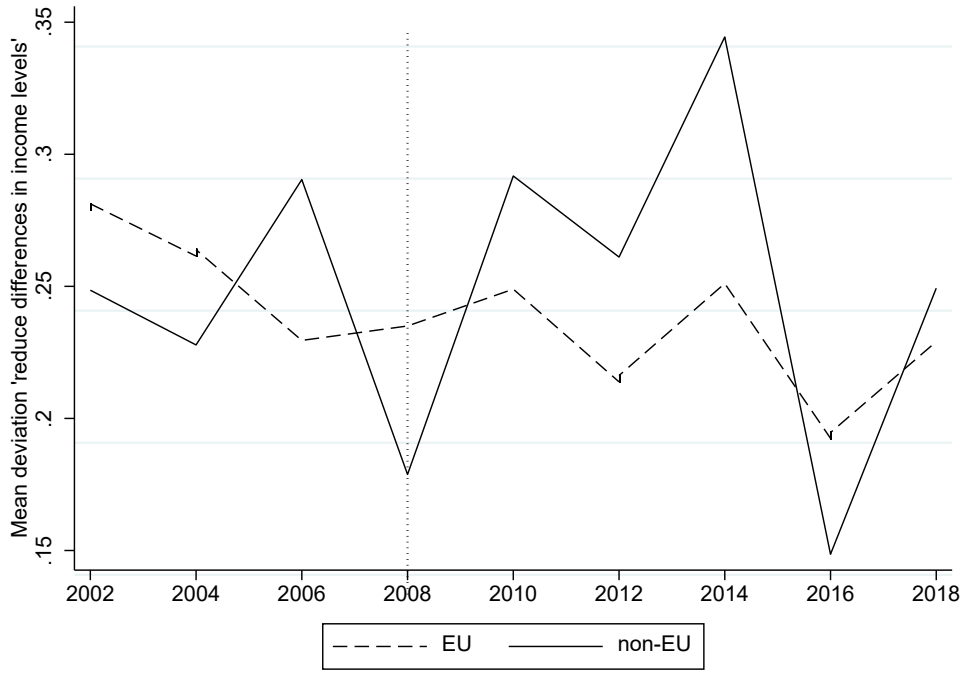


Figure 5. Convergence of "Government should reduce differences in income levels" (mean) across EU and across non-EU countries (1985-2018).

Note: Divergence versus convergence is measured in the average deviation from the mean (lower values mean more convergence).

Data: European Social Survey, 1 = agree strongly to 5 = disagree strongly, dotted line indicates the financial crisis in 2008.

[2] This is related to the concept of σ(sigma)-convergence, i.e. the convergence of units of observation to a common mean. Notably, a property of the standard deviation is that its value rises with the average value of the data set to which it is applied. To account for this, adjustments like the deviation from the mean are important (like coefficients of variation, defined as the standard deviation divided by the value of the mean of the corresponding data set). The term relative convergence (or divergence) can be applied when observing a drop (rise) in the value of the coefficient of variation and the term absolute convergence (or divergence) can be applied when using the standard deviation as a criterion. Here, the statistic captures relative convergence (or divergence) when observing a drop (or rise) in the value of such average absolute deviation from the mean (Cornelisse and Goudswaard, 2002).

A certain degree of convergence in attitudes and expectations towards the welfare state among the European citizenry can be a solid foundation for the emergence of a genuine European welfare state, but the full realization of such a model – if politically desired – requires additional efforts. In a previous paper, we found significant convergence in policy outputs (public expenditure) before the crisis of 2007/08 (Eick et al., 2021). The convergence indicates the emergence of a European welfare state model in a very broad sense as a collective commitment to devote a significant share of a nation's economic output to social policy while largely avoiding a race to the bottom in social rights. However, the convergence trend mainly was observed for the pre-crisis years leading up to 2007/08. In contrast, divergence in outputs, resources and, potentially in the long term, outcomes increased again after that, even though European-level efforts to establish and expand the social pillar of European integration intensified significantly in the 2010s. These discrepancies in public opinion and policy outputs are puzzling and could be explained by governments reaction to the crises, including austerity programmes. They demonstrate that EU-level efforts to expand and further develop the social pillar of European integration need to be coordinated and integrated with member states' efforts. The Covid-19 crisis might, on the one hand, represent a historic opportunity to promote these efforts. Still, on the other hand, it could also create significant obstacles to further progress in promoting the European Pillar of Social Rights as short-term pressures for compensation and then fiscal austerity dominate. Hence, even if demand for social policy is increasing (and potentially for a European welfare state model), the short- and medium-term fiscal constraints for governments could significantly hamper their ability to deliver (Tober and Busemeyer, 2020).

Next, we move from aggregate trends in public attitudes towards redistribution and income inequality to more policy-specific attitudes in different areas of the welfare state. While the data for redistribution preferences across different social policies is scarcer, it is also a problematic focus, for at least a couple of reasons worth airing and addressing – even though later sections address other policy-realm-specific aspects of social protection (education, employment, family). First, 'government responsibility for reducing income differences' is distinct from other functions of welfare states and social policy provision, for example, insurance functions, compensation and social investment functions, and most importantly, social rights functions. And this has supported some discussion in the literature about how redistribution support is a problematic measure that needs to be clarified concerning the redistribution of which policies and the redistribution from whom to whom (Cavaille and Trump, 2015). Second, support for redistribution and whatever redistribution is taken to mean has an unclear relationship to our EUSOCIALCIT framework's focus on resources, outputs and outcomes of social rights.

For these reasons, the next analysis highlights more specific measures of welfare state attitudes. Particularly, the ISSP includes such repeated measurements in every wave between 1985 and 2016 for 21 EU countries: 'Listed below are various areas of government spending. Please show whether you would like to see more or less government spending in each area. Remember that if you say "much more", it might require a tax increase to pay for it. (1) Health, (2) The police and law enforcement, (3) Education, (4) The military and defence, (5) Old age pensions, (6) Unemployment benefits, (7) Culture and the arts'.

Figure 6 depicts these attitude trends averaged across EU countries. Again, we can see overall convergence across social policies, but that comes with a few caveats: The trends confirm the well-known finding that social investment policies are generally more supported by the public (Busemeyer et al., 2018a). To the contrary, the support for unemployment policies is relatively low and decreasing over the past 35 years (an issue which we will explore further in Section 6 of this paper). Furthermore, EU citizens support more government spending in education, health and old-age policies to a larger degree than in other government areas that are not part of the welfare state (i.e. culture, military, police and environment). Additionally, we found similar patterns when examining an ISSP question about the target beneficiaries of certain governmental welfare provisions; sick people and students being the most deserving ones yet again. While we need to explore further whether there may be convergence across different social policy fields, the clear pattern emerging from our CSCD-Survey based summary is that the strengthening of certain social policies is very popular across the EU and that we find familiar distinctions in the levels of support across policy fields. Furthermore, levels of support have been reasonably stable for EU member states and robust even or because of the stresses of the global financial crisis. Of course, more work needs to be done on convergence across the different policies in future steps of our Work Package. Still, we assume that the trends mirror what we found above (apart from downward convergence of unemployment policies). The other take-away is that even though support for education is relatively high across the board, countries do relatively little in terms of increasing spending on it (see Busemeyer et al., 2020; Eick et al., 2021), which remains a certain puzzle thus far that needs further exploration.

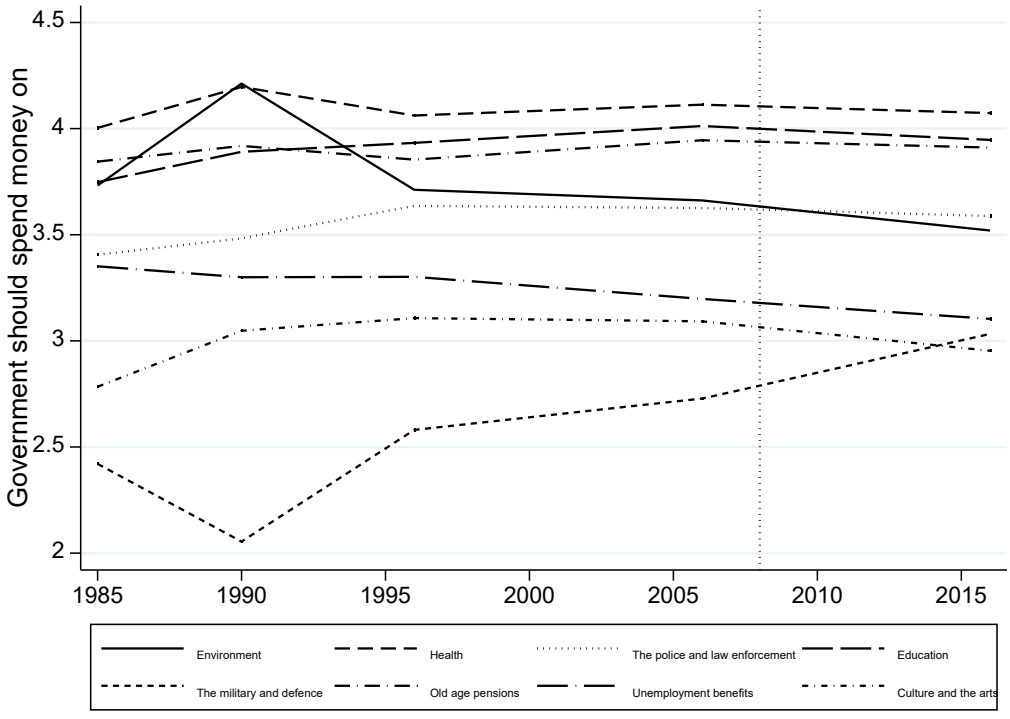


Figure 6. Different government areas where spending should be increased/decreased (mean) in EU regions, 1985-2016.

Data: International Social Survey Programme, 1 = Spend much less to 5 = Spend much more, dotted line indicates the financial crisis in 2008.

4.3 Convergence and divergence in welfare attitude across social groups

Next, we continue to examine general attitudes towards income redistribution in the EU, using the ESS data. As explained in sub-section 2.3 of this paper, a key assumption in the welfare state literature is that individuals with different socio-demographic characteristics, such as education, age or gender, are assumed to develop different demands for redistribution. We ask whether social cleavages on welfare values increased or decreased within welfare states. And we ask whether old cleavages (such as education or income) were replaced by new cleavages (such as ideology). In other words: Do we observe continued political conflict in the realm of social policy or more solidarity across and between different societal groups? In this section, we focus on overall trends, but we will explore this issue further in later stages of our Work Package.

Because of the absence of individual-level panel data, we use the ESS 2002 to 2018 data to build quasi-panel data at the level of different social groups (Jaeger, 2013). This means, while we aggregated the individual data of our dependent variables in the previous sections, we aggregate the individual data for different social groups in this section (‚don't know' answers were again treated as missing values). We construct dependent variables that measure the demand for government redistribution in each of our chosen social groups for each country and in each ESS wave. While different criteria can be chosen to create meaningful social groups, our general aim was to create groups that differ concerning their risk exposure. To allow for meaningful convergence analysis across time, the group-level variables include a dummy item for each socio-demographic group, measuring education (tertiary versus non-tertiary educated), income (highest three income deciles versus lowest six income deciles), age (over 50 versus under 50), gender (men versus women), support for the EU (highest five versus lowest six) and left-right identification (highest five versus lowest six). Hereby, we boost variation in social risk exposure across our selected groups, while taking the usual sample sizes of each ESS country and wave into account (around 1000 to 2000 respondents). Thus, we ensure that all groups are represented in each country and time period.

Figure 7 shows socio-economic cleavages between the higher and lower educated as well as wealthier and poorer. Across both groups, we find that the lower educated and the poorer groups show more support for income redistribution, which aligns with the literature (Rehm, 2009; Baute and Meuleman, 2020). Furthermore, we find more convergence than divergence within these two groups in EU member states, particularly for the educational cleavages. These trends show that the literature assumes associations between labour market vulnerability and education/income are often too quickly (Piore, 1980; King and Rueda, 2008). Exploring this association, we have to take into account that more precarious labour market sectors, such as the service sector, have expanded over the last decades in increasingly post-industrial societies. This means that labour market vulnerability has also spread among the higher educated and higher-income groups that were traditionally in more secure labour market positions (Häusermann et al., 2015), potentially leading to more support for social policy in this group.

In line with Häusermann et al. (2015), we find increasing potential for pro-welfare alliances between higher and lower educated as well as higher-income and lower-income groups that support more government redistribution through social policy. This might be because these groups have experienced two interlinked social risks in the labour market that relate to their preferences for more generous social policies; while these groups are usually equipped with higher levels of human capital that should allow them to perform well in the labour market, they might only be weakly integrated into that market. This (possible) precariousness might prevent them from feeling secure in their labour market position or them acknowledging the advantage they (usually) have (see also Häusermann et al., 2015). These are interesting trends across educational and income cleavages that have the potential to advance our understanding of polarisation and solidarities and the politics of welfare support.

Additionally, Figure 7 shows, as expected, that women are more in favour of redistribution than men, though these cleavages have not changed over the last decades. This is an interesting finding given the significant expansion of female labour force participation in that time. It could mean that women are still more likely to rely on welfare state measures than men and that the recent expansion of social investment policies has not changed that, even though women should benefit more strongly from social investment policies (Edlund, 1999; Svallfors, 1997; Hemerijck et al., 2016). In Figure 7, we did find more divergence between the younger and older groups. The older groups are increasingly in favour of redistribution while such preferences decrease for the younger groups. Of course, we would expect higher support for redistribution across the older groups because they depend on pensions schemes (Blekesaune and Quadagno, 2003; Bonoli and Häusermann, 2009). However, the divergence trend may be explained through the phenomena of ageing societies in most EU member states which mean that the younger generations have to carry more of the tax burden. Possibly this can be explained by the current generation of pensioners being more secure and better paid than all previous ones and probably also compared to future ones.

Lastly, Figure 7 also shows divergence across the two ideological groups we examined, namely pro-EU and anti-EU groups and politically left and right-oriented groups. The literature has long argued that there are ideological explanations for welfare attitudes (van Oorschot, 2002; Jakobsen, 2010) and our results confirm the importance of such cleavages across the EU. It is usually argued that pro-EU groups are more affluent, even called the winners of European integration. This group is more mobile and has more positive experiences with different cultures and opening of national boundaries. This is because the group can use their skills, knowledge and capital to benefit from Europeanization and enjoys an enhanced quality of life in an integrated European market (Kriesi et al., 2008). Consequently, this affluent group is less dependent on the welfare state for support, which might explain their lower levels of support for redistribution. In contrast, anti-EU groups are seen as the losers of globalization or as labour market outsiders who consequently benefit more likely from income redistribution, which might explain their higher levels of support displayed in Figure 7. However, more research is needed to untangle this relationship since Euroscepticism as such is also multidimensional (Baute et al., 2019). In particular, preferences for a more social EU agenda translate in stronger support for European solidarity, while preferences for an economic EU agenda decrease support. We can assume that

similar dynamics are in place when we look at left and right-oriented groups as left-oriented individuals are usually more egalitarian (Kriesi et al., 2008).

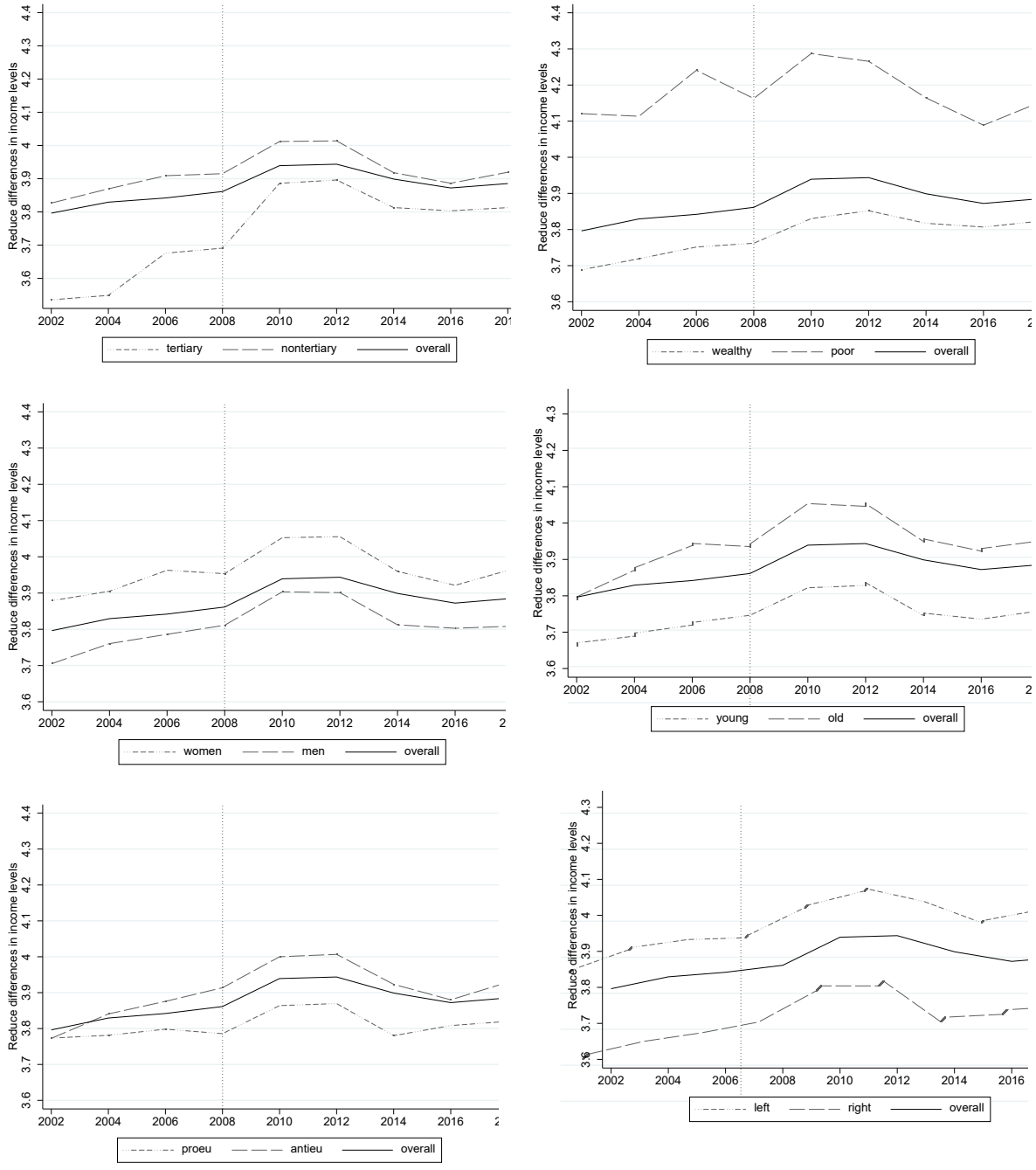


Figure 7. Convergence and divergence of "Government should reduce differences in income levels" (mean) across education and income groups (2002-2018).

Data: European Social Survey, 1 = agree strongly to 5 = disagree strongly, dotted line indicates the financial crisis in 2008.

Clearly, more in-depth research is needed to explore the macro-level conditions that can explain the emergence of these trends in social policy preferences and how these trends relate to institutional processes and changing socio-economic contexts. The findings also indicate a certain potential for strengthening European integration and the social pillar, which might be promoted by narratives of

transnational European solidarity. Such narratives could, on the one hand, continue to emphasize the benefits of European integration for those who strongly identify with the EU, while also taking more seriously the concerns and demands for social and economic compensation among the EU critics. Thus, the increasing divides on welfare policies between pro-EU and anti-EU individuals need to be addressed if further EU-led welfare initiatives were to be realised without eroding EU support. Consequently, the challenge for policy-makers will be to find possible coalitions, likely along the new ideological cleavages. This way, policy-makers could address the existing demands from both traditional welfare beneficiary groups and the new demands of the more heterogeneous, and often more vocal, groups that have recently been affected by the development of new social risks (Häusermann, 2012; Gingrich and Häusermann, 2015).

This sub-section provides a micro-foundation of potential dynamics in welfare politics, the realisation of which depends on the organization and mobilization efforts of political organisations. Overall, expanding a European social citizenship model could be a real chance for increasing European integration, both across and within EU member states. As the literature has argued, shared core values are essential and maybe even a vital prerequisite for political integration (Akalisky, 2018; Houwelingen et al., 2019). However, our analysis of public opinion towards European social citizenship has so far focused only on major trends towards general government redistribution on a national and EU-level. Yet, the story within particular realms of social rights is also important to explore for EUSOCIALCIT.

In the following three sections, we focus on three specific policy areas in terms not only of the general measures of redistribution explored in Section 4 but also selected perceptions, attitudes and preferences to these respective policy realms. The three policy areas were touched upon briefly above: education (Section 5), employment and income protection (Section 6) and family (Section 7). As we have already found in our previous paper (Eick et al., 2021), these policy areas are essential for the welfare state's social investment aspect and touch on essential outcomes and resources – both general ones and a few specific features of socio-economic life. We, therefore, devote somewhat more detailed attention to these three policy realms instead of covering other policy realms.

5. Measuring public opinion II: Public opinion towards education policies

As our exploration in sub-section 4.2 of this paper demonstrated, levels of support for education policies in the past 35 years across the EU are relatively high and have even increased in recent years. As mentioned before, education policies are often discussed within the lines of the paradigm of social investment, which is receiving more and more attention in comparative welfare state research (Bonoli, 2013; Hemerijck, 2013; Busemeyer and Neimanns, 2017). This is because scholars argue that social investment policies combine two fundamental challenges for the future of welfare states: they both contribute to diminishing socio-economic inequalities and to promoting economic growth. This section further looks into perceptions, attitudes and preferences towards education policies across EU member states from the 1980s to the present.

To start, we illustrate the evolution of attitudes towards education spending overall and financial aid to university students in the past 35 years. The paper uses data from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP). The present analysis includes data from 21 EU countries from four waves collected every ten years between 1985 and 2016. The dependent variables we use here are: 'Listed below are various areas of government spending. Please show whether you would like to see more or less government spending in each area. Remember that if you say "much more", it might require a tax increase to pay for it. Education' and ‚On the whole, do you think it should or should not be the governments' responsibility to financial help to university students from low-income families? ' (see also Lipsmeyer, 2003).

Figure 8 shows that support towards education spending across EU regions is relatively high and stable across time. Complementing the figure from above, we look at spending support between EU regions here, noting that support for additional spending on education is significantly lower only in the Nordic countries. This should, however, not be interpreted as lack of support for education. To the contrary, the Nordic countries have long prioritized investments in education and related social investment policies, which is the explanation why public support for *additional* spending on this issue is lower compared to other regions (following the logic of self-correcting feedback effects).

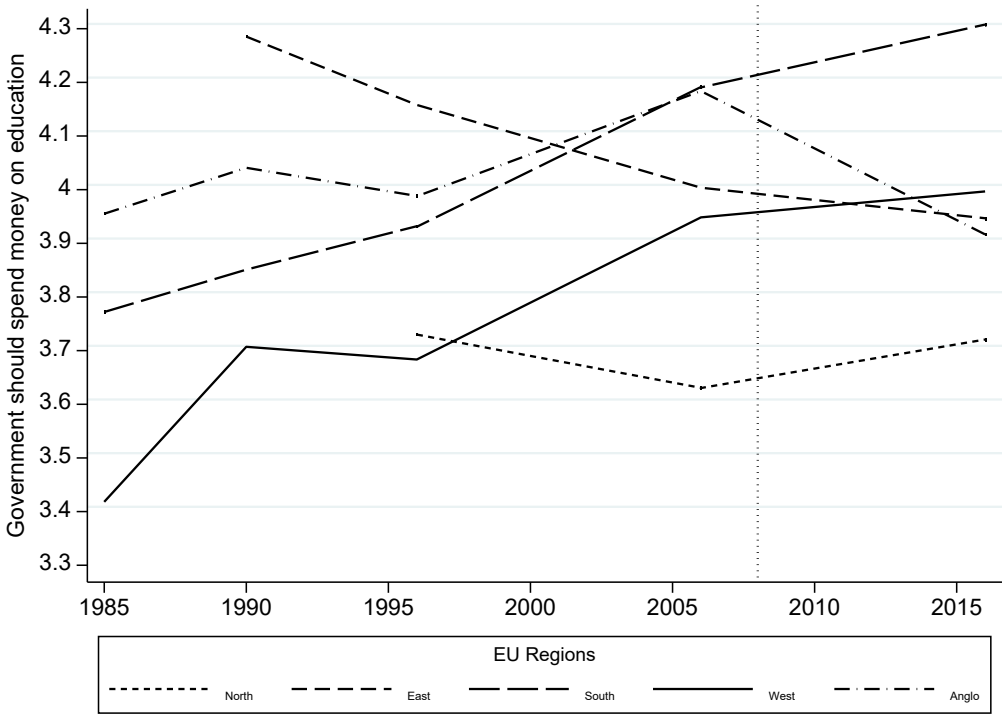


Figure 8. Government spending on education should be increased/decreased (mean) in EU regions, 1985-2016.

Data: International Social Survey Programme, 1 = Spend much less to 5 = Spend much more, dotted line indicates the financial crisis in 2008.

Figure 9 shows that support towards financial aid for university students across EU regions is relatively high and stable across time. However, we do see a decline in the levels of support in the aftermath of the financial crisis 2007/2008 in certain regions. The trends are in line with the literature that we find diverging developments across East, West and Anglo (where the public wants less support for education/students) as well as South and North (where the public wants more support for education/students).

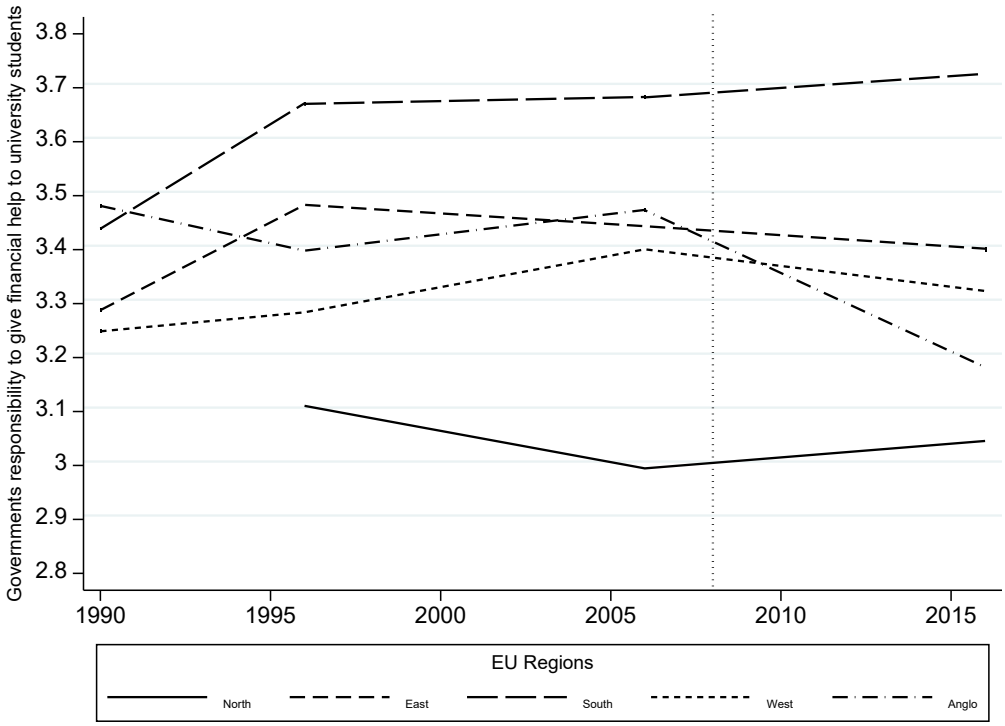


Figure 9. Attitudes on "Governments responsibility to give financial help to university students" (mean), across EU regions.

Data: International Social Survey Programme 1985-2016, 1 = definitely should not be to 4 = definitely should be, dotted line indicates the financial crisis in 2008.

Considering the general popularity of social investment policies (Busemeyer, 2012; Garritzmann, 2015), the high levels of support for education policies do not surprise. We also know that welfare states are facing new demands due to economic crises because policy-makers often respond to such times with budgetary constraints, namely austerity (Pierson, 2001; Eick et al., 2021). This means an extension of social investment policies, such as more education spending or benefits for university students, would only be possible with increased taxes, cutbacks in other programmes or higher levels of public debt – and as we will see later, these are also not popular amongst the public.

To further test whether the popularity of education policies may be undermined by the public's willingness to pay higher taxes for additional investment in different education sectors, we investigate another survey: the Investing in Education in Europe survey (INVEDUC). In the following, we focus on respondent's preferences for public expenditure on education across different education sectors across eight EU countries (early childhood and pre-primary education, general schools, vocational education and training, and higher education). INVEDUC operationalises this matter through the following question: 'In the following, I will name several areas of government activity. Please tell me whether you would like to see more or less government spending in each area. Keep in mind that 'more' or 'much more' might require a tax increase (education); If the government could increase spending for only one area of its activity, which one of the following should it be in your opinion? Keep in mind that 'more' or 'much more' might require a tax increase.' (see also Busemeyer and Garritzmann, 2017; Busemeyer et al., 2018a; Busemeyer et al., 2018b; Busemeyer et al., 2020).

Figure 10 demonstrates that education policies across different educational sectors are very popular amongst EU citizens. This finding from the INVEDUC data aligns with the findings from other surveys, such as the ESS and ISSP (Ansell, 2010: 136; Busemeyer, 2012; Garritzmann, 2015). However, there are significant variations across different education sectors (Busemeyer and Garritzmann, 2017). While general schooling and vocational training enjoy the highest levels of support, they are less willing to further invest in early childhood education and university education (which may be in line with our findings from above). This applies to most countries in the INVEDUC sample, apart from Germany, where the spending on vocational training is already relatively high compared to the other countries. Following this logic, it may be the case that the support for vocational training is overall relatively strong among EU citizens because, in the last decades, tertiary education has already been expanded extensively. At the same time, fewer resources were invested in vocational training in most EU member states (Eick et al., 2021). Overall, the support for education policies is likely strongly driven by what is already prioritized by governments in the individual countries, following path-dependent patterns depending on the institutional context.

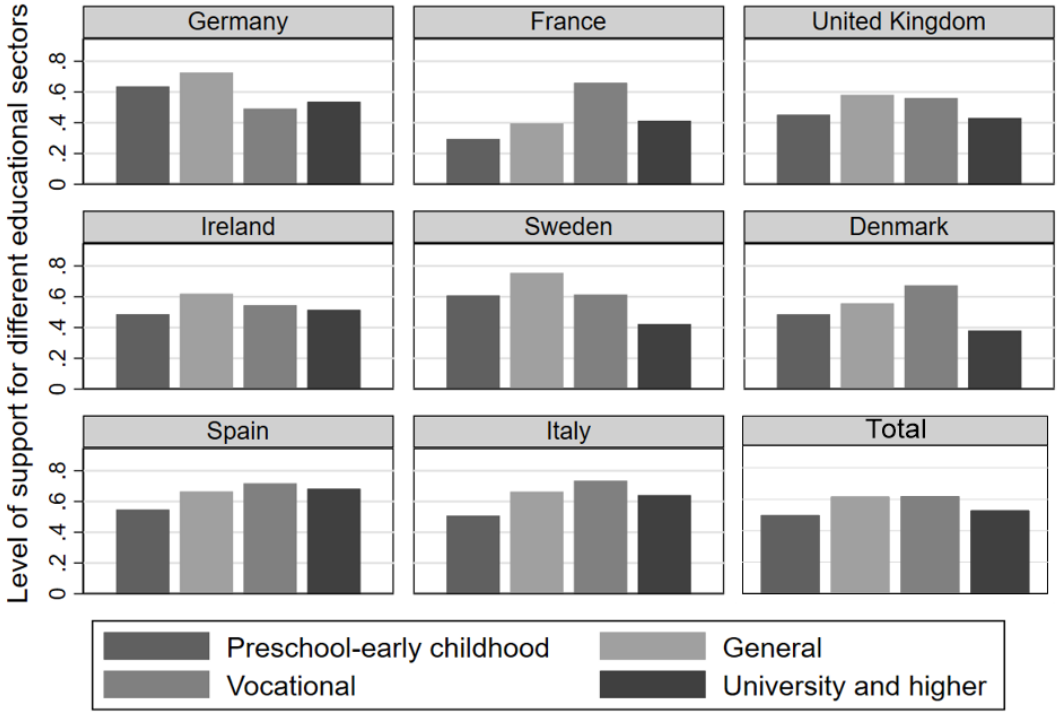


Figure 10. Preferences for spending on different sectors of the education system across countries in percent.
Data: INVEDUC 2014.

It could be argued that the mentioning of public spending on education ‚might require' tax increases is still a rather week wording to enable us to analyse trade-off scenarios. For this reason, the INVEDUC survey also includes a survey experiment where the following education policy scenarios are presented (Busemeyer and Garritzmann, 2017): Control: 'The government should increase spending on education.'; Scenario 1: 'The government should increase spending on education, even if that implies higher taxes.'; Scenario 2: 'The government should increase spending on education, even if that implies cutting back spending in other areas such as pensions.'; Scenario 3: 'The government

should increase spending on education, even if that implies a higher public debt.' Figure 11 shows the overall means, and 95 per cent confidence intervals of the group presented with no constraints and the three alternative scenarios. The findings show that the preferences for education policies are significantly affected by the particular trade-offs that citizens are confronted with. When presented with the constraint that taxes would need to be increased for additional education spending, support for such spending drops significantly. The public support decreases even further when the constraints would be higher levels of public debt, while cutting back on other parts of the welfare state, for instance, pensions, is the least popular scenario. In comparison, while 72 per cent of EU citizens support education spending in the unconstrained scenario, only 26 per cent of EU citizens support education spending in the latter case. While there are some cross-country variations in the results, this variation is much smaller than the variations across the different scenarios.

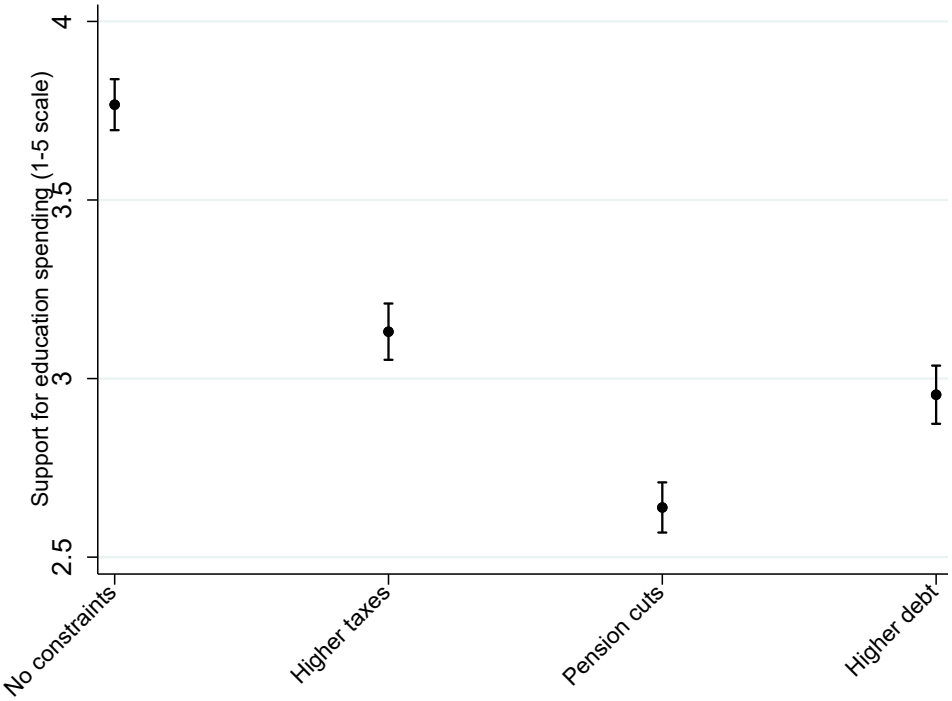


Figure 11. Experiment on attitudes towards more government spending on education (mean).
Data: Investing in Education in Europe 2014, 1 = spend much less to 5 = spend much more.

The INVEDUC data shows that future work could enormously enrich the literature by using novel experimental survey techniques, which is a promising alternative way to model trade-offs scenarios (Neimanns et al., 2018; Häusermann et al., 2019). The results also have implications for policy-making in the EU. Importantly, the political viability of the 'social investment state' as the newly emerging paradigm in social policy-making could be hindered by the political opposition of powerful groups if expanding social investments would mean cutbacks in other parts of the welfare state. Given the limited fiscal room of manoeuvre of most EU governments, this seems unavoidable in the near future (Busemeyer and Garritzmann, 2017).

After examining public attitudes towards national education policies, we will shift our focus onto EU-level education policies. The most successful education policy implemented by the EU has been the

European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (Erasmus), which was launched in 1987 and currently includes 33 countries. Participants in the Erasmus programme stay abroad between 3 and 12 months to complete part of their degrees in an institution abroad. The Eurobarometer 2016, which covers 26 EU member states, includes a question on the support for the Erasmus programme. Respondents were asked to state their opinion using the following statement: 'The Erasmus programme enables European students to spend part of their studies at another higher education institution or with an organisation in Europe. What is your opinion on the Erasmus programme?' The results in Figure 12 demonstrate that the success story of the Erasmus programme is very much reflected in the public support for this policy. Most EU citizens seem to have positive attitudes towards it. While there is generally little variation in support across countries, there is a certain tendency for support to be higher in countries that benefit more from the exchange programme, relatively speaking. For example, countries in the East region of the EU show the lowest levels of support, which may be explained through students and universities from Eastern European countries having the lowest participation rates within the programme (European Commission, 2021).

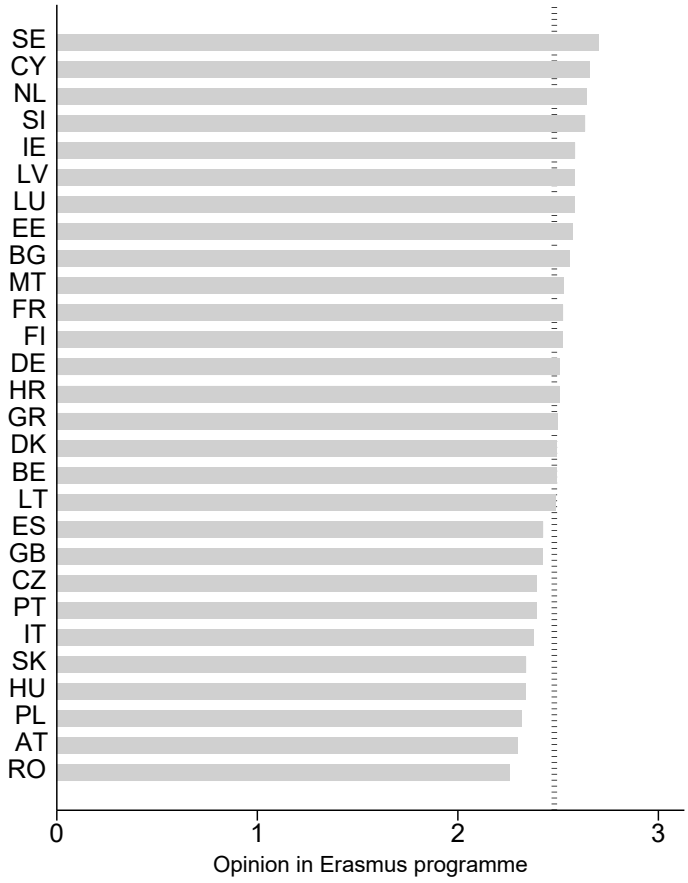


Figure 12. Attitudes on the ERASMUS student exchange programme (mean) across EU member states.

Data: Eurobarometer 2016, 0 = very negative to 4 = very positive, dotted line indicates EU mean [2.48].

For the context of this paper, it is important to emphasise that the Erasmus programme for university student exchange was built on the foundation of young people participating in democratic life and promoting their social inclusion. This is particularly the case for young people from a more disadvantaged background that usually have fewer opportunities to participate in transnational

activities. Overall, the programme aims to create more interaction between students from across the EU and to increase their feelings of belonging to a European community (European Commission, 2021). This idea is based on a long line of literature that assumes the emergence of a common (European) identity through transnational interaction (Lijphart, 1964; Rubio et al., 2002; King and Ruiz-Gelices, 2003; van Mol, 2011). While some empirical studies confirm the idea that Erasmus strengthens a common European identity (King and Ruiz-Gelices, 2003; Van Mol, 2011; Mitchell, 2015), others do not (Sigalas, 2010; Wilson, 2011) or conclude that it is dependent on the students' country of origin (van Mol, 2013). Regardless, due to its popularity, the Erasmus programme might be a fruitful way to promote a European social citizenship identity further. It is worth investigating if the public would also support EU-led education across other education levels, for example, with Erasmus + the EU is attempting to expand the programme to vocational education and lifelong learning (formerly run under the Leonardo da Vinco Programme).

The Eurobarometer from 2018 includes a more comprehensive question about education policies on the national versus the EU level across 26 EU member states. Research has shown that EU citizens might perceive EU social policies and national social policies as competing against each other or even cancel each other out (Burgoon, 2009; Baute et al., 2019). Therefore, it is important to study European solidarity relative to national solidarity. Specifically, the Eurobarometer asked: 'In your opinion, at what level can we deal with each of the following areas most efficiently? Education'. Figure 13 demonstrates that a majority of EU citizens believe the EU would be more efficient in dealing with education policies, although it needs to be taken into account that this measure might strongly be related to general attitudes towards the EU (Baute et al. 2019). These results are in line with other literature on the public opinion related to the Europeanization of welfare states (Burgoon, 2009; Hooghe and Verhaegen, 2017). In line with Gerhards et al. (2018), we find overall widespread public support for an EU-led welfare state.

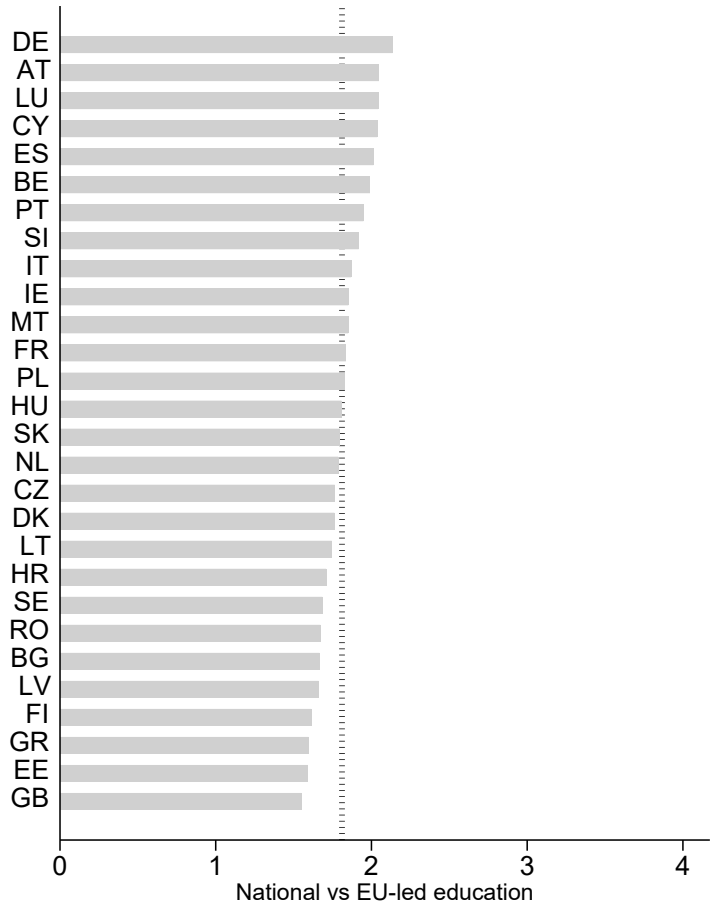


Figure 13. Attitudes on most efficient level to deal with education (mean) across EU member states.
Data: Eurobarometer 2018, 0 = at national level only to 4 = at EU level only, dotted line indicates EU mean [1.81].

In Figure 14, we aim to find an explanation for the cross-national differences identified in Figure 13. One could assume that the preference for an EU versus a national welfare states grounds on the level of satisfaction with the national welfare state. More specifically, we assume that countries with higher satisfaction levels with their national education systems are less inclined to favour an EU-led education system. In order to probe this hypothesis, we include the following ESS item from 2018: 'Now, using this card, please say what you think overall about the state of education in [country] nowadays?'. Figure 14 confirms our hunch. For example, the citizens in Nordic countries, such as Sweden, are over proportionally satisfied with the state of their national education systems. Therefore, the need for EU intervention is also relatively low. On the contrary, citizens in Germany are over proportionally dissatisfied with the state of their national education systems. Thus the need for a supranational organisation to intervene in education policies might be higher. There is one clear exception of the UK, which we consequently excluded as an outlier in this analysis. This is because the low levels of public support for an EU-led education system can probably be explained by the fact that the UK public is the most Eurosceptic public across our sample. The results from the following sections also demonstrate that the UK public is generally the most opposed to an EU-led welfare state.

To sum up, while the Bologna Process started the process of creating a European education area in higher education over two decades ago, the question remains under which circumstances the public

might be willing for promote further integration in this policy field. Our survey evidence provides indicative evidence that public support for a stronger role of the EU in education policy may be higher than commonly assumed. However, we should also be careful with interpreting this item because it strongly captures a general pro versus anti-EU attitude (see Baute et al 2019 on this issue with preferred decision-making level for social policy areas). This could also explain why countries like Belgium (which are generally pro EU) do not fit the pattern of Figure 14 well. Hence, further research is needed on this area.

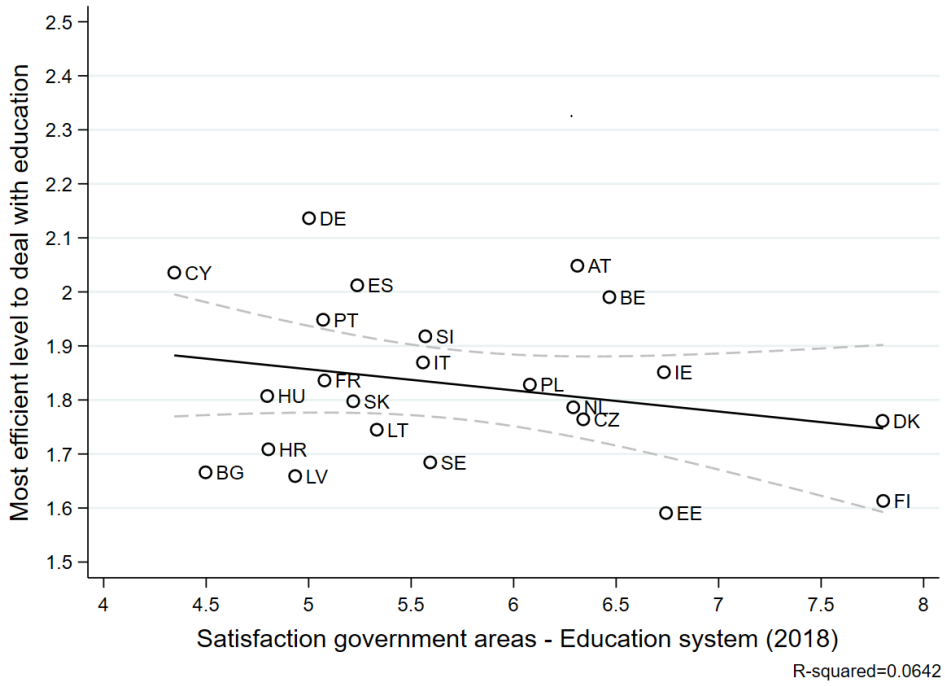


Figure 14. Relationship between Satisfaction towards the national education system (mean) and attitudes on *the* most efficient level to deal with education (mean) across EU member states, 2018.

Data: European Social Survey, 0 = Extremely dissatisfied to 10 = Extremely satisfied, Eurobarometer 2018, 0 = at national level only to 4 = at EU level only.

6. Measuring public opinion III: Public opinion towards employment policies and income protection

We continue with the policy realm of employment, including labour market regulation, social investment policies and social transfers. This section further looks into perceptions, attitudes and preferences towards employment policies across EU member states from the 1980s to the present. Importantly, when we look at the evolution of welfare attitudes towards employment policies is the changing nature of the European labour markets in times of globalisation. A large portion of the debates among researchers and the public deal with the growing flexibility and de-regulation of European labour markets, which have led to an increase of precarious labour forms, including fixed-term contracts and temporary agency employment (Kalleberg, 2000).

Figure 6 of this paper has already revealed at best mediocre support among EU citzens to increase public spending on unemployment benefits – in particular compared to the high levels of support for education. Hence, we start the analyses on employment policies by checking if the public would be willing to sacrifice unemployment benefits in favour of more spending on education. Conveniently, INVEDUC includes a question on public support for such a trade-off: 'Government plans to increase spending on education by 10% and wants to finance this by cutting the benefits for the unemployed'. Overall, we can see in Figure 15 that the public across the EU is not so much in favour of spending more on education at the cost of unemployment benefits, even though there are cross-national differences. For example, support for a recalibration from unemployment to education is highest in the UK, potentially because the unemployed are seen as more responsible for their own situation in the liberal system. The results are in line with the INVEDUC experiment from Figure 11, which showed that increasing taxes or levels of public debt might be a more feasible way to finance education than cutbacks in other parts of the welfare state. They also show that citizens in general dislike fiscal trade-offs, where they are forced to directly compensate spending increases in one policy area with spending cuts in another (Neimanns et al. 2018).

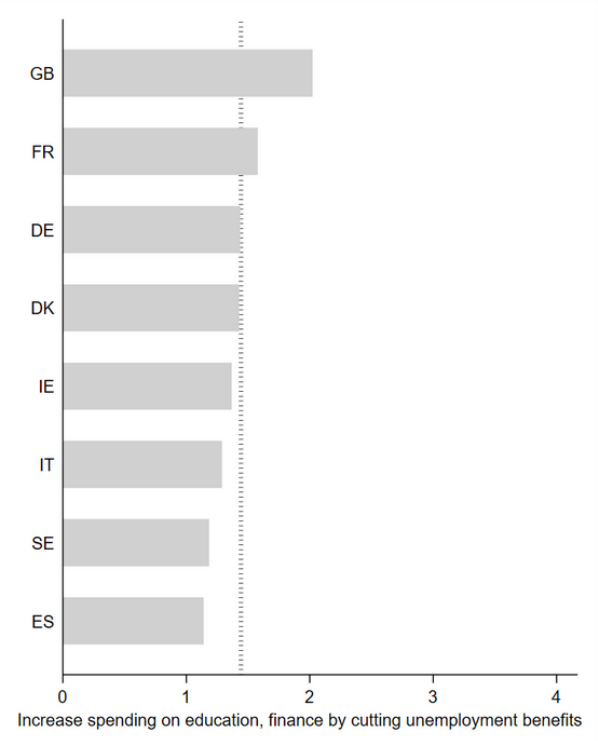


Figure 15. Attitudes "Government plans to increase spending on education by 10% and wants to finance this by cutting the benefits for the unemployed" (mean).
Data: Investing in Education in Europe 2014, 0 strongly disagree = to 4 = strongly agree, dotted line indicates mean across all countries [1.41].

We continue with public attitudes towards providing the unemployed with benefits. The present analysis includes data from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) across 18 EU countries from four waves collected every ten years between 1985 and 2016. The dependent variable we use here is: 'Listed below are various areas of government spending. Please show whether you would like to see more or less government spending in each area. Remember that if you say "much more", it might require a tax increase to pay for it: Unemployment benefits' (see also Lipsmeyer, 2003).

The results demonstrate overall decreasing support for unemployment benefits across 21 EU member states from 1985 to 2016. Comparing the item to the ISSP item on education from the previous section (which had the same answering scale), we can also see relatively low levels of support for the unemployed. However, looking at the regional differences in Figure 16, we can see that the South is increasingly favouring government spending on unemployment benefits, while in the other regions, especially Anglo countries, support is declining more rapidly. Considering the high unemployment rates in the South, these results are in line with the institutional theories presented in Section 2.3 of this paper. For example, especially the EU citizens who live in regions with higher unemployment and poorer economic conditions might want to reduce their exposure to social risks (Blekesaune, 2007; Dallinger, 2010). Furthermore, the relatively low demand for government redistribution for the Anglo countries hardly surprises in light of the relatively low levels of social expenditure that can act as a social force that legitimizes this institutional arrangement (Finseraas, 2009; Jæger, 2006b).

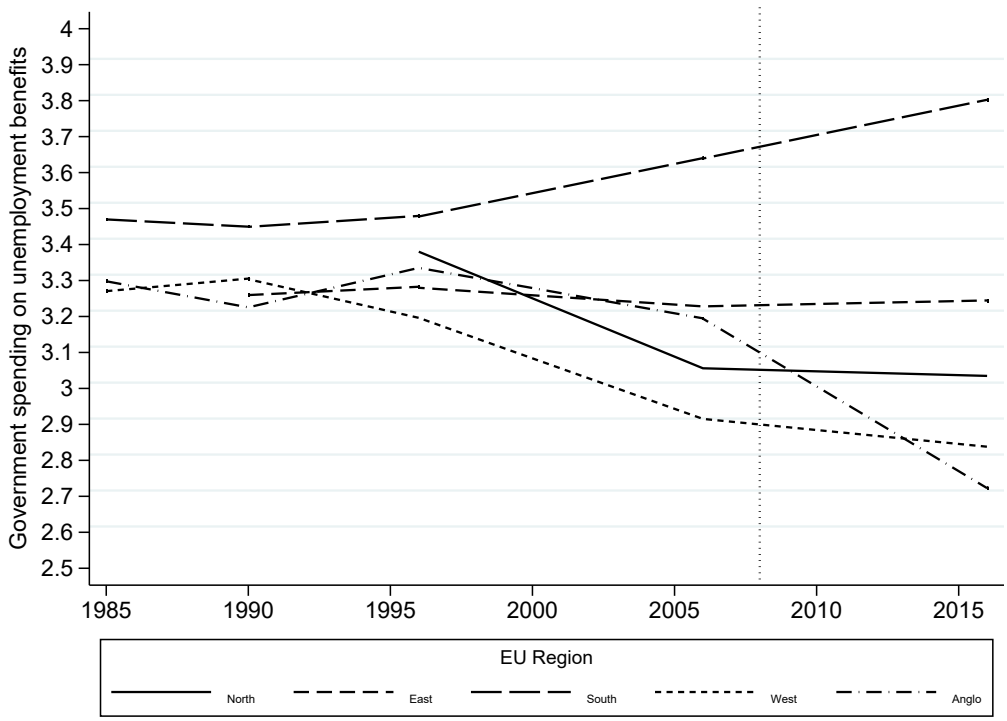


Figure 16. Attitudes on Government spending on unemployment benefits (mean), across EU regions.
Data: International Social Survey Programme 1985-2016, 1 = spend much less to 5 = spend much more, dotted line indicates the financial crisis in 2008.

The question remains why the levels of support for unemployment benefits are relatively low and decreasing across time. Possibly, the deservingness theory can help here (van Oorschot, 2000, 2006). As already mentioned in Section 2.2 of this paper, the unemployed are usually perceived as one of the least deserving social groups of welfare support by the public. This is because unemployment is often considered to be the fault of the individual and not a systematic failure. Consequently, the granting of support for unemployed people is based on the observable efforts to re-enter the labour market (van Oorschot, 2002). Refusing a job can even be seen as a violation of the reciprocity criterion on which unemployment benefits (most EU unemployment benefits are either means-tested or insurance-based) and that adds specific requirements to beneficiaries of the welfare state (Mau, 2004). Furthermore, unlike other welfare beneficiary groups, such as pensioners, the unemployed face stronger conditionality for welfare support because even though some unemployed have already contributed a lot to the system (e.g., an old worker who is laid off because of company restructuring), they are seen less deserving because people make judgements about their "reciprocity", which is typically higher for other groups, such as pensioners. To put differently, the public might think that they have not earned the benefits they are paid. For the reasons mentioned, the unemployed are often stigmatized and excluded from society which makes them outsiders that do not comply with another deservingness criterion – the identity criterion (van Oorschot, 2000).

It is possible that the general level of unemployment can affect how income inequality is structured and consequently soften the strictness of the control criterion. This means, the unemployed loose control over their state of need when the unemployment rate is higher. However, previous research on this issue reached mixed conclusions (some aggree: Quadagno, 2003; Fraile and Ferrer, 2005, some

disagree: van Oorschot and Meuleman, 2014; Fridberg and Ploug, 2010). A more robust finding is that cross-class solidarity between upper and middle classes on the one hand and the unemployed on the other delinces as social distance and inequality increase (Carriero and Filandri, 2019).

The unemployment dimension of European social citizenship seems worrying, also because we find similar patterns using another item from the ISSP on support for the government's role in ensuring the standard of living of unemployed people and how it changes over time. However, as we have been arguing before, this might relate to the structure of benefits. The unemployed may receive higher levels of public support across the EU when the questions are related to social investment, namely active labour market policies (ALMP). In line with this, it is argued that there is a shift in the preferred balance between social rights and social obligations when it comes to employment policies (Roosma and Jeene, 2017). This means stricter conditions imposed on the unemployed, such as actively looking for work, can increase support for these policies. EU countries started adopting ALMPS in the 1980s, in an economic context of austerity. This was because the unemployment rates skyrocketed at that time and put new demands for the welfare state. In other words, simply increasing unemployment benefits was no longer a viable solution in contexts of new social risks (Bonoli, 2013). Unlike unemployment benefits, ALMPS include a more heterogeneous set of social policies, from job search schemes to training courses. The differences in these measurements can also be traced back to individual welfare systems. For example, in Sweden, training-based ALMPs aim to prevent the marginalisation of lower-skilled groups by helping them to retrain in order for their skills to match current labour market demand and supply (Lødemel and Trickey, 2001; Bonoli, 2013). In contrast, in the UK, ALMPs are mainly aimed to help the unemployed, who are held individually responsible for not working, to re-enter the labour market in the fastest way possible (Daguerre, 2007; Bonoli, 2010). Consequently, such activation policies have been market as trampoline policies rather than as safety nets (Giddens, 2000). Nonoli and Natali (2012) assume that the prevalence of demanding ALMPs has changed the public understanding of social rights. Initially, the understanding was that these were universally granted, and later they were perceived as an entitlement that had to be earned through individual effort and compliance with the system. Consequently, we could expect that workfare and activation (i.e. the 'bad' kind of SI) is less popular amongst the public than training investments (i.e. the 'good' kind of SI). What research actually finds is that the the more affluent and progressive groups of the public are more in favour of training investments, while the poorer and more conservative groups are more in favour of workfare (Busemeyer et al., 2021; Häusermann et al., 2021).

For examining EU citizens' attitudes towards ALMPs over the past 35 years, the paper uses data from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) again. The present analysis includes data from 21 EU countries from four waves collected every ten years between 1985 and 2016. The dependent variable we use here is: 'Here are some things the government might do for the economy. Please show which actions you are in favour of and which you are against. (1) Government financing projects to create new jobs. (2) Support for the industry to develop new products and technology. (3) Support for declining industries to protect jobs. (4) Reducing the working week to create more jobs'.

Figure 17 demonstrates that ALMPs are indeed more popular than unemployment benefits, at least some. For example, the public across EU member states seems highly in favour of the government

financing projects to create new jobs and of support for the industry to develop new products. However, the support is lower when it comes to supporting declining industries to protect jobs or reducing the working week to create more jobs. While the support for ALMPs overall seems higher than the support for unemployment benefits, we see also declining trends here. Again, these vary across different regions across the EU. Here we find that the patterns are again in line with the theoretical expectations explained above. For example, Southern and Northern EU countries increasingly favour ALPMs, one probably for the increasing unemployment risks, the other probably because of the increasing popularity of social investment. As we found in Eick et al. (2021), social expenditure on such policies is highest in the North too. Overall, the cross-time results on employment policies are quite telling since other research suggests that in the short term (and during a crisis), there is particular demand for social compensation, not investment. However, looking at the big picture, we could not find evidence of this. However, it is possible that ALMPs are more popular amongst employed people while unemployed people prefer more generous unemployment benefits (see on a similar matter Fossati, 2018 – but this will remain a question for future research.

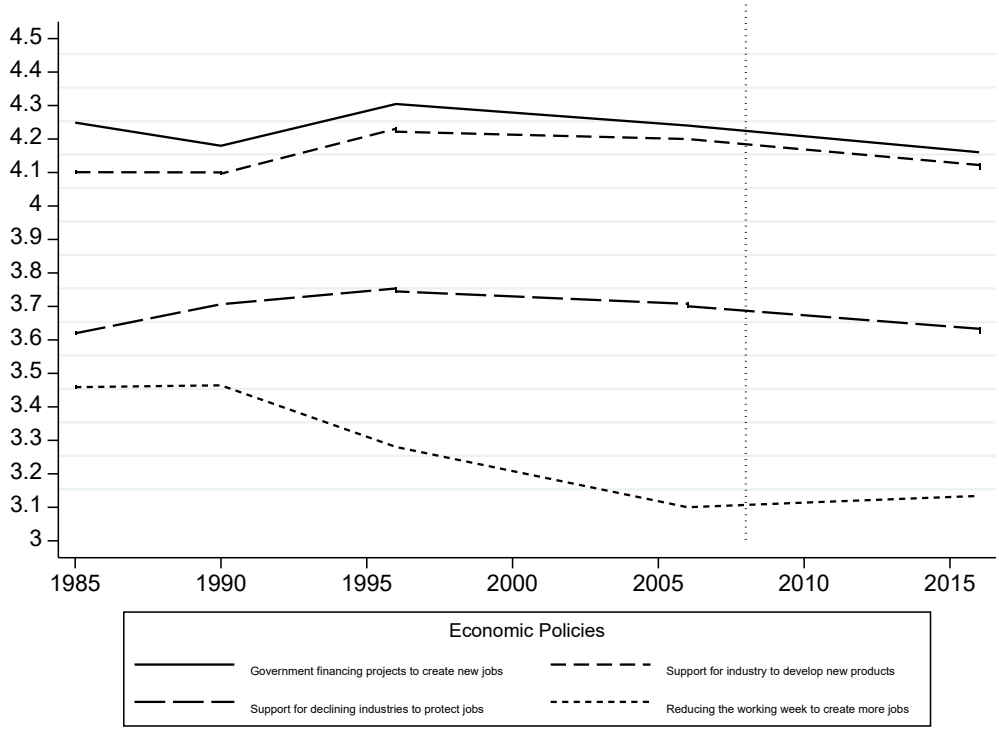


Figure 17. Attitudes on Economic Policies (mean).

Data: International Social Survey Programme 1985-2016, 1 = strongly against to 5 = strongly in favour, dotted line indicates the financial crisis in 2008.

A shortcoming of the ISSP items is that they do not include a trade-off between unemployment benefits versus ALMPs. Conveniently, the 2016 wave of the ESS includes such a question for 18 EU countries: 'Now imagine there is a fixed amount of money that can be spent on tackling unemployment. Would you be against or in favour of the government spending more on education and training programmes for the unemployed at the cost of reducing unemployment benefit?'. Overall, we can see in Figure 18 that the public across the EU is in favour of spending more on education for the unemployed, in other words, ALMPs, at the cost of unemployment benefits. The

cross-regional patterns follow, yet again, theoretical expectations (see above). For example, the UK and the Netherlands are the ones most in favour of replacing benefits with social investment as the unemployed are seen more responsible for their situation in countries with liberal tendencies.

Certainly, future research should elaborate on the long-term political indications of the changing risk structure in labour markets across the EU and how public opinion relates to it. This is especially important considering the long-term effects of youth unemployment that is mostly observed in Southern EU countries (Naumann et al., 2016; O`Reilly et al., 2018). Transferring the findings to other social policy fields, path-dependency patterns in policy trends that mirror institutional contexts also need further examination. This is because policies based on the conditionality principle appear to be more feasible in countries where welfare state dependence is framed in terms of individual responsibility and individual behavioural shortcomings. Still, our results also indicate that such framing could be changed through successfully social policy reforms and improving economic conditions that may convince the public to support the unemployed, even in times of increased labour market risks.

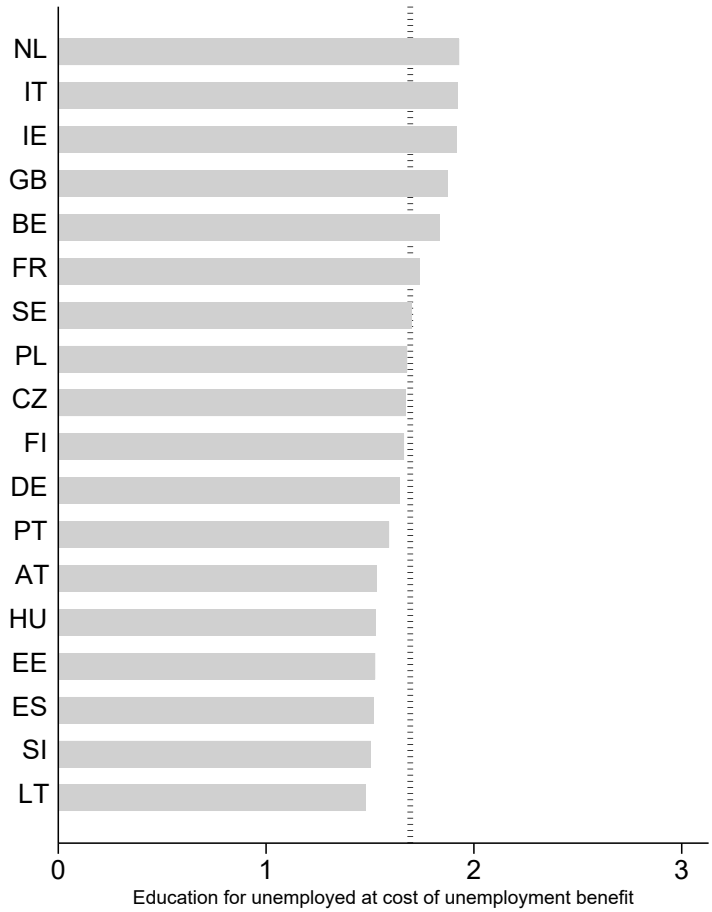


Figure 18. Attitudes on "Spend more on education for unemployed at the cost of unemployment benefit" (mean).

Data: European Social Survey 2016, 0 = strongly against to 3 = strongly in favour, dotted line indicates EU mean [1.69].

Because of the 2007/2008 financial crisis and new economic governance, debates about maintaining the generosity of national welfare states across the EU are becoming more intense (Hemerijck, 2012).

One of these EU-led welfare state policy proposals is part of the employment policy realm: minimum income protection (Vandenbroucke et al., 2013). The idea of a national minimum income scheme (MI) has gained more attention in public, political and academic debates, and all EU countries have already developed some form of MI that is regulated on the national level and that is a non-contributory scheme – in contrast to discussed universal basic income schemes (UBI) which would be universal (European Economic and Social Committee, 2013). Still, most MI schemes on the national level are not adequate in order to lift people out of poverty (Frazer and Marlier, 2016).

One feature of welfare states is that they often include buffers for economic shocks, particularly regarding income protection, also in the case of unemployment. Debates circle around how the EU can help to reinforce or compliment itself buffers for economic shocks, which might be achieved by supporting national income protection and unemployment insurance. For this reason, the EU has been working for the past 30 years on a proposal for a European minimum income scheme (EMI). But are EU citizens ready to share income-related risks? The ESS 2016 includes a question for UBI and for EMI across 18 EU countries. These questions are unique in that they include an extended definition of these policy proposals by emphasising that they have a universal and unconditional character and that taxes would pay for them.

The question on UBI is as follows 'Some countries are currently talking about introducing a basic income scheme. In a moment I will ask you to tell me whether you are against or in favour of this scheme. First, I will give you some more details. The highlighted box at the top of this card shows the main features of the scheme. A basic income scheme includes all of the following: The government pays everyone a monthly income to cover essential living costs. It replaces many other social benefits. The purpose is to guarantee everyone a minimum standard of living. Everyone receives the same amount regardless of whether or not they are working. People also keep the money they earn from work or other sources. This scheme is paid for by taxes. Overall, would you be against or in favour of having this scheme in [country]?' (Roosma and van Oorschot, 2020; Busemeyer and Sahm, 2021). This question is followed by an item on EMI: 'It has been proposed that there should be a European Union-wide social benefit scheme for all poor people. In a moment I will ask you to tell me whether you are against or in favour of this scheme. First, look at the highlighted box at the top of this card, which shows the main features of the scheme. A European Union-wide social benefit scheme includes all of the following: The purpose is to guarantee a minimum standard of living for all poor people in the European Union. - The level of social benefit people receive will be adjusted to reflect the cost of living in their country. - The scheme would require richer European Union countries to pay more into such a scheme than poorer European Union countries. Overall, would you be against or in favour of having such a European Union-wide social benefit scheme?' (Baute and Meuleman, 2020; Roosma and van Oorschot, 2021).

In line with our national versus EU-led welfare results on education, we find the same result in Figure 19 related to basic income: While both policies enjoy the support, the support across many countries is even higher when the policy comes from the EU-level rather than from the national level. However, this might also be because EMI is a targetted policy, meaning means-tested and not accessible to the rest of the population – while UBI is a universally accessible policy. It can also be assumed that the

financial crisis 2007/2008 made the challenges for poor people more salient to everyone across the EU. We can find again relevant cross-national differences here since the public in Eastern EU countries is most favourable towards national income support, and the public in Southern EU countries is most favourable towards EU-level income support. The research on UBI and EMI has shown that these policies find more support in countries where the levels of (material) deprivation are higher (Roosma and van Oorschot, 2020a; Baute and Meuleman, 2020). In line with this, we find that respondents from more deprived countries, such as Southern and Eastern European countries, show overall more support for poor people in their home countries and across the EU. The public from Southern countries is possibly in favour of EMI as the question wording indicates that they would receive financial support for such a policy from other member states that have a better economic position. Euroscepticism could play a role in explaining the relatively low levels of support for EMI across the public in Eastern EU countries since their public is known to be more Eurosceptic than the public in other EU countries (Leruth et al., 2017). It can also be assumed that lower-educated and lower-income groups are more in favour of both UBI and EMI schemes, even though they are usually more Eurosceptic than higher-educated and higher-income groups. More research on this matter could help indicate a potential way forward to promote cross-class solidarity and support for the project of European integration. Thus, it is particularly an EMI scheme that could have the potential to increase the legitimacy of the EU even among groups that usually feel left behind by the European integration project.

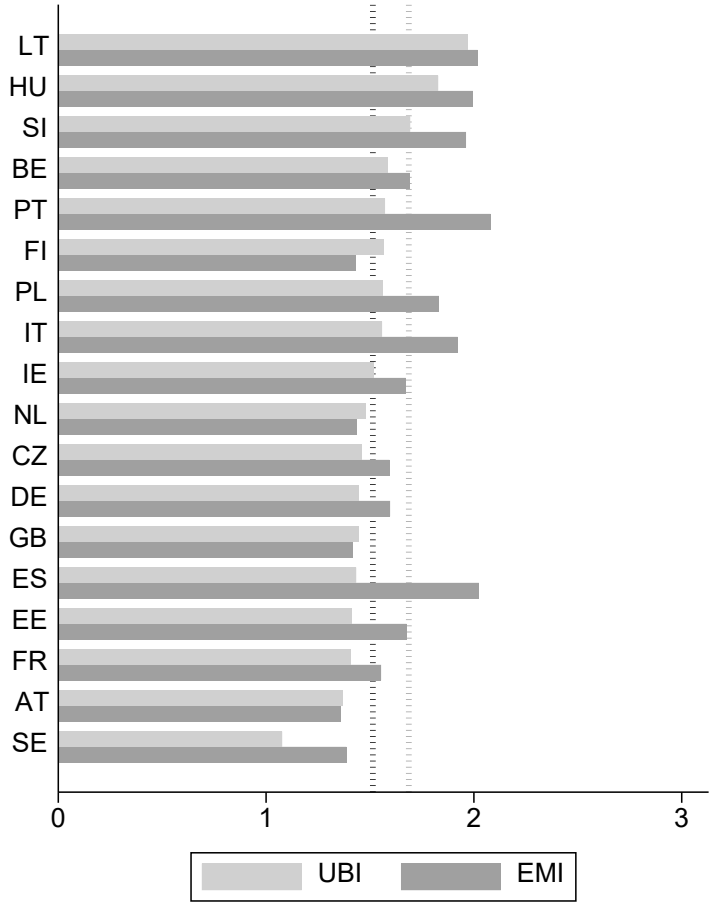


Figure 19. Attitudes on a national universal basic income and EU minimum income scheme (mean).
Data: European Social Survey 2016, 0 = strongly against to 3 = strongly in favour, dotted line indicates EU mean UBI: [1.51] and EMI: [1.68].

These results are also supported by another Eurobarometer item from 2018, which asks about employment policies on the national versus the EU level across 27 member states. Specifically, the Eurobarometer asked: 'In your opinion, at what level can we deal with each of the following areas most efficiently. Employment and Social Protection?'. The results in Figure 20 demonstrate that a majority of EU citizens believe the EU would be more efficient in dealing with employment policies with the same cross-regional variations we found in the item on education policies in Section 5 of this paper. However, these findings are not in line with Kuhn and Kamm (2019), who conducted survey experiments in the Netherlands and Spain. Their data shows too that EU citizens are more likely to support national-led unemployment policies than EU-led unemployment policies, even among the citizens that are most likely to support an EU-led welfare state overall. This means, this topic requires further attention.

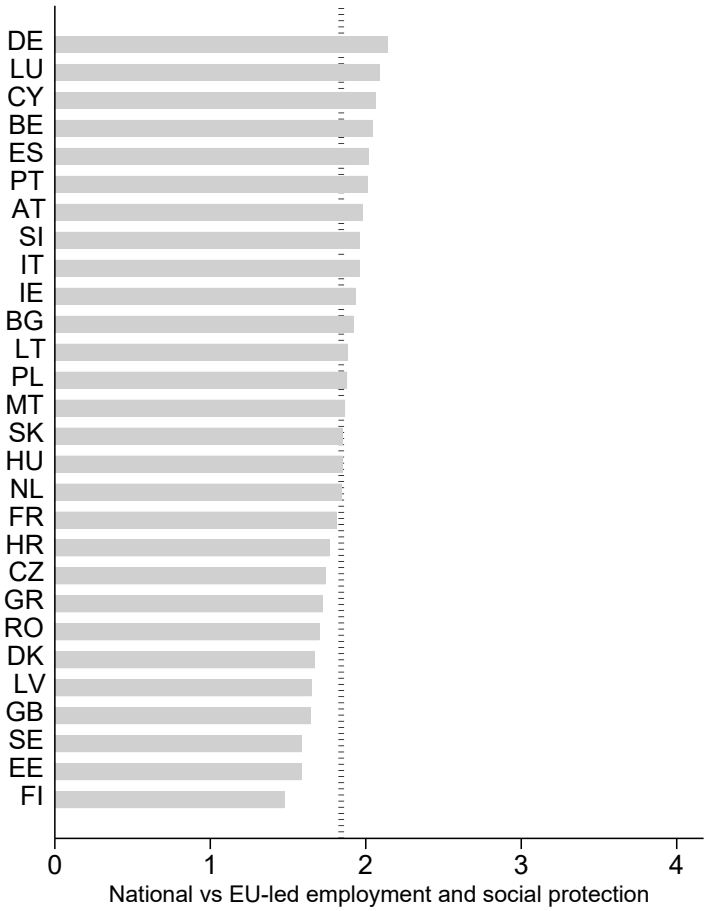


Figure 20. Attitudes on the most efficient level to deal with employment and social protection across EU member states.

Data: Eurobarometer 2018, 0 = at national level only to 4 = at EU level only, dotted line indicates EU mean [1.84].

To examine trade-offs related to EU-led unemployment policies, we study a conjoint survey experiment (Hainmueller et al., 2014) that includes trade-off scenarios on public support for European unemployment risk sharing (EURS) in 13 EU member states from 2018. The conjoint experiment examines preferences for policy proposals that would implement EURS. These proposals vary on six dimensions: (1) generosity, (2) education and training conditions, (3) between-country redistribution,

(4) national versus European administration, (5) impact on taxes, and (6) conditions concerning individual job search effort (Burgoon et al., 2021; Nicoli et al., 2019; Kuhn et al., 2020). To visualize these results, Figure 21 plots the Average Marginal Component Effects (AMCEs) for each attribute value across our six dimensions. The marginal effects can be interpreted as the increased or decreased chance that a respondent supports a EURS proposal across the given options the dimension includes. The results include common individual-level control variables (see Figure 7) and country dummies (for more details, see Vandenbroucke et al., 2018; Burgoon et al., 2021).

At first glance, Figure 21 demonstrates that policy design matters for support amongst EU citizens as variances across packages vary significantly. In other words, the support for a EURS proposal is conditional. However, there is a potential for a EURS proposal that can get the support of the majority of EU citizens, and only a small share of EU citizens fundamentally opposes such a proposal. Specifically, EU citizens tend to support proposals that (1) are more generous, (2) that require countries to offer education and training to unemployed people, (3) redistributes between member states, (4) are administered on the national level, (5) entail no tax increases, and (6) require people to accept any suitable job. However, as Figure 21 shows, some of these dimensions vary more than others with the most important seeming to be the generosity of the scheme and the schemes inclusion of social investment policies, which in line with our previous findings from this section. As usual, there are also important cross-country as well as socio-demographic differences (see Burgoon et al., 2021). While the results from these fine-grained studies demonstrate the need to examine the public support for EU-led employment policies critically, the results also demonstrate the potential for such policies in the future. This is because national welfare states have historically contributed to the building of national communities. Therefore, it is possible to imagine that EU-led policies might create their own basis of support in the long run.

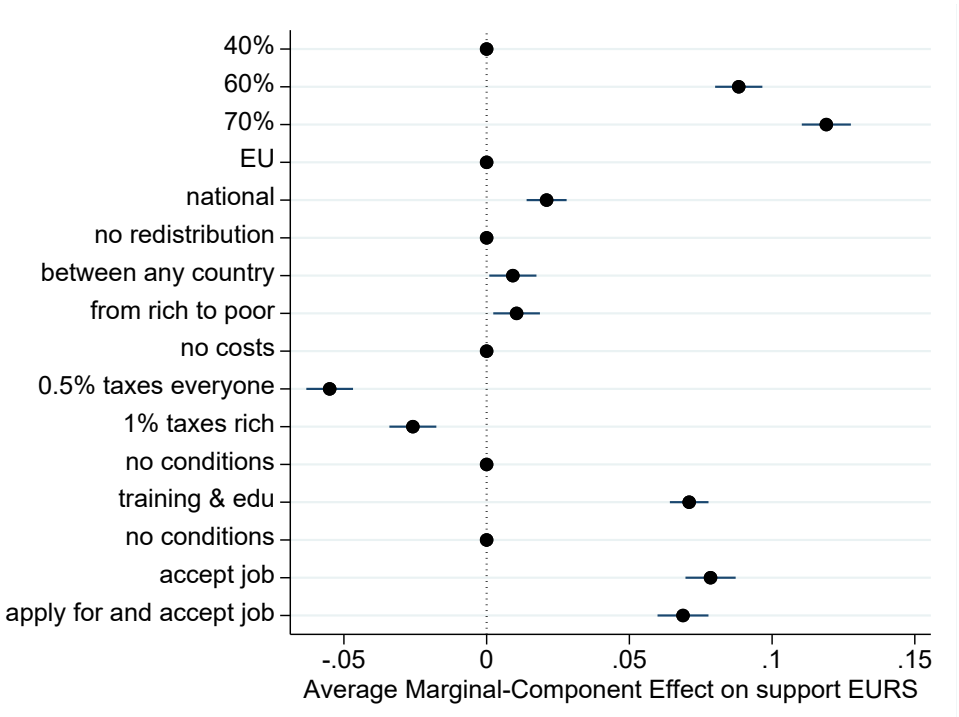


Figure 21. Average Marginal-Component Effect (AMCE) of dimension attributes on support for EURS.

Data: European unemployment risk sharing (EURS) 2018.

7. Measuring public opinion IV: Public opinion towards family policies

We finalise our paper with the policy realm of family policy, a major realm of social rights and especially important for gender (in)equality (Eick et al., 2021). In order to challenge the traditional division of labour between men and women in the EU, most member states have introduced family policies that aim to increase women's labour force participation over the past decades. Parallel to the changes in family arrangements, a change in public preferences on the traditional labour market and family roles of women and men can be assumed (Sjöberg, 2004). This section further looks into perceptions, attitudes and preferences towards family policies across EU member states from the 1980s to the present.

Figure 15 of this paper has already shown that the public across the EU is not so much in favour of spending more on education at the cost of unemployment benefits, but what about family policies? Hence, we start the analyses on family policies by checking if the public would be willing to sacrifice unemployment benefits in favour of more spending on family support, again using a question from the INVEDUC survey: 'The government plans to enact reforms involving a 10% increase in the budget for financial support and public services for families with young children and wants to finance this by cutting the benefits for the unemployed'. Figure 22 displays levels of support across countries that participated in the survey. Generally speaking, support for expanding family policies to the detriment of unemployment benefits is not strongly supported, and the cross-national differences are very similar to the ones we observed in Figure 15. For example, the UK is - yet again - the country most favouring replacing unemployment benefits with family policies which further emphasizes the individualistic values in the liberal welfare system. Of course, the results do not imply that the support for family policies is not particularly high, here we simply demonstrate the results from a trade-off. Again, these results emphasise that increasing taxes or levels of public debt might be a more feasible way to finance education than cutbacks in other parts of the welfare state.

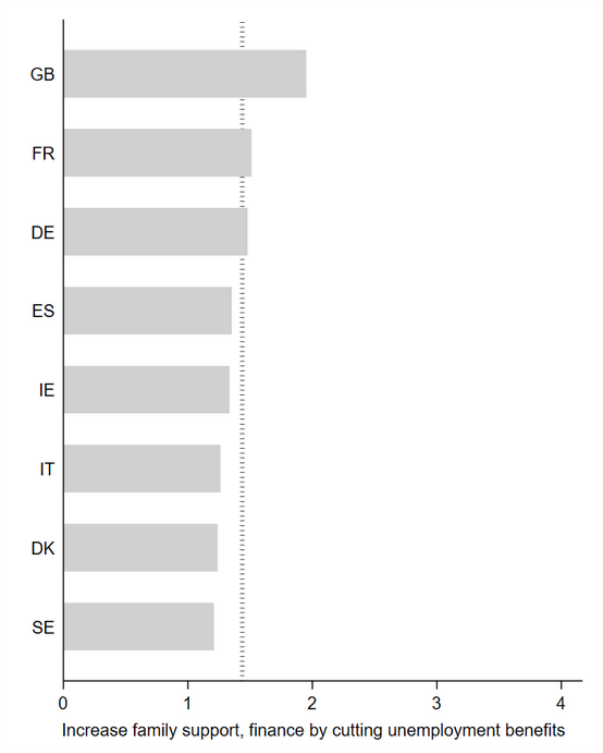


Figure 22. Attitudes "Government plans to enact reforms involving a 10% increase in the budget for financial support and public services for families with young children and wants to finance this by cutting the benefits for the unemployed" (mean).

Data: Investing in Education in Europe 2014, 0 strongly disagree = to 4 = strongly agree, dotted line indicates mean across all countries [1.41].

Next, we will explore public attitudes towards specific family policies more in detail. First, we illustrate the evolution of attitudes towards the traditional labour market divisions between men and women in the EU over the past two decades. The paper uses data from the European Value Survey (EVS). The present analysis includes data from 23 EU countries from six waves collected every ten years between 1990 and 2017. The dependent variable we use here is: 'People talk about the changing roles of men and women today. For each of the following statements I read out, can you tell me how much you agree with each?' Figure 23 displays agreement with the following item (picked out from a larger number of statements): 'A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works.' (see also Sjöberg, 2004). This item is not necessarily suitable for capturing attitudes on family policies but will help us to contextualize the findings for more obvious family policy items.

Figure 23 shows that attitudes towards working mothers get more positive across all regions of the EU, demonstrating that the public is increasingly more open to accepting the participation of women in the labour market (Thornton and Freedman, 1979; Cherlin and Walters, 1981; Sjöberg 2004). However, as with the previous policy realms, we also see cross-regional variations. For example, in Eastern and Southern EU countries, the public is more concerned with working mothers than in Northern EU countries. This further emphasises that women's labour market participation and social roles, in general, are still perceived differently across the EU (Ester et al., 1994; Scott et al., 1998; Knudsen and Wærness, 2001). Importantly, our results from Figure 18 do not appear to be a random finding. We also observed such trends in other ISSP question items such as 'A job is alright but what

most women really want is a home and children', which has had the same answer categories since 1987.

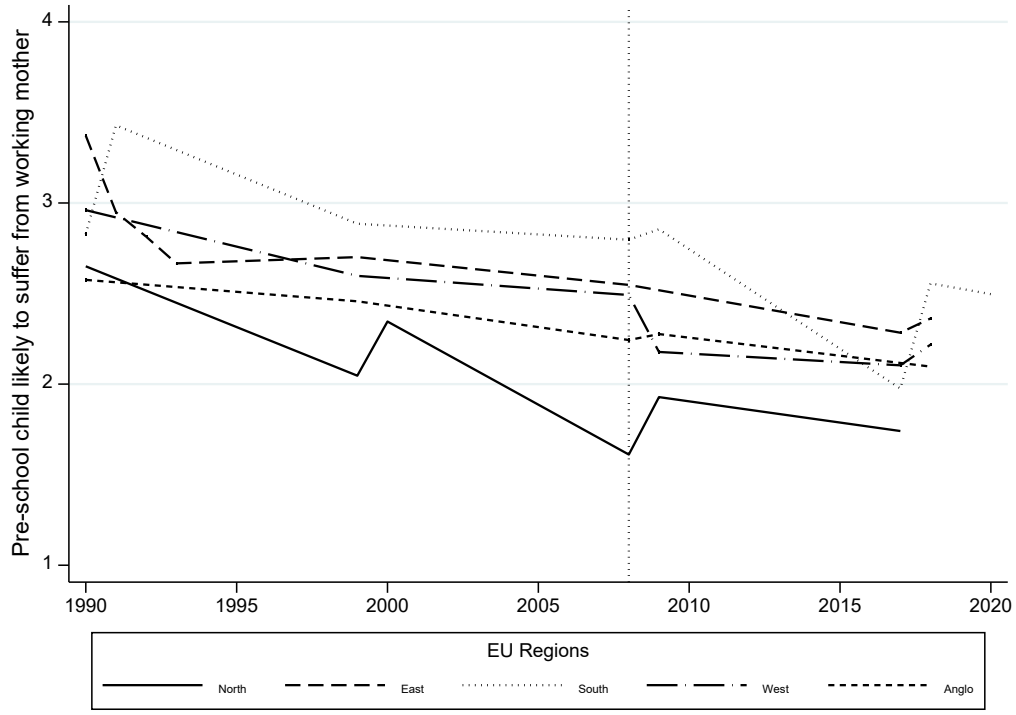


Figure 23. Attitudes on pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works (mean), across EU regions.

Data: European Value Survey 1990-2020, 1=strongly disagree to 4=strongly agree, dotted line indicates the financial crisis in 2008.

The significant changes in family structure and gender roles have generated new social needs over the past decades, and critics of the mainstream welfare state argued their social transfer programmes were built in favour of the male breadwinner model (Orloff, 1993; Sainsbury, 1994, 2001). To counteract this male breadwinner model, social-investment-related family programmes were introduced, including childcare and maternity and parental leave – both notable for their service-based contributions to labour market adjustments, facilitating a more gender-equitable combination of work and family. Eick et al. (2021) showed that social-investment-related family-policy spending has risen in the last several decades more quickly than social-protection-related family policies. It has (just before the onset of the financial crisis) overtaken the latter. Knowledge regarding public preferences for public childcare provisions and maternity and parental leave provision is relevant to understand policy advancements as public opinion can change policy reforms by acting as a possible veto player and influencing reform opportunities (Brooks and Manza, 2006).

First, we will examine EU citizens' attitudes towards public childcare provisions for working parents. Such a question is available for 18 European countries in the ESS 2008 and 2016 waves. The question is as follows: 'For each of the tasks I read out please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much responsibility you think governments should have to ensure sufficient child care services for working parents? ' (see also Kulin and Meuleman, 2015; Busemeyer and Neimanns 2017; Chung and Meuleman, 2014; Chung

and Meuleman 2017; Guo and Gilbert, 2014). Figure 24 shows that across EU member states, there is overall strong agreement that childcare is the governments' responsibility. While women's labour force participation is increasing, there is overall almost no change in that attitude between 2008 and 2016. However, there are cross-regional differences because the support for childcare increases slightly in the EU North and South regions and it decreases slightly in countries from the EU West, East and Anglo regions. This might be explained by the considerable variation among countries in designing and implementing government initiatives to reconcile work and care (van Lancker, 2020). Northern countries employ a range of childcare provisions that aim to create a dual-breadwinner model of family life. In contrast, Britain, for example, provides public childcare mainly to children from low-income parents. Furthermore, apart from the differences in the organization of the childcare programmes across countries, groups of countries also vary regarding their levels of public spending on childcare provisions, i.e. welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen, 1999).

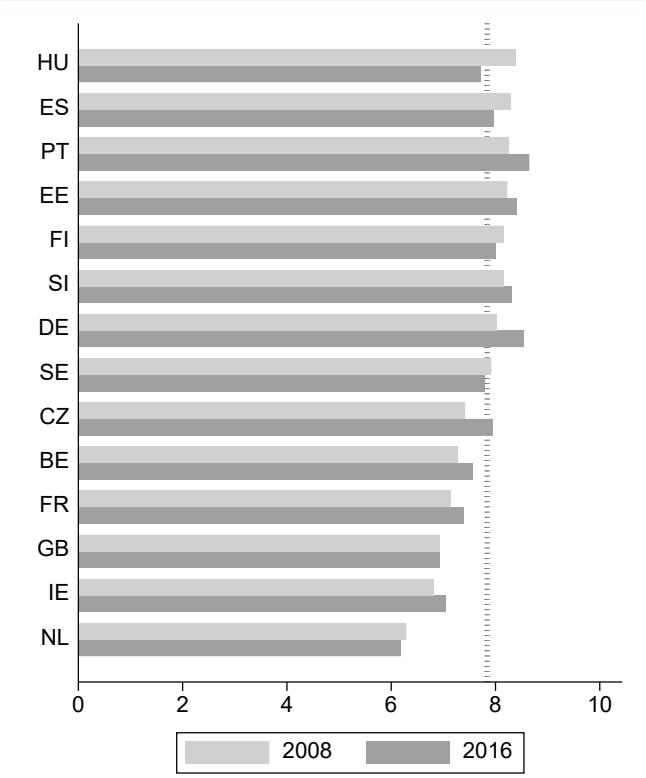


Figure 24. Attitudes on government's responsibility to ensure sufficient childcare services for working parents (mean), comparison 2008 and 2016.

Data: European Social Survey 2008 and 2016, 0=not governments' responsibility at all to 10=entirely governments' responsibility, dotted line indicates EU mean 2008: [7.83] and EU 2016: [7.85].

To further test whether the popularity of childcare policies may be undermined by the public's willingness to cut spending in other policy areas, we investigate another survey: Welfarepriorities 2020 which deals with priorities, trade-offs and reform opportunities in European welfare politics. Here, we focus on respondent's preferences for public expenditure on childcare across eight EU member states. Welfarepriorities operationalises this matter through the following question: 'Please imagine that the government wants to improve certain social benefits. However, it can only do so by cutting back on other social benefits. To what extent do you find the following cutbacks acceptable in

comparison to the improvement they allow? The government increases the availability of good-quality childcare, at a cost of lowering child benefits' (see also Häusermann et al., 2020; Häusermann et al., 2021).

Overall, we can see in Figure 25 that the public across the EU has different opinions regarding the childcare versus child benefit question, i.e. we can observe cross-national differences. For example, support for a recalibration from child benefits to childcare is highest in Italy, potentially because austerity, rising unemployment and declining incomes made childcare more expensive for families, particularly those on lower incomes (Bulgarelli, 2018). The results also emphasise the importance of social investments over social transfers when looking at the same beneficiary group. Specifically, these results are in line with our previous section on employment policies, where the public also preferd social investments over social transfers when looking at the same beneficiary group (see Figure 17). And considering that we have already found evidence in our paper that citizens in general dislike fiscal trade-offs, where they are forced to directly compensate spending increases in one policy area with spending cuts in another (Neimanns et al. 2018), the support for a recalibration from child benefits to childcare seems relatively high across the observed EU countries.

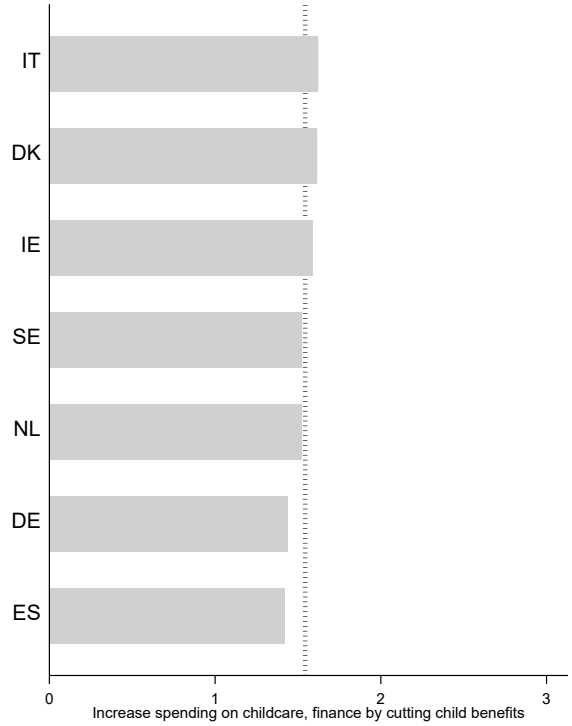


Figure 25. Attitudes "The government increases the availability of good-quality childcare, at a cost of lowering child benefits" (mean).

Data: WELFAREPRIORITIES 2020, 0 = completely inacceptable to 3 = completely acceptable, dotted line indicates mean across all countries [1.54].

To further examine the trade-offs in relation to childcare, we examine another trade-off item from the Welfarepriorities 2020 dataset that is included for six EU member states: 'The government increases the availability of good-quality childcare, at the cost of slightly lowering the maximum old age pension benefits' (see also Häusermann et al., 2020). In comparison to the childcare versus child

benefit question, the public appears to be more reluctant to trade off old age pension benefits for childcare. Overall, this makes sense considering that childcare affects only a particular group of citizens and old age pension benefits affect all citizens at some point in their life course. The only country supporting this policy proposal is Italy, which is somewhat surprising considering that Italy is one of the countries with the most rapidly ageing population in the EU. However, this finding further reinforces the pattern described above for Figure 23. On the contrary, the public in the socio-democratic welfare states Sweden and Denmark appear to be the least supportive of this trade-off. One can imagine that – even though class differences may still apply – childcare provisions are already relatively generous in these countries and that there consequently is more need for old age pension benefits (Pavolini and Van Lancker, 2018).

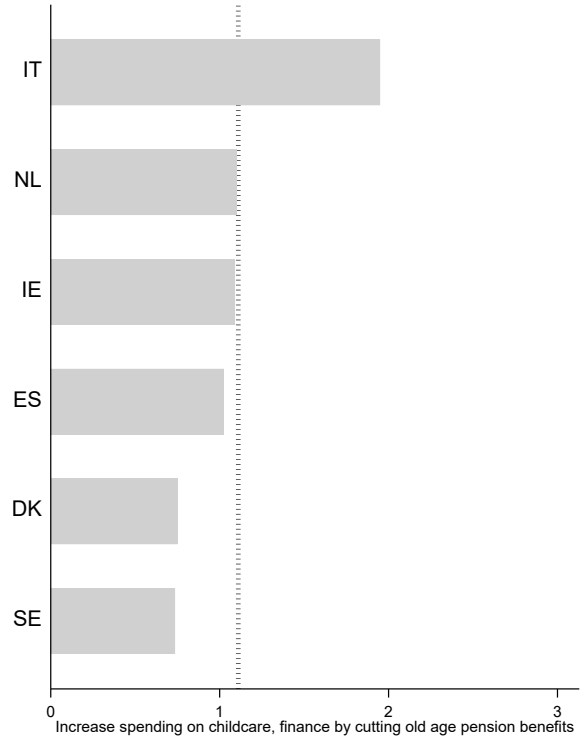


Figure 26. Attitudes "The government increases the availability of good-quality childcare, at the cost of slightly lowering the maximum old age pension benefits" (mean).

Data: WELFAREPRIORITIES 2020, 0 = completely inacceptable to 3 = completely acceptable, dotted line indicates mean across all countries [1.11].

Moving on to another social investment policy, namely parental leave. Parental leave is supposed to provide time for childcare. Working parents can use it after maternity or paternity leave, either on a full-time or a part-time basis, until the child reaches a particular age (Otto et al., 2021). Over the past 35 years, parental leave has been subject to a range of policy reforms across the EU and at the EU level. Together with maternity and paternity leave, the generosity of these policies follows the usual cross-national trends that we have already elaborated on in this paper (Moss and Deven, 2019; Koslowski et al., 2020).

Of course, it is also vital to explore the public opinion of such leave policies. New comparative survey data on this issue is scarce, however. Hence, we use ISSP data from 2012 across 21 EU member states. As we have demonstrated in this paper already, the public opinion on welfare support is relatively stable over the past decade. Therefore the results should still be meaningful. Furthermore, we have shown in Figure 23 that attitudes towards working mothers get more positive across all regions of the EU over the past decade. However, the public opinion of such leave policies might still be effected by national-level and EU-level discussions on the distribution of parental leave between the parents. First, we examine the following item: 'Still thinking about the same couple, if both are in a similar work situation and are eligible for paid leave, how should this paid leave period be divided between the mother and the father? ' As can be expected, most EU citizens prefer the mother to take the lion's share of the leave and fathers only some. However, we find the expected cross-regional differences; In the West and North, individuals prefer half/half leave arrangements, in South and Anglo countries mother most and in Eastern countries mother entire.

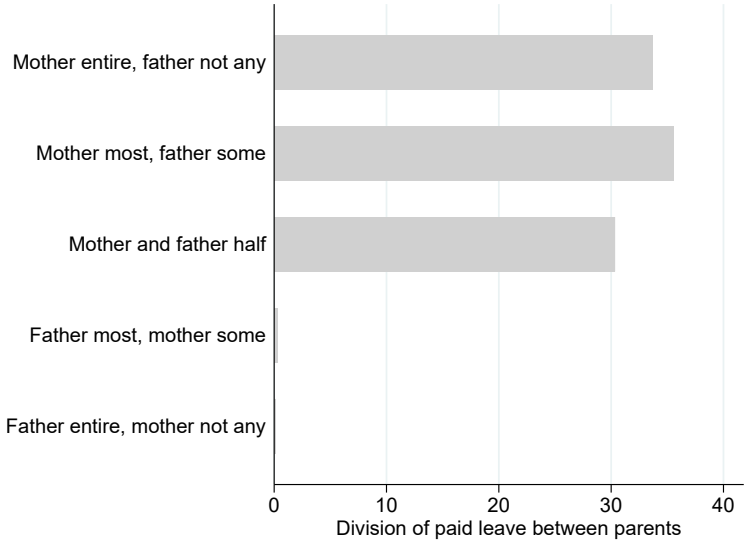


Figure 27. Attitudes on the division of paid leave between parents (in per cent), in EU. Data: International Social Survey Programme 2012.

Interestingly, the ISSP 2012 also includes a specific question about how citizens prefer the leave to be structured: 'Consider a couple who both work full-time and now have a newborn child. One of them stops working for some time to care for their child. Do you think there should be paid leave available and, if so, for how long?' Figure 28 shows that most EU citizens want paid leave to be available, and Figure 29 shows the preferred length of these leave policies. On average, EU citizens prefer the length of the paid leave to be 19 months, and only a minority of EU citizens want the paid leave to be more than 19 months. Countries where citizens want more paid leave are mostly Eastern EU countries that are known to have amongst the most generous paid leave policies (Otto et al., 2021). Still, we can assume a strong relationship between these attitudes, availability of full-time, affordable and quality childcare. Eastern EU countries might have (generous) paid leave policies but at the same time childcare availability has been going down, so often staying at home with the children is the only available option for parents. This means, as we have already shown for education and employment

policies, the support for family policies also seem to follow path-dependent patterns paralleling the institutional context to some extent.

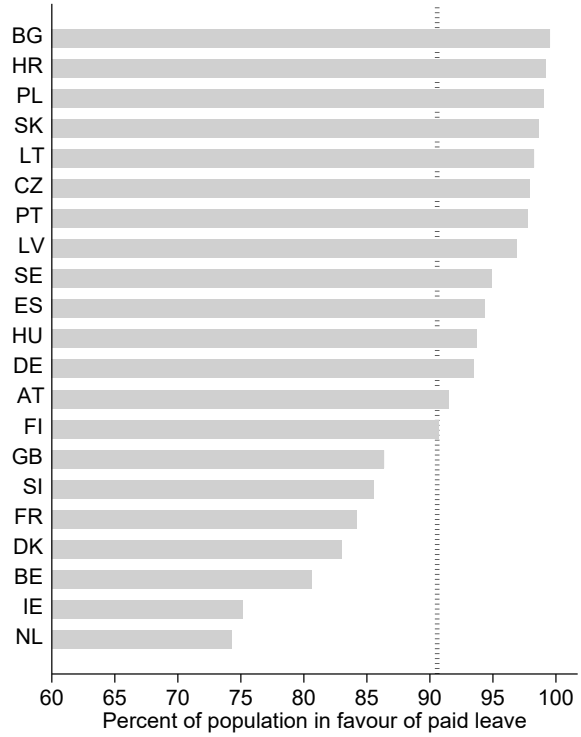


Figure 28. Per cent of the population in favour of paid leave in EU.

Data: International Social Survey Programme 2012, dotted line indicates EU mean [90.57].

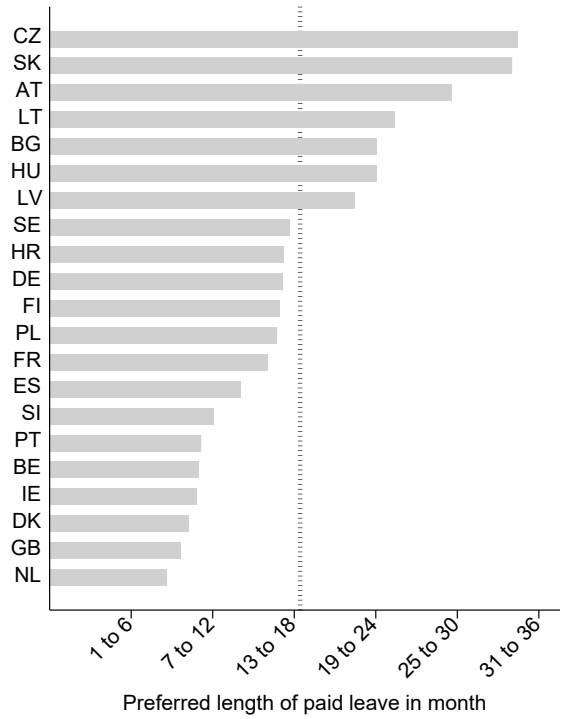


Figure 29. Preferred length of paid leave (mean) in EU.

Data: International Social Survey Programme 2012, dotted line indicates EU mean [18.89 months].

Finally, we examine trade-offs in the family policy realm. The ESS 2016 also includes a question that allows investigating trade-offs regarding welfare support for working parents. The question is as follows: 'Would you be against or in favour of the government introducing extra social benefits and services to make it easier for working parents to combine work and family life even if it means much higher taxes for all?' In Figure 30, we also see much support for working parents and reconciliation of work and with family life; this matters most in the South (because more need), and it matters the least in the North (because of lower need). This is now an example of self-undermining policy feedback (Buseemyer et al., 2019), hence it is not necessarily the case that attitudes always and automatically reflect current policies, as our results from above implied. Consequently, the results from this paper showed that both self-reinforcing and self-undermining feedback exist.

To sum up, as work and family structures change, one of the key problems governments face today is how to create family policies that allow parents to balance work with other life and family responsibilities (Chung, 2011). While we find high levels of support for policies that allow for a balance between family and work, more research is needed to better understand cross-national differences (see also Chung and Meuleman, 2018; Busemeyer and Neimanns, 2019). In particular, trade-off scenarios need to be examined so that we can understand better how to shape new family policies. A new survey experiment by Häusermann et al. (2021) across eight European countries is aiming to do this, in particular regarding childcare trade-offs. Furthermore, survey data on EU-led family policies seems to be lacking completely. It would be interesting to explore EU citizens' attitudes on this matter as we have found relatively high levels of public support in this paper for such policies in the policy fields of education and employment.

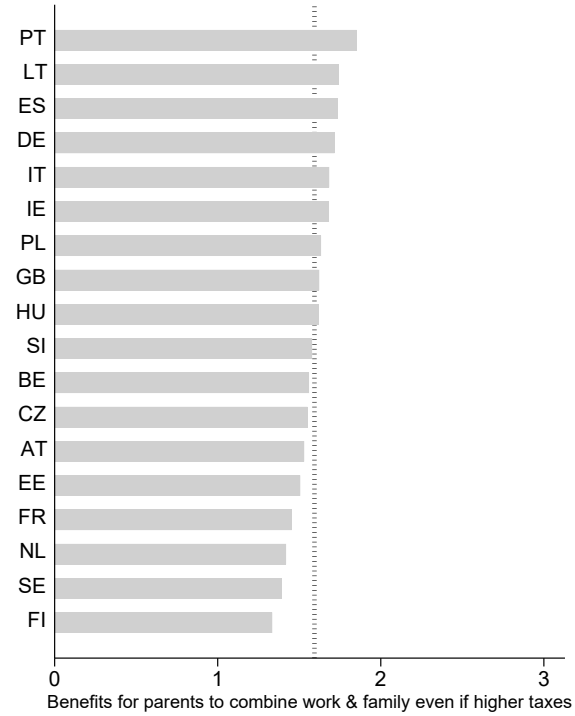


Figure 30. Attitudes on "Benefits for parents to combine work and family even if higher taxes" (mean).

Data: European Social Survey 2016, 0 = strongly against to 3 = strongly in favour, dotted line indicates EU mean [1.59].

8. Conclusions and recommendations

Public opinion on European social citizenship matters not only for the future of individual citizens but also for the future of national welfare states and a further expansion of an EU-led welfare model. Especially in times of crisis, where incomes are declining, inequality and poverty are rising, and working arrangements become more precarious, welfare support is essential to secure economic and social stability (Eurofound, 2018; Taylor-Gooby et al., 2017). While support for the welfare state remains strong across Europe, welfare chauvinism (van Oorschot, 2000; Mewes and Mau, 2013; Eick and Larsen, 2021), welfare populism (Taylor-Gooby and Leruth, 2018) and welfare Euroscepticism (Leruth et al., 2017) are also increasing.

This study aimed to take a birds-eye perspective to explore 35 years of public opinion surveys on social citizenship within and across EU member states. Naturally, this study has some limitations that we pointed out already in Section 3. Still, the analysis offers important insights into measuring social citizenship with existing survey data across EU member states. This paper helped identify opportunities and constraints for furthering the EU social policy agenda and implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights. While our analyses could not shed light beyond the impact of the financial crisis 2007/2008, we expect similar or even more pronounced trends after the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic – something we will only be able to explore through large survey programmes in the coming years.

In particular, this paper aimed to answer several questions related to perceptions, attitudes and preferences: First, we asked how to measure "social citizenship" with individual-level data? How can we use available data provided by international survey programmes, such as ESS, ISSP or EVS, to get a sense of the broad development trends in implementing social citizenship rights across the EU? For our study, we compiled the Comparative Social Citizenship Dataset (CSCD), which includes aggregated data from a range of survey datasets, and covers key perceptions, attitudes and preferences related to the future of European social citizenship. To sum up, the patterns presented here suggest that the CSCD is a useful data source for exploring the public opinion on social citizenship. It is also fascinating to observe how the data tells similar stories across different data sets, which emphasises the great quality of the big representative survey programmes. Still, more quantitative and qualitative data, especially on policy trade-offs, is needed to inform future EU policy-making. This is an issue that will be further explored in later papers of this Work Package.

Second, we asked how EU citizens perceive existing social rights over the past 35 years and what is the degree of satisfaction and dissatisfaction among EU citizens and what do they demand and prefer in terms of policy priorities? Overall, we found that the support for European social citizenship across different policy fields – both on the national and on the EU level – is high in all EU member states. We also find cross-national and cross-regional differences where more exposure to social risks equals more support for the welfare state across different policy areas. According to our findings, the EU

needs to find a balance between the different member states, particularly the ones in the North and the ones in the East or South. The Covid-19 crisis could serve as a basis for developing more pronounced policy positions on the pre-existing disagreements over the future of European social citizenship. Interestingly, we find high(er) levels of support for EU-led welfare compared to national-led welfare across different policy fields in most regions, apart from the EU North (probably because public satisfaction with the national welfare states is amongst the highest in the EU in these countries). The Covid-19 crisis may further underscore the interdependence between the EU member states regarding welfare state policies. For example, Koos and Leuffen (2020) suggest, regarding Covid-19 health policies, that there is much solidarity amongst EU citizens, which could be a focal point for developing common EU measures for crisis prevention.

Furthermore, public support for European social citizenship is relatively stable over the past 35 years, even though public opinion is also sensitive towards salient events, such as the financial crisis 2007/2008. Such developments in times of crisis bring up important questions about the future of European social citizenship: What type of welfare solidarity is needed for the future of Social Europe? To what extent are EU citizens prepared to support one another, and what trade-offs are they willing to accept? Our research demonstrates that welfare solidarity will likely rise due to the current Covid-19 crisis. It presents an opportunity to further strengthen European social citizenship, especially in combination with generous government responses to the situation (unlike austerity measures that likely reinforce negative attitudes towards those in need).

Third, we asked what evidence there is for or against the achievement of convergence of perceptions, attitudes and preferences within the EU and whether there is a basis for describing an existing or emerging European solidarity or whether we see more divisions across EU member states. Overall, we found that over the past 35 years, a (slightly) more homogenous European Union is emerging regarding support for government-promoted redistribution, yet attitudes on the role of the EU in social policy-making continue to vary across Europe. Our results suggest that across member states, citizens may become more similar to each other in demanding more protection from the welfare state (either at the national or at the EU level), which can become an important source for transnational solidarity in the wake of major crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic. Still, Euroscepticism has been growing in certain member states and already had the consequence of the UK leaving the EU. This is a concern that the EU should address. The high levels of support for European social citizenship, including on the EU level, may pose a unique opportunity to achieve that. For example, one can imagine the EU would achieve further upward convergence in public opinion on generous social policy measures if narratives were navigated around both member states and individuals supporting each other instead of blaming each other for negative consequences of crises, such as the Covid-19 crisis. Such narratives around solidarity are important to counteract the ties across EU member states to erode further.

Fourth, we asked whether social cleavages on perceptions, attitudes and preferences towards European social citizenship converge or diverge within EU member states. And were old cleavages (such as education and income) replaced through new cleavages (such as ideology)? While the analysis of this issue needs to be expanded in future steps of this Working Package, we find the upward

convergence between the higher and lower educated groups most intriguing because the higher educated are traditionally regarded as labour market insiders with distinctly different preferences. Faced with increasing inequality and labour market precariousness, high-skilled insiders might start to feel more like outsiders in demanding protection from the welfare state (Häusermann et al., 2015), which could explain their increasing welfare solidarity.

Furthermore, we identified increasingly relevant ideological cleavages, particularly between pro-EU and anti-EU individuals. This could be explained by pro-EU individuals usually being more affluent and not depending on welfare as much as the typical anti-EU groups who are less affluent. The increasing divides on welfare between pro-EU and anti-EU individuals need to be addressed if further EU-led welfare initiatives were to be realised without eroding EU support, also because euroscepticism as such is multidimensional (Baute et al., 2019). Overall, there seems to be potential for strengthening welfare alliances across the EU. However, the challenge for policy-makers will be to address both the needs from the groups that traditionally received welfare provisions and from the groups that need welfare provisions because of the development of new social risks and who are particularly vocal and heterogeneous (Häusermann, 2012). Potentially, an aim of the EU could be to create a stronger convergence of policy narratives across member states to counteract further disintegration within the EU. Such narratives could include perceptions on individual responsibilities and bad luck in the wake of economic crises, such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

Fifth, we asked whether we find variations in public support across different sub-sectors of the welfare state (for example, social transfers versus social investment) and to what extent these trends change during and since the crisis years (2007-2008) that have so fundamentally shaken the political and social thinking and policy development surrounding social rights. Generally, we find that the support for social investment policies (such as ALMPs) has been high and increasing over the past 35 years. In contrast, we find declining support for social transfers and benefits (such as unemployment benefits). This development may be related to growing support for the view that being unemployed is considered to be the fault of the individual rather than a systematic failure. In other words, unemployment is increasingly perceived as a matter of individual control. Consequently, the granting of support for unemployed people is based on the observable efforts to re-enter the labour market (van Oorschot, 2002), i.e. workfare policies. Hence, while the solidarity amongst EU citizens remains relatively strong, it is also subject to certain conditions, namely a growing realization that individuals at risk are asked to do more to get themselves out of the predicament. At the same time, we find strong support for the less punitive and more directly activating labour market policies, such as investment in training and lifelong learning. Particularly, future policy measures to increase redistribution across different policy fields should be well justified by policy-makers. The public should understand the causes and scope of the policies while factoring in the interests of tax-paying individuals and the long-term consequences of economic crises.

Finally, our research offered a view into important research gaps in a field with plenty of potential for future research that might benefit the process of European integration and the establishment of a genuine European social citizenship dimension within and across EU member states. More in-depth analyses are needed to develop a comprehensive framework in which we can understand the drivers

of people's attitudes towards European social citizenship. In particular, we need: (1) more over-time studies, including the repeated inclusion of the same items into the Eurobarometer, (2) more analysis of the reasons for convergence/divergence of attitudes on the macro and cross-national level, (3) more (cross-time) studies on attitudes towards specific EU-level policies, (4) more (cross-time) studies on policy trade-offs, and (5) qualitative studies that examine the diffuse, ambivalent, or downright contradictory nature of attitudes. We will address points 2-5 in due course of our work package and hope that other researchers may decide to contribute to solving these issues as well.

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Appendix

Table A1. Overview of countries included in the CSCD.

Country	ISO	Start EU Membership	Start OECD Membership
Australia	AU	-	1971
Austria	AT	1995	1961
Belgium	BE	1958	1961
Bulgaria	BG	2007	-
Canada	CA	-	1961
Chile	CL	-	2010
Colombia	CO	-	2020
Croatia	HR	2013	-
Cyprus	CY	2004	-
Czech Republic	CZ	2004	1995
Denmark	DK	1973	1961
Estonia	EE	2004	2010
Finland	FI	1995	1969
France	FR	1958	1961
Germany	DE	1958	1961
Greece	GR	1981	1961
Hungary	HU	2004	1996
Iceland	IS	-	1961
Ireland	IE	1973	1961
Israel	IL	-	2010
Italy	IT	1958	1962
Japan	JP	-	1964
Korea	KR	-	1996
Latvia	LV	2004	2016
Lithuania	LT	2004	2018
Luxembourg	LU	1958	1961
Malta	MT	2004	-
Mexico	MX	-	1994
Netherlands	NL	1958	1961
New Zealand	NZ	-	1973
Norway	NO	-	1961
Poland	PL	2004	1996
Portugal	PT	1986	1961
Romania	RO	2007	-

Slovak Republic	SK	2004	2000
Slovenia	SI	2004	2010
Spain	ES	1986	
Sweden	SE	1995	1961
Switzerland	CH	-	1961
Turkey	TR	-	1961
United Kingdom	GB	1973	1961
United States	US	-	1961