



The European Social Survey

Round 13 (QDT)

Stage 2 Application

Applications **MUST** be submitted by 17:00 (UK time) on Friday 11th October 2024
Applications should be emailed to ess@city.ac.uk

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|---|---------------|
| Is this application for a new or a repeat module | |
| New module | Repeat module |

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|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Expected module length | |
| 15 questions | 30 questions |

Proposed title for the Module

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| Welfare Attitudes in Europe: Social Security in Insecure Times |
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Abstract (Max 250 words)

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| <p>This proposal posits that repetition of the Welfare Attitudes Module in round 13 of the ESS is timely and highly relevant.</p> <p>First, societally. European societies have faced increased insecurity in recent years due to rapid, successive crises, including COVID-19, the climate crisis, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In this context, it is important to uncover how welfare attitudes have changed (using repeat items) and how citizens respond to new policy developments (by adding new items on the trade-off between military and social spending and on eco-social policy).</p> <p>Second, theoretically. We build on the theoretical approach of the previous module by including and connecting two highly influential frameworks: 1) The multidimensional model of welfare state legitimacy assesses the conditions for welfare states to remain just and helps us to fill important gaps in the measurement of these conditions (including deservingness principles). 2) By including a validated “deservingness principles scale” in a comparative survey, we will in addition be able to better understand the relative dependence of CARIN deservingness theory on individual and contextual factors.</p> <p>Third, empirically. A repeat module will vastly increase our understanding of the individual and contextual determinants of welfare attitudes, by increasing the number of contextual cases in which these can be studied and extending the possibilities to distinguish between age, cohort, and period effects.</p> <p>Lastly, we believe that the QDT is certainly up to the task, as evidenced by their expertise in both survey methodology and the topics of welfare attitudes, deservingness, and eco-social policy.</p> |
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Proposed Repeat Module
Welfare Attitudes in Europe: Social Security in Insecure Times

1. Rationale for repeating the module in 2027-2028.

In the following, we will demonstrate the (1) **societal**, (2) **theoretical** and (3) **empirical relevance** of collecting a new cross-national module on welfare state attitudes after the first and second modules were fielded in 2008/9 and 2016/7, respectively.

First, societally, we make the case that recent crises have fundamentally changed the European continent compared to the situation as it was about a decade ago, when the previous welfare attitudes module was collected. Not long after the massive health and succeeding economic crisis brought about by the **Covid-19** pandemic, Russia invaded Ukraine, leading to a major **energy crisis** and skyrocketing **inflation**, along with the spread of large numbers of Ukrainian war **refugees** across Europe. As a result, the (real and perceived) insecurity and precariousness experienced by European citizens likely increased in the past few years (Ares, et al., 2021). In most European countries, governments responded to these consecutive crises by **expanding** their **social protection** systems. For example, through the widespread use of furlough schemes during the pandemic, the introduction of various state subsidies to compensate for rising energy costs, and the establishment of minimum income protection schemes for Ukrainian refugees. In many countries, this sparked intense debates on whether social protection schemes ought to be *universally* accessible to all citizens/residents, or *selectively* targeted at specific groups exposed to greater risks (most notably low-income households). More generally, we have seen a remarkable revival of the old idea that the welfare state works as a vital buffer against economic recession. Although a similar story applied to the financial crisis that struck Europe in 2008 (Laenen et al., 2020), the crucial difference is that we are now faced with a much deeper and longer-lasting crisis that is unlikely to end any time soon. We expect that **these contextual changes have profoundly impacted Europeans' attitudes towards the welfare state.**

At the same time, the intensified efforts to provide social protection also come at a cost, as illustrated by the rising government debt in many European countries, which puts pressure on the financial sustainability of the welfare state. This is exacerbated further by **the spectre of war** that currently hangs over Europe and has, especially in those countries that are geographically closer to Ukraine or Russia (e.g., Poland, Romania, Estonia, Finland), increased the demand for defence spending. This also applies to countries that currently do not meet the 2% of GDP contribution rate required by NATO (e.g., Belgium, Spain, and Sweden). Accordingly, there are ongoing debates regarding the optimal balance between social and defence spending in a context of budgetary constraint. Put more bluntly, many countries are facing the tough choice of having to **prioritize between welfare and warfare.** We currently know very little, however, about the preferred balance of European citizens and voters.

On top of these crises looms the threat of **climate change**, of which the adverse consequences can already be observed across Europe and are expected to escalate even further in the not-too-distant future. To cope with the many floods and wildfires –among other things– that plague our continent, there is an urgent need for the implementation of various climate adaptation and mitigation policies. It is, however, increasingly acknowledged that this ecological **transition should also be socially just**: it is extremely difficult for people to show concern for “the end of the world” if they cannot even make it to “the end of the month”, so the argument often goes. In light of this realization, there is growing appreciation of the need to establish so-called “eco-social policies” that combine ecological (e.g., improved home insulation) with social (e.g., poverty reduction) objectives (Mandelli, 2022). However, we currently lack a deeper understanding of individual and country differences in popular support for such **eco-social policies** (Gugushvili & Otto, 2023).

In sum; as we demonstrate further below, the proposed repeat module on welfare attitudes will allow scientific research to uncover (1) how such attitudes have evolved in response to the growing insecurity and precariousness observed throughout Europe, (2) how citizens prioritize between welfare and warfare spending in times of budgetary constraint, and (3) how they perceive of eco-social policy to facilitate a just climate transition. Accordingly, the data from this module are not only of crucial importance for academic research on these matters but will surely also contribute to ongoing political debates regarding the future of the welfare state and adjacent policy areas such as defence and climate policy.

Second, theoretically, the repeat module builds on, but considerably improves, the conceptual model that guided the two previous modules. In line with this model, the core argument is still that citizens' welfare attitudes are affected by both specific risks and resources (e.g., income, feelings of insecurity) and more general predispositions (e.g., egalitarianism, left-right ideology). This process, in turn, is influenced by the broader institutional, social, political, and economic context in which people live (at the national, regional, and local level). With respect to the main outcome variable, welfare attitudes, the previous module inspired the development of the so-called **multidimensional model of welfare state legitimacy** (Roosma et al., 2013), a leading theory in the literature. The most important advantage it offers compared to prior research is that the framework facilitates a highly structured analysis of public welfare attitudes, by distinguishing different dimensions of welfare state legitimacy. Testing this multidimensional framework with data from the ESS, studies have shown that while Europeans (especially those living in Eastern and Southern Europe) are highly supportive of the welfare state, they also tend to be very critical of its concrete procedures and outcomes (Van Oorschot et al., 2022).

However, it is generally acknowledged that the previous modules did not contain suitable measurements for the **dimension of redistributive design**, which refers to the all-important issue of (1) who should *receive* social benefits/services, and (2) who should *pay* for these. The new ESS module will fill this gap, most notably by including a previously validated scale (in Belgium, see Meuleman et al., 2020) that measures people's support for the different deservingness criteria recognized by the **CARIN theory** (Van Oorschot et al., 2017). This will allow researchers to –for the first time ever– investigate one of the core premises of the theory, which states that citizens' emphasis on the CARIN criteria of deservingness depends on their individual characteristics as well as the broader context in which they live (Laenen, 2020). More generally, these criteria of deservingness can also be linked to concrete policy preferences (e.g., regarding unemployment benefits), as much prior, nationally oriented, research has done (e.g., Meuleman et al., 2020). The important innovation of the new ESS module is that it would allow the CARIN framework to be tested empirically from a cross-national perspective, thereby adding crucial insights to our current knowledge on the influence of context on contemporary deservingness thinking.

In sum; we are confident that the new ESS module will make a vital contribution to, and helps to connect, two theoretical frameworks that are highly influential in welfare attitudes research but have hitherto lived rather separate lives: the multidimensional framework of welfare state legitimacy and the CARIN deservingness theory.

Third, empirically, a repeat module would certainly bring several empirical innovations that will advance the whole field of welfare attitudes research. Thanks to the availability of data from cross-national surveys such as the ESS, scholars have been able to test the role played by contextual factors (for example, inequality, social spending, unemployment rates, economic development, and the political context) in explaining welfare attitudes (Van Oorschot et al., 2022). However, with a still relatively limited number of contextual cases available, many research questions focusing on the interplay between different contextual mechanisms remain unanswered (Roosma & Laenen, 2023). Repeating the module will offer more possibilities to examine **the role of contextual-level factors** influencing welfare attitudes, as there will be greater variation to study these effects and greater statistical power to test their significance. Additionally, repeating the module will allow the possibility to study **cohort effects** in a European context and a comparative perspective (Meuleman, 2019). Previous research using the ESS data has found substantial differences in welfare attitudes between different age groups that are often interpreted as generational differences (for example, in the case of universal basic income; Laenen, 2023). However, to distinguish between age, cohort, and possibly period effects, we need longer time series repeating the same survey items. By repeating the module, a 20-year development in welfare attitudes offers the possibility to study these cohort effects (applying e.g., pseudo-panel analysis; Schmidt-Catran, 2014) in multiple European countries. This longitudinal perspective is especially relevant for Central and Eastern European countries, in relation to which contradictory positions have been developed that these countries either represent a specific post-communist pattern of welfare attitudes or that their specificity in this regard is mostly determined by economic strain (Baranowski & Jabkowski, 2022; Basna, 2023).

In sum, by increasing the contextual variation and providing a longer time perspective, the new module will help to fill important empirical gaps in welfare attitudes research.

2. Theoretical/conceptual approach

We propose to take a theoretical approach for this module that builds on the **conceptual framework of the previous modules** (paragraph 2.1, Figure 1) but explains this in further detail by means of the **multidimensional framework of welfare state legitimacy** (paragraph 2.2, Figure 2) and extends this by integrating **deservingness principles** (based on 'deservingness theory') (paragraph 2.3, Figure 3). In this way we ensure sufficient conceptual continuity as well as offer the possibility for theoretical innovations.

2.1 Conceptual framework used in round 4 and 8

The conceptual framework used in the first two modules (round 4 and 8) functioned well to distinguish main concepts and indicators for the multidimensional analysis of welfare attitudes and their antecedents. Figure 1 displays the (slightly adjusted¹) conceptual framework used in ESS rounds 4 and 8. It distinguishes three types of explanatory factors of welfare attitudes.

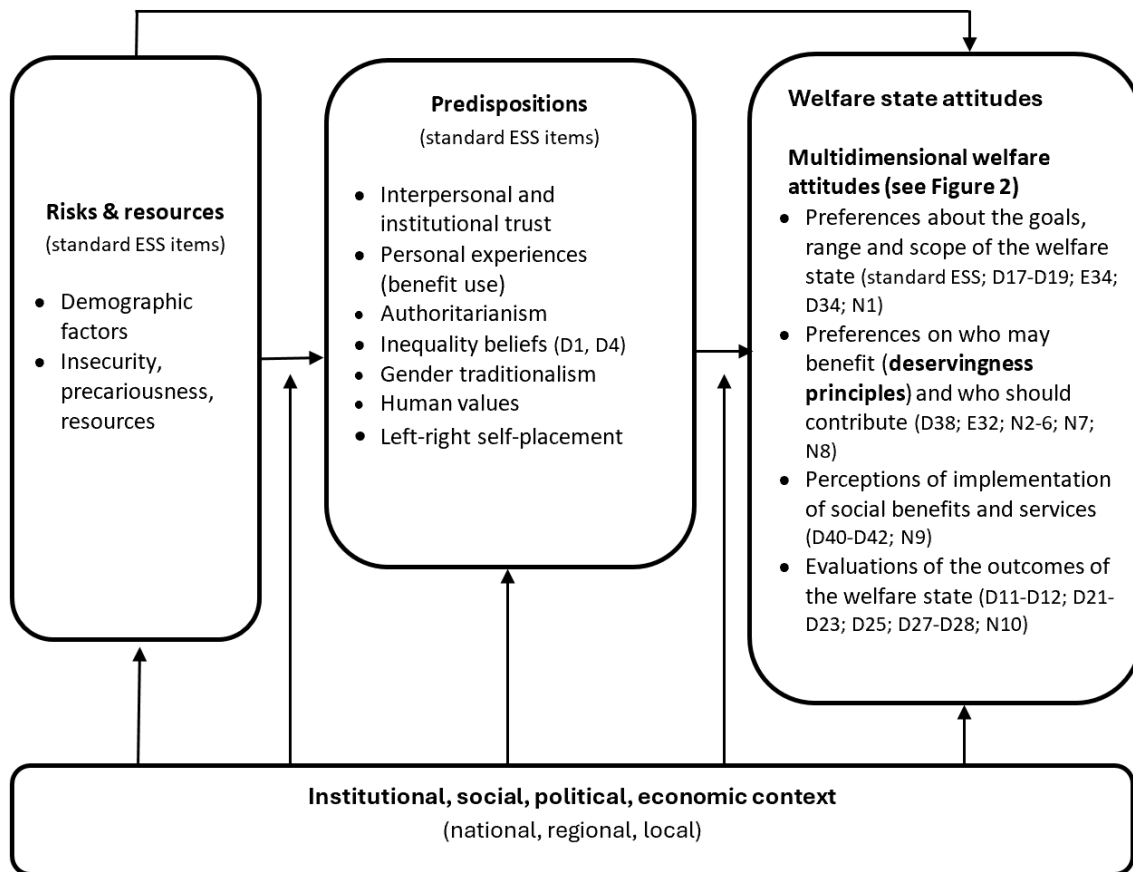
First, it mentions **individuals risks and resources** as drivers of welfare state attitudes. These are measured with socio-demographic items, like sex, age, household composition, as well as measures of insecurity, precariousness and resources, like household income (the amount as well as the source of income), education, work status (items are available in the standard ESS questionnaire). **Second**, it highlights **the role of predispositions**, such as institutional and interpersonal trust, ideological positions like egalitarianism, authoritarianism, or gender traditionalism, and experiences with benefits (items are available in the standard ESS questionnaire and the repeat module). And **third**, it explicates **the role of contextual effects**; we distinguish, as in previous modules, institutional, social, political and economic factors. As in the previous module of round 8 it is assumed that contextual effects influence risks and resources, predispositions, as well as welfare attitudes (see also section 3.4).

This conceptual framework proved to be helpful in developing models of direct and indirect relationships between variables **testing underlying theories**. The risks and resources that individuals are exposed to and endowed with may for example give rise to specific perceptions and beliefs, which in turn affect the way individuals form their welfare attitudes. At the same time, direct effects from social-structural variables (risks and resources) to welfare legitimacy can also be analysed. These types of models shed further light on the theoretical debate on whether **self-interest** and rational-choice are more important, equally important, or less important than **ideological explanations** and their underlying justice principles for supporting different dimensions of welfare state (see for instance; Rossetti et al, 2022; Gugushvili & Van Oorschot, 2020; Roosma, et al. 2016)

Moreover, the model includes the role of contextual factors at the national, regional and local level by specifying the impact of institutional (e.g., social policies), social (e.g., migration), political (e.g., coalition types) and economic (e.g., unemployment) contextual factors on risks and resources, predisposition and welfare attitudes (direct effects) and on their relationships (interactive effects) (see Ervasti, 2012; Meuleman & Chung, 2012; Van Oorschot & Meuleman, 2014). These models test for instance **theories about the role of economic conditions** in bolstering or reducing self-interest or altruism in welfare support (Durr, 1993; Fridberg & Ploug, 2000). Or they study **institutional theories** about the influence of the structure of the welfare state and the type of social spending (more universal vis a vis more means-tested social spending) on support for the welfare state (Rothstein, 1998; Mau, 2015). Moreover, it allows for testing **interactive effects**; for instance, studying how contextual factors impact the way socio-economic deprivation affects different dimensions of welfare support.

¹ Compared to the conceptual framework used in the previous module we have to remove the predispositions 'risk perceptions' and 'perceived social problems', as a consequence of reducing the number of items to create space for new measures. We will explain this in paragraph 3.1. Furthermore, we acknowledge that people's 'evaluations' of welfare state performance and welfare state consequences, that were previously accounted for under the second box of 'predispositions' theoretically fits better under 'welfare attitudes', as it is more in line with the multidimensional model of welfare state attitudes, that we will explain in section 2.2 and 3.1.

Figure 1. Model of dimensions of welfare state attitudes and their antecedents



Note: Numbers refer to item numbers in the questionnaire of the previous welfare attitudes module; B. to standard items, D to items in round 4, E to items in round 8 (only new items compared to round 4), and N refers to newly proposed items.

2.2 Theoretical additions to the conceptual framework

We add two theoretical perspectives to the abovementioned conceptual framework. The first – the **multidimensional model of welfare state legitimacy** – provides further guidance for the selection of the welfare attitude items in the model (the third box in Figure 1). Based on this model we propose to add several new items to the model to fill the existing gaps (see section 3.2).

The second theoretical perspective – the **deservingness principles** based on deservingness theory – offers opportunities to both fill the gap in the multidimensional model of welfare state legitimacy, and test deservingness theory in a comparative perspective. Based on this theoretical perspective we propose to include the five deservingness principles as items in the new module. We go into more detail in sections 2.2 and 3.2.

2.2.1 Multidimensional model of welfare state legitimacy

The relevance of studying public support for welfare lies in the assumption that institutions only can function effective and efficiently, if they are considered to be ‘just’ by the general public (Roosma, 2016; Rothstein, 1998). The welfare state is a “mega-sized collective action problem” (Rothstein et al., 2012, p. 8) and can only be maintained if people support welfare institutions and cooperate with the redistribution of means, risks and life chances. Citizens wish to contribute to the common good as long as they believe that this good is being produced and as long as they believe that others contribute as well (Levi, 1991). Rothstein (1998) mentions three conditions for welfare state legitimacy, based on the theory of ‘contingent consent’ (Levi, 1991). We build on these three conditions and extend them to develop a multidimensional model of welfare state legitimacy (Roosma, 2016).

First, there is the condition of **substantive justice**; people should support the goals and programs of the welfare state and believe these serve a just cause. Second, there should be a just distribution of burdens, citizens should believe that other citizens have a fair share in the costs of the social programs. Others have pointed to a broader idea of distributive justice as a condition for legitimacy, including the fairness of the allocation of means (Hegtvedt & Johnson, 2000; Tyler, 2011), i.e. the question of who should benefit from the collected resources (Roosma, 2016). This includes also assessments of beneficiaries' deservingness (Van Oorschot, 2006). We therefore refer to **redistributive justice**. Third, Rothstein (1998) mentions the condition of **procedural justice**: the implementation of welfare policies must be executed effective and efficiently. People must perceive the implementation as fair, simple and cheap and perceive cheating or free riding as difficult (Rothstein, 1998). Roosma (2016) integrated the fourth condition of **just outcomes**, referring to the concept of output-legitimacy that evaluates the performance of institutions and whether the social institutions are able to tackle the social problems for which they are designed (Scharpf, 1999).

The multidimensional model of welfare state legitimacy was developed to function as a framework to assess whether social protection systems meet these four conditions for welfare state legitimacy (Roosma, 2016; Rothstein, 1998). Assessing whether these four conditions are met is achieved by **measuring public attitudes toward related welfare dimensions** (e.g., Roosma et al., 2013);

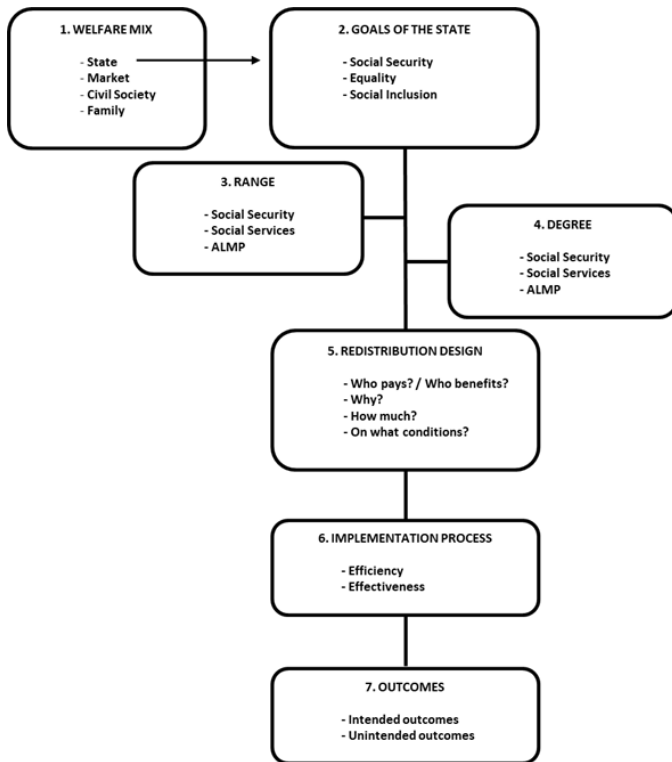
1. *Substantive justice* includes dimensions like which actor should be responsible for welfare, i.e. the **welfare mix** (not included here, because we aim to focus only on the welfare state and not on other actors), what should be the **goals** of the welfare state, the **range** of social policies offered and the **degree** of social spending on these policies.
2. *Redistributive justice* includes dimensions like ideas about the **redistribution design**, who should pay, who may benefit and under what conditions (perceptions on who may benefit are based on *deservingness theory*).
3. *Procedural justice* includes dimensions like perceptions of the **implementation** process; is the welfare state **effective** and **efficient** in implementing social benefits and services (e.g., is it able to prevent welfare abuse and underuse?).
4. *Just outcomes* includes dimensions like evaluations of the **intended** and **unintended outcomes** of welfare state programs; are goals met, how are policies evaluated, what are some of the moral and economic consequences?

Figure 2 provides an overview of these dimensions. For further detail about these dimensions, we refer to Roosma et al. (2013).

The ESS welfare attitude modules in round 4 and 8 allowed researchers to study these dimensions of welfare support in a multidimensional and cross-national perspective. **Results showed** that people on the one hand strongly believe that the government should redistribute between the rich and the poor and provide benefits and services to the elderly and the sick and disabled (Roosma et al., 2014; Van Oorschot & Meuleman, 2014), while at the same time being very critical about the efficiency and effectiveness of the system (seeing a lot of welfare abuse and underuse for instance (Roosma et al., 2016)) and evaluating welfare outcomes more negatively as well (Van Oorschot et al., 2012).

However, these dimensions of welfare state attitudes are largely but not completely covered by items in the previous modules (Roosma & Laenen, 2022). In the next section, we will go into detail how these dimensions **guides us in making decisions** about repeating exiting items and adding new items to the proposed module.

Figure 2. The multidimensional model of welfare state legitimacy



Roosma, et al. 2013.

2.2.2 Deservingness theory

Deservingness refers to the degree to which specific social policy target groups (such as the elderly, the sick and the unemployed) are considered worthy of social benefits and services (such as old-age pensions, healthcare and unemployment benefits) by the general public. Deservingness theory explains **why people express solidarity toward different target groups of social policy** (Van Oorschot, 2006). It posits that if target groups (or individuals) “score” higher on the so-called CARIN criteria of deservingness, they are considered more deserving of support or benefits (Meuleman et al., 2020; Van Oorschot & Roosma, 2017). A target group’s overall perceived deservingness depends, in first instance, on how it is evaluated (or ‘scored’) on these **CARIN criteria** (cf. ‘-...Ta...+’ in Figure 3). In general, target groups are considered more deserving if they (a) are not considered personally responsible for their situation (**‘Control’**), (b) adhere to prevailing societal norms and values, such as showing gratitude when help is offered (**‘Attitude’**), (c) make a contribution to our society, in the past, present, or future (**‘Reciprocity’**), (d) belong to the dominant social or cultural group with which most people can easily identify (**‘Identity’**), and (e) have severe financial and/or health needs (**‘Need’**). From this perspective, deservingness theory helps to explain why the public at large ranks some target groups –such as the elderly and the sick– consistently higher than others –such as unemployed people and immigrants– when it comes to their deservingness of social welfare (van Oorschot, 2006).

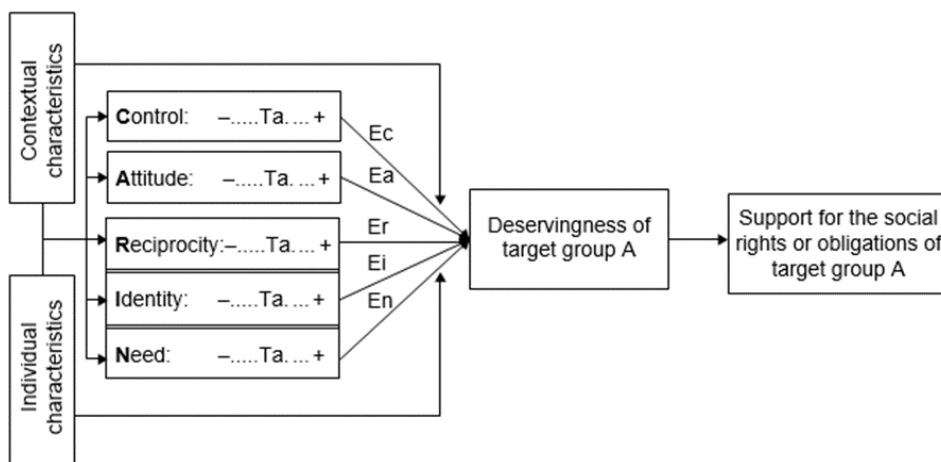
There is a large and growing body of literature addressing deservingness questions (Heuer & Zimmermann, 2020; Knotz et al., 2022). One of the most **central theoretical debates** is about the **relative importance of the CARIN criteria**, which is stretched between two positions (Laenen & Roosma, 2021). At one end, there is the idea of a universal hierarchy of deservingness criteria that is the same for everyone, always and everywhere. In this view, some of the criteria are simply more important than others. Most explicit in this regard are proponents of the so-called ‘deservingness heuristic’, who argue that humans have developed a psychological reflex over the course of evolution to categorize help-seekers either as ‘cheaters’ or as ‘reciprocators’ (e.g., Aarøe & Petersen, 2014; Jensen & Petersen, 2017). From this perspective, welfare opinions are not influenced by all types of

positive or negative perceptions of welfare recipients but, in particular, by the extent to which the people reciprocate (Petersen, 2012). At the other end of the debate, there is the view that a universal, fixed rank order of deservingness criteria does not exist, because their **relative importance** is likely to **vary across policy target groups** (see e.g. Heuer & Zimmermann, 2020) as well as individual and contextual circumstances (see Figure 3). When people judge the welfare deservingness of migrants, for example, the criterion of identity might be more salient to them than any of the other criteria. When thinking about the unemployed, by contrast, it could well be that issues of personal responsibility (the control criterion) are most important. Furthermore, people’s emphasis on deservingness and its underlying criteria is likely to be **influenced by individual characteristics** and **depend on the broader context** in which they live. The question of deservingness could be particularly important in a context in which a large proportion of citizens believe that the expansion of certain benefits will necessarily be accompanied by cutbacks in other areas (Ares et al., 2024). The debate about the relative importance of the deservingness criteria is yet to be solved. Collecting cross-sectional data will critically contribute to one of the central questions surrounding deservingness theory.

We propose to add **five questions** that measure the **CARIN deservingness principles**, asking people whether they find these principles relevant in granting social security rights. This scale has been validated with Belgian data, confirming that “the five deservingness principles are distinct dimensions that are differently related to social structural variables and have divergent consequences for policy preferences” (Meuleman et al., 2020, p. 1). In section 3.2, we will go into detail about the operationalization of the criteria.

Including the deservingness principles scale will open up many possibilities to strengthen our empirical understanding of welfare state attitudes. First, it will **add information** to the **redistributive justice dimension** in the multidimensional model of welfare support, as mentioned above. As such, deservingness principles can be explained as dependent variables by individual and contextual conditions: which groups of people find which deservingness principles most important, and under what contextual circumstances? Second, it will also contribute to our understanding of welfare state legitimacy, using the **deservingness principles as predispositions**, thus independent variables. For instance, are people who consider reciprocity important more supportive or less supportive of a universal basic income?

Figure 3. The welfare deservingness model



Note: ...Ta... = the ‘score’ of a target group on a deservingness criterion. Ec/a/r/i/n = the relative importance of a criterion in shaping the overall deservingness of a target group.

Source: the model is based on Jeene (2015, p. 22), van Oorschot & Roosma (2017, p. 16) and Laenen (2020, p. 22).

In the next section we clarify how these theoretical additions to the conceptual model will be operationalized.

3. Implementation

In this section, we indicate how we aim to operationalize our theoretical and conceptual model. **First**, we will provide an overview of our **rationale for repeating 20 items** that featured in the previous welfare attitudes modules of ESS rounds 4 and 8 and of **our arguments to add 10 new items** to the module. We build our arguments for repeating and adding new items on the multidimensional framework for welfare state legitimacy and on deservingness theory, as outlined in section 2. We support our arguments with evidence of item usage. **Second**, we will discuss in more detail our **proposed 10 new items**. For each (set of) items, we argue its relevance and propose an initial operationalization. We relate, where possible, to successful usage of (comparable) items in previous surveys and provide arguments for why these items are suitable for the ESS. **Third**, we will make some **general reflections on the suitability** of the full module as part of the ESS, specifically on its suitability as part of ESS's self-completion approach. **Finally**, we provide details on the **subjects and sources of relevant contextual data** that are suitable to use as contextual indicators that can predict support or evaluations of the welfare attitude dimensions.

3.1 Rationale for repeating and selection of new items

3.1.1 Overview of proposed repeat items and proposed excluded items

We propose to repeat the 20 items outlined in Table 1. 17 items feature both in round 4 and in round 8. One item was included only in round 4 (D34) and two items were only present in round 8 (E32 and E35). The table refers to the number of the item in round 4 and/or round 8, includes the variable label and the question wording. In the final column we refer to item usage that was reported in an item usage report from ESS ERIC, based on 4,743 substantive publications (journal articles, working and conference papers, and book chapters) between 2003 and 2022 (Malnar, 2023). It shows that **welfare attitudes items are intensively used**, which is also an indication of their suitability for the analysis of welfare state legitimacy.

Table 1. Proposed repeat items (20)

| Round 4 nr. | Round 8 nr. | Label | Question wording | No. of uses |
|-------------|-------------|---------|--|-------------|
| D1 | E1 | dfincac | Large differences in people's incomes are acceptable to properly reward differences in talents and efforts. | 58 |
| D4 | E2 | smdfslv | For a society to be fair, differences in people's standard of living should be small. | 67 |
| D11 | E4 | slvpens | Using this card, what do you think overall about the standard of living of pensioners? | 24 |
| D12 | E5 | slvuemp | What do you think overall about the standard of living of people who are unemployed? | 31 |
| D17 | E6 | gvslvol | Should it be governments' responsibility to...ensure a reasonable standard of living for the old? | 68 |
| D18 | E7 | gvslvue | ...ensure a reasonable standard of living for the unemployed | 82 |
| D19 | E8 | gvcldc | ...ensure sufficient child care services for working parents? | 58 |
| D21 | E9 | sbstrec | Social benefits and services in [country] ...place too great a strain on the economy | 48 |
| D22 | E10 | sbprvpv | ...prevent widespread poverty? | 38 |
| D23 | E11 | sbegsoc | ...lead to a more equal society | 39 |
| D25 | E12 | sbbsntx | ...cost businesses too much in taxes and charges? | 33 |
| D27 | E13 | sblazy | ...make people lazy? | 53 |
| D28 | E14 | sblwcoa | ...make people less willing to care for one another? | 34 |
| D34 | | ditxssp | If the government had to choose between increasing taxes and spending more on social benefits and services, or decreasing taxes and spending less on social benefits and services, which should they do? | 30 |

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|-----|-----|---------|---|----|
| D38 | E15 | imsclbn | Thinking of people coming to live in [country] from other countries, when do you think they should obtain the same rights to social benefits and services as citizens already living here? | 45 |
| D40 | E16 | uentrjb | Most unemployed people do not really try to find a job. | 33 |
| D41 | E17 | lbenent | Many people with very low incomes get less benefit than they are legally entitled to. | 13 |
| D42 | E18 | bennent | Many people manage to obtain benefits and services to which they are not entitled. | 30 |
| | E32 | bnlwinc | Would you be against or in favour of the government providing social benefits and services only for people with the lowest incomes, while people with middle and higher incomes are responsible for themselves? | 5 |
| | E35 | basinc | Overall, would you be against or in favour of having this (basic income) scheme in [country]? | 29 |

All items we **propose to repeat** can be related to our conceptual model presented in Figure 1.

- 18 items relate to the **multidimensional model of welfare state legitimacy** (box at the right-hand side of Figure 1). In section 3.1.2, we will discuss how these items fit within this model and provide an overview in Table 2.
- 2 items relate to **predispositions** (box in the middle of Figure 1) that can explain welfare attitudes; D1 measures support for meritocracy, while D4 measures egalitarianism. These items have proven useful in addressing the theoretical question whether indicators of self-interest (like risks and resources measured with demographics as a part of the standard ESS questionnaire) are more or less important predictors of welfare attitudes compared to ideological convictions (see section 2.1).

We propose **not to repeat** the following items that were included in both round 4 and 8 or only in round 8.

- D7/E3 (uemplwk): *"Of every 100 people of working age in [country] how many would you say are unemployed and looking for work?"*. In our view, this item is not suitable for a self-completion survey, as people would be able to look up the actual answer online.
- D47/E38 (lkuemp) and D49/E39 (lknemny): *"How likely it is that during the next 12 months you will be unemployed and looking for work for at least four consecutive weeks? / And during the next 12 months how likely is it that there will be some periods when you don't have enough money to cover your household necessities?"* Although these items have proven relevance in previous studies, we propose to exclude them to allow space for new items and because they do not add much explanatory value in addition to items that are standard in ESS and assess people's risk and resources as well; such as a measure of people's income, subjective income, benefit use, educational background, gender, marital status, etc.
- E20-E31 (ubpay, ubedu, ubunp (* and variations)). *"Imagine someone who is unemployed and looking for work. What do you think should happen to this person's unemployment benefit if ..."* These items examine conditions under which people are willing to grant unemployment benefits and, in this way, relate to deservingness thinking. We propose to exclude these items to allow space for new items and because we believe our proposal for operationalizing the deservingness criteria would be a more direct, general and accurate way to measure deservingness valuations.
- E33 (eduunmp) and E34 (wrkprbf): *"Would you be against or in favour of the government spending more on education and training programs for the unemployed at the cost of reducing unemployment benefit?" / "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?"*. Both items let respondents weigh social investment policies vis a vis traditional benefits or tax raises. We propose to exclude these items to allow space for new items and because social investment policy debates have not become more

salient in the past decade. Therefore, we do not expect substantial change in opinion formation around these issues.

- E36 (eusclbf) and E37 (eudcnbf): Both items refer to support for, and perceived consequences of, the European Union becoming more involved in providing social benefits and services. We propose to exclude these items to allow space for new items and because debates around Social Europe have not become more salient in the past decade. Therefore, we do not expect substantial change in opinion formation around these issues.

3.1.2 Placing repeat and new items in the multidimensional model of welfare attitudes

18 items can be **integrated into the multidimensional model of welfare state legitimacy** of Figure 2. At the same time, it becomes clear that this model still **contains a few important gaps**. We propose to **fill these with new items**, which will be explained in more detail in the following section 3.2. We will go through the dimensions one by one.

Table 2 provides an overview of the conditions of welfare state legitimacy, the related dimensions of welfare attitudes, operationalizations and ESS items numbers (including the new items).

Table 2 – Multidimensional model of welfare attitudes and operationalization

| Conditions | Dimension | Operationalization | ESS code: Round 4 (D) Additional in round 8 (E) New (N) |
|------------------------|--|--|--|
| Substantive Justice | Goals (1) | Agree/disagree that government should reduce income differences | Standard ESS |
| | Range (2) | Should it be governments' responsibility to... ensure a reasonable standard of living of the old / unemployed / ensure child care for working parents. | D17, D18, D19 |
| | | If favour or against of having this (basic income) scheme? | E34 |
| Degree (3) | Increasing taxes and spending more on social benefits and services or [alternative]? | Spending more on military defence at the cost of reducing social benefits and services, or [alternative]? | D34 <i>New item: N1</i> |
| | | When do you think [migrants] should obtain the same rights to social benefits and services? (welfare chauvinism) | D38 |
| Redistributive justice | Who is deserving of benefits? (4a) | In favour of providing social benefits and services only for people with the lowest incomes? (means-testing principle) | E32 |
| | | Agree/disagree with (5) deservingness principles (CARIN) | <i>New items: N2-N6.</i> |
| | | If the government was to introduce new subsidies for people to reduce their CO2 emissions, who should | <i>New item: N7</i> |

| | | | |
|--------------------|---|--|--|
| | | benefit? (eco-social justice principles) | |
| | Who should contribute? (4b) | Which income group(s) should contribute more to social benefits and services? | <i>New item: N8</i> |
| Procedural justice | Implementation (Effectiveness and Efficiency) (5) | Agree/disagree that people abuse/underuse social benefits and services How likely it is that an application for social benefits or services would be treated fairly? | D40, D41, D42 <i>New item: N9</i> |
| Just outcomes | Intended Outcomes (Goals) (6a) | Agree/disagree that social benefits and services prevent poverty /lead to a more equal society | D22, D23 |
| | Intended Outcomes (Policies) (6a) | What do you think overall about the standard of pensioners/people who are unemployed? Which group do you believe benefits the most from social benefits and services? | D11, D12 <i>New item: N10</i> |
| | Unintended outcomes (6b) | Agree/disagree that social benefits and services cost businesses too much / make people lazy / making people less willing to care for another | D21, D25, D27, D28 |

1. *Goals*: This dimension assesses to what extent people support income redistribution as a central goal of the welfare state.. This item is available in the standard ESS survey (gincdif) and asks to what extent people support the idea that the government should reduce income differences.
2. *Range*: This dimension assesses to what extent people support **government responsibility** for a range of social policies. In particular; the idea that the government should be responsible to ensure a reasonable standard of living for the old, a reasonable standard of living for the unemployed, sufficient childcare services for working parents. Here we also mention support for a widely discussed alternative welfare policy; **a universal basic income**. All these items have been widely used in academic output; respectively 68, 82, 58 and 29 times until 2022 (Malnar, 2023).
3. *Degree*: This dimension assesses to what extent people support **more/less social spending**. We aim to repeat item D34 that asks respondents to balance increasing taxes and spending more on social benefits and services against decreasing taxes and spending less on social benefits and services. This item was included in round 4, but not in round 8 (because of space constraints). We propose to include it again to cover the degree

dimension. Despite only featuring in round 4, the item has been used 30 times until 2022 (Malnar, 2023)

In addition, we propose to add an item (**N1**) that ask respondents to make a trade off in **spending on military budgets** at the cost of spending on social benefits and services (or vice versa). Also this item adds to the degree dimension of the multidimensional model, but weighs social spending against another, highly relevant and salient, policy domain.

4. *a. Who is deserving of benefits:* Despite its relevance in terms of welfare state legitimacy, previous modules did not cover the redistributive justice condition in great detail. Both round 4 and round 8 include an item that measures **welfare chauvinism**, asking respondents when migrants should obtain the same rights to social benefits and services as native citizens. This item focusses on the deservingness of migrants only. And one item in round 8 (E32) could qualify to be placed under this dimension, as it assesses support for providing **social benefits and services only to the lowest incomes** and not to middle and higher incomes.

To have a more accurate and broader assessment of whom people consider to be deserving of social benefits and for what reasons, we propose to include items that measure support for the **five CARIN deservingness principles (N2-N6)**.

In addition, we propose to add a measure that considers deservingness of beneficiaries in relation to a highly salient policy domain: eco-social policies. We propose a new item that asks respondents **who may benefit from subsidies to sponsor environmental policies (N7)?**

b. Who should contribute: In the previous modules there is no accurate measurement of respondents' assessment of who should contribute to the welfare state. We therefore propose to include a new item (**N8**) that assesses preferences for **which income group should contribute more to social benefits and services**.

5. *Implementation:* Previous rounds featured items that measured **perceptions of abuse and underuse of social benefits and services**. These items measure whether people agree with the statements that unemployed do not really try to find a job (D40), manage to obtain benefits and services to which they are not entitled (D42) and people with very low incomes get less benefits than they are legally entitled to. These questions measure perceptions of how other people are treated in the social welfare system.

To obtain more specific information on procedural justice, we propose to add a new item (**N9**) to this dimension, measuring the perceived likelihood that one's own **application for benefits or services will be treated fairly** or unfairly by the welfare system and/or frontline workers.

6. *Evaluation of outcomes:* The repeated items inquire about respondents' **evaluations of the intended outcomes** (6a) of welfare state intervention on poverty, inequality (D22-23) and living standards (are the need of pensioners and unemployed sufficiently covered?) (D11-12), and of the **unintended outcomes** (6b) for the economy (D21, D25) and negative incentives for individuals' behaviour (D27-28).

While these evaluations are crucial to understand people's demands for social policy, they do not account for respondents' **perceptions of** who the **main beneficiaries of welfare state intervention** are. Therefore, we propose a new item (**N10**) that asks respondents to evaluate which income groups respondents perceive to be the main beneficiaries of the welfare state.

3.2 Details on proposed new items

In this section we will further outline the relevance of our proposed new items and suggest an initial operationalization. Note that the question wording does not take into account yet the general flow of the survey. This can be adjusted when the question order of the survey is known. For each question we first provide the **question wording** and then we explain **its rationale and suitability**.

N1 – Preferences for welfare expenditures over military defence expenditures

Question:

If the government had to choose between spending more on military defence at the cost of reducing social benefits and services, or spending more on benefits and services at the cost of reducing military defence, what should they do in your opinion?

Answer categories

*0 - increase spending on military defence a lot and decrease social benefits and services,
10 - increase spending on social benefits and services a lot and decrease military defence.*

This new proposed item, partially based on existing surveys (DiGiuseppe et al. 2024; Simon et al. 2018) aims to incorporate **welfare-warfare preferences** and European security threats into the framework of welfare attitudes. The wording of the above proposed question is related to the item D34 that featured in ESS round 4 (ditxssp), which also asks about spending on social benefits and services.

In the context of the war in Ukraine and international insecurity, as well as inflation and austerity measures being implemented in some European countries, the issue of citizens' preferences regarding welfare and military security has become increasingly important. We propose adding this new item that addresses citizens' **preferences for social versus military security spending**. This item tackles the classic "guns versus butter" dilemma, for which mixed findings exist in the literature. Most research suggests a strong public preference for social spending over defense spending (DiGiuseppe et al., 2024), which is intensified by negative personal economic experiences (Hale, 2018; Snegovaya, 2020). However, exposure to military security issues has been shown to significantly influence preferences for military expenditure (DiGiuseppe et al., 2024). Additionally, Eurobarometer data (2023: 186) reveals substantial geographical variation in support for military spending across European countries.

N2-6 - Deservingness principles

Question:

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements;

- *People who are poor because of bad choices they made should be denied social benefits and services. [CONTROL]*
- *People who receive social benefits and services should be content instead of complaining. [ATTITUDE]*
- *It is not fair that people receive social benefits or services to which they have not contributed. [RECIPROCITY]*
- *When granting social benefits and services, people like me should get more priority. [IDENTITY]*
- *Social benefits and services should only be available to those who truly live in poverty. [NEED]*

Answer categories:

- 1 – Agree completely*
- 2 – Agree*
- 3 – Neither agree, nor disagree*
- 4 – Disagree*
- 5 – Disagree completely*

As argued in section 2.2, to determine who should get what and why, individuals implicitly apply five basic *deservingness criteria*, namely Control, Attitude, Reciprocity, Identity and Need (hence CARIN, see Van Oorschot et al., 2017). Here, we explain them in more detail.

These five deservingness criteria constitute abstract logics of redistributive justice that can be applied to many different social situations but are particularly useful to understand individuals' preferences regarding welfare policies. The deservingness criterion of **Control** implies that others perceive someone as more deserving when the need is caused by external situations beyond the victim's control. This idea can be traced back to the Lockean idea of justice that the people have a fundamental duty to provide for themselves. Next, people who are grateful for being helped are seen as more deserving and are rooted in traditional Christian morality that expects gratefulness and good behaviour of the poor. Van Oorschot (2006) coined the criterion of **Attitude** to denote that the public prefers beneficiaries who are compliant and thankful. A deeper conception of this logic is the principle that people should do something in return for their help, i.e. **Reciprocity**. Reciprocity can be expressed in various forms, including helping others or making efforts to get out of the needy situation (Van Oorschot, 2006). Reciprocity as such echoes the concept of 'equity' in the redistributive justice literature: contributing makes people entitled to receive. In social policy, reciprocity underlies social insurance schemes that protect people from social risks as unemployment and sickness. The principle of **Identity** states that we see those 'close to us' as more deserving. In theory, proximity can take the form of kinship relations, place of residence or ingroup identification. Finally, the criterion of **Need** implies that people are more willing to provide help if the intensity of the need of the other is greater. This need principle refers to the right of necessity, that is, the right not to die of hunger and to be helped instead. In social policy, the need principle is often translated into making benefits conditional on means-testing, thus reserving the resources of the welfare state for the neediest only.

Strikingly, many of the studies in the burgeoning field of welfare deservingness do not actually measure these concepts, but rather use deservingness criteria as a heuristic to interpret findings. To remediate this shortcoming, Meuleman, Roosma and Abts (2020) proposed and **validated a measurement instrument operationalizing the five deservingness criteria**. This instrument was used in the Belgian context (the Belgian National Elections Study) and measures directly which deservingness logics people find important for beneficiaries to be deserving of social benefits and services. The original instrument measures each of the five CARIN criteria by means of a multiple-item battery containing statements regarding the importance people attach to the various logics of deservingness. Five-point agree-disagree scales are used to register the answer. The reliability, dimensionality and construct validity of this scale was evidenced by means of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM; see Meuleman, et al. 2020 for details).

Because of limited space, we propose to include a **shortened version of this instrument** in the ESS module, with a single item per dimension. The selection of the items is guided by the results of the CFA of Meuleman, et al. (2020), in the sense that we select items with very strong factor loadings (>.60). Some items have been reformulated slightly to make them suitable for an international context.

N7 - Distributional justice principles for environmental policies

Question:

If the government was to introduce new subsidies for people to reduce their CO2 emissions, for example by purchasing solar panels, improving their home insulation or buying energy-efficient appliances, for which groups should these subsidies be? (Please select one option only)

Answer categories:

- *Only low-income groups*
- *Everyone except for high-income groups*
- *Everyone irrespective of their income*
- *No one, the government should not provide subsidies for reducing CO2 emissions*

As the scope of environmental policies in Europe increases in line with the increase of environmental problems the need for understanding the distributional effects of these policies becomes more and more pressing. Many environmental policies, while effective from an ecological point of view, are also regressive, placing a disproportionately large burden on especially the low-income people (Markkanen & Anger-Kraavi, 2019; Zachmann et al., 2018). This is most evident in relation to carbon taxes, however subsidies for various environmental purposes (Poortinga et al., 2016) can also be regressive in outcomes, if better-off groups are better placed to take advantage of those. This conflicts with the concept of just transition which is one of the central principles of the EU Green Deal and may undermine public support for these measures. It is therefore critical to understand **which distributional justice principles Europeans prefer regarding environmental policies**. While there is a large volume of literature on distributional justice principles in relation to traditional welfare policies (e.g. Gugushvili & van Oorschot, 2020; Laenen & Gugushvili, 2023; Van Hootegeem et al., 2023), it is not clear whether the general public applies the same principles to eco-social policies as the new eco-social risks differ in many respects from the traditional social risks which the welfare state addresses (Gugushvili & Otto, 2023), including visibility of specific risks, exposure of different groups to them and ascription of responsibility. The generated evidence can therefore add the eco-social dimension to the fundamental **debate about universalism vs. selectivism** in public welfare provision (Goodin and Le Grand, 1987; Korpi and Palme, 1998; Marx et al, 2013).

Hence we propose to develop a new item that measures people's distributive preferences in relation to environmental subsidies. In theory, governments can **target environmental subsidies in three ways**. One option is to provide a **universal subsidy**, for example in the form of a voucher that is available to everyone. The second option is to make it **means-tested**, that is, target it to low-income people only, for example those who receive social assistance. The third option is to exclude only rich people above a certain income level, that is, to apply the mechanism of **affluence-testing**. The proposed question also includes the fourth option of respondents being against subsidies altogether. The item is an original one as it has not been tested in surveys before, however, given the clear formulation and simple answer categories, we do not expect it to be cognitively demanding for respondents. Further, to clarify what is meant by environmental subsidies, we provide three specific examples of environmental purposes that are universally applicable in European countries.

N8 – Who should contribute to the welfare state

Question:

If the government wants to expand the provision of social benefits and services and these additional benefits and services need to be paid for through increased taxation and social security contributions, in your opinion, which of the following groups should contribute most to this increase in spending? (Please select one option only)

Answer categories

- *All groups should contribute equally, irrespective of their income level.*
- *Low-income groups should contribute most*
- *Middle-income groups should contribute most*
- *High-income groups should contribute most*
- *No one, the government should not expand the provision of social benefits and services*

Next to the new questions about opinions on who should be the main beneficiaries of the welfare state, we also include an item that directly addresses citizens' views on the **principles guiding contributions** – in the form of taxation and social security contributions – to the revenue side of the welfare state. The welfare state's legitimacy often rests on perceptions of a fair balance between what different groups contribute and what they receive in return (Hegtvedt & Johnson, 2000; Tyler, 2011). By asking **who should contribute more to funding welfare state benefits and services**, the question explores normative views about fairness and redistribution, which are key to the redistributive profile of the welfare state (Rothstein, 1998). Given that we already include an item capturing the extent to which respondents are willing to increase taxation to fund additional services, this item allows us to capture the preferred principle guiding further revenue collection. We expect these redistributive principles to vary significantly across individuals and countries, reflecting broader social, political, institutional and cultural differences.

In the formulation of the question, we deliberately do not separate taxation from social security contributions. This is because the balance between taxes and social security contributions as sources of state revenue differs significantly across countries. In some welfare systems, social security contributions form a major part of revenue, while in others, general taxation plays a larger role. By combining these two forms of contribution, the question ensures that respondents' perceptions are not biased by specific national contexts.

N9 – Fair treatment of social benefits and services application

Question

If you would apply for social benefits or services, how likely or unlikely is it that your application would be treated fairly?

Answer categories

0 - very unlikely

10 - very likely

Perceived procedural fairness is central to how people **perceive the delivery of social benefits and services**. Tyler (1990) argues that people apply the criteria of a) impartiality and lack of bias of frontline workers or systems; b) good faith of frontline workers and authorities; and c) own ability to participate in decision-making processes when evaluating the procedural fairness of the welfare system. Perceived procedural justice is a highly relevant aspect of welfare attitudes for many reasons. Firstly, it is **politically salient** and has been shown to be a very strong driver of political trust (van Ryzin, 2011; Abdelzadeh et al., 2015; Schnaudt & Hahn, 2021). The strong relationship between perceived procedural justice and trust leads to considering this variable as an indicator of institutional trustworthiness or even political trust (Brezzi et al., 2021). Second, the proportion of individuals who believe that authorities will treat them fairly when seeking a benefit or service is significantly lower among those who identify with a group that **experiences discrimination** (OECD, 2024: 75). Thirdly, evidence shows that **citizens' increasingly mixed experiences of the welfare state**, in which some are granted benefits or services and others denied, makes perceived procedural justice even more salient than distributive justice (Lind, 2001).

Therefore, we propose to add a new item (N9) measuring the perceived likelihood that one's own application for benefits or services will be **treated fairly or unfairly by the welfare system** and/or frontline workers. This proposed item strongly relates to the question used in CRONOS2 waves 1 and 4 (w1q28) in a group of questions on institutional trustworthiness.

N10 - Perception of main beneficiaries of the welfare state

Question

The government provides social benefits and services to various groups in society. Which group do you believe benefits the most from these social benefits and services?" (Please select one option only)

Answer categories

- *Low-income groups*
- *Middle-income groups*
- *High-income groups*
- *All income groups benefit equally*

Recent contributions (Garrizmann et al., 2022) have emphasized that new forms of **welfare state intervention**, in particular social investment policies, may **generate Matthew effects** in the sense of disproportionately benefiting middle- and higher-income groups, as well as highly educated people, over low-income and less-educated groups. Individuals' perceptions of these effects could explain – through the mechanism of self-interest – why professionals and the new middle classes

have become key advocates of the welfare state, while certain working class and low-income individuals have become more sceptical of state intervention. Even individuals who experience material insecurity or deprivation might display lower levels of support for state intervention if they perceive that social policies disproportionately benefit other groups.

Similarly, since support from **the middle class** has been crucial in the development of **encompassing and universalist welfare states**, it is important to separate mechanisms related to self-interest and perceptions of benefits, from other mechanisms such as values or ideology. Therefore, we propose to include the abovementioned question to measure **who respondents perceive to be the main beneficiaries of the welfare state**. We refer in the answer categories to income, since it continues to be one of the key markers of social stratification in Europe.

3.3 General reflections on the suitability

The proposed repeated module is highly **suitable for inclusion in a general-population survey** such as the ESS. The questions mainly regard preferences and opinions about welfare provision, and tap into societal debates that are relevant for the entire population and in all participating countries. Although social protection and the welfare state can be complex topics, the repeat questions have been **carefully designed and tested** (a collaboration between the previous QDTs and ESS HQ), so that they are easily understandable for the general public in different contexts. The repeat questions have proven their suitability by successful inclusion in previous ESS rounds (round 4 and round 8): They have been analysed very frequently and reveal meaningful patterns (as shown by the ESS-ERIC report; Malnar, 2023).

In **proposing our new items**, we have tried to stay as close as possible to the wording used in items from the repeat module. Where possible we have built on items that were used in other national or cross-national (e.g., CRONOS-2) surveys. For each new item we have carefully argued – in section 3.2 - how they are suitable to be presented to the entire population in different cultural and institutional contexts.

We do not foresee problems for the welfare attitudes module regarding the transition from face-to-face interviewing to **self-completion data collection**. If our suggestion not to repeat item D7/E3 is followed, the module does not contain knowledge questions for which self-completion might be less suitable. Because the questions are formulated in an understandable manner, clarifications by an interviewer are not needed. Questions on similar topics have been fielded in self-completion surveys by some countries in the EVS and ISSP (e.g., the Netherlands and Switzerland) without particular problems. The question formats we envisage are standard and easy to implement, both online and on paper. In this regard, it is important to note that we propose not to repeat survey questions E21 to E32 from round 8. These contained an experimental survey design to study support for granting different levels of social benefits to various groups of unemployed people.

3.4 Subjects and sources of relevant contextual data

The survey data collected can be easily combined with aggregate-level contextual data to explore how various institutional, socio-economic, and cultural factors influence attitudes. There are broadly two key types of contextual data that appear as relevant drivers of welfare state attitudes in the literature.

First, **socio-structural data** that capture the socio-economic conditions of different countries, such as the composition of the occupational structure, dominant economic activities, levels of global integration, the demographic composition (in terms of age or origin), socio-economic inequality, and poverty rates. Some of this information is already available in the ESS through the Multilevel Data Repository, for instance: demographic data on age structure and old age dependency ratio, Gini coefficient, unemployment rate, number of immigrants, emigrants and asylum seekers (all from Eurostat), GDP from UN Statistics Division (among others), or can be additionally collected from other sources, e.g. indicators on poverty and economic performance from Our World in Data.

Second, **political and institutional factors** describe the characteristics of welfare state institutions, including public expenditure in different sectors, the role of trade unions, political party governance history, and welfare policy features, such as the degree of stratification or inclusivity. The Multilevel Data Repository also includes relevant information of this type, for instance: social expenditure (from the OECD), health expenditure (from Eurostat), cabinet composition, and type of

government (all from Comparative Political Data Sets). Additional information could be obtained from V-DEM (for instance, the power of trade unions, health equality, or educational equality), from V-Party and CHES on political parties' positions on different issues, or from the Yale Center on for Environmental Law and Policy the Environmental Performance Index. Additional indicators, for instance for the quality of employment, could be computed from other survey data, such as the EU-SILC, and merged with ESS data. By combining individual-level preferences with these contextual variables, we aim to understand how broader country-level factors shape public support for different welfare models.

4. Dissemination

4.1 Relevance for different audiences

If this proposal is successful, we believe it will be useful for several audiences. The previous rounds of the welfare attitude modules have generated a large body of **scientific knowledge**. An item usage report from ESS ERIC, based on 4,743 substantive publications (journal articles, working and conference papers, and book chapters) between 2003 and 2022 (Malnar, 2023), shows that welfare attitudes items are intensively used by academics. The items that we propose to repeat (see Table 1) have been used 818 times in scientific publications (on average over 40 times, and ranging between 5 and 82 times). The item measuring support for universal basic income (only in round 8) has already been utilized 29 times (Malnar, 2023). This shows how much the items are valued and widely used by the academic community.

In addition, we believe that the information that could be obtained from the survey **is highly relevant for policymakers**. Institutions can only function effectively and efficiently if they are considered to be 'just' by the general public (Rothstein, 1998). The welfare state can only be maintained if people support welfare institutions and cooperate with the redistribution of means, risks, and life chances. Understanding people's attitudes toward current and possible future welfare provision is therefore indispensable for assessing the social legitimacy of the welfare state. Policymakers are also aware of this, and are highly interested in this type of information. In this regard, see the report Study on the Adequacy and Sustainability of Social Protection Systems: Attitudes in the EU (VC/2019/0050) that was commissioned by DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, and that relies heavily on ESS data and the welfare attitude modules in particular.

4.2 Proposed dissemination activities

For the round 13 data release, we are planning several dissemination activities targeting both academic and non-academic audiences.

First, within **one year** of round 13 data release:

- We will produce a cross-national analysis for the **ESS Topline Findings series**, offering concise summaries of the welfare attitudes items. This analysis will include data from all participating countries. Where relevant, we will present findings at **policy seminars organized by the CST**, bringing together ESS scientists, academics, and policymakers across Europe from e.g., the European Parliament, European Commission, and OECD.
- We will deliver a substantive presentation of **our key findings at a Strategic Advisory Board (SAB)** meeting, where we will also outline further dissemination plans.
- We will submit proposals for at least one large **social science conference stream** (e.g., ECPR, Council of European Studies, or ESPAnet), based on findings from the module.

Second, within **two years** of round 13 data release:

- We will propose a **thematic issue for an academic journal** (e.g., the Journal of European Social Policy) and/or a **joint book with an academic publisher** (e.g., Edward Elgar) entirely dedicated to the module's results.
- We will organize at least one **summer/winter school**, open to undergraduate and/or postgraduate students, focusing on the module's data.
- **Outreach to policy-makers and practitioners** will be done, inter alia, by presenting the module report to the EC Social Protection Committee, the EP Committee on Employment, Social Affairs and the European Social Partners, and the Latvian Government, taking into account the Latvian Presidency of the EU in 2028 and the expected relevance of the results for the CEE region.

Third, within **three years** of round 13 data release:

- We will provide at least **three peer-reviewed articles**, based primarily on ESS data from the module, that have been accepted for publication.
- We anticipate numerous research initiatives stemming from the module through the 'Welfare Attitudes Research Network,' led by Femke Roosma and Tijs Laenen. This is an international network that aims to foster collaboration and innovation in the field of welfare attitudes research. Additional funding will be sought from **European funds** (Horizon Europe) when relevant calls are open, and/or from national agency calls, to **strengthen QDT members' collaboration** on the issues covered by the module.

Where appropriate, we will contribute to ESS dissemination activities, such as writing blog posts or engaging with other communication efforts.

5. Team expertise and experience

5.1 QDT members and Team advisor

We propose a team (including **five QDT members and one advisor**) of researchers who are all highly experienced in studying welfare attitudes and have all worked (intensively) with the previous ESS welfare attitude modules in rounds 4 and 8, as well as with other modules or rounds.

We have changed the proposed QDT members compared to the **Stage 1 application**. We have **welcomed Associate Professor Maria Theiss** to the team, as we took the feedback and **advise of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB)** by heart to "demonstrate that the proposed module (and the team that will deliver it) can represent the **scope and diversity across Europe** relating to this topic." Maria Theiss is affiliated with the University of Warsaw and both knowledgeable of the topic of welfare state legitimacy as well as experienced in co-designing quantitative surveys, as evidenced in her CV. Moreover, she brings in the **perspective from the Central and Eastern European countries**, which was a perspective that could be strengthened in our team.

As the team proposed in Stage 1 already consisted of five members, **Bart Meuleman** will no longer be official QDT member. However, we are very pleased to still have him on board as **advisor to the team**, given his broad and incredibly rich experience in developing (cross-national) surveys as well as being a member of the QDT that developed the round 8 welfare module. This change has been consulted with ESS ERIC HQ.

The proposed QDT consists therefore of the following members: Femke Roosma, Tijs Laenen, Dimitri Gugushvili, Macarena Ares, and Maria Theiss.

5.2 Complementary experiences

We believe that our team as a whole (assisted by the team advisor) has the **necessary qualities** to design a cross-national, conceptually well-founded survey. In addition, the different team members **complement each other** with specific experiences.

All team members have experience with survey design and related quantitative methodology; some team members are **highly experienced in designing and conducting surveys in national and cross-national settings**. Dimitri Gugushvili is the national coordinator of ESS in Belgium (Flanders) for round 12 and he has been involved in the ESS and CRONOS surveys for the past five years. Both Tijs Laenen and advisor Bart Meuleman are also involved in developing the module on Social Europe included in CRONOS-2. Macarena Ares has experience as co-designer of a cross-country comparative online survey on welfare priorities². Maria Theiss is a co-designer of several cross-national surveys in H2020 projects. As mentioned, the team advisor Bart Meuleman was involved in developing the ESS round 8 Welfare Attitude module and he has also been the national coordinator of ESS Belgium (Flanders) for rounds 9, 10 and 11. All team members have additional experience in developing national surveys.

Further, all team members have an **interest in and are knowledgeable of welfare state legitimacy and social policy support**. Femke Roosma obtained her PhD based on developing and analysing the multidimensional model of welfare state. Tijs Laenen obtained his PhD in developing and empirically testing deservingness theory. Both have been publishing on welfare attitudes and deservingness perceptions since, and have been involved in academic work on universal basic income. Dimitri Gugushvili is very knowledgeable on the topic of eco-social policies as well as universal-versus-means-tested policies and has published several academic papers on these topics. Macarena Ares has been involved in the ERC project Welfare Priorities that aims to rethink social

² <http://welfarepriorities.eu/>

policy conflict. Maria Theiss is a principle investigator of a research project studying distributive justice perceptions in hybrid welfare states. Bart Meuleman has supervised several (PhD) projects focussing on studying welfare attitudes and distributive justice preferences.

Team members are affiliated with universities in the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain and Poland (all ERIC Members) and therefore **have knowledge of contextual circumstances in which social benefits and services are embedded** in diverse institutional structures of a variety of European welfare states. They also have complementing knowledge of how European citizens in different parts of the continent view these welfare systems and what are the underlying patterns of ideological and socio-economic predispositions.

The team consists of members (and an advisor) at **different stages of their academic careers** and in **different positions in the academic field**. From a post-doc to a full professor, from a research expert to a professor by special appointment (endowed by a thinktank). This brings in combinations of experience with fresh perspectives, as well as insider and outsider perspectives in the team discussion, which ensures high-quality outcomes.

For detailed information on the **team members'** and **advisors' expertise**, please see the **attached CVs**.

5.3 Past and future team collaboration

The majority of QDT members and the team advisor have been working together very effectively for many years. Femke Roosma collaborated with Bart Meuleman on the project "Attitudes towards Adequacy and Sustainability of Social Protection Systems in the EU", commissioned by the European Commission (2020), in partnership with Applica and Tarki Research. They are also co-editors of the volume "The Social Legitimacy of Targeted Welfare: Attitudes to Welfare Deservingness" (2017, Edward Elgar Publishing). Tijs Laenen has collaborated with Femke Roosma on his Marie Curie fellowship (Femke Roosma acted as co-supervisor), co-founding the Welfare Attitudes Research Network (WARN) and co-editing the volume "A Research Agenda for Public Attitudes to Welfare" (2023, Edward Elgar Publishing). Bart Meuleman supervised the PhD of Tijs Laenen. Both are co-supervisors of a current PhD student working on a project entitled "The Social Legitimacy of Basic Income: A multidimensional perspective based on vignette experiments", funded by the Flemish Research Council. They are also co-authors of the book "Welfare State Legitimacy in Times of Crisis and Austerity: Between Continuity and Change" and the ESS Topline report on the previous Welfare Attitudes module (both using ESS data). Since 2019, Bart Meuleman and Dimitri Gugushvili have been part of the team responsible for the implementation of the European Social Survey in Flanders. They have co-authored several academic articles and reports, also with Tijs Laenen. These included three academic articles and one report, two of which used ESS data. Tijs Laenen was part of the design team for the Social Europe module of CRONOS-2, a franchise of the ESS. Maria Theiss is a member of 'Welfare Attitudes Research Network,' led by Femke Roosma and Tijs Laenen. Maria Theiss, Femke Roosma and Tijs Laenen organized a book review session at the European Social Policy Network conference in 2022.

All group members worked extensively together in this application of a repeat module for welfare attitudes. The team members have had regular meetings, with pleasant and productive exchanges. The diverse perspectives and experiences of the team members contributed to high quality discussions, while at the same time fundamental thoughts on the theoretical framework and the relevance of including certain items aligned.

The QDT members will **continue and intensify their cooperation** in the use and dissemination of the round 13 data. Regular online meetings will continue and at least one face-to-face meeting per year will be held in the first 3 years after the data release to realise the proposed deliverables mentioned in section 4. Moreover, the QDT group will apply for EU-funded grants (e.g. Horizon Europe) and grants from national research agencies for the use and successful dissemination of round 13 data.

5.4 Conclusion

We are confident that our **broad and diverse experiences** with the topic of the proposed repeat module (welfare legitimacy), the underlying theoretical frameworks, experiences in conducting surveys and applying survey methodology, as well as the **geographical distribution** of the backgrounds and affiliated institutions of the team members, will lead to successful collaboration in developing this **socially, theoretically and empirically relevant repeat module**.

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- Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Tilburg University, the Netherlands
- Co-founder of the Welfare Attitudes Research Network (WARN).

SURVEY DESIGN EXPERIENCE

- Principle designer of Dutch Social Security Survey, 2023

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS (10)

- Roosma, F. & Laenen, T. (2023) *A Research Agenda for Public Attitudes to Welfare*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Roosma, F. (2021). The social legitimacy of European welfare states after “the age of austerity”. In: Greve, B. *Handbook on Austerity, Populism and the Welfare State* (pp. 110-129), Edward Elgar Publishing. [ESS4+8]
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AFFILIATIONS & POSITIONS

- Principal Investigator of the ERC Starting Grant “Unravelling the Politics of Basic Income: How Responsive are Policymakers to Public Opinion?”, Centre for Social Policy, University of Antwerp, Belgium [Start date: 01/02/2025].
- Project Coordinator of the Basic Income in Belgium (BABEL) project, Centre for Sociological Research, KU Leuven, Belgium.
- Co-founder of the Welfare Attitudes Research Network (WARN).

SURVEY DESIGN EXPERIENCE

- Principal designer of Wave 1 (2021) and Wave 2 (forthcoming) of the Basic Income in Belgium (BABEL) survey.
- Co-designer of the cross-national module on Social Europe included in Wave 2 (2022/3) of the CROss-National Online Survey 2.
- External advisor to the questionnaire design team of the country-specific panel for Belgium included in Wave 6 (2023) of the CROss-National Online Survey 2.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS (10)

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- Senior researcher, Centre for Sociological Research, KU Leuven, and National Coordinator of ESS Belgium (Flanders) for round 12

SURVEY DESIGN EXPERIENCE

- Co-designer of Belgium country-specific wave questionnaire of the CROss-National Online Survey 2.
- Co-designer of Belgium country-specific questions of the European Social Survey Round 11.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS (10)

- Gugushvili, D., Spruit, D. Van De Walle, S., Baudewyns, P. and Meuleman, B. (2023) *How satisfied are Belgians with the government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic? Evidence from the European Social Survey*. CESO working paper # CeSO/SM/2023-1. Available at: https://soc.kuleuven.be/ceso/ispo/downloads/Satisfaction_COVID. **[ESS10]**
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- Otto, A. and Gugushvili, D. (2020) Eco-Social divides in Europe: Public attitudes towards welfare and climate change policies. *Sustainability*, 12(1), 404. DOI: [10.3390/su12010404](https://doi.org/10.3390/su12010404) **[ESS8]**
- van Oorschot, W. and Gugushvili, D. (2019) Retrenched, but still very much desired? Aspects of the social legitimacy of the welfare state in Russia compared to European countries. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 71(3), pp.345-364. DOI: [10.1080/09668136.2019.1583316](https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2019.1583316). **[ESS4]**

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AFFILIATIONS & POSITIONS

- Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Barcelona, Spain

SURVEY DESIGN EXPERIENCE

- Co-designer of waves 1-3 of the Welfare Priorities online survey (welfarepriorities.eu), carried out in 8 West European countries.
- Member of the POLAT questionnaire design team, a 16-wave online panel of individuals' political attitudes and behavior, fielded yearly in Spain.
- Member of the CEO (Catalan Public Opinion Center) Governing Council.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS (10)

- Ares, M., S. Häusermann, M. Enggist and M. Pinggera (2024) Attitudinal consistency in citizens' social policy preferences. *Journal of Politics*, 1-37. DOI: [10.1086/729935](https://doi.org/10.1086/729935)
- Ares, M and S. Häusermann (2023) Class and Social Policy Representation, in *Unequal Democracies: Public Policy, Responsiveness, and Redistribution in an Era of Rising Economic Inequality* (N. Lupu and J. Pontusson, Eds.), Cambridge University Press.
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- Häusermann, S., M. Pinggera, M. Ares and M. Enggist (2022) Class and social policy in the knowledge economy. *European Journal of Political Research*, 61(2), 462-484. DOI: [10.1111/1475-6765.12463](https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12463).
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- Ares, M., B. Ceka, and H. Kriesi. (2017) Diffuse Support for the European Union: Spillover Effects of the Politicization of the European Integration Process at the Domestic Level. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 24(8), 1091-1115. DOI: [10.1080/13501763.2016.1191525](https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2016.1191525). **[ESS1-6]**

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AFFILIATIONS & POSITIONS

- Associate Professor, Faculty of Political Science and International Studies, University of Warsaw, Poland
- Member of Scientific Council, Centre of Excellence in Social Sciences, University of Warsaw, Poland
- PI of research project “What do others get? Comparative standards in perceived distributive justice. The analysis in the hybrid welfare states of Poland, Romania and Israel”, University of Warsaw

SURVEY DESIGN EXPERIENCE

- Co-designer of international surveys in H2020 projects: [EnTrust](#), [TransSOL](#), [LIVEWHAT](#)

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS (10)

- Theiss, M., Szelewa, D. (2024) How is citizens' trust in the welfare state possible? Literature review, *Social Policy & Society* (forthcoming)
- Theiss, M., Stepankova, L., Serek, J. (2024), Distributive justice and trust in the welfare system: perceptions of social assistance users, *Social Policy & Society* (forthcoming)
- Theiss, M., Menshenina, A. (2024) Debating Policy in the Context of Others' Suffering: European Parliament Narratives of Solidarity with Ukraine in Energy Domain, *Social Inclusion* (forthcoming)
- Theiss, M. (2023). How Does the Content of Deservingness Criteria Differ for More and Less Deserving Target Groups? *Journal of Social Policy*, 52(4), 962-980. [doi:10.1017/S0047279422000058](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047279422000058)
- Theiss, M. (2021). Local routes to preschool-access policies in Polish municipalities from a social citizenship perspective. *European Journal of Social Work*, 24(2), 290-301. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2019.1666254>
- Zschache, U., Theiss, M., Paschou, M. (2021). What Is Solidarity About? Views of Transnational Organisations' Activists in Germany, Poland, and Greece. *Sociological Research Online*, 26(3), 628-648. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1360780420962808>
- Lahusen, C., Theiss, M. (2019). European transnational solidarity: Citizenship in action? *American Behavioral Scientist*, 63(4), 444-458. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764218823836>
- Theiss, M., Kurowska, A. (2019). Being denied and granted social welfare and the propensity to protest. *Acta Politica*, 54(3), 458-478. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41269-018-0084-2>
- Kurowska, A., Theiss, M. (2018). Solidarity Practices in Poland and their Social Capital Foundations. W: C. Lahusen, M. Grasso (ed.), *Solidarity in Europe*, Palgrave Studies in European Political Sociology. Palgrave 2018, pp. 103-126.

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AFFILIATIONS & POSITIONS

- Full Professor of Sociology, Centre for Sociological Research, KU Leuven, Belgium
- Senior Researcher, SOCIUM – Research Centre on Inequality and Social Policy, Universität Bremen, Germany

SURVEY DESIGN EXPERIENCE

- National Coordinator of *ESS Belgium* (Flanders) for rounds 9, 10 and 11
- Principal Investigator of Belgium for the *CRONOS-2* and *CRONOS-3* data collections
- Principal Investigator of the Belgian online probability panel ‘The Social Study’
- Principal Investigator of the *Belgian National Election Study* (BNES) and the *Belgian Ethnic Minority Elections Study* (BEMES) 2020
- Member of the Questionnaire Design Team that developed the 2016 Welfare Attitudes Module
- Chair of the Methodology Group of the *European Values Study*
- Chair of the Swiss *MOSAiCH commission* that selects the questionnaires modules that are fielded together with the Swiss ISSP data collection

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- Meuleman, B., Żółtak, T., Pokropek, A., Davidov, E., Muthén, B., Oberski, D. L., ... & Schmidt, P. (2023). Why measurement invariance is important in comparative research. A response to Welzel et al.(2021). *Sociological methods & research*, 52(3), 1401-1419. DOI: [10.1177/00491241221091755](https://doi.org/10.1177/00491241221091755)
- Rossetti, F., Meuleman, B., & Baute, S. (2022). Explaining public support for demanding activation of the unemployed: The role of subjective risk perceptions and stereotypes about the unemployed. *Journal of European Social Policy* DOI: [10.1177/09589287221106980](https://doi.org/10.1177/09589287221106980) [ESS8]
- Baute, S., & Meuleman, B. (2020). Public attitudes towards a European minimum income benefit: How (perceived) welfare state performance and expectations shape popular support. *Journal of European Social Policy* DOI: [10.1177/0958928720904320](https://doi.org/10.1177/0958928720904320) [ESS8]
- Laenen, T., Meuleman, B., & van Oorschot, W. (Eds.) (2020). Welfare State Legitimacy in Times of Crisis and Austerity: Between Continuity and Change. *Edward Elgar*. [ESS4+8]
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- Kulin, J., & Meuleman, B. (2015). Human values and welfare state support in Europe: An east-west divide?. *European Sociological Review*, 31(4), 418-432. DOI: [10.1093/esr/jcv001](https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcv001) [ESS4]
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