



# Welfare States, Solidarity and Justice Principles: Does the Type Really Matter?

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## ABSTRACT

In this article, we investigate whether and, if so, to what extent, people's notions of solidarity and their choices of justice principles are related to the type of welfare state regime they live under, as well as to individual socio-demographic and ideological factors. We analyse data from the *International Social Survey Program 1996* and the *European Values Study 1999*, which together cover preferences of citizens from 20 welfare states. Hypotheses pertaining to people's notions of solidarity and preferences for justice principles in the different welfare state regimes are derived from the work of Esping-Andersen and his critics, as well as from sociological and social-psychological theories of solidarity and distributive justice. We find important, although not decisive, evidence for the thesis that the actual state of affairs with respect to the welfare state regime under which citizens live determines their views about which level of solidarity should be achieved and which justice principles should be emphasized. However, differences found are often not very pronounced, and we argue that this is a consequence of the fact that values of solidarity and justice are matters of priority to all welfare states. Taking into account the differences which exist between welfare state regimes, we also find important differences between individuals and social groups in their preferred level of solidarity and in their choice of justice principles.

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## 1. Introduction

When Esping-Andersen published his *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* in 1990, it instantly became a sociology classic. One of the crucial premises in this book was that the creation of equality has always been the core issue of welfare states. Later, Esping-Andersen (1994:3; 1996:2; 1999:3) observed that, in a manner of speaking, the welfare state itself is equality, at least, in the sense that welfare states – morally speaking – have always promised social 'solidarity of the people'. If Esping-Andersen's premise is correct – and the aim and character of welfare states can be formulated in such a simple straightforward manner – then why do welfare states so often differ substantially with respect to the distribution of welfare? The obvious answer for Esping-Andersen (1990:3; 1994:717; 1996:2; 1999:32) himself is that definitions of equality espoused in distinct welfare states have not only remained rather

vague, but have also often varied considerably. Welfare states vary in terms of which particular egalitarian justice principles they accentuate and which specific notions of social solidarity they pursue. Some welfare states, for example, have embraced a notion of equality that reflects a redistributive justice of collective solidarity. Others, however, have cherished a conflicting notion of solidarity – i.e. equity – which reflects the rationality of a quid pro quo actuarial principle of distributive justice.

Esping-Andersen (1990:3, 26 and 32) suggests that, when we focus on the justice principles and notions of solidarity embedded in welfare states, we discover that variations are not linearly distributed around a common denominator. They are clustered into three highly diverse regime-types, each organized around its own discrete logic of organization, stratification and societal integration. Therefore, we can identify three models – or ideal types – of welfare states: conservative, liberal

and a social-democratic. He tested this theoretical conjecture empirically by finding an answer to the question of whether distinct welfare states that resemble his ideal types can be observed. There appears to be a clear coincidence of high de-commodification and strong universalism in the Scandinavian, social-democratically influenced welfare states. There is an equally clear coincidence of low de-commodification and strong individualistic self-reliance in the Anglo-Saxon nations. Finally, the continental European countries group closely together as corporatist and statist. They are also modestly de-commodifying (Esping-Andersen 1990:77).

### **Research questions**

In the first part of his classic, Esping-Andersen was concerned with specifying crucial welfare-state differences and testing leading hypotheses concerning their crystallization into three different regime-types. In the second part, he studied those types as independent, causal variables. He tried to answer the question: How do different types of welfare state regimes systematically influence social and economic behaviour in advanced capitalist states? In this article we follow in his footsteps. We look critically at his typology and also examine modified versions to see if they have explanatory or heuristic power with regard to some crucial aspects of life within welfare states. The specific question we address in this article concerns whether or not it matters to people under which type of welfare state regime they live, with respect to their acceptance of certain notions of solidarity and their choice of particular justice principles.

The answer to this question cannot be found by simply looking into the myriad of empirical studies elaborating on Esping-Andersen's work. Svallfors (1997) has observed that most studies of welfare state regimes generally neglect the impact of regime characteristics on the attitude structures and value commitments found among populations of various welfare states. Their sophisticated treatment of institutions and actual distributions of various goods, he remarked, has seldom been extended to any substantial analysis of the way in which different regimes promote certain attitudes at the expense of others. Looking at the literature, Gundelach (1994) and Kluegel and Miyano (1995) seem to be among the very few exceptions that prove Svallfors's rule. Svallfors himself, however, is not someone to

simply accept this. Prior to his above-mentioned criticism of comparative welfare state studies, he (1993) had already searched for an empirical answer to the question of whether Sweden and Great Britain – both welfarist capitalist nations and differing significantly in their policies and politics – vary in the way their citizens perceive equality and redistribution. In the 1997 article, he continued by analysing how attitudes towards redistribution are structured in various types of welfare state regimes. He found that different types actually tend to promote different ways of valuing income differences resulting from both market forces and the redistributive policies of governments. If justice principles and notions of solidarity are used by people as guidelines for valuing income differences, then, according to Svallfors' findings, the type of welfare state really matters.

According to Svallfors, however, research into the question of whether – and how – welfare state regimes influence the attitudes concerning equality and redistribution is not the only thing that is lacking. He refers to several authors who argue that Esping-Andersen's typology is not exhaustive and that further regime-types need to be distinguished. He has, to some extent, been heeding the critics' call to add a fourth, radical world of welfare capitalism, which includes Australia and New Zealand. These countries, labelled by Esping-Andersen as liberal welfare states, show a low degree of welfare redistribution through the state. However, their industrial relations system emphasizes the equal distribution of primary welfare by regulating wages and other work conditions.

Our aim, in this article, is to follow both Esping-Andersen's and Svallfors' lead by extending their analyses. By doing so, we will attempt to gain more in-depth knowledge about the degree to which different regime types influence people's choices of principles of distributive justice and notions of solidarity. In order to do this, we elaborate on Esping-Andersen's and Svallfors' studies in three ways. First of all, we address the question of whether there are three – as Esping-Andersen assumes – or more ideal-types of welfare-state regimes. Furthermore, we try to measure people's choices of justice principles and notions of solidarity more directly, not relying on judgements of income (re)distribution as in Svallfors (1997). Finally, we use deductive reasoning – instead of Svallfors' inductive style of argumentation – by, first, applying explana-

tory theories of justice and solidarity and, secondly, by using confirmatory instead of exploratory forms of data-analysis.

## 2. Conceptual framework

Before we can accomplish our mission, we must first explain the conceptual framework applied in this article. As we have mentioned before, Esping-Andersen's point of departure is the assumption that welfare states are supposed to produce equality and, in a manner of speaking, even are equality. Because equality is such a broad and vague concept, welfare states often vary in terms of which egalitarian principles they accentuate. Not all welfare states have wholeheartedly and equally embraced the notion of equality that reflects a redistributive justice of collective solidarity. This raises the question of what the exact relationship is between this multifarious concept of equality, on the one hand, and notions of solidarity and principles of distributive justice, on the other.

Esping-Andersen suggests that the latter, at least in this case, can be treated as intertwined concepts. Both concepts refer to particular aspects of the notions of equality espoused by welfare states and are, at least in this regard, two sides of the same coin. Therefore, his answer – if we interpret his line of reasoning correctly – should be as follows. If all welfare states try to create some sort of equality, then they must try to find an institutional solution for the problem of solidarity: in other words, who should be made equal to whom or, more precisely, who should have equivalent rights to what kind of collective protection? Because solidarity and distributive justice are intertwined, the following consecutive question must be answered: What kind of equality should be applied to those who should have equivalent rights to what level of collective protection?

Although solidarity is one of sociology's key problems, the theoretical connotations of this concept have, since the important early contributions of Durkheim and Weber, seldom been analysed in a satisfactory manner (Bayertz 1998; Dorcian & Fararo 1997; van Oorschot & Komter 1998). In their review of the state of the art of sociological theory construction concerning solidarity, van Oorschot and Komter (1998) come to the conclusion that the distinctive features of societal solidarity are communal interests (shared utility) and feelings (shared identity). Solidarity takes shape either vertically:

The 'strong' help the 'weak' by redistributing benefits and burdens, or horizontally: The 'strong' and the 'weak' contribute to the common weal by risk-sharing. Societal solidarity increases the more the 'strong' support the 'weak', and the more both the 'strong' and the 'weak' contribute to the general interest. The sociological treatment of notions of solidarity that people cherish is in agreement with this distinction. Like solidarity, the problem of social justice features prominently in the work of the two most famous classical sociologists: Durkheim and Weber (Arts & van der Veen 1992:144). Contrary to solidarity, however, there is extensive and informative theoretical literature pertaining to what principles of distributive justice people embrace, i.e. their answer to the question of who should get what and why (for an overview, see, Jasso 1989; Arts 1995; Jasso & Wegener 1997). Deutsch (1975:139) provides a long list of substantive values on which, according to this literature, principles of distributive justice are based. He advances the thesis that, in spite of the many specific values underlying principles of distributive justice, three overarching principles can be distinguished: (1) equity; (2) equality; (3) need. Most of the substantive values can be gathered under the umbrella of these principles.

### *Differences in solidarity and justice between welfare states regimes*

If ideal typical welfare state regimes exhibit qualitatively different notions of solidarity and pursue different conceptions of distributive justice, what then are the specific notions and conceptions embedded in each of them? Before we can answer this question, however, we have to address a prior question: How many ideal types of welfare state can be distinguished in the real world of welfare capitalism? As we have seen before, Esping-Andersen (1990) answered the latter question by limiting the number of ideal types to only three: liberal, conservative and social-democratic. Several authors, however, have developed alternative typologies of welfare state regimes, or added one or more types to Esping-Andersen's classification in order to achieve more explanatory power or empirical refinement. From the vast array of welfare state typologies found in the literature (for an overview: Arts & Gelissen 1999a; Gelissen 2001), we have selected three additional regime-types: The southern or Mediterranean welfare states (Leibfried 1992; Ferrera 1996; Bonoli 1997), the so-called antipodean

or radical welfare states of Australia and New Zealand (Castles & Mitchell 1993; Castles 1996; Hill 1996) and, finally, the East-Asian communitarian welfare states (Becker 1996; Goodman & Peng 1996). We believe that they draw attention to interesting characteristics of those welfare states not directly included in Esping-Andersen's classification.

The liberal type emphasizes equality in the sense of equal opportunity and individualistic equity. Equal opportunity means that social positions are open to all. Individualistic equity means that people themselves are first and foremost responsible for their own welfare and that they, at least ideally, are awarded by the market according to their achievements and efforts. In its social policy, therefore, the state is fairly reluctant to provide welfare to those in need. Income transfers are deemed legitimate only in so far as they are intended for the deserving poor. Horizontal and vertical solidarity are low, as is the degree of de-commodification and income redistribution.

The conservative type stresses equity over redistribution. This is not an individualistic equity, but rather a corporative status equity. Society in conservative welfare states is segmented. There is a hierarchy according to class and status differentials. The welfare state institutions and programmes emphasize the functional importance for society of hierarchy according to class and status and are designed to preserve status differentials. The redistribution of welfare, and therefore solidarity, is more horizontal than vertical. The degree of de-commodification depends strongly upon one's position in the labour market and within the family (breadwinner model).

The social-democratic type of welfare state regime, in its turn, underlines universalistic solidarity and egalitarianism, which means equality of outcome. The state is the predominant moral community and takes full responsibility for the social welfare of the people by guaranteeing everybody a minimum standard of living, by providing full citizenship and by preventing social exclusion. There is a high level of de-commodification, high standards for meeting needs, the benefits are generous and are not dependent on individual contributions.

Southern Mediterranean welfare states resemble the conservative type, but they are characterized by a high degree of familism and an immature system of social security, which means a low degree of de-commodification. European countries of the Southern type

are familistic in that they assign a maximum of welfare obligations to the nuclear or even the extended family. Their social security systems are immature because, on the one hand, there is no articulated net of minimum social protection but, on the other, some benefits are very generous and some provisions are universal.

Anglo-Saxon countries under a radical regime – the Antipodeans – resemble those under a liberal regime as far as the low degree of welfare expenditure is concerned. Income maintenance schemes are, although rather modest and targeted, more needs-sensitive than in liberal welfare states and not simply concentrated on the very poor. Assistance is also more inclusive. While the liberal type is highly inegalitarian, the radical type is highly egalitarian. As in the continental European countries of the conservative type, solidarity is restricted to labour market participants and their dependents.

Although communitarian East-Asian welfare states have some characteristics in common with both the conservative and the liberal welfare states, they have other specific characteristics that make them different from the Western types. In communitarian East-Asian welfare states, solidarity is mainly restricted to – and expected from – the (nuclear and extended) family and the local and one's business community. Big conglomerates (firms) and local community organizations, on the one hand, and the family, on the other, are important for providing welfare and social security. The state is a welfare provider of last resort, only seeing to elementary needs.

### 3. Models and hypotheses

#### *Distributive justice and solidarity: a causal model*

The assumption underlying Svallfors' work on people's attitudes towards the welfare state is that people's choices or their preference order of principles of justice and notions of solidarity are based on contextual factors, particularly on the type of welfare state regime. This is in accordance with much of the literature on distributive justice (Rescher 1966; Eckhoff 1974; Deutsch 1975; Miller 1976; Leventhal 1976; Schwinger 1980). The common goal underlying the interaction in a certain situation is the principal determining factor. When the primary goal is to facilitate and enhance productivity, the equity rule is preferred. When the para-

mount concern is preserving harmony in a social aggregate, equality will be the dominant principle. The need principle will dominate when the well-being of individuals is most salient (Arts & van der Veen 1992). This is to a large extent in agreement with Peillon (1996), who states that the distribution of benefits by the welfare state has been legitimized, viz. by applying the need, the equity (desert or merit) and the equality (universal right) principle. Social services, he argues, were originally aimed at people who did not obtain sufficient resources on the basis of their efforts. The provision of social housing, unemployment benefits, health protection, etc., was justified by the fact that people need it. The provision of welfare may also be based on equity (merit, desert), if welfare benefits are related to contributions. One may also consider that, as members of a nation, people are equally entitled to a range of services and benefits, independent of what they achieve or need (universal right).

Contextual factors, however, only indirectly exercise their influence on the attitudes of individuals. First, people must become accustomed to the contextual factors and their social situations. Only if welfare state regimes have been around for some time have their citizens had the chance to gather individual and collective knowledge necessary for the smooth functioning of the institutional solidary arrangements: Only then can they learn to act in the socially approved manner. Secondly, people's choices of solidarity notions and justice principles are strongly affected by the way they frame the situation. Those frames are shaped by the socio-economic and institutional context of the past. They affect people's definition of the situation at hand and prestructure their choices of justice principles and notions of solidarity (e.g. Arts, Hermkens & van Wijk 1995:136–137). We can derive from status value theory (Berger et al., 1972, 1985) that issues of distributive justice only arise in the presence of stable frames of reference. Those frames describe distribution rules that are thought to be a social fact and can serve as generalized standards whereby individuals eventually develop expectations for rewards in specific situations. As a consequence of beliefs about what is typically the case, expectations are formed about what one can legitimately claim ought to be the case. A similar hypothesis can be found in framing theory: 'Any stable state of affairs tends to become accepted eventually, at least in the sense that alternatives to it no longer readily come to

mind' (Kahneman & Tversky 1981:730–731). This idea is consistent with Homans's observation that 'the rule of distributive justice is a statement of what ought to be, and what people say ought to be is determined, in the long run, and with some lag, by what they find in fact to be the case.'

Lindenberg (1997, 1993) feels that how solidarity functions in a society depends on how weak or strong it is. While there are gradations within these categories they are, in his opinion, qualitatively quite different. Because of this qualitative difference, societal situations give rise to two distinctive normative frames of reference in terms of solidarity. At one extreme, there is a frame of strong solidarity in which the dominant goal is to follow solidarity norms. At the other extreme, there is a frame of weak solidarity in which the dominant goal is to gain maximization and a subordinate goal is to follow solidarity norms. Therefore, liberal welfare states tend to create a normative frame that comes close to the weak solidarity ideal type. Social-democratic ones create a frame that approximates the strong solidarity one. The other types will give rise to mixed normative frames – between the extremes of weak and strong solidarity – with conservative and Southern welfare states more to the strong extreme and radical and communitarian states more to the weak side. All in all, these differences between welfare state regimes will not only be reflected in people's consensually held notions of solidarity, but also in the highly similar choices of justice principles they make.

Following this line of reasoning, we can now construct as a *primary hypothesis* the causal model depicted in Figure 1. In this model, the connections assumed in the preceding section are reproduced in brief.

### ***Distributive justice and solidarity: secondary hypotheses***

It would be naive to suppose that people's choices of principles of distributive justice and notions of solidarity are entirely determined by the force of circumstances of the welfare regimes and the frames of reference created by them. Research findings make it immediately apparent that these choices will not be completely determined by contextual factors and more or less uniform frames of reference. If that were the case, we would find a nearly general consensus on issues of social justice and solidarity within welfare states. Even though consensus dominates dissension, this conclusion would be

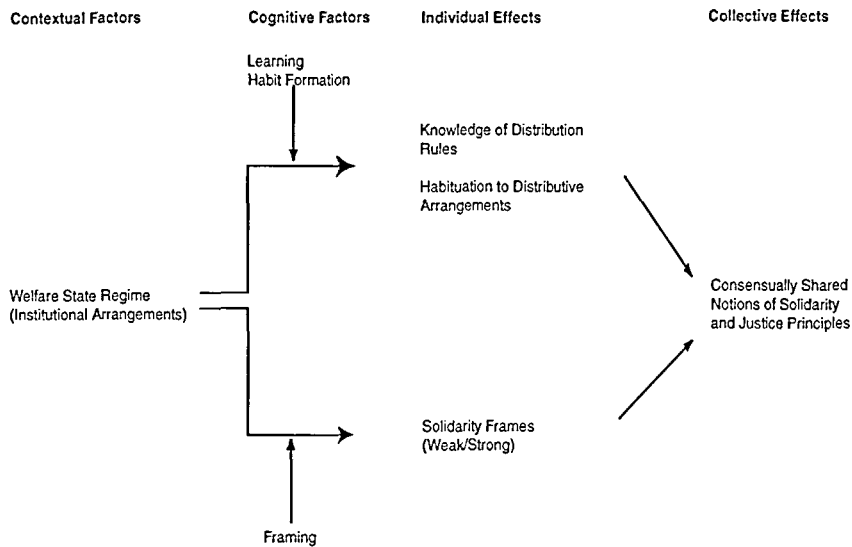


Fig. 1. Theoretical model of the impact of institutional arrangements.

obviously unrealistic (cf. Arts & van der Veen 1992:152; Törnblom 1992:203). Welfare states will not only be characterized by a considerable degree of agreement concerning the choice of notions of solidarity and justice principles, they will also show differences between individuals and groups in their preferences. Empirical studies clearly illustrate that people's beliefs about distributive justice and solidarity are not only conditioned by situational factors, but also by individual, relational and cultural ones (Hegved 1992:325). The most important individual factor seems to be self-interest (Miller 1992:585; Arts & Hermkens 1994:138; d'Anjou Steijn & Aarsen 1995:358; van Oorschot 1997:23). According to the so-called self-interest thesis, beliefs about justice and solidarity are a rationalization of self-interest. People tend to endorse the view of solidarity and justice, which, if implemented, would work to their relative advantage. Swift et al. (1995:35–37) found, for example, that there were significant social class differences in normative judgements about justice. Members of the working classes were most in favour of equality, whereas the salariat and the (traditionally conservative) petit bourgeoisie were less sympathetic to it. d'Anjou et al. (1995) found a clearly marked difference in adherence between the members of the highest and the lowest social positions, i.e. between higher management (who are more in favour of the desert or merit [equity] and less in favour of the need principle) and the social security recipients (who are,

conversely, less in favour of the merit and more in favour of the need principle), although the preferences of the members of the other classes showed a rather confusing pattern.

These findings can be interpreted differently, however (Miller 1992:585). It could be argued that lower-class respondents and social security recipients tend to have greater exposure to solidaristic relationships (through trade unions, etc.) and less exposure to competitive relationships than higher-class respondents do. One's day-to-day experiences of solidarity tend to determine whether or not one is inclined to conceive society in solidaristic terms and, therefore, use the appropriate criteria (merit versus need) in making judgements of social justice. Miller guesses that each of these interpretations contains a partial truth. He also remarks that there is a considerable degree of cross-class consensus. Where differences exist in the class-specific choice or preference order of justice principles, the relationship is generally weak. Van Oorschot (1997:23) found that self-interest is the main motivation for paying contributions to social insurances, but also that class has no direct effect. Swift et al. (1995), d'Anjou et al. (1995) and van Oorschot (1997) found that demographic and ideological factors were also associated with differences in the choice of solidarity notions and justice principles. There are generally weak correlations between demographic factors – such as gender and age – and the choice of justice principles (Törnblom 1992:203). Women sometimes seem to empha-

size equality and need principles, men the merit principle. Increasing age sometimes leads to a stronger emphasis on the merit principle. Ideological factors have a stronger influence than demographic factors on the choice of justice principles and solidarity notions. Research findings indicate that people who align themselves with parties of the left/right tend to prefer relatively low/high inequality. Adherence to a free market ideology is shown to be positively related to the merit principle and negatively related to the need principle.

We can now formulate a number of additional hypotheses. First, we must mention, however, that in the causal model we expected that contextual factors – especially the type of welfare state regime – would primarily determine which principle of distributive justice people would choose or what notions of solidarity they would embrace. This determination takes place, we have argued, through frames of reference that are a result of the historical legacy of welfare state regime institutionalization. Now we can add that we expect that individual attributes, demographic characteristics and ideological factors also will affect the choice of justice principles and the notions of solidarity that are cherished.

Based on the results of previous research, we have formulated the following expectations concerning how some of the factors mentioned above affect people's considerations of justice and solidarity across welfare states. We examine the main effects of an individual's social-demographic and ideological position and assume – for the time being and the sake of simplicity – that these effects hold equally across the different types of welfare states.

**Hypothesis 1:** Women will be more solidary and more in favour of equality and need

principles and less in favour of an equity principle than men, *ceteris paribus*.

**Hypothesis 2:** Those who are self-employed will less strongly endorse the principles of equality and need, and will more strongly adhere to an equity principle than those who are not self-employed, *ceteris paribus*.

**Hypothesis 3:** Younger people will be less solidary, more in favour of an equity principle and less in favour of equality and need principles than older people, *ceteris paribus*.

**Hypothesis 4:** The more left-wing one's political inclination, the more one will be solidary and in favour of the equality and need principles, and the less in favour of the equity principle, *ceteris paribus*.

**Hypothesis 5:** The higher one's level of education, the more one will be solidary and in favour of need and equality principles and the less in favour of an equity principle, *ceteris paribus*.

**Hypothesis 6:** People on high incomes will be less solidary, more in favour of an equity principle and less supportive of the principles of equality and need than people on low incomes, *ceteris paribus*.

**Hypothesis 7:** People who are gainfully employed will be less solidary, more supportive of an equity principle and less supportive of equality and need principles than people who are not employed, *ceteris paribus*.

These expectations, along with the primary hypothesis mentioned above, are represented in a graph in Figure 2. The remainder of this article is dedicated to testing these hypotheses. First, however, we give a brief overview of the data, the measures of justice and solidarity principles and the statistical techniques used.

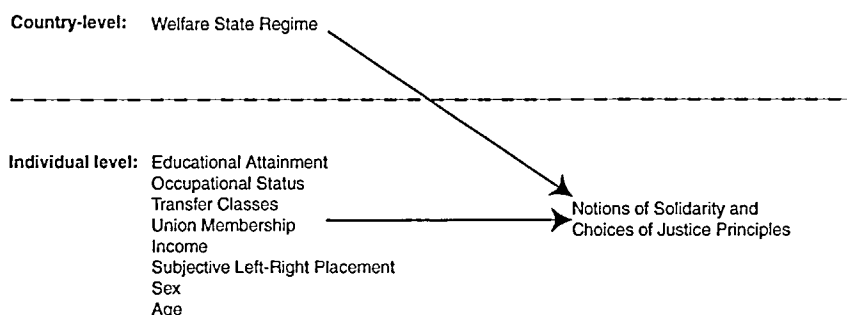


Fig. 2. Determinants of people's notions of solidarity and choice of justice principles.

#### 4. Data, operationalization and method

##### Data

To test the aforementioned hypotheses, we use data from two cross-national survey projects. In the first place, data from the 'Role of Government' module (carried out in 1996) of the *International Social Survey Program* (ISSP) are used. The second data source is the *European Values Study* (EVS). We use data from the most recent third wave conducted in 1999 or 2000 throughout Europe. For our purposes, it is necessary to confine our analysis to countries, which can be classified according to the six types of welfare state regimes we distinguish and for which sufficient data in either data set are available. Specifically, we include the countries listed below. Some of these are close empirical representations of the ideal type and others are hybrid cases exhibiting traits of two or more regime-types. However, one has to keep in mind that, ultimately, even archetypes are not completely pure cases:

##### Liberal:

1. Pure type: Canada (ISSP 1996) and the United States (ISSP 1996).
2. Hybrid type: Great Britain (ISSP 1996, EVS 1999) and Ireland (ISSP 1996, EVS 1999).

##### Conservative:

1. Pure type: France (ISSP 1996) and West Germany (ISSP 1996, EVS 1999).

##### Social-democratic:

1. Pure type: Denmark (EVS 1999), Norway (ISSP 1996) and Sweden (ISSP 1996, EVS 1999).
2. Hybrid type: Austria (EVS 1999), Belgium (EVS 1999), The Netherlands (EVS 1999).

##### Mediterranean:

1. Pure type: Greece (EVS 1999), Portugal (EVS 1999) and Spain (ISSP 1996, EVS 2000).
2. Hybrid type: Italy (ISSP 1996, EVS 2000).

##### Radical:

1. Pure type: Australia (ISSP 1996) and New Zealand (ISSP 1996).

##### East-Asian Communitarian:

1. Pure type: Japan (ISSP 1996).
2. Hybrid type: The Philippines<sup>1</sup> (ISSP 1996).

In both data sets, national weights are adjusted to generate samples with a standard size of 1000 respondents.

##### Operationalization

The dependent variables of this study – people's notions of solidarity and choice of justice principles – were measured as follows. In the first place, we selected seven indicators from the ISSP 1996 to assess people's preferred level of solidarity. These items relate primarily to the issue of who should have a right to a certain kind of collective protection. Specifically, respondents were asked how much they thought that, on the whole, it should or should not be the government's responsibility to do the following:

- Provide a job for everybody who wants one (IND1).
- Provide health care for the sick (IND2).
- Provide a decent standard of living for the old (IND3).
- Provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed (IND4).
- Reduce income differences between the rich and the poor (IND5).
- Give financial help to college students from low-income families (IND6).
- Provide decent housing for those who can't afford it (IND7).

We hypothesized that this selection of items from the ISSP 1996 would yield a scale which measures people's preferred level of solidarity. Prior to any analysis, the original response scales of these items (1 'Definitely should be', 2 'Probably should be', 3 'Probably should not be' and 4 'Definitely should not be') were reversed for convenience of interpretation. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to test a one-factor measurement model for each country with these observed variables as indicators.<sup>2</sup> Specifically, we used a Weighted Least Squares procedure to analyse the covariance matrix and asymptotic covariance matrix of these items. For comparative purposes, a multi-group analysis was also performed in which we restricted the loadings of the latent variable on the indicators to be equal across countries. Based on this model, factor regression weights were calculated which were used to estimate the scores of the latent variable. The results of these models are presented in Table 1.

In order to assess people's choice of justice principles, we selected three items from the EVS 1999. These items correspond with the equality, need and equity principles of justice. Respondents were asked to evaluate the importance of each of the following statements about what a society should provide in order to be considered 'just':



Table 1. *Factor loadings and fit-indices for Confirmatory Factor Models of solidarity items.*

| Item          | Ind1 | Ind2 | Ind3 | Ind4 | Ind5 | Ind6 | Ind7 | Min  | Max  | RMSEA | RMR  | GFI |
|---------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|-----|
| USA           | .70  | .81  | .82  | .78  | .74  | .69  | .82  | 1.21 | 4.84 | .086  | .075 | .99 |
| Canada        | .63  | .72  | .80  | .79  | .71  | .68  | .81  | 1.21 | 4.84 | .110  | .093 | .98 |
| Great Britain | .65  | .70  | .79  | .81  | .75  | .71  | .88  | 1.85 | 4.84 | .071  | .062 | .99 |
| Ireland       | .53  | .85  | .85  | .75  | .66  | .65  | .74  | 1.59 | 4.84 | .110  | .110 | .98 |
| West Germany  | .68  | .75  | .79  | .70  | .65  | .57  | .72  | 1.45 | 4.84 | .087  | .089 | .98 |
| France        | .67  | .72  | .81  | .83  | .76  | .74  | .88  | 1.21 | 4.84 | .080  | .075 | .99 |
| Sweden        | .81  | .76  | .79  | .81  | .79  | .59  | .82  | 1.21 | 4.84 | .091  | .087 | .99 |
| Norway        | .69  | .77  | .82  | .77  | .69  | .59  | .79  | 1.21 | 4.84 | .096  | .120 | .98 |
| Spain         | .67  | .81  | .87  | .82  | .74  | .84  | .89  | 2.37 | 4.84 | .045  | .046 | .99 |
| Italy         | .61  | .70  | .76  | .67  | .61  | .70  | .74  | 1.87 | 4.84 | .099  | .110 | .98 |
| New Zealand   | .68  | .79  | .77  | .74  | .68  | .62  | .81  | 1.21 | 4.84 | .110  | .097 | .98 |
| Australia     | .65  | .78  | .78  | .74  | .68  | .73  | .81  | 1.21 | 4.84 | .081  | .076 | .99 |
| Japan         | .65  | .78  | .80  | .82  | .73  | .68  | .71  | 1.21 | 4.84 | .090  | .082 | .98 |
| Philippines   | .78  | .80  | .78  | .77  | .59  | .78  | .80  | 1.21 | 4.84 | .075  | .081 | .99 |
| Multigroup    | .68  | .76  | .79  | .78  | .71  | .68  | .80  |      |      |       | .080 |     |

Ind1: 'Provide a job for everybody who wants one'.

Ind2: 'Provide health care for the sick'.

Ind3: 'Provide a decent standard of living for the old'.

Ind4: 'Provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed'.

Ind5: 'Reduce income differences between the rich and the poor'.

Ind6: 'Give financial help to college students from low-income families'.

Ind7: 'Provide decent housing for those who can't afford it'.

Source: ISSP 1996

- Eliminating large inequalities in income among citizens ('equality').
- Guaranteeing that basic needs are met for all, in terms of food, housing, clothing, education, health ('need').
- Recognizing people on their merits ('equity').

The original response format of these items (1 'very important', 2 'important', 3 'neither important nor unimportant', 4 'unimportant', 5 'not at all important') was also reversed.

The *explanatory variables* at the individual level were measured as follows. To assess the effect of educational attainment, we used a four-category collapse of the CASMIN project educational attainment classification (see Marshall, Swift & Roberts 1997). These four categories are 'low educational attainment', 'ordinary educational attainment', 'advanced educational attainment' and 'degree'. Three dummy variables were constructed using a 'low educational attainment' as the reference category. Furthermore, the effect of belonging to a transfer class was also assessed with three dummy variables: 'not in the labour force', 'unemployed' and 'old-age pensioners/disabled'. Those who are employed were taken as the reference category.

Household income is included using a 10-category variable, based on deciles. We also included the respondent's age – measured in years – and gender, using men as the reference category. Note that these variables are present both in the ISSP 1996 and in the EVS 1999. However, some important variables were only present in one of the data sets. Specifically, information about whether someone is self-employed was only included in the ISSP 1996. We added this variable to the model of factors explaining people's preferred level of solidarity by including a dummy variable, taking those who are not self-employed as the reference category. The EVS 1999 data also made it possible to include union membership (non-members are the reference category) and subjective left–right placement (measured on a 10-point scale 1 'left' to 10 'right') as explanatory variables in the models of factors affecting people's adherence to justice principles.

At the country level, we included five dummy variables for the various welfare state regimes in the model of factors affecting people's preferred level of solidarity. In this model, countries are indicated as belonging to the conservative, social-democratic, Mediterranean, antipodean or South-East Asian type

according to the classification presented in the data subsection. Countries which belong to the liberal type are taken as the reference category. In the models of factors affecting people's adherence to justice principles, we include three dummy variables to indicate conservative, social-democratic and Mediterranean welfare states. In these models, liberal welfare states are also taken as the reference category.

### **Method**

Multilevel modelling was used to assess the effects of individual and country-level variables on people's notions of solidarity and their choices of justice principles. Multilevel modelling is a special kind of regression analysis which takes into account the nested structure of data. The basic idea is that the dependent variable *Y* has an individual as well as a group aspect. The dependent variable must be a variable at level one: The hierarchical linear model is used to explain an occurrence at the lowest, most detailed level (Snijders & Bosker 1999). We estimated several hierarchical models in which the effects of social characteristics of individuals (level one or individual level) and their belonging to a certain world of welfare capitalism (level two or country level) were modelled simultaneously. The general hierarchical model assumes that both intercept and slope parameters may vary randomly across countries. In some cases it was necessary to estimate a more simple random intercept model, which assumes that only the intercept parameter at level one is allowed to vary randomly across level two, whereas the effects of social characteristics are fixed (assumed to be non-random) across level two. Eventually, both models allow us to investigate why some countries are more than others characterized by a higher average level of preferred solidarity and stronger preferences for a certain justice principle.

## **5. Results**

To investigate the relationship between welfare states and public preferences with respect to solidarity and justice, we examine the pattern of the mean scores (and standard deviations) on these instruments across countries (Table 2).

The first column represents the average position of the various welfare states on our instrument of the preferred level of solidarity. The following emerging patterns deserve atten-

tion. The first group of welfare states consists of Spain, Ireland and Italy, which have, on average, a relatively high score on the preferred level of solidarity. This group of countries is also characterized by more invariant attitudes concerning the preferred level of institutionalized solidarity, as is apparent from the smaller standard deviation of this variable. Obviously, these countries are 'immature' welfare states in which the role of the government is not as developed as citizens would like. A second group of countries includes two 'pure' social-democratic welfare states: Norway and Sweden. It also includes conservative France, as well as hybrid Great Britain. These four countries occupy an intermediate position, which still signifies a markedly positive attitude towards solidarity through government intervention. France is a country in which a strong statist legacy exists, whereas Great Britain is an example of what Esping-Andersen calls "stalled social-democratization" (1999:87): A welfare state in which a more comprehensive and collectivist orientation in social security has gradually blended with a more pronounced liberal ideology. All in all, the positive stance towards institutionalized solidarity in these countries is not surprising, given the important part the state plays – or has played – in the provision of social welfare. The third group consists of countries which belong to the liberal, radical, conservative or South-East Asian Communitarian regime type. Compared to the previous two clusters of countries, citizens of these countries show a relatively low endorsement of institutionalized solidarity. Not surprisingly, the United States is always at the bottom, preceded by Australia, Canada, Japan and New Zealand. As predicted, citizens of these welfare states appear to prefer a rather weak solidarity frame. Moreover, the citizens of the Philippines – an East-Asian Communitarian welfare state – and West Germany – a corporatist welfare state – show a tendency to prefer a weaker frame of solidarity. This is expressed by less endorsement of the state's rights to provide collective protection. As we predicted, the latter two countries occupy a position here that lies between the pure liberal and pure social-democratic countries.

In columns two to four of Table 2, we summarize the average values of choices for justice principles for the various countries. With respect to the preference for the equality principle, we observe that the citizens of Spain, Portugal and Greece show the strongest adher-

Table 2. Mean (and standard deviations) of measures of preferred level of solidarity and justice across countries.

| Measure         | Solidarity | Equality    | Need        | Equity      |
|-----------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| USA             | 3.37 (.78) |             |             |             |
| Canada          | 3.57 (.69) |             |             |             |
| Great Britain   | 3.98 (.61) | 3.61 (1.18) | 4.62 (.67)  | 4.31 (.84)  |
| Ireland         | 4.15 (.51) | 3.97 (1.10) | 4.67 (.69)  | 4.33 (.86)  |
| West Germany    | 3.76 (.57) | 3.62 (1.04) | 4.48 (.70)  | 4.10 (.95)  |
| France          | 4.02 (.69) | 4.06 (1.10) | 4.66 (.71)  | 4.26 (.98)  |
| Sweden          | 3.96 (.65) | 3.29 (1.17) | 4.54 (.86)  | 4.09 (1.00) |
| Norway          | 4.06 (.54) |             |             |             |
| Austria         |            | 3.63 (1.07) | 4.48 (.79)  | 4.20 (.88)  |
| The Netherlands |            | 3.17 (1.13) | 4.54 (.85)  | 4.13 (.97)  |
| Belgium         |            | 3.82 (1.15) | 4.64 (.71)  | 4.25 (.94)  |
| Denmark         |            | 2.71 (1.28) | 4.05 (1.16) | 3.87 (1.22) |
| Spain           | 4.42 (.48) | 4.31 (.89)  | 4.61 (.69)  | 4.17 (.98)  |
| Italy           | 4.09 (.56) | 3.76 (1.19) | 4.56 (.81)  | 4.03 (1.06) |
| Portugal        |            | 4.52 (.86)  | 4.71 (.66)  | 4.47 (.83)  |
| Greece          |            | 4.34 (.93)  | 4.78 (.55)  | 4.28 (.99)  |
| New Zealand     | 3.66 (.66) |             |             |             |
| Australia       | 3.56 (.58) |             |             |             |
| Japan           | 3.57 (.80) |             |             |             |
| Philippines     | 3.77 (.65) |             |             |             |

One-Way ANOVA for Solidarity:  $F(13;11643) = 181.15, p < .000$ .

One-Way ANOVA for Equality:  $F(12;12681) = 210.04, p < .000$ .

One-Way ANOVA for Need:  $F(12;12805) = 52.88, p < .000$ .

One-Way ANOVA for Equity:  $F(12;12611) = 23.77, p < .000$ .

Source: ISSP 1996; EVS 1999.

ence in comparison to the other countries. Furthermore, the variance of the preference for this principle is significantly lower in the Mediterranean countries. A middle group consists of welfare states with predominantly conservative characteristics – West Germany and France – and also some mixed types – Italy, Austria and Belgium. Not surprisingly, the people of Ireland also show a relatively strong positive stance towards equality, because it is an immature welfare state. At the bottom of the range of countries are the mature social-democratic welfare states of Sweden and Denmark and the hybrid cases of Great Britain and The Netherlands.<sup>3</sup> The latter two countries are also mature welfare states with a strong social-democratic legacy. Thus, we find a pattern in which citizens of immature welfare states want more equality, whereas those in more mature welfare states are in favour of levelling but are, at the same time, more willing to accept income inequality.

The third column of Table 2 reports that there is generally little variation among countries when the preference for the need-principle is at issue. This is a consequence of the level of

generality of the item measuring people's preference for this principle; general level questions elicit a strong commitment to solidarity (Kangas 1997). If contrasts between welfare states do exist in this dimension, they are mainly between the immature welfare states Greece and Portugal, on the one hand, and the mature social-democratic Denmark, on the other. There, people take a slightly less positive stance towards guaranteeing the meeting of basic needs. Notice, also, the higher variation of this item in Denmark, in comparison to the other countries. Finally, with respect to the public preference for the equity principle, the pattern is more pronounced. As expected, welfare states with a liberal imprint rank higher than welfare states with conservative and/or social-democratic characteristics, which show a weaker endorsement of this principle of justice.

When we review the results with respect to the preference for the three justice principles, one other interesting finding deserves attention: Portugal often ranks among the top, whereas Denmark – in all cases – occupies a position at the bottom. A possible explanation for this may lie in the expressiveness of the justice evalua-

tion. Jasso and Wegener (1997:408) point out that individuals have a certain style of expression that allows them to express with greater or lesser emphasis and with hyperbole or understatement. Therefore, it might be that Danes tend to understate their justice evaluation, whereas the Portuguese tend to overstate it. To investigate whether this is actually a result of expressive style, we adapted a technique proposed by Greenleaf (1992) to construct a measuring instrument for extreme response style in surveys. The goal of this method is to identify a subset of items in the item-pool, which are uncorrelated and have similar extreme response proportions. Specifically, we selected several items from the EVS 1999 survey, which had five interval scales with the same endpoint labels as the items used to measure the preference for justice principles. To identify uncorrelated items, we subjected this selection to principal component analysis with varimax rotation. Next, we examined the positive extreme response proportions, which we choose to be at least 40% of the respondents answering 'agree strongly' or 'agree' of the items loading highest on each rotated principal component.<sup>4</sup> Four items were retained to construct each respondent's extreme response score as the proportion of items in which the respondent chose the 'agree strongly' or 'agree' category. Although this measurement is obviously limited by the small number of selected items, the results gave some indication that the extreme response style of the Portuguese might affect their evaluation of the justice principles.<sup>5</sup>

In Table 3 we present the results of a hierarchical linear regression analysis for people's preferred level of solidarity. Consistent with our predictions, the type of welfare state regime does matter for people's notions of solidarity. Specifically, the contrasts among the different regime-types suggest, first of all, that citizens of social-democratic welfare states are significantly more in favour of social rights by government than citizens of liberal welfare states. Furthermore, citizens of southern welfare states give a higher preference to a strong form of solidarity. We also expected that citizens of radical and South-East Asian Communitarian welfare states would give more preference to weak forms of solidarity. As the coefficients of the contrasts of these two regime-types are not significantly different from the liberal regime, we do not have to reject this hypothesis. Finally, we predicted that conservative welfare states would lean more towards a solidarity frame in the strong

Table 3. Two-level hierarchical linear model of factors affecting people's preferred level of solidarity.

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| Intercept                                 | 3.85*** |
| <i>Country-level variables:</i>           |         |
| Welfare state regime (reference: liberal) |         |
| Conservative                              | -.07    |
| Social-democratic                         | .26***  |
| Mediterranean                             | .35***  |
| Antipodean                                | -.01    |
| South-East Asian                          | -.04    |
| Level 2 Modelled variance                 | .24     |
| <i>Individual-level variables:</i>        |         |
| Educational attainment (reference: low)   |         |
| Ordinary                                  | -.10*** |
| Advanced                                  | -.15*** |
| Degree                                    | -.16*** |
| Self-employed                             | -.13*** |
| Transfer classes (reference: working)     |         |
| Not in the labour force                   | -.00    |
| Unemployed                                | .11***  |
| Old-age pensioners/disabled               | -.01    |
| Household income                          | -.04*** |
| Sex                                       | .12***  |
| Age                                       | .00     |
| Level-1 Modelled variance                 | .09     |

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$  (one-tailed test); \*\*  $p < 0.025$  (one-tailed test); \*  $p < 0.05$  (one-tailed test).

Source: ISSP 1996.

extreme and, as such, we expected that their citizens would show a stronger preference for a high level of solidarity. However, here we find that there is no significant difference between the citizens of conservative and liberal welfare states. All in all, however, our hypothesis that the welfare state matters for people's notions of solidarity holds fairly well, especially if we keep in mind that the classification we used explains 24% of the variance in people's preferred level of solidarity at the country level.

As to our secondary hypotheses, we find, first of all, that the educational attainment of a respondent significantly affects his or her preferred level of solidarity. However, contrary to hypothesis 5, it appears that the more education an individual has had, the less he or she is in favour of a strong frame of solidarity. Consistent with hypothesis 2, we see that the self-employed are less inclined to support a high level of solidarity. As far as transfer classes are concerned, only the unemployed prefer a higher level of solidarity than those who are working; a result which only partially confirms hypothesis 7. According to hypothesis 6, individuals with higher incomes should show a weaker prefer-

Table 4. Two-level model of factors affecting preferences for justice principles.

| Dependent variable                        | Equality | Need     | Equity   |
|---|----------|----------|----------|
| Intercept                                 | 3.74***  | 4.56***  | 4.17***  |
| <i>Country-level variables:</i>           |          |          |          |
| Welfare state regime (reference: liberal) |          |          |          |
| Conservative                              | .06      | -.09     | -.20***  |
| Social-democratic                         | -.22***  | -.19**   | -.17***  |
| Mediterranean                             | .35***   | -.02     | -.16***  |
| Level-2 Modelled variance                 | .49      | .07      | .08      |
| <i>Individual-level variables:</i>        |          |          |          |
| Educational attainment (reference: low)   |          |          |          |
| Ordinary                                  | -.054*   | -.033    | -.102**  |
| Advanced                                  | -.102*   | .043     | -.062    |
| Degree                                    | -.136**  | .091**   | -.054    |
| Union member                              | .060*    | .012     | -.091*** |
| Transfer classes (reference: working)     |          |          |          |
| Not in the labour force                   | .055     | .038     | .044     |
| Unemployed                                | .047     | .055*    | -.018    |
| Old-age pensioners/disabled               | .024     | .019     | -.014    |
| Household income                          | -.031*** | -.005**  | .003     |
| Sex                                       | .012     | .045***  | -.046    |
| Age                                       | .004***  | -.001*   | .005***  |
| Subjective left-right placement           | -.113*** | -.040*** | .014**   |
| Level-1 Modelled variance                 | .09      | .02      | .03      |

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$  (one-tailed test); \*\*  $p < 0.025$  (one-tailed test); \*  $p < 0.05$  (one-tailed test).

Source: ISSP 1996.

ence for solidarity than people with lower incomes. The effect of the household income of a respondent confirms this. Finally, the coefficient of gender reveals that there is a difference between men and women when the preference for a certain level of solidarity is at issue: As expected (see hypothesis 1), women prefer a higher level of solidarity than men, *ceteris paribus*. Altogether, the explanatory variables at the individual level account for only 9% of the variance in the preferred level of solidarity.

In the models presented in Table 4, we first investigated whether – and if so, to what degree – welfare state regimes account for differences between populations in their preferences for justice principles.<sup>6</sup>

With respect to the public preference for the equality principle, people living in a social-democratic welfare state appear to be less in favour of equality than citizens of liberal welfare states. In contrast, citizens of Southern countries are clearly more supportive of equality. These results are in agreement with previous findings by Gelissen (2001) that the citizens of mature social-democratic welfare states are less supportive of an extensive and intensive welfare state than citizens of Southern welfare states.

Furthermore, citizens of social-democratic welfare states are significantly less in favour of applying the principle of need than citizens of liberal welfare states. One possible explanation for these effects is that, in social-democratic welfare states, the tax regime needed to achieve equality might be more burdensome than in liberal welfare states. This leads these citizens to take a less positive position towards equality.

Finally, the results in the last column show that citizens of conservative, social-democratic and of Southern welfare states are all less supportive of the equity principle of justice. This is in accordance with our expectations. We hypothesized that primarily the liberal welfare states would tend to create a normative frame of weak solidarity, which emphasizes equity most strongly. With respect to the effects of the individual level variables, we find that, as educational attainment increases, individuals are less likely to choose the principle of equality. However, those with a degree are – in contrast to those who are low-schooled – significantly more supportive of the need principle of justice. Only those with ordinary (secondary school) education are less in favour of the equity principle than those with the least educational

attainment. Thus, these results do not, in general, support hypothesis 5. The coefficients of union membership suggest that this socio-political characteristic promotes a stronger preference for the principle of equality and a weaker preference for the equity principle. Surprisingly, in these models there are hardly any visible differences between the transfer classes and those who are working. Only the unemployed appear to be more in favour of the need principle than the employed. A higher household income negatively affects the preference for the principles of equality and need, which is in line with hypothesis 6. Furthermore, women appear to be more supportive of the need principle than men. As age increases, people are more in favour of equality, less in favour of the principle of need (although this effect is significant only at  $p < 0.05$ , one-tailed test), and more in favour of the equity principle. As expected, we find that, as people move more to the right of the political spectrum, they are less in favour of equality and need, and more supportive of merit.

## 6. Conclusion and discussion

We have argued here that people's notions of solidarity and their choices of justice principles need to be understood in the context of the frames of reference and the forces of circumstances created by their welfare state regimes. A second objective of the analyses presented here has been to test the idea that welfare states will show a considerable degree of agreement with respect to the public's commitment to solidarity and its choice of justice principles. Moreover, within these welfare states, dividing lines will run among individuals and groups in their preferences for certain justice principles and notions of solidarity.

The results and wider implications of our analyses can be summarized as follows. With respect to the analyses at the welfare state level, we found significant – although not decisive evidence – that there is a connection between cognition and evaluation (Marshall et al. 1999:350–351). More specifically, the actual state of affairs concerning welfare state regimes is associated with people's views about which level of solidarity should be achieved and which justice principles ought to be emphasized. Citizens of the immature Mediterranean welfare states show a strong commitment to institutionalized solidarity. Likewise, the people of social-

democratic welfare states or welfare states with a strong statist or social-democratic imprint clearly take a positive view of government intervention to achieve a high level of solidarity. In contrast, in a third group of countries – a mixture of liberal, radical, conservative and South-East Asian communitarian welfare states – citizens appear to be relatively less dedicated to achieving a high level of solidarity through government intervention. In general, the results show a close match between the expected ranking of countries according to the public's preferred level of solidarity and the frames of solidarity, which are emphasized by the various regime types.

Concerning citizens' choices of justice principles, we also find a ranking of countries which comes relatively close to Esping-Andersen's classification of welfare states, but which is not as clear-cut as the public's preferred level of solidarity. With respect to people's choice of the principle of equality, the findings suggest that, although citizens of all types of mature welfare states are in favour of income levelling, they are simultaneously willing to accept income inequality. Conversely, the populations of immature welfare states appeared to be more in favour of equality. As for the preference for the need principle, the most significant result is that citizens – regardless of their type of welfare state – rate this principle as paramount. However, the results also show that the populations of modern welfare states also give strong preference to the principle of equity and equality. However, this latter finding does not hold true for the immature welfare states of Spain, Portugal and Greece, where the principle of equality is preferred over the equity principle. These results are largely consistent with the observation of Arts and van der Veen (1992:149). In modern societies, they state, not only the differentiated distribution of primary resources is increasingly based on achievement and decreasingly on ascription (hence the high evaluation of the equity principle of justice). However, also egalitarian ideas have become more important. At the value level, modern societies are basically egalitarian in the sense that inequalities are positively justified in terms of their importance for society. The systematic ordering of preferences for the three principles, which exists across all types of welfare states, provides a clear illustration of this argument. With respect to citizens' preference for the equity principle, we find – as expected – that the citizens of

welfare states which emphasize a weak frame of solidarity (in casu the welfare states with a liberal imprint) tend to show a stronger preference for desert criteria than the citizens of welfare states which create a strong solidarity frame: the conservative and social-democratic regime types. Therefore, there is a strong correspondence between the normative frames of solidarity – embodied by the various welfare state regimes – and their populations' preferred level of solidarity and their choices of justice principles.

Taking into account the differences which exist between welfare state regimes, we also found important differences between individuals and social groups in their preferred level of solidarity and their choices of justice principles. Our results are largely in line with previous findings by, for example, Kluegel and Miyano (1995) and Gelissen (2001). In general, we find that, as people's educational levels increase, they are less committed to institutionalized solidarity and equality. This result supports Kluegel and Miyano's thesis (1995) that, owing to its strong correlation with income, educational attainment differentiates between those who expect to benefit from and those who expect to pay the price for solidarity and equality. As expected, a higher income negatively affects people's preferred level of solidarity and their choices of justice principles. Furthermore, women prefer a higher level of solidarity than men. Finally, as far as the effects of transfer classes are concerned, only the unemployed appear to be significantly more in favour of a high level of solidarity than those who are employed.

However, these findings deserve a critical comment. A first critical remark concerns the data. The high level of commitment to solidarity, which we find is possibly based both on a general consensus about solidarity and justice in life beyond welfare regimes and the consequence of the questions which we currently have at our disposal to measure people's preferred level of solidarity and their choices of justice principles. A statement such as 'guaranteeing that basic needs are met for all' will only elicit approval by the majority of the public in most welfare states, because they have no alternative readily available. Including this kind of question obviously limits the scope of research on public commitment to solidarity and justice and their connection to welfare states.<sup>7</sup> As Arts and van der Veen (1992:152) point out, this kind of critique has been

promoted, in particular, by Marxist theorists, who suspect that the apparent consensus results from the fact that questions are formulated in abstract terms. This causes the observed agreement to be an artefact of the measurement instrument used. Eventually, this raises important issues of validity, and the discussion whether dissent predominates consent – or vice versa – needs to be settled by future research.

A second critical note pertains to the fact that the differences found between countries and regime types are often slight. For example, a quick glance at Table 2 reveals that the average scores of the various welfare states are relatively close together. Two explanations may be offered for this finding. In the first place, it could be argued that the world has fundamentally changed since Esping-Andersen formulated his classification, which is based on data from the 1970s and 1980s. Welfare states, in many ways, have converged since then as a consequence of emerging globalization (Montanari 2001). Giddens (1991:61) points to the importance of globalization, by arguing that the modern world should now be understood as a global system. The construction of theories must, therefore, escape from the limitations of modelling specific nation or welfare states (Sklair 1991:2). Globalization may also have led to a convergence of people's opinions about solidarity and justice. However, whether this also holds true for the findings in this article can, ideally, only be assessed on the basis of aggregated, long-term cross-national time series on these opinions; these are, unfortunately, only to a limited degree available (Gelissen 2001:189). Another explanation may be that differences between welfare state regimes are largely simply differences of emphasis. Whether regimes differ from one another is dependent on how much weight they attach to specific justice principles and notions of solidarity. As Goodin et al. (1999:36) correctly argue, 'discussions of differences between welfare state regimes must be set firmly against the backdrop of commonality. In many respects, what all these welfare regimes share is at least as important as their differences'. Because the countries we included in our analyses are all welfare states – albeit some are 'immature' and others are mature – that some are one particular kind and some are another – we do not come across truly large differences in people's preferred level of solidarity and their choices of justice principles. Our findings only underscore the following: Irre-

spective of the particular ideology on which specific welfare states are built, a loose social unanimity exists over the various types of welfare states. Values of solidarity and justice are matters of priority to all.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Note that the Philippines is not included by Esping-Andersen in his discussion of welfare states. However, in order to have some variation within the South-East Asian welfare state regime we use the Philippines as another real 'immature' welfare state which can be assigned to this type of regime.

<sup>2</sup> To assess the overall fit of the measurement model, we use the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), the values of which lie on a scale ranging from 0 to 1, where values close to 1 indicate a satisfactory fit. Also, the Root Mean Square Residual (RMR) and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) are used. The smaller the RMR, the better the fit of the model. A RMR of zero indicates a perfect fit. A value of RMSEA of about 0.05 or less indicates a close fit of the model in relation to the degrees of freedom, whereas a value of about 0.08 or less for the RMSEA indicates a reasonable error of approximation. Models with a value of RMSEA of 0.1 or more indicate unsatisfactory fit of the model (Browne & Cudeck 1993).

<sup>3</sup> Note that, with the exception of Denmark, all response patterns on the item measuring the preference for the equality principle are more strongly skewed to the right.

<sup>4</sup> Only two uncorrelated items had negative extreme response proportions, which we chose to be at least 40% of the respondents answering 'disagree strongly' or 'disagree'. Because the number of usable items causes too little variation in the negative extreme response measure, we could not investigate whether the Danes also have an extreme response style.

<sup>5</sup> For Portugal, this measure of positive response style explained 10% of the variance in the preference for the equality principle, 11% of the variance in the preference for the need principle and 10% of the variance in the preference for the equity principle. For the other countries, explained variances by this measure were 4% or less.

<sup>6</sup> Models for the dependent variables Equality and Equity are random-intercept and slopes models; the model for the dependent variable Need is a random intercept model (Random intercept and slopes model for this dependent variable proved not to be stable).

<sup>7</sup> Large-scale surveys, such as the International Social Justice Project 1991, include more refined measures of people's perceptions and preferences with respect to the distributive order, but are limited in the number of welfare states (see also Arts & Gelissen 1999b).

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