KU LEUVEN

FACULTEIT SOCIALE WETENSCHAPPEN

Public attitudes towards Social Europe:

At the crossroads of European integration and the welfare state

Sharon BAUTE

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

Promotor: Prof. Dr. Bart Meuleman
Copromotoren: Dr. Koen Abts en Prof. Dr. Marc Swyngedouw
Onderzoekseenheid: Centrum voor Sociologisch Onderzoek [CeSO]

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Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

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Introduction

The founding fathers of the European project were convinced that improvements in welfare would stem from European economic integration. Because the European project was conceived as one with open economies and closed welfare states, the development of a social dimension for the EU was a 'road not taken' (Scharpf, 2002). Nevertheless, over time, national social spaces have opened up as a result of the EU's increasing competences and geographical expansions. For instance, the EU rules on the coordination of social security systems ensure that EU citizens are entitled to the same social benefits as nationals of the country where they are employed, and that citizens can take up retirement in another member state. Furthermore, the EU has set the minimum period for maternity leave at 14 weeks (Directive 92/85/EEC), finances projects for young people seeking employment and invests in lifelong learning opportunities to modernize workforce skills through the European Social Fund. These are just a few examples of how the EU intervenes in the sphere of social policy. One can no longer ignore this ongoing development at the European level; namely the development of Social Europe. Social Europe consists of EU law that establishes supranational social policies and that affects social rights and policies in the EU member states (Martinsen & Vollaard, 2014, p. 680). European integration has resulted in a multilevel governance over social policy (Leibfried & Pierson, 1995b) and impacts on the social contract between citizens and the state (Rhodes & Mény, 1998).

European integration is accompanied by concerns relating to social redistribution and protection. For instance, the eastern enlargements of the EU have raised discussions about social dumping, about competition between social regimes and about the pressure that integration dynamics exert on the maintenance of high social standards and social protection levels in the most advanced welfare states (Vaughan-Whitehead, 2003). More recently, the Eurozone crisis elicited discussions about what member states of the European Union owe each other. Concerns about the consequences of financial assistance have prevailed in both donor and recipient countries of the bailout packages. In donor countries, a certain degree of public reluctance has become apparent with regard to providing financial assistance to debt-ridden countries, as many citizens expect their government to invest resources in improving living conditions at home and not abroad (Lengfeld, Schmidt, & Häuberer 2015). In recipient countries, concerns have arisen concerning the strict austerity measures conditional to the bailout packages, introducing significant cuts in social spending.

Concerns about the EU's impact in the social area have been proved to play a strong role in opposing further European integration (Vasilopoulou, 2016). Most notably, the Brexit referendum questioned the costs and benefits of European integration. A major theme in the referendum campaign concerned the EU freedom of movement and the issue of so-called 'welfare tourism', which assumes that EU migrants are attracted by more generous welfare benefits in destination countries. The referendum outcome shows that some groups are convinced they are better off by withdrawing from the EU than by joining forces and responding to common challenges at the EU level.

European integration is no longer a matter of 'foreign affairs'. The process of European integration is of key importance for the future of national welfare states. Domestic debates about social regulations, redistribution and deservingness, are now supplemented with a European dimension. Given that Social Europe affects life chances and access to financial resources, it has become an inescapable issue for sociological research. What are the societal consequences of the opening up of national social spheres? Are citizens willing to share resources with their fellow Europeans? Does Social Europe constitute a potential source of social conflict in society? Understanding how citizens conceive Social Europe and why some are more in favour of it than others is essential in order to gain insight into the popular legitimacy of further integration as well as into potential lines of conflict over EU policymaking.

As social policy is increasingly subject to and constrained by European decision-making, scholars should be urged to depart from the usual focus on social policy as a demarcated space of national welfare states. This dissertation takes a sociological perspective on European integration by analysing public opinion towards Social Europe. The main research goal is to investigate how citizens conceptualize Social Europe and what the main drivers of support for Social Europe are. In a wider sense, this dissertation provides insights into the desirability of 'an ever-closer union' from the view of citizens. As Social Europe is situated at the convergence of European integration and the welfare state, welfare attitudes and attitudes towards the general process of European integration may be of primary importance in explaining support for Social Europe. However, it remains unclear how and to what extent they are related. Do citizens perceive Social Europe as complementary to their welfare state or do they see it as the antipode, threatening hard-won social achievements? To what extent does their judgement depend on what this Social Europe contains? Of course, Social Europe is inseparable from the wider process of European integration. Would public support for Social Europe be just a matter of being in favour of or opposed to European integration itself? As the process of European integration continues, the public may have developed more sophisticated notions of the EU. However, do citizens genuinely perceive

European integration as a project with multiple faces? These are some of the open questions that will be addressed in this dissertation.

In Chapter 1, the research topic, the research goals and the empirical strategy of this dissertation are outlined. This dissertation is based on a collection of four empirical articles (published or under review), and therefore there is inevitably some overlap between the general theoretical framework and the chapters, as well as some differences in terminology. Because these articles are co-authored, the term 'we' (instead of 'I') is being used when any reference is made to the authors. Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 empirically analyse public attitudes to Social Europe each time from a different angle. Lastly, in Chapter 6, the main findings and policy implications of the studies are discussed and avenues for future research are suggested.

Chapter 1

Theoretical framework and research goals

This chapter sets out the theoretical framework of this dissertation. The first section focuses on how European integration relates to national welfare states. Here, I mainly draw on the work of Ferrera (2005), entitled 'The Boundaries of Welfare: European Integration and the New Spatial Politics of Social Protection' and adopt his terminology of de-bounding and de-structuring. The second section defines Social Europe and briefly sets out its multidimensional character. The third section zooms in on public attitudes towards Social Europe. The relevance of studying public attitudes to Social Europe is set out and the embeddedness of the research topic in current research traditions is clarified. Based on theoretical reasoning and empirical evidence, the most important origins of support for Social Europe are subsequently highlighted. At the end of this section, important lacunae in literature are summarized. The fourth section of this chapter contains the specific research questions that are addressed in this dissertation. How these research questions are empirically analysed is set out in section five. This last section includes a contextualization of the Belgian case, a description of the datasets and an explanation of the different types of statistical modelling that are used.

1.1 European integration: De-bounding and de-structuring the welfare state

European welfare states are undergoing profound transformations. Challenges are presented from the inside, such as aging populations and changing family structures, but also from the outside. Globalization has fundamentally altered the context in which welfare states operate (Swank, 2010). Capital has gained a structurally stronger bargaining position towards labour and governments. It is argued that economic globalization constrains the ability of governments to sustain generous social protection systems (Scharpf, 2000). For instance, capital mobility exerts pressure on governments to cut back their social security spending and reduce the corporate taxes that finance the welfare state. For European welfare states, European integration is an even more far-reaching variant of globalization (Schmidt, 2003). European integration gradually undermines the sovereignty (the legal authority) and the autonomy (the de facto regulatory capacity) of national welfare states through the establishment of supranational institutions (Leibfried, 2015; p. 264). Ferrera (2005) theorizes the challenge of European integration to national welfare states as being an attempt to redefine the boundaries of welfare. To understand the tension between

national systems of social solidarity and European integration, it is important to explain the dynamics of boundary building that characterize national welfare states.

European welfare states started to develop from the late nineteenth century and became firmly entrenched after the early years following the World War II (Nullmeier & Kaufmann, 2010). Social rights became an important element of citizenship embedded in the national welfare states (Marshall, 1950). Ferrera considers welfare state formation as a process of 'bounded structuring' (see also Rokkan, 1975). On the one hand, the welfare state levels out the inequalities of the market and pacifies the conflicts between social classes. It provides internal structuring, which includes all citizens within the same circle of solidarity. This internal structuring implies the creation of codified rules and norms of behaviour through centre-periphery relations, socio-political divisions, and institutional-organizational forms (Ferrera, 2005, p. 23). On the other hand, there is a need for external bounding, that is, demarcating the circle of solidarity and defining the social categories that do not fall under selected target groups. As Ferrera states, there can be no internal structuring without spatial demarcation (Ferrera, 2005, p. 21). Through the development of compulsory social insurance, clear boundaries are drawn between those who are entitled to social benefits and those who are not eligible to join the social security systems (Kuhnle & Sander, 2010). The development of formal systems of solidarity within nation states implies locking in insiders and preventing outsiders from entering. By means of external bounding vis-à-vis outsiders, the internal bonding of insiders is facilitated (Ferrera, 2005; Rokkan, 1975), and boundary building thus facilitates solidarity ties between insiders. The concept of bounded structuring precisely captures the interdependence between the external closure of a given space and its internal differentiation.

Because welfare state formation creates external boundaries and an internal structuring of solidarity, it has been argued that welfare states contribute to state building and the political legitimacy of the nation state (Bartolini, 2005). Social policies have been used to create loyalty to the national state, and welfare states create both social and territorial integration. Social integration concerns the mediating and reconciling of social conflicts, particularly class conflicts, through social policies and welfare arrangements (van Kersbergen, 2006, p. 381). Territorial integration relates to constructing and reinforcing a national political community by redistributing resources from richer to poorer people and regions.

According to Ferrera (2005), European integration is based on a different logic to that of national welfare states. Whereas national welfare states are based on closure, European integration exerts opening pressures. European integration is understood as a process of de-bounding and de-structuring. It affects the sovereignty of nation states by weakening the external

boundaries of welfare states and de-structuring their internal constellations. The EU constrains the scope and content of national bounding decisions, as well as the right to impose boundaries as such (Ferrera, 2005, p. 3). Welfare states still have the right to impose boundaries; however, it is no longer an absolute right. For instance, social benefits no longer need to be consumed within the state's territory, as they have become portable within the EU. In sum, member states are now 'semi-sovereign welfare states' the social policies of which are increasingly constrained not only by demographic change, individualization and globalization, but also by the pervasive influence of the European Union (Leibfried, 2000).

Due to the different dynamics of welfare states and European integration, the making of Social Europe has been of a contested nature (Martinsen & Vollaard, 2014). Ferrera is relatively optimistic about the capacity to protect both national social contracts and EU social policy progress. He believes that the tensions between European integration and national welfare states can open up a larger shared social space. As Ferrera (2005) posits, European integration is an attempt to redraw the 'bounded structuring' at the supranational level, and re-bounding and re-structuring processes can be observed. In this regard, Ferrera draws attention to the fact that much of the jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) is devoted to the enforcement of rights to social assistance and other non-contributory benefits to EU citizens.[1] By weakening national barriers, the EU not only plays a 'market-making' role, but also manufactures a form of solidarity. European integration is building a social space that constitutes a new boundary vis-à-vis third countries and their nationals.

However, the tension between European integration and national welfare states has resulted in two opposing views about the EU; namely the EU as a regional actor for global economic integration versus the EU as a defensive wall against globalization (Hyman, 2005). Compared with Ferrera (2005), others have more pessimistic views on the consequences of the opening pressures of European integration on social protection (Hemerijck, 2012; Offe, 2003; Scharpf, 2010). Such views underline that European integration will not be able to restructure at the supranational level the type of solidarity that exists in national welfare states. According to Scharpf (1999, 2010), there is a structural asymmetry in the institutional design of the EU between negative and positive integration, which cannot be overcome by political action at the EU level. Whereas negative integration refers to the removal of barriers and obstacles to free and undistorted competition, positive integration refers to the reconstruction of a system of economic

[1] Similarly, Leibfried (2015) argues that European social policy is to a large extent court driven.

regulation at the European level (Scharpf, 1999, p. 45).[2] Hemerijck (2012, p. 291) suggests that defensive domestic mobilizations around national welfare states have been triggered because European integration is increasingly perceived as the handmaiden of globalization. Before the financial crisis, Offe (2003) had already argued that in order to maintain support for the European project, the EU should become a credible institution of protection against economic insecurity. Whereas European integration was portrayed as compatible with, or moreover, as a guarantee of rising social and welfare standards during the first five decades of European integration, it is now increasingly perceived that further European integration threatens welfare. This idea of conflicting interests is also found in what Hemerijck (2012) calls the 'double bind of Social Europe'. This double bind results from the twofold commitment to domestic social protection and European market integration. On the one hand, national governments are bound by a domestic social contract and therefore unable to shrink welfare programmes without running the risk of alienating their national political support bases (Hemerijck, 2012, p. 294). On the other hand, member states have become, as Hemerijck describes, irreversibly committed to a pervasive programme of European market integration, exposing their welfare states to regulatory competition. This double bind implicates a loss of national welfare policy autonomy due to market integration, in combination with the inability to shift welfare policy to the European level due to institutional differences and political controversy (Hemerijck, 2012, p. 294).

1.2 From welfare states to Social Europe

From a historical perspective, the process of European integration is impressive. Throughout the decades, the EU has expanded both its competences and its territory. The fundamental idea behind the project of European integration was to unify European countries after the Second World War by creating a common market for coal and steel. The establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community[3] in the Treaty of Paris 1951 can be considered as the very beginning of what later evolved into the European Union. Subsequently, the goal became to bring about economic integration in a wider range of sectors, leading to the creation of the European Economic Community – also known as the Common Market – and the European Atomic Energy Community, by the Treaty of Rome in 1957. This treaty introduced the principle of the four freedoms, based on the underlying idea that people, goods, services and capital should be able to move just as freely within the EU as they can in national markets.

[2] Scharpf (1999) warns that the distinction is not completely interchangeable with the concepts of market-making and market-correcting policy interventions. Whereas negative integration is market-making, measures for positive integration can be both market-making and market-correcting.

[3] The six founding countries were Belgium, France, (West) Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.

At the early beginning, the European project was conceived of as a project with open economies and closed welfare states (Ferrera, 2008). Enhancements to living and working conditions were expected to result from the expansion of the market and the operation of market forces. However, soon it turned out that the idea of separate tracks was not viable, precisely because the economic sphere and the social sphere are so strongly interrelated. The EU started to gradually intervene in social policy for specific aspects defined in its treaties (Leibfried, 2015). The emerging European social policy resulted more from spillovers from the single market process to the area of social policy, rather than from the EU's ambitions to build a welfare state. Nevertheless, continued European integration has resulted in multilevel governance in the area of social policy (Leibfried & Pierson, 1995b). In sum, whereas prior to the European integration process, welfare states were national states (de Swaan, 1992), they gradually became semi-sovereign states (Hemerijck, 2012). The shift in competences over social policy from the national to the supranational marks the development of Social Europe.

However, what does the notion of 'Social Europe' mean? Social Europe is used as a container concept to indicate a wide range of social policy principles and instruments. So far, there is no common definition of Social Europe used by scholars. However, at least two aspects seem to be essential; namely a certain degree of European integration and an involvement in social policy.
Martinsen and Vollaard (2014, p. 680) define Social Europe in a two-level perspective:

> (1) the protection and extension of social rights by means of positive integration and market correcting/restricting policies, and (2) the intervention in national social policies to enforce the market and promote free movement, free competition and non-discrimination.

Following this definition, Social Europe is conceived as an EU-induced phenomenon, which distinguishes it from other approaches that consider it as a combination of national and EU-level policy (Ferrera, 2014). Martinsen and Vollaard's (2014) definition captures the complexity of Social Europe very well, by indicating that it not only refers to market-correcting policies, but also results from market-making policies and is therefore strongly intertwined with European economic policy. Different terms circulate – European social policy (Leibfried & Pierson, 1995a), European Social Union (Vandenbroucke, 2017), EU social dimension (Falkner, 2016) and European social model (Jepsen & Pascual, 2005) – often for different usages. For instance, the so-called European social model is often used to indicate an assumed set of commonalities in the social and economic systems of European countries that would distinguish European societies from the United States (Alber, 2006). To gain more detailed insights into what Social Europe

entails, a few examples are provided below. Given that Chapter 2 focusses on the dimensions of Social Europe that can be distinguished conceptually, these will not be elaborated in great detail here. As a conceptualization of the various dimensions of Social Europe's policy principles and instruments helps to understand how Social Europe relates to national welfare states, a comprehensive outline of the development of European social policy is not provided here, but is well documented in literature (see e.g. Anderson, 2015; Geyer, 2000; Hantrais, 2007).

Current European social policy has resulted from various policy principles and instruments. The coordination of social security rights across borders was a first important intervention in national social policies. EU citizens are granted cross-border welfare rights, to prevent them from losing their social security rights when moving from one member state to another. Concretely, this means that EU citizens have access to social security benefits in another member state, and that social rights, such as pensions, can be taken up when residing in another member state (European Commission, 2010b). Furthermore, EU social regulations concern binding as well as non-binding minimum standards, mainly in the areas of health and safety in the workplace, working conditions and gender equality (Falkner, 2010). For instance, the protection of workers exposed to industrial emissions or pollutants, or responsible for heavy loads is included in EU Directives (Falkner, 2010, p. 294). Another facet of Social Europe that developed as an integral part of European integration concerns the structural funds that redistribute resources across the EU and reduce economic and social disparities (Allen, 2010). The Cohesion Fund is intended for member states with a gross domestic product per capita less than 90 per cent of the EU average.[4] It invests in trans-European infrastructure networks and in environmental projects. A relatively new EU social policy instrument is the Open Method of Coordination (OMC). The OMC was originally applied to coordinate economic policies (Hodson & Maher, 2001), but has been extended to social policy areas, such as pensions, inclusion, health and long-term care (de la Porte & Pochet, 2002). Although the OMC does not create binding rules, convergence towards common objectives is facilitated by means of mutual learning, benchmarking and peer review (Pochet, 2005). Member states present regular reports on how they have dealt with the guidelines and why they have chosen particular strategies. These examples indicate that Social Europe is already implemented through a variety of policy instruments, which all have their own dynamics and purposes.

The development of Social Europe has been impeded by a number of obstacles (Bailey, 2008; Obinger et al., 2005). First, the EU treaties are primarily focused on economic policy,

[4] For the period 2014–2020 these countries are Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

providing only *limited competences* in the social field (Leibfried & Pierson, 1995a). The EU can only play by the rules and use the competences it has in the social area as much as possible.[5] EU legislation in social policy areas requires at least qualified majority voting (for an extensive overview of social policy mandates see Leibfried, 2015), and developing extensive social policy at the EU level would require treaty changes. However, it is argued that national governments resist the integration of welfare policies because of the electoral importance of social programmes (Leibfried, 2015). Second, the development of Social Europe is impeded by the *heterogeneity* of member states. The welfare states of the founding six countries were all shaped by the Bismarckian work-based social insurance model and were thus not that different from each other (Falkner, 2009a, p. 20; Scharpf, 2002). However, the heterogeneity in funding and expenditure, and normative assumptions and values of national welfare systems increased dramatically after EU enlargements. Coordinating or harmonizing the social policies of the 28 member states is challenging at the very least. Third, the strengthening of Social Europe is constrained by a relatively *small EU budget* compared with national budgets for social policies. Especially for the most affluent member states, incoming EU transfers – such as those received from the European Social Fund to design activation policies for the unemployed – may seem insignificant in comparison with the national budgets these countries allocate to social spending (Verschraegen et al., 2011). Summarized, the EU's limited social competences, the rising heterogeneity and a limited EU budget are often given as explanations for why the strengthening of Social Europe is obstructed. A European welfare state or one-size-fits-all approach is not considered feasible or desirable (Kleinman, 2002; Vandenbroucke, 2017).

Despite some institutional, budgetary and practical obstacles to the development of Social Europe, it is very likely that the strengthening of the EU's social dimension will continue in the future. The implementation of a European unemployment insurance scheme is currently being discussed. This would introduce an institutionalized system of solidarity between all EU citizens, while increasing the viability of the monetary union (Dullien, 2013). Other proposals have been made in the form of a European child benefit (Levy et al., 2013) and a European minimum income benefit (Peña-Casas & Bouget, 2014). These are all steps towards a minimum European social security system. Furthermore, EU member states are debating the introduction of Eurobonds for the Eurozone (European Commission, 2011a). Eurobonds imply that member states will act together as a common guarantor for loans to an individual member state. As a

[5] In areas in which the EU does not have exclusive competence, the principle of subsidiarity applies, laid down in the Treaty on European Union (European Parliament, 2015). This principle implies that the EU does not take action unless action at the EU level is more effective than at the national, regional or local level. The exercise of EU powers is also governed by the principle of proportionality, implying that action should not go beyond what is necessary to meet the objectives of the treaties.

consequence, states that are already highly indebted will be able to receive cheaper credit, thanks to Eurozone countries with higher ratings.[6] Eurobonds can be considered an important step towards a European fiscal union, whereas at the same time they would significantly strengthen member state solidarity.

1.3 Public attitudes towards Social Europe

1.3.1 Integration or contestation?

To date, very little attention has been paid to how citizens perceive the development of Social Europe, despite the fact that citizens' acceptance and support for Social Europe is considered significant for decision-making processes in democracies. In highlighting the importance of such attitudes, Gerhards and Lengfeld (2015) draw on the distinction between system integration and social integration, introduced by Lockwood (1964). *System integration* refers to the integration of institutions and subsystems. It consists of the formation and extension of European institutions and the creation of a uniform European legal space (Gerhards & Lengfeld, 2015, p. 7). By contrast, *social integration* refers to individuals and their integration into society. It is the approval of the process of system integration (Gerhards & Lengfeld, 2015, p. 7). Legitimized European integration requires that system integration is accompanied by social integration. However, Gerhards and Lengfeld point to a divergence between European system integration and social integration. This development needs more attention and needs to be studied in more detail.

In addition to reasons of popular legitimacy, there is a wider relevance for studying public attitudes towards Social Europe. Cleavage theory assumes that attitudes can crystalize around specific lines of conflict and develop into cleavages (Bartolini & Mair, 1990). Cleavage arises to the extent that social structure determines political preferences (Marks & Steenbergen, 2004, p. 3). Citizens' socially stratified attitudes can form a basis for political mobilization if they are organized by political actors, such as political parties (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967). Traditionally, these cleavages relate to the socioeconomic and cultural sphere. Various scholars point to the emergence of new issues that have transformed or displaced the traditional left-right cleavage (Kriesi et al., 2008; Swyngedouw, 1994). Kriesi and colleagues (2008) argue that globalization and denationalization have given rise to a new conflict in Western European societies, namely an 'integration versus demarcation conflict' that opposes the winners from globalization with the losers. Integration captures support for the opening-up of national boundaries, whereas

[6] The design of Eurobonds has been strongly debated, due to the potential for moral hazard. See Delpla & von Weizsäcker (2011) for their Blue and Red Bonds proposal to enforce fiscal discipline.

demarcation refers to preferences for state autonomy and protectionist measures. According to Kriesi and colleagues (2008), the new structural conflict of integration and demarcation operates between the winners and losers from globalization. They define the losers as those people whose life opportunities were traditionally protected by national boundaries (Kriesi et al., 2008, p. 4). The weakening of national boundaries is perceived by these people as a threat to their social status and their social security, and 'Their life chances and action spaces are being reduced' (Kriesi et al., 2008, p. 5). The *winners* from globalization, by contrast, are those who benefit from the new opportunities arising from globalization and 'whose life chances are enhanced' (Kriesi et al., 2008, p. 5).

Kriesi and colleagues (2008) have brought the relevance of European integration – which they consider as a regional variant of globalization – for European societies and national politics to the attention. Of course, European integration affects different spheres of life, referring to social (solidarity and redistribution), economic (liberalization), cultural (European heritage and identity) and political integration (supranational authority structures). Focusing on whether a conflict of integration versus demarcation exists regarding the attitudes towards Social Europe in particular is relevant for two main reasons. First, the issue of Social Europe constitutes a potential dividing line among the electorate, since it concerns the highly sensitive area of welfare. European integration destabilizes long-standing patterns of national institutionalized solidarity and might cause new lines and forms of distributive conflict (Ferrera, 2005). As Social Europe can disturb the existing distribution of material resources and life chances, a potential dividing line may be particularly prevalent regarding welfare issues. Second, voters' attitudes to the various dimensions (political, economic, cultural and social) of European integration do not necessarily coincide. Different patterns of contestation are possible for different integration issues. As a major objective of Social Europe consists of counterbalancing the economic policies of the EU, the social-structural position of citizens on the integration-demarcation poles may be different from their position regarding Economic Europe. By focusing on European integration in general – rather than on Social Europe, for instance – scholars look beyond the particularities of the European construction and what it entails for society. In conclusion, a potential social conflict in society can be emerging with regard to the issue of Social Europe. Analysing the position of voters concerning this issue provides insights into the nature and scope of the so-called integration-demarcation conflict (Kriesi et al., 2008). It shifts the analyses of European integration as an all-encompassing phenomenon to a more fine-grained analysis of the social dimension of European integration.

In order to understand contestation about Social Europe, it is also meaningful to shed some light on the motives that are used by proponents and opponents of Social Europe. Various

reasons have been put forward in favour of a more Social Europe and many authors have stressed that Social Europe is a necessity if European integration is to continue (e.g. Fernandes & Rinaldi, 2016; Vandenbroucke, 2013). A major argument centres around spillovers or externalities associated with economic integration. In practice it is effectively impossible to make a separation between 'market issues' and 'social issues'. Problems connected with the completion of the internal market initially encouraged the European Commission to intervene in the area of social policy (Leibfried & Pierson, 1994, p. 37-38). It is argued that European market-making or negative integration has contributed to the breaking down of national borders around domestic arrangements for social protection, while in return contributing little to market-correcting positive integration at the EU level (Hemerijck, 2012, p. 326). It is further suggested that the social dimension of the EU should be strengthened in order to counterbalance the negative impact of economic deregulation and to prevent a 'race to the bottom' in social standards (Delors & Fernandes, 2013; Fernandes & Gyer, 2014). European social policy is perceived by some as the only option in a globalized society, and in this regard, Habermas (2013) and Magnusson and Stråth (2014) argue that defence of the welfare state can only take place at the European level, as social policy issues transcend national borders and should therefore be dealt with at the European level. Subsequently, it has been argued that if we do not include the European Social Model as an integral part of European integration, citizens might no longer support the European project (Seeleib-Kaiser, 2013, p. 23). The development of a social dimension is seen as an opportunity to strengthen public support for European integration (Fernandes & Maslauskaite, 2013a), as many citizens believe that the European project has not been beneficial to them and that the EU threatens social standards and national welfare. The development of Social Europe is assumed to improve people's perceptions on the EU in general.

Arguments against Social Europe have also been put forward. For example, the EU might be perceived as an economic project that should do no more than whatever is necessary to ensure the free movement of goods, capital, labour and services. One might also criticize a European social agenda for increasing the role of the EU. In addition, it could be argued there is no European shared identity that legitimize the implementation of redistribution at the European level (Börner, 2013). Furthermore, concerns about strengthened European solidarity – such as in the case of the European Social Fund – are centred on the effects of moral hazards (Tsoukalis, 2005, p. 126). It is argued that EU transfers and redistribution should come with strict conditionality, as more active involvement of the EU in the fight against poverty and social exclusion may end up rewarding countries for their bad economic policies (Vanhercke et al., 2016).

1.3.2 Attitudes towards Social Europe as an emerging research interest

Before zooming in on the potential genesis of support for Social Europe, I want to briefly place the contributions of this dissertation in context by clarifying its embeddedness in literature. The study of public opinion towards Social Europe brings together two relatively independent research areas, namely the research tradition concerning welfare state attitudes and that concerning public opinion towards European integration.

First, the research field on welfare state attitudes has extensively studied public support for various facets of national welfare states and social policies. Attitudes towards redistribution (Burgoon, 2014; Svallfors, 1997), the deservingness of welfare beneficiaries (van Oorschot, 2000) and the mis-targeting of welfare benefits (Roosma, Gelissen, & van Oorschot, 2015) are just a few examples. Research on welfare state attitudes acknowledges that the boundaries of national welfare states have become much more permeable. In this respect, some studies have been devoted to the phenomenon of welfare chauvinism (Mewes & Mau, 2012; Reeskens & van Oorschot, 2012; van der Waal et al., 2010), which means opposing the granting of welfare rights to immigrants (Kitschelt, 1997). These studies focus on the demarcation of solidarity, instead of framing attitudes in terms of support for the opening of the solidarity circle. In addition, they focus on immigrants as a homogenous group, whereas a distinction between EU nationals and non-EU nationals is needed in order to gain insight into the social legitimacy of the EU's coordination of social security systems. Furthermore, research on welfare attitudes largely ignores the fact that social policies have become increasingly influenced by European decision-making. Only a very few studies have paid attention to citizens' perceptions of the impact of the EU on social policies (see e.g. Kumlin, 2009).

Second, the research tradition regarding EU attitudes has been predominantly concerned with how the wider process of European integration is perceived by the public and thus its popular legitimacy. However, public opinion towards European integration was not considered important at the beginning of the European project, as there was a so-called 'permissive consensus'(Hix & Hoyland, 2011). The public was assumed to have accepted actions at the European level, as the European project had been successful in creating prosperity and welfare. It has nevertheless been argued that the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 marked the turning point from a permissive consensus to an area of constraining dissensus (Hooghe & Marks, 2008). Citizens have expressed their concerns and objections about the European project, for instance in European referenda, implying that national elites are increasingly constrained by public dissent. Since the 1990s, an enormous number of articles have been devoted to explaining public support towards European integration. Whereas the first wave of studies focused almost exclusively on diffuse support for European

integration (Anderson & Reichert, 1996; Gabel & Palmer, 1995), progressive integration has turned scholars towards explaining areas of support for the EU, such as the performance of the EU or its engagement in specific policy areas. Past studies have shown that attitudes towards the EU are complex and that a one-dimensional approach towards these is insufficient (Boomgaarden, Schuck, Elenbaas, & de Vreese, 2011; Krouwel & Abts, 2007). The multidimensional nature of EU attitudes entails that these can be directed towards the system as a whole, the institutional design, specific policies or the perceived direction of policies (Vasilopoulou, 2018). However, there is still a pressing need for empirical research that drills down into specific issues of EU attitudes and their determinants; for research that moves beyond the prevailing focus on generic levels of support for or opposition to the EU. Public attitudes towards Social Europe are an example of the effort to gain a more sophisticated understanding of how citizens think about European integration. However, the expansion of the EU's policymaking competences over social policy is barely mirrored in the number of studies on public attitudes to Social Europe. Opinions on other aspects of European integration – such as support for economic and monetary integration – have received far more scholarly attention (Hobolt & Wratil, 2015; Kuhn & Stoeckel, 2014).

To sum up, the research tradition on welfare state attitudes has not paid attention to the EU's competences in social policy, whereas EU opinion studies predominantly focus on diffuse EU support and much less on specific support such as for EU social policy (making). Consequently, public opinion research on Social Europe is still in its infancy. A major lacuna in previous research is the lack of a clear conceptualization and operationalization of the various dimensions of Social Europe. Studies to date have focused almost exclusively on one aspect of Social Europe at a time (most notably the preferred decision-making level for social policy) or have aggregated items that refer to different dimensions. Consequently, knowledge about the structure of citizens' attitudes, specifically on how support for different dimensions of Social Europe relate to each other, is lacking. As indicated by the definition of Martinsen and Vollaard (2014), Social Europe requires at least some involvement of the European Union in social policy, whether it is driven by market-correcting or market-making objectives. As Social Europe can refer to various policy principles and instruments, a multidimensional approach is needed to deal with its complexity. The policy options regarding Social Europe are too nuanced to capture using a single dimension of national versus supra-national decision-making. Discussions regarding the principles, degree, scope, limits and instruments of European social policy are equally important, but have not yet received the empirical attention they deserve.

1.3.3 The genesis of support for Social Europe

Why are some people more supportive of various facets of Social Europe, whereas others tend to oppose them? Based on theoretical reasoning and empirical evidence, different predictors can be identified. As enumerating all potential predictors of support for Social Europe would be beyond the scope of this dissertation, this section focuses on what the main individual-level explanations are. Subsequently, country-level predictors are briefly discussed as an additional approach.

Self-interest

It is often argued that the European project is a project of the elites and much less of the wider society (Haller, 2008). This is hardly surprising, as one knows that sweeping away barriers to the free movement of capital, goods, services and labour are at the core of the European project. However, not everyone benefits equally from such economic integration. Accordingly, a long-standing research tradition posits that support for European integration is the result of economic self-interest (Gabel, 1998). This theory suggests that citizens who have benefited the least from the opportunities of European (economic) integration are expected to be less in favour of European integration. The standard utilitarian approach makes assumptions about which categories of individuals are likely to gain or lose from European integration (Anderson & Reichert, 1996; Brinegar, Jolly, & Kitschelt, 2004; Gabel, 1998). A citizen's socioeconomic status is a major determinant distinguishing the so-called winners from the losers of integration. As the objectives of Social Europe are oriented towards the protection and extension of social rights and standards, and creating more equality, lower socioeconomic status groups may be – from a self-interested point of view – more in favour of Social Europe, as one would expect with regard to European integration in general. However, Social Europe might not always be perceived as beneficial, as it entails a weakening of national institutions, which can disturb the existing distribution of material resources and life opportunities among natives (Ferrera, 2005). Especially in the most advanced welfare states, the reduction of a state's autonomy may imply a reduction in the size of the public sector (Andersen, 2004), and thus evoke fears of a loss of social security, not at least among the most needy. Previous studies show that groups at a greater risk of poverty, unemployment and ill health are more in favour of government spending on social policies and social security (Hasenfeld & Rafferty, 1989; Svallfors, 1997). This aspect of dependence and risk is important in distinguishing between the potential winners and losers of Social Europe in particular. Their material wellbeing may be negatively affected by EU transfers for instance (Kleider & Stoeckel, 2016). Overall, one can expect that those who are recipients of national welfare state arrangements or who are at a higher risk of becoming recipients – typically the lower

socioeconomic status groups – will be less likely to welcome European interference in social policy.

Previous empirical studies on citizens' attitudes to Social Europe provide mixed evidence for the self-interest theory. Apart from a positive relationship between income and support for EU decision-making in health and social welfare, Mau (2005) did not observe meaningful differences in support along socioeconomic status lines. A study of Burgoon (2009) found positive associations between low income, and support for the extent to which people consider the fight against poverty and social inclusion a priority objective of the EU. Gerhards and Lengfeld (2013) found that low-educated respondents supported the access of EU citizens to social benefits to a greater extent than those with secondary education (but not significantly different from those with high-school education). This is contrary to the empirical findings of Berg (2007), who observed positive relationships between educational attainment and solidarity with EU citizens (concerning access to the labour market and social benefits), and a preference for the EU as the decision-making level for social policy on the other hand. However, a later study by Gerhards and colleagues (2014) could not confirm the hypothesis that people with low socioeconomic status and low levels of education are less likely to support the Europeanization of social policy, as their results were insignificant or ambiguous.

The traditional self-interest approach has been extended with perceptions concerning the costs and benefits of European integration (Abts, Heerwegh, & Swyngedouw, 2009; Anderson, 1998; McLaren, 2006). The benefits are often a direct result of EU-level social policy, for instance cross-border welfare rights and financial transfers from the structural funds. This subjective dimension of self-interest has received little attention in studies on support for Social Europe in particular. Nevertheless, it has been found that citizens who believe their country has not benefited from EU membership are less willing to transfer competences over social policy to the European level (Mau, 2005) and to support social rights for other EU citizens (Vasilopoulou, 2016). If people fear a loss of social benefits resulting from integration, they are also less supportive of European decision-making for welfare policies (Mau, 2005). Irrespective of whether these impressions and concerns are justified, they seem highly influential regarding citizens' judgement about the desirability of Social Europe.

In conclusion, previous studies do not indicate a strong distributive line in attitudes towards Social Europe on the basis of citizens' social-structural characteristics. These mixed results may possibly be partly due to the use of different dimensions of Social Europe as dependent variables, and by diverging operationalizations of socioeconomic and self-interest indicators. The relationship between social-structural variables and support for Social Europe

needs to be studied in greater detail in order to be able to draw conclusions about a potential social conflict occurring on this issue. Furthermore, a promising path for future research is the impact of the perceived costs and benefits of European integration. European integration can be perceived either as a threat or an opportunity with regard to the level of social protection that citizens enjoy.

Ideology and welfare state attitudes

Research has also linked support for Social Europe to left-right political ideology, in that left-right orientation is assumed to function as a navigational system in taking a position towards Social Europe. In this regard, left-wing voters are assumed to endorse Social Europe more strongly, because such policies fit into their ideal position on the left-right dimension (Tsebelis & Garrett, 2000). Empirical studies consistently show that left self-placement is positively related to support for various dimensions of Social Europe. For instance, citizens who position themselves on the political left are more willing to grant other Europeans access to their social security system (Berg, 2007; Gerhards & Lengfeld, 2013, 2015; Vasilopoulou, 2016) and are more supportive of financial assistance to other member states (Beaudonnet, 2014; Daniele & Geys, 2015; Kuhn, Solaz, & van Elsas, 2017). Furthermore, left-oriented voters are more likely to think that the fight against poverty and social exclusion should be an EU priority objective (Burgoon, 2009). Nevertheless, left-right orientation is a somewhat vague indicator of citizens' ideological beliefs, as it captures both socioeconomic and socio-cultural attitudes (de Vries, Hakhverdian, & Lancee, 2013; van Elsas & van der Brug, 2015. In addition, different meanings of left-right orientation apply across European countries (Piurko, Schwartz, & Davidov, 2011).

Despite the inclusion of general left-right ideology in most studies on attitudes to Social Europe, far less attention has been devoted to the role of specific welfare attitudes. Given that welfare states are the primary providers of social security to citizens, attitudes towards Social Europe will be formed in the light of national welfare states. Citizens' preferences and evaluations of the social policies they have at home will be very likely to influence their views on the development of Social Europe. A few studies have analysed the relationship between welfare attitudes and support for specific aspects of Social Europe. Egalitarianism is found to be positively related to support for helping the poor across the EU and for sharing economic risks between member states through Eurobonds (Ciornei & Recchi, 2017). Furthermore, support for redistribution of wealth in the country (Kleider & Stoeckel, 2016) and for increased social spending, conditional on higher taxes (Beaudonnet, 2014), are related to stronger support for financial help between member states. Nevertheless, Kuhn and colleagues (2017) found no relationship between support for national redistribution and support for member state solidarity.

These studies do not fully take into account the multidimensionality of welfare attitudes (Roosma, Gelissen, & van Oorschot, 2013; van Oorschot & Meuleman, 2012) and are almost exclusively focused on member state solidarity, leaving aside other dimensions of Social Europe. Therefore, it remains unclear when citizens perceive Social Europe either as complementary to or competing with their own welfare state.

In summary, whereas politically left self-placement is consistently related to stronger support for Social Europe, the relationship between specific welfare state attitudes and Social Europe is less clear cut. Future research that provides a more comprehensive picture of the relationship between welfare state attitudes and support for European social policy is needed.

European identity

Identity and a sense of belonging are important elements in citizens' willingness to share with others (Börner, 2013). According to deservingness literature, people who are closer to 'us' are seen as more deserving to social protection (van Oorschot, 2000). This criteria of identity can also be applied in the context of EU policies to explain why some are more willing to accept redistribution to EU citizens. Against the backdrop of the continued integration process and blurring boundaries between national communities, a growing body of research deals with notions of European identity (Bruter, 2005; Carey, 2002; Díez Medrano, 2008; Westle & Segatti, 2016). A European shared identity is even considered as a facilitator in the development of European social policy, as it is assumed to override different interests (Büchs, 2007; Dougan & Spaventa, 2005).

European identity should not be considered as mutually exclusive of other identities, such as national and local identifications (Hanquinet & Savage, 2011). Very often, individuals hold several identities simultaneously. Feelings of national identity are even found to be positively related to feelings of European identity (Boomgaarden, 2011). However, whereas some consider national identity as something that is compatible with European integration, others perceive that European integration is a threat to their national identity (McLaren, 2004). How individuals frame their national identity seems to be crucial in understanding citizens' attitudes to EU policies. In particular exclusive national identities have a strong negative effect on support for European integration (Hooghe & Marks, 2004). Building on this identity-approach, previous empirical studies confirm that citizens who feel in some sense European, are more willing to support equal social rights for EU citizens (Gerhards & Lengfeld, 2015), to support member state solidarity (Kuhn et al., 2017; Stoeckel & Kuhn, 2017) and for European decision-making over social policy in general (Berg, 2007; Mau, 2005).

Furthermore, transactionalist theory (Deutsch, 1957) predicts that a shared European identity and support for European integration emerges from the increased transactions between Europeans. Cross-border social interactions and mobility across countries is assumed to spill over in solidarity ties. Empirical research shows that on top of citizens' identification with Europe, experiences of individual transnational experiences structure citizens' willingness to show EU-wide solidarity. More specifically, it is found that having lived, worked or studied in another EU member state increases support for Eurobonds - which imply sharing of revenues and costs - (Ciornei & Recchi, 2017) and that individuals who frequently spent time abroad are more willing to grant EU citizens access to their social security system (Gerhards & Lengfeld, 2015).

Euroscepticism

The development of Social Europe is taking place as part of the wider process of European integration. Therefore, citizens' lack of support for the EU – or so-called Euroscepticism – may be an important explanation of the degree of support for Social Europe. Euroscepticism is a widely-used concept referring to some aspects of European integration or the EU (Hooghe & Marks, 2005; Krouwel & Abts, 2007). The term was initially used in the mid-1980s in the United Kingdom to refer to members of parliament who had reservations about the path of European integration (Leruth, Startin, & Usherwood, 2018). As European integration increased considerably in scope over time, Euroscepticism became more prevalent in other EU member states; in political parties as well as among the general public. Euroscepticism is no longer confined to the margins, most notably proven by the result of the Brexit referendum. Existing studies into Euroscepticism have focused almost exclusively on examining political parties and, as a result, theoretical approaches to understanding opposition to European integration have been strongly influenced by party-based Euroscepticism literature. One of the first attempts to break down the concept of Euroscepticism was made by Taggart and Szczerbiak, who distinguish between principled (hard) and contingent (soft) opposition to European integration. Based on Taggart and Szczerbiak's (2008) work on party-based Euroscepticism, attitudes towards EU membership have been used as a key definitional variable distinguishing citizens' holding pro or anti-EU attitudes.

It can be expected that people who are less in favour of Social Europe hold this opinion because they are simply less in favour of European integration. Similarly, those who support EU-level social policy more strongly may do so because they are supportive of the EU overall. The extent to which voters' preferences regarding Social Europe can be reduced to a general EU attitude or level of Euroscepticism could inform us about the extent to which citizens hold sophisticated attitudes concerning the EU. Are attitudes towards Social Europe nothing more than specific types of EU attitudes derived from an overall position towards European integration?

In past studies, Euroscepticism has mainly been treated as a dependent variable. Only a few studies into attitudes to Social Europe pay attention to an underlying generalized EU attitude. These studies have shown that the more citizens support EU membership and further European unification, the more they favour European decision-making over social policy (Berg, 2007; Mau, 2005) and financial help for other member states (Kleider & Stoeckel, 2016; Kuhn et al., 2017). Nevertheless, such generic Euroscepticism cannot explain all the variation in citizens' attitudes in support of member state solidarity, indicating that Euroscepticism is complementary to other explanations.

Country-level explanations

In addition to individual-level explanations for citizens' support of Social Europe, it has to be taken into account that attitudes towards European integration are embedded in a national context (Brinegar & Jolly, 2005). Literature on cross-national variation in attitudes towards the EU is dominated by self-interest theory, assuming that not all countries benefit equally from European integration. This reasoning has also been applied to aspects of Social Europe in particular (e.g. Daniele & Geys, 2015). Regional differences in citizens' support for Social Europe may be related to various country characteristics. Most notably, the generosity of the national welfare state may determine expectations about whether EU-level social policymaking will be beneficial or detrimental to the level and quality of people's welfare arrangements. It can be expected that in strong welfare states, citizens are more likely to fear a downward convergence or a negative impact of European integration on the quality and extent of social benefits and services, whereas citizens living in less generous welfare states will support Social Europe more strongly, as they hope that their welfare states will catch up with the rest of the EU. Comparative studies indeed point in this direction. In Mediterranean welfare regimes, citizens are more in favour of European decision-making over health and social welfare, whereas people in Scandinavian welfare regimes are the least supportive (Mau, 2005). Similarly, in countries with higher social spending and welfare efficacy, support for EU decision-making over social policy is lower (Beaudonnet, 2013; Eichenberg & Dalton, 2007; Ray, 2004). Furthermore, those who have generous national welfare provisions targeted at labour market risks consider social objectives as a lower EU policy priority (Burgoon, 2009). All these studies evidence that what citizens have at home affects public support for EU competences in social policy and people's views about what form of Social Europe is desirable.

Member states' direct profit from EU transfers is another relevant driver of support for Social Europe. The populations of net beneficiary countries may be more supportive of Social Europe compared with those in net contributing countries, because of an underlying self-interest.

Citizens living in net receiving countries are found to be more in favour of European decision-making over social policy in the first place (Beaudonnet, 2013), and in countries receiving more structural funds, citizens more strongly prioritize social policy objectives for the EU (Burgoon, 2009). In the context of the Eurozone crisis, it has been shown that in loan-receiving countries, support for fiscal assistance to debt-ridden member states is higher (Daniele & Geys, 2015; Lengfeld et al., 2015).

In addition, the national economic conditions can also be influential to citizens' support for Social Europe. For instance, with regard to support for member state solidarity, it can be expected that worse economic conditions increase support for European social policymaking, as citizens are in greater need of social protection. It has been shown that in member states with high unemployment and low GDP per capita, EU social objectives – fighting poverty and social exclusion – are considered as having a higher priority (Burgoon, 2009). On the other hand, one can also expect that poor economic conditions decrease support for practices of European solidarity, as citizens in countries with a high unemployment rate might think more strongly that resources should be restricted to their own group first, to overcome hard economic times. Support for financial solidarity between member states is indeed found to be lower in less affluent countries (with lower GDP per capita) (Kleider & Stoeckel, 2016; Kuhn et al., 2017).

Although existing comparative studies highlight the importance of the national context in understanding attitudes to Social Europe, vital questions remain unanswered. The assumed underlying mechanism of current research on cross-national differences in support for Social Europe is that objective country characteristics influence citizens' assessment of what the process of European integration will bring with regard to the level of social protection. Some populations will perceive it more strongly as a threat, whereas others may perceive European integration as an opportunity to increase social protection levels (Beaudonnet, 2013; Eichenberg & Dalton, 2007; Mau, 2005). However, it has not been previously tested whether and how the national context affects citizens' assessment of the impact of European integration on social security levels. Regional differences in the perceived impact of European integration on social protection are likely to be related to similar country characteristics as those influencing support for Social Europe, namely the welfare regime, the net EU budget transfers and economic conditions. In addition, strong arguments can be put forward to expect an impact of intra-EU migration. The process of European integration has facilitated intra-EU migration, the level of which is not equal among member states (European Commission, 2017a). East-west mobility flows are especially prevalent and exceed south-north flows, although the latter have significantly increased as a consequence of the economic crisis (Eurofound, 2014). In countries hosting high numbers of EU migrants, citizens may experience the development of Social Europe from a different perspective

than their counterparts living in 'sending countries'. Especially with regard to cross-border welfare rights, European integration may be perceived as a threat to the maintenance of generous welfare provisions, due to so-called 'welfare tourism', placing a strain on national provisions. Gaining a deeper insight into regional differences in the perceived threat of European integration to social security would benefit our understanding of citizens' perceptions of Social Europe in a wider sense.

1.3.4 Conclusion

While attitudes towards different components of Social Europe have become of interest to social scientists, competing explanations for these attitudes are suggested. Although the overview in this dissertation is not exclusive, self-interest, ideology, welfare state attitudes, European identity and Euroscepticism can be expected to be relevant individual-level explanations. Nevertheless, very little attention has been paid to how welfare state attitudes and Euroscepticism relate to support for Social Europe. Given that Social Europe comprises to a certain degree European integration and an involvement in social policymaking, the role of attitudes towards European integration in general, and the welfare state in particular deserves more attention in public opinion studies. Furthermore, previous studies have analysed attitudes to specific dimensions of Social Europe in isolation from each other. As a result, it remains unknown how support for the various dimensions of Social Europe are related to each other, and whether the importance of certain explanatory factors varies across the different attitudinal dimensions of Social Europe. Such insights demand a multidimensional approach on the measurement of citizens' attitudes, meaning that attitudes to different components of Social Europe are integrated in one single study. This requires extensive survey data on attitudes to the various dimensions of Social Europe, whereas traditional surveys such as the Eurobarometers provide scholars with poor and inadequate indicators. Finally, citizens' perceptions of the EU's impact on social security have been overlooked in current research, although citizens' assessments of the EU's impact on social security are assumed to explain the cross-national differences in support for Social Europe.

1.4 Research goals and an overview of the empirical chapters

The main research aim of this dissertation is to investigate how attitudes to Social Europe can be conceptualized and operationalized and to seek better insight into how attitudes towards Social Europe can be explained. In the following paragraphs, the overarching research aim is subdivided into more specific questions that are addressed in the empirical chapters. Figure 1.1 gives an overview of the conceptual framework and indicates the scope of each empirical chapter. As

indicated by this figure, the various empirical chapters include a wide range of variables. However, the chapters are guided by a specific focus, mentioned below. Figure 1.1 also shows that the perceived impact of the EU on social security is depicted as a mediating variable between the explanatory variables and support for Social Europe. I do not suggest that this variable mediates all the effects of the explanatory variables on support for Social Europe, but I have placed it in between for the clarity of the research goals addressed in Chapter 5.

A major contribution of this dissertation lies in the conceptualization and operationalization of attitudes towards Social Europe. Chapter 2 elaborates on the meaning of Social Europe and argues that this concept can refer to different policy options. The central claim is that because of the multidimensional nature of Social Europe, public attitudes towards it cannot be measured by a single item. In line with this reasoning, a measurement model is tested, including the indicator that has received most scholarly attention in empirical research to date: specifically the preferred decision-making level for social policy (Beaudonnet, 2013; Berg, 2007; Mau, 2005). However, if citizens agree that the EU should have at least some competences in social policy, the question remains of what types of policy principles and instruments are desirable. A multidimensional approach to measuring support for Social Europe is proposed, by including support for various existing policy instruments, as well as proposals for future European social policy (see Figure 1.1). More specifically, these refer to European social citizenship, EU social regulations, member state solidarity, interpersonal solidarity and a European social security system. Including all these dimensions provides a unique insight into the structure of citizens' attitudes to Social Europe: specifically how the different dimensions of attitudes to Social Europe are related to each other. Based on the results, I suggest some possibilities for measuring attitudes to Social Europe in future research. Furthermore, whereas the criticism is often made that many citizens are disinterested in EU politics and that attitudes towards the EU can therefore not be meaningfully analysed (Gaxie, Hubé, & Rowell, 2011), few efforts have been made to test this empirically. As an additional objective, it is investigated whether or not citizens with different education levels conceptualize Social Europe similarly. Summarized, Chapter 2 addresses the following research questions:

- Which different dimensions of Social Europe can be distinguished conceptually based on the principles, scope and instruments of EU-level social policy?
- How can the attitudes towards these aspects of European social policy be operationalized and measured among citizens, and do people distinguish effectively between these dimensions?
- Do citizens with different education levels conceptualize Social Europe in a similar way?

After addressing these pressing questions, this dissertation attempts to explain why some individuals are more and others less in favour of Social Europe. As indicated on the left-hand side of Figure 1.1, combining a variety of potential explanatory factors will provide detailed and extensive knowledge on how public attitudes to Social Europe can be understood. First, this dissertation tests the validity of self-interest theories in explaining support for Social Europe. As outlined above, previous studies provide mixed evidence for self-interest theories on the basis of social-structural characteristics, separating the so-called winners and losers from European integration. The comparability of the results across the studies is impeded by the use of different dependent variables as well as by diverging operationalizations of social-structural variables. In this dissertation, I take into consideration the impact of various indicators of socioeconomic position (education, employment status, occupation, income and benefit dependence) as well as the perceived costs and benefits of EU membership on attitudes to different components of Social Europe (Chapter 3, 4) and the perceptions of the threat of the EU to social security (Chapter 5). Second, the relationship between European identity and support for Social Europe is analysed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. Given that previous studies consistently point to the importance of European identity, this element has, in terms of research questions, not been given a central role in the empirical chapters.

Furthermore, this dissertation scrutinizes the impact of ideology (left-right political orientation) and welfare state attitudes on support for Social Europe. Since welfare state attitudes go beyond a merely ideological left-right position, I have depicted welfare state attitudes as a separate block in Figure 1.1. Whereas previous studies have consistently shown that a left-wing orientation is related to higher levels of support for various dimensions of Social Europe, the contribution of this dissertation lies in a fine-grained analysis of the relationship between specific welfare state attitudes and support for Social Europe. As not all policy instruments of Social Europe are equally intrusive to the national welfare state, Chapter 3 analyses how welfare state support relates to support for Social Europe and whether this relationship varies across the different dimensions of Social Europe. I suggest two alternative explanatory mechanisms for how welfare state attitudes relate to support for Social Europe, namely spillover and obstacle. The spillover mechanism assumes that welfare state support facilitates support for Social Europe, as citizens consider Social Europe to be an instrument that aims to achieve similar objectives to those of national welfare states. By contrast, the obstacle mechanism assumes that Social Europe challenges the boundaries of national social systems. Acknowledging previous work on the multidimensionality of welfare state attitudes (Roosma et al., 2013; van Oorschot & Meuleman, 2012), a distinction is made between support for basic welfare state principles and welfare state critique. Summarized, Chapter 3 addresses the following research question:

- How is welfare state support related to support for Social Europe and does this relationship vary across the different dimensions of Social Europe?

In a similar way to that in which the notion of Social Europe is interwoven with social policy, it is inseparable from the wider process of European integration. Chapter 4 focuses on the role of general EU support or Euroscepticism in explaining support for a specific dimension of Social Europe: European solidarity. The debate about the future of Europe very often boils down to a choice between *more* or *less* Europe, whereas the debate on *what kind* of Europe – in terms of its policy and priorities – people want, moves to the background. Therefore, the guiding research question in Chapter 4 is to what extent voters' support for European solidarity is an expression of a general pro versus anti-European integration attitude, or a preference regarding the socioeconomic agenda in EU politics. Results show that support for European solidarity is not just a matter of being more or less in favour of Europe – including the issue of which countries can be part of it and how much power the EU should have – but is also related to substantive positions about the EU's policy direction. Furthermore, this study departs from the dominant one-sided view of support for European solidarity by including support for the two existing facets of EU-wide solidarity. By incorporating both member state solidarity (i.e., transfers to less-developed and crisis-hit countries) and transnational solidarity (i.e., social rights for mobile EU citizens[7]), this chapter reveals interesting differences in the nexus between Euroscepticism and different forms of European solidarity. Summarized, the following research question is addressed:

- Is public resistance against Europe simply an emanation of Euroscepticism, or instead a reflection of individuals' preferences concerning the EU's social and economic agenda?

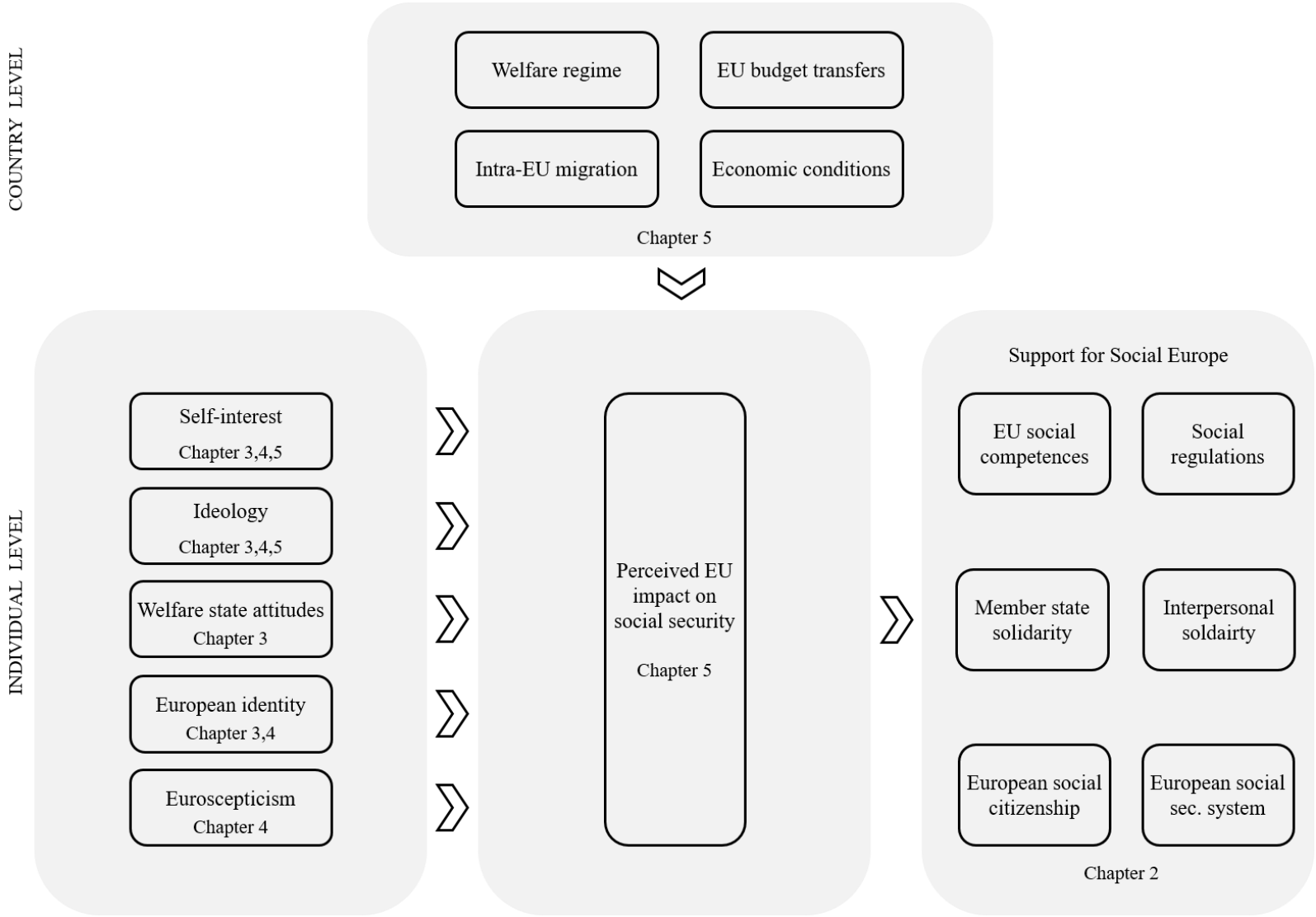
An alternative approach to gaining insight into public attitudes to Social Europe is to focus on how citizens perceive the impact of European integration on the level of social security. This approach does not focus on a particular policy principle or instrument of Social Europe, but provides knowledge about citizens' concerns. The EU's impact in the social area is a highly sensitive issue, precisely because of the high level of social protection that has been achieved in many European welfare states. Previous research shows that concerns about a loss of social security resulting from European integration diminish support for European decision-making over social policy (Mau, 2005) and European integration in general (Brinegar & Jolly, 2005), making such threat perceptions a stumbling block for the EU's popular legitimacy. It has been argued that

[7] It should be mentioned that social rights for mobile EU citizens are referred to as 'European social citizenship' in Chapter 2, whereas they are referred to as 'transnational solidarity' in Chapter 5, to better fit within the terminology of the article.

'fears seem to be part of a subcutaneous storyline of European integration' (Grauel, Heine, & Lahusen, 2013, p. 19). Are citizens in more advanced welfare states indeed more concerned about the consequences of European integration to their social security? European integration might not only be perceived as a threat to social security. Citizens could also be concerned about employment, financial contributions to the EU, and a loss of national sovereignty and national identity. The determinants and the specificity of EU-related concerns about social security have not been thoroughly investigated. Therefore, Chapter 5 takes an inclusive approach to perceived fears, by investigating whether fears concerning a loss of social security resulting from European integration can be considered as specific to the social aspects of the EU, or whether they are merely a reflection of a general anxiety about European integration. Subsequently, it is investigated whether the fears that European integration threatens social security are affected differently by social-structural position, ideological disposition and national context, compared with other EU-related fears. By analysing data from all the EU-28 member states, this chapter validates the research findings in a cross-national perspective and provides insights into the role of contextual factors. To summarize, Chapter 5 addresses the following research question:

- Compared with other EU-related fears, are fears that European integration endangers the existing social security level affected differently by social-structural position, ideological disposition and the national context?

Figure 1.1. A conceptual framework for analysing public attitudes towards Social Europe

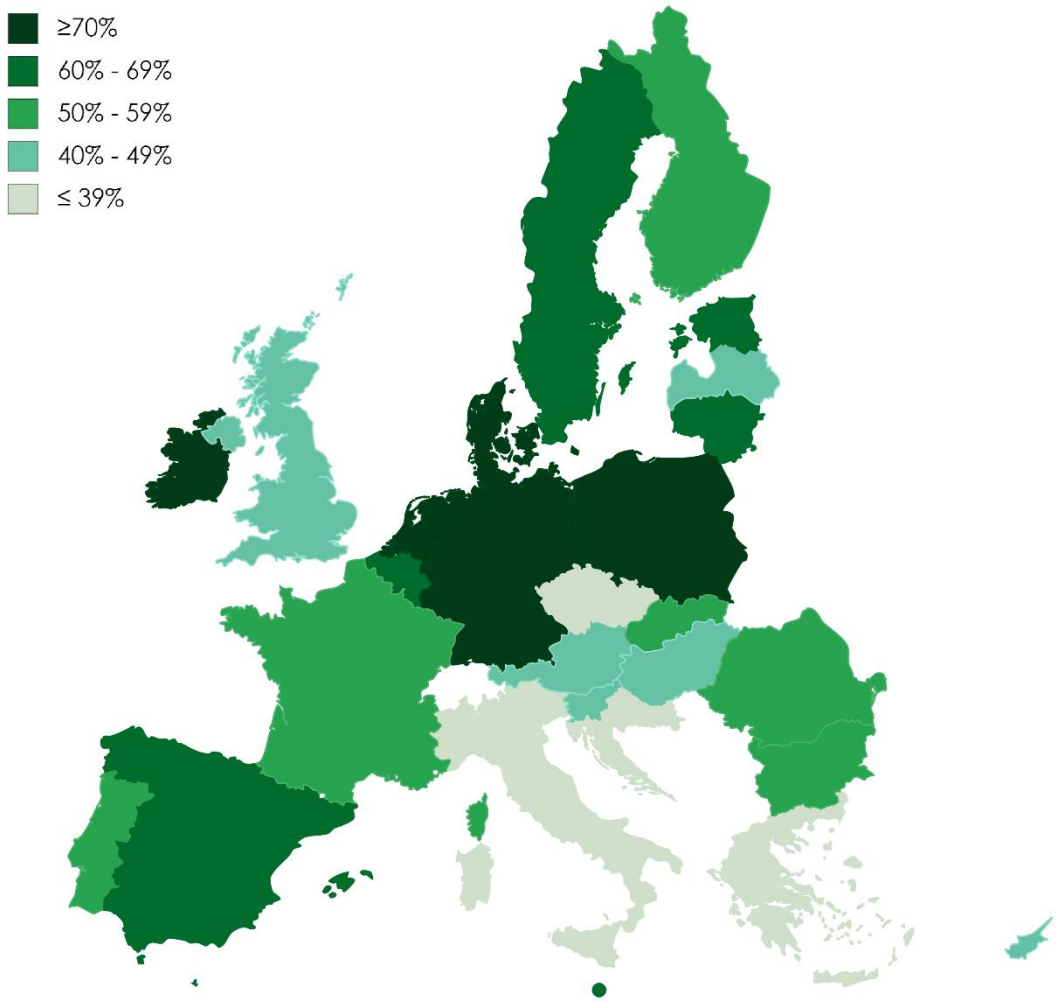


1.5 Empirical strategy

1.5.1 The case of Belgium: Contextualization

Given that three of the four empirical chapters are based on Belgian data, it is apposite to give a brief description of the Belgian context in which the development of Social Europe is taking place. In this regard, two relevant specificities of Belgium need to be highlighted: First, it is a member state with a relatively pro-EU population and second, it has a strong welfare state. As indicated in Figure 1.2, Belgians are more supportive of EU membership than the average EU-28 citizen. The Eurobarometer survey shows that whereas 64 per cent of Belgians evaluate EU membership as a good thing, the equivalent is 57 per cent across the whole of the EU (European Parliament, 2017).

Figure 1.2. Support for EU membership as a good thing



Source. Eurobarometer - March 2017 (European Parliament, 2017).

Various factors can underlie Belgians' relatively favourable attitude towards European integration. As one of the founding six countries of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951, Belgium has a *long tradition of EU membership*. According to socialization theory, the length of EU membership is beneficial to support for European integration (Anderson & Kaltenhaler, 1996). It assumes that when a country joins the EU, a socialization process is initiated that leads to greater public awareness, and appreciation of integration and European institutions more generally (Balestrini, Flood, & Flockton, 2010). Belgium is not only one of the founding member states of what ultimately became the European Union as we know it today, but also *hosts the official seats* of the European Commission, the Council of the European Union and the second seat of the European Parliament. Given that the EU is geographically tied to Brussels, the EU may feel less far removed from Belgians' personal life compared with for example that of Hungarians or Greeks. Often-heard expressions such as 'no interference from Brussels', have little meaning and hence remain absent in Belgium. Previous research evidences that geographical distance indeed plays a role in citizens' support for the EU. Europeans living further away from Brussels are less likely to support European integration, when controlling for other factors such as EU transfers (Berezin & Díez Medrano, 2008). With Brussels as the de facto capital of Europe, Belgium can be considered as a direct beneficiary of the EU, and the presence of EU institutions in Brussels attracts many large companies and boosts the economy. Belgium only counts as a net-contributing country to the EU budget when expenditure allocated to the EU administration is excluded (European Commission, 2016).[8] The Eurobarometer survey indicates that Belgians believe more strongly than the average European that their country has benefited from EU membership. More specifically, 69 per cent of Belgians versus 60 per cent of other Europeans believe that their country has mainly benefited from being a member of the European Union (European Commission, 2015a).

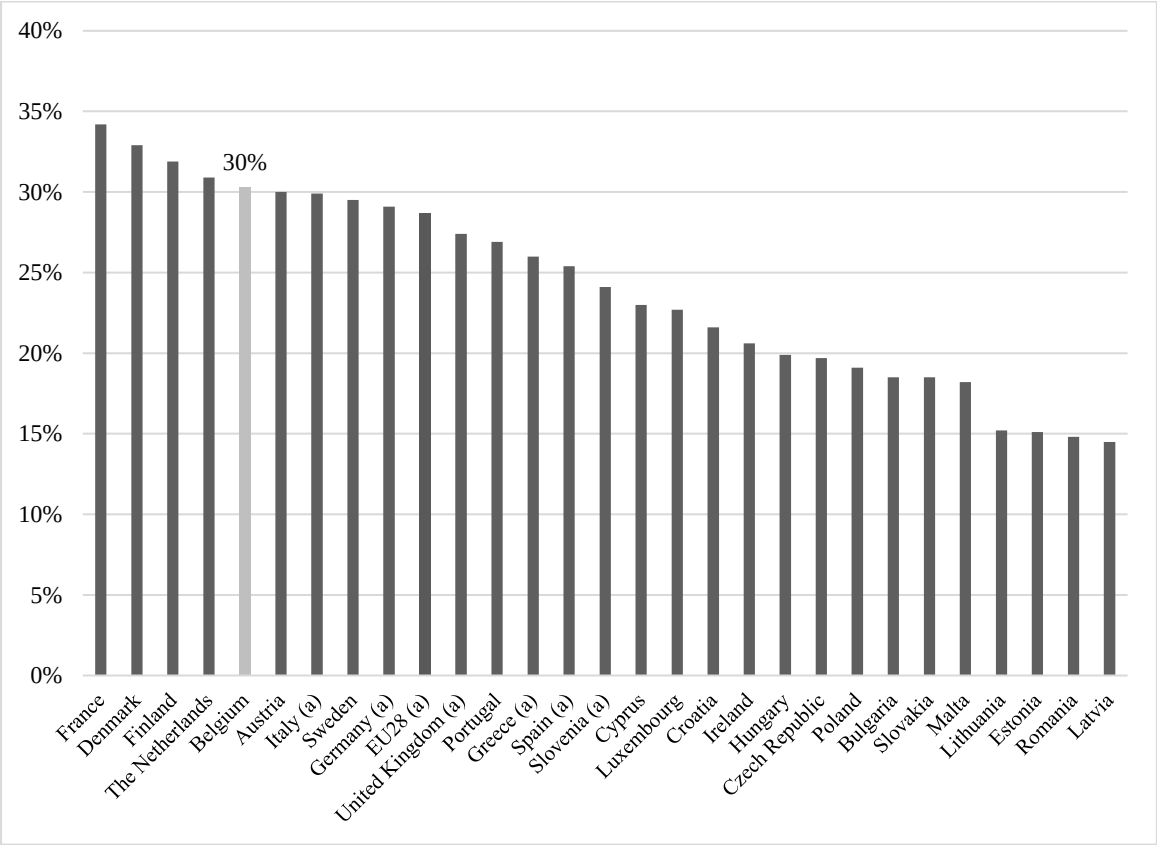
In addition, the *political climate* in Belgium is relatively pro-European. There is no strong anti-EU movement and very little political mobilization around European integration. There is one party with a pronounced anti-European position, Vlaams Belang, which is situated on the radical right (Nielsen & Franklin, 2016). The remaining parties are relatively positive with regard to European integration, although they set different priorities about European politics (Vanhecke & Wolfs, 2014). For instance, Partij van de Arbeid van België (PvdA) and Parti du Travail de Belgique (PTB) criticize the EU's capitalist and market-oriented policies and advocate a more left-wing course for the European project (Brack & Hoon, 2016). Although some differences in party positions on Europe can be identified, inter-party competition on the issue of European

[8] In 2015, Belgium's net payments to the EU budget amounted to 0.33 per cent of the gross national income (European Commission, 2016).

integration remains almost absent in Belgium, and as a result, it is difficult for voters to express their views on European integration at the ballot box. The lack of partisan conflict over European integration may prevent European integration from becoming a salient issue for voters. The sleeping giant that European integration is assumed to be, with the potential of EU attitudes to impel voters to political behaviour (van der Eijk & Franklin, 2004), may be in a deeper sleep in Belgium compared with other European countries.

Furthermore, Belgium is one of the few EU countries to have *compulsory voting*. Almost 90 per cent of Belgians voted in the 2014 European Parliament Elections, compared with only 43 per cent across all 28 member states (European Parliament, 2014). Whereas voter turnout in European elections is used as an indicator of (dis)interest in European politics, this does not apply to Belgium. In addition, since 2014, European Parliament Elections have been held on the same day as the federal and regional elections in Belgium. Compulsory voting and the national and European elections being held on the same date imply that Belgian voters may consider the European elections to a lesser extent as 'second-order elections' (Reif & Schmitt, 1980), whereas European elections often occur between national elections in other member states, when the popularity of the governing parties is typically low. The synchronized electoral cycles of European and national elections can diminish the likelihood that people will use the European elections as an opportunity to punish or reward current governing parties. However, there is little evidence that compulsory voting results in a better informed population and greater political awareness (Loewen,Milner, & Hicks, 2008; Sheppard, 2015). Especially outside the ballot box, it remains doubtful whether compulsory voting influences political attitudes and behaviour. The results of the Belgian National Election Study 2014 indicate that 68.15 per cent of respondents could identify Jean-Claude Juncker as being the president of the European Commission out of three possible options; the others being Angela Merkel (6.65 per cent) and Herman Van Rompuy (25.20 per cent). Whether this is high or low is hard to say. Eurobarometer surveys that examine citizens' knowledge about the European Union illustrate that Belgians' level of knowledge is average compared with other nationalities. For instance, compared with 68 per cent of Belgians, 71 per cent of all Europeans consider it true that the members of the European Parliament are directly elected by the citizens of each member state (European Commission, 2014).

Figure 1.3. Total expenditure on social protection as a percentage of gross domestic product (2014)

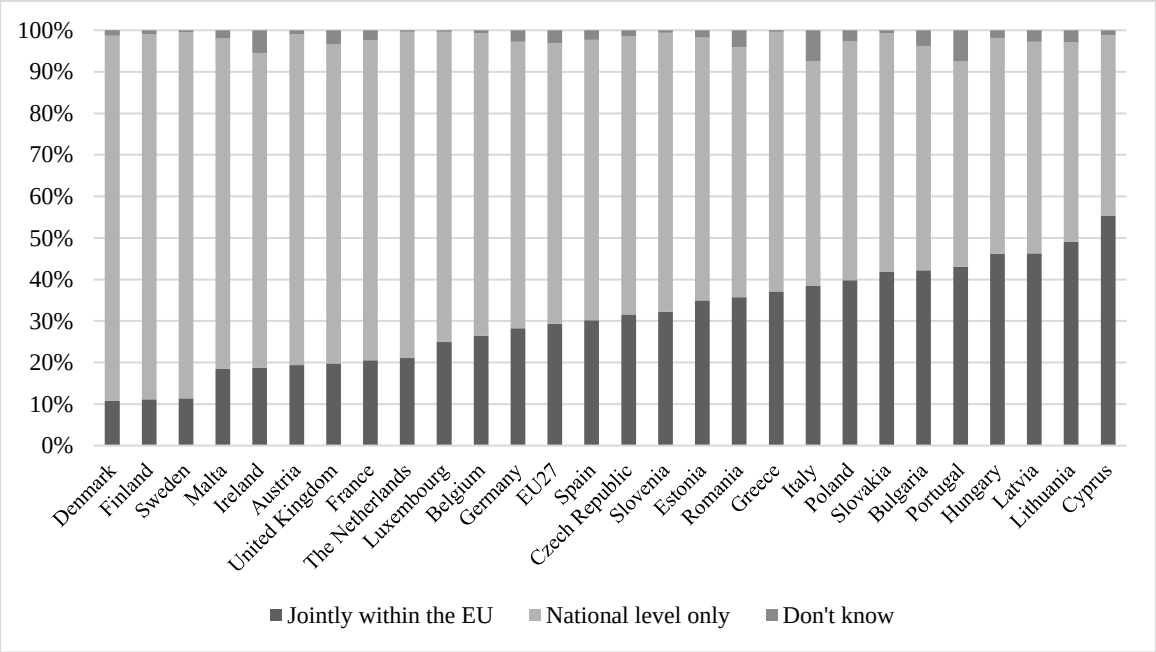


Source. Eurostat (online data code: spr_exp_sum), (a) = provisional.

Nevertheless, the fact that Belgium is a relatively pro-EU member state does not necessarily mean that Belgians are also above the average in terms of support for Social Europe. It has been shown that the importance of the length of EU membership in explaining EU support is diminishing and giving way to economic and social assessments of how the EU affects nation states and individuals (Balestrini et al., 2010). Compared with other member states, Belgium is a strongly developed welfare state. As indicated in Figure 1.3, Belgium's social protection expenditure is among the highest of all member states; only France, Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands spend more on social protection (relative to their GDP). Socioeconomic policy is an important issue for Belgian voters and dominated the 2014 election campaigns (Dandoy, Reuchamps, & Baudewyns, 2015). It is very likely that citizens develop their attitude to Social Europe in relation to their national welfare state, by making an assessment of whether European social policymaking is desirable. The potential impact of European integration on the Belgian welfare state may be a crucial issue, and support for Social Europe may therefore strongly depend on what form of Social Europe is at stake or proposed. Eurobarometer surveys give a first glimpse of public attitudes towards the development of Social Europe, and Figure 1.4 provides an overview of Europeans' preferred decision-making level regarding social welfare. This shows that

compared with other nationalities, Belgians are relatively reluctant to transfer competences in social welfare to the European level (European Commission, 2011b).

Figure 1.4. Preferred decision-making level for social welfare



Source. Eurobarometer 76 (European Commission, 2011b).

In conclusion, Belgians are somewhat pro-EU minded, and it can be expected that they attach great value to social issues. This makes Belgium a very interesting case to study attitudes towards Social Europe. It provides an opportunity to analyse how citizens who are used to a high level of social protection being provided at the national level, perceive and evaluate the process of European (social) integration. This allows the investigation of important questions. For instance, does support for the welfare state go hand in hand with support for Social Europe? The answer to this question will be of existential value for the legitimacy and the future of Social Europe. Furthermore, in the case of Belgium, it can be examined whether proponents of the EU are also willing to expand their strong social model to the rest of the EU. Are they willing to show solidarity with other EU citizens residing in their country, or do they want to keep the hard-won social benefits for themselves? These questions illustrate that the case of Belgium is extremely relevant with regard to gaining insights into the desired scope of solidarity in the EU and to understanding potential obstacles to popular support.

1.5.2 Survey research

The following paragraphs explain the methods of data analysis used in this dissertation and highlight some important issues. This dissertation is based on survey research, which has become one of the most popular methods in the social sciences. Surveys are a method of data collection in which a sample of the population is asked to participate in answering a standardized questionnaire (Roose & Meuleman, 2014). An enormous variety of research questions can be studied by means of survey research. In this regard, the operationalization is critical, since research questions need to be translated into corresponding survey questions that measure the concepts at stake (Jann & Hinz, 2016).

Survey samples consist of a selection of units from a population, since including all the units in the target population is usually not possible for practical or financial reasons. However, sampling must be carried out carefully to allow extrapolating of the results obtained. Representative samples are an important aim of surveys (Jann & Hinz, 2016, p. 114), and the more a sample is an unbiased representation of the population, the higher its external validity and thus the degree to which the findings from the sample can be generalized to a broader population. Representative samples can be achieved through probability-based samples, also known as random samples, which use some form of random selection. This implies that the likelihood of a unit being selected in the sample is known. In the most simplistic case, the chance of being selected is equal for all units in the population, but this is not required (Billiet & Waege, 2008). Different types of probability samples exist, such as simple random samples, stratified sampling, cluster sampling and two-phase sampling (for an overview see Tillé & Matei, 2016). Given that opinion research aims to draw conclusions about a wider population, relevant surveys are often based on one of these types of probability-based samples.

As with any method of data collection, survey research has its limitations. A major constraint of using surveys is the *ex post facto* format of the data collection (Jann & Hinz, 2016, p. 107). In contrast to an experimental design, surveys do not allow controlling for any stimuli, and all variables are measured at one point in time. The interval validity – the ability to say that no other variables except the one under study caused the result – can be a point of concern here. Unless researchers use longitudinal designs, which have multiple observations over time (for instance panel designs or cohort studies), it is not possible to prove causality by means of survey research. Ideally therefore, causality claims should be avoided when using cross-sectional surveys. Nevertheless, surveys are a legitimate method to test hypotheses about associations between variables of interest.

A particular critique of opinion research on European integration is the potential occurrence of non-attitudes and a low level of knowledge about European politics among citizens. Having a non-attitude refers to the absence of any attitude or opinion about an object, concept or other type of stimulus (Bishop, 2005; Converse, 1964). In survey research, such non-attitudes can result in 'no opinion' or 'don't know' responses, but they can also remain hidden by a random response to a question to avoid a respondent appearing ignorant. Some people persist in answering questions when they have no meaningful opinion, even though they are given an 'unsure' option. In addition to respondents' eagerness to give their opinion, survey practices may also contribute to what is called the 'manufacturing of public opinion' (Moore, 2008). It has been argued that pollsters push respondents to express preferences when no real opinion exists, turning pollsters into opinion makers (Cobb & Nance, 2011; Moore, 2008). By using forced-choice questions, answers are squeezed out of the respondents and public ignorance is downplayed.

Although an all-knowing, rational and fully engaged public is unlikely to exist, I do not believe that public opinion about European integration is an illusion. Public attitudes are neither true nor false. As others have argued, even when opinions are constructed during an interview, they are not necessarily random (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996). In this regard, Sinnott (2000) points to a real-to-random continuum. Accordingly, responses to survey questions can approximate more or less closely to real or random attitudes (Sinnott, 2000, p. 117). Studies have shown that citizens' attitudes towards the EU are far from random (Gabel & Anderson, 2004; van der Eijk & Franklin, 2004), and voters' attitudes towards European integration are found to have a meaningful structure and to be theoretically interpretable. In addition, studies have shown that the level of knowledge citizens possess about the attitude object rarely lead to different attitudes towards it (Visser, Holbrook, & Krosnick, 2008). This indicates that citizens' attitudes towards complex issues such as European integration can be meaningfully investigated.

In conclusion, if surveys are conducted according to the methodological 'rules of the game' (e.g., regarding representative samples), they are excellent tools with which to gain insights into attitudinal patterns in a broader population. Surveys are eminently suitable to reveal social structures as aggregates of individual attitudes and behaviour. Two different surveys are used in this dissertation, both based on probability samples. Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 use data from the Belgian National Election Study 2014. A secondary dataset, the European Values Study 2008, is analysed to address the research questions in Chapter 5 in a cross-national perspective. In the following section, more information is provided about these surveys.

Belgian National Election Study

The Belgian National Election Study (BNES) 2014 was a face-to-face survey carried out among 1901 Belgians entitled to vote in the 2014 national elections (Abts et al., 2015). This post-election survey was organized by the Institute for Social and Political Opinion Research (ISPO) of the University of Leuven. Data collection took place between 2 October 2014 and 16 March 2015 in Flanders, and between 9 October 2014 and 16 June 2015 in Francophone Belgium. The BNES 2014 had a response rate of 47.18 per cent (AAPOR, 2016). To achieve this response rate and to aim for high data quality, several methodological rules were built into the process of data collection.

First, the BNES 2014 uses a probability-based sample. This means that a random selection method for respondents was involved, maximizing the chance of obtaining a representative sample of the total population of Belgian voters. The sample was stratified by region (Flanders, the Brussels-Capital Region and Wallonia[9]) and province. Accordingly, in each region and province, a sample was selected that was proportional to the population size.[10] Stratification has the advantage that standard errors are reduced, allowing for smaller sample sizes compared with simple random samples (strata are more diverse, but internally more homogenous). Furthermore, two-stage sampling was chosen, which limited geographical distribution and was therefore less costly than simple random samples. The primary units of the two-stage sample were municipalities, of which the probability to be selected was proportional to the number of Belgian inhabitants aged 18 and over. Any particular municipality could also be selected multiple times. The individuals – the secondary units – were randomly selected within the selected municipalities. The sample was drawn from the National Register, containing data for all Belgian citizens.

The main part of the data collection was carried out by means of computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI); the second part consisted of a questionnaire.[11] Pilot interviews were conducted in Dutch and French to identity potential difficulties in the survey. To increase

[9] Although the Brussels-Capital Region is officially bilingual, the majority language is French. Brussels-Capital Region and Wallonia are merged together in the sample design as 'Francophone Belgium'.

[10] Based on the official population statistics of 1 January 2013 for Belgians aged 18 and over (Statistics Belgium, 2014).

[11] Mainly for budgetary reasons, not all the questions could be included in the face-to-face interview, as this would have increased the duration and thus also the costs. Unified mode principles were followed (Dillman et al., 2014) to reduce measurement differences between the different modes (mode effects), for instance by making response options the same in the face-to-face and the drop-off survey. Given that nearly all the items on Social Europe are included in the drop-off questionnaire, social desirability bias for these items is reduced.

response rates, an advance letter – communicating the purpose and the importance of the study – was sent to each respondent's address before the first contact by an interviewer. The fieldwork was outsourced to the market research institute GfK and their interviewers were briefed about potential difficulties in the questionnaire. At least five attempts were made to contact respondents through home visits, spread over different times and different days of the week, over a period of at least two weeks. On average, it took about 67 minutes in Flanders and 70 minutes in Francophone Belgium to complete an interview. At the end of the interview, each respondent was given a stamped and addressed envelope and a drop-off survey (taking approximately 20 minutes to complete), which they were asked to complete and send to the university within the following few days. To increase the response rates for the questionnaire, three reminders were sent to respondents, in accordance with the principles of Dillman's Tailored Design Method (Dillman et al., 2014). A first letter was sent a week after the face-to-face interview took place to thank respondents for their participation. This letter also functioned as a reminder, including a voucher as an unconditional incentive to complete the questionnaire. The second reminder contained a new copy of the questionnaire and a stamped, addressed envelope (sent two weeks after the face-to-face interview) and if needed, a third reminder was sent an additional two weeks later. In total, 73.76 per cent of the respondents filled out and sent back the drop-off questionnaire (N=1403).

Despite all the efforts to obtain a representative sample, certain groups are somewhat under or overrepresented in the sample. This was corrected for by the use of sampling weights in all the analyses of the BNES. The sampling weights are based on the composition of the sample according to age, gender, education and region, compared with the composition of the Belgian population. An individual belonging to a certain age group, gender or educational level that is underrepresented in the sample is given a weight larger than 1. People who are overrepresented are given a weight smaller than 1. Weighting factors were constructed using the Weight 2.1 program (Hajnal, 1995). Given that most questions on Social Europe are included in the drop-off questionnaire of the BNES, this dissertation is based on the sample that completed both the face-to-face interview and the additional questionnaire. The weights that are used in the analyses also take into account the sample selection bias for the drop-off questionnaire.

The BNES contains various detailed measurements of different components of support for Social Europe, which are not available in cross-national surveys. The inclusion of the various measurements in one dataset allows for an in-depth study and a better understanding of citizens' attitudes towards Social Europe. Analyses of this single-country survey data are therefore a valuable contribution to the field.

European Values Study

The European Values Study (EVS) is a cross-national survey that provides insights into how Europeans think about life, family, work, religion, politics and society. Round four of the EVS (2008) contains appropriate measurements to answer the research question about the domain-specificity of fears concerning a loss of social security resulting from European integration, and the impact of contextual factors (see Chapter 5). The EVS 2008 contains data on all EU-28 member states. Probability-based samples of the population aged 18 and over were collected in each country. Data collection consisted of face-to-face interviews (computer assisted or pencil and paper), except in Finland (internet panel) and in Sweden (postal survey). Sample sizes vary from 1000 in Cyprus to 2075 in Germany, and national response rates range from 24.38 per cent in the United Kingdom to 87.23 per cent in Finland.[12] Data for the EVS can be accessed free of charge from the GESIS Data Archive. More details about the dataset are provided in the EVS method report (see http://www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu/).

1.5.3 Statistical modelling

All the analyses in this dissertation were performed using structural equation modelling (SEM). Because many variants of this technique exist, Figure 1.5 gives the basic idea behind each type of SEM that is used in this dissertation. The models in Figure 1.5 do not display the exact models that are tested in the various chapters, but are illustrative of how the types differ from one another. A structural equation model consists of two parts: the measurement model and the structural model (Brown, 2015, p. 44). The first part specifies the number of factors and how the various indicators are related to the factors, and the second part specifies the relationship between various factors.

The measurement model is referred to as *confirmatory factor analysis* (CFA) (Model A in Figure 1.5). CFA can be used to verify the number of underlying dimensions of a concept (i.e., the factors) and the relationship between items and factors (i.e., factor loadings). In contrast to explanatory factor analysis, CFA is hypothesis driven (Brown, 2015). This implies that the researcher imposes a given factor structure to the data, based on theory and prior research evidence. The acceptability of the hypothesized model is evaluated by goodness of fit indices (e.g., RMSEA, CFI and TLI) and the strength of the parameter estimates. CFA is a very useful

[12] Although Croatia was not yet an EU member state in 2008, it was included in the analysis since Croatia's status as a candidate country was confirmed by the Council of the EU in 2004, which resulted in negotiations starting from 2005 and accession to the EU in 2013.

tool for the development of attitude scales, as intended in Chapter 2, in which various first-order as well as higher-order factor models are estimated to determine the model that best represents the data. SEM distinguishes the latent variable that captures the shared variance and the unique variance of the indicators.[13] For instance in Chapter 5, this feature of SEM allows us to gain insight into the extent to which several EU-related fears can be reduced to a generalized fear of European integration, and to what extent they are domain specific. Furthermore, CFA provides an analytic framework with which to evaluate the equivalence of a measurement model across groups, such as people belonging to different educational groups or countries. Measurement invariance implies that a measurement instrument measures the same concept in the same way across various subgroups of respondents (Brown, 2015; Davidov et al., 2014), as people in different groups may understand concepts differently. This technique for estimating the same model simultaneously for different groups is known as *multigroup CFA* (Model B in Figure 1.5). This analytic framework is also applied in Chapter 2, as equivalence of the measurement model of attitudes towards Social Europe is tested between low and high-educated respondents. Various aspects of invariance across groups can be examined, which have been linked to different terminologies. Configural invariance for instance refers to the test of equal factor structures (the number of factors are identical across groups), and metric invariance refers to the test of equality of factor loadings. Scalar equivalence refers to the test of equality of intercepts. These various tests are applied in Chapter 2.

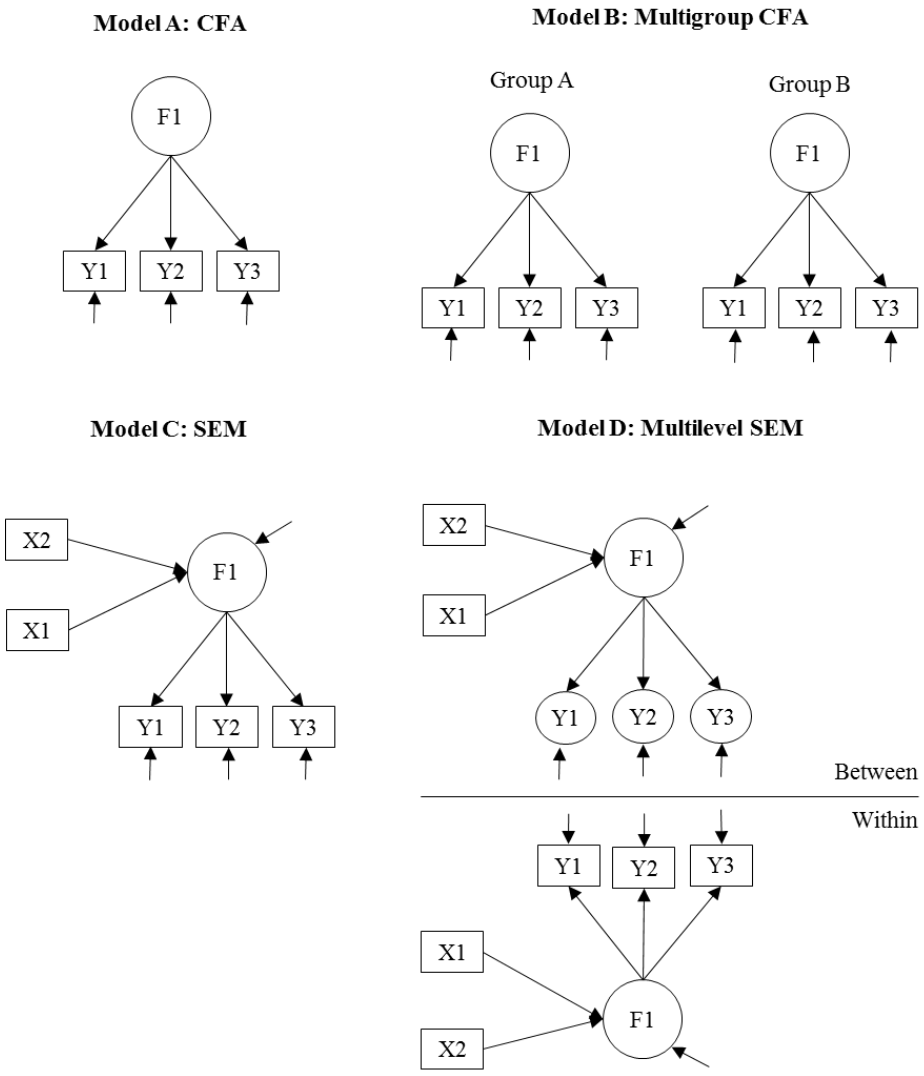
Confirmatory factor analyses are typically performed as a starting point for *full structural equation modelling* (see Model C in Figure 1.5). Once a well-fitting measurement model has been specified, one can go on to specify the structural model. This technique is applied in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. The main reason that structural equation modelling is chosen over standard regression modelling is that it can estimate latent variables and relationships between manifest and latent variables. Standard methods are based on observed measurements only, whereas SEM incorporates both unobserved (i.e., latent) and observed variables (Byrne, 2012, p. 4). Furthermore, whereas standard regression cannot correct for measurement error, SEM estimates the error variance parameters, leading to more accurate results. In addition, SEM allows us to test direct and indirect effects, which provides insights into the net and total effects of predictors on a dependent variable. These features make SEM an appropriate tool with which to test the research questions in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. In Chapter 3 for instance, the differential effects of the explanatory variables on separate dimensions of support for Social Europe can be estimated. Such differential or direct effects provide deeper insights into the specificity of each dimension of support for Social Europe relative to one another.

[13] For an extensive description of structural equation modelling, see for instance Byrne (2012) and Kline (2016).

Lastly, the cross-national data from the European Values Study is analysed by means of *multilevel structural equation modelling* (MLSEM) (Model D in Figure 1.5). Multilevel analyses are needed, because standard regression models treat the units of analysis as independent observations. However, two individuals from the same country tend to be more alike than two individuals from different countries. Therefore, standard errors will be underestimated if the hierarchical structure is not taken into account, leading to a higher chance of Type I errors (false positives or the incorrect rejection of a true null hypothesis). Multilevel modelling takes into account the hierarchical or clustered data structure by allowing for residual components at each level in the hierarchy (Hox, 2010), in this case, at the individual and at the country level. In addition, multilevel models allow estimation of the effects of individual-level and country-level variables simultaneously. As the aim here is to combine the features of both multilevel modelling and structural equation modelling when analysing the European Values Study in Chapter 5, structural equation models were performed in a multilevel framework.

Item nonresponse is addressed in this dissertation using full information maximum likelihood estimation, which produces more reliable estimates compared with conventional methods such as listwise deletion (Schafer & Graham, 2002). All the analyses in this dissertation were performed using Mplus version 7.3 software (Muthén & Muthén, 2012), except for descriptive statistics and scatterplots, which were performed in SAS Enterprise Guide 7.11.

Figure 1.5. Variants of structural equation models tested in this dissertation



Chapter 2

Measuring Attitudes towards Social Europe: A Multidimensional Approach[1]

Abstract

Although the notion of 'Social Europe' can refer to different principles and policy options, most research narrows down attitudes towards Social Europe to a unidimensional construct. In this study, we instead propose a multi-dimensional approach, and contribute to the literature in three ways. First, we elaborate the notion of 'Social Europe' conceptually, and distinguish between the decision-making level for social policy, European social citizenship, harmonization, member-state solidarity and interpersonal solidarity. Second, analysing the 2014 Belgian National Election Study by means of confirmatory factor analysis we evidence that citizens indeed have distinct attitudes towards the policy principles and instruments of Social Europe. Although these attitudinal dimensions are interrelated, they cannot be reduced to a single Social Europe factor, meaning that citizens differentiate in their attitudes between various aspects of Social Europe. In addition, our research indicates that member-state solidarity is the primary aspect of Social Europe in public opinion, whereas the feature that has received most scholarly attention in empirical research to date - the preferred decision-making level for social policy - cannot be considered as a key component of attitudes towards Social Europe. Third, we investigate whether citizens with different educational levels conceptualize Social Europe similarly using multigroup confirmatory factor analysis. Results indicate that the attitudinal factor structure of Social Europe is largely equivalent among lower and higher-educated citizens.

[1] This chapter is based on an article published in Social Indicators Research:
Baute, S., Meuleman, B., Abts, K., & Swyngedouw, M. (2017). Measuring attitudes towards Social Europe: A multidimensional approach. *Social Indicators Research*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1007/s11205-017-1587-3

2.1 Introduction

For a long time, European integration was understood as being a project of open economies and closed welfare states, in which economic growth resulting from market liberalization would preserve the autonomy of the nationally-bounded welfare states (Castles et al., 2010; Ferrera, 2005; Giubboni, 2014). The development of a social dimension was a 'road not taken' (Leibfried & Pierson, 1995a; Rhodes & Mény, 1998; Scharpf, 2002). However, the idea of separate tracks soon turned out to be impossible, as the economic and social arenas are intrinsically intertwined. As a result, the EU has started to engage more actively in European-level social policymaking that affects social welfare in the various member states (Gerrits, 2015). Furthermore, calls for deepening the social dimension in the EU have been heard in the public debate (e.g. Allespach & Machnig, 2013; Habermas, 2013; Nida-Rümelin et al., 2013). Some authors perceive 'Social Europe' as an opportunity to strengthen public support for European integration (Fernandes & Maslauskaite, 2013b; Grozelier et al., 2013; Vandenbroucke, 2013). The further development of a Social Europe is believed to increase the legitimacy and accountability of the European Union, as it would raise the profile of the EU as a provider of social protection. However, Eurobarometer data shows that almost half of the European citizens believe that the European project has not been beneficial to them and that the EU threatens social standards and national welfare (EB 65, EB 81; European Commission, 2007, 2014).

The issue of Social Europe is controversial given the strong historical link between the national state and welfare policies. Although the role of the EU and the scope of its competences in social policy are contested (Føllesdal, Giorgi, & Heuberger, 2007), citizens' opinions about European social policy have received surprisingly little scholarly attention to date. In this contribution, we argue that the measurement of citizens' attitudes towards Social Europe is the Achilles' heel of existing research. Current studies lack a clear conceptualization of Social Europe, including its dimensionality. As a result, the measurement of attitudes towards Social Europe is unsatisfactory. Most existing studies measure these attitudes by focusing on a single dimension (Bechtel, Hainmueller, & Margalit, 2014; Burgoon, 2009; Gerhards & Lengfeld, 2013; Lengfeld et al., 2015), usually on what citizens consider to be the most appropriate level for social policymaking (national vs. European) (Mau, 2005; Beaudonnet, 2013). Other studies (Berg, 2007; Gerhards et al., 2014) aggregate items that refer to different, conceptually distinct dimensions, such as the principles, degree, scope and instruments of EU-level social policy. Scientific knowledge regarding attitudes towards Social Europe - as well as the dimensionality of these attitudes and their interrelations - is seriously constrained by this lack of clarity regarding conceptualization and measurement.

In this article, we attempt to remedy these shortcomings and to clarify the operationalization of citizens' attitudes towards Social Europe. Concretely, we address the following three research questions: (1) Which different dimensions of Social Europe can we distinguish conceptually based on the principles, scope and instruments of EU-level social policy? (2) How can the attitudes towards these aspects of European social policy be operationalized and measured among citizens, and do citizens distinguish effectively between these dimensions, or is it instead possible to reduce the dimensions to a single underlying construct? (3) Do citizens with different educational levels conceptualize Social Europe in a similar way or not?

We analyse data from the 2014 Belgian National Election Study, and apply second-order confirmatory factor analysis to gain insights into the structure of attitudes towards Social Europe. By addressing these questions, we contribute to the conceptual and empirical validity of measurement of citizens' attitudes towards Social Europe, and help to progress empirical research in this field. As European integration moves forwards, it is plausible that attitudes become more complex and multi-faceted (Beaudonnet & Di Mauro, 2012; Boomgaarden et al., 2011; Cautrès, 2012), and that citizens are not equally positive or negative with regard to every aspect of Social Europe.

2.2 Conceptualizing the dimensions of Social Europe

Although the concept of Social Europe is frequently used, different meanings of it can be found in literature.[2] In general, 'Social Europe' refers to EU governance that establishes supranational social policies and that affects social rights and policies in the member states. Martinsen and Vollaard's (2014, p. 680) definition formalizes a two-level perspective on Social Europe:

> (1) the protection and extension of social rights by means of positive integration and market correcting/restricting policies, and (2) the intervention in national social policies to enforce the market and promote free movement, free competition and non-discrimination. Whereas the imperatives of market correction and non-discrimination may establish (European) social rights, market enforcing and non-discrimination tend to weaken the spatial boundaries of the welfare state and challenge the traditional allocation principles for social sharing.

[2] For a discussion of the notion of the 'European Social Union' see Vandenbroucke (2013, 2014) for the 'European Social Model' see Alber (2006) and Jepsen and Pascual (2005), and for 'European social integration' see Threlfall (2007).

This definition highlights the different aspects of Social Europe and describes EU social policy integration as resulting from market-making, market-correcting and non-discrimination initiatives. In addition, the definition focuses exclusively on EU policymaking, not on member states' social policies, which are included in other approaches (Ferrera, 2014; Vandenbroucke, 2014).

Different constitutive dimensions of Social Europe emerge from the aforementioned literature. First, Social Europe includes decision making at the European level on specific social policy measures. Second, the concept may also refer to the Europeanization of social rights, linked with the free movement of people and the workforce. Third, a wide range of European social policies are oriented towards the harmonization of member states' social policies through social regulation and mutual surveillance. Last, Sangiovanni (2013) argues that EU solidarity essentially needs to incorporate the principles of member-state solidarity as well as the principles of transnational solidarity defining obligations among EU citizens. As a result, we distinguish five dimensions of Social Europe: a supranational decision-making level for social policy, European social citizenship rights, harmonization of the social policy of member states, solidarity between member states and interpersonal solidarity between European citizens.

Table 2.1 summarizes these dimensions, their most important related policy instruments and the existing empirical studies on citizens' attitudes towards these particular principles or instruments. Although the overview is not exhaustive, these main policy options represent the contours of EU social policy.[3] Below, we elaborate the dimensions in greater detail.

[3] We do not include the social dialogue or collective bargaining at the EU level in our conceptualization, despite the fact that these can also be considered aspects of Social Europe (e.g. Gold, 1993).

Table 2.1. A conceptual framework of the dimensions of Social Europe and an overview of empirical studies

Policy principles	Description	Policy instruments	Empirical studies on attitudes
Level for decision making regarding social policy			Ray 2004 Mau 2005 Berg 2007 Eichenberg and Dalton 2007 Beaudonnet 2012, 2013
European social citizenship	The granting of social rights to EU citizens or a Europeanization of social rights	- Provide EU citizens with access to national social protection schemes - Portability of social rights to other member states	Berg 2007 Gerhards and Lengfeld 2013 Gerhards and Lengfeld 2015
Harmonization	Harmonization of national social policies and improvement of national social standards	- Social regulations - Mutual surveillance	Gerhards, Lengfeld and Häuberer 2014
Member-state solidarity	Redistribution between member states of the EU	- Structural funds - Bailouts	Beaudonnet 2014 Bechtel, Hainmueller and Margalit 2014 Lengfeld, Schmidt and Häuberer 2015
Interpersonal solidarity	Redistribution between EU citizens	- European unemployment insurance scheme - European child benefit - European minimum income benefit	/

2.2.1 Decision-making level for social policy

Social Europe implies at least some competences of policy making at the EU level to create supranational social policy or to intervene in member states' policies. Social Europe therefore relates to the *decision-making level for social policy*, referring to the level at which social policy should be determined: local, regional, national or supranational. The question of which level for decision making is appropriate can be answered on different grounds (De Winter & Swyngedouw, 1999). Legally, the division of power between the EU and its member states is guided by the principle of subsidiarity, which authorizes intervention by the EU when the objectives of an action cannot be satisfactorily achieved by the member states (European Parliament, 2015). Current multilevel governance implies that certain policy issues are dealt with by different governments, very often through shared competences (Leibfried, 2000; Pierson & Leibfried, 1995). The question of whether welfare issues should be subject to EU decision making is controversial, because it always contains a territorial dimension. In essence, European social integration refers to a process of boundary redrawing, transferring social and welfare competences to the European level (Bartolini, 2005; Ferrera, 2005).

2.2.2 European social citizenship

Granting social rights to EU citizens is a cornerstone of Social Europe, as it is constitutive in the development of *European social citizenship* (Bruzelius, Chase, & Seeleib-Kaiser, 2014; Faist, 2001; Gerhards & Lengfeld, 2015; Magnusson & Stråth, 2004; Schall, 2012). From the beginning of the European integration process, EU social policy has been aimed at securing the free movement of workers. The 1957 Treaty of Rome granted EU citizens access to other member states' social security schemes and introduced the transferability of already-earned social security rights between member states. In this sense, social benefits and services are no longer restricted to a member states' own citizens and can be taken up by people residing outside of the state's territory (Bruzelius et al., 2014, p. 2; Falkner, 2010, p. 301; Leibfried, 2015). As European social citizenship prohibits welfare discrimination towards non-nationals, it offers a new perspective on social rights. The granting of social rights by EU institutions redefines the boundaries between insiders and outsiders in social sharing systems, because the process of European integration introduces a distinct EU citizenship decoupling some rights from national territories (Ferrera, 2005, p. 43).[4]

[4] The Treaty of Maastricht (1992) formally introduced EU citizenship, setting out that any national of a member state is legally also a 'citizen of the Union'.

2.2.3 Harmonization: Social regulations and the Open Method of Co-ordination

A wider range of European social policy measures has been put into practice through the *harmonization* of member states' social policies (Falkner, 2009a; Threlfall, 2003). The harmonization of national social policies and the convergence of social standards are mainly addressed through social regulations. *Social regulation* refers to the regulatory regime that constrains or reinforces member state law making (Majone, 1993). The increasing use of qualified majority voting instead of unanimous voting has contributed to a growing body of EU legislation (Martinsen & Vollaard, 2014). There are three main fields of EU social regulation with large amounts of binding and non-binding norms: health and safety at work, other working conditions and equality in the workplace and beyond (Falkner 2009b, 2010). In some member states, the EU social regulations had considerable legal consequences due to inadequate national legislation, while in others no major changes were required. Nevertheless, these directives reduce the autonomy of national welfare states in policy design.

Mutual surveillance among national policymakers, mostly practised through the *open method of co-ordination* (OMC), is a second instrument that facilitates social policy harmonization. In contrast to social regulations, the OMC does not take competences away from national governments, but has potentially converging effects on national social policies through mutual learning and peer pressure (Hodson & Maher 2001; Porte, Pochet, & Room, 2001; Scharpf 2002; Trubek & Trubek, 2005; von Maydell et al., 2006). Originally developed in the field of EU employment policy, the OMC has been steadily extended to health, pension reform, equal opportunities and social inclusion (Büchs 2007; de la Porte & Pochet, 2012; Pochet, 2005; von Maydell et al., 2006).

2.2.4 Member-state solidarity

In addition to regulation, Social Europe also involves redistribution. An important redistributive principle in the EU is *member-state solidarity*, based on financial transfers among member states (Allen, 2010; Crum, 2011; Dougan & Spaventa 2005; Gerrits, 2015; Raspotnik, Jacob, & Ventura, 2012; Sangiovanni 2013). In particular, the various structural funds focus on reducing regional disparities in income, employment, investment and growth (Anderson, 1995; Falkner, 2010; Geyer, 2000; Leibfried & Pierson, 1995a), in order to strengthen economic and social cohesion (Mau & Verwiebe, 2010).[5] In 2014, the structural and investment funds accounted for around 39% of the EU's total budget, implying strong territorial redistribution between EU

[5] The agricultural fund of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is also sometimes perceived as an element of the EU's social dimension (Seeleib-Kaiser 2013).

member states (European Commission, 2015b). The issue of whether and to what extent solidarity between EU member states should exist (Seeleib-Kaiser, 2013) became crucial during the European debt crisis, when bailout operations for some Eurozone member states came into practice (Bechtel et al., 2014; Fernandes & Maslauskaite, 2013b; Fernandes & Rubio 2012; Lengfeld et al., 2015). In reality, these fiscal aids are credits to be paid back and are given on the condition that austerity measures are taken. Nevertheless, these measures overturned the 'no bailout clause' and are considered as instruments of international redistribution (Bechtel et al., 2014) or member-state solidarity (Beaudonnet, 2014; Gerhards & Lengfeld, 2015).

2.2.5 Interpersonal solidarity

European integration not only connects states, but also citizens. *Interpersonal solidarity* refers to the willingness of citizens to share risks, to redistribute resources and to support each other in order to bridge social divisions. In this sense, interpersonal or transnational solidarity concerns obligations among EU citizens (Crum, 2011; Sangiovanni, 2013). Although a European welfare state with direct transfers between EU citizens does not exist, the political viability of a European social security system based on interpersonal solidarity has been debated (Kleinman, 2002). In this scenario, national solidarity would be supplemented or even replaced by transnational solidarity. Specific policy proposals based on this logic concern a European unemployment insurance scheme (Fattibene, 2015; Fernandes & Maslauskaite, 2013a), a European child benefit (Levy et al. 2013), and a European minimum income benefit (European Economic and Social Committee, 2013; Peña-Casas & Bouget, 2014). For Eurozone countries, these policies may function as automatic fiscal stabilizers to redistribute money to countries that are hit by asymmetric shocks (Andor, 2016; Atkinson & Marlier, 2010; Dullien, 2012; Fattibene, 2015; Fichtner, 2014; Levy et al., 2013). Nevertheless, they imply new forms of solidarity reaching beyond the logic of a Transfer Union, as they have essentially an interpersonal nature with resources redistributed between individuals rather than regions or countries. At the same time, the actual proposals of transnational solidarity do not require the full harmonization - no 'one size fits all' - of social security systems across Europe.

2.3 Public attitudes towards Social Europe

Empirical research on attitudes towards Social Europe is still in its infancy and as previously stated, most studies predominantly focus only on a single dimension (see Table 2.1). A number of studies analyse citizens' *preferred decision-making level for social policy*, using opinions on whether the local authorities, the (sub)national government or the EU should be responsible for

social welfare (Beaudonnet, 2012, 2013; Berg, 2007; Eichenberg & Dalton, 2007; Mau, 2005; Ray, 2004).

Other studies focus on a specific policy principle or instrument. First, public attitudes towards a *European social citizenship* are studied by measuring citizens' support or opposition towards the granting of social rights to non-national EU citizens who live or work in another EU country (Berg, 2007; Gerhards & Lengfeld, 2013, 2015). Although opinion towards the granting of social rights to non-nationals is often studied in literature on welfare chauvinism (e.g. Mewes & Mau, 2012; van der Waal et al. 2010), very few studies focus on the Europeanization of social rights in particular.

Second, attitudes towards the *harmonization* of national social policies have been investigated by measuring citizens' support for a uniform social welfare system and a uniform minimum wage across the EU (Gerhards et al. 2014). However, the implications of these policy measures can involve both regulation and redistribution, making it hard to categorize this approach exclusively within the harmonization dimension. Furthermore, no empirical studies have been conducted on the attitudes towards the EU's practices of social regulations or mutual surveillance (social OMCs) among member states.

Some recent studies (Beaudonnet, 2014; Bechtel et al., 2014; Lengfeld et al., 2015) investigate public opinion concerning both the principle and practice of *member-state solidarity* in the light of the European debt crisis. These studies capture citizens' attitudes towards the idea of bailout payments for over-indebted EU countries, opinions on the conditions under which countries should receive financial support and citizens' motivations to support international financial transfers within the EU. Nevertheless, attitudes towards member-state solidarity outside the crisis context or attitudes towards the EU's structural funds have not been surveyed to date.

In sum, empirical studies either focus on only one facet of Social Europe, or too-readily aggregate conceptually distinct dimensions into a single index, whereas other dimensions - mainly attitudes towards interpersonal solidarity at European level - remain unexplored. Nevertheless, the fact that the pattern of relevant explanatory variables differs considerably according to the particular dimension studied (see for example Berg, 2007; Gerhards et al., 2014; Gerhards & Lengfeld, 2013) does suggest that attitudes towards Social Europe cannot be reduced to a single dimension. To answer the question of which distinct attitudes towards Social Europe can be distinguished, and how these attitudes are interrelated, is only possible by testing the multidimensionality of attitudes in a measurement approach (see, for example, van Oorschot & Meuleman, 2012).

2.4 Data and methods

2.4.1 Data

We analyse attitudes towards Social Europe using data from the 2014 Belgian National Election Study (BNES) organized by the Institute for Social and Political Opinion Research at the University of Leuven (ISPO-KU Leuven) (Abts et al., 2015). This post-electoral survey was carried out among a register-based probability sample of Belgians entitled to vote in the 2014 elections. On completion of a computer-assisted personal interview (response rate 47%), respondents were asked to fill out a 20-page drop-off questionnaire, containing a specific module on Social Europe. Applying the principles of Dillman's Tailored Design Method (Dillman et al., 2014), we were able to convince 74% of the respondents to fill out and send back the drop-off questionnaire (N = 1403). The realized sample includes 49.2% men and 40.4% people with tertiary education, and the mean age is 51.7 years. The elderly and higher educated are somewhat overrepresented compared with the 26% who did not return the drop-off (mean age 45.2; 28.7% with tertiary education). However, given that in this study we analyse relationships between variables rather than levels of support, the impact of this overrepresentation can reasonably be assumed to be limited (Heggestad, Rogelberg, Goh, & Oswald, 2015).

2.4.2 Indicators

The first dimension, the *preferred level for decision making regarding social policy* is measured by means of three items, each referring to a specific policy area: 'unemployment benefits', 'pensions' and 'health care'. Respondents were asked to indicate the level at which they prefer decisions to be taken, choosing from the following four response categories: (1) exclusively EU, (2) largely EU, (3) largely national and (4) exclusively national. Compared with the Eurobarometer, our operationalization includes more clearly defined policy areas, and offers more fine-grained answer options with four categories instead of two. To uncover how the decision-making level for social policy relates to preferences regarding other policy areas, we also include indicators for two additional policy areas in the analyses: *economic policy* (indicators: budget and government spending, taxes and economic policy) and *security and foreign policy* (indicators: organized crime, migration and asylum policy, defence and army).

Furthermore, the questionnaire contains multi-item measurements for the other four dimensions of Social Europe outlined in Table 2.1. An overview of the exact question wording and the frequency distributions for each of the items are provided in ''Appendix 2.A and 2.B''.

Opinions about *European social citizenship* are operationalized by four Likert five-point agree-disagree items concerning citizens' attitudes towards the access of EU citizens to social benefits and protection in Belgium. One item concerns equal social rights, two items relate to prioritizing nationals and one item refers to the conditionality of social protection.

Attitudes towards *harmonization* are measured by support for four types of *social regulations*: obligations imposed on employers to protect health and safety at work, maximum weekly working hours, minimum terms of paid leave and minimum terms of maternity leave. Responses were coded on a five-point scale ranging from 'a very bad thing' to 'a very good thing'. Due to its complexity, we decided not to survey attitudes towards mutual surveillance through the open method of co-ordination (i.e. a second aspect of harmonization).

Attitudes towards *member-state solidarity* are measured by three items on a five-point scale referring to solidarity between the richer and poorer countries of the EU. These items concern supporting member states in economic difficulties, the amount of tax money being redistributed, and the necessity for solidarity between EU member states. Due to reasons of complexity and specificity, we choose not to refer specifically to bailout payments or to structural funds, but instead to general views about solidarity between more and less prosperous member states.

Lastly, *interpersonal solidarity* is measured by means of two separate scales. On the one hand, the attitude towards the *principle of interpersonal solidarity* is measured directly by two items: support for EU measures to reduce income disparities and support for a system of solidarity among all EU citizens. On the other hand, four other items tap into interpersonal solidarity indirectly by measuring support for the implementation of a *European social security system*. One item concerns the realization of an overall European welfare state, whereas the other three items refer to shared European protection schemes for specific policy areas: child allowances, minimum income benefits and unemployment benefits.

2.4.3 Statistical modelling

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is used to study the dimensionality of attitudes towards Social Europe. Testing competing models, the analysis proceeds in three stages. First, the issue of multidimensionality is addressed by specifying a model containing six dimensions, while also testing whether a second-order factor - support for Social Europe - can explain the interrelations between these dimensions. Second, we assess the validity of 'preferred decision-making level' as an indicator of attitudes towards Social Europe. Third, the issue of measurement invariance

(Davidov et al., 2014) across the low and high educated is addressed by multigroup confirmatory factor analysis (MGCFA). All models are estimated using Mplus 7.3. The presence of missing data is dealt with by using full information maximum likelihood estimation (FIML) (Schafer & Graham, 2002).[6]

2.5 Results

2.5.1 Attitudes towards Social Europe: Unidimensional or multidimensional?

To investigate whether the postulated multidimensional structure is reflected in citizens' attitudes, we compare CFA models with competing attitude structures. Model 1 represents a CFA model in which the 20 selected items of Social Europe load on one factor. Global model fit indices (see Table 2.2) show very clearly that this unidimensional model does not fit the data adequately. Model 2 represents a CFA with six latent constructs (each measured by two[7] to four indicators) that are uncorrelated. Fit indices improve substantially by specifying multiple dimensions instead of a single factor, but the overall fit of Model 2 remains unacceptable. Modification indices suggest an error correlation between two social regulation items, namely between support for the EU's social regulations on paid leave for employees and support for maternity leave. The inclusion of the error correlation improves the model fit significantly ($\Delta\chi^2 = 43.601$ for 1 degree of freedom) and is theoretically justified because both items refer to similar instruments: regulations concerning leave. Based on these arguments, we include this error correlation in Model 2 and all subsequent models. In Model 3, the assumption that the dimensions are unrelated is relaxed, and correlations between the six latent constructs are included. Judging by all fit indices, Model 3 performs substantially better than the one without correlations (Model 2) and yields a satisfactory model fit. This confirms that the postulated dimensions of Social Europe constitute separate but interrelated dimensions.

[6] The ML estimation procedure assumes that the indicators are continuous and follow a multivariate normal distribution. Given that most of our indicators are five-point Likert items, this assumption is not fulfilled. However, simulation studies show that the ML estimator is robust against a violation of the normality assumption as long as there are at least five answer categories and the data is not overly skewed (DiStefano 2002; Muthén and Kaplan 1985;West et al. 1995). As a robustness check, we re-estimated the first and second-order factor models (Models 1–5) using robust weighted least squares (WLSMV) estimation for categorical data. This yielded very similar results, although factor loadings were slightly stronger and model fit was, depending on the fit index considered, marginally worse (χ^2, RMSEA) or somewhat better (CFI, TLI). In this article, we report the ML estimates because this procedure is more straightforward for testing measurement equivalence. The WLSMV results are available on request from the first author.

[7] In the uncorrelated model, factor loadings for the two indicators of 'interpersonal solidarity'—Q121_3 and Q121_7—were set equal (constrained to 1) for reasons of model identification.

Table 2.2. Fit indices of CFA models, attitudes towards Social Europe (N=1403)

Model	Description	χ^2	df	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	TLI
1	Single-factor model	4698.500	170	.138	.118	.506	.448
2	First-order model with six uncorrelated factors	1514.033	170	.075	.149	.853	.836
3	First-order model with six correlated factors	407.289	154	.034	.035	.972	.966
4	Second-order CFA (Social Europe)	511.951	163	.039	.045	.962	.956

In the fourth step, we investigate whether the pattern of correlations between the different dimensions of Social Europe can be accounted for by means of a single, underlying second-order factor (Model 4). The second-order factor model has a good model fit, as the RMSEA equals .039, the SRMR equals .045 and both the CFI (.962) and TLI (.956) are sufficiently close to 1. This implies that the various attitudinal dimensions of Social Europe are, at least to some extent, expressions of a more general evaluation continuum.

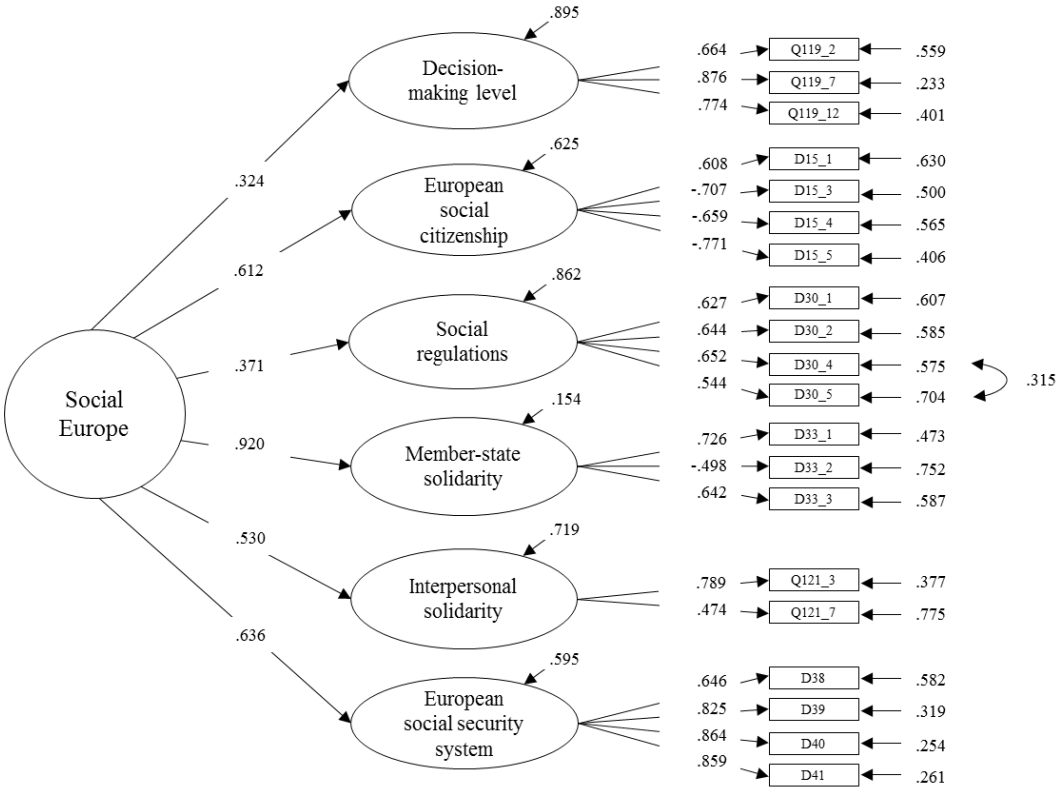
In this measurement model (see Figure 2.1), all loadings of the items on the first-order factors have an absolute value larger than .40, and mostly above .60. This indicates that the items are sufficiently valid and are reliable indicators of the concepts they are intended to measure. The extent to which the specific dimensions overlap with the general concept of Social Europe can be derived from the second-order factor loadings. These loadings vary considerably in strength. The highest is observed for *member-state solidarity*: the loading of .920 implies that approximately 85% of the variance in opinions on solidarity with other member states can be explained by the Social Europe second-order factor. Or from a different perspective, citizens' general attitudes towards Social Europe largely coincide with their opinions on whether the richest member states of the EU should support the less-affluent ones. In citizens' eyes, member-state solidarity seems to be the primary aspect of Social Europe. This is not completely unexpected, as the EU's various structural funds, which redistribute money from the more-affluent to the less-affluent member states, are the kernel of existing Social Europe. Although not measured directly, we assume that the impact of the European debt crisis and the rescue funds for Eurozone countries are important in this respect. The extensive debate about the bailouts for over-indebted member states might explain why citizens' general attitudes towards Social Europe rely so closely on their opinion about member-state solidarity.

Three dimensions show somewhat weaker but still considerable second-order factor loadings: .612 for *European social citizenship*, .530 for the principle of *interpersonal solidarity*, and .636 for the implementation of interpersonal solidarity through a *European social security system*. These dimensions share between 28 and 41% of their variance with the general Social Europe factor, implying they are to a certain extent determined by it, however they do not overlap completely. Popular support for Social Europe therefore partly hinges on the views that all EU

citizens should be given the same access to social rights, that more solidarity should exist between European citizens regardless of their country of residence, and that a common European welfare system should be developed.

The lowest second-order factor loading is found for the preferred *decision-making level for social policy* (.324). This finding delegitimizes the common academic practice of using preferred decision-making level as a proxy for attitudes towards Social Europe.

Figure 2.1. Second-order factor model with standardized factor loadings (Model 4; N = 1403).



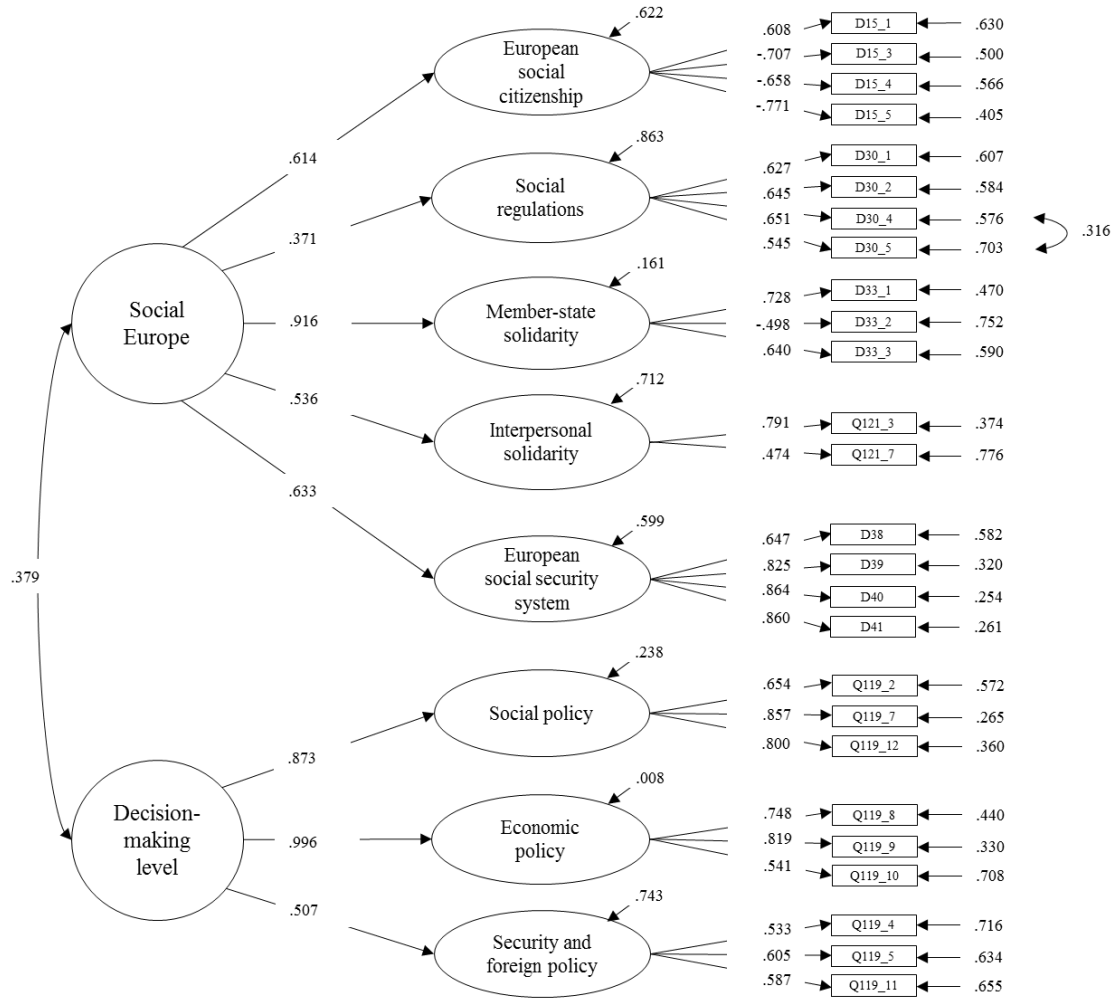
Note. Model fit indices of the CFA model: χ^2 = 511.951, df = 163, RMSEA = .039, SRMR = .045, CFI = .962, TLI = .956. All parameters are significant at the p < .001 level. *Source* BNES (2014)

Furthermore, support for *social regulations* implemented by the EU is also weakly explained by the Social Europe construct (.371). Citizens responding favourably to these items might express their approval for these measures rather than support for the harmonizing role of the EU with regard to these social regulations. So neither the preferred decision-making level for social policy nor opinions on the harmonization of (implemented) social regulations in the EU substantially shape citizens' attitudes towards Social Europe. Whereas the first might be too abstract to measure support for Social Europe, the latter might be related to support for particular social policy measures.

2.5.2 Preferred decision-making level: A valid measurement of attitudes towards Social Europe?

Previous studies on support for European-level social policy have predominantly used the preferred decision-making level as a crucial indicator (Beaudonnet, 2013; Mau, 2005). However, our findings indicate that this dimension is only very weakly related to the second-order factor. Consequently, it seems unjustified to consider the preferred decision-making level as a component of citizens' general attitude towards Social Europe. In order to shed light on this essential issue, we add to the factor model six additional items measuring attitudes towards the preferred level for decision making regarding two other policy areas. Concretely, we specify a model with two second-order factors (see Figure 2.2): (1) *decision-making level*, which contains the items concerning the preferred decision-making level for social policy (three items), for economic policy (three items) and for security and foreign policy (three items); and (2) *Social Europe*, measured by means of the remaining dimensions, thereby excluding the preferred decision-making level for social policy.

Figure 2.2. Second-order CFA model for decision-making level and Social Europe with standardized factor loadings (Model 5; N = 1403).



Note. Model fit indices of the CFA model: χ^2 = 910.535, df = 289, RMSEA = .039, SRMR = .049, CFI = .948, TLI = .942. All parameters are significant at the p < .001 level. *Source* BNES (2014)

This model tests the hypothesis that the preferred decision-making level for the area of social policy does not measure attitudes towards Social Europe, but instead indicates a preference for supranational policy-making in general. The model has an appropriate model fit (RMSEA = .039; SRMR = .049; CFI = .948; TLI = .942) and presents interesting insights. First, the correlation between the two second-order factors (Social Europe and decision-making level) is moderately strong (.379). Citizens in favour of supranational policy hold more positive views about Social Europe and vice versa. Nevertheless, Social Europe and the preferred decision-making level are clearly distinct concepts. The first-order factor loadings of the respective items for economic policy, security and foreign policy, and social policy show an expected pattern with most loadings higher than .60. As expected, the second-order factor loadings on the Social Europe concept are similar to those in the previous model. The second-order factor loadings on the decision-making level construct equal .873 for social policy, .996 for economic policy and .507

for security and foreign policy. People's preferences regarding the level for decision making therefore correspond almost perfectly with their views on EU involvement in economic policies, but also with regard to social policy. The second-order factor loading for the decision-making level for social policy on the general decision-making construct is substantially stronger than the loading we observe on the Social Europe construct (.324, see Figure 2.1). In this sense, the item on the preferred decision-making level for social policy seems to measure support for supranational policy-making rather than attitudes towards Social Europe. In other words, the policy-making dimension clearly trumps the social dimension. This finding is highly relevant for the assessment of previous research on Social Europe, which is unfortunately largely based on this specific indicator (Beaudonnet, 2013; Berg, 2007; Mau, 2005).

2.5.3 Measurement equivalence among high-educated and low-educated people

In order to draw valid conclusions, the meaning and interpretation of our measurement should be equivalent for all subgroups in the population. Because European-level social policy in its different aspects is a highly complex and intricate topic, it is possible that these survey measurements are too complex for lower-educated citizens. In their study on perceptions of Europe, Gaxie et al. (2011) argue that survey questions on complex European issues are suitable instruments only for respondents with what is termed synoptic involvement, that is, those who know the technical and political particularities of European debates and who can discuss European issues with ease. To investigate whether our measurement of attitudes towards Social Europe may be biased depending on synoptic involvement, we investigate whether it is equivalent across higher and lower-educated respondents. In order to test this issue, we assume that education level is indicative of respondents' ability to understand European issues and respondents' familiarity with or interest in these issues (European Commission 2010). Our second-order measurement equivalence test (Byrne & Stewart, 2006; Chen, Sousa, & West, 2005) allows us to investigate whether citizens with different levels of education hold different understandings of the same questions, and whether the pattern and means of the various dimensions are comparable across both groups. Concretely, we perform a multi-group confirmatory factor analysis (MGCFA) of the second-order factor model Social Europe (including the first-order factors shown in Figure 2.2), comparing respondents who completed upper-secondary education or lower (N = 835) with those who hold a tertiary educational degree (N = 567).

Table 2.3 compares the fit indices of a series of models with different restrictions imposed. We start with a configurally-equivalent model (i.e. equal factor structures but no cross-group restrictions on loadings or intercepts). The configural model has a good fit (RMSEA = .04;

SRMR = .046; CFI = .966; TLI = .959), implying that the number of factors and the pattern of factor loadings are similar among the low and the high educated, thus indicating that the same dimensional structure is found across both groups. However, this finding does not necessarily imply that meaningful comparisons of the latent factor Social Europe can be made between the two groups, as this would require scalar equivalence (i.e. equal factor loadings and intercepts). Therefore, in the next step we constrain the first-order and second-order factor loadings and intercepts (Model 2 in Table 2.3). Although this model shows a good fit (χ^2 = 670.628; RMSEA = .048; SRMR = .067; CFI = .945; TLI = .942), indicators of local misfit (modification indices and expected parameter changes) suggest releasing constraints on five parameters. These modifications improve model fit considerably (Model 3: $\Delta\chi^2$ = 127.679; ΔRMSEA = .008; ΔSRMR = .015; ΔCFI = .017; ΔTLI = .017). Table 2.4 shows the factor loadings and intercepts for this final MGCFA model, which implies partial scalar equivalence of the first and second-order constructs. Below, we briefly discuss the deviations from full scalar equivalence.

Table 2.3. Fit statistics of MGCFA models for the second-order factor model Social Europe among the low and the high educated (N = 1402)

Model	Description	χ^2	df	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	TLI
1	Configural invariance	481.267	227	.040	.046	.966	.959
2	First-order and second-order factor loadings and intercepts invariant	670.628	258	.048	.067	.945	.942
3	First-order and second-order factor loadings and intercepts invariant with modifications	542.949	254	.040	.052	.962	.959

First, the factor loadings for the item regarding whether or not there is too much tax money flowing from the prosperous EU countries to the poorer ones (d33_2) is considerably weaker for the lower educated (-0.46) than for the higher educated (-0.86). For the higher educated, the response to item d33_2 is more consistent with the other indicators of the dimension member-state solidarity than for the lower educated. A possible explanation is that the lower educated are less aware of the fact that this item has a reverse meaning in comparison with the other two items measuring member-state solidarity. Second, the intercept of the item regarding minimum paid leave (d30_4) is greater among the lower educated than among the higher educated (4.08 vs. 3.94). In other words, if we compare lower and higher-educated people who have the same level of support for social regulations, the former take a more favourable stance towards minimum paid leave. Third, the second-order factor loading for member-state solidarity is considerably stronger for the lower educated. In fact, for the lower educated, member-state solidarity overlaps completely with the second-order factor Social Europe.[8] Lastly, two second-

[8] The (standardized) factor loading of member-state solidarity had to be constrained to 1 among the low educated, because the loading exceeded the value of 1 for this group.

order intercepts are allowed to differ somewhat between the low and the high educated. Controlling for the second-order factor, the higher educated indicate slightly less approval for the principle of interpersonal solidarity, whereas they report somewhat greater levels of support for a European social citizenship. The MGCFA results confirm partial scalar equivalence, giving sufficient grounds for comparing the results of the lower and the higher educated in a reliable and valid way. The hypothesis that our measurement instruments cannot be used for the lower educated is rejected. However, although the structure of attitudes towards Social Europe is similar for the low and the high educated, our analysis reveals significant differences in the level of support for Social Europe between the two groups: among the higher educated, overall levels of support for Social Europe are strongest (0.09 for the higher educated vs. 0 for the lower educated, see Table 2.4).

Table 2.4. Second-order partial scalar equivalence model among the low and the high educated: unstandardized and standardized (in parentheses) parameter estimates (modifications in bold, N = 1402)

	Low educated					High educated				
First-order	**Factor loading**				**Intercept**	**Factor loading**				**Intercept**
Member-state solidarity										
D33_1	1 (0.69)				2.82 (3.02)	1 (0.74)				2.82 (3.09)
D33_2	**-0.46 (-0.33)**				3.34 (3.74)	**-0.86 (-0.69)**				3.34 (3.99)
D33_3	0.84 (0.62)				3.38 (3.84)	0.84 (0.71)				3.38 (4.27)
Interpersonal solidarity										
Q121_3		1 (0.67)			3.54 (3.88)		1 (0.82)			3.54 (3.97)
Q121_7		0.72 (0.47)			3.40 (3.64)		0.72 (0.57)			3.40 (3.69)
European social citizenship										
D15_1			1 (0.55)		2.71 (2.52)			1 (0.63)		2.71 (2.67)
D15_3			-1.17 (-0.66)		3.45 (3.29)			-1.17 (-0.73)		3.45 (3.37)
D15_4			-0.95 (-0.63)		4.08 (4.55)			-0.95 (-0.64)		4.08 (4.30)
D15_5			-1.30 (-0.76)		3.99 (3.95)			-1.30 (-0.76)		3.99 (3.65)
Social regulations										
D30_1				1 (0.59)	4.17 (6.17)				1 (0.67)	4.17 (7.14)
D30_2				1.51 (0.63)	3.67 (3.83)				1.51 (0.65)	3.67 (4.02)
D30_4*				1.24 (0.66)	**4.08 (5.40)**				1.24 (0.68)	**3.94 (5.55)**
D30_5*				1.27 (0.53)	3.84 (4.00)				1.27 (0.58)	3.84 (4.48)
European social security system										
D38					1 (0.61)	2.33 (2.72)				1 (0.69)	2.33 (2.88)
D39					1.28 (0.79)	2.49 (2.94)				1.28 (0.87)	2.49 (3.03)
D40					1.29 (0.83)	2.51 (3.09)				1.29 (0.91)	2.51 (3.18)
D41					1.28 (0.83)	2.42 (3.03)				1.28 (0.89)	2.42 (3.00)
Second-order	**Factor loading**				**Intercept**	**Factor loading**				**Intercept**
Member-state solidarity	**4.87 (1)**				0 (0)	**3.30 (0.91)**				0 (0)
Interpersonal solidarity		2.38 (0.52)			**0 (0)**		2.38 (0.60)			**-0.28 (-0.38)**
European social citizenship			2.32 (0.52)		**0 (0)**			2.32 (0.67)		**0.21 (0.33)**
Social regulations				1 (0.33)	0 (0)				1 (0.47)	0 (0)
European social security system					2.01 (0.51)	0 (0)				2.01 (0.66)	0 (0)
Mean score Social Europe	0					0.09				

Note. Model fit indices χ^2=542.949 df=254 RMSEA=.040 SRMR=.052 CFI=.962 TLI=.959

2.6 Conclusion

The contributions of this study to the conceptualization and measurement of citizens' attitudes regarding Social Europe are threefold. First, we elaborated the notion of 'Social Europe' conceptually by defining it as a multidimensional concept that refers to various instruments and principles of solidarity at European level. Second, our empirical analysis confirms that citizens indeed have attitudes to five different, but interrelated, aspects of Social Europe, i.e. attitudes concerning European social citizenship, harmonization through social regulations, member-state solidarity, interpersonal solidarity and a European social security system. In addition, our research indicates that member-state solidarity is clearly the primary aspect of Social Europe in public opinion, whereas the feature that has received most scholarly attention in empirical research to date - the preferred decision-making level for social policy - cannot be considered as a key component of attitudes towards Social Europe. Third, our proposed multidimensional measurement of Social Europe proves to be a valid instrument for both high and low-educated people, rejecting the proposition that Social Europe is a concept that is too complex to be measured among the lower-educated population.

These findings have several repercussions for the interpretation of previous studies as well as for future research. Our analyses reveal that the most-often investigated item in previous research - the preferred decision-making level for social policy - is measuring support for European integration in general, but is not constitutive to citizens' opinions towards the social aspect of European integration. Accordingly, it is misleading to use this indicator to draw conclusions about citizens' attitudes towards Social Europe (Mau, 2005) or a European social policy (Beaudonnet, 2013). Based on our findings, we recommend including at least three of the following constitutive components to measure the overall attitude towards Social Europe: member-state solidarity, European social citizenship and the European social security system.

The validation of our measurement instrument is time and space dependent. Events such as the Greek crisis, the refugee crisis and the Brexit referendum - just to mention a few - point to the fact that cross-nationally different meanings of Social Europe probably exist. In addition, the meaning of Social Europe is likely to be related to the social protection level of the national welfare system. For instance, harmonization of social policies might be an important component of Social Europe in the minds of citizens living in less-developed welfare states, whereas this may be less relevant for citizens in well-developed welfare states, in which EU social regulations improve existing social protection to a lesser degree. Furthermore, the finding that member-state solidarity functions as a 'master template' must be treated with great care in a cross-national

perspective, because this aspect of Social Europe possibly does not equally contribute to citizens' overall attitude towards Social Europe across member states. In net-contributing countries, member-state solidarity might be a sensitive topic that dominates the debate on Social Europe in general. In net-receiving countries, the relevance of Social Europe's separate components may be more balanced. In addition, the politicized debate about financial aid for debt-ridden member states in recent years may partly explain why citizens' attitudes towards member-state solidarity coincide so strongly with their overall attitudes regarding Social Europe - at least in the Belgian case. Nevertheless, further research needs to shed light on the cross-national and cross-temporal validity of our instrument.

In addition, future contributions could expand the scope of the attitudes that are included. The proposed measurement focuses on the content of Social Europe; on its policy principles and to a limited extent on its policy instruments. New measurements might focus additionally on Social Europe's policy instruments, as they are not fully captured in our approach. Furthermore, a measurement of Social Europe might also include citizens' attitudes towards the social policy priorities for the European Commission (Burgoon, 2009), the performance of the European social policy (Beaudonnet & Di Mauro, 2012) and its (un)intended consequences, in order to shed more light on the multi-layered nature of attitudes towards Social Europe.

In the near future, studies concerning the measurement of attitudes towards Social Europe should certainly be complemented by research on the determinants of citizens' attitudes towards its various dimensions, because a new integration–demarcation conflict (Kriesi et al., 2008) between winners and losers of globalization might emerge. The opening of national welfare boundaries and restructuring at the European level are expected to be supported differently among different groups within national communities, as well as between EU member states, depending on whether people perceive Social Europe as a threat or an opportunity. Lastly, researchers should also investigate the extent to which attitudes towards Social Europe go beyond Euroscepticism as such, and whether Europeans' perceptions of the EU's impact on national welfare states elicit negative or positive attitudes towards further European (social) integration.

Appendices

Appendix 2.A. Support for Social Europe among Belgians (percentages weighted by age, gender and education)

Decision-making level [a]	Can you tell me for each of the following policy domains whether decisions in those domains should, according to you, be taken exclusively by the European Union, primarily by the European Union, primarily at the national level or exclusively at the national level?					
		Exclusively national level	Primarily national level	Primarily EU	Exclusively EU	
Q119_2	Health care	35.69	42.83	15.47	6.01	
Q119_7	Pensions	43.29	42.44	10.14	4.13	
Q119_12	Unemployment benefits	40.68	44.60	9.90	4.82	
European social citizenship	Now we would like to ask your opinion on whether EU citizens should have access to social security in Belgium. By EU citizens we mean people who have come to Belgium from other EU member states and live here. Social security provides citizens with an income in case of illness, unemployment and disability. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?					
		Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree
D15_1	EU citizens should receive the same social facilities as Belgians	10.49	27.83	30.32	26.58	4.77
D15_3	In the allocation of social benefits Belgians should have priority over EU citizens	4.10	22.41	25.15	36.31	12.03
D15_4	EU citizens should first have a job before they gain access to social services	1.37	6.91	17.32	45.65	28.75
D15_5	Let's support the poor in our country first, before we help the poor coming from other EU countries	2.54	10.27	22.23	33.39	31.58
Social regulations	Below are a number of measures that the European Union has taken in recent years. Can you indicate for each of the following measures whether it is a (very) good or a (very) bad thing that the EU has taken these measures?					
		A very bad thing	A bad thing	Neither good nor bad	A good thing	A very good thing
D30_1	The EU imposes a number of obligations on employers to protect the health and safety of workers	0.22	1.33	9.42	58.71	30.32
D30_2	The EU prohibits a workweek of more than 48 hours (including overtime) for workers in the EU member states	1.68	9.39	25.40	43.60	19.93
D30_4	The EU posits that workers in the EU member states are	0.17	2.17	14.68	53.23	29.76

	entitled to paid leave for a period of at least 4 weeks					
D30_5	The EU obliges all EU member states to provide at least 4 months of paid maternity leave to women who gave birth	1.28	5.92	20.67	42.87	29.26
Member-state solidarity	The following statements are about solidarity between member states of the European Union. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?					
		Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree
D33_1	Rich EU countries such as Belgium should always support other member states that experience serious economic difficulties	6.34	28.30	37.62	25.59	2.15
D33_2	Too much tax money is going from the prosperous EU countries to the poorer EU countries	2.49	13.90	43.73	33.11	6.76
D33_3	The solidarity between the richer and poorer EU countries should not be broken	2.06	9.03	37.54	42.83	8.54
Interpersonal solidarity	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?					
		Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree
Q121_3	A system of solidarity between all EU citizens needs to be established	2.50	13.44	23.00	54.43	7.63
Q121_7	The EU should take measures to reduce income differences between all EU citizens	1.50	18.04	27.75	43.98	8.73
European social security system [a]		Completely against	Rather against	Rather for	Completely for	
D38	General system[b]	14.31	37.36	40.16	8.17	
D39	Child benefit[b]	11.94	47.25	29.09	11.72	
D40	Minimum income benefit [b]	10.94	49.06	30.00	10.00	
D41	Unemployment benefit [b]	9.25	44.51	34.97	11.27	

[a] Answer categories are reversed,
[b] Questioning is given in Appendix 2B

Appendix 2.B. Survey questions on a European social security system

D38 European social security system	Currently, each member state of the European Union is responsible for its own system of social security. This social security provides citizens a minimum protection in the event of illness, old age, unemployment or disability. Some are saying we should stablish a common system of social security within the European Union, to which all EU citizens pay contributions. Are you for or against such a common system of social security at the EU level?
Introduction D39-D41	*In the social policy domain, the European Union can do many things. In the following four questions we describe four different measures the European Union could possibly take. Are you for or against these measures?*
D39 European child benefit	One possible measure is the introduction of a European child benefit. Through this measure the EU guarantees a minimum benefit for children in the European Union that is adapted to the cost of living in each country. To fund the European child benefit, each country would pay according to its wealth. Additionally, member states could opt to further increase the child benefit in their own country at their own expense. Are you for or against the introduction of such a European minimum child benefit by the EU?
D40 European minimum income benefit	A second possible measure is the introduction of a European minimum income. Through this measure the EU guarantees a minimum income benefit for all poor people in the European Union that is adapted to the cost of living in each country. To fund the European minimum income, each country would pay according to its wealth. Additionally, member states could opt to further increase the minimum income in their own country at their own expense. Are you for or against the introduction of such a European minimum income by the EU?
D41 European unemployment benefit	A third possible measure is the introduction of a European unemployment benefit. Through this measure the EU guarantees a minimum unemployment benefit for all temporary unemployed in the European Union that is adapted to the cost of living in each country. To fund the European unemployment benefit, each country would pay according to its wealth. Member states could opt to further increase the benefit in their country at their own expense. Are you for or against the introduction of such a European unemployment benefit by the EU?

Chapter 3

Welfare state attitudes and support for Social Europe: Spillover or obstacle?[1]

Abstract

This study investigates how support for Social Europe is related to citizens' welfare attitudes. On the one hand, welfare attitudes can spill over from the national to the European level, given that Social Europe aims to achieve similar goals to those of national welfare states. On the other hand, support for the welfare state can be an obstacle, if citizens perceive the nation state and the European Union as competing or substituting governance levels. Using data from the 2014 Belgian National Election Study, we take a multidimensional approach to Social Europe, capturing attitudes toward social regulations, member state solidarity, European social citizenship, and a European social security system. Results demonstrate that citizens who are more positive about the welfare state are also more supportive of Social Europe. However, positive welfare attitudes do not affect all dimensions of Social Europe to the same extent. The spillover effect of support for basic welfare state principles is strongest for policy instruments of Social Europe that are less intrusive to national welfare states (EU social regulations). By contrast, welfare state critique has a stronger impact on support for more intrusive instruments (European social citizenship).

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3.1 Introduction

The debate on the social dimension of the European Union is generating more political discussion and controversy than ever before. The call for expanding Social Europe mainly comes from the political left, which is preoccupied with strengthening and preserving the achievements of national welfare states, and considers the development of Social Europe as a necessity (Føllesdal et al., 2007). Politicians and scholars have presented a number of arguments in favor of Social Europe, including the expectation that it would increase the popular legitimacy of the European project as it could compensate for the negative consequences of economic integration by providing social protection at the EU level (Fernandes & Maslauskaite, 2013a; Schellinger, 2015).

Nevertheless, little scholarly attention has been paid to citizens' attitudes toward the EU's social dimension and how these positions are related to their attitudes toward national welfare states. In this study, we approach Social Europe as referring to current or proposed EU governance that establishes supranational social policies and that affects social rights and policies in the member states (Martinsen and Vollaard, 2014, p. 680). In some respects, Social Europe strengthens the national welfare state, whereas at the same time challenging its foundations (Ferrera, 2017). For instance, social regulations can extend national legislation, whereas the coordination of social security rights prohibits that social benefits and services are restricted to member states' own citizens. These two dynamics of Social Europe may generate different expectations about how attitudes toward national welfare states relate to support for Social Europe. On the one hand, attitudes concerning the national welfare state can spill over to the European area, given that both Social Europe and the national welfare state aim to achieve similar goals. On the other hand, it can be expected that support for the welfare state hinders support for Social Europe, if the nation state and the European Union are considered as competing or substituting governance levels (Burgoon, 2009).

Previous research shows that in member states with high levels of income equality, citizens who support state intervention and income redistribution have more negative attitudes toward the EU (Garry and Tilley, 2015). Furthermore, citizens who are dissatisfied with national public services (Kumlin, 2009), evaluate their coverage as insufficient, and have less confidence in the sustainability of their national welfare state (Beaudonnet, 2015) are also less supportive of the EU. This may indicate that citizens either blame the EU for being the cause of their malfunctioning national system or consider it–at least in advanced welfare states–as a threat. Given these results, it remains unclear what citizens expect from the EU regarding social policy, and in particular how their welfare attitudes are related to support for Social Europe. By

investigating multiple welfare attitude dimensions, the current study aims to pinpoint *how welfare state support is related to support for Social Europe and whether the relationship with welfare state attitudes varies across different dimensions of Social Europe*. To fully understand this linkage, we distinguish between attitudes toward the basic principles of the welfare state and welfare state critique, since their relationship with support for Social Europe is based on a different underlying logic.

3.2 Explaining support for Social Europe

3.2.1 Welfare attitudes: Spillover or obstacle to support for Social Europe?

We propose two explanatory mechanisms for how welfare state attitudes may relate to support for Social Europe, namely spillover or obstacle. On the one hand, Social Europe can be considered as an instrument that aims to achieve similar objectives as national welfare states. The social dimension of the EU has developed to counterbalance the negative impact of economic deregulation and to prevent a 'race to the bottom' in social standards (Fernandes and Maslauskaite, 2013). In this respect, Vandenbroucke (2013: 221) argues that a Social Union should guide and support the substantive development of national welfare states, based on general social standards and common objectives. From the perspective that Social Europe aims to defend the welfare state at the European level, it can be expected that advocates of the national welfare state will be more positive toward Social Europe. This *spillover* mechanism implies that citizens' attitudes are congruent across policy levels (Muñoz et al., 2011). A spillover of pro-welfare attitudes to the European area is consistent with cue-taking theory, which assumes that citizens use their attitudes about domestic politics as a proxy to evaluate European integration (Anderson, 1998). Given that many citizens have limited interest in and awareness of European politics, general attitudes toward the welfare state can be activated as a heuristic and evoke attitudes toward the EU's social dimension.

On the other hand, it is argued that Social Europe challenges the foundations of national welfare states. Ferrera (2005) points out that national welfare states are based on 'closure', as compulsory social insurance draws clear boundaries between those who are entitled to social benefits and those who are not eligible to join the social security system. European integration, on the contrary, operates on the basis of 'opening', since it attempts to redraw the boundaries of welfare at the supranational level. The EU constrains the scope and content of national bounding decisions, as well as the right to impose boundaries as such (Ferrera, 2005, p. 3). Others have expressed concerns that European integration will not be able to restructure at the supranational

level the type of solidarity that exists in national welfare states (Hemerijck, 2012; Scharpf, 2010). Integration not only affects the boundaries of social sharing systems, but also the internal design of welfare states, for instance in the areas of pensions, health care, and social assistance. The threat that Social Europe poses to the boundaries of welfare states can nourish competition for scarce resources, whereas the impact on the internal design of the welfare state can raise concerns–especially in the most advanced welfare states–about the maintenance of social protection levels. From this viewpoint, pro-welfare attitudes may *obstruct* support for Social Europe. First, citizens' preferences regarding strong government responsibility for welfare and for income redistribution might be restricted to national boundaries. In this respect, pro-welfare state positions might coincide with welfare chauvinism. Second, citizens who are satisfied with their welfare regime may perceive Social Europe as a threat to institutionalized solidarity at the national level, whereas those who think that national institutions perform poorly may see it as an opportunity (Beaudonnet, 2015; Sanchez-Cuenca, 2000).

3.2.2 Dimensions of support for Social Europe

The notion of 'Social Europe' can refer to different basic principles and policy options, which vary in the extent to which they are intrusive to national welfare states. By intrusiveness, we understand the degree of interference in the boundaries of solidarity on which the welfare state is based. Accordingly, empirical research shows that citizens differentiate substantially in their attitudes concerning various aspects of Social Europe (Baute et al., 2017). Whether citizens' welfare attitudes facilitate or obstruct support for Social Europe might depend on how a particular policy instrument intervenes in the national welfare state.

The first, and least intrusive, aspect of current European social policy relates to the *harmonization* of national social policies. This is mainly addressed through binding and non-binding social regulations, for instance in the fields of health and safety at work, working conditions, and equality (Falkner, 2010). The regulatory angle of Social Europe actually supports the welfare state, as it reinforces social protection, while leaving the boundaries of national welfare states untouched. More recently, the Open Method of Coordination was introduced to facilitate an upward convergence of social standards through mutual learning and peer pressure (de la Porte, 2013). Given the large diversity of national welfare states, complete harmonization is not aimed at. Nevertheless, the EU's instruments for harmonization are a direct pressure toward more 'bounded varieties of welfare' (Falkner, 2010).

Second, Social Europe also requires financial solidarity that goes beyond the national welfare state (Sangiovanni, 2013). *Member state solidarity* is implemented through various

structural funds, which aim to reduce regional disparities in income, employment, investment, and growth within the EU (Allen, 2010). The fiscal aid to Eurozone countries, which overturned the 'no bailout clause' during the European sovereign debt crisis, is also considered as an instrument of international redistribution. In essence, member state solidarity provides financial assistance from more affluent regions to poorer ones, on top of existing forms of institutionalized solidarity within member states. Therefore, these transfers do not erode the autonomy of member states to conduct their own social policies.

Third, the development of *European social citizenship* (Faist, 2001) is a cornerstone of Social Europe that operates according to an opposing dynamic to that of national welfare states. It implies that EU citizens acquire access to other member states' social security schemes and that already-earned social security rights are transferrable between member states. The creation of an EU social citizenship space–which matches the EU's territorial borders–strongly infringes on the boundaries of national welfare states (Ferrera, 2005, 2017). Currently, EU citizens receive equal social rights as nationals, without a European standard, as the amount, type, and duration of benefits depend on the country of residence.

Turning to the most intrusive dimension, Social Europe can also be implemented by policy instruments that are based on *interpersonal solidarity*, defining rights and obligations among EU citizens (Sangiovanni, 2013). Such policy instruments have been proposed in the form of a European unemployment insurance scheme (Dullien, 2013), a European minimum income benefit (Peña-Casas and Bouget, 2014), and a European child benefit (Levy et al., 2013). European social protection schemes would introduce new redistributive mechanisms and would enforce financial solidarity between EU citizens. Their level of contributions and benefits would be based on a relatively low common denominator between member states and could be topped up by the member states with national payments. Such measures would for instance be financed by a flat tax on all household income and limited to a maximum proportion of GDP. This is clearly the most intrusive component of Social Europe to the welfare state.

3.2.3 Welfare state principles and welfare state critique

To gain detailed insight into the spillover and obstacle mechanisms, we incorporate two clusters of welfare attitudes in this study, namely support for basic *welfare state principles* and *welfare state critique*. The distinction between the two is relevant, because their relationship with support for Social Europe rests on different theoretical foundations.

Attitudes about *welfare state principles* refer to citizens' preferences for redistribution and the government's responsibility for welfare. Welfare state principles refer to what Roosma and colleagues (2013) label the 'welfare mix': The goals of the welfare state and the preferred range of government responsibility for welfare. First, the welfare mix refers to the diversity of welfare-generating forces. The state, the market, civil society, or the family can all operate as regulatory or redistributive institutions (Roosma et al., 2013). Our primary interest is citizens' preferences regarding the *role of the government* in providing welfare. A second welfare state principle relates to the redistributive *goals* of the welfare state (van Oorschot and Meuleman, 2012). Imposing equality of opportunities and/or outcomes is one of its main objectives (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Support for welfare state principles is thus strongly related to egalitarian views. The third aspect, the *range* of government responsibilities, refers to the specific areas of life in which the government should intervene (Roller, 1995). For instance, one might think that the government should ensure the provision of health care, pensions, unemployment benefits, child care, paid care leave, and so on.

At the European level, a similar debate is ongoing regarding the role of government, the promotion of equality, and the range of government responsibilities. Cue-taking theory (Anderson, 1998) would predict a positive relationship between support for basic welfare state principles and support for Social Europe. For instance, it assumes that citizens with a more liberal orientation are strongly in favor of the EU's internal market while being more opposed to European social policy, as they prefer less government intervention and fewer regulations. In line with this theory, empirical studies show that citizens with egalitarian views and those who prefer higher social spending are more in favor of member state solidarity (Beaudonnet, 2014; Ciornei and Recchi, 2017). However, welfare state development has facilitated internal bonding between insiders by means of external bounding toward outsiders (Ferrera, 2005). Citizens mainly think about state intervention and welfare redistribution within national boundaries. Literature on welfare chauvinism confirms that endorsing the basic principles of the welfare state is not necessarily consistent with support for welfare redistribution to non-nationals (van der Waal et al., 2010). As a result, support for welfare redistribution and government responsibility may translate into opposition to European interference in social policy, in particular regarding the Europeanization of social rights.

In contrast to welfare state principles, *welfare state critique* does not refer to an ideological position as such, but to citizens' assessment of the performance and consequences of their national welfare state. The performance of the welfare state generates a certain amount of institutional trust among citizens. We consider people's *trust in the social security system* as an overarching evaluation of their national welfare state. However, more specific components of

welfare state critique can be found in literature. Perceptions of the mistargeting of welfare benefits, and especially the overuse of benefits, are a sensitive subject among the European public (Ervasti, 2012). One might perceive that some beneficiaries are not deserving of or not entitled to receive social benefits, which in the latter case is considered as benefit abuse. Furthermore, perhaps the most criticized side effect of the welfare state is its *economic consequences* (van Oorschot et al., 2012). The critique is that the welfare state is a financial burden on the government budget, increases labor costs and tax levels, and makes labor markets inflexible. Together with (dis)trust in the social security system and perceptions of benefit overuse, we consider the perceived economic consequences as a major component of welfare state critique.

Some scholars argue that both national and European institutions are evaluated similarly (Anderson, 1998), assuming that citizens' evaluations rest on institutional trust in general (Muñoz et al., 2011). A spillover effect may also result from a direct involvement of national governments in EU decision-making (Kritzinger, 2003). In this regard, citizens' support for Social Europe expresses support for incumbent authorities' policies at the European level. The opposite argument – in favour of the obstacle mechanism – is also plausible, namely that national and European systems are evaluated differently, since citizens make cost/benefit evaluations of transferring sovereignty to the European level (Sánchez-Cuenca, 2000). Those who are satisfied with the functioning of the national welfare state may be more reserved about Social Europe, whereas those who perceive the welfare state as inefficient may embrace European social policy-making more enthusiastically (Beaudonnet, 2015). This implies that strong criticism of the welfare state may boost support for Social Europe, whereas little criticism is accompanied with lower support for Social Europe.

3.2.4 Hypotheses

We have argued that both support for the basic welfare state principles and welfare state critique can either facilitate or hinder support for Social Europe. The contrasting mechanisms of spillover and obstacle lead us to formulate two alternative hypotheses:

> ***Spillover hypothesis - H1:*** *High levels of support for the basic principles of the welfare state (H1a) and low levels of welfare state critique (H1b) are positively related to support for Social Europe.*

> ***Obstacle hypothesis - H2****: High levels of support for the basic principles of the welfare state (H2a) and low levels of welfare state critique (H2b) are negatively related to support for Social Europe.*

Furthermore, the policy instruments of Social Europe do not intervene in national welfare states in the same way. EU social regulations and member state solidarity are the least intrusive to national welfare states, whereas European social citizenship and interpersonal solidarity challenge and undermine the sovereignty and boundaries of the welfare states to a larger extent. In line with the arguments set out in the previous section, we assume that the spillover mechanism of basic welfare state principles will be stronger for those aspects of Social Europe that are least intrusive, because citizens will perceive them as supportive to their national welfare state. More intrusive instruments such as European social citizenship and interpersonal solidarity may be perceived as more threatening to national welfare states and raise concerns about the consequences of these policies. In sum, given that the various dimensions of Social Europe differ in the extent to which they are intrusive to the welfare state, we expect the following differentiation in the spillover and obstacle mechanism as referred to in the previous hypotheses:

> ***H3****: The spillover effect is stronger for less intrusive dimensions of Social Europe (H3a), whereas the obstacle effect is stronger for more intrusive dimensions (H3b).*

Furthermore, we expect the relative importance of the welfare state principles and welfare state critique to be depending on the intrusiveness of the different dimensions of Social Europe. For dimensions that intervene more strongly in national systems, citizens' assessments of whether this will bring improvement or deterioration will gain importance. The opportunity costs of transferring social competences to the European level are much higher for citizens who are satisfied with the performance of their welfare state. Therefore, for the most intrusive components of Social Europe, the level of criticism on the welfare state is likely to be more important than the level of support for the basic principles of the welfare state. When it comes to less intrusive policy instruments, citizens' may reason more according to their ideological preferences regarding redistribution and regulations, which can be expected to have a stronger effect on support for Social Europe than their level of welfare state critique.

> ***H4****: For less intrusive dimensions of Social Europe, the level of support for the basic principles of the welfare state is more important in explaining citizens' support for Social Europe (H4a), whereas for more intrusive dimensions of Social Europe, the level of welfare state critique is more important (H4b).*

3.3 Data and methodology

3.3.1 Data

We use data from the 2014 Belgian National Election Study (Abts et al., 2015). This post-electoral survey was carried out among a register-based probability sample of Belgians entitled to vote in the 2014 national elections. On completion of a computer-assisted personal interview (response rate 47%), respondents were asked to fill out a 20-page drop-off questionnaire, containing a specific module on Social Europe. Applying the principles of the Tailored Design Method (Dillman et al., 2014), we were able to convince 74% of the respondents to fill out and send back the questionnaire (N=1403).

3.3.2 Variables

Support for Social Europe is measured by a second-order latent factor, consisting of the four constitutive dimensions distinguished above (see Appendix 1-2 for question wording). Each of the dimensions is specified as a latent factor. First, attitudes toward *harmonization* are measured by support for four types of social regulations covering health and safety at work, maximum weekly working hours, minimum terms for paid leave, and minimum terms for maternity leave. Second, attitudes concerning *member state solidarity* are measured by three items referring to solidarity between the richer and poorer member states. These concern support in times of economic difficulties, the amount of tax money being redistributed, and the continuation of member state solidarity in the future. Third, opinions about *European social citizenship* are operationalized by four items concerning citizens' attitudes toward the access of EU citizens to social benefits and protection in Belgium. One item concerns equal social rights, two items relate to prioritizing nationals, and one item refers to the conditionality of social protection. Lastly, *interpersonal solidarity* is measured by support for the implementation of a European social security system. One item concerns the implementation of an entire European social security system, whereas three items refer to European protection schemes for specific policy areas: Child allowances, minimum income benefits, and unemployment benefits.

Support for welfare state principles is measured by three latent factors. First, *the role of the state versus the market* is measured by the following agree-disagree statements recorded on a five-point scale: 'Society would be better off if the government intervened less in the market' and 'Businesses should have more freedom; therefore, regulations for businesses should be reduced.' A higher factor score indicates that respondents support greater government intervention in the economy. Second, attitudes toward the principle of *equality* are measured by three items (answers

on five-point scales): 'The differences between classes ought to be smaller than they are at present,' 'The differences between high and low incomes should stay as they are,' and 'The government should reduce income differentials'. Higher scores indicate more egalitarian views. To measure attitudes concerning the *range of government responsibilities*, respondents were asked to what extent they think the government should be responsible for 'a reasonable pension,' 'affordable health care' and 'a reasonable standard of living for the employed.' Responses range from 'no responsibility' (0) to 'full responsibility' (10).

Welfare state critique is also measured by three items. First, *trust in the social security system* is measured on a five-point scale ranging from 'very little confidence' (1) to 'a great deal of confidence' (5). Responses were recoded so that high scores indicate high levels of distrust. Second, perceptions of benefit *overuse* are measured by how often respondents think it occurs that people: 'Use their health insurance although they are not sick,' 'Receive unemployment benefits although they could have a job if they wanted,' and 'Receive a minimum income although they are not actually poor.' Responses range from 'very often' (1) to 'never' (5). A latent variable was constructed with a higher score indicating greater perceptions of abuse. Lastly, attitudes to the *economic outcomes* of the welfare state are measured by a latent variable with three items: 'The welfare state costs too much money compared with what it yields,' 'The tasks of the welfare state are better left to the free market,' and 'The welfare state costs companies too much and harms our economy.' Responses range from 'completely disagree' (1) to 'completely agree' (5).

We take into account basic social-structural variables such as *age* and *gender* (0=male, 1=female). *Education level* distinguishes between lower-secondary, higher-secondary, and tertiary education. *Employment status* consists of seven categories: White-collar worker, blue-collar worker, self-employed, pensioner, student, unemployed or disabled, and inactive. *Sociotropic* and *egocentric benefits* are included by citizens' opinion about whether EU membership has brought advantages to Belgium and to people like them. Responses are recoded into 'mainly advantages' (1) and 'mainly disadvantages or no opinion' (0). *European identity* is measured by citizens' attachment to Europe, ranging from 'not at all attached' (1) to 'strongly attached' (5). Since welfare attitudes are embedded in a larger political division of left-right ideology, we include *left-right self-placement* (0-10 scale). Responses are recoded into left (0-4), center (5) and right (6-10).

An overview of the descriptive statistics is given in Appendix 3-4.

3.3.3 Methods

A second-order confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is estimated that captures the common component of attitudes towards the four dimensions (see Appendix 5).[2] The CFA model has a good fit; the RMSEA equals .032, the SRMR equals .043 and both the CFI (.967) and TLI (.960) are sufficiently close to 1. All first-order factor loadings have an absolute value larger than .48 and mostly above .60. This indicates that the items are sufficiently valid and are reliable indicators of the concepts they are intended to measure. The second-order factor loadings range from .329 (social regulations) to 1 (member state solidarity).[3]

Hypotheses are tested by means of structural equation modeling, with welfare attitudes modeled as mediating variables between the social-structural control variables and support for Social Europe. The model captures the similarity of antecedents of the different dimensions of Social Europe by estimating general effects of the predictors on the second-order factor 'Social Europe'. In addition, component-specific effects are included, by allowing significant direct effects of the predictors on the different dimensions of Social Europe (first-order factors). These direct effects indicate deviations from the common explanatory model, meaning that the impact of a certain predictor on a specific dimension of Social Europe is different from that on one's overall attitude towards Social Europe. Appendix 6 shows a visual representation of the estimated model. All analyses are performed using Mplus software version 7.3 and weighted by age, gender, and education level. Item non-response is addressed using full information maximum likelihood estimation.

3.4 Results

3.4.1 Spillover or obstacle? Common patterns

Table 1 displays the standardized direct effects of the structural equation model. These include the common impact of the predictors on citizens' overall support for Social Europe as well as the differential effects on the four specific attitudinal dimensions of Social Europe. The total effects of the predictors on attitudes toward Social Europe are reported in Appendix 7. These are the sum of the direct effects shown in Table 1 and the indirect effects that run through the mediating variables. Information about the two types of effects (direct and total) is required to gain detailed

[2] Including an error correlation between two items of the social regulations scale improved the model fit and is theoretically justified because both refer to regulations concerning leave.

[3] Factor loading was constrained to 1, because it exceeded 1 when freely estimated. Member state solidarity thus coincides completely with citizens' general attitude toward Social Europe.

insight into the explanatory model. Whereas the direct effects are useful to reveal differential impacts of predictors, the total effects provide insight into the general patterns in our data.

First, we look at the common effects of the social-structural variables on citizens' overall support for Social Europe. Table 1 shows that when welfare state attitudes are taken into account, neither age, nor gender, nor education has a significant direct effect on support for Social Europe. With regard to employment status, we observe that pensioners, students, and the inactive are more in favor of Social Europe than blue-collar workers. The latter do not differ in their general attitude to Social Europe from white-collar workers, the self-employed, and welfare beneficiaries such as the unemployed and disabled. Furthermore, Table 1 shows that if citizens perceive that their country has benefited from EU membership, they support Social Europe more strongly, whereas perceived egocentric benefits are irrelevant in this respect. , People with a stronger European identity are also more supportive and right-wing voters are more opposed to Social Europe in general than those who position themselves at the center politically.

The primary purpose of the analyses is to find out how support for the welfare state is related to support for Social Europe. To determine whether there is empirical evidence for a spillover or obstacle effect, we look at the common direct effects of the various welfare attitudes on the overarching Social Europe factor. With regard to *welfare state principles,* Table 1 shows that opinions concerning the welfare mix in society are not significantly related to overall support for Social Europe. Being in favor of government intervention in the economy neither increases nor decreases overall support for Social Europe significantly. By contrast, attitudes concerning social redistribution are an important predictor of citizens' general support for Social Europe. People who are more strongly in favor of an egalitarian society are significantly more supportive of the EU's social dimension (β=.119; p=.031). Furthermore, Table 1 indicates that preferences for wide-ranging government responsibilities are unrelated to citizens' overall support for Social Europe. In other words, people who think that the government should be responsible for providing reasonable pensions, affordable health care, and a reasonable standard of living for the unemployed, do not differ in their overall attitude toward the EU's social pillar compared with those who believe that the government is not responsible for these matters at all. Turning to *welfare state critique,* lower levels of trust in the national social security system decrease support for European social policy (β=-.083; p=.041). Citizens who distrust their social security system do not put their trust in European social policy, as the obstacle hypothesis suggests. If people distrust their national social security, they also have more reservations about the EU's social policy. In addition, citizens who think that overuse of social benefits is common, hold much more negative attitudes toward Social Europe in general (β=-.217; p<.001). Those who believe that the effectiveness of social benefits is poor–in terms of whether they reach the 'right' people–are thus

less willing to expand the circle of solidarity to the rest of Europe. Lastly, concerns about the negative economic consequences of the welfare state have no significant direct effect on overall support for Social Europe.

In summary, although only three out of six examined welfare state attitudes are significantly related to overall support for Social Europe, we notice a common spillover pattern. Endorsement of the basic welfare state principles is related with stronger support for Social Europe (H1a), which suggests that attitudes towards the national welfare state function as a proxy to form an opinion about Social Europe. Similarly, low levels of welfare state critique are accompanied with higher support for Social Europe (H1b), indicating that not only ideological preferences, but also institutional trust and evaluations are transferrable across policy levels.

Table 3.1. Direct effects of social-structural variables and welfare attitudes on support for Social Europe and its different components (standardized estimates)

	Social Europe	Social regula-tions	Member state solidarity	European social citizen-ship	EU social security system
	β	β	β	β	β
Social-structural variables					
Age	-.073				
Female	-.024				
Education					
Low	-.070			-.148***	
Middle	-.059			-.110***	
High	Ref.			Ref.	
Employment status					
White-collar	.051	.018			
Blue-collar	Ref.	Ref.			
Self-employed	.058	-.107*			
Pensioner	.128*	-.046			
Student	.078*	.014			
Unemployed / disabled	.035	.101*			
Inactive	.114**	.065			
Egocentric benefits EU membership	.038				
Sociotropic benefits EU membership	.229***				
European identity	.284***				.078*
Left-right orientation					
Left	.022			.076*	
Center	Ref.			Ref.	
Right	-.115**			-.007	
Welfare state principles					
Welfare mix: State versus market	.005	.238***			
Goals of the state: Equality	.119*	.123*		-.107**	
Range of government responsibility	.061	.191***			
Welfare state critique					
Distrust in social security	-.083*				
Effectiveness: Benefit overuse	-.217***			-.273***	
Outcomes: Economic consequences	-.061			-.092*	
Explained variance	.423	.319	1.000	.540	.313

3.4.2 Specific dimensions of support for Social Europe

The second purpose of this analysis is to figure out whether the relationship between welfare attitudes and support for Social Europe varies across different dimensions of Social Europe. Most of the welfare attitudes indeed have component-specific effects that deviate from the general pattern. This is indicated in Table 1 by the significant direct effects of the predictors on the specific attitudinal dimensions of Social Europe. From left to right, the four specific dimensions are ranked from less intrusive to more intrusive to the welfare state.

With regard to support for *EU social regulations*, the least intrusive dimension of Social Europe, Table 1 reveals several differential effects. First, we look at social-structural variables. The difference between blue-collar workers and the self-employed is larger with regard to support for EU social regulations than support for other facets of Social Europe. This can be explained by the fact that the self-employed are unlikely to benefit from these regulations, which are targeted at employees. Moreover, employers have to bear part of the costs of these regulations. The difference between the reference category of blue-collar workers and the unemployed or disabled is much larger for EU social regulations, with the latter group being more in favor of these measures. This is not illogical, since the unemployed and disabled are in higher need of social protection and the EU social regulations are most reinforcing of national welfare states compared with the other aspects of Social Europe. Turning to our main area of interest, all three welfare state principles have a differential effect on opinions about EU social regulations. Controlling for general attitudes to Social Europe, preferring state intervention above market forces is strongly positively related to support for EU social regulations (β=.238; p<.001). Obviously, aversion to government intervention obstructs the approval of active social policymaking in a regulatory way, regardless of the policy level. Egalitarian attitudes seem to be disproportionally more important regarding support for EU social regulations than for other components of Social Europe. The additional effect of egalitarianism is positive (β=.123; p=.034), indicating that citizens who are in favor of an equal society approve of the EU's social regulations even more than we would expect given their general level of support for Social Europe. Furthermore, preferring wide-ranging government responsibilities for welfare has a direct, positive effect on support for EU social regulations (β=.191; p<.001). This means that even when we take into account citizens' general score on the Social Europe factor, those who think that the state should provide reasonable pensions, unemployment benefits, and affordable health care, are significantly more in favor of the EU's regulatory actions in the social domain.

Second, several differential effects are found concerning attitudes toward *European social citizenship*. Education level has a direct positive effect on support for this facet of Social

Europe. The fact that the higher educated have on average more transnational interactions might explain why they differ so much from the lower educated with regard to their support for this particular dimension of Social Europe. European social citizenship creates new social opportunities beyond the welfare state, which are mainly advantageous to the higher educated. Furthermore, the gap between left-oriented voters and those who position themselves at the center politically is larger concerning support for European social citizenship than for other dimensions of Social Europe. With regard to welfare state principles, a negative differential effect is observed for egalitarianism (β=-.107; p=.009). This indicates that egalitarianism has a weaker impact on support for the Europeanization of social rights compared with the other dimensions of Social Europe. In fact, the total effects shown in Appendix 7 indicate that overall, egalitarian views are not significantly related to support for European social citizenship (β=-.050; p>.05). The opening up of national social security to mobile EU citizens might be perceived as most threatening to citizens' own social position, which could explain why egalitarian views do not result in stronger support for equal social rights for EU citizens. Second, two components of welfare state critique have direct effects. While perceptions of benefit overuse have a strong negative impact on support for Social Europe in general, support for European social citizenship is even more strongly related to perceptions of benefit overuse (β=-.273; p<.001). This means that voters who believe welfare overuse is very common are even more skeptical about granting social rights to EU citizens than one would expect given their overall score on the Social Europe factor. In other words, perceiving the overuse of social benefits as more frequent hinders support for European social citizenship disproportionally more than citizens' support for social regulations, member state solidarity, and an EU social security system. Further, controlling for citizens' general attitude toward Social Europe, Table 1 shows a direct negative effect of concerns about the economic consequences of the welfare state on support for European social citizenship (β=-.092; p=.035). People who believe that the welfare state is harmful to the economy are more negative with regard to granting EU citizens access to their welfare state. The logic behind this might be the belief that the number of beneficiaries of social protection schemes should not be expanded, to restrain the negative consequences for the welfare state.

No differential effects are found for *member state solidarity*. As the confirmatory factor analysis shows (see Appendix 5), attitudes toward member state solidarity coincide completely with citizens' general disposition toward Social Europe. This explains why antecedents cannot have differential effects on member state solidarity. With regard to support for a *European social security system*, we find that attachment to Europe has a positive differential effect. Stronger identification with Europe increases support for this policy instrument of interpersonal solidarity even more than it influences citizens' overall level of support for Social Europe. This finding indicates that identity is an essential element of public support for transferring more social

competences to the European level. Contrary to our expectations, we find no direct effects of welfare attitudes on support for a European social security system, which is the most intrusive to national welfare states.

Our results indicate that the spillover effect of welfare attitudes from the national to the European level is not uniform for all facets of Social Europe. In addition to a set of common predictors, we find specific effects of welfare attitudes that deviate from the general pattern, confirming both hypotheses H3 and H4. More specifically, the spillover effect of *welfare state principles* is strongest for the dimension that is least intrusive to the national welfare state, namely EU social regulations. For example, the impact of egalitarian views is much stronger on support for EU social regulations than on support for more intrusive dimensions of Social Europe. For European social citizenship, the spillover effect seems to have weakened in favour of the obstacle effect. By contrast, the spillover effects of different types of *welfare state critique* are strongest for European social citizenship. These findings indicate that distrust and concerns regarding the effectiveness and consequences of welfare policies easily spill over to the European policy level, whereas support for basic principles such as government intervention and redistribution tend to be more nationally demarcated. The spillover effect depends not only on the dimension of Social Europe, but also on the type of welfare attitudes.

3.5 Conclussion

Although the role of the EU and the scope of its competences in social policy are contested, the attitudes of citizens regarding Social Europe have received little previous scholarly attention. Given the strong historical link between welfare policies and the national state, we analyze whether public support for the national welfare state spills over to or obstructs support for Social Europe. Our results provide evidence for the spillover effect, as citizens holding more positive welfare attitudes are more in favor of Social Europe than those generally less supportive of the welfare state. This indicates that citizens recognize Social Europe ultimately has very similar objectives to those of national welfare states. It should be noted that Belgians already enjoy a relatively high level of social protection and thus that their opportunity cost of transferring competences to the European level are higher compared to citizens in less-advanced welfare states This suggests that the spillover effect might be even stronger in other EU member states. That support for the welfare state facilitates support for Social Europe instead of being an obstacle - even in a country with an advanced welfare state - points to a window of opportunity for European policymakers to implement a more ambitious social agenda. In established Western-European welfare states, European policymakers proposing a deepening of the EU's social

dimension should not fear resistance from welfare state advocates. Instead, they will find a social basis for it among those who prefer strong welfare states and who praise their national social security system to a larger extent. Citizens who support social protection and welfare redistribution in general also see a role for the EU in these areas. Opposition to the growth of Social Europe will mainly be articulated by citizens who hold more negative views about the welfare state.

Our analysis also shows, however, that creating public support for European social policy is more challenging in the case of policy instruments that are more intrusive to the national welfare state. The spillover effect of support for welfare state *principles* is strongest for European social policy instruments that leave the boundaries of the national welfare state untouched, and merely extend social protection along existing lines. Advocates of the welfare state support European regulations on health and safety at work very strongly, whereas their enthusiasm for instruments that imply redistribution between member states or EU citizens is somewhat more moderate. This indicates that citizens in favor of welfare redistribution especially welcome policies that support national welfare states in their key functions, without reshuffling the boundaries of welfare too profoundly. In addition, our analysis indicates that *critical evaluations* of the performance and consequences of the national welfare system have a stronger detrimental impact on support for European social policy that blurs the boundaries of national welfare states, namely equal social rights for mobile EU citizens. However, our expectations regarding support for a European social security system – the most intrusive to national welfare states – are not confirmed. Future studies should analyse whether this is due to measurement error or whether citizens perceive it as less intrusive than a European social citizenship. Nevertheless, our findings indicate that more-intrusive policy instruments of Social Europe might not be primarily rejected on the basis of Europe's social engagement as such, but seem to be related to reservations about the practical feasibility, negative side effects, or potential abuse. For instance, if citizens perceive that social benefits are mistargeted, they are less willing to open up the boundaries of solidarity by granting EU citizens access to their welfare system. Although the less-intrusive policy instruments of Social Europe might seem a safer option to avoid public contestation, they do not tend to contribute much to the visibility of Social Europe in advanced welfare states. An important task for both European and national policymakers is therefore to inform citizens about how the EU engages in social policy and how it could protect ordinary citizens. Furthermore, this study illustrates that individual variation in support for Social Europe is not only explained by welfare attitudes, but also by European identity and citizens' perceptions of their country's benefits of EU membership. Social Europe thus evokes a very diverse set of attitudes that cannot be reduced to welfare issues alone.

It should be noted that the scope of welfare attitudes included in this study is not exhaustive. For instance, we did not include accurate measurements of satisfaction with the coverage or quality of national welfare provisions. If citizens think that their national welfare system does not provide enough protection, they might be more supportive of EU social policy. Furthermore, the positive relationship between support for the principles of the welfare state and support for Social Europe might even be stronger in less-advanced national welfare states. In these countries, citizens are protected to a lesser extent by their welfare policies, which can trigger high expectations about Social Europe among left-wing voters. Future research is needed to examine whether the strength of the spillover effect varies across EU member states.

Appendices

Appendix 3.A. Support for Social Europe among Belgians (percentages)

Social regulations	Below are a number of measures that the European Union has taken in recent years. Can you indicate for each of the following measures whether it is a (very) good or a (very) bad thing that the EU has taken these measures?					
		A very bad thing	A bad thing	Neither good nor bad	A good thing	A very good thing
D30_1	The EU imposes a number of obligations on employers to protect the health and safety of workers	0.22	0.94	8.53	59.36	30.95
D30_2	The EU prohibits a workweek of more than 48 hours (including overtime) for workers in the EU member states	1.74	8.90	24.82	44.65	19.90
D30_4	The EU posits that workers in the EU member states are entitled to paid leave for a period of at least 4 weeks	0.22	2.39	15.29	54.35	27.75
D30_5	The EU obliges all EU member states to provide at least 4 months of paid maternity leave to women who gave birth	1.45	6.24	21.25	44.09	26.98
Member state solidarity	The following statements are about solidarity between member states of the European Union. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?					
		Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree
D33_1	Rich EU countries such as Belgium should always support other member states that experience serious economic difficulties	5.93	27.11	36.59	27.98	2.39
D33_2	Too much tax money is going from the prosperous EU countries to the poorer EU countries	2.62	14.99	43.52	32.24	6.62
D33_3	The solidarity between the richer and poorer EU countries should not be broken	1.95	9.04	36.61	43.56	8.83
European social citizenship	Now we would like to ask your opinion on whether EU citizens should have access to social security in Belgium. By EU citizens we mean people who have come to Belgium from other EU member states and live here. Social security provides citizens with an income in case of illness, unemployment and disability. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?					
		Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree
D15_1	EU citizens should receive the same social facilities as Belgians	10.16	28.30	28.66	28.23	4.64
D15_3	In the allocation of social benefits Belgians should have priority over EU citizens	4.42	23.50	26.11	35.10	10.88
D15_4	EU citizens should first have a job before they gain access to social services	1.59	7.39	16.96	46.16	27.90
D15_5	Let's support the poor in our country first, before we help the poor coming from other EU countries	2.90	11.01	22.45	34.18	29.47

European social security system[a]		Completely against	Rather against	Rather for	Completely for
D38	General system[b]	14.83	37.92	38.64	8.61
D39	Child benefit[b]	11.72	29.09	47.25	11.94
D40	Minimum income benefit[b]	10.00	30.00	49.06	10.94
D41	Unemployment benefit[b]	11.27	34.97	44.51	9.25

[a]Answer categories are reversed. [b]Questions are given in Appendix 3.B.

Appendix 3.B. Survey questions on a European social security system

D38 European social security system	Currently, each member state of the European Union is responsible for its own system of social security. This social security provides citizens a minimum protection in the event of illness, old age, unemployment or disability. Some are saying we should stablish a common system of social security within the European Union, to which all EU citizens pay contributions. Are you for or against such a common system of social security at the EU level?
Introduction D39-D41	*In the social policy domain, the European Union can do many things. In the following four questions we describe four different measures the European Union could possibly take. Are you for or against these measures?*
D39 European child benefit	One possible measure is the introduction of a European child benefit. Through this measure the EU guarantees a minimum benefit for children in the European Union that is adapted to the cost of living in each country. To fund the European child benefit, each country would pay according to its wealth. Additionally, member states could opt to further increase the child benefit in their own country at their own expense. Are you for or against the introduction of such a European minimum child benefit by the EU?
D40 European minimum income benefit	A second possible measure is the introduction of a European minimum income. Through this measure the EU guarantees a minimum income benefit for all poor people in the European Union that is adapted to the cost of living in each country. To fund the European minimum income, each country would pay according to its wealth. Additionally, member states could opt to further increase the minimum income in their own country at their own expense. Are you for or against the introduction of such a European minimum income by the EU?
D41 European unemployment benefit	A third possible measure is the introduction of a European unemployment benefit. Through this measure the EU guarantees a minimum unemployment benefit for all temporary unemployed in the European Union that is adapted to the cost of living in each country. To fund the European unemployment benefit, each country would pay according to its wealth. Member states could opt to further increase the benefit in their country at their own expense. Are you for or against the introduction of such a European unemployment benefit by the EU?

Appendix 3.C. Descriptive statistics social-structural background variables

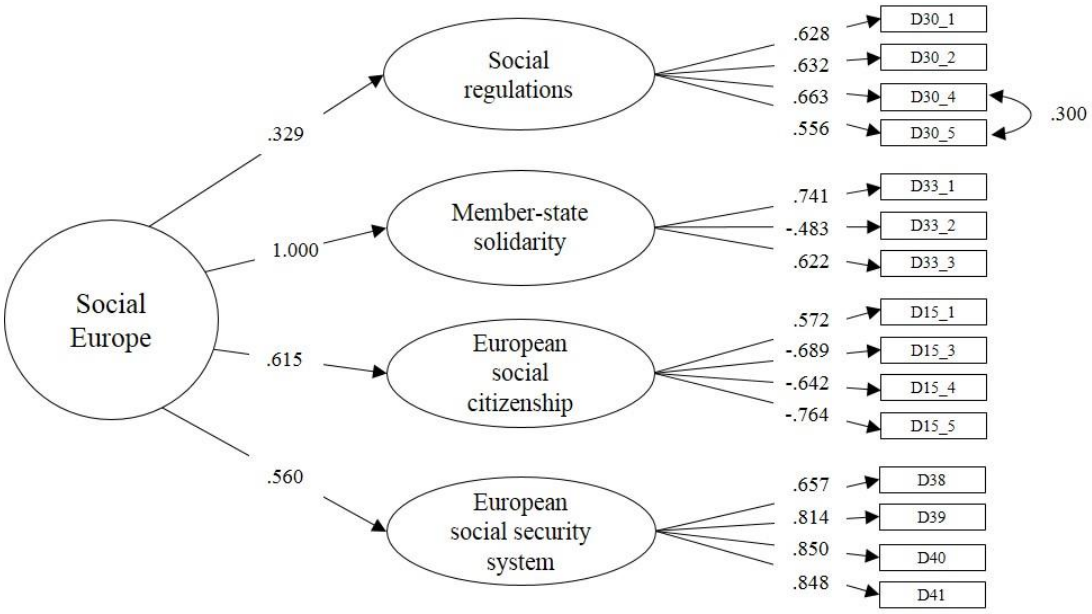
	Mean / %	S.D.	N
Age	51.70	17.53	1403
Female	50.82		1403
Educational level			1403
Low	27.37		
Middle	32.22		
High	40.41		
Employment status			1402
White-collar workers	34.17		
Blue-collar workers	14.55		
Self-employed	3.71		
Pensioned	28.53		
Student	4.92		
Unemployed / disabled	7.35		
Inactive	6.78		
Egocentric benefits EU membership			1392
Mainly advantages	20.04		
Mainly disadvantages or no opinion	79.96		
Sociotropic benefits EU membership			1389
Mainly advantages	32.54		
Mainly disadvantages or no opinion	67.46		
Attachment to Europe	2.92	1.13	1374
Left-right orientation			1364
Left	27.42		
Center	36.29		
Right	36.29		

Appendix 3.D. Descriptive statistics welfare state attitudes

	Mean	S.D.	Factor-loading	N
Role of the state versus the market				
Society would be better off if the government intervenes less in the market	2.87	0.88	.811	1373
Businesses should get more freedom. Therefore, regulations for businesses should be reduced	2.82	0.91	.469	1377
Principle of equality				
The differences between classes ought to be smaller than they are at present	3.90	0.88	.673	1400
The differences between the high and the low incomes should stay as they are	2.21	0.93	-.617	1397
The government should reduce income differentials	3.60	1.03	.651	1398
Range of government responsibility				
Making sure the elderly have a reasonable pension	8.37	1.61	.748	1402
Making sure there is affordable health care for all	8.78	1.38	.699	1402
Making sure that the unemployed have a reasonable standard of living	6.59	2.22	.459	1401
Distrust in social security	2.56	0.78	/	1400
Benefit overuse				
That people use their health insurance although they are not sick[a]	3.44	0.88	.663	1394
That people receive unemployment benefits although they could have a job if they wanted[a]	3.79	0.85	.756	1387
That people receive a living wage (minimum income) although they are not actually poor[a]	3.18	0.89	700	1385
Economic consequences of welfare state				
The welfare state costs too much money compared with what it yields	3.03	0.95	.642	1373
The tasks of the welfare state are better left to the free market	2.30	0.82	.486	1381
The welfare state costs companies too much and harms our economy	2.85	0.90	.681	1368

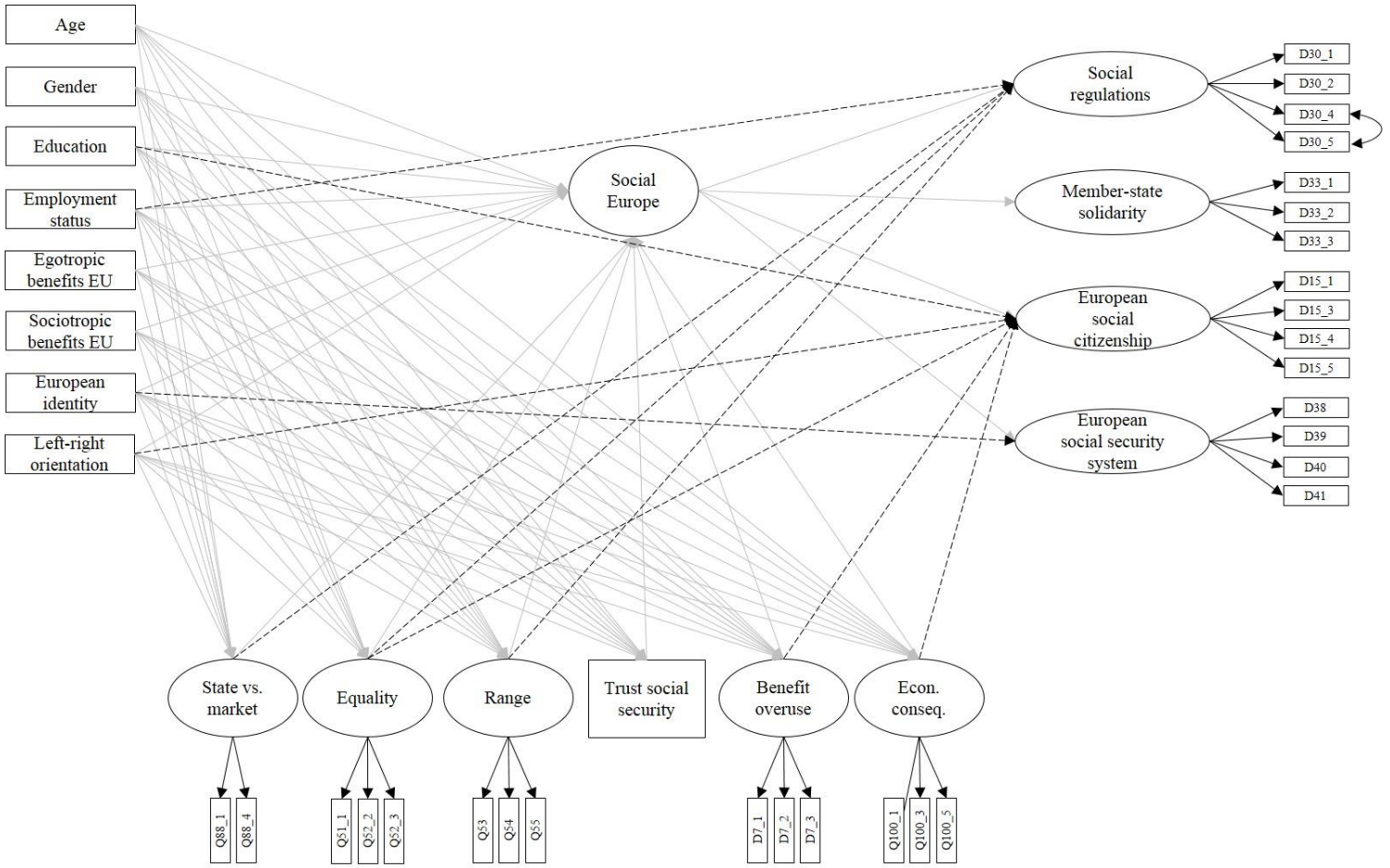
[a]Answer categories of the item are reversed.

Appendix 3.E. Measurement model of attitudes towards Social Europe (weighted by age, gender, and education)



Note. χ^2= 212.251; *df*=86; RMSEA=.032; CFI=.967; TLI=.960; SRMR=.043; *n*= 1401; estimator= MLR.

Appendix 3.F. Attitudes towards Social Europe explained by structural and attitudinal predictors – significant direct effects



Note. The general effects are depicted by the arrows from the independent variables on the left side and in the bottom of the figure, pointing to the second-order latent factor 'Social Europe'. Differential effects of predictors on first-order attitudinal dimensions are illustrated by dashed lines.

Appendix 3.G. Total effects of social-structural variables and welfare attitudes on support for Social Europe and its different components (standardized estimates)

	Social Europe	Social regulations	Member state solidarity	European social citizenship	EU social security system
	β	β	β	β	β
Social-structural variables					
Age	-.028	.007	-.028	.003	-.015
Female	-.025	.008	-.025	-.037	-.013
Education					
Low	-.113*	-.034	-.113*	-.273***	-.059*
Middle	-.089*	-.025	-.089*	-.194***	-.047*
High	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Employment status					
White-collar	.046	.012	.046	.025	.024
Blue-collar	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Self-employed	.012	-.181***	.012	-.003	.006
Pensioned	.128*	-.033	.128*	.051	.067*
Student	.076*	-.007	.076*	.040	.040*
Unemployed / disabled	.049	.116*	.049	.032	.026
Inactive	.119**	.079	.119**	.052	.062**
Egocentric benefits	.033	.010	.033	.019	.017
Sociotropic benefits	.270***	.089***	.270***	.176***	.141***
European identity	.314***	.083***	.314***	.188***	.242***
Left-right orientation					
Left	.088*	.071***	.088*	.168***	.046*
Center	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Right	-.178***	-.137***	-.178***	-.096**	-.093***
Fundamental welfare principles					
Welfare mix: State versus market	.005	.239***	.005	.002	.003
Goals of the state: Equality	.119*	.150*	.119**	-.050	.062**
Range: Social security	.061	.205***	.061	.030	.032
Welfare state critique					
Distrust in social security	-.083*	-.019	-.083*	-.040*	-.043*
Effectiveness: Benefit overuse	-.217***	-.049***	-.217***	-.377***	-.113***
Outcomes: Economic consequences	-.061	-.014	-.061	-.122*	-.032
Explained variance	.423	.319	1.000	.540	.313

Note. n= 1327; χ^2= 1371.12; df= 710; RMSEA= .026; CFI= .923; TLI= .905; SRMR= .036.
*** $p \leq .001$. ** $p \leq .01$. * $p \leq .05$.

Chapter 4

Public support for European solidarity: Between Euroscepticism and EU agenda preferences?[1]

Abstract

Whereas previous research has predominantly focused on whether citizens want more or less European integration, far less attention has been paid to what kind of Europe they want. This study reveals that public support for member state solidarity (i.e., transfers to less developed and crisis-hit countries) and transnational solidarity (i.e., granting cross-border social rights to EU citizens) cannot be reduced to a pro-versus anti-integration, nor to a domestic left-right conflict. Drawing on data from the 2014 Belgian National Election Study, we find that those who prefer an economic agenda for the EU are less supportive towards member state and transnational solidarity. By contrast, prioritizing social objectives in EU politics translates into stronger support for both practices of European solidarity. This research indicates that citizens' preferences on the EU agenda in particular are a crucial element in understanding contestation over European integration issues.

[1] This chapter is based on an article that is accepted for publication in the Journal of Common Market Studies: Baute, S, Abts, K., & Meuleman, B. (forthcoming). Public support for European solidarity: Between Euroscepticism and EU agenda preferences? *Journal of Common Market Studies*.

4.1 Introduction

The Brexit referendum has forced European policymakers to reflect on the course of the European project more than ever. In its white paper on the future of Europe, the European Commission carved out five scenarios that differ strongly in the proposed scope of competences for the EU (European Commission, 2017c). Very often, debates about the future of the EU are reduced to a choice between 'more or less' Europe. However, this opposition conceals a more fundamental debate on what kind of Europe – in terms of its policy and priorities – is preferable. In this regard, the EU has been increasingly criticized for being preoccupied exclusively with economic policy, and lacking a strong social dimension (Bailey, 2008; Scharpf, 2010). Although some are reluctant about EU interference in social policy, calls have been made for a more 'Social Europe', with a strengthened focus on social policy-making at the EU level (Fernandes and Rubio, 2012; Vandenbroucke, 2013). Advocates of strengthening the EU's social dimension have put forward various arguments. Most notably, EU-level social policy is considered necessary to avoid politically undesirable effects of the single market on national welfare states, such as the risk of social dumping and a race to the bottom in terms of social standards. Social Europe is also deemed to contribute to the long-term sustainability of the Eurozone, as initiatives with a social purpose can reduce the risk of asymmetric shocks. In addition to these political and functional reasons, intensified engagement in social policy-making is considered a precondition for sustaining public support for the European project. These arguments in favour of a Social Europe find a response among policymakers. Jean-Claude Juncker's (2015) call to achieve a 'social triple A-rating' – parallel to being 'triple A' in economic and financial terms – is an example of this. The 'European Pillar of Social Rights' initiative and the proposal of EU Commissioner Marianne Thyssen to reform the EU social security co-ordination law reflect the same ambition.

Notwithstanding calls for a more 'Social Europe', it is important to acknowledge that the EU is already involved in social policy making, using various policy instruments such as social regulation, the exchange of best practices, and – probably the most contested aspect of Social Europe – the redistribution of domestic resources (Falkner, 2016). Currently, redistribution at the EU level is based on two different logics of solidarity: (1) *member state solidarity*, establishing financial transfers between countries, and (2) *transnational solidarity*, granting cross-border welfare rights to EU citizens (Sangiovanni, 2013). The salience of both types of European solidarity has increased in the light of the recent economic crisis. Financial assistance to debt-ridden member states overturned the no-bailout clause, deepening member state solidarity. In addition, high unemployment rates in Southern Europe increased the number of mobile EU citizens, which might not only exercise their economic rights, but also their welfare rights

(Eurofound, 2014). These events bring to the fore questions about the legitimacy and the limits of European solidarity. In particular, concerns have been raised about a so-called 'Transfer Union', with permanent transfers to less-developed member states (Fernandes & Rubio, 2012) and the financial burden of intra-EU mobility on national welfare states[2] (Fóti, 2015).

In this article, we approach the legitimacy of European redistribution from the perspective of public opinion, and investigate the level and roots of popular support for member state and transnational solidarity. Specifically, we analyse whether public resistance against European solidarity is simply an emanation of Euroscepticism, or rather reflects individuals' preferences concerning the EU's social and economic agenda. On the one hand, European solidarity strengthens the integration of the member states and citizens in the EU by sharing risks and resources. Public resistance to European solidarity can therefore be an expression of citizens' opposition to the principle of European integration in general. On the other hand, European solidarity is inherently part of the EU's social dimension, meaning that resistance to European solidarity may be explained by a lack of support for the implementation of a social agenda for the EU. To date, few studies have analysed individual differences in the support for European solidarity. It remains unclear to what extent support for European solidarity is an expression of general support for the EU, or instead ideological preferences concerning the priority of social and economic policy for the EU agenda (hereafter referred to as EU agenda preferences). In addition, most studies are limited in scope, as they focus either on member state solidarity (Beaudonnet, 2014; Bechtel et al., 2014; Daniele & Geys, 2015; Kleider & Stoeckel, 2016; Lengfeld et al., 2015; Stoeckel & Kuhn, 2017) or on transnational solidarity (Gerhards & Lengfeld, 2013, 2015; Hjorth, 2015). Potential differences in the explanatory mechanisms of these two types of European solidarity remain obscure, whereas they could provide broader insight into citizens' understanding of European integration issues. To answer these questions, we analyse data from the Belgian National Election Study (BNES) 2014 by means of structural equation modelling.

4.2 The two faces of European solidarity

Historically, the institutionalization of solidarity within national welfare states gave rise to questions about the conditionality of solidarity and about who deserves social protection (van Oorschot, 2000). The development of EU-level social policy similarly prompted discussions about what principles and ideals of solidarity ought to apply between member states and citizens of the EU (Crum, 2011; Sangiovanni, 2013). Sangiovanni (2013) rightfully distinguishes national

[2] Especially those with generous social benefits and services (Scharpf, 2010).

solidarity, member state solidarity and transnational solidarity as different logics of solidarity in the EU. As we are interested in practices of European solidarity, we focus on the latter two types. *Member state solidarity*, also labelled 'international solidarity' (Ciornei & Recchi, 2017), refers to the sharing of social and economic risks between EU member states; *transnational solidarity* entails social and economic risk sharing among EU citizens. Practices of both types of European solidarity currently exist in the EU.

4.2.1 Member state solidarity

As an integral part of European integration, joint efforts are made to reduce regional disparities and to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the EU. The structural and cohesion funds were established to support these efforts. Financed by national contributions, they represent about one third of the EU's total budget (European Commission, 2016). The funds are directed towards a diverse set of objectives, from upgrading workforce skills to environmental programmes, and thus respond to a number of challenges for which member states share responsibilities (Allen, 2010). This policy instrument entails an important element of redistribution that is founded on the logic of member state solidarity, as the richest EU countries are net contributors and less-developed countries net recipients (European Commission, 2016). The Cohesion Fund, for instance, exclusively provides resources to member states that have a gross national income per capita below 90 per cent of the EU average.

The European debt crisis has revived the debate about redistribution between EU member states. In a short space of time, a new permanent bailout fund for the Eurozone led to a deepening of member state solidarity. The established European Stability Mechanism obliges member states to contribute to a joint budget, from which countries facing severe financial difficulties can borrow. It has been argued that member state solidarity is not only needed to get out of the crisis, but will also contribute to the smooth functioning of the monetary union in the long term (Fernandes & Rubio, 2012). Others have warned that financial transfers are solely legitimate in exceptional circumstances, as they can lead to public opposition both in donor countries, based on concerns that the loans will not be paid back, and in recipient countries, because of the accompanying austerity measures (Vanhercke et al., 2016).

Empirical studies indicate that in donor countries such as Germany, public support for financial assistance is higher than is often portrayed by the media (Bechtel et al., 2014; Lengfeld & Kroh, 2016). The interdependency between member states of the EU seems to be a motivation to support financial aid to other member states (Beaudonnet, 2014; Lengfeld et al., 2015). In addition to national economic interests, the willingness to support other member states is also

guided by considerations of moral duty and reciprocity, that is, the expectation that any country might become needy in the future. The finding that Germans are more willing to provide financial help to EU than to non-EU countries (Lengfeld & Kroh, 2016) indicates that European integration has created a certain degree of support for member state solidarity.

4.2.2 Transnational solidarity

EU rules not only have consequences for redistribution between member states, but also have a direct impact on the legal rights and obligations of every individual citizen. The co-ordination of social security systems (regulations (EC) 883/2004 and 987/2009), which aims to prevent citizens from losing their social security rights when moving from one member state to another, for example, establishes cross-border solidarity relationships between EU citizens.[3] Transnational solidarity is mainly implemented through the principles of non-discrimination, aggregation of periods of insurance, and exportability (European Commission, 2010b). Most importantly, the principle of non-discrimination implies that mobile EU citizens have the same rights and obligations as nationals of the member state where they reside. This means that social benefits and services can no longer be reserved only for nationals. When benefits are conditional on the completion of particular periods of insurance, employment or residence, EU co-ordination rules ensures that periods under the legislation of other member states are taken into account. The use of social benefits can also not be limited to a member state's own territory. Due to the exportability principle, family benefits are also paid to entitled mobile EU citizens whose child is living in another member state.

European social citizenship is crucial to establish solidarity between Europeans. As Ferrera (2005) states, the process of European integration has redrawn the boundaries of social citizenship and has attempted to restructure it at the European level. Given that about 16 million Europeans live and work in another member state (European Commission, 2017b), its scope and impact are significant. However, intra-EU movement is not equally spread across Europe: 98 per cent of mobile workers live in EU15 or EFTA countries, while only 2 per cent reside in the EU13 (European Commission, 2017a). Currently, transnational solidarity only comes into force when citizens exercise their right of free movement, although the extension of transnational solidarity has already been proposed in the form of a European unemployment insurance scheme, a European child benefit and a European minimum income benefit (Dullien, 2012; Levy et al., 2013; Peña-Casas & Bouget, 2014).

[3] The EU does not pay social benefits directly to individuals, but co-ordinates member states' redistributive policies.

The opening of the boundaries of long-standing national solidarity systems to EU citizens remains a sensitive issue for member states as well as for their citizens. Empirical research among Swedish citizens shows that the recipient's identity plays a decisive role in the willingness to grant social benefits to EU migrants (Hjorth, 2015). More specifically, cues about being Bulgarian as opposed to Dutch, decrease Swedish citizens' willingness to grant access to child benefits. These findings can be linked to recent EU enlargement, which triggered concerns about Eastern Europeans constituting a financial burden on welfare arrangements (Fóti, 2015). Very often, the costs of mobile EU citizens for public budgets is capitalized on by Eurosceptic parties, and this has become a salient political issue (Bruzelius et al., 2014). Although there is no empirical evidence for the welfare magnetism hypothesis – that international differences in the generosity of welfare systems trigger intra-EU migration flows (Giulietti & Kahanec, 2013) – public support for cross-border welfare rights is shown to be cost sensitive. When citizens are faced with potential cuts in the level of benefits, they are less willing to grant EU citizens access to their national social security system (Gerhards & Lengfeld, 2015).

4.3 Explaining European solidarity: Euroscepticism and EU agenda preferences

A variety of theoretical approaches ─ including self-interest, identity, and individual transnationalism (Bechtel et al., 2014; Berg, 2007; Ciornei & Recchi, 2017; Gerhards & Lengfeld, 2015; Kuhn et al., 2017) ─ have been put forward to explain citizens' attitudes to European solidarity. We focus on two opposing views that received only little attention in previous research. The first relates to what Marks and Steenbergen (2004) labelled the international relations model. This perspective conceives contestation over European integration issues as being a simple pro-integration versus anti-integration division. An alternative view assumes that instead, arguments about European issues express the left-right divide of domestic politics. This view is also referred to as the regulations model (Steenbergen & Marks, 2004).

According to the international relations model, opposition to European solidarity is a direct reflection of Euroscepticism: a negative attitude towards European integration or the European Union in general (Krouwel & Abts, 2007). Concretely, deepening and widening are the two basic processes that underlie the integration into 'an ever-closer union' (Fraser, 2004). First, *deepening* refers to the transfer of decision-making powers to the supranational level. In a variety of policy areas, the EU has acquired exclusive, shared and supporting competences as defined in the EU treaties. However, not all Europeans are willing to pass more legal power to EU institutions, indicated by the support for Eurosceptic parties who opt for national sovereignty

instead of supranational decision-making (Treib, 2014). Second, the principle of *widening* refers to the geographical enlargement of the EU. Although doubts have been raised about the capacity of the EU to absorb further members (Vobruba, Bach, Rhodes, & Szalai, 2003), the process of enlargement is likely to continue in the future, as several candidate countries are negotiating to gain EU membership. Citizens' attitudes towards the processes of widening and deepening are not necessarily complementary (Hobolt, 2014; Karp & Bowler, 2006). For instance, those who favour deepening may not be in favour of widening, because the EU might lose strength with more countries included, as decision-making would become more difficult. For similar reasons, some advocates of the deepening of the European project are not that unhappy about Brexit.

Both deepening and widening have an impact on solidarity patterns in terms of what resources and risks are shared, and with whom. The cross-border welfare rights for EU citizens are precisely the result of European decision-making. The proposed European unemployment insurance (Dullien, 2012) would even redistribute resources between Europeans across the whole EU (or EMU), as it is targeted at the entire labour force rather than only mobile EU citizens. Further, EU enlargement inevitably influences old member states' EU budget contributions and incoming subsidies from the EU (European Commission, 2016), and creates opportunities to express solidarity with new member states and their citizens. In sum, EU membership entails a certain degree of member state and transnational solidarity. Based on the international relations model (Steenbergen & Marks, 2004), we hypothesize that support for both practices of European solidarity is in the first place informed by citizens' stance on European integration: those who oppose the very idea and principles of European integration are less willing to share resources and risks with other EU member states or citizens. Previous empirical research suggests that opposition to EU membership and further unification are important predictors of support for financial help to other member states (Kleider & Stoeckel, 2016; Kuhn et al., 2017). The impact of attitudes towards the deepening and enlargement dimensions of European integration on support for European solidarity has not been investigated before. In sum, this argument leads to the following hypotheses:

> *H1: Citizens are less supportive of European solidarity if they oppose EU membership (H1a) and the principles of deepening (H1b) and enlargement (H1c).*

Alternatively, the regulation model assumes that contestation over European integration is an expression of the traditional left-right political dimension (Tsebelis & Garrett, 2000), reflecting the basic choice of a regulative and redistributive state versus a market-oriented state (Hooghe & Marks, 1999). According to this view, left-wing voters will endorse institutionalized forms of European solidarity more strongly, since such policies fit into their socioeconomic ideology.

Empirical research confirms that citizens who position themselves on the political left are more willing to grant other Europeans access to their social security system (Berg, 2007; Gerhards & Lengfeld, 2013, 2015; Vasilopoulou, 2016) and are more willing to provide financial assistance to other member states (Beaudonnet, 2014; Daniele & Geys, 2015; Kuhn et al., 2017). Following this reasoning, support for European solidarity depends not so much on preferences regarding European integration, but instead articulates citizens' ideological preferences about the policy direction of the European project. Further, as EU competences have become more diverse, citizens have become more sensitive to the political agenda of the European Union (van Elsas & van der Brug, 2015). Whereas the European project is primarily concerned with economic policy, the EU's social policy objectives have become more prominent over time (Føllesdal et al., 2007). This shift in the EU's agenda is visible in the European Semester, which is the policy co-ordination cycle through which priorities are set for the EU. Although initially focussed on monitoring economic developments and preventing economic and financial problems, the European Semester has integrated social policy objectives in recent years (Vanhercke et al., 2015). For instance, country-specific recommendations put increasing stress on ensuring the accessibility and effectiveness of member states' social security, pension and healthcare systems and on fighting poverty and social exclusion. Nevertheless, the course of European integration remains highly debated.

Accordingly, citizens who support EU membership and the principles of European integration might still criticize specific aspects of EU policy, such as the EU's engagement in social policy (Sørensen, 2007). We argue that the fundamental policy objectives of the European project, namely what kind of Europe should be developed, are of crucial importance in understanding attitudes towards solidarity at the EU level. Whereas some believe that the EU's main goal should be to enhance the competitiveness of the European economy, others may consider that the EU should be primarily occupied with providing, at the supranational level, decent social security to ordinary citizens in times of globalization (Isernia & Cotta, 2016). Previous research confirms that citizens have different conceptions of the EU's priorities (Gabel & Anderson, 2004). We hypothesize that those who prioritize social policy are more likely to advocate European solidarity practices, because they can be considered as tools to implement the EU social agenda. On the other hand, preferences regarding the economic agenda for the EU may not be related to support for European solidarity. Moreover, those who would prefer the EU's agenda to remain focused on economic issues may be less in favour of further European solidarity building. Beaudonnet (2014) analysed the impact of EU-level policy preferences on support for member state solidarity and found that citizens who consider the development of a European Social Model as a priority are more willing to support financial help to other member states in times of crisis. By contrast, prioritizing economic objectives has no significant impact on member

state solidarity. As we expect EU agenda preferences to be important for both transnational and member state solidarity, this reasoning leads to the following overarching hypotheses:

> *H2: Prioritizing social policy at the EU level as an important agenda item for the EU is positively related to support for European solidarity (H2a), whereas prioritizing economic policy does not translate into higher support for European solidarity (H2b).*

4.4 Methodology

4.4.1 Data

To test our hypotheses, we use data from the Belgian National Election Study 2014. This post-electoral survey was carried out among a register-based probability sample of Belgians entitled to vote in the 2014 national elections. On completion of a computer-assisted personal interview (response rate 47 per cent (AAPOR, 2016)), respondents were asked to fill out a drop-off questionnaire, containing an extended module on Social Europe. About 74 per cent of the respondents send back the completed questionnaire (N=1403).

4.4.2 Variables

Support for *member state solidarity* is measured by means of three agree/disagree statements tapping into support for member states in economic difficulties, the amount of tax money being redistributed and the continuity of solidarity between EU countries. Responses were recorded using a 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree). In contrast to previous studies, our measurement taps into general principles of redistribution between countries, thus capturing support for the logic of the structural and cohesion funds rather than the bailout funds. Attitudes to *transnational solidarity* are operationalized by four 5-point Likert-type items on the access of EU citizens to social benefits and protection in Belgium. One item concerns equal social rights, two relate to prioritizing nationals and one refers to the conditionality of social rights. Confirmatory factor analysis indicates that a measurement model with two latent variables fits the data well, as the RMSEA equals .045 and both the CFI (.969) and TLI (.950) are sufficiently close to 1. The latent factor of member state solidarity correlates at .641 with the latent factor of transnational solidarity, which indicates that these two types of attitudes are quite strongly related to each other. Table 4.1 provides descriptive statistics as well as factor loadings for the items measuring both types of European solidarity.

Table 4.1. Operationalization and descriptive statistics of member state solidarity and transnational solidarity

Scale 1-5	*% disagree (strongly)*	*% agree (strongly)*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*Factor loading*[a]
Member state solidarity					
Rich EU countries such as Belgium should always support other member states that experience serious economic difficulties	33.04	30.37	2.94	0.94	.713
Too much tax money is going from the prosperous EU countries to the poorer EU countries	17.61	38.86	3.25	0.88	-.519
The solidarity between the richer and poorer EU countries should not be broken	11.00	52.39	3.48	0.85	.635
Transnational solidarity					
EU citizens should receive the same social facilities as Belgians	38.46	32.87	2.89	1.07	.599
In the allocation of social benefits, Belgians should have priority over EU citizens	27.92	45.98	3.25	1.07	-.709
EU citizens should first have a job before they gain access to social services	8.99	74.06	3.91	0.94	-.659
Let's support the poor in our country first, before we help the poor coming from other EU countries	13.90	63.65	3.76	1.08	-.775

Note. [a] Fully standardized parameters. Model fit: χ^2=64.491; df=13; CFI=.970; TLI=.951; RMSEA=.053, N=1400.
Source: BNES 2014.

Euroscepticism or general EU support is measured by the three constitutive components, namely support for EU membership, deepening and enlargement. First, citizens' *support for EU membership* is assessed by the item 'Generally speaking, do you think that Belgium's membership of the EU is (1) a good thing, (2) a bad thing or (3) neither a good nor a bad thing'. Second, the attitude towards *deepening of the European project* is measured by the preferred distribution of competences between the EU and the national government: (1) The current competences of the European Union should be reduced, (2) The distribution of competences between the EU and national member states should remain more or less the same or (3) The current powers of the European Union should be expanded. Third, the attitude to *enlargement* is assessed by an item concerning whether the accession of Eastern European countries in the last decade is: (1) a good thing, (2) a bad thing or (3) neither a good nor a bad thing. Because the correlation between these three items of Euroscepticism is only moderately strong (Cramer's V values [0-1] between each of the three indicators range from .26 to .40), we treat the three variables as separate indicators.

Prioritising social policy for the EU is operationalized by gauging the extent to which the European Commission should give priority to the following issues: fighting social inequality, fighting poverty, developing strong social protection in all EU countries and enforcing good

working conditions in all EU countries (answer categories: a very low priority, a low priority, neither a low nor a high priority, a high priority or a very high priority). *Prioritising economic policy for the EU* is operationalized by measuring support for prioritizing EU-level efforts in 'fostering economic growth' and 'creating employment'. CFA shows that these items do indeed measure the intended concepts. The measurement model of social and economic priorities has a good fit (X^2=40.40; df=8; CFI=.973; TLI=.950; RMSEA=.054) with five out of six factor loadings larger than .60.[4] Frequency distributions for all items are displayed in Appendix 4.B.

We include various social-structural variables, among which are *age*, *gender* (0=male, 1=female) and e*ducation level* (lower-secondary education, upper-secondary education and tertiary education). *Occupational status* is based on the Erikson-Goldthorpe-Portocarero (EGP) class scheme. In line with Svallfors (1997), we use a slightly modified six-class version of the EGP scheme, comprising the following classes: service class I (higher-level supervisors and administrators), service class II (lower-level supervisors and administrators), routine non-manual, self-employed, skilled workers and unskilled workers. Retired people are categorized according to their last occupation and respondents who had never been employed are included in a separate category. Furthermore, *perceived economic insecurity* is included. Respondents were asked how often they had the following concerns: (1) that your financial worries will increase in the coming years, (2) that you will have difficulties in maintaining your socioeconomic position and (3) that your children and the coming generation will find things much more difficult. A latent variable is constructed of these items (answer categories: never, rarely, sometimes, regularly and often).[5] *Migration background* is included as a dummy variable (0=no, 1=yes). Respondents whose mother or father did not have Belgian nationality at birth are considered as having a migration background. We include citizens' attachment to Europe, ranging from: not at all attached (1) to strongly attached (5). Lastly, because preferences regarding the policy priorities in EU politics are embedded in a general ideological position, we take into account *left-right self-placement* (0-10 scale). The correlations between left-right self-placement and the items of prioritizing social or economic policy are relatively moderate (Pearson's correlation coefficients between .06 and .22). An overview of the descriptive statistics is given in Appendix 4.A.

[4] Modification indices suggest an error correlation between 'Developing a strong social protection in all EU countries' and 'Enforcing good working conditions in all EU countries'. The inclusion of the error correlation improved the model fit significantly and is theoretically justified because both items refer to protecting EU citizens.

[5] Standardized factor loadings equal .83, .79, and .48.

4.4.3 Statistical modeling

To test our hypotheses regarding the roots of member state and transnational solidarity, we estimated a series of structural equation models (SEMs) using Mplus software version 7.3. The models were constructed stepwise (that is, adding blocks of variables in separate steps), which allowed us to assess the net explanatory power that Euroscepticism and EU agenda preferences added to the models when social-structural predictors, European identity and left-right placement had already been taken into account. A visualization of the final model is shown in Appendix 4.C. Results are weighted by age, gender and education. Item non-response was addressed using full information maximum likelihood estimation (Schafer and Graham, 2002). All reported regression parameters were standardized to allow comparison of effect sizes.

4.5 Results

Models 1a and 1b (Table 4.2) show the effects of social-structural variables on member state and transnational solidarity respectively. Remarkably, support for transnational solidarity is more strongly affected by socioeconomic indicators (education level, occupation and subjective economic insecurity). For instance, the gap between the low educated – traditionally considered as the 'losers' from globalization (Kriesi et al., 2008) – and the highly educated is larger for transnational solidarity than for member state solidarity. This suggests that European solidarity practices trigger feelings of competitive threat among lower-educated Belgians and that granting social rights to EU citizens is especially perceived as threatening to people's own social position. Furthermore, transnational identities are a facilitating factor for creating European solidarity; citizens with a migration background endorse member state solidarity more strongly and identification with Europe enhances solidarity with both EU member states and citizens. In line with previous research, right-wing voters are less in favour of European solidarity. Together, these variables explain 27.3 per cent of the total variance in member state solidarity and 26.2 per cent of the variance in transnational solidarity.

The three indicators of Euroscepticism are added in models 2a and 2b. These variables additionally explain 19.2 per cent of the variation in member state solidarity, but only 8 per cent of the additional variance in transnational solidarity. In line with our expectations (H1a, H1b and H1c), the results indicate that opposition to EU membership, deepening and enlargement have strong and independent effects on support for European solidarity. First, disapproval of one's country's *EU membership* impedes support towards both member state solidarity and transnational solidarity. Membership is thus considered as an engagement to share risks and

resources with the countries and citizens that are part of it. Second, rejecting the principle of *deepening* is an additional brake on citizens' support for solidarity across the EU. Citizens who prefer a status quo for the division of powers or who think that the EU should return a large part of its powers to the nation states are less willing to support other member states financially or to accept EU citizens as equals by granting them social rights. With regard to transnational solidarity, however, differences are less evident (and not always statistically significant). Third, models 2a and 2b show that citizens who disapprove of the Eastern *enlargements* (or have no clear opinion on the matter) are significantly less supportive of both member state solidarity and transnational solidarity. Belgian citizens thus recognize that the accession of new countries to the EU will expand the circle of solidarity, potentially making it more costly. The boundaries of the European community seem to be of extreme importance, because opposition towards enlargement even more strongly hampers support for European solidarity than opposition to EU membership and to EU deepening. A comparison of the regression coefficients shows that opposition towards EU membership, deepening and widening clearly have a stronger impact on support for member state solidarity than on transnational solidarity. Perhaps the former is very much seen as an EU-induced practice, whereas transnational solidarity is less perceived as an automatic consequence of European integration.

Lastly, models 3a and 3b illustrate that public resistance to European solidarity is not simply an emanation of Euroscepticism, but relates to citizens' substantive preferences regarding the EU's agenda. As expected, citizens who advocate the European Commission giving a higher priority to social issues are much more in favour of member state solidarity and transnational solidarity. Prioritizing economic issues in European politics, by contrast, does not translate into higher support for European solidarity. Moreover, citizens who strongly believe that economic policies should dominate the European agenda are significantly less willing to show solidarity with other EU member states or with EU citizens than those who give economic issues a lower priority. These effects are found on top of voters' left-right self-placement, signalling that people genuinely have substantive positions towards the EU's policy objectives. European solidarity is seen as a constitutive part of Social Europe, but not of economic European policy, which confirms hypotheses H2a and H2b. It is remarkable that the effect of prioritizing social issues is much stronger for member state solidarity than for transnational solidarity. Possibly, EU transfers to less-developed and crisis-hit countries are considered as more effective policy instruments to achieve the EU's social objectives. The allocated structural funds can improve the social development of complete regions, whereas transnational solidarity practices in the form of cross-border welfare rights are merely targeted at mobile citizens. Respondents might take into account that mobile EU citizens constitute only a small group within the European population and therefore may consider them as being less needy. Models 3a and 3b explain in total about 55 per

cent of the variance in member state solidarity and 36 per cent of the variance in transnational solidarity.

Table 4.2. Structural equation models for member state solidarity and transnational solidarity

	Model 1a Member state β	Model 1b Trans-national β	Model 2a Member state B	Model 2b Trans-national β	Model 3a Member state β	Model 3b Trans-national β
Age	.083*	-.042	.096	-.031	.040	-.048
Female	-.042	-.070*	-.063	-.076*	-.078*	-.080*
Education						
Low	-.195***	-.251***	-.114*	-.197***	-.131**	-.203***
Middle	-.142***	-.196***	-.094**	-.162***	-.107**	-.169***
High	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Occupational status						
Service class I	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Service class II	.010	-.045	-.010	-.042	-.027	-.049
Routine non-manual	-.004	-.052	.026	-.032	-.013	-.048
Self-employed	-.082*	-.100**	-.070	-.085*	-.070	-.087*
Skilled workers	-.086*	-.097**	-.062	-.077*	-.060	-.078*
Unskilled workers	-.066	-.075	-.052	-.065	-.093	-.082
Not applicable	.060	-.031	.002	-.069	-.013	-.073
Economic insecurity	.015	-.146***	.059	-.122**	.047	-.121**
Migrant background	.097**	.038	.129***	.059	.108**	.055
European identity	.374***	.258***	.139***	.115**	.119**	.112**
Left-right self-placement	-.209***	-.239***	-.187***	-.221***	-.105**	-.192***
EU membership						
A bad thing			-.153**	-.098*	-.199***	-.111**
Neither good nor bad			-.097**	-.094**	-.099**	-.098**
A good thing			Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
EU deepening						
Reduce competences			-.249***	-.075	-.246***	-.076
Maintain competences			-.159***	-.103*	-.159***	-.105*
Expand competences			Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
EU enlargement						
A bad thing			-.428***	-.329***	-.378***	-.305***
Neither good nor bad			-.164***	-.132**	-.144**	-.124**
A good thing			Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
EU social priorities					.368***	.147**
EU economic priorities					-.150**	-.128*
Explained variance (R^2)	.273	.262	.465	.342	.552	.361
CFI / TLI	.937 / .911		.934 / .907		.929 / .901	
RMSEA	.033		.030		.030	

Note. * $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$. *Source*: BNES 2014.

4.6 Conclusion

In contemporary debates about the development of the European Union, there is an apparent paradox between the call for a more Social Europe on the one hand and reservations about supranational solidarity on the other. This study empirically analyses whether public support for existing forms of European solidarity – member state solidarity and transnational solidarity – is in the first place an emanation of Eurosceptic attitudes, or is instead driven by EU agenda preferences.

There are three main findings. First, Eurosceptic sentiments reduce support for member state and transnational solidarity. Opposition towards EU membership, deepening and enlargement greatly obstruct citizens' willingness to share risks and resources with nations and citizens that are members of the EU. Citizens seem to recognize that being a member of the EU and the continued process of integration by means of widening and deepening will inherently require certain practices of EU-wide solidarity. In particular, opposition towards EU enlargement is strongly detrimental with regard to support for European solidarity. The public seems to understand clearly that enlargement of the EU has consequences for the boundaries of the community in which resources can be accessed or redistributed.

The second major finding is that support for European solidarity is not just a matter of being in favour of or against European integration, but depends strongly on citizens' preferences concerning the agenda-setting of the EU. Prioritizing a Social Europe translates into higher support for member state and transnational solidarity. Advocates of a more social direction for the European project are thus genuinely more willing to redistribute resources to other member states and to open up the boundaries of their long-standing national solidarity systems to EU citizens. Conversely, prioritizing an Economic Europe is associated with lower levels of support for transfers to less-developed and crisis-hit countries and cross-border welfare rights. This finding implies that even though individuals are in favour of European integration, it is possible that they oppose European solidarity. EU agenda preferences are a crucial element in understanding support for specific EU policies whereas they remained underexposed in previous research.

Third, we found differentiation in attitudinal patterns towards the two faces of EU-level solidarity. The finding that Euroscepticism has a relatively weaker impact on support for transnational solidarity may result from the fact that cross-border welfare rights are not only a prerogative of EU citizens. Non-EU citizens – or so-called third-country nationals – are under certain conditions also eligible to social benefits and services. Citizens may therefore perceive these benefits as part of a broader phenomenon of globalization, instead of the result of European decision-making. By contrast, financial transfers to less developed and crisis-hit countries are an

exclusive characteristic of the EU's policy, implying that solidarity between member states is more strongly perceived as a phenomenon inherent to European integration. Furthermore, the preference for a more social EU agenda has a relatively weaker effect on support for transnational solidarity. In citizens' minds, a more social agenda for the EU means helping other member states, and to a lesser extent sharing resources with mobile Europeans residing in their country. This discrepancy may be based on the reasoning that EU social objectives can be more effectively achieved by means of EU transfers, which can benefit complete regions, whereas cross-border welfare rights are only advantageous to mobile EU citizens. The differentiation in the explanatory patterns of transnational and member state solidarity indicates that citizens distinguish between various components of Social Europe, confirming previous research (Baute et al., 2017).

One of the limitations of this study relates to the measurement of support for cross-border welfare rights. This is operationalized by support for social rights for EU citizens residing in Belgium, whereas the principle of non-discrimination implies that Belgians are also granted access to social security when residing in other member states. The one-sided view on the beneficiaries of cross-border welfare rights in our survey has potentially resulted in recording lower support for transnational solidarity. Furthermore, given that this study is based on Belgian data, we are fully aware of the possibility that both member state solidarity and transnational solidarity can be perceived differently in other EU member states. On the one hand, Belgians may perceive member state and transnational solidarity as practices with little reciprocity. Apart from the revenues allocated to EU administration, Belgium is a net-contributor to the EU budget, attracts a high share of mobile EU citizens and has a strongly developed welfare state. In crisis-hit countries, support for financial help to other member states and cross-border welfare rights for EU citizens seeking employment elsewhere may be stronger. On the other hand, Belgians are on average relatively in favour of European integration (European Parliament, 2017). For a small country, the European project has enabled Belgium to gain a more central position. Accordingly, one can expect that Belgians' pro-EU mindset spills over into above-average support for European solidarity. Cross-national research is needed to answer these remaining issues.

Notwithstanding the limitations noted above, this study provides important insights for future policy development of the EU. Although it is argued that Europe needs to strengthen its social dimension to regain support from the public, our results nuance this suggestion. Citizens who oppose the very idea and principles of the EU are unlikely to become supportive of a European project with solidarity practices as constitutive policy elements. This indicates that heading towards a more social Union is not a silver bullet to counter hard Euroscepticism. Nevertheless, by strengthening solidarity practices between member states and between European citizens, soft Euroscepticism that is directed towards the agenda-setting of the EU – more

specifically that the EU puts too little emphasis on social objectives – may be tempered. Furthermore, this study has implications for the legitimacy of the EU, as it indicates that citizens evaluate the EU in terms of what course it takes, on top of their overall evaluation of the project of European integration. General support for the EU remains an important underlying reason for voters' willingness to share risks and resources with other member states and EU citizens. However, citizens have an ideological preference about what course the European project should take and this substantive position may play an increasingly important role in their support for continued European integration. Debate about the future of the EU should focus more on the policy directions of the union rather than presenting it as a unidimensional issue of more or less European integration.

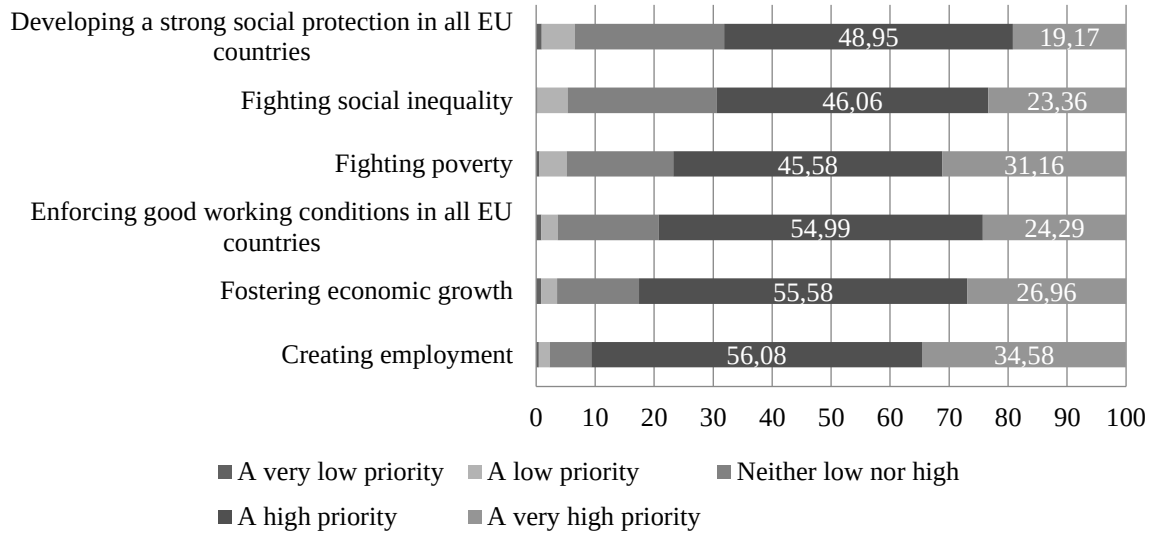
Appendices

Appendix 4.A. Descriptive statistics of independent variables

Variable	*Mean (S.D.) / %*	*N*
Age	51.70 (17.53)	1403
Female	50.82	1403
Education level		1403
Low	27.37	
Middle	32.22	
High (ref)	40.41	
Occupational status		1403
Service class I (ref)	13.04	
Service class II	17.61	
Routine non-manual	21.18	
Self-employed	9.19	
Skilled workers	8.84	
Unskilled workers	19.32	
Not applicable	10.19	
Economic insecurity[a]	2.99 (0.92)	1401
Migration background	13.51	1399
European identity	2.92 (1.13)	1374
EU membership of Belgium		1393
A good thing (ref)	52.48	
Neither a good nor a bad thing	35.39	
A bad thing	12.13	
EU deepening		1343
Reduce competences	28.89	
Maintain competences	51.15	
Expand competences (ref)	19.96	
EU Enlargement to Eastern Europe		1391
A good thing (ref)	18.12	
Neither a good nor a bad thing	34.08	
A bad thing	47.81	
Left-right self-placement	5.14 (2.19)	1364
EU social priorities[a]	3.91 (0.67)	1379
EU economic priorities[a]	4.15 (0.63)	1383

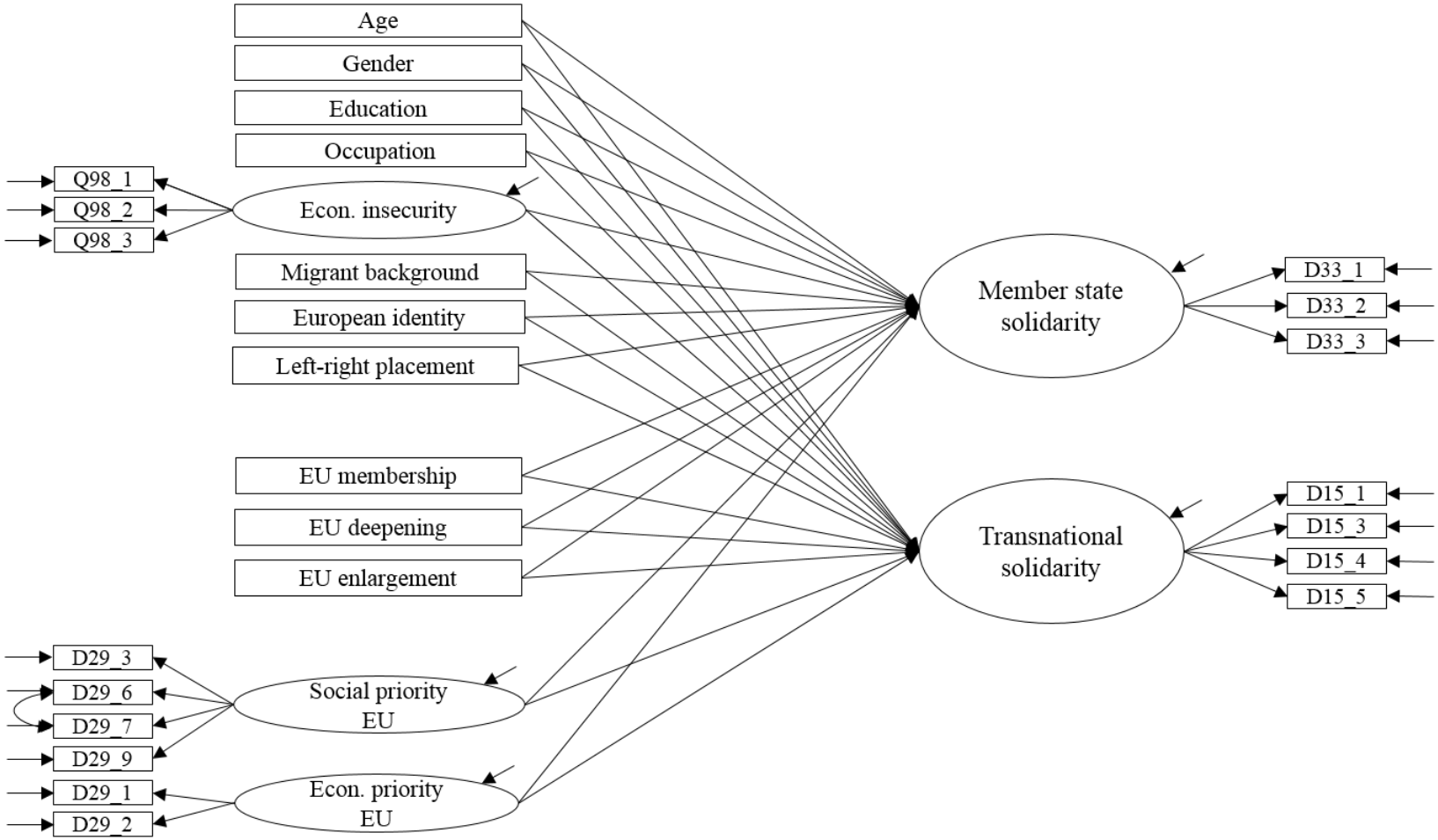
Note. [a] Mean score of the measured variables of which the latent construct is specified.

Appendix 4.B. Perceived priorities for the European Commission



Source. BNES 2014 (Weighted for age, gender and education).

Appendix 4.C. Explanatory model of support for member state solidarity and transnational solidarity



Chapter 5

European integration as a threat to social security: Another source of Euroscepticism?[1]

Abstract

This study investigates whether citizens' concerns about the EU's impact on social security are a distinct source of Euroscepticism. By analysing data from the European Values Study 2008, we show that citizens differentiate between domain-specific fears about European integration (i.e. about social security, national sovereignty, culture, payments and jobs), meaning that they cannot be reduced completely to a general fear about European integration. Furthermore, socioeconomic determinants and ideological position are more important in explaining citizens' fear about the EU's impact on social security than in explaining their generalised fear of European integration. In countries with higher social spending, citizens are more fearful of European integration in general, however, social spending does not affect fears about social security more strongly than it affects other EU-related fears.

[1] This chapter is based on an article that is accepted for publication in European Union Politics:

Baute, S., Meuleman, B., Abts, K., & Swyngedouw, M. (2018). European integration as a threat to social security: Another source of Euroscepticism? *European Union Politics*, *137*(1), 353-378.

5.1 Introduction

According to Hooghe and Marks (2008), the 'permissive consensus' regarding European integration has been replaced by 'constraining dissensus' as European institutions and policies have become more visible, politicized and contested. Similarly, others argue that 'as the nature of the European project is becoming more diverse, so are the reasons to oppose it' (van Elsas & van der Brug, 2015: 197). As a result, concerns about European integration and its consequences for member states and citizens have become apparent in different areas (Grauel et al., 2013). For example, fear over a loss of political influence has a clearly distinct logic and nature compared with concerns that European integration threatens national identity and culture (McLaren, 2004). Furthermore, the Eastern enlargements and the recent bailout operations have fuelled economic anxieties about increasing costs (Bechtel et al., 2014; Karp & Bowler, 2006), while internal market policies have fuelled worries about relocating jobs to other countries (Bernaciak, 2014).

This study focusses on citizens' concerns about a loss of social security resulting from European integration. Whereas economic integration was deemed the driving force for rising welfare standards for a long time, concerns that European integration threatens welfare and social protection have recently been surfacing (Eichenberg & Dalton, 2007). Citizens can perceive the interference of the EU in the social policy area either as a threat, leading to a loss of social security, or as an opportunity, reinforcing and extending national welfare arrangements. Importantly, fears about a loss of social security diminish support for joint European decision-making concerning social policy (Mau, 2005) and for European integration in general (Brinegar & Jolly, 2005).

Nevertheless, the perceived impact of the EU on social security has received little previous attention in empirical research (Beaudonnet, 2012; Cautrès, 2012; Ray, 2004). In addition, studies focusing on concerns about social security analyse it in isolation from citizens' concerns about the EU's impact on other domains of society, such as national sovereignty, national identity, financial contributions and employment. The differences and commonalities between these sources of Euroscepticism have not previously been investigated. As a result, knowledge about how strongly the social dimension of Euroscepticism is related to other domain-specific concerns about European integration is lacking. Accordingly, in this article we investigate if fear concerning a loss of social security resulting from European integration can be perceived as a specific fear that is peculiar to the social aspects of the EU, or whether it is merely a reflection of a general anxiety about European integration sui generis. Second, we examine whether fears that European integration endangers the existing social security level are affected differently by

social-structural position, ideological disposition and national context compared with other EU-related fears (referring to national sovereignty, identity, financial contributions and jobs). To answer these questions empirically, we analyse cross-national data from the European Values Study (2008) by means of multilevel structural equation modelling. Our study illustrates that fear about social security cannot be reduced completely to a general fear of European integration, and is related to particular structural and ideological determinants.

5.2 European integration as a threat: Different sources of Euroscepticism?

Citizens may perceive European integration as a threatening process in its entirety, leading to a generalised fear of integration. However, the expansion of the European project has made the grounds for opposing European integration more diverse. Various sources of Euroscepticism are discussed in the literature, each related to a particular threat that the EU poses. These threats centre on the issues of national sovereignty, cultural identity, financial contributions, jobs and social security.

One basis for Euroscepticism relates to the perceived threat to *national sovereignty* (Sørensen, 2007). It originates from opposition towards the very idea of European political integration, for example emanating from calls for a political union based on the European federal state (Cohn-Bendit & Verhofstadt, 2012). Public support for further political integration was already low in the 1990s, and in many policy areas Europeans still prefer national sovereignty to European decision-making (European Commission, 1997, 2011b).

Euroscepticism may also be rooted in perceptions that European integration challenges *national identity and culture* (Carey, 2002). A substantial proportion of European citizens fear that the process of European integration is eroding everyday practices, lifestyles and national culture (McLaren, 2004). It has been shown that cultural concerns were an important underlying element in the 'No' vote in the Dutch referendum of 2005 (Lubbers, 2008).

In addition, Euroscepticism can also stem from cost-benefit calculations regarding the financial consequences of European integration. In many – especially net-contributing – countries, concerns about *national financial contributions* to the EU budget are prevalent (Leconte, 2010). Enlargement of the EU, and the recent Eurozone crisis, increased the salience of the financial consequences of European integration, for instance in terms of changing incoming subsidies and the budget contributions of member states (Hobolt, 2015; Karp & Bowler, 2006).

A further source of Euroscepticism relates to the threat that the EU poses to the labour market and in particular to *jobs* (Grauel et al., 2013). As a result of the internal market, citizens might feel that job prospects and earnings are negatively affected by posted workers (i.e. employees who are sent by their employer to carry out a service in another EU Member State on a temporary basis) and the relocation of jobs to member states where production is cheaper. In the context of the EU enlargements of 2004 and 2007, concerns about regime competition and social dumping were translated into restrictions on the free movement of Eastern European workers.

Turning to the focal point of this study, Euroscepticism can also stem from perceived threats to *social security* (Beaudonnet, 2012). In this regard, Sørensen (2007: 140) argues that 'social Euroscepticism' – defined as scepticism towards the EU's social engagement – was important to explain differing support for the EU Constitution in 2005. One in four Europeans who opposed the Constitution mentioned that it was not social enough and too liberal (Sørensen, 2007). The view that the EU has a negative effect on national social security systems and should promote a Social Europe (Delors & Fernandes, 2013) has gained currency in European public opinion. For example, one in two citizens worries about a loss of social benefits resulting from European integration and 43 percent of Europeans believe that fighting poverty and social exclusion should be the top priority for the EU (European Commission, 2007). Social Euroscepticism may stem from different facets of the European integration process. First, increased intra-EU migration is assumed to facilitate 'welfare tourism' (Fóti, 2015), arousing fears about adverse effects on the sustainability of social protection systems. Second, the EU is associated with a 'race to the bottom' in social standards, as the internal market constrains the ability of governments to sustain generous systems of social protection (Kvist, 2004). Third, the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and its convergence criteria concerning the inflation rate, public finances, interest rates and exchange rate stability are seen as significant interference by the EU in the area of domestic redistribution (Eichenberg & Dalton, 2007). Following the Euro crisis, the EU – which supervises budgetary discipline – has become increasingly associated with cuts in public spending and reduced social protection (Leconte, 2010). Lastly, even active social policymaking at the European level can produce concerns about the level of social protection. Because of the diversity of social protection schemes in Europe, fear of convergence towards the 'lowest common denominator' that will retrench generous welfare states has gained ground (Scharpf, 2010).

It is clear that fear from European integration can have different substantive roots. Yet it is unknown to what extent domain-specific fears, such as concerns about a loss of social security, are truly distinct phenomena or are parts of an over-arching generalised fear. On the one hand, citizens' perceptions of the impact of European integration on different domains might deviate

from one another, because citizens pay more attention to issues they find important. On the other hand, one could assume that citizens are relatively uninformed about European integration and fail to differentiate between various types of EU-related threats.

5.3 Explaining citizens' fear of European integration concerning social security

If citizens' fear of a loss of social security is a truly distinct source of Euroscepticism, this should be reflected in the specificity of its causal antecedents. If we can identify predictors that are particularly relevant to specific concerns about social security, then the assumption that these concerns are merely reflections of a generalised fear of European integration can be rejected. A variety of theoretical approaches ─ including self-interest, cognitive mobilization, cue-taking and identity approaches (Abts et al., 2009; Hobolt, 2012) ─ have been put forward to explain EU attitudes.

5.3.1 Individual-level explanations: Utilitarian interest and ideological orientation

To explain individual differences in citizens' fear about a loss of social security, we distinguish two complementary approaches: the utilitarian approach and the ideological approach, which focuses on preferences regarding government intervention and income redistribution.

The utilitarian approach relates Euroscepticism to self-interest and makes assumptions about what social categories are more likely to gain or lose from European integration (e.g. Anderson & Reichert, 1996; Gabel, 1998). It is expected that those with higher levels of income, education and occupation skills can benefit more from the new opportunities and are better able to succeed in an integrated European market, since they are more mobile and flexibly employed. European integration should prove more threatening to individuals with lower levels of financial and human capital, because their life chances, which were traditionally protected by national boundaries, are being reduced (Kriesi et al., 2008). Studies show that citizens with lower socioeconomic status and those dependent on the welfare state have more reservations about European integration in general (Beaudonnet, 2015; Mau, 2005).

In line with this reasoning, we can expect that citizens with lower socio-economic status are especially concerned about the EU's impact on social security, because their life chances are determined to a larger extent by national welfare provisions than those of higher socioeconomic status groups (Gerhards, Lengfeld, & Häuberer, 2016). In particular to welfare beneficiaries,

European integration as a threat to social security

European integration may represent a threat to social security as it might change the status quo of redistributive mechanisms (Beaudonnet, 2015). For instance, the granting of access to social security systems for EU citizens, the induced austerity policies and spending cuts of the EMU, and pressures of social policy convergence might fuel fear of a loss of social security that is disproportionally stronger among individuals with lower socioeconomic status. Although these citizens have also benefited from the EU's positive market-correcting policies, such as regulations in the field of health and safety at work (Falkner, 2010), overall, we could expect that they perceive the EU's impact in the sphere of social protection more negatively. Because citizens' structural position in society influences their dependence on social security, we expect that on top of the effect of socioeconomic status on citizens' generalised fear, socio-economic status has an additional negative effect on concerns about the EU's impact on social security.

Concerns about European integration do not only vary with regard to self-interest calculations, but are also rooted in *ideological perspectives*. Political conflict over European integration is related to a left/right dimension concerning state regulation and social redistribution (Hooghe & Marks, 1999). Left-wing parties view European integration as an amplifier of globalization, inducing rising inequality, and are preoccupied with the effects of integration on workers and welfare systems (Bertoncini & Koenig, 2014). Accordingly, empirical studies show that voters' preferences for active government in the socioeconomic sphere are an important predictor of Euroscepticism (Brinegar & Jolly, 2005; Garry & Tilley, 2015; Van Elsas & Van der Brug, 2015). Since European policy has mainly been focusing on the creation of a single market, we expect that citizens who are strongly in favour of government intervention and income redistribution experience European integration as more threatening. In addition, those who prefer higher levels of government intervention, social regulations and redistribution are expected to be particularly fearful of the EU's impact on social protection, because the preservation of social security is salient to them (Føllesdal et al., 2007). Empirical studies show that left-wing citizens evaluate the EU's impact on social security more negatively than right-wing citizens (Cautrès, 2012; Van Elsas & Van der Brug, 2015). Given that left-wing respondents are susceptible to social security related concerns, we expect that preferences regarding government responsibility and income redistribution are more powerful in explaining citizens' concerns about the EU's impact on social security in comparison with other types of fear about European integration.

5.3.2 Explaining cross-national differences

Various studies have evidenced that contextual factors shape attitudes towards European integration (Brinegar & Jolly, 2005; Eichenberg & Dalton, 2007). Most of the literature on cross-national variation in attitudes towards the EU is based on utilitarian appraisals, assuming that not

only individuals, but also entire countries can win or lose from European integration. Four explanatory factors are relevant in this respect: the level of welfare provisions, national economic conditions, financial transfers received from the EU and intra-European migration.

European integration affects national welfare states in different ways and to different degrees (Scharpf, 2010). In the most-developed welfare states, the free market competition rules exert strong pressures to lower the burden of social security. Accordingly, concerns about European integration in the most comprehensive welfare states particularly relate to the robustness or vulnerability of their welfare model against these pressures (Andersen, 2004). Hereby, a race to the bottom and the deterioration of the quality of social services is feared. By contrast, in welfare states where coverage is weaker, the expected impact of integration is less negative. Moreover, citizens might hope that social standards and social protection levels will improve as a result of the EU's interference in welfare issues (Burgoon, 2009; Mau, 2005). In this regard, empirical studies show that in countries with higher levels of social spending, citizens have more reservations about the European project (Balestrini et al., 2010; Sanchez-Cuenca, 2000). In addition, citizens in more-advanced welfare states evaluate the EU's impact on social security more negatively and are less willing to transfer social competences to the European level (Gerhards et al., 2016; Mau, 2005; Ray, 2004).

Second, citizens' evaluations of European integration are based on *national economic conditions* (Anderson & Kaltenhaler, 1996). If the national economy is performing strongly, citizens tend to believe that supranational politics guarantee or reinforce prosperity in the country (Netjes, 2004). Conversely, Euroscepticism has increased most strongly in the member states most affected by the recent economic crisis (Foster & Frieden, 2017; Serricchio, Tsakatia, & Quaglia, 2013). We expect that economic conditions are especially important for citizens' confidence about the maintenance of social protection levels, as poor economic conditions may trigger fears about cuts in social spending.

Financial transfers within the EU are another important source of potential country-level benefits from European integration and vary considerably across member states. Citizens living in countries that benefit more from transfers show greater support for European integration overall (Anderson & Reichert, 1996; Brinegar & Jolly, 2005). We assume that EU transfers are particularly important in explaining citizens' assessments of how the EU is affecting social welfare. A large proportion of these transfers are distributed through the structural and investment funds, reducing regional disparities in income, employment, investment and growth (Anderson, 1995), and through the agricultural fund of the Common Agricultural Policy. As financial

transfers are often used for programmes serving welfare functions, we expect that higher national benefits reduce negative evaluations regarding the EU's impact on social protection.

Lastly, concerns about European integration are often linked to intra-EU migration facilitated by the free movement of individuals (Fóti, 2015). Significant differences in the number of EU foreigners exist between countries, with east to west and south to north movements being most prevalent (Eurofound, 2014). Although citizens living in countries with high intra-EU mobility rates might be more concerned about European integration in general (Toshkov & Kortenska, 2015), we expect that intra-EU migration will increase concerns about the EU's impact on social protection in the first place. Increased migration is believed to put additional pressure on welfare benefits and social services in host countries (Kvist, 2004). The assumption of so-called welfare tourism, namely that EU migrants are attracted by more generous welfare benefits in destination countries, only reinforces this belief. Where the proportion of EU-immigrants is larger, citizens might thus be more likely to think that European integration is detrimental to their welfare state.

Compared with citizens' general fear of European integration, we expect that member states' level of welfare provisions, economic conditions, net EU-transfers and intra-EU migration are especially indicative of the perceived EU impact on social security. These country characteristics either provide the lens through which citizens will evaluate the EU's impact on social security (i.e. level of national welfare provisions, economic conditions) or directly relate to EU-level welfare assistance and its beneficiaries (i.e. EU net-transfers, intra-EU migration).

5.3.3 Hypotheses

Table 5.1 summarizes the hypotheses that are derived from the theoretical arguments set out above. We expect that the individual-level and country-level factors mentioned influence citizens' generalised fear of European integration, but also that they have an additional influence on citizens' fear concerning a loss of social security.[2]

[2] While it would be possible to elaborate on the differential impact of these predictors on the other domain-specific fears, this exercise is beyond the scope of this paper.

Table 5.1. Hypotheses

	General effect: fear about EU integration	Domain-specific effect: social security
Individual level	▪ Indicators of socioeconomic status are negatively related to generalised fear over European integration (H1a).	▪ On top of the effect of socioeconomic status on generalised fear, indicators of socioeconomic status have an additional negative effect on fear for a loss of social security (H1b).
	▪ Being in favour of state responsibility for welfare and being in favour of income redistribution is positively related to generalised fear of European integration (H2a).	▪ On top of the effect of preferences for state responsibility and income redistribution on generalised fear, these preferences have an additional positive effect on fear for a loss of social security (H2b).
Country level	▪ Where domestic social welfare provisions are more extensive, generalised fear about European integration is higher (H3a).	▪ On top of the effect of welfare provisions on generalised fear, extensive welfare provisions have an additional positive effect on fear for a loss of social security (H3b).
	▪ Poor national economic conditions trigger generalised fear of European integration (H4a).	▪ On top of the effect of national economic conditions on generalised fear, bad economic conditions have an additional positive effect on fear for a loss of social security (H4b).
	▪ Net transfers from the EU have a negative effect on citizens' generalised fear of European integration (H5a).	▪ On top of the effect of net EU-transfers on generalised fear, net transfers have an additional negative effect on fear for a loss of social security (H5b).
	▪ High intra-European migration rates have a positive effect on citizens' generalised fear about European integration (H6a)	▪ On top of the effect of intra-EU migration on generalised fear, intra-EU migration has an additional positive effect on fear for a loss of social security (H6b).

5.4 Data and methods

5.4.1 Data

We use data from the European Values Study 2008, including all EU-28 countries.[3] Based on probability-based samples of the adult population, face-to-face interviews were conducted (computer assisted or pencil and paper), except in Finland (internet panel) and in Sweden (postal

[3] The samples from Great Britain and Northern Ireland were pooled to create one sample for the UK. This did not bias our findings.

survey). National response rates range from 24.38 percent in the United Kingdom to 87.23 percent in Finland.

5.4.2 Variables

Individual level: The different types of *fears of European integration* are measured by the following question: 'Some people may have fears about the building of the European Union. For each, tell me if you personally are currently afraid of': 'The loss of social security', 'The loss of national identity and culture', 'Our country paying more and more to the European Union', 'A loss of power in the world for [country]' and 'The loss of jobs in [country]'. Responses were recorded on a 10-point scale ranging from 'Very much afraid' (1) to 'Not afraid at all' (10) and were recoded so that higher scores indicate higher levels of fear. The latent variable 'generalised fear of European integration' underlies all five items.

To test the hypotheses of economic self-interest, different indicators of socioeconomic status are included. *Educational level* is measured by the respondents' highest level of education completed (lower-secondary, upper-secondary and tertiary education). *Income* is expressed in quartiles of equivalised household income (including wages, salaries, pensions and other incomes) within each country. To equivalise the income, the harmonised monthly household income was divided by the number of people living in the household, where each additional adult counts for 0.7 and each child for 0.5 units. Missing items are included in a separate category (25.09 percent). *Employment status* is included as a variable with five categories: paid employment, retired, student, unemployed or disabled, and others (military service, homemaker, etc.). The EVS measures the *use of welfare benefits* by the respondent's or his/her partner's dependence on means-tested welfare benefits during the last five years prior. These benefits do not include entitlements to unemployment or disability benefits, or pensions. However, the accurate measurement of employment status is complementary in distinguishing specific welfare beneficiaries.

Ideology is assessed using two items reflecting preferences towards economic individualism versus social equality. First, *pro-state responsibility attitudes* are measured by respondents' self-positioning on a 10-point scale ranging from 'Individuals should take more responsibility for providing for themselves' to 'The state should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for'. Second, *pro-income redistribution* attitudes are measured by respondents' self-positioning on a 10-point scale ranging from 'Incomes should be made more equal' to 'There should be greater incentives for individual effort'. Responses were recoded so that higher scores indicate pro-state responsibility and pro-income redistribution attitudes.

We control for *age* and *gender*, *migration background* (dummy for citizens with at least one parent born outside the country of residence) and *anti-immigrant attitudes* (5-item scale) because we expect them to affect citizens' fear of European integration, although they are not the focus of this study. Anti-immigrant attitudes are captured by responses on opposite statements (1-10 scale), with higher scores indicating stronger agreement with the statements 'Immigrants take jobs away from natives in a country', 'A country's cultural life is undermined by immigrants', 'Immigrants make crime problems worse', 'Immigrants are a strain on a country's welfare system' and 'In the future the proportion of immigrants will become a threat to society'.

Country level: The extensiveness of *social welfare provisions* is measured by net spending on social protection benefits as a percentage of GDP (Eurostat indicator: *spr_net_ben*). Missing data for France and Poland was imputed by figures for the nearest available year (2010 instead of 2008). Although more accurate indicators of welfare generosity exist (Scruggs et al., 2014), the social spending measure is the best option available for all EU-28 countries. *National economic conditions* are assessed by the annual unemployment rate (Eurostat code: *une_rt_a*). *Financial transfers* are measured by the member states' net transfers received from the EU as a percentage of their gross national income (see calculations of operating budgetary balances: European Commission, 2015b). A negative net transfer means that the country receives less payment from the EU than it contributes and that the country is thus a net contributor, whereas a positive percentage means that the country is a net beneficiary of the EU's budget. *Intra-EU migration* is measured by the number of EU immigrants per 1000 inhabitants (calculations based on Eurostat data: *migr_pop1ctz*).

Descriptive statistics of individual and country-level variables are provided in Appendix 5.A and 5.B.

5.4.3 Statistical modeling

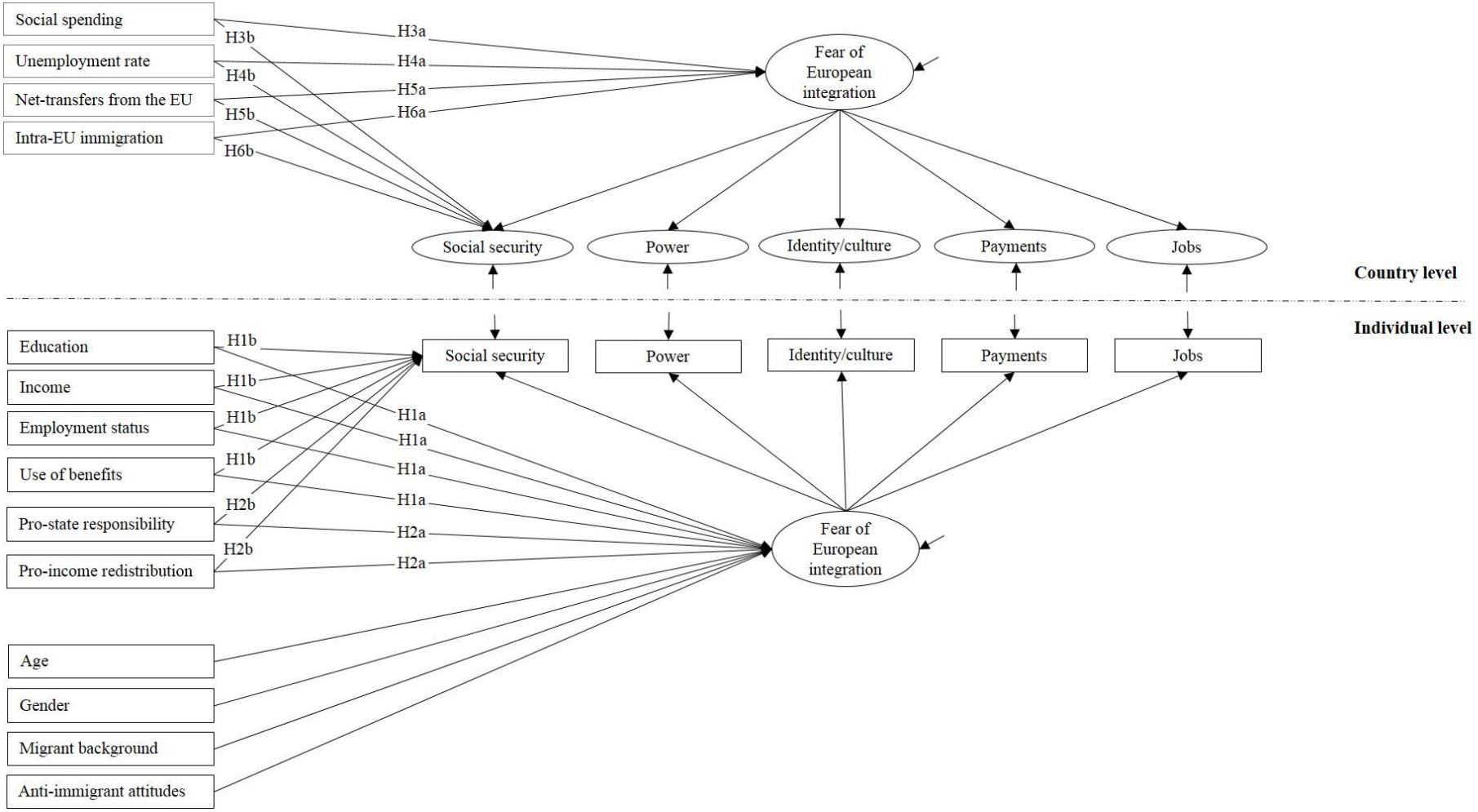
We perform multilevel analyses to take into account the hierarchical data structure and to estimate individual-level and country-level effects simultaneously. Between 4.3 percent (loss of national identity and culture) and 9.8 percent (loss of jobs) of the variance of the specific fears is attributable to country-level differences, indicating that multilevel analysis is meaningful. Our methodological strategy consists of multiple stages. First, to identify to what extent EU-related fears are distinct from one another, we conduct multilevel confirmatory factor analysis (MLCFA). This factor-analytic model makes a distinction between (1) a latent variable that captures the shared variance of domain-specific fears, i.e. the generalised fear; and (2) the unique variance of

the indicators, i.e. the domain-specific fears. Second, to analyse to what extent the determinants of fear about a loss of social security are domain-specific, we rely on multilevel structural equation models (MLSEM). The advantage of MLSEM over standard multilevel regression modelling is that it allows estimating 'generalised fear' as a latent variable. Figure 5.1 depicts the general effects by the arrows from the independent variables to the latent factor 'fear of European integration' at the individual and at the country level. The domain-specific effects at both levels are shown by the arrows pointing to 'social security'. These specific effects represent how certain predictors affect social fears differently compared to generalised fear. We do not observe multicollinearity problems, as all correlations between independent variables range between .01 and .69.

Because the number of higher-level units in our dataset (28 countries) is relatively small (Meuleman & Billiet, 2009), we make use of Bayesian estimation. The Bayesian approach yields credibility intervals that have better coverage than maximum likelihood based confidence intervals (Hox, van de Schoot, & Matthijsse, 2012). To obtain estimates of the posterior distribution, the Gibbs sampler is used (two chains with maximum of 50,000 iterations). To monitor convergence, we used the Gelman-Rubin convergence criterion[4] with .01 as the cut-off criterion. Furthermore, we inspected trace plots visually to check the convergence of the chains and the stability of the estimates. Because the Bayesian approach provides little information about the global model fit, we additionally re-estimated all models using robust maximum likelihood estimation to obtain fit indices. All the analyses were performed using Mplus software version 7.3.

[4] This criterion determines convergence by considering within-chain and between-chain variability of the parameter estimates in terms of the potential scale reduction (Gelman et al., 2014).

Figure 5.1. Hypothesized two-level structural equation model of citizens' fear of European integration



5.5 Results

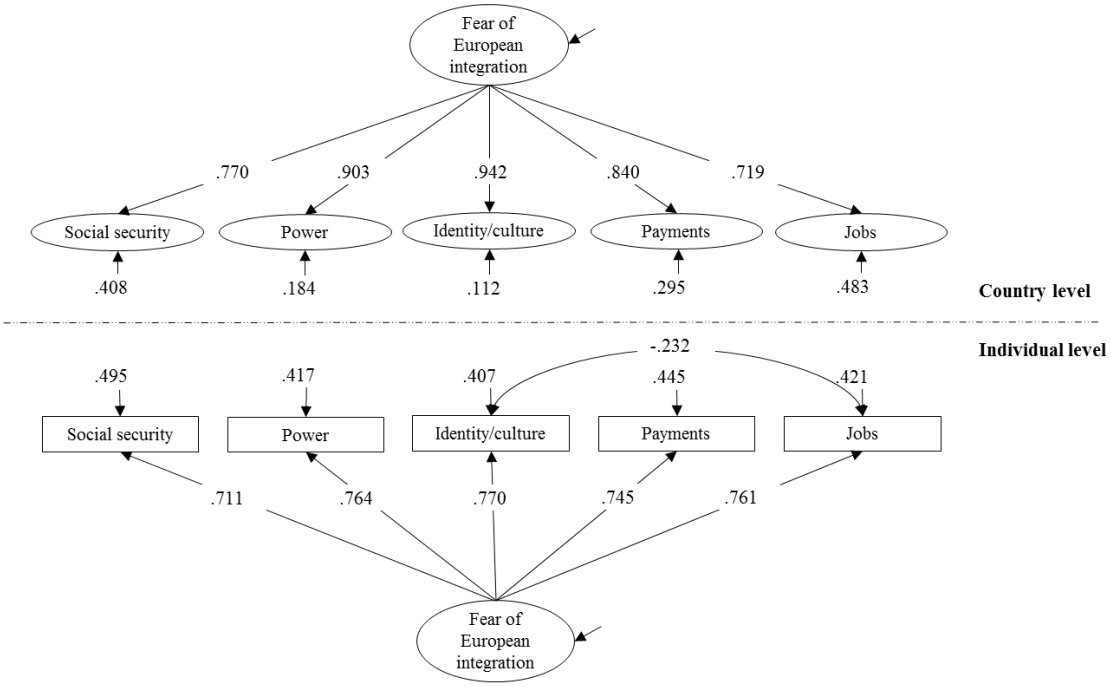
5.5.1 Are fears of European integration domain-specific?

Europeans turn out to be somewhat concerned about the EU's impact on social security, as they score on average 6.14 on a scale from 0 to 10. Overall, these concerns rank third, preceded by fears regarding a loss of jobs and increasing national contributions to the EU. Details on the domain-specific fears in each country is provided in Appendix 5.C.

The (dis)similarities between the five domain-specific fears are investigated using MLCFA (see Figure 5.2). At both levels, the factor structure consists of a single underlying latent construct – generalised 'fear of European integration' – that is measured by the five domain-specific fears. To test the equality of factor structures at the individual level and the country level (cross-level isomorphism), we constrained the factor loadings to be equal across levels. Modification indices suggested including an error correlation between fear over the loss of national identity and culture, and fear about a loss of jobs (-.232; $p < .001$). This negative residual covariance makes sense, because cultural threat and the threat to jobs are substantively less associated with each other than the other EU-related fears. The adapted model has a good fit: χ^2=231.962, the RMSEA equals .020 and both the CFI (.979) and TLI (.968) are sufficiently close to 1. The equality of factor loadings across levels indicates that the latent construct 'generalised fear of European integration' is similar at the individual and at the country level.

The interpretation of parameters in Bayesian CFA is identical to regular CFA models. Standardized factor loadings (see Figure 5.2) are sufficiently strong at the individual level (between .711 and .770) and country level (between .719 and .946). The strong loadings indicate that the domain-specific fears are, to a certain extent, expressions of a generalised fear or concern about European integration. At the individual level, different fears share between 51 percent (loss of social security) and 59 percent (loss of national identity and culture) of their variance with the general factor. At the same time, this finding implies that almost half of the variance of the domain-specific fears is not captured by the underlying factor. On top of the existence of a general component, citizens tend to differentiate between the various threats they perceive from European integration.

Figure 5.2. MLCFA model of citizens' fears of European integration: standardized parameters

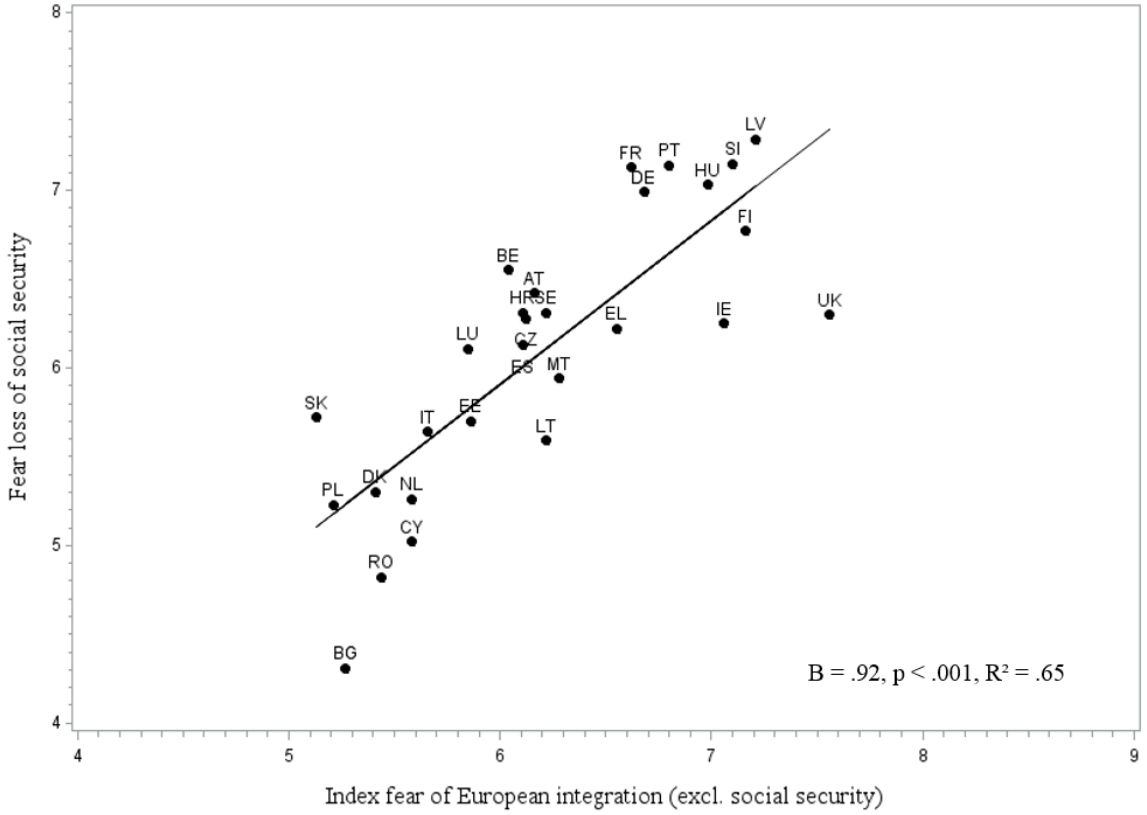


Note. N = 40995; estimator = Bayes; PPP = .000; 95% confidence interval = [810.950;885.855]).

At the country level, the standardized factor loadings show a similar pattern but are slightly stronger (except for loss of jobs). Fear about a loss of social security loads .77 on the latent factor fear of European integration. About 59 percent of the variance in the fear about a loss of social security at the country level is shared with the general factor. The country averages for the five fears are more consistent compared with those of individuals. This indicates that spillover effects between different sources of Euroscepticism are more strongly operating at the country level. If, for example, the fear about a loss of social security provoked by European integration is extremely high in a certain country, it is likely that negative perceptions in other domains (political, cultural, financial and labour market) will also be very high. Nevertheless, Figure 5.3 illustrates that country means of fear about a loss of social security do not perfectly coincide with the other EU-related fears. We see for instance that the Irish and the British perceive lower levels of threat to social security than one would expect, given their average level of fear about European integration in other domains.[5]

[5] Plotted country means of fear about a loss of social security with each of the other EU-related fears provide similar patterns; national identity (B = .84, p < .001), power (B = .71, p < .001), payments (B = .81, p < .001) and jobs (B = .62, p < .001).

Figure 5.3. Scatterplot of country means for fears about European integration (loss of power, loss of national culture and identity, increasing payments, and loss of jobs) and mean fear about a loss of social security



5.5.2 Explaining citizens' fear about a loss of social security: Domain-specific determinants?

To gain insight into the common and domain-specific determinants of various EU-related concerns, we turn to MLSEM. Our model estimates individual-level and country-level effects on the latent variable 'fear of European integration' (thus representing the commonality of determinants) as well as on the domain-specific fears (i.e. the specific effects).[6] The model includes a dummy variable for Latvia, which is an influential observation[7] (see Appendix 5.D). Table 2 shows the standardized estimates and 95 percent posterior probability intervals (PPI). PPI's should be interpreted as the 95 percent probability that in the population the parameter lies between the two values, while standardized parameters can be interpreted in the same way as regular regression coefficients. Fit indices based on robust maximum likelihood estimation

[6] Given that the analyses are conducted on a very large number of observations (N = 38,070), even miniscule and insubstantial effects quickly become statistically significant. Therefore, instead of solely relying on p-values, it is suggested to pay attention to effect sizes. Aiming for a parsimonious model, small unsubstantial direct effects were not allowed in the model.

[7] Whereas higher levels of fear about European integration are found in countries with high social expenditure, Latvia does not fit this pattern as it combines low social expenditure with very high levels of fear.

indicate a good model fit (χ^2 = 594.618; df = 75; RMSEA = .013; CFI = .982; TLI = .968; SRMR $_{within}$ = .006; SRMR $_{between}$ = .074).

Generalised fear about European integration

With regard to the individual level, several indicators of socioeconomic status have an effect on generalised fear over European integration (see Table 5.2). Those with a tertiary education report lower levels of generalised fear than those with lower educational credentials. Furthermore, income is negatively related to perceptions of feeling threatened by European integration. In comparison with those belonging to the highest income quartile, the other income groups report greater levels of fear. We observe subtle differences in fear about European integration depending on employment status: those who are in paid employment are more concerned about the consequences of European integration than pensioners and students are. Experiences of benefit dependence in the five years prior to the survey do not affect fear of European integration in general. Table 5.2 shows that citizens' ideological positions really matter in predicting fear of European integration. Those who are more strongly in favour of government intervention experience much higher levels of generalised fear about European integration. Additionally, individuals who support income redistribution to a larger extent also experience higher levels of threat concerning European integration. These findings support hypotheses 1a and 2a. With regard to the control variables, Table 5.2 shows that women and citizens with anti-immigrant attitudes also report higher levels of generalised fear.

For the country level, we observe a positive effect of social spending on generalised fear, indicating that in member states where net spending on social protection benefits is higher, citizens are generally more concerned about the consequences of European integration.[8] This confirms hypothesis 3a, stressing the relevance of national welfare arrangements on citizens' perceptions concerning European integration. Table 5.2 shows that the unemployment rate, the amount of net transfers received from the EU and the intra-EU migration rate do not affect citizens' general threat perceptions. These findings indicate that national social protection is an important issue in understanding cross-national differences in the fear over European integration. Moreover, social protection outweighs contextual factors related to economic conditions, European transfers and immigration. Hypotheses 4a–6a are thus not supported.

The model explains 20.4 percent of the individual-level variance and 35.7 percent of the country-level variance in the generalised fear of European integration.

[8] We replaced social spending by average growth of GDP over the previous five years, to see whether the effect of social spending was due to economic wealth. This proved not to be the case.

Fear about a loss of social security resulting from European integration

Table 5.2 also includes the direct effects on the domain-specific fears of European integration. It shows that there are direct effects of some variables on citizens' fear of a loss of social security, in addition to the general pattern outlined above. Whereas high incomes are found to temper citizens' generalised fear of European integration, a person's income has an additional negative effect on the fear about the loss of social security. Concretely, those in the lowest two income quartiles are even more fearful regarding a loss of social security than one would expect based on their general score for fear about European integration. A lower income thus increases concerns about the EU's impact in the cultural, political, financial or economic sphere, but has an even more notable impact on the fear of a loss of social security. Similarly, employment status has an additional effect on fear about a loss of social security, on top of its effect on generalised fear of European integration. Students and pensioners report lower levels of generalised fear compared with the employed and these differences are even more pronounced regarding the perceived impact of the EU on social security. Those in paid employment might be very sensitive about potential changes in the social security system to which they contribute. Although the unemployed and disabled are not different from those in paid employment in terms of their general level of fear, they are more fearful than those in paid employment with regard to social security. The susceptibility to 'social Euroscepticism' among the unemployed and disabled can be explained by the direct interest in national welfare provision by these groups. Furthermore, dependence on means-tested social welfare benefits within the five years before the survey increases fear about a loss of social security, whereas benefit dependence does not affect the generalised fear level. These findings illustrate that indicators of socioeconomic status have a specific impact on fear of a loss of social security (hypothesis 1b). While utilitarian interest explains differences in generalised fear concerning European integration, this approach is even more important in explaining public concerns about the EU's impact on social security in particular.

Pro-state responsibility beliefs and support for income redistribution also have significant direct effects on social fears. These additional effects are positive, indicating that citizens who are in favour of strong welfare states are even more susceptible to social security related concerns about European integration than one would expect given their generalised fear of European integration. This confirms hypothesis 2b and validates previous research stating that a left-wing orientation is positively associated with higher levels of fear about a loss of social security (Cautrès, 2012; Van Elsas & Van der Brug, 2015). Additionally, we find that the positive impact of anti-immigrant attitudes is weaker and that the gender gap is larger with regard to concerns about a loss of social security than about citizens' overall fear of European integration.

Contrary to our expectations, we do not find domain-specific country-level explanations. While higher social spending increases generalised fears about the impact of European integration, it has no additional negative effect on fear concerning a loss of social security. Erosion of the social model by external influences is a big concern in advanced welfare states, which might cause European integration to be perceived not only as detrimental to social protection, but as a threatening process itself. In member states receiving more net transfers from the EU, citizens are not less fearful regarding European integration, nor are they more likely to evaluate the EU's impact on social protection positively than in member states receiving less. National economic conditions, measured by unemployment rates, do not affect citizens' generalised fear of European integration, nor influence citizens' evaluations of the EU's impact on social security. Lastly, in member states with higher proportions of EU immigrants, citizens are not more fearful about the consequences of European integration in any single domain. Hypotheses 3b–6b are thus not supported.

From these findings, we conclude that the uniqueness of different EU-related fears ─ in this case, the fear about a loss of social security ─ is reflected by the relevance of utilitarian and ideological factors as explanatory mechanisms. Concerns about the EU's impact on social security are generated by specific mechanisms at the individual level, namely citizens' dependence on the welfare state (being unemployed or disabled, and experience of means-tested benefit dependence) and positive attitudes towards the welfare state (pro-state responsibility and pro-income redistribution). At the country level, different EU-related fears overlap more strongly, which can explain why we do not find domain-specific mechanisms for concerns about a loss of social security. Euroscepticism at the country level is more a general phenomenon, whereas within countries, citizens differentiate between different EU-related fears. Although we also find significant additional effects on the other EU-related fears (columns 4–7 in Table 5.2), we do not discuss them, as they are beyond the scope of this article.

Table 5.2. Standardized parameter estimates and posterior probability intervals

	Generalised fear		Social security		Jobs		Culture		Payments		Power	
	Estimate	95% PPI	Estimate	95% PPI	Estimate	95% PPI	Estimate	95% PPI	Estimate	95% PPI	Estimate	95% PPI
INDIVIDUAL LEVEL												
Age	-.008	[-.023;.007]										
Gender (ref = male)	.061*	[.051;.071]	.019*	[.011;.027]								
Education												
Lower-secondary	.131*	[.116;.146]			.030*	[.019;.041]	-.038*	[-.049;-.027]				
Upper-secondary	.109*	[.095;.124]			.026*	[.015;.036]	-.019*	[-.029;-.008]				
Tertiary (ref)	-	-			-	-	-	-				
Income												
1st quartile	.068*	[.053;.082]	.018*	[.006;.028]			-.029*	[-.039;-.017]				
2nd quartile	.065*	[.051;.079]	.016*	[.005;.026]			-.017*	[-.027;-.006]				
3rd quartile	.035*	[.022;.049]	.008	[-.002;.018]			-.019*	[-.029;-.009]				
4th quartile (ref)	-	-	-	-			-	-				
Missing	.048*	[.034;.062]	.010*	[-.001;.020]			-.009	[-.019;.002]				
Employment status												
Paid employment (ref)	-	-	-	-								
Pensioned	-.018*	[-.033;-.003]	-.028*	[-.036;-.019]								
Student	-.031*	[-.042;-.020]	-.009*	[-.017;-.001]								
Unemployed/disabled	.003	[-.008;.014]	.009*	[.001;.018]								
Others	-.008	[-.019;.003]	-.008	[-.016;.001]								
Dependence on welfare benefits over previous five years	.009	[-.002;.019]	.030*	[.022-.038]								
Pro-state responsibility	.092*	[.081;.102]	.034*	[.026;.042]			-.027*	[-.035;-.019]				
Pro-income redistribution	.059*	[.048;.069]	.039*	[.030;.047]					-.022*	[-.031;-.014]		
Anti-immigrant attitude	.379*	[.370;.390]	-.049*	[-.059;-.040]	.019*	[.009;.028]						
Migration background	-.005	[-.016;.007]			.028*	[.020;.036]	-.020*	[-.028;-.011]				
COUNTRY LEVEL												
Unemployment rate	.115	[-.213;.428]										
Spending on social benefits (% of GDP)	.507*	[.083;.808]										
Net transfers received from EU (% of GDP)	.070	[-.334;.474]										
EU immigrants (per 1000 inhabitants)	.064	[-.269;.372]										
Dummy Latvia	.365	[-.011;.630]										
Residual covariance												
Fearjobs with fearcult	-.233*	[-.249;-.218]										
R^2 individual level	.204*	[.196;.213]	.517	[.508;.525]	.587	[.578;.595]	.596	[.587;.605]	.554	[.546;.563]	.581	[.573;.589]
R^2 country level	.357*	[.121;.579]	.715	[.505;.869]	.617	[.399;.800]	.883	[.716;.972]	.763	[.558;.896]	.827	[.631;.934]

**: posterior predictive p < .05; PPI = posterior probability interval. N = 38,070.*

5.6 Conclusion

Three major findings result from this study. First, Europeans are quite concerned about a loss of social security provoked by European integration, and this concern is not merely an expression of general anxiety about the European Union. Given that citizens are able to differentiate between particular fears indicates that they have a more sophisticated notion of European integration than is often suggested. Second, utilitarian and ideological determinants are of greater importance in explaining concerns about a loss of social security than in explaining generalised fear about European integration. Individuals with lower socioeconomic status and who are more in favour of strong welfare states are especially susceptible to 'social Euroscepticism'. These differential effects remain hidden when citizens' fear about a loss of social security is studied in isolation from other EU-related fears. Third, spillover effects between specific fears are stronger at the country level, which means that countries are characterised by a more general climate of fear about integration. This explains why we do not observe domain-specific contextual determinants of social security concerns. Citizens in member states with higher spending on social benefits are more fearful regarding European integration in general, although the effect of social spending is not stronger on fears about social security. A high level of social protection has the potential to function as a key catalyst for Euroscepticism, since the threat that integration poses to social welfare might be such a pervasive concern in these countries that it results in stronger reservations about European integration as such.

This study shows that fear regarding European integration is versatile. Research should continue to generate in-depth knowledge about which social groups have reservations concerning European integration and for what particular reason, in order to untangle specific types or sources of Euroscepticism. Citizens' concerns about specific consequences of European integration should ideally not be studied in isolation from other EU-related fears. Researchers should be aware that some of the explanatory mechanisms underlying a specific EU-related fear might be explained by citizens' generalised fear of European integration.

Some limitations and avenues for future research should be mentioned. First, our measurement of welfare beneficiaries is very rigorous, as it merely includes entitlements to means-tested welfare benefits. Therefore, the observed impact of welfare dependency on citizens' fear for a loss of social security may even be underestimated. Further, we did not include citizens' evaluations about the performance of their national welfare states. Citizens who think that their national welfare state is performing badly may perceive European integration as less threatening and perhaps as an opportunity to increase social protection. In addition, this study provides no

insight into how concerns about the impact of European integration on social security are related to support for (further) European integration. Future research should examine how citizens' perceived impact of European integration on national welfare states facilitates or impedes their support for European social policy. So far, we assumed that citizens are able to evaluate how European integration potentially affects social security. In this regard, it remains unclear to what extent their evaluations are based on framing of the EU's performance by the media and national governments. Their practices of blaming the EU or giving credit to it may shape citizens' perceptions of the EU. Besides, our study does not provide insight into changes in individuals' fear of European integration over time and how recent incisive events at the European level may affect public perceptions. In this regard, since 2008, the Eurozone crisis and the recent refugee crisis may have stirred up citizens' threat perceptions. Depending on the degree to which countries were affected, these phenomena may have increased cross-national differences. For instance, in countries receiving financial assistance, European integration has potentially become strongly associated with cuts in social spending because of the austerity policies that were conditioned on the bailout packages. These issues remain unanswered and call for longitudinal or more recent cross-national data.

In a broader sense, our results imply that European leaders cannot ignore the social agenda. Citizens are aware that European integration is no longer a unilateral story of economic affairs. How Europe can reconcile integration with social security has become an existential issue, not only for its popular legitimacy but also for its sustainability. European integration should proceed with explicit social objectives. Working towards upward convergence in social developments, without imposing a 'one-size-fits-all' model, would be an appropriate response to address concerns about the social consequences of integration.

Appendices

Appendix 5.A. Descriptive statistics of individual-level variables

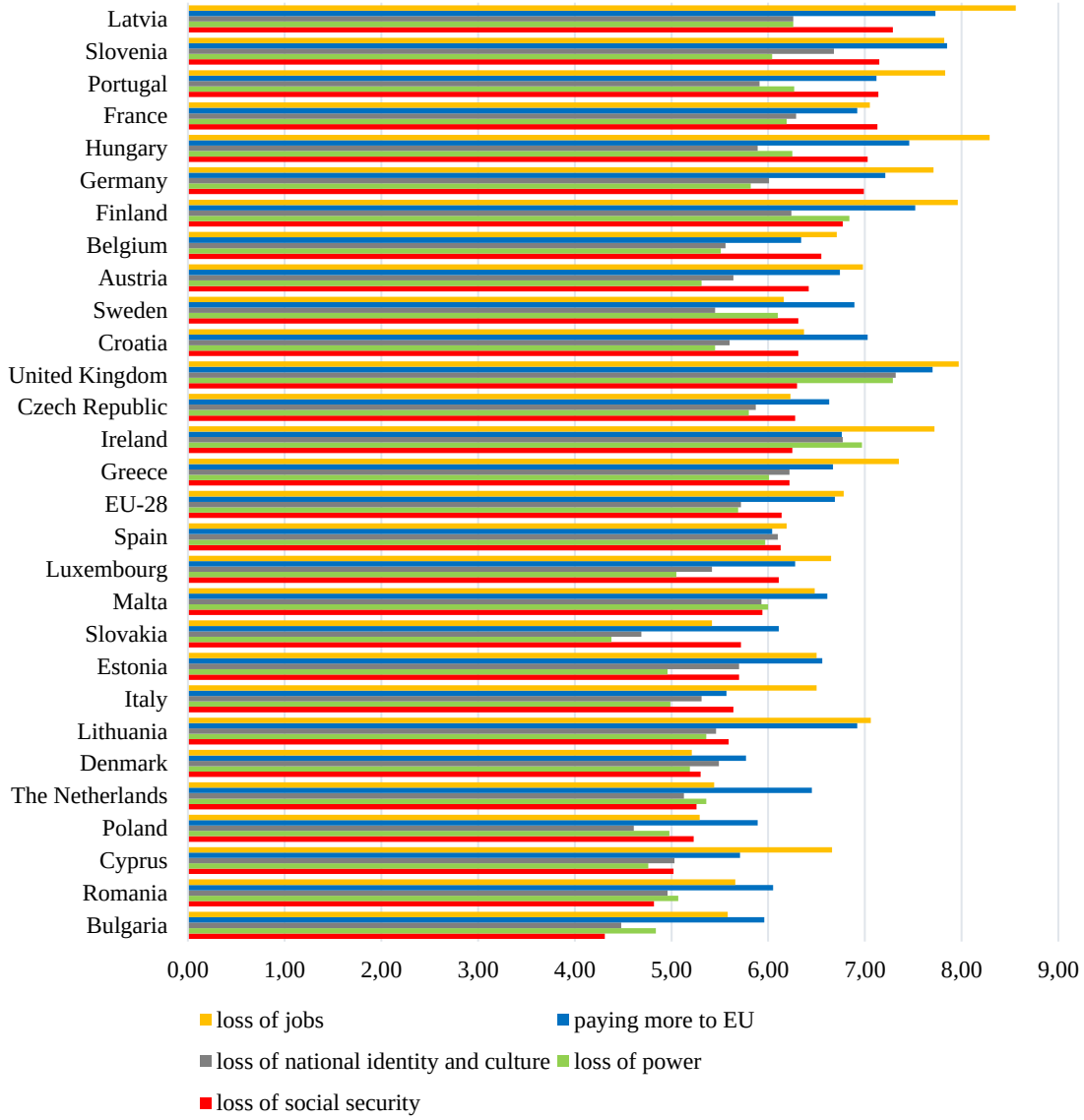
	Mean / %	**S.D.**	**Cronbach's alpha**	**N**
DEPENDENT VARIABLES			.87	
Fear loss of social security	6.18	3.03		39927
Fear loss of power	5.70	3.02		39268
Fear loss of national identity and culture	5.74	3.07		40259
Fear payments	6.72	2.81		39182
Fear loss of jobs	6.82	3.00		40292
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES AND CONTROLS				
Age	48.60	18.04		41799
Gender				41974
Man	44%			
Woman	56%			
Educational level				41570
Lower-secondary	33.34%			
Upper-secondary	44.65%			
Tertiary	22.01%			
Income				41982
First quartile	20.14%			
Second quartile	17.66%			
Third quartile	18.48%			
Fourth quartile	18.64%			
Missing	25.09%			
Employment status				41690
Paid employment	52.32%			
Retired	25.79%			
Student	5.79%			
Unemployed or disabled	7.46%			
Other	8.64%			
Use of benefits				41273
No	86.61%			
Yes	13.39%			
Pro-state responsibility	4.81	2.61		41141
Pro-income redistribution	5.80	2.81		40709
Migration background				41616
No	85.39%			
Yes	14.61%			
Anti-immigrant attitudes	6.17	2.24	.87	41461

Appendix 5.B. Overview of country-level characteristics in 2008

Country	Survey year	N	Net social spending (% GDP)	Unemploy-ment rate	Net transfers EU (% GNI)	Intra-EU migration (/ 1000 inh.)
Austria	2008	1510	24.80	4.1	-0.12	34.44
Belgium	2009	1509	24.37	7.0	-0.20	61.82
Bulgaria	2008	1500	14.95	5.6	1.92	1.01
Croatia	2008	1525	17.94	8.6	0.29	1.76
Cyprus	2008	1000	18.32	3.7	-0.10	103.01
Czech Republic	2008	1821	17.42	4.4	0.78	12.67
Denmark	2008	1507	24.59	3.4	-0.22	17.01
Estonia	2008	1518	14.74	5.5	1.46	6.19
Finland	2009	1134	22.80	6.4	-0.16	8.90
France	2008	1501	30.06[c]	7.4	-0.19	20.15
Germany	2008-2009	2075	24.88	7.4	-0.34	30.60
Greece	2008	1500	24.30	7.8	2.68	14.12
Hungary	2008-2009	1513	22.15	7.8	1.11	10.04
Ireland	2008	1011	19.97	6.4	0.35	90.44
Italy	2009	1519	23.64	6.7	-0.25	15.67
Latvia	2008	1506	12.21	7.7	1.69	2.30
Lithuania	2008	1500	15.25	5.8	2.67	1.05
Luxembourg	2008	1610	19.48	4.9	-0.07	365.89
Malta	2008	1500	17.56	6.0	0.50	19.96
The Netherlands	2008	1553	21.93	3.7	-0.43	16.03
Poland	2008	1510	16.94[c]	7.1	1.25	0.66
Portugal	2008	1553	22.53	8.8	1.57	10.91
Romania	2008	1489	14.07	5.6	1.14	0.28
Slovak Republic	2008	1509	15.53	9.6	1.13	4.80
Slovenia	2008	1366	20.65	4.4	0.31	2.03
Spain	2008	1500	20.68	11.3	0.26	46.65
Sweden	2009-2010	1187	24.99	6.2	-0.40	26.24
United Kingdom	2009-2010[a] /2008[b]	2056	22.46	5.6	-0.04	26.40

a= Great Britain; b= Northern Ireland; c= figures from 2010;
Source. Eurostat.

Appendix 5.C. EU-28 and country means for citizens' fear about European integration (weighted for gender and age)

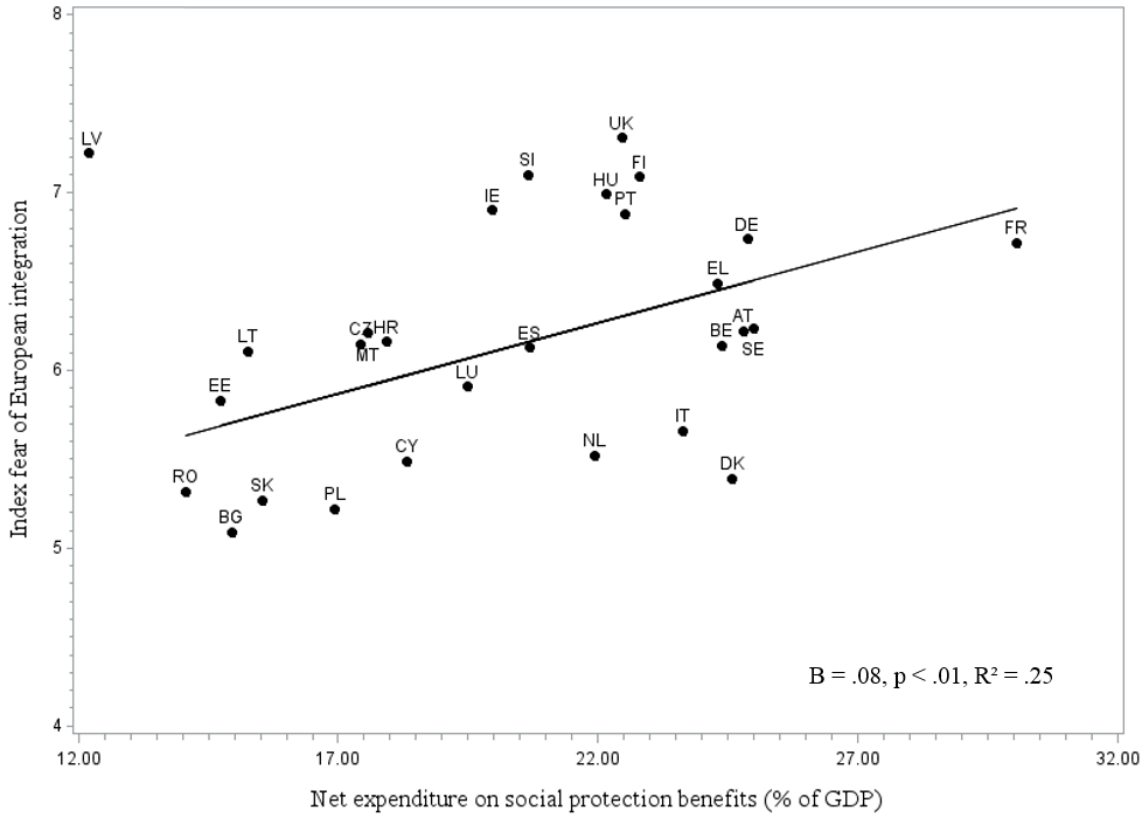


Source. EVS 2008, own calculations.

Figure 5.C shows the country averages for the five domain-specific fears (sorted by the level of fear about a loss of social security). In Latvia, Slovenia, Portugal and France, citizens view the EU's impact on social security most negatively (>7). The group of countries where average social fear is higher than the EU average is very diverse. There is no notable divide between European populations that express more concerns about European integration in general, and countries where citizens are more positive overall. Instead, the country ranking diverges to a large extent according to the specific issue that is considered. In the UK for example, concerns about shrinking national power are the highest out of all the member states, whereas the average fear

about a loss of social security is close to the EU average. This suggests that the domain-specific fears originate, to a certain extent at least, along idiosyncratic lines.

Appendix 5.D. Scatterplot of countries' social spending and mean fear of European integration



Note. Latvia is not included in the estimation of the trend line.

Chapter 6

General conclusion and discussion

To gain a deeper understanding of public attitudes towards Social Europe, in this this dissertation I analyse how citizens' attitudes to Social Europe can be conceptualized and operationalized, and how differences in citizens' attitudes towards Social Europe can be explained. In this concluding chapter, I discuss the main findings, by bringing together the conclusions of the previous empirical chapters. By taking a multidimensional approach to attitudes towards Social Europe, this dissertation confirms, extends and questions previous findings in the field in various ways. Furthermore, I reflect on the limitations and unresolved issues in this thesis and discuss how future research might address these. Lastly, I take the opportunity to highlight the societal relevance of this dissertation and discuss some policy implications relating to the legitimacy of the European project.

6.1 Main findings and contributions

6.1.1 The structure of attitudes towards Social Europe

The first objective of this dissertation was to analyse how attitudes to Social Europe can be conceptualized and operationalized. Previous studies lack a clear conceptualization of Social Europe, including its dimensionality. As a result, they narrow down attitudes to Social Europe to a unidimensional construct – mostly support for EU decision-making over social policy (Beaudonnet, 2013; Mau, 2005) – aggregate items that refer to different, conceptually distinct dimensions (Berg, 2007; Gerhards et al., 2016), or analyse attitudes to specific dimensions of Social Europe in isolation from each other. This issue is addressed, based on a special module on Social Europe included in the Belgian National Election Study 2014. A multidimensional measurement of attitudes to Social Europe permits overcoming this limitation of earlier work. More specifically, it provides insights into the structure of citizens' attitudes, specifically how attitudes to different components of Social Europe are related to each other. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first study that empirically analyses the structure of attitudes to Social Europe. The results in Chapter 2 indicate very clearly that Social Europe is not only a multidimensional concept at the policy level, but also in the minds of citizens; the structure of citizens' attitudes towards Social Europe is multidimensional. People differentiate between

various components of Social Europe: EU decision-making over social policy, EU social regulations, a European social citizenship,[1] interpersonal solidarity and a European social security system. These various dimensions are interrelated, but cannot be reduced to a single Social Europe factor. Furthermore, the results in Chapter 2 delegitimize the common practice of using citizens' preferred decision-making level as a core indicator of attitudes towards Social Europe. Preferences for European instead of national decision-making concerning social policy is an indicator that measures support for supranational policymaking rather than support for Social Europe in particular. Alternative indicators to measure attitudes to Social Europe are recommended, most notably support for member state solidarity, which is the key component of citizens' generalized attitude to Social Europe. That Social Europe is in the first place understood as a practice of financial support between member states may indicate that citizens perceive it primarily as something interstate related, instead of something that occurs within their own national boundaries. In addition, the intense media attention paid to the bailouts of over-indebted Eurozone countries during data collection may have activated member state solidarity in citizens' mind as the primary face of Social Europe. Public support for Social Europe also hinges on the view that mobile EU citizens should be granted access to social security, that solidarity between EU citizens should be strengthened and that a European social security system should be developed. Attitudes towards EU social regulations are not so constitutive to citizens' general idea about Social Europe, a finding that potentially has to do with the strong Belgian context. Belgians are already used to extended social regulations and may therefore perceive EU social regulations as a minor component of Social Europe. In conclusion, the structure of attitudes to Social Europe is clearly multidimensional. Researchers interested in citizens' overall attitude to Social Europe should therefore not rely on single survey items. The attitudes scale developed in Chapter 2 could be adopted in future research. Confirmatory factor analysis provides evidence for the construct validity of the measurement, and multigroup confirmatory factor analysis confirms that the structure of citizens' attitudes to Social Europe is similar among high and low-educated people.

Furthermore, the multidimensional approach of this dissertation also provides insights into the level of support for the different components of Social Europe relative to one another. The strongest absolute level of support is found for EU social regulations, probably because these reinforce popular national social protection measures while leaving the boundaries of the welfare state untouched. On average, almost eight out of ten Belgians support EU social regulations in the fields of health and safety at work, and working and employment conditions. The Belgian population is more divided when it comes to support for member state solidarity or a European social security benefit. Only one in two Belgians believes that solidarity between rich and poor

[1] This is referred to as transnational solidarity in Chapter 5, because it fitted better to the terminology used in the article.

EU countries should not be broken, and similarly, half of the population seems to support a European unemployment benefit. Belgians are even more reluctant when it comes to social rights for mobile EU citizens, which open up the long-standing national solidarity systems to non-nationals. Only three out of ten Belgians openly support the idea of equal social rights for EU citizens, whereas four in ten oppose it and the remaining three out of ten have no clear opinion. These findings underline that support for Social Europe depends strongly on what dimension is at stake. Large proportions of the Belgian population do not conceive other EU citizens as equals and are somewhat reluctant to accept them as full members of society. Overall, Belgian citizens do not perceive themselves as members of a socially integrated European unity (Gerhards & Lengfeld, 2015).

6.1.2 Individual-level explanations: Self-interest, ideology, European identity and Euroscepticism

Several contributions are made to the current state of the art concerning the origins of support for Social Europe. Combining the findings of Chapter 3, Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 provides deeper insights into the role of self-interest, ideology, European identity and Euroscepticism. Where the term Social Europe is used in the paragraphs below, it refers to citizens' generalized attitude to Social Europe, as measured by the different components in Chapter 3.

First, the chapters provide greater insight into the validity of self-interest theories based on social-structural and subjective variables. With regard to the social-structural determinants, the results show that lower-educated people have greater concerns about the EU's impact on social security and are much less supportive of Social Europe, especially with regard to policy instruments that are more intrusive to the welfare state (i.e., the granting of social rights to mobile EU citizens). These findings could be explained by an underlying self-interest mechanism. Their higher risk of becoming dependent on the welfare state and their lower level of geographical mobility may explain why the lower educated perceive European integration as more threatening and express a preference for keeping the EU away from the social sphere. With respect to occupational status, the results consistently show that the self-employed are less supportive towards various aspects of Social Europe, as shown in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. No strong differences are found between other occupational categories. According to self-interest theories, welfare beneficiaries in particular should be more concerned about the EU's impact on social security and more opposed to Social Europe, because an opening up of the social space may be perceived as leading to increased competition for scarce resources. In this respect, the results provide mixed evidence. Belgian data shows that compared with blue-collar workers, being unemployed or disabled does not result in lower support for Social Europe. Moreover, the unemployed and disabled are even more in favour of EU social regulations, which might be

explained by the fact that these regulations strengthen national social protection and do not enlarge the redistributive group. The European survey data shows that compared with wage-earners, welfare beneficiaries (means-tested benefit recipients, the unemployed and the disabled) experience greater fears of losing social security as a result of European integration. It should be noted that pensioners – who are also dependent on the welfare state – are less fearful of the EU's impact on social security and, as Belgian survey data shows, are more in favour of Social Europe overall. Apart from education level, indicators of social-structural position show no straightforward pattern that confirms the self-interest theory. As opponents to Social Europe cannot easily be distinguished by specific social-structural characteristics, the basis for an integration-demarcation cleavage that can be mobilized by political parties is relatively weak. Evidence for the winners-losers thesis (Kriesi et al., 2008) is only moderate regarding the issue of Social Europe. This is in line with previous studies on support towards specific dimensions of Social Europe, such as equal social rights for EU citizens (Gerhards & Lengfeld, 2015). Evidence for the self-interest theory is stronger when we look at perceived self-interest. Chapter 3 reveals that people who believe EU membership has been disadvantageous to their country, support Social Europe to a lesser degree. These findings are consistent with previous work by Mau (2005), which found that support for EU decision-making in social welfare is lower for a person who believes that EU membership is less beneficial and if they are concerned about the impact of European integration on social security (Mau, 2005). Summarized, attitudes to Social Europe are not as strongly composed along structural lines (except for education level) than is assumed by self-interest theory, whereas perceptions of the costs and benefits and the potential threat of the EU to social protection are more important in explaining support for Social Europe.

Second, ideological orientation is an important factor in explaining attitudes towards Social Europe, as shown in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. Voters positioning themselves on the right side of the political spectrum are less in favour of Social Europe in general. These findings are consistent with previous studies that focus on support for specific facets of Social Europe (Beaudonnet, 2014; Berg, 2007; Daniele & Geys, 2015; Gerhards & Lengfeld, 2013, 2015; Kuhn et al., 2017; Vasilopoulou, 2016), and indicate that support for Social Europe is embedded in ideological beliefs about government intervention and redistribution. This ideological dimension cannot be neglected if the aim is to understand potential contestation over Social Europe. Given that left-right orientation captures both socioeconomic and socio-cultural attitudes (de Vries et al., 2013; van Elsas & van der Brug, 2015) and because it differs in meaning across countries (Piurko et al., 2011), more specific measurements of ideological orientation are used in the cross-national study in Chapter 5. The results in this chapter indicate that support towards state responsibility for welfare and support for income redistribution translate into stronger fears about European integration. Citizens who are in favour of strong welfare states are even more susceptible to social

security related concerns about European integration than one would expect given their generalized fear of European integration. To gain insight into the nexus between citizens' attitudes towards the national welfare state and their support for Social Europe, I looked beyond merely ideological attitudes, and also included welfare state critique. The results in Chapter 3 confirm that evaluations of the practical implementation and trust in the welfare state are of additional interest. Evidence is provided for a spillover effect of both support for the basic principles of the welfare state and welfare state critique to attitudes about Social Europe. A person who is in favour of equality but has less trust in the social security system is less supportive of Social Europe. An additional new insight is that the spillover effect of support for basic welfare state principles to the European level is weaker for more intrusive practices of solidarity. Support for Social Europe faces its ultimate test when policies become more intrusive concerning the welfare state.

Third, the results show that a European identity is an important facilitating factor regarding support for Social Europe in general. Belgians who are more strongly attached to Europe are found to be much more in favour of social regulations, member state solidarity, European social citizenship and an EU social security system. The strong nexus between identity and support for Social Europe shown in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 confirms previous research that finds a strong relationship between feelings of European identity and support for specific components of Social Europe, ranging from European decision-making over social policy, to European social citizenship and member state solidarity (Berg, 2007; Gerhards & Lengfeld, 2015; Kuhn et al., 2017; Mau, 2005). Related to this, the results indicate that feeling European is more important than the objective fact of having a transnational background. Only limited evidence is found that individual transnationalism in the form of a migration background affects support for Social Europe. As shown in Chapter 4, Belgians with a transnational background are more supportive towards member state solidarity, whereas they do not differ significantly in their support for a European social citizenship compared with citizens who do not have a migration background. Furthermore, analyses of the European Values Study in Chapter 5 show that having a migration background does not influences citizens' concerns about a loss of social security. This points to the limited explanatory power of individual transnationalism theories, at least with regard to actually having a transnational background. However, the importance of transnational experiences in the form of visits to other EU countries and transnational human capital is not tested here.

Fourth, deeper insight is provided into the role of Euroscepticism regarding support for existing practices of EU-level solidarity (i.e., social rights for mobile EU citizens and financial help to other member states). The results in Chapter 4 show that Euroscepticism – measured by

negative attitudes towards EU membership, EU deepening and EU enlargements – obstruct citizens' willingness to support European solidarity to a large extent. Nevertheless, this finding nuances theories that assume conflict over European integration issues are merely a reflection of pro versus anti-European integration positions (Steenbergen & Marks, 2004). Although Euroscepticism has a strong negative impact on support for European solidarity, it only accounts for part of the variation in citizens' support. This implies that Euroscepticism is a complementary explanation for support for Social Europe, on top of ideology and European identity, for instance. Interestingly, Chapter 4 reveals that even though individuals might be in favour of European integration, it is still possible that they oppose European solidarity on the basis of their EU agenda preferences. Whereas prioritizing economic objectives for the EU translates into lower support for European solidarity, prioritizing social objectives results in stronger support. These effects are found when controlling for left-right orientation. Preferences towards the policy direction of the EU in particular are thus a crucial element in understanding support for specific EU policies.

6.1.3 Country-level explanations for EU threat perceptions

Compared with individual-level explanations, the national context seems to play a minor role in explaining perceived EU-related concerns. Chapter 5 reveals that in countries with higher spending on social benefits, citizens are more concerned about the consequences of European integration in general, including concerns about social security. This level of fear is not particularly related to the maintenance of social protection, but is an overall concern about European integration. Higher levels of social protection function as a catalyst for pervasive concerns about European integration. Although social spending does not disproportionally fuel fears about a loss of social security, compared with other EU-related fears (i.e., about national sovereignty, culture, payments and jobs), it does indicate that citizens who are used to extensive domestic welfare provisions have greater concerns about the consequences of European integration in general. National social protection thus matters with regard to how citizens perceive the wider process of European integration. This provides insights into the potential underlying mechanisms in previous studies on the linkage between welfare regimes and support for Social Europe. These earlier studies have shown that in member states with higher social spending (Eichenberg & Dalton, 2007; Ray, 2004), higher welfare efficacy (Beaudonnet, 2013) or in Mediterranean welfare regimes (Mau, 2005), citizens more strongly prefer national decision-making over European decision-making with regard to social policy. The mechanism assumed in these studies is that in the most developed welfare states, citizens might fear a downward harmonization or a race to the bottom in social standards. The findings here suggest that concerns about the consequences of European integration – including fears of a loss of social security – are indeed stronger in member states with the highest expenditure on social protection. Contrary to

expectations, no impact of member states' net transfers received from the EU, intra-EU migration rates and economic conditions are observed on concerns about European integration in general or in particular spheres (social, economic, political and cultural). It is not so much the position of a country as a net receiver or net contributor, the extent to which it experiences immigration or the economic conditions that determine citizens' perceptions of the impact of European integration on social security levels. It can be argued that the public will judge proposals for a more Social Europe based on their assessment of whether this will be beneficial or detrimental, and much less based on objective data.

6.1.4 Attitudes towards Social Europe: Non-attitudes?

The analyses in this dissertation show that attitudes towards (Social) Europe are far from random, rejecting the non-attitudes thesis (Converse, 1964). Evidence against this thesis is found in all the empirical chapters. First, Chapter 2 illustrates very clearly that citizens differentiate between various dimensions of Social Europe. The finding that the structure of citizens' attitudes to Social Europe is similar among the low and the high educated is also indicative of the fact that EU attitudes do exist. It rejects the idea that Social Europe is a concept too complex to be measured among lower-educated people, who are often less knowledgeable about and interested in European politics (Gaxie et al., 2011). Furthermore, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 show that the explanatory variables of different dimensions of Social Europe are not identical to one another and differ in strength, which signals that attitudes towards different policy instruments of Social Europe have their own idiosyncratic logic to some extent. For instance, the gap in support between the higher and the lower educated is particularly large with regard to support for European social citizenship, compared with other dimensions of Social Europe. As the higher educated tend to have more transnational lives (Favell, 2008; Recchi, 2015) – and thus more often benefit from the increased opportunities offered by European social citizenship – educational differences become disproportionally relevant in explaining support for cross-border welfare rights than for other dimensions of Social Europe. Another example concerns the differential impact of welfare attitudes (Chapter 3). Egalitarianism is disproportionally more important in explaining support for EU social regulations than for other components of Social Europe. In other words, being in favour of an equal society translates more strongly into support for EU social regulations than into support for a European social security system for instance. If respondents interpret the various dimensions of Social Europe in a uniform way, then there would be no differential effects of explanatory variables such as egalitarianism. Furthermore, the results in Chapter 4 illustrate very clearly that opposition to European solidarity cannot be reduced to an underlying pro or anti-EU attitude. The fact that citizens have preferences concerning EU agenda priorities, which exert an influence on support for European solidarity on top of their generalized

support for the EU, tells us that citizens are aware of the policy directions of the EU. Lastly, Chapter 5 illustrates that citizens differentiate between domain-specific fears about European integration, and thus that these fears are genuinely distinct from one another. Summarized, all the findings here highlight that citizens have a more sophisticated notion of European integration than is often suggested. These findings are in line with previous studies showing that EU attitudes are far from random (Gabel & Anderson, 2004), and point to the importance and meaningfulness of studying EU attitudes in general.

6.2 Limitations and future research

This dissertation has certain limitations and leaves several related topics untouched. Therefore, I would suggest some important challenges for future research. As public opinion research on Social Europe is still in its infancy, new measurements for attitudes to Social Europe were generated in this research project. However, the measurement of Social Europe as a multidimensional construct could be further developed in future research. First, the scope of the measurement for attitudes to Social Europe is not exclusive and could be further complemented. This could possibly be achieved by adding indicators on the role of European social dialogue or social partnership as policy instruments in the development of Social Europe (Falkner, 2016; Stuchlik & Kellermann, 2009). Second, in examining support for specific measures, special attention could be paid to the beneficiaries of these policies. For instance in the case of European social citizenship, support could be measured by the willingness to grant other EU citizens access to a country's welfare system, as well as the endorsement of being granted access to the welfare systems of other member states. Whereas the first way of operationalization makes the implications of a European social citizenship for national systems very clear, it does not take into account that respondents themselves are also beneficiaries of European social citizenship once they move within the EU. Individuals can be expected to respond differently to a question that provides a complete picture of the beneficiaries of a certain policy. Measuring attitudes towards both sides of the coin is suggested in order to obtain a full understanding of support for European social citizenship. Third, the complexity of measuring attitudes towards policy instruments that are not yet in place makes it methodologically challenging to develop indicators of a European social security system. Researchers should continue to develop indicators of attitudes to new policy proposals at the EU level. Such attempts could further validate the findings here, and provide insights into the legitimacy of EU proposals that are in the pipeline.

A second limitation relates to the scope of countries included in the empirical chapters of this dissertation. Chapter 5 includes all EU-28 member states, whereas the measurement model

and explanatory models of support for Social Europe tested in chapters 2, 3 and 4 are based on Belgian survey data. The analyses of the Belgian data generate new insights into the structure and genesis of attitudes that are very likely to be similar in other member states. Nevertheless, as Belgium is a well-developed welfare state, it is not unthinkable that cross-national differences exist. First, potential cross-national differences can exist in the structure of citizens' attitudes, which is the association between different attitudinal components of Social Europe. The notion of Social Europe may evoke different ideas across Europe. For instance, citizens in less developed welfare states may perceive social harmonization as an important item of the European social agenda and conceive Social Europe as a convergence method to catch up with advanced welfare states. This would imply that in less advanced welfare states, general attitudes to Social Europe coincide more strongly with opinions about EU social regulations – which aim at an upward convergence – than is found for Belgian citizens. Second, from earlier studies we learn that absolute levels of support for European decision-making over social policy (Beaudonnet, 2013; Mau, 2005) are higher in countries with lower levels of social protection, and that in loan-receiving countries, citizens are more supportive of member state solidarity (Daniele & Geys, 2015; Lengfeld et al., 2015). Exploring and explaining cross-national differences in support for other dimensions of Social Europe remains an important challenge in the field. Third, potential cross-national differences in the strength of certain explanatory factors are not analysed in this dissertation. One particularly interesting issue for comparative research is the nexus between social-structural variables and support for Social Europe. For Belgians, Social Europe implies helping less affluent member states and granting EU citizens access to their relatively generous social security system. Whether the preference for national demarcation among the lower educated is universal, or peculiar to the most affluent states such as Belgium, is an interesting issue for future studies. From a self-interest perceptive, one could assume that lower socioeconomic status groups in less well-off countries are not less, but more supportive of Social Europe. If the latter is the case, it would indicate that self-interest theories and the composition of so-called winners and losers of (Social) Europe (Kriesi et al., 2008) are context dependent. The need for comparative research in the field is accompanied by the need for cross-national survey data on citizens' attitudes towards Social Europe. A wider understanding of Europeans' views about Social Europe can only result from including measurements of such attitudes in Europe-wide surveys, such as the Eurobarometer, the European Values Study or the European Social Survey.

A third avenue for further research is to connect attitudes to Social Europe with support for the other pillars of the European integration process. Is Social Europe perceived as the antithesis of a raw free-market Europe? The linkage between support for Social Europe and support for European integration in the economic, cultural or political sphere would extend our

knowledge about EU attitudes enormously. Are advocates of the internal market automatically advocates of Social Europe? Possibly not, as it is shown in Chapter 4 that the more citizens consider economic policy as a priority for the EU agenda, the less they support European solidarity practices such as cross-border welfare rights for mobile EU citizens. A typology of policy integration positions could be meaningful in order to differentiate between specific attitudinal patterns among the public. For instance, it could be possible to distinguish advocates of Social and Economic Europe from those who oppose one or both of them. This points to an opportunity to incorporate the content of EU policies into existing typologies of Euroscepticism. An investigation of the similarities and differences in explanatory mechanisms of support for Social Europe with support for European integration in the economic, cultural or political sphere would further extend our knowledge about EU attitudes. The results in Chapter 5 indicate that with regard to EU-related concerns, citizens differentiate between the various spheres in which European integration is influential and that its determinants are partly domain specific. Similarly, it could be expected that the determinants of support for Social Europe diverge in strength from those of Economic, Cultural or Political Europe. I suggest investigating to what extent social-structural determinants have a similar impact on support for European integration as for support for Social Europe. Whereas labour market position has only a moderate impact on support for Social Europe, one can expect that it is much more decisive in explaining support for European economic integration.

Lastly, future research could examine the consequences of attitudes towards Social Europe on other attitudes and on political behaviour. This dissertation makes important contributions to how we can understand and explain citizens' support for Social Europe, while leaving aside the consequences of these attitudes. First, it needs to be acknowledged that based on the cross-sectional data used in this dissertation, **causality claims** cannot be made. For instance, in Chapter 5 it is shown that citizens who support state responsibility for welfare and income redistribution are more concerned about a loss of social security resulting from European integration. However, the causal direction behind this relationship cannot be established with the cross-sectional data. Moreover, both types of attitudes are likely to interact with each other. Accordingly, citizens with stronger concerns about a loss of social security resulting from European integration may desire more extensive welfare arrangements at the national level. They may expect welfare states to generate new insurance against increased risks and provide compensation to those who are disadvantaged by international competition. In this respect, scholars analysing welfare state attitudes could pay more attention to what is happening at the European level. The Eurocrisis has dramatically increased the salience of the EU in member states. Researchers could test whether preferences for strong welfare states increase in the aftermath of important European political and economic **events**. Another suggestion for future

research is to study the impact of citizens' attitudes to Social Europe on political behaviour. The impact of citizens' orientations towards Social Europe on their voting behaviour in European elections and referenda remain relatively unexplored. A study that was conducted shortly before the Brexit referendum found that British citizens who believe EU citizens should not have access to welfare benefits in the UK were strongly in favour of their country leaving the EU (Vasilopoulou, 2016). This points to a promising path for future research, focused on the consequences of support or opposition to Social Europe for political behaviour. In this respect, it is unknown to what extent citizens' attitudes to Social Europe affect their voting behaviour in national elections, or so-called EU issue voting. The development of Social Europe may also be reflected in voting motives, and EU issue voting in national elections might be more diversified than is assumed. Analysing different types of EU issue voting would provide deeper insights into the peculiarity of attitudes to Social Europe compared with attitudes on other EU issues or EU attitudes in general.

6.3 Policy implications: The future of (Social) Europe

Over recent decades, awareness has increased among political leaders of the European Union that a social dimension for the EU is indispensable for the continuation of the European project in general. President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker, set out the ambition to achieve a 'social triple-A rating' for the EU. The proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, which will serve as a compass for the overall convergence process, reflects the EU's ambition to strengthen its social dimension. Although the course towards a more Social Europe has been set, this does not mean that citizens are automatically in favour of Social Europe. Whereas it has been previously argued that strengthening the social dimension of the EU would increase public support for the European project, the results of this thesis suggest that this will only be achieved for a part of the population.

The strong differentiation in support for Social Europe along educational lines deserves special attention by European policymakers. For example, the low educated are less supportive of Social Europe and perceive the EU's impact on social security as most detrimental. Why is this group less supportive of Social Europe? From a self-interest approach it is understandable that the lower educated are less willing to show solidarity with EU citizens and EU member states. The criticism can be made that Social Europe is primarily concerned with mobile citizens and less-developed regions, and thus that there is not much benefit in it for lower educated groups in affluent member states. Especially in the most developed welfare states, the lower educated may perceive that the benefits of Social Europe mainly accrue to those in less-developed member

states. How does Europe deliver in the interest of vulnerable groups? Is the EU too distant from their personal lives? Irrespective of the EU's current social acquis, such as regulating health and safety at work and financing programmes to modernize workforce skills – which are in the interest of lower-skilled people – the EU could do more to counterbalance the negative side effects of internal markets, including in the most developed countries. To give an example, social dumping practices have placed a strain on the job prospects of lower-skilled workers in high-wage countries. Beliefs that national governments can better protect their life chances may be responsible for lower levels of support for Social Europe among the lowest educated. Perhaps they perceive European integration as an economic, elitist project, and therefore have very gloomy expectations regarding social protection.

The advanced analyses in this dissertation shed light on how citizens perceive Social Europe in relation to the national welfare state. It is found that Belgians who are most in favour of their welfare state, are also most supportive towards Social Europe. This signals that even in well-advanced welfare states such as Belgium, there is a certain degree of support for extending social rights, working towards common social standards and a willingness to show solidarity at a European level. Although citizens' support is somewhat conditional on the intrusiveness on welfare states of all these policy instruments, Social Europe is not perceived as the enemy of their hard-won social achievements. With regard to the wider process of European integration, the analyses show that advocates of a more social direction for the European project are thus genuinely inclined to open up the boundaries of their long-standing national solidarity systems and to redistribute tax money to other member states. By contrast, advocates of an Economic Europe are less supportive of European solidarity. This indicates very clearly that opposing positions towards the direction of the European project can be found among citizens. Moreover, this points to a window of opportunity for political parties to employ the differentiated preferences of voters in election campaigns, so that European elections no longer remain second-order elections. The role of political parties in directing or influencing the future of Social Europe can be strengthened. It is important that parties clearly announce to voters their positions on what role they see for the EU in social policy. Only if parties lay their cards on the table regarding their viewpoint on the social dimension of European integration, can voters influence whether the social dimension of the EU should be strengthened and the form Social Europe should take (Vanhecke & Wolfs, 2014). Given that many Europeans attach great value to social issues, their attitudes towards Social Europe may be of underestimated relevance for European elections. However, in this respect, Kleider and Stoeckel (2016, p. 22) have argued that it is problematic for left-wing political parties to take a position on the issue of international redistribution in the EU. The authors reached this conclusion after finding empirical evidence that economic left ideology translates into higher support for EU transfers, whereas citizens with low incomes are more

opposed to such practices. Left-wing ideology is only found to translate into support for member state solidarity among high-income individuals. 'Arguing in favor of assisting economically struggling EU members may earn leftist parties the endorsement of left-leaning, high-income voters, but it could cost them their traditional working-class clientele' (Kleider & Stoeckel, 2016, p. 22). Such considerations indicate why political parties may not have expressed their stance on Social Europe very clearly.

This dissertation also points out a major stumbling block for Social Europe. Citizens' fear of a loss of social security resulting from European integration is a distinct EU-related fear that needs to be addressed. Whereas Jean-Claude Juncker has proclaimed that the EU is the protective shield for all Europeans, this is clearly not how citizens perceive the situation. Referendums in EU member states – which have not only been used to consult citizens over their country's EU membership, but also held on specific EU-related issues – have shown citizens' concerns about the direction of the European project, its policies and its consequences. Even though certain groups may not be very fond of the European integration process, criticism does not mean indifference. Criticism of the EU signals that citizens are aware of the importance of the EU for their everyday life. The future of Europe is not as pessimistic as Brexit might suggest. Brexit has not triggered anti-European feelings in other member states and it is unlikely to do so as the consequences of the opt-out become clearer. Many Europeans want Europe to be more than merely an economic project. However, the form of Social Europe will remain contested, not only because of different individual preferences, but also given the diversity in social policies in the member states.

The EU has a major challenge to face in showing that it does not only serve economic goals, but that it is an institution providing security and welfare to citizens. Proving to European citizens the added value that the European project entails will become an essential task. If not, the tension between European integration and the welfare state may become the Achilles' heel of the future of Europe. However, the EU's current engagement in social policy should also be acknowledged. In this regard, the (in)visibility of Social Europe plays a major role. Too often, national governments claim the credit for EU-imposed measures, which makes the EU's role in social policy disappear into the background. A lack of awareness about the EU's social acquis may be partly responsible for relatively high levels of perceived threat of the EU to social security. Potentially, increasing the visibility of the aims and achievements of Social Europe could change citizens' perceptions of the EU in a positive way. A potential way to overcome citizens' fears about the impact of European integration is to explain the benefits of Social Europe from the viewpoint of the citizens themselves. European integration is still too often portrayed as a threat or a costly affair, whereas little attention is drawn to the efforts that are being made, for

instance regarding the gradual development of fair rules for the labour market and to the opportunities it brings, such as the ease with which people can take up retirement in another member state. In this respect, national governments share a responsibility to make the visibility of Social Europe more prominent.

European integration has always developed incrementally, as many obstacles have been encountered along the way. The European Commission set out five scenarios on the future of Europe in its white paper (European Commission, 2017c). These scenarios differ strongly in the proposed scope of the EU. In opting for a scenario of re-centring priorities on the single market or reducing competences, there lies a risk of an increasingly limited capacity to implement market-correcting initiatives. European social policymaking could be moved to the background, with stronger pressures for a race-to-the-bottom, whereas Europeans already perceive high levels of threat posed by the EU to social protection. Reducing competences might not only make it harder to deliver on social objectives, but also increases the perception of the EU as an exclusively economic project among citizens. Alternatively, the option of member states doing much more together would involve transferring more power and resources to the European level. Given the enormous diversity in social policies and social development across the EU member states, this scenario of strengthening the EU's social dimension can be considered challenging at the least. An alternative scenario proposes a two-speed Europe, in which member states that want to do more in common would work together in specific policy areas. These policy areas could cover matters such as defence, taxation or social issues. Such 'coalitions of the willing' already exist within the EU, most notably with the Schengen area and the Eurozone. Recently, specific policy proposals to deepen the social dimension of the EU have been made, in particular with the aim of functioning as automatic stabilization mechanisms for the Eurozone. Given that the functional benefits of such EU-level social policies are somewhat weaker for Eurozone outsiders, this strengthens expectations that the future of Social Europe will also become one of differentiated integration. Eurozone countries are likely to take the driver's seat in reinforcing Social Europe (Fernandes & Maslauskaite, 2013a). If Eurozone countries start to engage more in the coordination of social policies and develop new instruments of social justice and social developments, a two-tiered Europe is thus likely to occur on the issue of Social Europe. Of course, member states retain the option to join the coalition at a later point in time. However, it is highly uncertain whether a two-speed option would eventually lead to the inclusion of all member states. History has taught us that opt-outs occur when member states are given a choice. Nevertheless, if public support for a more Social Europe is strongly divided across Europe, with one group of countries advocating a more social direction for the EU and another group of countries resisting, a two-speed Social Europe might still be an option. No doubt, the EU's social dimension will continue to be the subject of political debate.

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Dutch summary

Ondanks het feit dat het Europese project lange tijd werd aanzien als een economisch project, heeft de EU geleidelijk aan een sociale ruimte gecreëerd op Europees niveau door middel van zowel markt-versterkende en markt-corrigerende maatregelen. De ontwikkelingen van Sociaal Europa hebben de context waarbinnen welvaartsstaten opereren fundamenteel gewijzigd en hebben een verlies van nationale soevereiniteit en autonomie met zich meegebracht. In het licht van de lopende debatten over de rol van de Europese Unie in het sociaal beleid, analyseert dit doctoraatsonderzoek de manier waarop burgers kijken naar de evolutie van Sociaal Europa en dit aan de hand van Belgische en Europese enquêtegegevens.

Eerdere studies met betrekking tot deze thematiek missen een duidelijke conceptualisering van het begrip Sociaal Europa. Een eerste doelstelling van dit onderzoeksproject betreft dan ook het analyseren van de manier waarop men de attitudes van burgers ten aanzien van Sociaal Europa kan *conceptualiseren en operationaliseren*. Zo wordt Sociaal Europa binnen dit onderzoek geconceptualiseerd aan de hand van verschillende dimensies: het besluitvormingsniveau inzake sociaal beleid, Europees sociaal burgerschap, harmonisering, solidariteit tussen lidstaten en interpersoonlijke solidariteit. De analyses tonen aan dat burgers differentiëren tussen de verschillende dimensies in hun houding ten aanzien van Sociaal Europa. Waar eerder onderzoek focust op het geprefereerde besluitvormingsniveau voor sociaal beleid (Europees versus nationaal) als sleutelindicator voor steun voor Sociaal Europa, tonen de resultaten van dit onderzoek aan dat de algemene attitude van burgers ten aanzien van Sociaal Europa in de eerste plaats samenhangt met hun mening ten aanzien van solidariteit tussen lidstaten.

Vervolgens tracht dit onderzoek meer inzicht te verwerven in de manier waarop we de attitudes van burgers ten aanzien van Sociaal Europa kunnen *verklaren*. Gezien Sociaal Europa onderdeel vormt van het Europese integratieproces en een zekere betrokkenheid in het sociaal beleid vereist, ligt de hoofdfocus van dit onderzoek op de rol van welvaartsattitudes en Euroscepticisme. Het idee wordt naar voor gedragen dat Sociaal Europa in zekere zin de nationale welvaartsstaten versterkt, terwijl het tegelijkertijd de grenzen van de welvaartsstaat verzwakt. Op basis van surveygegevens uit het Belgisch Nationaal Verkiezingsonderzoek 2014, wordt aangetoond dat er een groter draagvlak is ten aanzien van Sociaal Europa bij Belgische burgers die een meer positieve houding aannemen ten aanzien van de welvaartsstaat dan bij burgers met meer negatieve houdingen ten aanzien van de welvaartsstaat. Dit betekent dat Belgische kiezers erkennen dat Sociaal Europa uiteindelijk vergelijkbare doelstellingen nastreeft als nationale welvaartsstaten.

We merken echter op dat het intrusieve karakter van verschillende Europese beleidsinstrumenten op de welvaartsstaat een rol speelt in de relatie tussen welvaartsattitudes en steun voor Sociaal Europa. Zo brengt deze studie aan het licht dat het positief verband tussen de attitudes inzake welvaartsstaat en steun voor Sociaal Europa zwakker is wanneer het gaat over grensoverschrijdende sociale rechten voor Europese burgers. Daarenboven wordt onderzocht in welke mate attitudes ten aanzien van Sociaal Europa een uitdrukking zijn van een algemene positieve of negatieve houding ten aanzien van Europese integratie. Eurosceptische houdingen verkleinen de bereidheid tot Europese solidariteit aanzienlijk. We dienen echter op te merken dat zelfs wanneer individuen voorstander zijn van Europese integratie, ze zich alsnog kunnen verzetten tegen Europese solidariteit op basis van hun voorkeuren inzake de prioriteiten van het Europees beleid. Burgers die de mening toegedaan zijn dat de EU zich op economische zaken moet focussen, zijn sterker gekant tegen Europese solidariteit dan degenen die vinden dat de EU prioriteit moet geven aan sociale beleidspunten. Het debat omtrent Europese integratie kan dus niet simpelweg gereduceerd worden tot een vraagstuk van meer of minder integratie, maar dient zich vooral ook op inhoudelijk vlak te manifesteren.

Als derde onderzoeksdoelstelling wordt licht geworpen op hoe burgers *de impact van de EU op hun sociale zekerheid percipiëren*. Ondanks het feit dat bezorgdheden over de gevolgen van Europese integratie voor Europese welvaartsstaten vaak geuit worden, heeft deze thematiek in empirisch onderzoek amper aandacht gekregen. Op basis van de data van de European Values Study (2008) wordt aangetoond dat de gepercipieerde impact van de EU op sociale zekerheid niet te reduceren valt tot een algemene angst voor Europese integratie, maar een eigen dynamiek heeft. Bovendien zijn de sociaaleconomische en ideologische positie van individuen belangrijker in het verklaren van bezorgdheden over de impact van de EU op de sociale zekerheid dan in het verklaren van andere EU-gerelateerde angsten. Europeanen met een lagere sociaaleconomische status en burgers met een voorkeur voor een sterke rol van de overheid in welvaarts- en inkomensherverdeling zijn met name gevoelig voor dit soort 'sociaal Euroscepticisme'. Deze differentiële effecten zouden verborgen zijn gebleven indien bezorgheden omtrent de impact van de EU op sociale zekerheid bestudeerd werden in isolatie van andere EU-gerelateerde angsten.

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