Attitudes towards Social Security: Review of Literature

Ivana Piterová, Institute of Social Sciences, Centre of Social and Psychological Sciences of SAS, Košice, piterova@saske.sk

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Abstract:
There has not been enough attention given to the topic of social security in Slovak psychological research; although the state of social protection, legal aspects of social security or themes of social services, social policy and social care are well described by economists, sociologists, lawyers or social workers. The article provides an overview of the current knowledge of social security attitudes as attitudes have been a research topic of social psychology for a long time.
Social security benefits and services provided by welfare states are linked to many predictable or unpredictable events; such as unemployment, illness, birth of a child or retirement. The questions that could arise are: who has a positive or negative attitude towards providing social security benefits and services?; who deserves the help?; why and to what extent?; and if there are any causal differences between European countries.
This review is divided into four main parts. Firstly, a brief description of the social security system in the Slovak Republic is provided. The social security system consists of social insurance, state social support, and social assistance. They are based upon dissimilar principles, i.e. the principle of merit, equality and need, respectively. Within the European Union, the coordination of the social security system is applied. However, due to the specific conditions in every country, it is not possible to establish a unified social security system yet.
Secondly, the paper describes and summarizes different types of welfare states in the context of chosen typologies. It begins with the typology of Esping-Andersen (1990), Leibfried, (1992), Ferrera (1996), and Bonoli (1997) and continues with recent research that lead to the question about numbers and different types of welfare states e.g. Arts and Gellisen (2001) or Gryaznova (2013). Thirdly, the definition of social security attitudes in relation to Fishbein’s and Ajzen’s theory is presented. The possibility of categorizing welfare attitudes into three levels, according to the degree of generality, is outlined. The most general category is welfare state attitudes, more specific one are attitudes towards different types of welfare state. These are: Social democratic, Conservative, Liberal, and Radical. It is possible to divide people into attitudinal types and analyse their attitudes or specific traits. At the most specific level, there are attitudes towards providing benefits and services to different groups of beneficiaries, such as pensioners, the unemployed or single parents.
Finally, the results of research on determinants of social security attitudes carried out are described. The large amount of research is built on survey databases such as the European Social Survey or International Social Survey Program. These surveys have been conducted internationally over several decades and thus provide the opportunity to compare different countries as well as to capture differences over time. We focused on individual level determinants; such as self-interest, socio-demographic characteristics, values, interpersonal and institutional trust and deservingness heuristics. At the institutional level there is a considerable amount of research on welfare regimes, values and normative beliefs at a national level, culture, justice perception, contextual indicators as a level of unemployment, and the existence of economic and social disparities in countries. Other indicators that are included in the research are gross domestic product (GDP) per capita or GDP based on Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) per capita.
In conclusion, the comparison of European countries gave an answer to the question: “Who is more supportive?” The highest support for social security benefits and services is in Scandinavian countries operating a social democratic regime. Additionally, people from other countries with social democratic attitudes show more solidarity to other people, have a higher level of trust and higher support for welfare programs and redistributive policies. When it comes to socio-demographic characteristics, those who are more supportive include: women,
young people, those with secondary education, those from the middle class, religious people, political of a left wing persuasion, and the unemployed.

In the case of self-interest, those who receive benefits and services and those who pay lower taxes are more in favour. People with egalitarian, collectivistic value orientations and values of self-transcendence, altruism and embeddedness are more supportive. Moreover, a value of conservation is significant for welfare state support mostly in Eastern Europe.

The answer to the question “who do we support?” is provided through extensive research by Jensen, Petersen, Kostra, Roosma, Reeskens and van Oorschot, who studied the heuristics of deservingness and solidarity of people. Five factors have been confirmed: control, need, reciprocity, identity and attitude. We are more in favour of helping people we perceive not to be responsible for their situation; if we assume they contribute to the state or will do in the future, and are similar to us and express gratitude for the help they receive.

The research of contextual factors brings an answer to the question “when are we more often supportive”. More left-wing policies and egalitarian principles are expressed in times of crisis and higher unemployment, and also during periods of greater economic and social disparities amongst people.

The weaknesses of the survey research may be in the low number of items represented, and the large amount of data that reduces error sensitivity and the accuracy of results. Another difficulty may arise from contextual factors, which are different in countries and make results and their interpretation less clear. Moving some attention from robust comparative research to partial experiments would allow us to capture a narrower spectrum of selected factors and their interaction.

It is necessary to know how the attitudes are changing, why they differ among people and countries and how we could affect them. Scientific study of welfare attitudes creates the imaginary bridge between people and the welfare state and allows the formation of a welfare policy in accordance with the preferences of citizens. That is one reason why research on this topic matters.

**Key words:**

**Introduction**

There has not been a sufficient level of attention given to the topic of attitudes towards social security in Slovak psychological research. Previously, it has been frequently associated with social work, economics, law and sociology. Information on the state of social protection in Slovakia has been provided by Bednárik (2018), the legal aspect of social security has been described by Macková (2017), while Repková (2012; 2016; 2017) has long been interested in the theme of social services, social policy and social care. However, it is also possible to examine this issue from the social psychology point of view, precisely through the optics of attitudes or attitudinal types towards social security. From this perspective, there have not been enough publications in Slovakia yet, but an overview of attitudinal types and attitudes towards social care from the European social survey (ESS)\(^1\) 4th round data has been produced by Výrost (2010).

Through various predictable and unpredictable events people can end up without work, permanent incomes or dependent on low-incomes. In such situations, people have to make recourse to social security benefits and services provided by the welfare state. Our question is whether the level of social solidarity of the state, communities or families is increased in times of hardship.

Consequently, the following questions have been asked: "To what extent are the individual and the state responsible when in such a situation?" "Who has positive attitudes towards providing social security?" "Who deserves the help of the state, why and to what extent?" and "What causes differences in attitudes to the provision of social security benefits?" Finding

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\(^1\) The European Social Survey is an academically driven cross-national survey that is conducted across Europe at two-year intervals. The survey measures the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns of diverse populations in more than thirty nations. The main goal is also to achieve and spread higher standards of rigour in cross-national research in the social sciences (http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/).
answers to such questions has prompted a scientific study of this topic, especially of research carried out in other countries outside Slovakia.

The presented review summarizes the findings of studies that were found in online scientific databases (WOS, SCOPUS, and EBSCO etc). Among the studies that were found using keywords such as “welfare attitudes”, “welfare state attitudes”, “social security”, “attitudes towards redistribution”, we selected mostly those comparative ones, carried out on data of international surveys which were as close as possible to the chosen topic.

I. What is social security?

Social security as the right of every person has been guaranteed in the Declaration of Human Rights at international level since 1948. According to Article 25 of this document, everyone as a member of society has “the right to a standard of living adequate to the health and welfare of his and his family, including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services, the right to unemployment insurance, sickness, incapacity, widowhood, old age or other cases of loss of earnings arising from circumstances beyond his control (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.)” This right is also guaranteed by the Constitution of the Slovak Republic in Article 39.

In Slovakia, the social security system includes three subsystems: social insurance, state social support and social assistance. The first one, social insurance, is based on the principle of merit. In the case of a situation such as unemployment, maternity or disability, benefits are calculated from the amounts paid to the state, which, in turn, relate to the individual’s previous income. In other words, higher benefits are provided to people who have worked longer, and/or earned and contributed more to the state. The second one, state social support, is based on the principle of equality, and addresses situations like the birth of a child, or a more longer-lasting situation such as a dependent child. In this case, the benefits are provided by the state as an equal amount for all. The last one, social assistance, is based on the principle of need. When a person demonstrates that they lack the ability to provide for themselves and/or their family, each individual case will be assessed when setting the amount of social benefits (Jurík, 2017).

Within the European Union, the coordination of social security systems is applied. However, certain coordination rules have been established which do not replace national systems. In particular, due to the development of individual countries in specific economic, social, and cultural conditions, it is not possible to establish a unified social security system yet.

II. Models of the Welfare state

Among the countries that belong to the social model, there are considerable differences in their social policies, including their social security systems. The existence of different types of social states has been described in well-known typology by Esping-Andersen (1990). Despite the fact that it was neither the first typology nor was it generally accepted, and has been modified or supplemented by several authors over the years, it is frequently mentioned in foreign studies. Esping-Andersen (1990) distinguished three models of the welfare state, based on the operationalisation of three principles: decommodification (which examined the extent to which an individual’s welfare is reliant upon the market), level of social stratification (which examined the role of welfare states in maintaining or breaking down social stratification), and private-public mix (which focused on the relative roles of the state, the family and the market in welfare provision).
Knowing the differences between models of welfare state can result in a deeper understanding of dissimilarities among attitudinal types. The existence of four distinct welfare attitudinal types (social democratic, conservative, liberal, and radical) is confirmed as valid, based on the possibility of dividing people into four categories (Výrost, 2010). Various models of the social state from the Esping-Andersen typology are presented. Additionally, the names of welfare state types from several selected typology modifications are added.

The first type includes the countries of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway who have a social democratic system, and is called the Scandinavian model (Ferrera, 1996; Leibfried, 1992) or Nordic (Bonoli, 1997). In these countries, according to Esping-Andersen (1990), there is a high level of decommodification, universal benefits and a high degree of benefits equality. Ferrera (1996) emphasizes social protection as a civil law, a certain amount of contributions are entitled to all the people of the country (universality), and the contributions are funded by general taxes.

The second one consists of the UK and Ireland, who have a liberal system (Esping-Andersen, 1990), and is called Anglo-Saxon (Ferrera 1996; Leibfried, 1992) or British type (Bonoli, 1997). There is a greater restriction of social benefits and a basic system is defined at a minimum level. In addition, benefits are provided only to the poorest or to people facing hardship, so social security support is strongest in this group of the most disadvantaged people.

The third type contains the Western European countries (e.g Germany, Austria, France) with a conservative system (Esping-Andersen, 1990); also called Bismarck/Institutional (Ferrera, 1996; Leibfried, 1992) or continental (Bonoli, 1997). The state intervenes only in situations when family resources to secure the basic needs of their members have failed (Výrost, 2010).

The first version of the Esping-Andersen (1990) typology was not accepted by other authors. Castles and Mitchell (1992) reviewed his typology and further divided the liberal type into two distinct categories, two different groups of social states: liberal and radical. The former, which combined low social expenditure, low taxation and low benefit equality with a weak position of labor parties and trade unions, exemplified by the USA, the latter, in which low social expenditure and low taxation were combined with high benefit equality, exemplified by Australia, and New Zealand.

The countries of southern Europe (e.g. Italy, Greece, Spain, and Portugal) constitute the fourth group, which was not included in the Esping-Andersen typology and lead to a critique by others authors. Leibfried (1992) named this system as rudimental, Castles and Mitchell (1993) called it radical and Bonoli (1997) labelled it as southern. It is a mixture of systems with uncertain rules. In these countries there are systems based on the family status of social protection; that is, the family assumes responsibility for their members and is less reliant on government, so they are also called familialistic (Kalmijn & Saraceno, 2008). Esping-Andersen (1998) added this model to his typology later as the Mediterranean regime.

The first type, which was added later, is the aforementioned regime of Down Under (Australia and New Zealand) which combines the elements of the liberal and social democratic system; thus there are low income differences and high social benefits paid mostly to the middle classes. A second type that was added is East Asian, which combines the elements of the previous regimes, particularly the liberal and conservative ones, in which the state does not provide high social benefits because the employer or the family should take responsibility for
care. Therefore, a person who does not work for a corporation, which partially replaces the state care, is disadvantaged (Esping-Andersen, 1998).

Recent studies indicate groups of countries that cannot be divided into the categories already mentioned; mainly post-socialist countries (the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic, Poland, Croatia, Romania, and Bulgaria) and the countries of the former USSR (Russia, Estonia, and Lithuania). These Eastern European configurations have not been confirmed as self-existing social models, rather they are understood as combinations of the previous types. For example, as stated by Beblavý (2012, p. 29), Slovakia "includes elements of a liberal and conservative-corporative type as well as some clear features of post-socialist countries (e.g. high level of coverage but relatively low level of benefits and low level of trust in state institutions). Despite the fact that the existence of these groups of countries as separate types is not confirmed, they are used in research as separate groups. For example, Gryaznova (2013) defines six types of social states in research: social democratic, conservative, liberal, familiaristic, post-socialist countries and countries of the former USSR. Alternatively, we can find a categorization of clear types; such as Denmark, Norway or Sweden, while Austria, Belgium, and the Netherlands are the hybrids of the social democratic countries (Arts & Gellisen, 2001).

Mixed results in conducted research may arise from reference to the general typology of welfare states and indicators that fail to capture the complexity of institutional establishment and individual views (Jordan, 2013). The study of types of welfare states has some deficiency in the theoretical inconsistency and rigidity of the concept. Relying on the empirical categorization and the lack of match between description and welfare state is becoming a problem.

III. Attitudes towards social security

A definition of attitudes towards social security from a psychological point of view can be derived from Fishbein’s and Ajzen's (1975; 1980) Theory of Reasoned Action that brought some changes into the attitudes research. Firstly, the authors split the behavioral intention from behaviour that is related but not identical. Secondly, instead of three parts of attitudes, they described attitudes as an affective evaluation of performing behaviour not attitudes to the object itself. Thirdly, they added a subjective norm that represents the individual's perception about a particular behaviour which is influenced by the judgement of others, i.e. peoples’ behaviour is influenced not only by our attitudes but also our effort to meet the expectations of others. The theory was modified by Ajzen (1985) who added the perceived behavioural control that is an individual’s perceived ease or difficulty in performing a particular behavior. The theory was renamed, The Theory of Planned Behaviour.

The application of this theory seems appropriate, as in the case of social security we do not refer to attitudes towards institutions or attitudes towards people (assessment of object of attitude) but attitudes towards providing assistance to given categories of people (assessment of behavior towards the object of attitude). Therefore, recipients of social security become the object of attitudes, and we are interested in the level of support for helping these groups of people. The state is a provider of such assistance in this case, but citizens are the contributors to the state budget, thus this question of providing social security benefits and services is also their concern.

Attitudes towards social security can be categorized into Welfare attitudes, which have more levels of generality. The most general are Welfare state attitudes; the more specific ones are
attitudes towards individual models of welfare state, or attitudinal types such as conservative, liberal, social democratic, and radical. Even more specific are the attitudes towards benefits and services for different groups of people, e.g. the unemployed, the sick or disabled, the retired or single parents. In this case, our attitudes are influenced by attitudes towards this category of beneficiaries. A more specific description of proposed categorization is delivered in the following section.

Welfare state attitudes

The welfare state began to develop with the aim to protect and promote the social and economic well-being of citizens. It is based on an equitable distribution of wealth paid for by citizens’ taxes. However, a person may have a different attitude as a beneficiary of social benefits than as a contributor. The research findings confirm that attitudes to the welfare state are not continuous but multi-dimensional and may be in conflict. For example, van Oorschot and Meuleman (2012) confirmed the multi-dimensionality of attitudes towards the welfare state in the data from Denmark in 2006. Moreover, individual dimensions were influenced by the socio-economic structure and ideology. Roosma, Gelissen and van Oorschot (2013) predicted the existence of the seven social-state dimensions outlined in Figure 1.

![Figure 1: Dimensions of Welfare state (Roosma, Gelissen, & van Oorschot, 2013)](image-url)
The first dimension is a “welfare mix”, that is slightly different from other dimensions. It represents the alternative institutions providing help and welfare for citizens. The question in this case is “who is responsible?” Is it the state, family or the market or other private institutions, such as the church or charity? In this paper, as well as the authors, we focus on the responsibility of welfare state to redistribute sources.

The second dimension includes the goals of the state; the goal of achieving a more liberal idea of equal opportunities or rather an equalitarian idea of equal income, and whether the goal is to protect the public from the rigidity of the market. The authors highlight three main goals, namely: providing social security, achieving equality (income / opportunities), and promoting social inclusion through participation.

Other dimensions are the range and degree that relate to areas of life or society into which the state should redistribute resources (range) and how much funding should be allocated (degree). There are three sub-dimensions: social benefits, social services, and an active labor market policy.

The redistribution design refers to issues such as: "Who should receive redistributed resources?", "Who should contribute, for what purpose and under what conditions?" and "Which groups deserve which types of contributions and under what circumstances?"

The implementation concerns procedural justice, and has two subdimensions: efficiency and effectiveness. This means whether the finances and services are provided in a timely manner, whether they are understandable and whether they are not being wasted or inadequately provided.

The last dimension is outcomes, i.e. the intended and unintended results, which are related to redistribution and objectives.

Roosma, van Oorschot and Gelissen (2013) on data from 22 countries participating in the European Social Survey in 2008 confirmed this hypothesis on multi-dimensionality of attitudes. They found that people were especially positive towards the welfare state and the scope of its powers, while being critical of the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of social security provision. These dimensions correlated with each other, but were different in each country. Eastern and Southern European countries have been characterized by positive attitudes towards government goals and tasks with slightly negative attitudes towards the effectiveness and outcome of social policy; while in contrast, the attitudes of Western and Northern European countries to these dimensions of the welfare state were based on a fundamentally positive or negative attitude towards the welfare state.

In another study conducted in 2014, the same authors refer to the two main dimensions in attitudes to the role of the welfare state; attitudes to what the welfare state should do (the preferred role of the state) and the belief in its current performance (perceived performance). Based on the analysis of 22 European countries from the ESS data (2008), it was confirmed that based on scores within these two dimensions, it is possible to place a person in 1 of 4 clusters (overall positive, overall negative, critical of performance, critical of the role). Each of these clusters contained a certain proportion of respondents which differed between types of welfare states. When they were looking for profiles of individuals belonging to these clusters, they came to the conclusion that those who have a subjectively high income and prefer a right-wing political ideology are satisfied with the results but not with the tasks of the state. Those with subjectively low income and left-wing political ideology were satisfied with
the tasks but not with the performance of the welfare state. Such results have been confirmed for all types of welfare states. Only "critical of the role" was not sufficiently represented in post-socialist and Mediterranean countries. The people in the cluster "generally positive" did not have a political orientation and were relatively satisfied with their income. The smallest number was "totally negative", and in the case of post-socialist countries it was individuals who identified themselves with right-wing political ideology and without employment.

**Attitudes towards types of welfare state - Welfare attitudinal types**

A welfare state can exist in different forms in regards to different social policies; as described in the typology of Bonoli (1997); Castles & Mitchell (1993); Esping-Andersen (1990) or Ferrera (1996). Each type of welfare state is described with different level of solidarity, a dissimilar range of government responsibilities, universality of benefits and services or acceptance of income equality. It seems to be reasonable to expect that attitudes towards different types of welfare state differ as well.

In compliance with the aforementioned typologies, Svallfors (1997) analyzed the data of eight nations from the International Social Survey Programme. He distinguished four attitudinal types on the basis of a low inter-correlation between attitudes to redistribution and to income. A social democratic type was defined as highly supportive of state interventions with an egalitarian preference of income equality. A conservative type was described as highly supportive of state interventions with non egalitarian attitudes to income. A liberal type had low support for state interventions with non egalitarian beliefs about income. The last one, the radical type, was characterised as a low supporter of state interventions with an egalitarian view on income.

A similar approach was applied by Výrost (2010). He defined four types of attitudes towards social protection based on the average score measured on two scales: social solidarity and social differentiation. The former was defined as co-dependence and support for benefits provided to people. The latter had a meaning of tolerance towards social differences between people, leading to a rejection of benefits for others. The social democratic type support providing help to people on the basis of general rules. The conservative type has a high level of solidarity with the conviction that assistance and support from the state should only be provided to those who objectively need it and only at a differentiated range. The radical type is an expression of the belief that people should take care of themselves, supporting the acceptance of differences between people and providing assistance only in an extraordinary situation. The liberal type prefers social differentiation, and at the same time is not an advocate of providing help to others unless they really need it, but to such an extent that they remain motivated to take care of themselves (Výrost, 2010).

Furthermore, at the level of attitudinal types, there is a possibility to divide people into categories and examine the characteristics and features that are typical for individual types in the same way as to look for differences. Unfortunately, we don't register research studies covering this topic but Výrost (2010) explored the attitudes of four attitudinal types towards items from ESS 4th round rotating module about welfare in Slovakia.

The results of the analysis have shown that out of the socio-demographic characteristics, age has been statistically significant. The preference of the liberal attitudinal type declined, while preference for the conservative type inclined with age. Women in Slovakia prefer more conservative attitudes in contrast to more liberal men. The conservative attitudinal type dominated in all educational groups. The preference of the social democratic attitudinal type
decreased while the preference of the liberal attitudinal type increased with the rising level of education (Výrost, 2010).

Regarding the attitudes of these four groups to the tasks of the government in the area of welfare, all four attitudinal types supported the view that Governments should take responsibility to ensure work and health care, but to varying degree, while the opinions of conservative and liberal respondents were less positive (Výrost, 2010).

When assessing the actual state of social security in Slovakia (living standards), responses were rather in the negative pole of the scale, but they slightly differ between attitudinal types. Conservative and liberal respondents perceived this state as less negative than radical and social democratic respondents (Výrost, 2010).

Lastly, the views on social security perspectives in Slovakia were analyzed. People with social democratic and radical attitudes agree to increase taxes to contribute more to benefits and services, while liberal and conservative prefer tax cuts to contribute less to social benefits and services (Výrost, 2010).

**Attitudes towards social security programs**

We can debate about varying attitudes towards individual social programs or benefits and services provided to specific groups of people (e.g., pensioners, the unemployed, single parents), depending on each type of recipient.

Out of nine sub-dimensions (goals, range of government responsibility, degree, efficiency, effectiveness/abuse, effectiveness/underuse, outcomes policy, outcomes economic, and outcomes moral) that were defined by Roosma, Gelissen, and van Oorschot (2013), Gryaznova (2013) selected the range of government responsibilities and tested its dimensionality. There were three dimensions discovered: unconditional social programs (pensions and health care), labor market regulation (jobs and unemployment benefits) and family support (paid leave for care and kindergartens). Dimensionality was confirmed across all types of Welfare state: conservative, social democratic, familiaristic, ex-communist and the former USSR.

Even at this level, our attitudes are multidimensional and, to a certain extent, correspond to our attitudes towards the category of recipients of benefits and services. The reason for supporting a particular program is also self-interest; it is confirmed that people who are likely to become social security benefits recipients will have a more positive attitude towards a given social policy (Kangas, 1997). More detailed information on the importance of socio-demographic characteristics and self-interest is given below in the following section dedicated to the results of research on determinants of attitudes towards social security.

Older research confirmed the universally high support for the elderly and the sick, but support for the poor and the unemployed differs more widely between countries (Jaeger, 2007). One of the explanations is provided by Larsen (2008), which assumes that the type of welfare state affects the way people perceive poverty through unemployment, such as whether it is due to a lack of effort, such as laziness or lack of happiness. For example, the US public and the media are accustomed to attributing poverty through unemployment to a lack of individual effort and laziness, so they attach responsibility to individuals. Conversely, in most European countries they are accustomed to "blame" contextual factors such as luck or social and economic conditions in the country (Alesina & Glaeser, 2004). For this reason, support for the poor and
the unemployed can be very different between countries. The results of research on the importance of the welfare state are also presented in the next sections.

IV. Research on determinants of social security attitudes

Most foreign literature involves extensive research on social security attitudes, welfare state attitudes or attitudes towards social policy that contain the items or uses the survey databases such as the European Social Survey (ESS), International Social Survey Program (ISSP), European Values Survey (EVS) and World Values Survey (WVS).

These surveys are conducted internationally or globally over the course of several decades and thus provide the data suitable for comparing countries and cultural and historical entities as well as capturing differences in attitudes and behavioral patterns over time. In order to clarify the current state of knowledge on this topic, we present the results of research built on survey data according to the determinants at individual and institutional level.

a. Individual level determinants

Self-interest and socio-demographic characteristics

Support for social welfare policy, programs and services or the welfare state in general results from how socio-demographic characteristics relate to self-interest. Self-interest as a factor depends on the position of an individual in the social structure of the state (van Oorchoot, 2010), while the socio-economic status influences the perception and evaluation of social reality.

In the literature, there are classifications of people into individual groups which are characterised by a different interest in social benefits and services. For example, Andreß and Heien (2001) distinguished between taxpayers, consumers and producers of social security benefits and services. Women, pensioners, young families with children, low-income and low-educated people, ethnic minorities, the unemployed and the sick as among the main consumers support the welfare state to a greater extent, as compared to taxpayers. Although the attitudes of the taxpayers are more heterogeneous. It also depends on the social position, duties, services and care they receive. Similarly, Svallfors (2006) or Jaeger (2006) came to similar conclusions about self-interest and position in the labor market. In other words, those with a low market position - women, the unemployed, pensioners and sick people – express higher demands for government interventions.

Among socio-demographic characteristics, the importance of education for the support of the welfare state is contradictory. There is a greater variability of support between high income groups and higher educational levels (Linos & West, 2003). Some other studies confirmed the negative effect of education on solidarity and support for redistributive social policy (Arts & Gelissen, 2001; Jaeger, 2006). While, Muuri (2010) confirmed in the Finnish sample that higher educated respondents actually have more positive attitudes than other educational groups on the functioning of the welfare services and the state of welfare benefits.

With regard to differences at a country level, Gryazonova (2013) confirmed the effect of education on welfare attitudes only in the countries of the former USSR and post-socialist countries. With higher education the support for a reduction in the government's responsibility for social security has declined. The importance of income was confirmed in all types of welfare states while the importance of the genus was confirmed only in post-socialist and
social democratic countries. Age was relevant only in conservative, liberal and familiaristic countries.

Although, according to studies and research of public opinion, self-interest as an indicator of support for social security programs is constantly confirmed, the effect is not usually too strong (van Oorschot, 2002). As reported by van Oorschot (2013), it is possible because the interest in the program exceeds their current situation and, for example, they do not assume that the program will benefit them or their family members or friends in the future.

**Values**

Due to the low effect size of self-interest for social security programs support, research is often focused on cultural dimensions such as values, norms, national culture of the welfare state and ideology.

A lot of research covers the topic of importance of basic human values and value orientations. In Svallfors, Kullin and Schnabel (2012) the relationship between basic human values and welfare attitudes was not evident. On the contrary, Gryaznova a Magun (2012) and Gryaznova (2013) have confirmed that the values of dimension Conservation and Self-transcendence increase the level of support for government interventions, while the values of dimension Openness to change and Self-enhancement have a negative effect.

The predictive power of Schwartz’s motivational type of values for attitudes towards social security was examined in their contribution “Values as predictors of attitudes towards social security (Piterová, 2017). The paper draws on the ESS 4th round data. Respondents of Slovak Republic were assigned to four distinct attitudinal types (Social democratic, Conservative, Liberal, and Radical) with the aim to compare values profiles of these clusters. The results confirmed the values Benevolence and Tradition as significant predictors of Social Solidarity and values Power and Security as a significant predictors of Social Differentiation.

With a rising preference for security value, a decline in social differentiation can be predicted; or in other words the desire for equality between people is increasing; whereas, an increase in preference of value power predicts an increase in social differentiation, ie accepting differences. With the increasing importance of benevolence and tradition, an increase in solidarity can be predicted. Thus, values from the dimensions self-transcendence (benevolence), conservation (tradition, security) and self-enhancement (power) have been significant. Respondents in all four groups were most identified with values associated with conservative and self-transcendent values; mostly security and universalism.

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2 Dimension includes values of security, tradition, conformity, highlighting the desire for stability, traditions, self-discipline and obedience (Schwartz, 2004).
3 Dimension includes the values of universalism and benevolence, emphasizing the interest and care of the welfare of others, loyalty and social justice (Schwartz, 2004).
4 Dimension includes the values of self-direction, stimulation and hedonism, thus finding and testing new things, openness of thought, creativity and desire for pleasures are typical (Schwartz, 2004).
5 Dimension includes the values of Power and Achievement, which are characterized by the emphasis on authority, wealth, intelligence and abilities (Schwartz, 2004).
6 The respondents who score 1SD around the arithmetic mean on both scales were excluded from the analysis.
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Interpersonal and institutional trust

Welfare attitudes in general can also be affected by peoples’ trust as well as by trust in institutions and politicians who create social policy programs and decide about redistribution. The fact that interpersonal trust can play a central role in supporting the welfare state is based on the belief that trust in people will strengthen the conviction that others will not misuse the social system.

Rothstein, Samanni and Teorell (2012) and Svalfors (2013) argued that support for a state’s social policy is influenced by their confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of the procedures used to redistribute money. Thus, interpersonal trust is associated with perceived procedural justice where people need to believe that it is equitable and efficient for the state.

These hypotheses were followed by Daniele and Geys (2015) who confirmed that interpersonal trust helps to explain preferences in redistributing resources. People who have trusted others have been more supportive of paying higher taxes, as well as increasing social spending for the state. A certain assumption indicating that the positive effect of interpersonal trust on social support may depend on the perceived quality of public institutions was also confirmed. Support for social policy thus required both interpersonal and institutional trust.

The deservingness heuristics

When deciding on social security support we do not use, or we do not have, all the necessary information, and therefore we use cognitive heuristics. Heuristics are fast-pervasive decision-making rules that determine the relationship between the available information and the preferred decision (Petersen, 2015). It is a solution to the information deficit by encouraging people to look for and consider only a certain part of available information. One such heuristics is the heuristics of merit. When assessing social policy no attention is drawn to the program or policy itself, but to the moral nature of the recipients (see, for example, Jensen & Petersen, 2017, Koostra, 2016, Reekens & van Orschoot, 2014, Van Orschoot, 2000, 2002, 2006, van Orschoot & Roosma, 2015).

One of the most widespread overview of factors that serve as inputs for cognitive heuristics in social policy has been described by van Oorschot (2000, 2002). According to him, recipients are considered as deserving of social benefits as: 1) they do not have control over their own situation; 2) they have a high level of need; 3) they have contributed to their society; or will do in the future; 4) share the same group identity; 5) their attitudes and behavior express gratitude. On the basis of these criteria (need, control, reciprocity, identity and attitude), it is possible to create a certain rank of merit among groups, which is comparable between European welfare states (van Oorschot, 2006).

What is particularly important is effort (e.g. control); as people support those who are perceived to be trying - for example, undergoing training to stop smoking or find work. Koostra (2016) confirmed in the English and the Dutch sample that effort was more important than the ethnic background in assessing merit; that is, if the minority ethnic population tried to find a job, the evaluation was the same as for the majority population. However, similar studies have not yet been conducted to create space for further study.
b. Institutional level determinants

The importance of normatives, values, and beliefs about redistribution is formed even at the national level. A considerable amount of comparative research has confirmed the relationship between the welfare state regime and attitudes towards social security (redistributive principles, welfare programs, welfare policies) (see e.g. Andreß and Heien, 2001; Arts & Geliseen, 2002; Blekesaune and Quadagno, 2003; Gryaznova, 2013; Jaeger, 2006; Larsen, 2008; Svallfors, 1997). Gryaznova (2013), highlights how the welfare state regime explains 60 per cent of variability of welfare attitudes.

Analysis of values and value orientations at the national level, specifically the significance of self-transcendence and conservation, was confirmed by Kulin and Meuleman (2015). The study showed conservation (values tradition, conformity and security) as a stronger predictor for welfare state attitudes in East European countries. In addition, results were explained by mutual experience of “authoritarian egalitarianism” during the communism period. On the other side, self-transcendence (values universalism and benevolence) was proved as a stronger predictor in Western European countries, with higher social expenditure. Gryaznova (2013) also confirmed collectivism (= conservation) and altruism as significant predictors for demanding the welfare state, in post-socialist and former USSR countries, compared to other countries (familiaristic, liberal, conservative, social democratic).

Arikan and Ben-Nun Bloom (2015), Guo and Gilbert (2014) and Jaeger (2006) confirmed that individuals in countries highlighting egalitarianism and embeddedness\(^7\) are more supportive of welfare security and higher state social expenditure. Furthermore, attitudes towards social policy are more positive. It has also been verified that the less a person is informed, the stronger the effect of values on their decision-making support for government interventions is (Elster, 2007; Kangas, 2007).

The concept of egalitarianism (in contrast to meritocratic values) was applied to research as a justice principle. Calzada, Gómez-Garrofo, Moreno and Moreno-Fuentes (2014) validated the positive correlation of egalitarianism and welfare attitudes in east European countries, while this concept was true in relation to the support of welfare state in southern Europe. People with meritocratic opinions were less supportive of welfare programs in northern and continental Europe.

Even the question of perceived justice plays a role in promoting social security. Arikan and Ben-Nun Bloom (2015) confirmed, in ISSP data, that if the preferred principle of distributive justice is not consistent with the perceived reality, it has a significant effect on attitudes towards the welfare state. The preferred principle of justice and the perception of social differences or even conflicts (between rich and poor, management and employees, high and low socio-economic groups) act as a mediator of the relationship between one’s own position in society and support for the welfare state (Lewin-Epstein, Kaplan & Levanon, 2003).

Among the contextual factors, the level of unemployment as well as the existence of economic and social disparities in the country has been confirmed for social security attitudes. In other words, people in times of high unemployment are more supportive of social security. (Blekesaune, 2006; Erikson, MacKuen & Stimson, 2002). People identify more with left-wing

\(^7\) Embeddedness is a characteristic trait of societies where an individual is not autonomous but as part of a group is responsible for meeting the collective goals. Those societies prefer values as social order, tradition, security, obedience and wisdom (Schwartz, 2004).
beliefs when unemployment increased, while inflation leads to a rise in right-wing opinions (Piurko, Schwartz & Davidov, 2011).

Other indicators that are used to explain the existing differences between countries are, for example, the living standard of the country expressed in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita or GDP based on Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) or CPP, the country's social expenditure in relation to GDP. However, the issue of attitudes to social security is so complex that looking for individual and institutional factors to explain differences is not enough. Frequently considered factors in the discussion of comparative studies are therefore the specific history, distinction in culture, and ideology of countries and cultural entities.

**Conclusion**

The extensive amount of international research has considerably expanded the state of knowledge in the field of attitudes towards social security and its determinants over the last 20 years. Research is based on extensive databases that enable international comparison, and longitudinal assessments responding to changes.

As for the question “Who is more supportive?”, the comparison of European countries showed that the highest support for social security is in northern countries with social democratic regimes. These countries provide benefits and services to a wide range of people. Moreover, they have higher interpersonal and institutional trust, which leads to the higher support of redistribution and welfare programs. Even amongst attitudinal types, the social democratic type has the most positive attitude towards social security.

When taking into account the socio-demographic characteristics, women, young people, people with secondary education, the middle-classes, religious people, the political left and the unemployed are more supportive. In the case of self-interest, people working in state sector, those who perceive higher risk (the unemployed), those who receive services and benefits (women, the retired, the unemployed), and those who pay lower taxes are more supportive.

When it comes to values, people with egalitarian, collectivistic value orientations and values of self-transcendence, altruism and embeddedness are more supportive. The conservation value is significant for welfare state support mostly in east European countries.

The answer to the question “Who do we support?” is provided by the extensive research of Jensen, Petersen, Kostra, Roosma, Reeskens and van Orschoot who study the heuristics of deservingness. Five factors for the decision-making process: control, need, reciprocity, identity, attitude have been confirmed. We are more in favor of helping people who are not responsible for their situation; who will contribute to the state later or who are similar to us and express an attitude of gratitude for the benefits and services they received. Studies also confirm that while we are more supportive of the elderly and the sick, help towards the unemployed and the poor appears to be more diverse amongst countries (Jaeger, 2007).

Research of contextual factors answers the question “When are we supportive more often?” We are more in favor of left-wing policies, we use egalitarian principles, and show social solidarity in times of crisis and higher unemployment and also during a period of greater economic and social disparities among the people in a country.
The weakness of exploring this topic is in the abstractness of the concept. Welfare attitudes are a multi-dimensional phenomenon that leads to differences in research projects; sometimes the focus is on the support of higher taxes to provide higher benefits while in other studies it is necessary to evaluate the state of welfare system, social programs or answer the question of welfare state responsibilities. However, it is possible to categorize these attitudes according to the degree of generality as outlined in the contribution.

Similarly, surveys use a low number of items representing scales, and a large amount of data that reduce error sensitivity and the accuracy of results. It is also difficult to capture contextual influences, which in this case play a significant role; research does not directly investigate whether differences are caused by a welfare regime or other contextual factors. In this case, the possible solution could be the realisation of experiments that bring clear information about the causality. Moving some attention from robust comparative research to partial, reproducible experiments would allow us to capture a narrower spectrum of selected factors and their interaction.

It is necessary to know how the attitudes are changing, why they differ among people and countries and how we could affect them. Scientific study of welfare attitudes creates the imaginary bridge between people and the welfare state and allows the formation of a welfare policy in accordance with the preferences of citizens.
References:


