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# Opportunity and Solidarity

Peter TAYlor-Gooby  
University of Kent



Centro de Estudios Andaluces  
CONSEJERÍA DE LA PRESIDENCIA

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Peter Taylor-Gooby

University of Kent

[p.f.taylor-gooby@kent.ac.uk](mailto:p.f.taylor-gooby@kent.ac.uk)

## Abstract

European welfare states, for excellent reasons and in their different ways, are currently restructuring provision. One aspect is an emphasis on opportunity and individual responsibility, rather than redistribution or security. Trust in government is vital in harsh times and the tradition of state welfare has often been seen as contributing to social stability in democratic welfare capitalism. This raises the question of how more individualised directions of reform relate to social solidarity, highlighted in the EU *Renewed Social Agenda* below.

This paper uses data from the 2008 European Social Survey to examine the relationship between opportunity, solidarity and trust in government in the context of three different welfare states representing different regime types. It pays particular attention to the normative assumptions about individual responsibility contained in an opportunity-centred approach, and to the implications for blame when aspirations are not achieved. The analysis indicates that institutional framework, class interest and social values remain important, but that the discourse of social justice and of individual morality surrounding opportunity plays a strong role in popular responses to the new approaches to welfare. Who could dispute the value of equal opportunities? Yet opportunity-centred welfare opens up the possibility of blaming the poor on the grounds that they failed to take up the opportunities made available. Must try harder.

*Europeans face unprecedented opportunities, more choice and improved living conditions. The European Union, ... has been instrumental in creating those opportunities, by stimulating employment and mobility ..., the focus needs to be on empowering and enabling individuals to realise their potential while at the same time helping those who are unable to do so. .... The reality is that economic and social actions at EU and national*



*level are mutually reinforcing and complementary, which links together opportunity, access and solidarity*

*EU Renewed Social Agenda, 2008, section 1*

**Keywords:**

Opportunity, Solidarity, Welfare State, Reform, Activation, EU

7830 words



## Introduction

This paper considers attitudes to state welfare in European countries, taking into account recent shifts in the way social provision is treated in political discourse. One way of analysing state welfare categorises provision into that concerned primarily with meeting a socially-agreed range of needs over the life-course and that concerned with redistribution from advantaged to disadvantaged groups (for example Roller 1998 ; Kumlin 2007). The distinction may be framed in terms of security as opposed to redistribution, in terms of horizontal versus vertical distribution, in terms of social security against welfare. Each category relates to a central theme in a different political tradition, Christian democrat and social democrat, Bismarck and Gaitskell, corporatism/conservatism and universal social citizenship, Germany and Sweden. For a number of reasons, to do with shifts in the economic, social and political contexts in which governments provide welfare, substantial changes have taken place in relation to both themes. In relation to the first, security, there is a tendency to transfer a greater share of responsibility for outcomes from state to individual. In relation to redistribution, the concern is not so much with resources as with opportunities. These two developments are reflected in the greater prominence of a proactive rather than passive discourse of social citizenship, typically with enhanced support for disadvantaged groups to take up the opportunities that society offers, and in the growth of the new public management which treats citizens increasingly as customers making choices rather than deferential clients, and service providers as entrepreneurs rather than bureaucrats.

This shift in the way practice in welfare provision is analysed is associated with a normative shift. This emerges at two levels: in relation to theories of social justice and the state, dealing with the range of benefits and services that should be provided, and to theories about how citizens should behave. The accounts of social justice developed by Rawls (2001), Miller (1999), Plant (1995), Doyal and Gough (1991) and others focus chiefly on the appropriate redistributive impact of government. More recent work on opportunity and capability tends to emphasize the range of opportunities that should be made available (Sen, 1979, Burchardt and Vizard 2007a, b). Traditional assumptions about social citizenship rested on a notion of

responsibility that emphasized a work ethic and calibrated welfare entitlement in relation to specific needs and social risks (old age, sickness, injury, disability, poverty and so on: van Oorschott 2006, Mau 2003, Svallfors, 2006, Arts and Gelissen 2001). People ought to be entitled to particular support under particular circumstances, and it is the responsibility of the community to provide this. As members of a community citizens share a responsibility not to claim inappropriately and cheat others as taxpayers. The new normative approach retains this logic but adds a further responsibility: to grasp the opportunities that are made available. When the community manages social provision increasingly through opportunities plus support and access to opportunities, its members also have a responsibility to participate by seizing and using the opportunities. The outcomes of failing to do so rest with them, and not with the community. Blame for poverty shifts in the direction of the individual.

State welfare has often been seen as the European solution to the problem of balancing the individualism and inequality of market capitalism with the universalism and shared interest of political democracy (Boix 2003). Globalisation and post-industrialism risk destabilising this settlement because they make it more difficult for the state to deliver the goods (security and redistribution to meet need) while increasing pressures to do so (Scharpf and Schmidt 2001). The opportunity-centred approach seeks to restore equilibrium. The EU's *Renewed Social Agenda* (2008, quoted as epigraph) argues that opportunity plus access to opportunity will reinforce solidarity, and that better opportunities will enhance growth by mobilising human capital more efficiently to the benefit of all. An alternative argument might suggest that the more individual approach will open up divisions between privileged and less privileged groups by transferring opportunities from the former to the latter. This issue may become more pressing as the costs of coping with the fiscal crisis and rising unemployment bear on social spending, already stressed by the demands of population ageing (OECD 2009; IMF 2009 xvii).

This paper falls into four sections examining recent developments in European social provision and the emerging emphasis on opportunity and individual responsibility, considering the contribution of an opportunity-centred approach to social solidarity and cohesion, analysing material from the 2008 European Social Survey on how

opportunity relates to solidarity among different social groups in different welfare states and presenting findings and conclusions.

## **I. Recent developments in social citizenship**

The story of the post-war development of welfare states in developed industrial nations can be told as a drama in two acts, each with its dominant normative and pragmatic assumptions, followed, perhaps, by the first scene of the uncertain response to the current crisis. This account will be brief and operate at the most general level (for more detailed analyses see Bonoli, George and Taylor-Gooby 1999; Pierson 2000 or Scharpf and Schmidt 2001). Most of the discussion identifies different frameworks or regimes of social provision (Esping-Andersen 1990, Allan and Scruggs 2004) and emphasizes a general trend, in the first act, to expansion within the various regime-types, and in the second to constraint, with some limited convergence (Swank 2005).

During the *trente glorieuses* of assured nation-state-centred growth after the second world war, governments expanded the range and level of benefits to meet popular demands. Typically the welfare state operated within assumptions of male breadwinner full employment, so that much elderly and child care was provided within the family, and the issue of whether the established gender roles promoted a fair distribution of opportunities was low on the political agenda. Different mechanisms of finance (social insurance, various kinds of taxation), entitlement (contribution record, universal allocation, need, desert) and administration (by central or local state, by insurance agency with various degrees of association with social partners) developed. In the second act, social political and economic shifts changes called these assumptions into question.

All welfare states were ‘confronted with massive challenges.. and...regardless of the political orientation of their governments, none could fully defend the achievements of their “golden age” ’ (Scharpf and Schmidt 2001, 335). Globalisation weakened the authority of national governments to control exchange rates and regulate imports and exports. It reinforced pressures to manage national affairs (including social

spending) with the object of enhancing competitiveness in a freer world market (McNamara 1998, Bardhan et al 2009). The shift towards a post-industrial economy tended to weaken the organised working class who were the political mainstay of the traditional welfare state across Europe (Jessop 2002, Freeman 1995, Standing 2009). The demands of emerging political groups, and especially of women, challenged the male worker welfare state and required an expansion of collective care services. Additional pressures from expanding elderly populations, rising health care costs and fluctuations in employment intensified the problem of escalating expenditure. The introduction of new technology threatened to render obsolete or export many of the jobs on which the core working class had relied for security and good living standards (Pierson 2001, ch3). The less deferential, more demanding stance of citizens identified by political scientists (Norris 1999) brought home the limitations of traditional approaches to governments.

These pressures led to reforms that proceeded at various speeds in different political contexts. The pace and pattern of change was affected by a number of factors: the collision between the constraints and the popularity of state welfare (Pierson 2001, 14), the fact that varying constitutional arrangements offered different opportunities to introduce radical changes (Bonoli, George and Taylor-Gooby 1999, Ferrera and Rhodes 2000), the influence of different institutional structures of welfare on sense of entitlement and of obligation (Mau 2003), the range of actors involved (levels of government, social partners, the third sector, religious bodies, Castles 1998) and the degree of entrenchment of interests committed to the *status quo* (Palier and Martin 2008; Swank 2004). Certain common features can be identified, including:

- Reforms to social security to encourage active labour market participation, both through welfare-to-work restrictions on unemployment and early retirement entitlements and through support from advisers, training and make-work-pay wage subsidy (Lodomez and Trickey 2001, EU 2008b). These reforms include the UK New Deal and Single Gateway Schemes, the German Hartz IV reforms, the French introduction of PARE and related reforms, Clinton's workfare and TANF reforms in the US and flexi-curity reforms in Denmark and the Netherlands (Cebulla et al. 2005, Clegg 2007). Further reforms seek to transfer those dependent on incapacity disability benefits into paid work.



- Work-life balance reforms including changes in employment rights, equal opportunities legislation and the expansion of pre-schooling and day care provision in order to increase the availability of parents, particularly mothers, for paid work (Daly and Rake 2007, Esping-Andersen et al. 2002).
- Pension restructuring to limit entitlements in line with demographic change, increase the required contribution periods, raise retirement ages and expand the scope of individual responsibility through supplementary private pensions (Arza and Kohli, 2008; Bonoli and Palier 2007).
- New Public Management reforms, directed at cost-efficiency and responsiveness, and concerned to decentralise budgetary responsibility and enhance the scope for competition in internal and sometimes external markets (Lane 2002, OECD 2005, Barnes and Gill 2000, McLaughlin et al. 2002). Such procedures typically expand consumer choice (for example the UK and Swedish health and education reforms, Le Grand 2007, Enthoven 2002, PMSU 2006, Chen et al 2004). Further examples are National Performance Review in the US, La Rélève in Canada and the Copernicus reforms in Belgium. In continental Europe developments proceed at a slower pace, but most countries have now introduced elements of competition and of spending constraint (Hassenteufel and Palier 2007).

The pace of development among the crowded and diverse welfare states of Europe varies and the pattern of outcomes is necessarily complex. Taken together, reform programmes have, in their various ways, shifted a proportion of responsibility for outcomes in labour market access, in pension entitlement and in managing work and family life from state to individual, while expanding the range of choices and responsibility for the outcomes of choices that rests with the citizen. They render social provision more responsive to individual demands. The reforms also constrain future spending commitments, notably in relation to pensions, while state spending continues to rise.

Whether the international political economy bearing on social provision is entering a third stage of protectionism is unclear. The evidence would be national support for



finance and some manufacturing industry and specific labour market subsidies. The argument of this paper assumes that it is not, since awareness of possible economic benefits from globalisation is likely to exceed the concerns about the immediate need for ring-fenced domestic support. Continuing trends to an active and opportunity-centred citizenship within a climate of austerity may seem more likely (OECD 2009, IMF 2009). For convenience the two core approaches to welfare policy of the post-war period, the first collectivist, expansive, if not universal, and mainly passive on the one hand, and the second more opportunity-centred, individualist, more focused and concerned to activate and transfer responsibility (and risk) from state to citizen on the other, may be summed up as ‘traditional’ and ‘modernised’.

## **II. Some conceptual issues: opportunity and solidarity**

The net impact of the shift towards an opportunity logic is twofold:

- At the pragmatic level, it allows government to devote less effort to redistribution and more to support for individuals who are assumed to respond to opportunities and incentives to move from benefits into employment, to supplement their own pensions privately or to take up training opportunities, and are encouraged through subsidies, sanctions and case management to do so. This addresses the twin pressures to curb spending and meet rising demand, a pressure redoubled by the financial crisis.
- At the normative level, it transfers a greater share of responsibility for what happens from government to individuals. This has implications for social citizenship. Passive provision implies duties to accept provision and to follow the requirements of the rules of entitlement. A more active framework implies a positive responsibility to grasp the opportunities made available because this advances both individual and common good.

An immediate issue is the relationship between opportunity and solidarity. Solidarity is an attribute of individuals as members of a group and necessarily has a collective reference. It is normally understood as concern for and recognition of a common interest, whether within a social group (as in class solidarity) or across society as a

whole (as in the conception of an active concern for the welfare of all, especially vulnerable groups, contained in the teaching of Pope John Paul II: 1987). Solidarity is of interest in welfare state studies because it provides a basis for collective welfare state provision that may include vulnerable minorities. The solidarity that advocates of the *Renewed Social Agenda* wish to advance operates thus: broadly, collectively and inclusively. Opportunity, on the other hand, is to do with the agenda of choices available to individuals.

If opportunity is to furnish a basis for solidarity both concepts must be understood in collective and inclusive terms, for example in the claim that equality of opportunity across citizens may promote collective sentiments of common interest. An extensive literature tackles this idea (for example, Sen 1979, Nussbaum 2003, Roemer 1996, 2005), and it is influential in national (Burchardt and Vizard, 2007a, b, Arndt and Volkert 2006) and international (UN 2009) policy-making. An important theme has been the limitations that may be placed on the choices people are able to make both through practical obstacles of access and lack of resources and through the conceptual issues of the assumptions people make about the range of opportunities that exist and are appropriate for them, and indeed the possibilities that additional opportunities might open up. Sen's work has been path-breaking in developing a comprehensive approach to opportunity that does not simply justify inequalities on the grounds that some people may have more extensive imaginations, desires or information so that satisfying their aspirations requires more resources (Osmani 2008). It has been criticised for its focus on individual achievement and its failure to address the collective and social nature of the construction of and response to opportunities (Dean 2009).

An opportunity approach to social provision includes both practical issues to do with the opportunities that are made available and the support that is provided to help more or less advantaged social groups take them up, and normative issues to do with the pattern of opportunities that should be available in society. The EU Agenda assumes that provision for common access will equalise opportunities and secure widespread support because citizens will recognise a shared interests. In the same way the expansion of traditional welfare states across Europe was made possible by the



support of broad cross-class coalitions (Baldwin 1990). This brings the question of how people perceive and think about opportunity-centred policies to the fore.

The normative issues in relation to opportunity, as to security and redistribution, can be addressed at two levels. At the societal level the discourse concerns fair allocations and contributions, typically understood in terms of need, desert and equality (Miller 1999, Linos and West 2003, 394-5). Rawls, von Parijs and others add a concern with efficiency and incentives. From the opportunity perspective, social justice also includes the range of choices and the capacity to exercise them. A separate literature addresses popular attitudes. A strong theme in relation to traditional provision concerns the work ethic, individual responsibility to contribute to society through paid work, and how this interacts with benefit entitlements (van Oorschott 2006, Mau and Veghte 2007 ch 1). The corresponding theme for the opportunity approach concerns what might be termed an achievement ethic: the extent to which individuals take responsibility for grasping opportunities so that they take a greater share of the responsibility for outcomes (Lepianka et al 2009, Roemer 1996, 5-8, 2005).

In the logic of the traditional security plus redistribution approach, social provision can only advance solidarity if both societal and the individual normative concerns are satisfied, if there is a reasonable measure of consensus that the allocation of benefits and services is fair and that benefits are regulated in ways that do not damage the work ethic (Dwyer 2004, Handler 2004, Murray 1984). For the opportunity welfare state, the issues at the societal level concern the fair allocation of opportunities. Here a discourse about social mobility and privilege has been important (Blanden et al 2005, Jantti et al 2006). At the individual level the issues of responsibility are now more concerned with grasping the opportunities available, provide the allocation of opportunities is seen as more or less fair. Irresponsibility consists not so much as claiming support to which one is not (morally) entitled as failing to behave in a way that will advance one's security. Blame for outcomes shifts to the individual for failing to respond to opportunities. Solidarity and a stable welfare settlement are vulnerable to disagreements about the extent to which people fail as active and engaged citizens.

This discussion suggests that in addition to the impact of differences in material interest and perceived material interest, normative considerations about fairness and also about the impact of provision on individual behaviour must be taken into account. Issues of material interest are extensively discussed elsewhere. A dominant tradition starts out from class divisions and relates social welfare to stratification and to the various accommodations of differences of interest within welfare state regimes (Korpi 1983, Esping-Andersen 1990). Further work adds gender interests and family relationships and responsibilities in the reproductive sphere as well as those in the productive sphere (O'Connor et al 1999, Lewis 2008). Analysis of the relationship between regime type and attitudes to state welfare indicates that the link is complex and mediated by institutional structure.

Linos and West show that groups with specific skills are more supportive of co-ordinated market economy regimes (for example, Sweden and Germany), while those with more general skills tend more to endorse more liberal regimes (2003, 404-5). This may be explained through the greater protection and opportunities that the more regulated labour market of the former regimes offers to those with specialised skills. Svallfors shows that class divisions emerge more clearly in both social democratic and corporatist regimes in which struggles over social provision are politicised through an institutional structure which includes these issues in the negotiations of social partners than in liberal regimes in which the corresponding institutions are weaker (2007). These findings indicate that class differences, gender and regime need to be taken into account in any analysis of the impact of particular policy approaches on attitudes to state welfare. In addition, the analysis of class must distinguish between middle and working class and also allow the skilled insider groups to be distinguished from unskilled, more marginal outsiders, to whom a co-ordinated regime has less to offer.

At the level of attitudes the above discussion distinguishes between pragmatic concerns about the direction of policy and normative judgements at two levels: societal to do with fair allocation and individual to do with the effect of provision on morally desirable behaviour. The analysis in the next section includes as explanatory variables measures of professional and managerial, skilled working and unskilled working class status, self-rated income, directly related to perceived interests in

redistribution, gender, social characteristics that relate to social provision and to opportunities (age and education), general political orientation, which may play a part in influencing attitudes to social provision, and attitude factors covering endorsement of provision and societal and individual judgements.

The overall research question concerns the relationship between the two policy stances, the traditional approach which stresses security and redistribution and the more recent developments which place emphasis on providing access to opportunities and individual responsibility to take them up, and solidarity. Social provision has played a major role in enhancing trust in government and in securing the stability of the traditional welfare state settlement. The relationship between a more open opportunity-centred approach and an inclusive society-wide solidarity is now on the agenda. Further questions concern the relationship between regime type, opportunity and solidarity and how this is mediated by divisions and perceptions of interests. The considerations above indicated that opportunity brings normative issues to the fore. We hypothesize that attitudes to welfare will play a strong role alongside material divisions of interest, that divisions of interest will be influenced by regime and class position, and that normative judgements will be of considerable importance within the field of attitudes.

### **III The analysis**

The factors influencing trust in government and support for state welfare are complex. Analysis that seeks to take into account the influence of the different regime formations in Europe speedily encounters the problem of too many variables and too few cases. For this reason we select three countries to compare: Sweden, Germany and the UK. These are the leading European examples of the three main regime types identified by Esping-Andersen and including the main representatives of both the co-ordinated and liberal market varieties of capitalism identified by Soskice (1999).

Table 1 gives some recent information bearing on equality of outcome and of opportunity. Sweden is most equal in terms of equality of outcome (poverty, replacement rate, inequality, columns 1 to 3) and equality of opportunity (columns 4

to 8), indicated by education spending, active labour market support and mobility, according to Blanden, Machin and Gregg's index (2005), followed by Germany and the UK. This pattern reflects the distinction typically made between social democratic Sweden with its universalist and integrative policies and established supportive active labour market, corporatist Germany with more emphasis on the established status order and the more liberal-leaning UK in which the responsibility to take up opportunities rests more firmly with the individual (Esping Andersen 1990, ch 2). Since policy agenda are changing rapidly, it is helpful to use recent data and this study considers material from the 2008 round of the European Social Survey. ESS is a high quality survey that covers a range of European countries with a questionnaire that includes aspects of welfare and social provision and attitudes to governance (ESF, 2007).

#### TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

The analysis uses ordinary least squares regression models to examine the relationship between the factors identified in the discussion above and trust in government. Trust in government is chosen as the dependent variable because it represents general acceptance of the existing political settlement and is a good foundation for society-wide solidarity. The political science tradition that examines legitimacy shows that government welfare activity is an important factor in promoting trust in government (Gilley 2006, Rothstein and Uslaner 2005, Huang et al 2007). In this paper we use recent data to analyse how the traditional welfare state approach, summed up in the security and redistribution tradition relates to trust in government compared with the new opportunity-centred tradition.

Variables representing trust in government in general for each country were constructed through a factors analysis of five variables covering trust in parliament, the legal system, the police, politicians and political parties (principal components analysis, varimax rotation). This identified a single factor in each case as explaining about two-thirds of the variance (Table 2). This suggests a strong underlying theme to the concept in people's attitudes and provides a good basis for modelling trust in the general political settlement.

## TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

The explanatory variables fall into three groups: those relating to material interests and the political articulation of those interests (social class and perceived inequalities of income); those relating to social circumstances relevant to needs and articulated needs for social provision (age and gender), general political orientation on a left-right scale and level of education, both of which have been shown in previous work to relate to attitudes to social provision (Svallfors 2006) and those relating to attitudes to welfare state policy. Details of the variables are given in the Appendix. Table 3 shows the national differences in attitudes to social provision. The first four rows refer to traditional approaches, the second four to opportunity approaches. Following the earlier discussion we distinguish policy-centred concerns (the first two rows in each section) which may be influenced by national provision and personal interest, from normative concerns. We also distinguish between broader normative attitudes to social justice (rows three and seven) and moralised concerns about individual behaviour (rows four and eight). Choice of variables is influenced to some extent by available data. For the traditional approach, policy attitudes refer to spending and redistribution, social justice is to do with a more equal society and behaviour with the view that benefits don't make people lazy. For the opportunity-centred approach, policy attitudes refer to expanding job opportunities and child care, fairness to equal opportunities and behaviour effort in searching for work. Details of variables are given in the Appendix.

## TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Policy attitudes reveal a stronger endorsement of opportunity policies than of the traditional approach. The lower level of support for further expansion of child care in Sweden probably relates to existing high levels of provision. Increased spending, implying tax rises, is much less popular. Most people support the more egalitarian and also the equal opportunity notions of social justice. In a democratic and open society, equal opportunities are immediately attractive. Moralistic attitudes to the impact of social provision on individual behaviour show the strongest gradient across different regimes. Only minorities in any country disagree with the view that welfare damages the work ethic and only minorities in Germany and the UK believe that

unemployed people pursue job opportunities strenuously. This opens the possibility that the opportunity-centred welfare state, just as the traditional welfare state, may allow people to pass moral censure on disadvantaged groups, on the grounds they are not trying hard enough.

The pattern of responses reveals some differences in the directions that might be expected on the basis of welfare regime: perceived better availability of child care and less concern that people may not take up their responsibilities in an opportunity framework in social democratic Sweden, less support for tax and spend and less pragmatic and normative support for the opportunity approach in social insurance corporatist Germany; moralistic concerns about both approaches to intervention and lower support for equality but enthusiasm in principle for equal opportunities in the more liberal UK. However the strong and widespread endorsement of equal opportunities in principle and the equally powerful reservations about whether individuals devote appropriate effort to pursuing opportunities in two of the countries indicates a more marked division than that between social equality values and work ethic moralism. The implication is that the moves towards an opportunity-centred welfare state may in practice create possibilities for dissensus and instability in liberal and corporatist countries.

We next examined the contribution of the various factors to social solidarity from a traditional and a modernised perspective in each of the three exemplar countries using multivariate techniques (Table 4). The models are those described above, including material interest, social circumstances relevant to provision, and welfare attitudes for equality/ security and opportunity approaches. As is common in such analyses, R-squared statistics are relatively low indicating that only between 10 and 20 per cent of variance is explained in the models. Trust in government in general is likely to be influenced by many other factors than those included, especially current national political issues and factors relevant to particular component trust items. Collinearity is at acceptable levels, with tolerance statistics in no case lower than .59. There are substantial similarities in patterns of socio-demographic variables between the two models for each country indicating stability.

TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE



## IV Findings and conclusions

In all cases welfare attitudes are more important in explaining general trust in government than the other items, suggesting that discourse as well as interests plays an important role in the relation between welfare reform and cohesion. In relation to social class and self-rated income group, which we argue reflect material interest, the differences are not marked but are in expected directions. Middle class and more comfortable groups are more confident in the political settlement, and the contrast is typically with the skilled rather than the unskilled working class and most marked for Sweden and then Germany rather than the UK. This is in keeping with the argument that, in a regulated labour market, redistribution of resources or opportunities is likely to damage the interests of those at the top of the working class, who may see themselves as contributing to the cost of their own benefits and resent transfers to lower skilled and more marginal groups perceived as outsiders. As Svallfors points out (2007) these effects are more likely to be articulated in social democratic or corporatist than in more open liberal systems.

Gender, interestingly, has no significant relationships, despite the fact that modernised approaches have stressed policies to rebalance paid and care work and to advance women in relation to employment. Age is most salient in the UK, where both older and younger groups endorse the settlement, in keeping with the age-related transfer system. In general those on the political right are more trusting and this effect is more marked in Sweden and to some extent Germany, again following the political articulation of welfare issues.

Pragmatic attitudes show interesting similarities between the three countries. Despite the differences in regime, support for the traditional policies of redistribution and tax and spend and, especially, the policies associated with access to opportunities is strongly linked to trust in the government settlement. However, for normative societal attitudes the general view that greater equality is associated with fairness has only a weak and non-significant relationship with trust in government, while endorsement of equal opportunities is clearly linked, especially in Sweden, but not in

the UK. Moralistic concerns about the impact of welfare policy on individual behaviour, to do with laziness in the case of traditional work ethic models and with irresponsibility for the modernised achievement ethic, tell against trust in government as expected, rather more so for the modernised approach.

The findings are clearly complex and reflex the multi-faceted nature of the object under consideration. Four points may be made.

- Differences between regime types exist, but are less marked than might be expected. The greater politicisation of social class differences in the social democratic and corporatist models is apparent.
- Attitudinal factors seem to be more important than socio-demographic or material factors in the contribution of welfare policy to trust in government and social stability. The relative strength of attitudes is somewhat more marked in relation to the new opportunity-centred approaches.
- Pragmatic considerations are important. Access as well as opportunity plays a strong role in the part played by policy in this process.
- Normative judgements are also significant, particularly so in relation to the reforms. In this area it is important to include the moralistic judgements by members of society on how social interventions shape people's behaviour as well as general themes of social justice.

The distribution of responses in Table 3 indicated broader endorsement of opportunity policies than of more traditional ones. However the low level of approval for the impact of welfare on behaviour, (outside Sweden) implies that such support may not extend to opportunity policies in practice. The coefficients in Table 4 indicate stronger associations with trust, especially for the attitude measures, in the case of the opportunity model. This shows that the differences between individuals in these areas are more closely aligned with trust in government and suggests possibilities for social dissensus along the lines defined by the new approach to welfare. The strength of the normative individual attitudes indicates that debates over moral issues are

increasingly important in the relationship between social provision and social solidarity in the reformed welfare state.

These findings suggest that the new opportunity-centred approaches in social policy can provide a basis for solidarity just as much as the security/ equality approach of the previous welfare settlement, provided that policies which enhance access to opportunities are included. Material interests (class and income) are, if anything, rather more weakly evident in relation to the new approach. The high level of endorsement of equal opportunities in principle implies that political rhetoric based on this theme may find a receptive audience. However, it is not clear that such attitudes follow through into views on how individuals respond to policies. Only in Sweden, with its established and well-financed active labour market approach does a substantial group believe that unemployed people actively pursue opportunities, and even here the coefficient in Table 4 in relation to normative individual attitudes is relatively large. Elsewhere there are strong moralistic concerns and opportunity-centred welfare may provide grounds for dissensus as poorer groups are seen as failing to make the appropriate effort. Everybody supports better opportunities. Who could be against allowing people the chance to make the best of themselves? However, the new opportunity welfare state has a hard edge, to do with the extent to which it imposes responsibility on the individual so that for many people, the failure to take full advantage of what is offered is seen to merit blame and justify diminished life chances. The link between opportunity and solidarity envisaged by the EU requires a supportive and inclusive context.



**Table 1: Equality of outcome and opportunity in Sweden, Germany and the UK**

	<i>Equality of Outcome Policies</i>			<i>Equality of Opportunity Policies</i>					<i>Other</i>	
	<i>Gini coefficient mid-2000s</i>	<i>Poverty rate 2006 Eurostat</i>	<i>Replacement rate</i>	<i>Mobility</i>	<i>ALMP Spend % GDP</i>	<i>Education spend % GDP</i>	<i>Gender pay gap % Eurostat</i>	<i>% Tertiary education</i>	<i>Social Spending % GDP</i>	<i>Unempl 15-24 2008 %</i>
<b>Sweden</b>	0.25	12.00	77.00	.14	1.61	7.00	17.60	30.60	33.60	20.2
<b>Germany</b>	0.28	13.00	76.00	.17	1.19	4.90	22.70	21.60	31.10	10.4
<b>UK</b>	0.35	19.00	65.00	.27	0.53	5.30	24.30	22.60	23.30	15.0

Source: OECD SocX, education, labour market and social policy databases and Eurostat for poverty rates, unemployment and the gender pay gap. Blanden, J, Machin, S and Gregg, P (2005) 'Final Report to Sutton Trust: Intergenerational Mobility in Europe and North America, CEP, LSE for opportunity

Replacement rate is for a one earner, two child family after 60 months unemployment.

Poverty is the Eurostat at risk of poverty rate after social transfers.

Gender pay gap is the gap between women's to men's earnings for full time workers aged 18-65 as a percentage of male earnings as estimated by Eurostat. It does not include earnings in the informal economy.

Employment Protection strictness: OECD index of protection against dismissal, regulation of temporary employment and regulation of collective action.

Opportunity: Intergenerational partial correlation between sons earnings when in thirties and fathers when children teenagers, see text for further details

**Table 2: Trust in government: factor analyses**

	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>UK</i>
Trust in country's parliament	.826	.827	.857
Trust in the legal system	.802	.748	.768
Trust in the police	.696	.622	.638
Trust in politicians	.886	.863	.891
Trust in political parties	.838	.828	.862
<i>Eigenvalue</i>	3.30	3.20	3.27
<i>% variance explained</i>	69.9	61.2	65.4

**Table 3 Attitudes to Inequality: % taking pro-welfare position**

	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>UK</i>
<b><i>Welfare attitudes:</i></b>			
<b><i>Traditional</i></b>			
Govt increase spending	43	23	38
Redistribution	64	65	58
Equal society	57	55	51
Work ethic	39	32	19
<b><i>Welfare Attitudes:</i></b>			
<b><i>Modernised</i></b>			
Job opportunities	67	64	67
Child care opportunities	34	74	72
Equal opportunities	72	74	72
Job search effort	60	39	29
<i>N</i>	1760	2607	2290



**Table 4: Interests, socio-demographics, attitudes and trust in government in Sweden, Germany and the UK (OLS regressions, Beta weights)**

	<i>Sweden</i>		<i>Germany</i>		<i>UK</i>	
	<i>Security/</i>	<i>Opportunity</i>	<i>Security/</i>	<i>Opportunity</i>	<i>Security/</i>	<i>Opportunity</i>
	<i>equality</i>	<i>/</i>	<i>equality</i>	<i>/</i>	<i>equality</i>	<i>/</i>
		<i>responsibility</i>		<i>responsibility</i>		<i>responsibility</i>
<b><i>Interest</i></b>						
Middle class	.02	.01	.02	.02	.03	.00
Skilled working	-.13**	-.07*	-.08**	-.06**	-.05	-.04
Unskilled working	-.06*	-.02	-.02	-.01	.00	-.03
High income	.08**	.06*	.12**	.10**	.07**	.05*
Low income	-.03	-.08**	-.08**	-.07**	-.06*	-.05*
Gender	.01	.01	.00	.01	.01	.02
<b><i>Social characteristics</i></b>						
Aged 60+	-.04	-.04	-.01	-.01	.06*	.06*
Aged 30 -	.04	.07**	.04*	.03	.09**	.05*
Education level	.08**	.00	.03*	.00	-.04	-.04
Politics, left to right	.12**	.09**	.05*	.05**	.06**	.02
<b><i>Welfare attitudes</i></b>						
Increase spending / job opportunities	.09**	.12**	.12**	.17**	.08**	.18**
Redistribution / child care opportunities	.15**	.21**	.10**	.19**	.14**	.18**
Equal society/ equal opps.	..02	.13**	.02	.06**	.02	.04
Work ethic/ job search effort	.11**	.16**	.06**	.13**	.12**	.10**
<i>R-squared</i>	.11	.18	.09	.15	.09	.14
<i>Tolerance stat.</i>	.59	.62	.64	.65	.62	.61
<i>N</i>	1500	1243	2145	2112	1885	1726

### Appendix: variables used in the analysis

Variables are scored as dummies: 1 yes, 0 no unless otherwise stated. Scoring is reversed in some cases so that pro-welfare attitudes are positive.

<i>Dependent variable</i>		
Trust in Government	See Table 4	11 point scale Scored 1: no trust – 11 complete trust
<i>Social class</i>		
Middle	Professional and managerial	Iscoco groups 1000-2999 22.4% sample
Skilled working	Skilled working class	Iscoco groups 7000-8999, 22.1% of sample
Unskilled working	Routine semi and unskilled working class	Iscoco groups 5000-5999, 9000-9999, 23.4% of sample
<i>Self-rated income</i>		
High income	Self-rated comfortably off	29.7% sample
Low income	Self-rated hard up	25.4 per cent
Gender	Woman	52.7 per cent
<i>Social characteristics</i>		
Age 60+	above 60	27.9 per cent
Age 30-	under 30	21.8 per cent
Education	completed level of education	0 primary incomplete; 1 primary complete; 2 lower secondary; 3 upper secondary; 4 post school, not tertiary; 5 lower tertiary; 6 upper tertiary
Left-right scale	Self placement on scale	11 point scale : 1 left to 11 right
<i>Welfare attitudes:</i>	see Table 3	
<i>Traditional</i>		
Govt increase spending	Govt should decrease/increase taxes and spending	11 point scale: 1 decrease – 11 increase
Redistribution	The government	5 point scale; strongly agree to strongly

	should reduce differences in income levels	disagree (scoring reversed in model)
Equal society	for a fair society, differences in income should be small	5 point scale; strongly agree to strongly disagree (scoring reversed in model)
Work ethic	Welfare services and benefits make the poor lazy	5 point scale: strongly agree to strongly disagree (scoring reversed in model)
<b><i>Welfare Attitudes: Modernised</i></b>		
Job opportunities	Job opportunities for the young	11 point scale: 1 extremely bad – 11 extremely good
Child care opportunities	Availability of child care	11 point scale: 1 extremely bad – 11 extremely good
Equal opportunities	Important that people are treated equally and have equal opportunities	6 point scale; very much like me - not like me at all (scoring reversed in model)
Job search effort	Most unemployed people do not try to find a job	5 point scale; very much like me - not like me at all (scoring reversed in model)

All variables from ESS 2008





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