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How Processes of Policy Feedback Help Reproduce Support For The Nordic Welfare Model

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THE DYNAMICS OF STABILITY

HOW PROCESSES OF POLICY FEEDBACK HELP REPRODUCE SUPPORT FOR THE NORDIC WELFARE MODEL

by

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ENGLISH SUMMARY

This dissertation takes its starting point in the fact that a distinct welfare model exists in the Nordic countries. With roots going back to the late 19th century and growing more distinct over time, this model stands out in a number of ways. Of these I have chosen to highlight three factors where the Nordic welfare model compared to other welfare models: An extended role for the state in organizing or providing welfare to the citizens; an increased usage of welfare services in providing this welfare, epically for the elderly, the incapacitated, and children; and greater reliance on universal schemes for proving welfare. Historical studies show that support for this welfare model arose from a combination of historic factors that favoured it, and political actors who seized the opportunities. The power of these political actors has today weakened considerably, while support for the model remains fairly stable. This is the puzzle addressed by this dissertation.

To explain its stability, this dissertation turns to the Nordic welfare state itself. Institutional theories can help explain how the features that make the Nordic welfare model distinct can also affect attitudes towards the welfare state, and thereby help reproduce the model. These theories, however, often lack a micro element — that is, they do not describe these processes of attitude change at an individual level. To do so, I draw on policy feedback theory as my major theoretical framework in order to outline the social mechanisms.

This dissertation thus investigates the social mechanisms that help recreate support for the Nordic welfare model, or to rephrase the title of the dissertation, the dynamics that create stability. These social mechanisms are not specific to the Nordic welfare model, but are presumably more prevalent here, and thus help explain the stability of support for the model. Combined, the results do not point to a "master variable" that helps explain the continuous support for the Nordic welfare model, instead, the article outlines mechanisms that help create support for the Nordic welfare model, as well as two instances where the support is challenged, but not undermined. This is not an exhaustive overview of the possible social mechanism that helps generate support for the Nordic welfare model or the possible threats to the Nordic welfare model, however, I do believe it this includes some of the most important mechanisms and challenges.

DANSK RESUME

Denne afhandling tager dens udgangspunkt I det faktum, at en særlig velfærdsmodel findes i de Nordiske lande. Denne velfærdsmodel har rødder tilbage til slutningen af 1900-tallet og har, over tid, adskilt sig fra andre velfærdsmodeller på særligt tre områder: En nøglerolle for staten når det kommer til at organisere eller levere velfærd til borgerne, en større brug af velfærdsservices, især rettet imod ældre, handicappede og børn, samt en større grad af universelle velfærdsydelser. Historiske studier viser, at opbakningen til denne velfærdsmodel blev skabt gennem en kombination af faktorer der gjorde det muligt at skabe denne velfærdsmodel og politiske aktører der greb disse muligheder. Disse historiske faktorer, der hjalp med at skabe opbakning til velfærdsstaten, er dog blevet svækket med tiden, mens støtten til modellen forbliver stabil. Denne umiddelbare modsætning er denne afhandlings omdrejningspunkt.

Derfor vender jeg I denne afhandling fokus imod de nordiske velfærdsstater for at forklare denne stabilitet. Her kan institutionelle teorier hjælpe med at forklare hvordan de faktorer de får den nordiske velfærdstatsmodel til at adskille sig også kan forklare stabiliteten i opbakningen. Disse teorier beskriver dog oftest ikke hvordan disse processer med at skabe opbakning til de nordiske velfærdstater fungerer på et mikro-niveau, altså hvordan dette der gør den nordiske velfærdsmodel særligt påvirker opbakningen til velfærdsmodellen og derigennem hjælper med at reproducere den. Til at skabe sådanne mikro-forklaringer vil jeg trække på policy feedback teori, som den primære teoretiske ramme, og ud fra dette beskrive og teste sociale mekanismer der kan forklare den vedvarende opbakning til velfærdsmodellen.

Disse social mekanismer eksisterer ikke kun i de nordiske lande, men skulle være mere udbredt her, og kan dermed hjælpe med at forklare stabiliteten i opbakningen til velfærdsmodellen. Samlet set peger resultaterne ikke på en forklaring på opbakningen til den nordiske velfærdsmodel. I stedet viser resultaterne i artiklerne en række forskellige måder at skabe opbakning på, samt to tilfælde hvor opbakningen til velfærdsmodellen er under pres, men ikke forsvinder. Denne afhandling ikke kan afdække det samlede billede af mekanismer der oppebærer støtten, samt mulige trusler imod støtten til velfærdsmodellen, men jeg mener, at den behandler nogle af de vigtigste.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Troels Fage Hedegaard is trained in political science, both bachelors and master's degree (cand.scient.adm), from Aalborg University where he graduated in 2011.

From 2012 to 2015 he was affiliated with the Department of Political Science, and worked on this dissertation at the Centre for Comparative Welfare Studies.

INTRODUCTION

Copenhagen 20. April 2015

Spring has finally come to Denmark and the dissertation is finally done. The fact, that I have come so far means that I have a lot of people to give thanks to. First, a special thanks to Christan Albrekt Larsen who gave me the opportunity to write this dissertation, and who has guided me though the process as my supervisor. With supervision consisting of early encouragement, and later tougher commenters on my writings, has helped me though the processes of developing and enhancing an idea, that writing articles is. Sanne Lund Clement also deserves a thank you for getting me started on this dissertation, as she planted the idea of applying for a Ph.D. position in my head, and helped me though the process of applying.

Through the process I have also gotten a lot of help from good colleagues. Here Andreas Phil Kjærsgård deserves special thanks. Andreas started writing on his dissertation around the same time as me and over the last three years I have learned a lot by sharing article drafts, ideas, papers, and methods with him (and hopefully so have he). I did not know Andreas especially well before I started this process, but throughout he has been a great colleague, and now is a good friend. Mathis Herup Nielsen and Morten Frederiksen have also been good colleges and friends that I have come to know better since moving to the Copenhagen outpost of Aalborg University. I could start to raddle off the names of many other good colleagues from CCWS and the university in general, but at the fear of forgetting someone I will not. Instead I will generally thank the department for being a fantastic first workplace where I was always nicely greeted and curiosity is encouraged.

The final praises goes to my girlfriend Lena, who has patiently listened whenever I was frustrated about tough reviewers or uncooperative statistical models, and Astrid, who was born a little more than a year ago, and who have made me work faster, so I can get back home to the both of them.

I hope you will enjoy reading this.

Troels Fage Hedegaard

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1. THE CURRENT STABILITY

The Nordic countries are characterised by welfare states that are distinctive in terms of the scope of government responsibility, the use of welfare services, and the degree to which there is universal eligibility to receive services and benefits. This model of providing welfare grew increasingly distinct throughout the last century and today remains largely so. In this dissertation, I argue that one of the key factors behind this stability is continued public support for the welfare model. Many of the traditional sources of support for the Nordic welfare model have, however, faded in power, which prompts the question of what other sources of support exist. In trying to answer this, I explore the social mechanisms through which the Nordic welfare model creates its own support. This dissertation thus attempts to outline the dynamics that create stability.

THE STABILITY OF THE NORDIC WELFARE MODEL

In early 2013 the magazine *The Economist* proclaimed the Nordic countries *the next supermodel*: "If you had to be reborn any anywhere in the world as a person with average talents and income, you would want to be a Viking." The magazine attributed this Rawlsian statement to the fact that: "The Nordics cluster at the top of league tables of everything from economic competitiveness to social health to happiness" (The Economist 2013).[1] Most, if not all, of these socially desirable outcomes have been linked to the fact that the states in the Nordic countries play a key role in the lives and welfare of their citizens (Wilkinson, Pickett 2010, Rothstein 1998, Esping-Andersen 1990, Alestalo, Hort & Kuhnle 2009, Dølvik et al. 2014).

This active role of the Nordic states in the production of welfare goods has been given different theoretical labels, of which Esping-Andersen's (1990) description of the social democratic welfare regime and Titmuss' (1974) account of an institutional redistributive model stand as the seminal works.[2] The works of Esping-Andersen (1990) and Titmuss (1974) have since formed the basis of a number of theoretical and empirical studies that have described the existence of a distinct Nordic or Scandinavian welfare model (Abrahamson 1999, Alestalo, Hort &

[1] Although it should be noted that many of the features of the "supermodel" that *The Economist* (2013) praised — public sector reforms, extensive e-government initiatives, and private contractors in the public sector — have very little to do with what separates the Nordic countries from other welfare models.

[2] Titmuss' (1974) description also included the UK, which at the time favoured the Beveridgean welfare model that relies on universal welfare benefits and services, but has since favoured a more liberal welfare model (Esping-Andersen 1990).

Kuhnle 2009, Bonoli 1997, Dølvik et al. 2014, Kildal, Kuhnle 2005, Kautto 2010, Greve 2007, Andersen et al. 2007). Although there are some differences in what studies of the Nordic welfare model emphasise as uniquely Nordic, they also share a number of similarities. Based on the similarities I have chosen to highlight three that will form the basis of my understanding of what distinguishes the Nordic welfare model from other welfare models.[3]

First, studies of welfare states in the Nordic countries all refer to the fact that the state has the key responsibility for the provision of welfare to its citizens. This has been described by scholars as "Nordic stateness", where the state becomes the central authority in organising the way welfare goods are produced, and the principles according to which they are distributed (Esping-Andersen 1996, Sabbagh, Vanhuysse 2006).[4] Secondly, the studies of the Nordic welfare model stress that the greater responsibility of the state is especially prevalent in service and care tasks, which in other welfare models are provided by other entities such as families, civil society, or the market (see Kautto 2010 who uses OECD social spending data to show this difference between the welfare models). Finally, studies point to the fact that the Nordic welfare states distinguish themselves from other welfare states by awarding a comparatively larger degree of welfare according to universal criteria, that is, on the basis of citizenship.

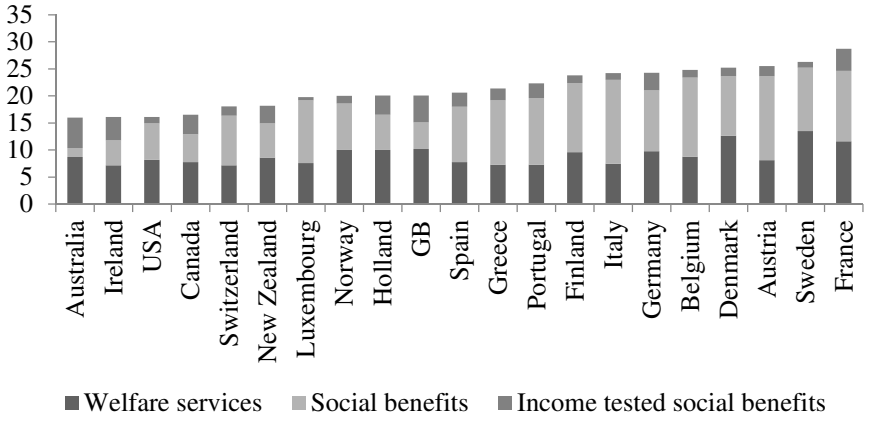
In this definition of Nordic countries and the Nordic welfare model, I will include Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Finland, even though some studies consider Finland to belong to another family or regime of welfare states, depending on data and statistical method (for an overview of studies on this see: Arts, Gelissen 2010). This omits Iceland from the definition, as studies have found the Icelandic welfare model to be more of a hybrid, with features of both the Nordic and Anglo-Saxon welfare model (Gissurarson 2014).

[3] Table 5 in the appendix provides an overview of what six of the texts describe as characteristic for the Nordic welfare states. Though the authors emphasize different characteristics I found five that are consistently emphasized (see Greve 2007 for a similar overview). Of the five characteristics I have chosen to use three in my definition of what sets the Nordic welfare model apart from other welfare models. This leaves the Nordic welfare models ability to equality, including gender equality, and the interplay between the welfare state and the labour market, as important characteristic that I do not cover. This was done in part to limit the scope of the project and in part because these subject where also part of another thesis in the same overall research project (Kjærsgård, 2015).

[4] The responsibility for providing welfare does not, however, mean that the state always produces welfare, and increasingly the Nordic countries have begun using private companies to this end. This does not challenge the states' responsibility, as the state still pays for the provision and carries the blame if something goes wrong. Some scholars have, however, argued that privatisation of production also could start a process of gradual privatisation of responsibility (Hacker 2004, Blomqvist 2004).

That the existence of a distinct Nordic welfare model is not just a theoretical construction, as will be demonstrated in Figure 1 below, which presents the social spending for a select group of OECD countries. In Figure 1 the total social spending in the countries is divided into welfare services and social benefits, with the share of social benefits that are income tested marked separately. The figure relies on 2007 data, which is preferred over newer data, as it allows for the subdivision of the social spending data by drawing on calculations from Adema, Fron, and Ladaique (2011). Total social spending is used as a rough measure of the state's role in welfare production, whereas social spending and income tested benefits are proxies for spending on welfare services and the degree of universalism in social benefits, respectively.

Figure 1: Public social spending in select OECD countries. Presented as spending on welfare services, social benefits and income tested social benefits in percent of GDP for 2007.



Sources: The total social spending is based on the OECD Social Expenditure database, while the share of social benefits that are income tested are calculated based on Adema, Fron, & Ladaique (2011).

Figure 1 shows that there is variation in public social spending between countries, as Australia, Ireland, USA and Canada have the lowest total spending of just above 15 percent of GDP. At the other end, France tops the scale with nearly double as much total social spending.[5] Consistent with the description of Nordic welfare

[5] This, however, does not mean that there is much difference in total spending on welfare between the Western welfare states. Based on social expenditure data, which also includes private spending on

states taking greater responsibility for the provision of welfare, they also tend to cluster at the top of social spending. The Nordic exception to this pattern is Norway, which ranks in the lower half of the countries on total social spending as a percent of GDP. This is because Norway is a much richer country when measured by GDP per capita, which lowers the relative size of the welfare state (Green-Pedersen 2004). Figure 1 also shows that the Nordic countries have the highest share of social spending on welfare services, which has also prompted use of the term "social democratic service economies" to describe the Nordic countries (Iversen, Wren 1998). A more detailed breakdown of this data on welfare services by Adema, Fron, and Ladaique (2011) shows that most Western countries, including the Nordic countries, spend around six percent of their GDP on public healthcare. The areas where the Nordic countries particularly differentiate themselves are on non-health welfare services, which include care for children, the elderly, and the disabled. For instance, the Nordic countries spend between 1.5 and 2.5 percent of GDP on public care for the elderly; figures only match by Japan and Holland, while the rest of the Western countries spend less than 0.5 percent of GDP (own calculations, based on the OECD social spending data from 2009). Finally, the figure shows that income tested social benefits are the lowest part of social spending in the Nordic countries. This is not a direct measure of the degree of universalism, but can be used as a proxy for it, as it shows that the Nordic countries rely on other policy designs. Studies have shown that the Nordic countries do rely more on universal benefits, while the Central and Southern European countries rely more on contributions-based social benefits (Esping-Andersen 1990, Greve 2007, Castles 2008).

The picture painted by Figure 1 is of the Nordic welfare states that are comparatively more alike than they are internally different. This fits the conclusion made by the bulk of the literature on welfare models of a distinct welfare model existing in the Nordic countries (Esping-Andersen 1990, Alestalo, Hort & Kuhnle 2009, Dølvik et al. 2014, 1999).

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welfare (both mandatory and voluntary) and tax incentives, Ademan, Fron, and Ladaique reach (2011) the conclusion that: "Accounting for both the tax system and the role of private social benefits reveals that social spending levels are similar in countries often thought to have very different gross public social expenditure levels" (32). Using this total measure, they find that the Nordic countries come within a few percentage points of GDP of countries that are often thought to be low spenders of welfare like the US and Australia. This suggests the existence of a "substitution effect" between the modes of providing welfare: state, civil society, and market (Esping-Andersen 1990, Lindbom 2011, Adema, Ladaique 2005). Similar gross levels of spending, however, should not be confused with similar outcomes; for instance, Castles and Obinger (2007) show that bigger net spenders get more "distributional bang for their buck" (220).

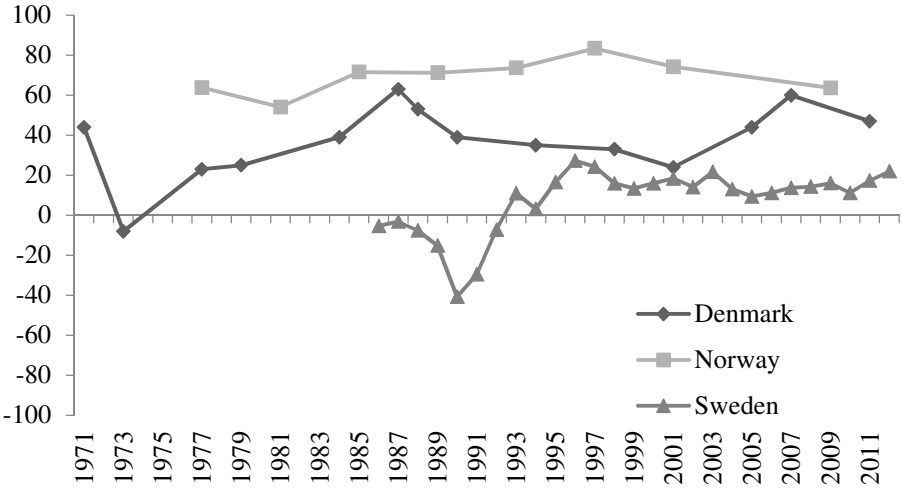
The Nordic welfare model, however, does not only produce the positive societal outcomes described by *The Economist*. The welfare states have traditionally faced criticism for producing a number of unintended negative effects. One example of this is the argument that generous social benefits, which are a mainstay of the Nordic welfare model, create poverty traps, where the economic incentives do not support employment in a low income job, and may even support a "culture of dependency", even though evidence of the latter seems to be based more on anecdote than fact (Somers, Block 2005, Murray 1984). Another, politically conservative, argument is that when the government takes extensive responsibility for producing welfare this can undermine or crowd out other means of welfare, such as the family or civil society (Putnam, Leonardi & Nanetti 1993). Another line of argument is that the growth of the Nordic welfare states might be difficult to rein in. This argument was presented by the Danish welfare commission (Andersen et al. 2007), based on a combination of the theory of Baumol's cost disease, which states that the relative costs of labour will increase in labour intensive tasks such as care, and Wagner's law, which states that the demands for the care tasks will increase faster than the economy grows. Following this logic to its conclusion, the relative size of the welfare state will have to continue expanding relative to the general economy in order to maintain the same level of welfare, which has been argued as hurting the economy.

Without listing the complete range of positive and negative outcomes, it seems safe to conclude that the Nordic welfare model, like other welfare models, produces both. Adopting the definition of Mau (2003), modern Western welfare states can be viewed as "the major institutional arrangement of western countries that contribute to a socially accepted allocation of resources among the members of a given society" (1). This definition of welfare, which builds on Easton's (1965) classic definition of politics as the "authoritative allocation of value for a society" (3), thus contends that the existence of the Nordic welfare model to be a democratic choice. Although there are unquestionably other factors helping to reproduce the Nordic welfare model, such as institutional inertia (Pierson 2001) and the "stickiness" of the idea of a Nordic model (Cox 2004), public support is a key factor if the welfare states in the Nordic countries are to remain stable.[6]

[6] The overall conclusion in the literature has been that the welfare states of the Nordic welfare model have remained fairly stable and distinct (Alestalo, Hort & Kuhnle 2009, Dølvik et al. 2014, Kautto 2010, Greve 2007, Fritzell et al. 2005), although some scholars have argued the contrary (Cox 2004, and in part Abrahamson 2003). In this respect, it is important to stress that stability entails that welfare states of the Nordic model can change as long as they remain distinct in the features outlined above. This is, however, not the focus of this dissertation, and I will therefore mostly rely on the conclusions of the literature and social spending data (Figures 1 and 3) to document the stability.

There are unfortunately no surveys that document support for the welfare state or welfare policies both comparatively and over a number of years. For a view of attitudes over time, I will use national surveys, which include attitudes towards the welfare state over at least 30 years. The questions in the election surveys are, however, worded quite differently and the levels of support are therefore not comparable. I can, however, examine whether the overall level of support favours the welfare state and whether there is overall stability in that level of support. The support for the welfare state is measured for Sweden, Denmark, and Norway. Unfortunately, the Finnish Election Barometer does not include questions on attitudes to the welfare state or social spending which are replicated more than twice. Figure 2 shows the overall support for the welfare state in the three countries as opinion balances, which measure the support for welfare state spending subtracted resistance against welfare state spending. Answers that do not indicate support for or against the welfare state and "don't know" answers have been included in the calculation, but do not count for or against. This creates a single figure which indicates the overall support for, or resistance against, the welfare states.

Figure 2: Attitudes towards the welfare state in Sweden, Denmark, and Norway. Presented as opinion balances from 1971 to 2012.



Notes: Question and source for each country - Sweden: "Reduce the public sector" from the SOM surveys. Denmark: "With whom do you agree the most? The social reforms that have been carried out in this country should be maintained at least at the present level, or social reforms have gone too far and

people should manage without social security more than they do currently" from the National election survey. Norway: "In our opinion, in the future, do you think social benefits should be reduced, kept as they are, or expanded?" from the National Election Survey.

Figure 2 shows that there is overall support for welfare state spending in the three countries, as the opinion balances are generally in the positive range of the balances. The figure also shows that these attitudes towards the welfare state are stable overall throughout the period. There are, however, two major discrepancies in this pattern of stability, the first being in Denmark in 1973 and the second in Sweden in the late 1980s and early 1990s, where the balances dip into the negative range of the opinion balance, and the overall pattern of stability is broken. In both cases, the dip in support can be attributed to events that undermined support for the welfare state. In the Danish case, the dip was caused by a general crisis in support for the political system, as well as criticism of the welfare state by the Progress Party in Denmark (Wilensky 1975, Glans 1984), whereas the dip in support for the welfare state seems to been caused by a crisis in the banking system and general economic unrest (Englund 1999).[7] This shows that otherwise stable support for the welfare states can be undermined, as least for short periods.

Comparative surveys have also documented the support for the welfare state and as opposed to the national surveys presented above with similar questions. In this respect, the role of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) government modules (the fourth module of this, from 2006, is the only one to include all the Nordic countries) and the fourth round of the European Social Survey (ESS, from 2008) are especially interesting, since they include all the Nordic countries. The existence of comparative surveys, however, is a relatively new phenomenon, and does not allow for tracing the Nordic countries back in time. The results of studies using these surveys do point to the Nordic countries being very similar in terms of support for the welfare state. The results also indicate, although with more uncertainty, that Nordic citizens display comparatively higher levels of support for welfare state spending and government responsibility than other western European citizens (Svallfors 2012, Larsen 2008b, Jæger 2006, Bean, Papadakis 1998, Linos, West 2003).

[7] Using an index of spending preferences from the Swedish Welfare Surveys, Svallfors (2011) finds support to be stable throughout the period. The dip in the support for the welfare state might thus be caused by the political nature of the measure, as will be discussed in more detail in Chaper 5, and people turning their backs on the political system rather than the welfare state. The same can be argued to be the case in Denmark in 1973, although none of the spending measures stretch that far back (Stubager, Holm & Smidstrup 2013).

When combined, the national and comparative surveys demonstrate an overall pattern of stable and strong support for the Nordic welfare model. In the next chapter I argue that many of the political, economic, and societal factors that helped create popular support for the welfare state have since faded in strength. This suggests that other mechanisms help sustain support for the welfare model and the research question of this dissertation is thus how support for the Nordic welfare model is then reproduced: *Why do the inhabitants of the Nordic countries continually support a Nordic welfare model?* It can be argued that this research question has a stability bias, and therefore a sub-research question is added: *Are there groups or policies where this support is declining*? This prompts me to look not only at potential sources of stability, but also at critical cases where there is potential for change in the support for the Nordic welfare model.

CHAPTER 2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORDIC MODEL

In this chapter, I first provide an overview of the historic explanations of how a distinct welfare model developed in the Nordic countries, and secondly, I outline the explanations of how the popular support for this welfare model was created.

Esping-Andersen (1990) argues that there is no "master variable" that explains the growth of the welfare states, and thus why the Nordic welfare states developed differently from other Western nations. There are, however, historical studies that point to societal and historic differences that led the Nordic countries to favour a different welfare model.

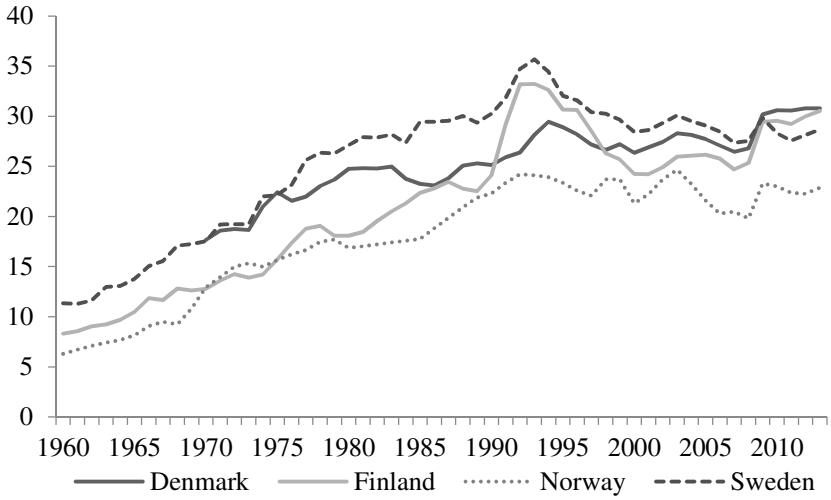
The development of the Nordic welfare states followed similar paths, although at varied speeds, with Denmark and Sweden as early frontrunners and Norway and Finland as laggards. The first social policies were enacted in the Nordic countries in the 1890s, and by the end of the 1930s they offered a generally similar range of policies. These early traces of the current welfare model focused on providing protection against social risks such as sickness, unemployment, and old age for the working population (see Alestalo, Hort & Kuhnle 2009 for an overview of the policies and years). Kuhnle (2011) argues that although the inspiration to enact the laws came from Germany, they were organised differently than Bismarck's compulsory social insurances. Instead, the social policies were often voluntary insurances that were financially supplemented by the state, which allowed the Nordic countries to more easily move towards universal policies later. Baldwin (1990) also argues that the universal policies often where enacted as the result of political compromises, as will be described in more detail later in the chapter (Østergård 1992).

This development continued throughout the 1900s, and the foundation of the current welfare model was laid during this "golden age", from around 1930 to 1960. In this period, the Nordic welfare states also grew to become more distinct from the other Western welfare states (Kuhnle 2011, Petersen 2011). Petersen (2011) argues that this convergence of the Nordic welfare states took place with help from the trans-national policy learning between the Nordic countries. A long-standing tradition of cooperation between the countries created a strong community for

sharing ideas on policy development and even extending common social rights among Nordic citizens. This led the Nordic countries to favour similar, and to high degree universal, solutions for welfare policies. Some studies have also pointed out the existence of democratic institutions, such as a democratic and consensus-based political culture as important for the establishment of a Nordic welfare model. This led the Nordic states down a reform path where the welfare state acted as the venue for class struggle (Alestalo, Hort & Kuhnle 2009, Østergård 1992). Later, the Nordic welfare model came to serve as a symbol with which the Nordic citizens could identify, when comparing themselves with the outside world, which also added to the popularity of the model (Petersen 2011, Larsen 2008a).

Part of the development of the size of the Nordic welfare states is illustrated below in Figure 3, which tracks developments in total social spending as a percentage of GDP from 1960 until 2014.

Figure 3: Social spending in the Nordic countries. Presented in percentage of GDP from 1960 to 2014.



Source: Based on OECD social spending data. The data from Denmark is, however, only included from 1970 onwards.

Figure 3 shows that average social spending in the four Nordic countries increased from around ten percent of the GDP in 1960 to around 30 percent of the GDP in 2013. Overall, this demonstrates a consistent growth in the relative size of the welfare states from 1960 to the early 1990s, when growth is succeeded by a stable level of spending. The spike and subsequent fall in social spending around 1992–1993 is tied, respectively, to low and high growth in the economies, which affects the need for social benefits and the relative size of the welfare state. This is the "dependent variable problem" that arises when tracking with a measure relative to the size of the total economy (Green-Pedersen 2004). In spite of this, the figure does show how the Nordic welfare states developed over time and today remain fairly stable in terms of share of the total economy (Kuhnle 2000, van Kersbergen 2000).

As for development on an individual country basis, Figure 3 shows that Sweden and Denmark have been frontrunners in terms of social spending throughout the period. Finland has lagged behind at times, due to being less economically developed (Alestalo, Hort & Kuhnle 2009). In Finland, we also see the economic crisis hitting proportionally harder, and Finland experienced a negative growth rate of 14 percent from 1991 to 1994, with unemployment rapidly increasing from 3 to 18 percent (Timonen 2003). Norway also seems to be lagging behind, but this is caused by the country being richer than the other Nordic countries, and the welfare state thus taking up a smaller part of the total economy.

HISTORIC SOURCES OF POPULAR SUPPORT FOR THE WELFARE STATE

The second part of this chapter outlines theories about how the development of welfare states has gathered public support. There is not an explicit focus on the Nordic model or Nordic countries in the theories, as they more generally deal with how support for a welfare state is generated. The theories will, however, be related to the Nordic model in the discussion of their applicability to the stability of public support.

The earliest attempts to explain the development of welfare states come from the functionalist "logic of industrialism" theories, which argue that the development of the welfare states is a natural by-product of the progression of the economy (Wilensky, Lebeaux 1965, Kerr et al. 1960). As the economy changes the society chances and new social problems arise, which creates popular demand for more and possibly new types of social protection. For instance, in the newer version of this argument, known as the "compensation hypothesis", it is argued that citizens in

small open economies will demand more protection as economic globalisation increases, since it leaves them more vulnerable (Katzenstein 1985, Rodrik 1998). This "logic of industrialism" argument explains why some citizens demand more welfare (for a test of the micro foundations of this argument see Walter 2010), and the argument does seem to fit the Nordic countries nicely, as they all have small open economies. However, although these theories could successfully explain the somewhat similar trajectories of the Western welfare states in the "golden age", there are difficulties in using them to explain the development demonstrated in Figure 1 (see also Brooks, Manza 2007 for more on this argument). Why did some welfare states come to rely more heavily on the state while others produce welfare through other means? The theories offer little explanation of why a Nordic welfare model developed or how it remains stable (Alestalo, Hort & Kuhnle 2009).

Critiques of the functionalist theories point to the fact that they lack a description of the actors behind welfare state development and reproduction. This can be found in the Marxist approach to explaining welfare state development and sustainability, known as the power resources theory (Korpi 1983, Korpi, Palme 1998). This theory points to the power of left-wing parties and labour unions as the main factor in explaining this, as can be recapitulated using Korpi's (1983) words in *The Democratic Class Struggle*: "the distribution of power resources between the main collective or classes in society is of key importance for its distributive processes and institutional structures as well as for patterns of conflict and change" (26). This explanation fits the development of the Nordic welfare states, as it coincided with periods of strong labour unions and social democratic dominance of the political system (Korpi 1983, Arter 2003). Historical studies have also shown that left-wing parties and the labour unions did play a large role in generating support for the Nordic welfare model, although compromises and the farmer's parties also played a large part (Alestalo, Hort & Kuhnle 2009, Nørgaard 2000, Baldwin 1990). The theory falls short in terms of explaining the current stability, however, as argued by Pierson (1996): "A straightforward application of power resource arguments […] would suggest that welfare states are in deep trouble" (150). The loss of power for social democratic parties and labour unions has only continued since Pierson (1996) questioned the explanatory power of the power recourse approach. This is especially true in the Nordic countries, where long periods of social democratic dominance of the parliamentary system have been succeeded by historic lows in terms of voter support (Arter 2003).[8] Gingrich and Häusermann (2015) also shows that among the employed has the percentage of working class voters out of the total vote for the left has declined form just below 50 percent in 1980 to less than 20

[8] In response to this, Korpi and Palme (2003) argue that although the overall level of spending has not declined, qualitative changes in welfare have reduced the impact of the welfare states from a citizen's perspective.

percent in 2010. Instead the Left-wing parties have come to rely on a basis of middleclass voters, with different welfare preferences than the votes. This has, however, coincided with increasing support for welfare programs among the centre and right-wing parties, leading to the conclusion that support for the welfare state no longer rests on the left-wing and unions alone (Gingrich and Häusermann, 2015).

A somewhat different story of the development of the welfare states is told by Baldwin (1990), who argues that the "power resources" approach is too simplistic and tends to confuse current politics with past developments. Baldwin (1990) argues that welfare state development happened when social groups had both need for the protection against different risks and the ability to pursue collective risk sharing in this area. This is opposed to "power resources" approach, of the workers and unions pushing for welfare state expansion, as this theory seeks to explain support for the welfare state more in self-interest and utility maximizing terms than in ideological terms. Baldwin (1990) argues that this was because the workers and unions alone could not push though many of the early welfare reforms alone, but needed the help of small independent farmers. An alliance between these two groups made sense since the workers and the farmers were often in a similar economic situation, and thus had similar interests in terms of expanding welfare protections. This alliance helped build popular support and political power behind welfare state expansion and against larger farmers and factory owners (Nørgaard 2000, Esping-Andersen 1985, Petersen 1990). The new social protection also where extended to the poorer and less well-organized groups. However, this was not out of kindness, but as a "trickledown" effect of the need for social protection. Specific to the development of the Nordic welfare states Baldwin (1990) point to different welfare state extensions in Sweden and Denmark that where made possible by this alliance. Another interesting argument presented by Baldwin (1990) is that the more universal policies where enacted in the Nordic countries where not where due to the influence of the political Left, though the universal policies have later become a key part of their political platforms, but due to the farmers wanting to be sure to be included in the coverage. The prevalence of universal schemes in the Nordic welfare stats then affected the later political decisions as this tended to draw the middleclass into having interest in the welfare state.

Baldwin's (1990) theory thus helps provide a more detailed understanding of the development of the support for the welfare states (in the period 1875-1975). It, however, does not cover the period after 1975 where the growth rates of the economies and welfare states slowed down and where a state of "permanent austerity" arose (Pierson 2001). Baldwin (1990) argues that the high growth rates of the post-war period made the zero-sum game of redistribution easier. This,

however, leads to the question of how this self-interest based solidarity fair in the current economic situation?

Finally, a number of theories point to specific national culture as the explanation for the development of a specific welfare state models. Borrowing the definition used by Pfau-Effinger (2005), culture is the "system of collective constructions of meaning by which human beings define reality" Pfau-Effinger (2005, 4). Culture thus becomes a useful tool in characterising the values of a people at a specific time. In this tradition, Books and Manza (2007) have argued that differences between nations in the "embedded preferences" of citizens have resulted in the differences in the size and makeup of welfare states between welfare states (for counterarguments see Kenworthy 2009), and other studies have pointed to the "collective memory" of a people as important in the development of welfare states (Olick 2008, Rothstein 2000). The "cultural theories" of welfare state development and stability are often tautological in nature, however, as they rarely account for how the culture is created, reproduced, and how it might change. Further capturing the values and culture of a people might be highly problematic with the survey approach used in this article. For these reasons the cultural theories are problematic for this dissertation, as they might explain the current stability, but not how it is created.

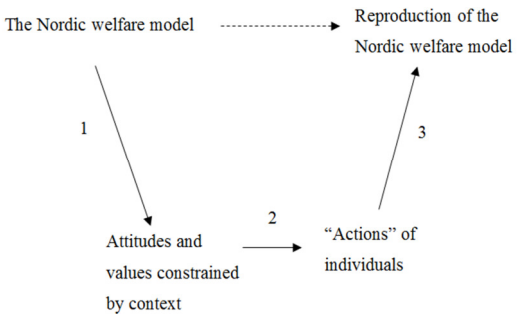
The theories outlined can help account for how the popular support behind welfare state development was created, but they are less well suited to explain its current stability. That the support for the Nordic welfare model is consistent and strong therefor suggests that the explanation of the stability is to be found elsewhere. This does not mean that factors outlined above are without influence, and, for instance, Korpi's (1983) ideas have greatly influenced Esping-Andersen's (1990) theory of welfare regimes, which will be used later. However, the impact of class struggle, for example, seems to be mediated through the welfare state. I therefore instead look to the institutions of the welfare state and how these might help explain its stability, that is, how the Nordic model might help create its own support. In the next chapter, I outline the overall theoretical framework of the dissertation. This framework will help conceptualise how the institutions of the Nordic model can help recreate support for the Nordic model.

CHAPTER 3. THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL CONNECTION

This chapter outlines the overall theoretical framework of the dissertation and discusses the implications of this. The theoretical framework of the dissertation is inspired by Coleman's (1990) ideas on how to construct social theories and the literature on social mechanisms (Hedström, Swedberg 1998, Hedström, Ylikoski 2010, Mayntz 2004). Although there are differences between these strands of literature, they share the common idea that for a social theory to make valid claims it needs to make a distinction between the individual level (micro) and the systemic level (macro), and include both in the construction of the theory.

The way Coleman (1990) envisions the connections is described in his "bathtub model" in Figure 4 below, with the theoretical components of this dissertation included.

Figure 4: Coleman's "bathtub model" for the construction of social theories.



Source: Modified version of Coleman (1990) Figure 1.2.

Coleman (1990) argues that the goal of any social theory is to explain social phenomena, that is, macro level social systems. In this dissertation, the social phenomenon of interest is the existence of a Nordic welfare model and how it is reproduced, however, in order to explain the social phenomenon, Coleman (1990) argues that a theory needs to include theories that deal with the attitudes and actions

of individuals. This is because social phenomena only exist as social constructions, at what Coleman (1990) terms the systemic level, which describe the aggregated institutions, actions, and attitudes. In this dissertation this would mean that there is no Nordic welfare model in itself, which also fits the definition of the welfare state as a socially accepted institutional arrangement. Similarly, there is no specific point where citizens choose whether or not to support, and thereby whether or not to reproduce, the entire Nordic welfare model. Instead, there are numerous opportunities where the citizens can choose whether to express support for the policies and institutions that make up the Nordic welfare model. It is therefore important to include the individual level in order to describe and connect the social phenomenon. At the individual level are the conditions, created by the Nordic model, which affect the attitudes and actions of Nordic citizens regarding the Nordic welfare model. It is these conditions I am interested in as explanations for the reproduction.

Following the model, the process of linking the systemic and individual levels involves three steps marked by the numbers in Figure 4. First (1), a macro-micro link must be established by describing which conditions the Nordic welfare model creates. Next (2), the theory needs to account for how the conditions create attitudes that are supportive of the welfare state policies. Hedström and Swedberg (1998) termed this the "situational mechanism", as this step focuses on how the conditions create specific situations which can alter attitudes. Finally (3), the theory needs to account for how the patterns of support create the second social phenomenon, thereby creating the connection at the systemic level. The dissertation will focus on the second of the three steps, and thus describe how the conditions created by the Nordic welfare model help reproduce attitudes that support the Nordic welfare model, however, I will also outline theories and studies that account for the other steps in the model.

This is thus an attempt to establish the social mechanisms that help drive the continued of the support for Nordic welfare model (Hedström, Swedberg 1998, Hedström, Ylikoski 2010, Mayntz 2004). There is no single definition of a social mechanism (see Mayntz 2004 for an overview), but one, provided by Elster (1989), suggests that "a mechanism explains by opening up the black box and showing the cogs and wheels of the internal machinery" (cited from Hedström and Ylikoski, 2010). For this dissertation, the "cogs and wheels" are the subject of interest, as they will help me explain how the Nordic model is reproduced, which is the "black box" of the dissertation. An important precondition for the social mechanisms to be able to open the "black box" is that they are founded in theoretical causality and

thus provide a detailed explanation of how social phenomena are created (Hedström, Swedberg 1998, Hedström, Ylikoski 2010).

There are, of course, some issues with adopting this research design. Firstly, as the dissertation primarily focuses on the second link in the model, it becomes important to consider whether the conclusions drawn at the micro level can be inferred to the macro level — the so-called atomistic fallacy (Hox 2010). The question of whether and how the attitudes observed at the micro level can affect the macro level will be discussed in Chapter 4. Secondly, this research design entails some assumptions about human nature and rationality, which will be discussed in the section below.

RATIONALITY OF THE ACTORS

Coleman (1990) argues for the use of rational choice theory when applying the model of social theory construction. When using rational choice theory the first should therefore be that people want to maximise their utility. This does not always mean maximising economic utility, as individuals, in principle, can maximise any form of gain (Coleman 1990). Hechter and Kanazawa (1997) have argued that this "thick" conceptualization of utility and rationally is where the sociological approach differs from the "thin" understanding. "Thin" rational choice theory is what, according to Hechter and Kanazawa (1997), is commonly found in the studies from economics and public choice theory which is characterised by not being concerned with the values or goals of the actors. As a result the theories generated are highly universal and generate almost law-like mechanisms. These theories are, however, unable to explain the motivations behind actions, which is the strength behind the "thick" rational choice theories. By being more concerned with the motivations of the actors the "thick" models specify the values of the individuals and further allow the actors to peruse other goals than economic gains, for example status or simple wellbeing, but sill under the assumption of maximizing.

Other key assumptions in rational choice theory are of full information and optimal choice. Coleman (1990) argues these assumptions are inherent weakness of the theory and instead suggests that we treat individuals as "conditionally-rational" actors, in the sense that they act rationally within the intuitions they are in: "In general, the environment, or social context, in which a person acts affect the relative benefits of different social actions; and it is the macro-to-micro transaction which shapes this social context" Coleman (1990, 21). This is thus somewhat like a institutional approach to rational choice theory where actors can draw on other factors when calculating utility and where the actors can do so with limited

information (see Coleman 1992 for more on the possibility and limitations of rational choice theory).

Coleman (1990) further argues that it should be the goal of a theory to explain behaviour that is not perceived as rational: "the success of a social theory based on rationality lies in successively diminishing the domain of activity that cannot be accounted for by the theory" Coleman (1990, 18). One way to achieve this, within rational choice theory, is to draw on the work of Lindenberg's (1992) that builds on Coleman's (1990) ideas on theory construction. Lindenberg (1992) makes a distinction between core assumptions of the theory and the bridging assumptions. Lindenberg (1992) argues that this division is useful as it allows rational choice theorists to amend some of the problems of rational choice theory, such as the one pointed out by Coleman (1990) above, without giving up on the benefit that rational choice theory provides in the form of great analytical power and clear hypotheses.

In this case, this would mean taking the core assumption of rational choice theory that people act rationally and adding the bridging assumption, which can change the perception or framing. Bridging assumption thus adds to rational choice theory by providing more complexity to the model in order to provide a more realistic model. Lindenberg (1992) argues that this creates logics of the situation, similar to Coleman's (1990) conditional rationality, wherein theory can draw on both economics and sociology to explain human behaviour (a similar idea exists in the work of Pierson (1993) which will be covered in the next chapter). This idea of the core theory and bridges is, however, built on two assumptions which cannot be challenged without creating what Lindenberg (1992) calls "bastard theories". Firstly, the bridge assumptions must not challenge the core assumptions. If this is the case, it becomes impossible to deduce hypotheses on actions and the design loses its power. Secondly, following the "bathtub" model outlined above, the bridging assumptions must also contain micro level descriptions to add to the theory. If these two conditions are met, it is possible to add any number of bridges to the theory; although one should stop when the final added assumption adds less explanatory power than complexity to the theory. The exact tipping point between complexity and explanatory power might, however, be difficult to determine outside theoretical considerations.

It is this idea of rational but contextually bound actors that I will draw on throughout the dissertation, both when describing the macro-micro links (Points 1 and 3 in Figure 4) and when describing the individual level connections (Point 2 in Figure 4). The goal is thus to create rational choice theory that specifies the motivation of actors by adding bridge assumptions.

CHAPTER 4. MAKING THE CONNECTIONS

This chapter will outline theories to help me make the three steps of the framework outlined above. In the first part of the theoretical review, I will present three theories of how the conditions created by the welfare states can affect attitudes. Then I will present policy feedback theory on how the conditions might affect attitudes towards welfare policies at the individual level, and finally theories and studies on how this support for individual policies can be aggregated into the reproduction of the Nordic welfare model.

THE CONDITIONS CREATED BY THE NORDIC MODEL

As described in the first chapter the Nordic model is characterized by welfare states that have extended role for the state in organizing or providing welfare to the citizens; an increased usage of welfare services in providing this welfare, epically for the elderly, the incapacitated, and children; and greater reliance on universal schemes for proving welfare. In order to describe the effect of this organization of the welfare state, on public support for the welfare state, I will outline theories that provide descriptions of this. Though the theories do not deal only with these three conditions they should help provide hypotheses on the impact on attitudes from the conditions the Nordic welfare model creates.

The first theory I will account for is Esping-Andersen's (1990) theory of the welfare regimes, from the book *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*.[9] Esping-Andersen (1990) argues that the Western welfare states all bear similarities to one of three ideal types of a welfare state regime: the social democratic, the conservative, and the liberal. Inspired by Marshall's (1950) idea of a social citizenship, Esping-Andersen (1990) argues that the core differences between these welfare state regimes can be found by examining the degree of "de-commodification" of the workforce, which is a measure of the degree to which the citizens can live a normal life, without reliance on the market.

These differences are produced by the fact that the welfare regimes provide welfare differently, which thus produces different patterns of de-commodification. The lowest degree of de-commodification is found in the liberal regime, where the state

[9] The theory was later "revised in *Social Foundations of Post-industrial Economics* (1999), which placed more emphasis on the role of women and the issue of "de-familisation", after critique from feminists.

run welfare schemes are more reliant on means-tested residual benefits targeted at the very poorest who cannot support themselves by other means. The second model of providing social protection is found in the conservative regime, which primarily relies on an insurance model of providing welfare. Here a high degree of de-commodification is provided, but only for those who have contributed and on the basis of an actuarial principle. A third model exists in the social democratic regime, where welfare is to a greater degree provided on a universal principle, ensuring that all citizens can receive the welfare as a social right. It is important to stress that these are ideal types, and as shown in Table 1, the modern Western welfare states bear many similarities. Esping-Andersen's (1990) point is that for historical reasons the countries of the different regimes draw more on the principles of one of the regimes than the others.

The theory is often applied at an intra-country level (or macro-macro to use Coleman's terms) to study how countries cluster in terms of welfare spending or other outcomes. Esping-Andersen (1990) only provides overall suggestions as to how the support for the different welfare regimes is affected by the differences in institutional structure, such as: "Welfare states are key institutions in the structuring of class and the social order" Esping-Andersen (1990, 55) and that "Each case will produce its own unique fabric of social solidarity" Esping-Andersen (1990, 58). These hints have been interpreted to mean that different regimes will produce societal cleavages specific to this regime and thereby reproduce support for the specific welfare regime (Svallfors 2003, 2010). Esping-Andersen (1990) also emphasises how the social democratic welfare regime produces welfare services and benefits that are "commensurate with even the most discriminating tastes of the new middle classes" (27). In the social democratic welfare regime this is mostly welfare services of a high quality, awarded according to universal criteria. This contributes to the support for the welfare regime by the middle class as "All benefit; all are dependent; and all will presumably feel obliged to pay" (28). This is opposed to the liberal regime, where the transfers are from the upper and middle class to the lower class, or the conservative regime, where the transfers help reproduce social cleavages and support the traditional role of the family (Esping-Andersen 1990). Esping-Andersen's (1990) theory thus provides descriptions of the impact of a historically state-centric and universal welfare state on public support.

The influence of the middle class and the impact of universal and selective welfare policies are also explored in Rothstein's *Just Institutions Matter* (1998), but here from a normative and philosophical standpoint. By applying a simple rational choice argument, Rothstein (1998) rehashes the idea that the middle class is the most important group in terms of creating a basis of popular support for the welfare state and welfare policies (Korpi 1983). This is because the lowest income groups

will most likely support welfare policies, as they are net beneficiaries, and this will be reversed in the high income groups who are net losers.

This calculation is, however, not the same for universal and selective welfare states. Since the universal welfare state provides welfare services and benefits that also extend to the middle class, this creates a situation where the middle class cannot calculate whether they are net winners or losers from interactions from the welfare state. This is opposed to selective welfare states, where the policies are targeted at the poorest and do not provide gains for the middle class. On this basis Rothstein (1998) argues that in a universal welfare state, and for universal policies, the attitudes of the middle class are not affected by either self-interest or social justice norms, but by the design of the policy itself: "We can thereby both shake off the narrow self-interest straightjacket […] and liberate ourselves from the structural determinism originating in sociology. Politics […] has its own explanatory power. The design of political institutions governs the notions if morality and justice prevailing in society" Rothstein (1998, 217).

This results in public support for a policy being determined by how it is designed — that is, how the policy is administrated and how eligibility is determined. Selective policies are in general unpopular, since they are based on judgments of needs by public officials. This tends to create a public discussion of "where the line between the needy and the non-needy should be drawn; and […], whether the needy themselves are not to blame for their predicament" (Rothstein 1998, 159). On the other hand, universal policies are awarded by citizenship and "objective criteria", such as an age certain for state pension, which assures that this kind of discussion does not arise and that the middle class will also benefit. The key is thus the difference in the perceived procedural justice, a term borrowed from Levi (1989), which according to Rothstein is what creates the differences in public support.

The final theory of the conditions created by the Nordic welfare model that I will go though is Pierson's (2001, 2000) theory of "the new politics of the welfare state". Pierson (2001, 2000) frames his "new politics" theory in opposition to the "old politics" explanations of power resources outlined above (Korpi 1983). He argues that although the "old politics" explanations were useful in explaining welfare state expansion, the welfare states are now in a situation of "permanent austerity" (Pierson 2002). In spite of both internal and external pressures Pierson (2001, 2000) notes that the welfare states have not undergone radical changes. Although this theory does not explicitly deal with the Nordic welfare model, the arguments seem especially relevant in the Nordic countries.

Pierson (1996, 1994) attributes this to how the welfare state creates its own support through a combination of institutional path dependency and the existence of a welfare clientele. The basic argument of institutional path dependency is that the

structure of welfare programmes can make retrenchment increasingly difficult over time. Many welfare state policies create patterns of expected reciprocity between the groups currently paying for the welfare programmes and future generations who are expected to contribute once they enter the workforce. Changing the institutional setup of the welfare state can upset this balance, which would induce great costs for the groups currently working, as they would end up contributing to the welfare of others, as well as paying for their own — the so-called double-payment problem (Starke 2006).

The second factor is the existence of a welfare clientele. As the name indicates, this clientele consists of the groups that are dependent on the welfare state: the public employees and the recipients of social benefits and welfare services. According to Pierson (1996, 1994), this group makes retrenchment of the welfare state politically difficult for two reasons. Firstly, the combined numbers of public employees and recipients of benefits and services adds up to more than half the voting population in most Western countries. Secondly, the welfare clientele have vested interests in the welfare state programmes and thus will fight to expand them, or at least to keep the status quo. The concentrated losses of the members of the welfare clientele will lead them to electorally punish any politician who attempts to retrench the welfare state. On the other hand, the general population will only provide weak electoral gains to politicians who attempt to retrench the welfare programmes, as the gains, in the form of marginally lower taxes, are more dispersed. Pierson (2001) draws on studies from political psychology which shows that people act more negatively in response to losses than to gains, which leads to generally risk averse behaviour. Combined, this leads to negative reactions to expansions from the welfare clientele and the general population. As a result, politicians will seek to avoid the blame associated with retrenchment and thus will only retrench in infrequent situations where they can avoid or pass on the blame (Weaver 1987). This leads Pierson (2001) to conclude that the welfare state is creating its own support: "the emergence of powerful groups surrounding social programs may make the welfare state less dependent on the political parties, social movements, and labour organizations that expanded social programs in the first place." Pierson (2001, 178). Pierson's (1994, 1996, 2000, 2001) writings on the "new politics" thus provides descriptions of the impact of a mature welfare state and the institutional and self-interest structures it creates.

The three theories outlined above are similar in a number of ways. First, they provide descriptions of the conditions created by the Nordic welfare model and how these might affect attitudes towards the welfare state. Secondly, the theories lack detailed descriptions and analysis of the processes at the micro level, giving few descriptions and very little, if any, empirical evidence. To use Eslter's (1989) term, these are "black box" explanations, since they do not specify and test the social

mechanisms that drive the theory. This leaves room for individual-level analysis of the impact of the Nordic welfare model in order to expose and fine-tune the "cogs and wheels" of the theories. Finally, the theories all draw inspiration from new institutionalist theory, which means that they emphasise the way that formal and informal rules direct behaviour, and that previous decisions have a big impact on the current possibilities. Ervasti et al. (2008) argue that in an institutionalist understanding, "the relationship between institution and behaviour is reciprocal. Institutions do structure attitudes and behaviour, but existing attitudes also help create, sustain and modify existing institutions" Ervasti et al. (2008, 2). The reciprocal relationship between institutions and attitudes is important, and I will argue in the next section on the micro links between conditions for attitude formation and patterns of attitudes, that policy feedback theory can provide this link.

THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL CONNECTIONS

This section outlines ways that the conditions created by the Nordic welfare model can create specific attitude patterns that favour the reproduction of the model. In order to describe this, I will introduce policy feedback theory, which describes how the institutional setup of welfare policies can affect attitudes.

The idea of feedback from policies is rooted in historical institutionalism and argues that the attitudes of citizens not only have an effect on the policies that are enacted, but that the policies previously enacted also have an effect on attitudes. Since this field of literature is relatively new, and tackles a wide range of areas, there is nothing resembling a common definition of policy feedback, and often the term is used to describe very different processes. One definition, from a literature review by Béland (2010), which is close to the understanding of policy feedback that I will use, emphasises that "policy feedback is a temporal concept that points to the fact that over time, policy can shape politics" Béland (2010, 569) . The idea is thus that policy feedback theory is a framework for research that emphasises how the conditions created by the welfare state can affect attitudes towards the welfare state.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE POLICY FEEDBACK LITERATURE

There is no definitive starting point for the literature on policy feedback, and different authors have pointed to different "classics" which emphasise how previously enacted policies have an impact on later political decisions. Commonly cited examples are Heclo's (1974) study of policy learning in Sweden and the UK,

Lowi's (1964) study of the impact of prior decisions, and even Schattsschneider's 1935 study of how opening a policy path, in this case taxes on canals, can affect the possibility of activating this path later. From the world of welfare state studies, one of the first examples of the idea of policy feedback was that of Esping-Andersen (1980), who argues, based on a comparison of housing policy in Denmark and Sweden, that "differences in state policy are of major importance for class voting and Social Democratic power" Esping-Andersen (1980, 545). Thus, differences in the way housing policy is designed affected whether it could be used as a political tool by the Social Democrats. Combined, the studies describe feedback from the policies to the elite level, that this, how they affected politicians, civil servants, and interest organisations. This feedback can come in many forms, including budget constraints, policy learning, or a narrowing of possibilities (Pierson 2000, Béland 2010).

FEEDBACK TO THE MASSES

The subject of this dissertation, however, is not elite processes, but policy feedback to the general population. I will take my starting point for this in Pierson's (1993) theoretical description of policy feedback, and from there elaborate on the concept. According to Pierson (1993), policy feedback consists of a combination of incentive effects and interpretive effects. The incentive effects motivate citizens to act on the incentives created by government institutions: "Individuals make important commitments in response to certain types of government action. These commitments, in turn, may vastly increase the disruption caused by new policies, effectively 'locking in' previous decisions" Pierson, (1993, (608). This results in citizens with positive attitudes towards welfare policies from which they directly or potentially gain. The interpretive effects are processes where the welfare policies and interactions with public institutions teach or communicate to citizens the problems that are considered important by society and what part the state has in solving them. This demonstrates how policy feedback can consist of a rational component and a non-rational component (or a "bridge" to use Lindenberg's (1992) term), and shows how this framework fits well with the overall framework outlined above based on Coleman's (1990) "bathtub". Pierson (1993) argues that this can create path dependency — a term borrowed from the economic historian Douglas North (1990), describing a process where institutional change, over time, becomes less likely, due to the increasing return of staying on the path, compared to choosing a new one.

Pierson (1993) argues that the feedback from policies to the general population has an under-analysed effect: "there is reason to expect that the effects on mass publics may turn out to be the most important political consequences of government growth." Pierson (1993, 597). Pierson's (1993) claim that public attitudes affecting

policy feedback are under analysed has since been repeated several times (Mettler, Soss 2004, Campbell 2003, Béland 2005, Wendt, Mischke & Pfeifer 2011). However, although repeated often this characterisation of the literature no longer seems to be true, as I will show in the next section.

POLICY FEEDBACK AS AN INDIVIDUAL LEVEL EXPLANATION

A number of studies have taken up the challenge of explaining attitudes and actions in terms of policy feedback. One of the earliest examples of a policy feedback study of individual attitudes and actions is by Soss (1999), and explores how the design of specific benefits teaches citizens about the welfare state. Soss' (1999) study compared the attitudes towards the welfare state of two groups receiving different types of unemployment benefits. One group was awarded a benefit with strict eligibility and means testing, while the other group was awarded the social benefit as a right. This, to some degree, resembles the differences between selective and universal benefits outlined by Rothstein (1998) above. Soss (1999) found that these differences in design created differences in views of the government and political participation. From this, Soss (1999) concluded that welfare policies and their design provide sites for adult learning about the role of the state and the relationship between the individual and the state: "The heart of the matter is that welfare programs provide many people with their most direct exposure to a government institution. When clients think about government, their program experiences provide the handiest and most reliable points of reference" Soss (1999, 376). Soss (1999) argued from this that the differences between the programmes mimic some of the differences between Esping-Andersen's (1990) welfare regimes. This thereby provides the first part of a micro foundation in understanding how differences in the conditions create differences in attitudes and action.

Another noteworthy study is Soss and Schram's (2007) examination of why a reform of American social assistance (TANF) did not affect public opinion. In order to explain this they outline a framework of two dimensions: proximity and visibility. Policies that are proximate have an impact on the lives of the citizens, while policies that are not, stay "hidden" from the citizens (Mettler 2011, Howard 1999). As a result, the citizens will draw on their own experiences when forming attitudes about the welfare institutions that are proximate, while having no personal reference point for policies that are distant or hidden. The visibility dimension is the difference between highly polarised policies and those outside the public eye. Where a policy is very visible, attitudes are more likely to be informed by media descriptions, whether they be positive or negative. This framework can be used both at a policy level (Soss, Schram 2007) and at an individual level (Mettler 2011), and has served as the theoretical inspiration for many studies of policy feedback, as it includes both the impact of personal experiences and media portraits.

The ideas of policy learning and personal experiences are also explored in Kumlin's (2004) book *The Personal and the Political.* Kumlin (2004) shows that experiences with the welfare state can affect political trust and political ideology regarding the welfare state. Kumlin's (2004) major contribution is systematically showing that personal experiences with the welfare state are able to affect political attitudes. Kumlin, however, also stresses that the policy feedback explanation should not be perceived as the only explanation of political attitudes: "Not even in Sweden, where the welfare state occupies a large portion of political debate, and is a crucial source of party conflict, are personal welfare state experiences the sole or the most important causal factor behind political trust and ideology" (295). Other studies by Kumlin (2011, 2006) have also iterated the same point, that there is a feedback relationship between the institutional setup of policies and the attitudes and values of the public.

The final author I will emphasise in this rundown of the policy feedback studies of welfare attitudes is Svallfors (2006, 2007) who has studied policy feedback from a class perspective. Svallfors (2006, 2007) argues that the class system and the welfare state support each other by creating a "moral economy" feedback. According to Svallfors (2006), this perception of policy feedback is more encompassing than many of the other studies of this issue, as it includes the "total experience of living in a particular institutional environment, which constantly provides clues on what the desirable state of affairs should be" (268). Svallfors (2006) further argues for an American bias in the literature on policy feedback, where findings from specific contexts are extrapolated as general findings. Svallfors (2007) also discusses the impact of American research on the policy feedback literature: "Sometimes authors seem hardly to be aware that they discuss findings that are, or might be, specific for the United States" (263). Among the important differences, Svallfors (2007) mentions the very different degree of union and political organisation in the US and Europe. The European welfare states seem to play a much larger role in the everyday lives of citizens, which should have a great impact on attitudes. According to Svallfors (2007), this means that "most Europeans have a much greater stake in the welfare state than most Americans" (264). This makes it important to produce studies from European and Nordic contexts that further explore these differences, and to provide counterpoints to the US research.

Many additional studies could be cited to show the connection between welfare state policies and support for the welfare state (for reviews of the literature on this issue see Béland 2010, Campbell 2011, Kumlin, Stadelmann-Steffen 2014). To keep this relatively short, however, the understanding should be that policy feedback theory can help describe and study the interaction between welfare state policies, and attitudes towards them. Policy feedback thus presents a framework for applying the ideas of micro-to-micro links between the conditions created by the

Nordic welfare model and individual attitudes towards welfare state policies. The advantage of this framework is that it explicitly focuses on how the current conditions created by the welfare state model affect attitudes towards the welfare state, and thus the reproduction of the welfare state.

RECONNECTING INDIVIDUAL ATTITUDES TO POLICY

The third part, completing the "bathtub" framework (Figure 4), involves linking the attitude patterns of citizens to the reproduction of the Nordic welfare model. The most direct link between the attitudes of the population and the structure of welfare institutions is through elections. Here citizens can elect the politicians that best match their attitudes regarding which tasks the state should take responsibility for, how much public money should be put into these, and how eligibility to receive the social benefits and welfare services should be determined. It could easily be argued, however, that the link between elections and changes in the different welfare policies that make up the Nordic welfare model is quite weak. How can we be sure that election results, which are often many years apart, do affect the actions of politicians, and thus the reproduction of the Nordic welfare model? To support the argument that this link exists I will outline a number of studies, that have studied this connection, below.

One of the first studies to examine this link was by Page and Shapiro (1983). Based on US data from the period 1935 to 1979 Page and Shapiro (1983) did find some evidence of the political system being responsive to changes in public opinion, especially on issues that have a greater degree of salience. This question is again posed in *The Sometimes Connection* by Sharp (1999). Here four possible outcomes of the link between public attitudes and public policy are outlined, ranging from the public being totally disconnected from public policy to the full responsiveness of changes in attitudes and changes in policy. Similarly to Page and Shapiro (1983), the conclusion of Sharp (1999) is that the link sometimes exists, but also that it is contingent on a number of factors and therefore varies between policy areas. In spite of the contingencies, Sharp (1999) concludes that public opinion is connected to public policy: "there is more than a little evidence in this volume that the direction and timing of policy change is, at a minimum, constrained by the mass preferences" (259). The same overall conclusion is found in the "thermostat literature", although the responsiveness hypothesis is taken a step further by positing that changes in public attitudes lead to changes in public policy and vice versa (Wlezien 1995, Naumann 2013). Based on this approach, Soroka and Wlezien (2004) conclude that "We also observe that spending itself follows changes in preferences over time—there is representation. Democracy works." (49). The theory of a thermostatic relationship has been tested in different countries and in

different policy areas, finding that an overall relationship does exist. This effect is, however, again found to be contingent on the political system and knowledge of what happens in the political system. Brooks and Manza (2007) reach the same conclusion in *Why Welfare States Persist*, where they argue that the differences and reproduction of welfare states can be explained by public attitudes.

A meta-review of the literature by Burstein (2003) concludes that the studies show a strong link between public opinion and public policy, especially when the salience is high. Thus, as long as public interest in the welfare state is high, we would expect the link to persist, and given that the welfare state continues to be perhaps the most important policies issue in the Nordic countries, this should strengthen this connection. The contingent impact of the attitudes of the citizens on the actions of politicians can be argued to be further supported by the decreasing power of class voting, compared to issue voting (Nieuwbeerta, Ultee 1999). Though class based voting has by no means disappeared there seems to be a consensus in the field, that issue voting has a strong impact on election results (Borre 2001, Manza Hout & Brooks 1995). This could make the impact of attitudes to single issue that capture salience even greater as, for instance, shown by the Danish Election Studies up though the 2000's (Goul Andersen et al. 2007).

Overall, the results point to a connection between the attitudes of citizens and the choices of politicians regarding state solutions. This is not a direct link, however, as the studies note conditions, but the required connection exists nonetheless (for a discussion of these conditions see Manza, Cook 2002).

CHAPTER 5. MEASURING WELFARE ATTITUDES

This chapter outlines the overall methodological issues in the dissertation. First I will discuss whether and how attitudes can be compared between contexts, and then how to measure welfare attitudes.

COMPARING WELFARE STATE REGIMES

The most frequently used approach in the literature on welfare attitudes is to compare levels of support for the welfare state between countries. This is often done to test whether the regime patterns described by Esping-Andersen (1990) can be found (Jæger 2006, Bean, Papadakis 1998, Svallfors 2003), however, this might be a problematic approach, as can be exemplified when comparing attitudes towards what the government's responsibility should be in the European Social Survey. Here respondents were asked whether a number of tasks should be the responsibility of the government on a scale from 0 (no responsibility) to 10 (entirely the government's responsibility). The answers are presented as means for three countries — Denmark, Germany, and the United Kingdom (UK) — which are often used as representative of the social democratic regime, the conservative regime, and the liberal regime, respectively (Svallfors 2003).

Table 1: What should the government's responsibility include? Presented as the mean scores for each country on a scale from 0–10.

	Denmark	**Germany**	**UK**
Ensure a job for everyone who wants one	5.47	6.02	5.99
Ensure adequate health care for the sick	8.85	8.29	8.72
Ensure a reasonable standard of living for the old	8.29	7.44	8.51
Ensure a reasonable standard of living for the unemployed	6.62	6.32	5.98
Ensure sufficient child care services for working parents	8.06	7.84	6.95
Provide paid leave from work for people who temporarily have to care for sick family members	8.20	7.29	7.20

Notes: Based on European Social Survey 2008 questions D15-20: "People have different views on what the responsibilities of governments should or should not be. For each of the tasks I read out please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much responsibility you think governments should have. 0 means it should not be governments' responsibility at all and 10 mean it should be entirely governments' responsibility". N (min): Denmark = 1579, Germany = 2711, United Kingdom = 2308. "Don't know" answers not included. Weights from the survey are applied.

Table 1 shows large variations in attitudes towards helping different groups, but much smaller variations between the countries. In the three countries there is strong overall support for the state taking responsibility for the sick, the old, and children (average 8.0), and less support for the state taking responsibility for helping the unemployed (average 6.1). One interpretation of the differences between the areas is that some groups are perceived as "deserving" while others are perceived as "undeserving". This has been shown empirically by van Oorschot (2000, 2006), who finds that there are historic, and, across Europe, universal, differences in which groups are deemed deserving of public help. The sick, the old, and children are perceived as deserving because they are not in control of the situation that caused their need. On the other hand, the unemployed have, at least in principle, the ability to change their situation, which makes them a less deserving group in the public's perception.[10]

The between country variations, however, are much smaller. Overall, there is a tendency for the Danes to somewhat favour more state responsibility, as they have the highest average in four of the six areas, but the differences are not large (averages respectively are 7.6 for Denmark, 7.2 for Germany, and 7.3 for the UK).[11] This pattern is very similar to that reported by Svallfors (2003) on the basis of the Role of Government modules of the ISSP (1990 and 1996), and similar to Svallfors' (2003) findings these results do not suggest a regime pattern, as there are no systematic variations in the answers. Thus, it seems difficult to explain the differences between welfare states via the differences in support for government responsibility, as the theory predicts. Other studies have also come to the conclusion that the ranking does not fit the predictions made on the basis of Esping-Andersen's welfare regimes (Jæger 2006, Bean, Papadakis 1998, Svallfors 2003). One conclusion is, as per Svallfors (2003), that there is no systematic regime effect on attitudes: "it seems time to assert that attitudes to welfare policies are only to a very limited extent structured by differences in welfare regimes" Svallfors (2003, 190). Instead, Svallfors (2003) argues that if we are interested in what does create differences between individuals and countries in support for the welfare state, we should instead look to other explanations, such as individual self-interest and class patterns.

An alternative explanation is that the regime effects on attitudes are weak because people do not answer the questions in a vacuum. The questions are posed in a

[10] Van Oorschot (2000, 2006) also outlines other elements in these heuristics — need, identity, attitude, and reciprocity — but empirical analysis points to control, followed by identity, being the most important factors.

[11] The averages for the individual tasks are statically different (at $p > 0.05$) when comparing Denmark to UK and Germany.

manner that seeks to tap into principled beliefs, which should then vary across the welfare regimes dependent on the institutional setup of the welfare regime (see the wording below Table 1). This is, in essence, a Rawlsian veil of ignorance placed on the respondents. It could be called an input model, as the institutions of the regime affect the input and thus create variations between regimes, yet it seems somewhat naïve that a research tradition which presumes that people's attitudes are formed by the institutional setup, at the same time imagines that people are able to disregard the same institutional setup when answering a survey. Following that logic, a different interpretation could be that people do not answer about whether the state should take responsibility for a task, in a vacuum. If people answer these questions with the current institutional setup in mind, this might be why we see so few differences in the comparative surveys. This muddles the picture, as the institutional setup becomes both a part of the input, but also effects the output, by working as the frame of reference. This input-output explanation thus contends that the impact of welfare state regimes on attitudes is not easily captured in large comparative attitudes. The latter interpretation finds more support when broadening the view to all the countries included in the 2008 version of the European Social Survey used above. This is done by Svallfors (2012) who finds that Eastern European citizens are most in favour of government responsibility, making the Nordic citizens are less supportive in comparison. This might either suggest that Nordic citizens want less state responsibility, and the Eastern European citizens want comparatively more, or that people cannot disregard the context in which they live when answering the survey.

This does not mean that comparative surveys are not a useful tool, however, but that instead of hoping to find different levels of support, depending on the welfare regime, we should instead look for the social mechanisms as outlined above (Svallfors 2012). Although the level of support for government responsibility might vary across contexts, we can still show whether there are common or different mechanisms that explain support for welfare state solutions. It is also possible to analyse developments in the levels of support within a country, as long as the absolute levels of support are not compared. These mechanisms might be linked to the theoretical explanation of welfare regime, policy design, or welfare clientele, and thus we can show an effect from the structural level to the individual level (see Svallfors, Kulin & Schnabel 2012 for an excellent example of a study that draws on the mechanisms approach).

HOW TO MEASURE SUPPORT FOR THE WELFARE STATE?

The next methodological question is how to measure welfare attitudes. Here I will draw on Kumlin (2007) who argues that the multitude of questions on attitudes to welfare states can be divided into three levels, depending on their abstraction.

At the highest level of abstraction, in-principle support for the welfare state is indicated, which measures support for the idea of a welfare state and whether it should be expanded or retrenched. This measure is, however, often strongly correlated to the overall left-right dimension in politics in a country (Kumlin 2007). This is not surprising, as one of the primary divisions in many Western countries is the role of the government and whether it should be expanded or retrenched. The existence of this underlying political division is also confirmed by Roosma, Gelissen and van Oorschot (2013) who, based on a number of different measures of welfare support, conclude that "in western/northern welfare states, there is a general welfare attitude that is fundamentally positive or negative" Roosma, Gelissen and van Oorschot (2013, 16).

This fundamentally positive or negative attitude should also be present at the policy level, which measures attitudes towards spending or support for government responsibility for specific policies. As opposed to the highest level of abstraction, however, Kumlin (2007) argues that these attitudes are "more complex than can be neatly captured by general measures of state intervention orientations and left-right ideology" Kumlin (2007, 365). This is because attitudes at this level are prone to influences from different forms of feedback, such as self-interest and the perceptions of the target group. This also fits better with theoretical framework outlined above, of the reproduction of the welfare state not being a binary yes or no choice, but the support, or lack thereof, for a series of social welfare benefits and services that, combined, make up the welfare state. Using the second level of measurement also fits the general trend that issue voting in elections seems to be on the rise, while class voting, which would favour the more overall measure, is declining (Nieuwbeerta, Ultee 1999).

Finally, at the lowest level of abstraction we find the performance evaluations. Here surveys tap into attitudes related to specific experiences with the welfare state. This tells us something about the attitudes of the recipients of benefits or services, but also limits who can be asked, and does not tell us about the attitudes of the general population.

PUBLIC SPENDING OR GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY?

The final methodological issue is the type of survey item through which support for welfare programmes should be measured? To assess this, two types of questions have been used in the surveys and thus the literature. One type of question has focused on whether the state should take responsibility for a certain task or group, and the other types of question asks whether spending on a social policy area should be increased, decreased, or stay the same. The first type of question thus provides an absolute measure of welfare state support, while the second type of question provides a more relative measure of support.

These are of course related matters, as the groups for which the state can take responsibility and the target of social policies are often the same. The support for government responsibility and spending is not entirely the same, however, and can, in some instances, differ considerably. This is because, although attitudes towards government responsibility and social policy spending are correlated, these do not measure exactly the same thing, as support for government responsibility can go hand-in-hand with support for less spending. For example, an individual can argue that it is the government's responsibility to ensure the living standard of the unemployed, while supporting less spending on unemployment benefits, based on a feeling that the unemployment benefits are too generous. This is not just a theoretical problem, as 19 percent of the respondents in the ISSP 2006 at one time thought that it definitely or probably should be the government's responsibility to take care of the sick, while at the same time supporting cuts in unemployment benefits.

This makes it necessary to make a choice between the two types of questions, and here I have chosen to use the spending questions. This was, in part, for practical reasons, as they were available in all the datasets used in the dissertation, but there are also theoretical reasons for this choice. Firstly, using the spending measure fits better with the definition of the welfare state used in the dissertation. Secondly, I perceive it to be a more pragmatic measure, which better captures the feedback effects, whether it is from policy design, proximity, or target group perception, as this makes the respondents to take the design of a policy into account. Further, given that I don't want to compare level of support directly between countries, because of the input/output argument laid out above, using the more relative measure is not as critical for comparisons.

CHAPTER 6. EXPLORING THE SOCIAL MECHANISMS

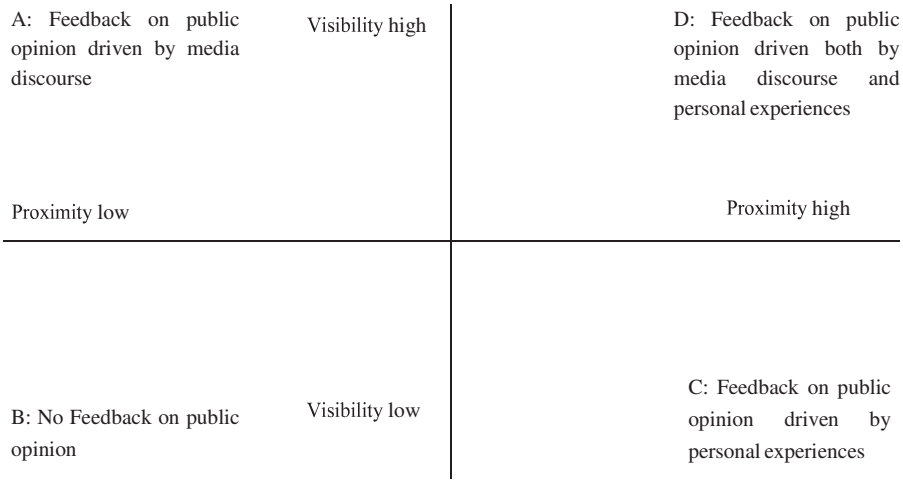
This chapter summarises the results given in the articles and places them in the larger framework of the dissertation. I will thus emphasise how the results of the articles demonstrate how the conditions created by the Nordic welfare model creates social mechanisms that help sustain support for the welfare programs, even when challenged.

HOW PROXIMATE AND VISIBLE POLICIES SHAPE SELF-INTEREST, SATISFACTION, AND SPENDING SUPPORT

The first article was co-written with Christian Albrekt Larsen and explores different ways in which public welfare services can impact attitudes. The prevalence of welfare services is one of the features that define the Nordic welfare model (Alestalo, Hort & Kuhnle 2009, Arts, Gelissen 2010, Castles 2008) and thus one of the factors that can potentially affect the attitudes of citizens. The idea pursued in the article is that the existence of welfare services creates both direct users, such as the recipients of home care assistance, and a group of close family members, such as the children of recipients, who have a personal interest in the service, but might have little knowledge about the quality of service. The impact of public service production is therefore described in terms of a policy feedback effect, since it creates direct interactions with both the welfare state, but also family members who depend on the welfare services to help their families.

This creates a number of different scenarios for feedback effects, as described using the framework outlined by Soss and Schram (2007), who sketch out two dimensions of policy feedback: proximity and visibility (described in more detail in Chapter 4). In this description, the existence of feedback is dependent on both how proximate the individual is to the welfare service, as well as the visibility of it, as described in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Proximity, visibility, and feedback effects on the public opinion.



Notes: Based on the framework outlined by Soss and Schram (2007) combined with the work of Zaller (1992).

As Figure 5 outlines, this framework provides different scenarios depending on proximity to the welfare service and the visibility of this welfare service. The framework is applied to a Danish survey of attitudes towards the performance of the municipalities (who are responsible for most of the welfare services). In order to test the impact of different degrees of proximity, the respondents were divided into three groups, for each of four welfare services: direct users, the close family members of users, and non-users. The results indicate that the direct users are significantly more satisfied with the service than both the non-users and the second order users, and for all four services the second order users scored the lowest. This pattern shows that there is indeed an impact from being proximate, but also that this effect might not always be linear, because of the interactions between proximity and visibility.

This is exemplified when focusing on attitudes towards home-care assistance, which were under public scrutiny at the time (Borre, Goul Andersen 2003). The results indicate that the public debates made the close family members of users more susceptible to the debates, since they had close family using the service and were more exposed to information concerning the area. This effect of visibility, however, was mediated by knowledge of local politics which, following Zaller's (1992) theory on the impact of knowledge on media messages, interpreted as contextual knowledge, could dampen this effect.

The article also tests the impact of user status on attitudes towards spending. Contrary to what should be expected from Pierson's (2001) welfare client theory, I do not find a significant effect, from being a user, on attitudes towards spending. However, there is a strong effect on attitudes to spending, in being a close family member of a recipient. This suggests that the pressure to spend more is not only from the fairly small group of users, but by the much larger group of family members. As demonstrated in the case of home-care assistance, this effect could be created by a lack of insight into the everyday situation and needs of the recipients of the service. The interpretation is further supported by the fact that the level of satisfaction with the welfare service, whether experienced or perceived, is also demonstrated to affect attitudes towards spending. Thus, the direct users, who were demonstrated to be the most satisfied, are not pushing for further spending, while the family members, who on average are more dissatisfied, are pushing for further spending. This also shows another interesting mechanism, namely that when the citizens of the Nordic countries perceive the welfare services to be failing, they do not turn their backs on the state, but instead demand more spending, at least in the short term.

THE POLICY DESIGN EFFECT

In the second article, I explore the social mechanisms that help create differences in support between policy designs. As outlined above, the Nordic welfare model is, to a larger degree than other welfare models, characterised by universal benefits. It is a documented fact that universal policies tend to generate more public support than selective policies, with contributions-based policies falling somewhere in between (Svallfors 2012, Jordan 2013, Alston, Dean 1972). Thus, part of the popularity of the Nordic welfare model is due to the fact that it relies on the universal policy design to a higher degree. The mechanisms behind this pattern are unclear, however, and built on macro explanations that draw on a combination of self-interest and perceptions of the recipient group, and do not provide individual (micro) level testing.

In order to provide a micro level explanation, I therefore outline the effect of being close to recipients of a benefit and how this might vary between policy designs. This is based on a discussion of the literature on group identification, inspired by van Oorschot's (2000) identity criteria, the literature upon which he draws (De Swaan 1988, Cook 1979), and the literature on the policy feedback effects of proximity (Soss 1999, Soss, Schram 2007). Based on this, I argue that two overall effects should cause differences in attitudes between the policy designs: incentives and interpretations (inspired by Pierson (1993), described in more detail in Chapter 4). Being close to recipients of a benefit should create an incentive effect, where attitudes are motivated by the gains or losses from social benefits. This incentive

effect coexists with an interpretive effect where attitudes are formed by personal experiences and sympathy with the beneficiaries of benefits. Based on this, universal social policies should create both positive images of the recipients and common interests in the population, whereas selective social policies should create negative images and only serve the interests of the recipients.

The possible existence of this pattern was tested on Danish data measuring both support for spending on social benefits and the proximity to recipients of five social policies. The proximity to the recipients of the benefits is subdivided into recipients of the social benefit now or within the last 12 months (1st order proximity), close family (2nd order proximity), close friends (3rd order proximity), and respondents without proximity to the benefit (4th order proximity). The results of these regressions, with other controls applied, but not shown, are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Logistic regressions showing the chance of answering that the benefits are 'too low' compared to 'suitable'.

	Social Assistance	**Incapacity benefit**	**Unemployment benefit**	**State education grant**	**State pension**
1st order proximity	3.2^{*}	6.2^{***}	2.2^{***}	1.6^{NS}	0.9^{NS}
4th order proximity	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
2nd order proximity	3.0^{**}	1.9^{**}	0.9^{NS}	1.4^{NS}	1.1^{NS}
4th order proximity	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
3rd order proximity	2.8^{**}	1.6^{*}	1.1^{NS}	1.3^{NS}	1.1^{NS}
4th order proximity	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref

Notes: Ref = Reference category, NS = not significant, * = p>0.10, ** = p>0.05, *** = p>0.01. For the full model see Table 3 in the article. The regressions have also been run without controlling for respectively ideology and personal income, which produces no major differences in the effect of the proximity dummies.

Table 2 shows the overall expected patterns of differences in the effect of proximity between policy designs. For attitudes towards social assistance and incapacity benefits, the two selective policies in the study, I found a significant effect in being proximate to recipients.[12] Importantly, the effect was also present when analysing the close friends of recipients (3rd order proximity). This suggests that the effect on

[12] It should be noted, and was not made entirely clear in the article, that none of the social policies are "pure" versions of selective, contributions-based or universal policies. Incapacity benefit is, for instance, less selective than social assistance, since it contains some universal elements. The overall ranking of the policies presented in the article is still valid.

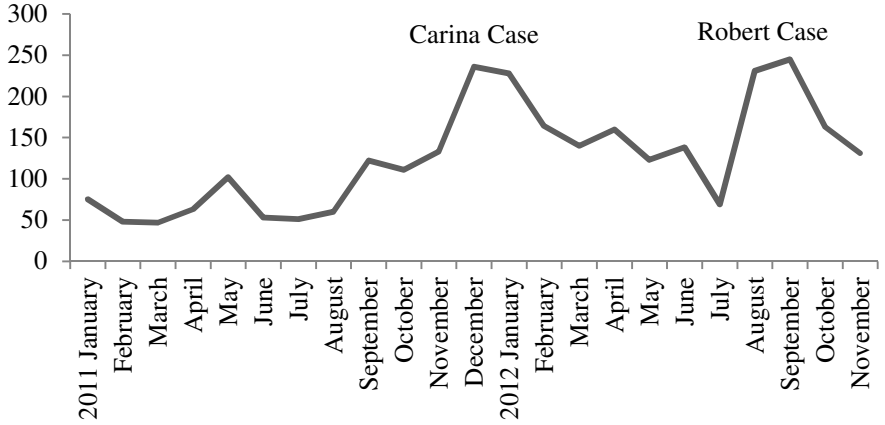
attitudes of being proximate is not tied only to economic self-interest, as there is no apparent self-interest connection between a recipient and close friend, which shows that this proximity effect also draws on the perceptions of the recipient group. As predicted, this effect did not exist for the universal policies, state education grant and state pension, where there is no difference between the orders of proximity. The results are not in opposition to the other theories on the policy design effect, but do provide an individual-level theory and testing of the effect. This shows how the design of a policy is able to alter the public perception of a policy and the group benefitting from it, as well as create different patterns of interest in the population.

STEREOTYPES AND WELFARE ATTITUDES

Where the first two articles investigate how, respectively, welfare services and universal welfare benefits can help generate their own support, the third article explores what happens when normalcy is challenged for a selective benefit. The public support for selective benefits is believed to be the most easily undermined, for many of the reasons outlined in the article on policy design (Petersen et al. 2011, Golding, Middleton 1982, Gilens 2000). In the article, I track attitudes towards social assistance during a period in which public support could potentially be undermined.

The starting point for this article was a predominantly negative debate on social assistance in Denmark that featured two media cases, “lazy Robert” and “poor Carina”. It can be argued that the cases are stereotypes that embody the classic critiques that poverty relief distorts the incentive to work and makes recipients lazy (Rothstein 1998, Somers, Block 2005, Golding, Middleton 1982). The media cases drew a lot of attention, as documented by the number of newspaper articles in five major newspapers shown in Figure 6 below, and sparked what can be described as a moral panic (Garland 2008, Cohen 2002).

Figure 6: Number of articles mentioning social assistance in five major newspapers.



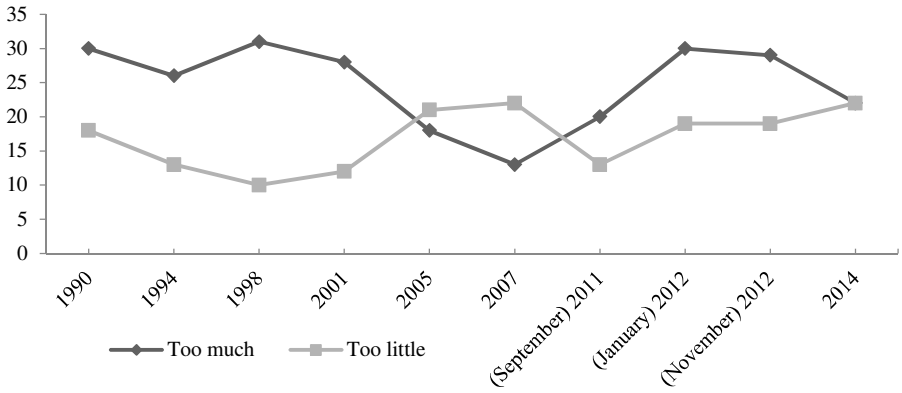
Source: The newspaper database Infomedia tracking the newspapers BT, Ekstra Bladet, Berlingske, Politiken and Jyllands-Posten.

Using a panel design, I tracked attitudes before the debates in September and October 2011 and after the debates in November 2011. The results show that the Danes became only slightly less supportive of spending on social assistance over the period (although significantly different at $p>0.05$). The slight drop in support for social assistance did not fit the descriptions in the literature of how harsh debates and negative stereotypes should undermine support for welfare benefits (Petersen et al. 2011, Golding, Middleton 1982, Gilens 2000).

To provide an individual-level explanation of this, I looked into explanations of the individual-level changes in attitudes before and after the debates. Of the total population, only 39 percent changed their attitudes towards spending on social assistance, and of this group, about one third changed their attitudes in a positive direction, in the sense that they became willing to spend on social assistance. This polarisation of attitudes "hid" some of the reaction to the debates, and thus accounts for the relatively small drop in overall support for spending on social assistance. The results further demonstrate that the polarisation of attitudes took place in two dimensions: egalitarian values and the perceived risk of unemployment. This demonstrates that the effect of native debates can be better observed when studying them at an individual level (Taber 2003, Taber, Lodge 2006, Lord, Ross & Lepper 1979).

An interesting picture emerges when viewing the long term development of attitudes towards spending on social assistance. Below, the attitudes for and against spending on social assistance are tracked from 1990 to 2014, placing the media stories in a longer timeframe.

Figure 7: Attitudes towards spending on social assistance from 1990 to 2014, presented as attitudes for or against cutting spending.



Notes: Data from 1990 to 2011 is from the Danish election surveys (Stubager, Holm & Smidstrup 2013). The 2012 to 2014 data is from surveys conducted by YouGov. The similar wording of questions is used in the surveys. Attitudes expressing that the respondents are satisfied with the current level of spending or don't know are included, but not tracked in the figure. No weights are applied to the results.

Figure 7 shows that in the longer term, attitudes towards spending on social assistance are quite stable, and if there is any development it is trending towards more positive attitudes. There is a small drop in support from before the cases (September 2011) to during (January 2012) and after (November 2012), as also documented in the article, however, this effect disappeared in 2014, and in fact the overall level of support is slightly higher than before the cases. This might be connected to the fact that universalistic Nordic welfare states tend to create a feedback effect whereby the overall values of the welfare state affect attitudes in other areas (Esping-Andersen 1990, Svallfors 2007, Larsen, Dejgaard 2012).

NEO-LIBERALISM AND THE NORDIC WELFARE MODEL

The fourth article studies neo-liberal ideology as a very different challenge to the Nordic welfare model. The global rise of neo-liberal ideology has been predicted to spell doom for welfare states, as the ideology is believed to stand in sharp opposition to their existence (Harvey 2005, MacGregor 2005). Based on the literature on ideological morphology, it could be argued that the ideology will take on a different form in Nordic countries and thus adapt to the Nordic welfare model (Turner 2008, Freeden 1998). The article explores whether this is the case.

The article focuses on the emergence of the "Liberal Alliance" political party in Denmark in order to answer this question. Although neo-liberal ideas have long been influential in Nordic countries, this represents an opportunity to study the neo-liberal ideology, as the party represents one of the most comprehensively neo-liberal political platforms in the Nordic countries. The article examines whether the neo-liberal ideology identified among voters and the grassroots of the party has adapted to the three distinctive features of the Nordic welfare model. This is explored through a mixed-methods approach of sequentially presenting a survey of party voters and interviews with grassroots members of the party. The survey used in the article is presented below in Table 3.

Table 3: Voter attitudes towards government spending on welfare policies presented as opinion balances.

	Liberal Alliance				Liberal Alliance	Liberal Party and CPP	Danish People's Party	Left-wing parties
	Too much	Suitable	Too little	Don't know	Opinion balance	Opinion balance	Opinion balance	Opinion balance
Education	5	44	45	6	41	34	35	66
Homecare for elderly	9	47	34	10	25	35	63	57
Healthcare	13	44	38	5	25	35	64	67
Childcare	11	50	30	9	19	35	34	53
State pension	19	51	17	10	-2	18	49	35
Unemployment insurance	35	46	9	10	-26	-16	-1	27
Social assistance	52	33	7	8	-45	-36	-20	20

Notes: From a 2011 election survey. N (total) = Liberal Alliance (333), Liberals and Conservative Peopels Party (CPP) (1446), Danish People's Party (624), left-wing parties (2966).

The survey presented in Table 1 shows that the neo-liberals are not opposed to a role for the government, since they support further spending on four of the seven policy areas, and for the universal welfare services there is no significant difference

between Liberal Alliance and the traditional right-wing parties. On the other hand, they differentiate themselves on attitudes towards state pensions and the two benefits aimed at the unemployed: unemployment insurance and social assistance. This shows that voters for the Liberal Alliance are more opposed to selective benefits, and an otherwise popular universal benefit loses support among this group of voters.

The interviews with members of the party were used to further explore and substantiate the reasoning behind this attitude pattern. The interviews showed that the respondents made a distinction between what one of them termed the "common goods", for which the state should take responsibility, and the other welfare goods which were deemed to help largely undeserving groups. This distinction followed the overall difference between universal and non-universal policies outlined above in the survey, although with some differences, especially for the state pension. The interviews further showed what can best be described as an ambivalent attitude towards the further targeting of welfare. Based on a combination of the survey and the interviews, I concluded that the attitudes of neo-liberals have indeed adapted to the context of the Nordic welfare model, thus creating a distinct Nordic neo-liberalism that does not stand in opposition to the welfare model.

GUARDIANS OF THE WELFARE STATE

The fifth and final article takes on the idea that public employees should be more opposed to cuts in public spending than private sector employees. This idea exists throughout the literature on welfare state development and welfare state attitudes, and is often tied to an argument that this is in the interest of public employees. This can be found, for instance, both in the work of Pierson (2001) and Esping-Andersen (1990), which are cited as the key inspiration for the conditions created by the Nordic welfare model.

The literature on this division in the attitudes towards social spending has, however, not produced the expected results, as most studies have not found the expected difference between public sector and private sector employees. The article tries to improve this link, by changing the approach used by other articles on this subject in two ways. It first examines attitudes towards retrenchment, as opposed to general spending, towards both general social spending and specific social policies. This effect is predicted to be strongest for welfare services, as they are the most labour intensive and also create more contact between employees and citizens (Kitschelt 1994). It secondly examines whether the effect of public employment also exists at a household level or whether the effect is negated, such as in "mixed households"

that are dependent both on the public sector and the private sector (Pierson 2001). The potential division between public and private sector employees on attitudes towards retrenchment is studied comparatively in sixteen western welfare states using data from the fourth ISSP Role of Government module, and on a household level using a Danish survey. The results using the ISSP data are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Fixed effects binary logistic regression model showing the chance of answering that more or the same should be spent (0) against answering less should be spent (1) on the government, health care, education, pensions, or unemployment benefits. The models test for the impact of employment sector and control for the effect of sex, age, education and country. The results are presented as odds ratio with levels of significance noted.

	Government spending	Health care	Education	State pension	Unemployment benefits
Sector of employment					
Public	0.653^{***}	0.743^{*}	0.847^{NS}	0.675^{**}	0.739^{***}
Private	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
Sex					
Male	0.971^{NS}	1.486^{***}	1.676^{***}	2.081^{***}	1.389^{***}
Female	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
Years old					
Age	1.043^{***}	1.067^{*}	1.076^{*}	1.081^{**}	0.999^{NS}
Age^2	1.000^{**}	0.999^{*}	$0.999^{(*)}$	0.999^{*}	1.000^{NS}
Education					
No formal	$1.237^{(*)}$	0.193^{**}	0.323^{*}	0.350^{**}	1.288^{NS}
Lowest formal	1.715^{***}	0.484^{***}	0.616^{*}	0.349^{***}	0.561^{***}
Above lowest	1.232^{***}	0.874^{NS}	$0.807^{(*)}$	0.387^{***}	0.526^{***}
Higher secondary	$1.106^{(*)}$	0.474^{***}	0.420^{***}	0.400^{***}	0.653^{***}
Above higher secondary	0.944^{NS}	0.556^{***}	0.504^{***}	0.613^{***}	1.533^{**}
University	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
N (total)	12.663	12.975	12.932	12.839	12.772

Notes: Based on the ISSP (2006) 'Role of Government' survey. Government spending: 'Here are some things the government might do for the economy. (…) Cuts in government spending', welfare policies: 'Please show whether you would like to see more or less government spending in each area'.
Ref = reference category, NS = not significant, (*) p > 0.1, * p > 0.05, ** = p > 0.01, *** = p > 0.01.

As Table 4 shows, the comparative survey suggests that public employees tend to oppose retrenchment for all policy areas and that the effect is strongest for unemployment benefits. This fits poorly with the idea that public employees will act in ways that defend jobs or are in their direct interest. Instead, the difference with private sector employees is strongest for the welfare policies that enjoy less popular support, prompting the idea of a "guardian effect". The same pattern is also tested in Danish data, but on a household level, where individuals were divided into public, mixed, or private households. This shows that the effect of being publicly

employed also can be "extrapolated" to a household level, which significantly expands the effect, and thus, for the Danish data, involves more than 50 percent of the workforce.

DANISH OR NORDIC MECHANISMS?

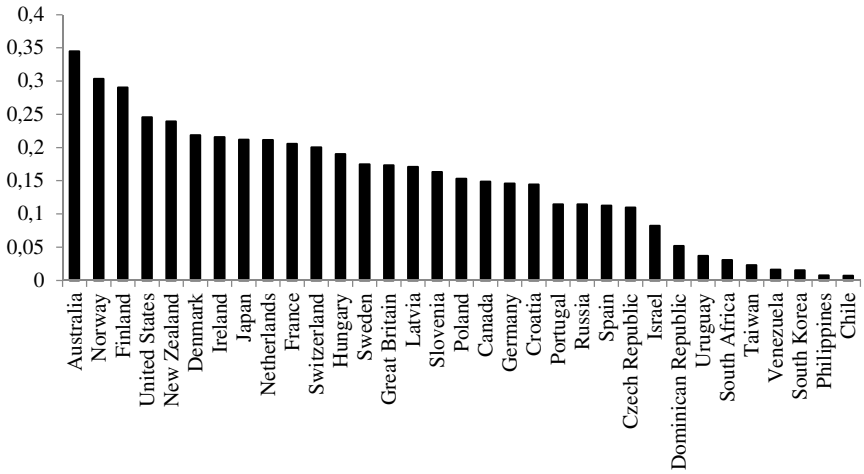
The subjects or the data used in the articles have, for all but the article on the "guardians of the welfare state" of public employees, come from Denmark. This may lead to a concern that these are not Nordic patterns, but simply Danish patterns, which have weak external validity regarding other Nordic countries. In this final part of this chapter, I will therefore try to demonstrate that similar mechanisms or patterns have been demonstrated in the other Nordic countries.

The first two articles focus on the impact of being proximate to recipients of welfare services and social benefits, and the ways in which that affects attitudes towards such spending. It is difficult to find studies that show similar proximity patterns, as these are based on very particular questions, but it is possible to show that similar effects exist, without the underlying proximity patterns. This means documenting similar impacts of user satisfaction on spending preferences and a somewhat similar ranking of policies, and between policies, as shown in the policy design article. An example of this for welfare services is by Kumlin (2004), who shows, based on various Swedish surveys, that the changes experienced in public services have an impact on political attitudes such as government approval or political trust. Similarly for policy design effect, Svallfors (2011) shows a similar pattern in the Swedish Welfare State Surveys, and Blomberg, Suomnien, Kroll and Helenius (1996) have documented the same pattern in Finland. These studies demonstrate the same overall ranking of policies, with universal polices generally having more support than contributions-based policies, and selective policies falling at the bottom of the scale. Jordan (2013) has also shown this difference between selective and universal policies and their ability to create policy feedbacks comparatively.

Another of the conclusion from the article, regarding proximity to welfare services, was that dissatisfaction with the current services tends to create support for spending and, conversely, satisfaction dampens support for spending. Using the ISSP Role of Government survey (from 2006), it is possible to show the relationship comparatively. In the figure below, the relationship between the perceived success of the government in providing healthcare for the sick, and the

willingness to spend on healthcare for the sick, is tested using an OLS regression. Controls for age, sex, highest level of education, and hours worked weekly are also applied, but only the effect of the perceived success (or lack hereof) of the government in providing healthcare for the sick, on healthcare spending is shown.

Figure 8: The effect of perceiving the government as successful or unsuccessful in providing healthcare for the sick, on attitudes towards spending on healthcare for the sick. The effect is controlled for age, sex, highest level of education, and hours worked weekly (not shown), and is presented by country as standardised effects.



Notes: The effect of perceiving the government as successful or unsuccessful has a significant effect in spending attitudes, at $p > 0.05$ in all countries except Chile, Taiwan, South Korea, Philippines, South Africa, and Venezuela. Questions: "Government should spend money: Healthcare" and "Government successful: Provide healthcare for the sick?" Both questions are answered on a 5-point Likert scale, respectively, from "spend much more" to "spend much less" and from "very unsuccessful" to "very successful". A test for homoscedasticity has been run on the residuals, showing a normal distribution, which supports the idea that this can be treated as a linear effect, although the dependent variable is not on an interval scale.

Figure 8 shows that there is an effect of the government being perceived as successful or unsuccessful in providing healthcare for the sick on attitudes towards spending on healthcare. The direction of the effect follows the same pattern reported in the article about the perception of an unsuccessful government leading to demand for more spending, and conversely the perception of success dampening

the demand for spending. This relationship is not significant in all the countries (see the figure below), but I do find it exists in the other Nordic countries, which also tend to cluster at the top, in terms of strength of the association. This also shows that it is not a specific Nordic effect, as suggested in the article, but an effect that extends to mature Western welfare states.

The article on stereotypes and attitudes towards spending on social assistance shows a small overall effect on public attitudes towards social assistance. A similar result is reported by a three-wave cross-sectional study of attitudes towards spending on social assistance in Norway. This study also finds attitudes to be stable, even during a period of harsh criticism and increasing number of recipients (Pettersen, Sæbø & Terum 1994). As discussed in the article, and in the summary above, this could be linked to the Nordic welfare model, which has been argued to affect perceptions, and media portrayals of the poor, including social assistance recipients (Svallfors 2007, Larsen 2006). This argument is further supported by studies from Denmark and Sweden (Larsen, Dejgaard 2012, Larsen, Knudsen 2014) and Norway and Finland (Bay et al. 2009), which show that media portrayals of the poor and social assistance recipients are generally positive.

Finally, in the fourth article, on the Liberal Alliance as an example of neo-liberalism in a Nordic country, studies that show a similar influx of the ideology in Sweden (Bergqvist, Lindbom 2003), Norway (Mydske, Claes & Lie 2007), and Finland (Jutila 2010) are cited. This shows that, although the Liberal Alliance might be the "purest" example of a neo-liberal party, the ideology is influential in all the countries. Even though the neo-liberal ideology has not crystallised into a political party in the other Nordic countries, it makes sense to talk of a Nordic, and not just Danish, developments.[13]

This review of related studies shows that similar mechanisms have been demonstrated across the Nordic countries. This helps confirm the overall claim of the dissertation that the features that distinguishes the Nordic welfare model can also help explain the stability in public support.

[13] See also Harvey (2005) and Hall and Lamont (2013) for more comparative discussions of the limited impact of neo-liberalism on social policy in the Nordic countries.

CHAPTER 7. THE DYNAMICS OF STABILITY

Public support for the Nordic welfare model remains stable, in spite of the fact that the forces and actors that favoured it historically have weakened considerably. This is the puzzle of this dissertation.

One explanation for this puzzle could be, that the ideological support for the welfare state policies remains strong and thus, that the support for the Nordic welfare model is a continuation of the class struggle. This, however, fits poorly with the fact the class voting has been declining (Nieuwbeerta, Ultee 1999), the left-wing has been losing ground (Arter 2003) and that the centre and right-wing parties of the Nordic countries has increasingly taken a pro welfare state stance over the last 30 years (Gingrich & Häusermann 2015). Another possibility is to argue, that the support for the welfare state is more out of habit than out of choice and thus, that the support for the welfare state is mostly a cultural phenomenon (Brooks & Manza, 2007, Pfau-Effinger, 2005). There is undoubtedly some truth to this argument, which also forms the idea that unhappy Nordic citizens support further spending because they have the "collective memory" of a previously successful state (Olick 2008). However, "cultural theories" of welfare state development and stability are often tautological in nature in that they rarely account for how the culture is created, reproduced, and how it might change. This makes them problematic for this dissertation, as they might explain the current stability, but not how it is created. For these reasons, I instead turn institutional theory in order to explain how the Nordic welfare model might create its own support, and thus help explain the stability.

The Nordic welfare model stands out, compared to other welfare models, in a number of ways, of which I have chosen to highlight three: An extended role for the state in organizing or providing welfare to the citizens; an increased usage of welfare services in providing this welfare, epically for the elderly, the incapacitated, and children; and greater reliance on universal schemes for proving welfare. Institutional theory can help me explain how the features that make the Nordic welfare model distinct can also affect attitudes towards the welfare state, and thus help reproduce the model (Rothstein 1998, Esping-Andersen 1990, Pierson 1993, 1996, 2001). These theories, however, often lack a micro element — that is, they do not describe these processes of attitude change at an individual level. To provide this, I draw on policy feedback theory to describe the processes at the individual level and thereby outline the social mechanisms. The articles in the dissertation describe social mechanisms that help recreate support for the Nordic welfare model,

or to rephrase the title of the dissertation, the dynamics that create stability. These social mechanisms are not necessarily specific to the Nordic welfare model, but should be more prevalent here, and thus help explain the stability in support for the model.

The results of the dissertation are comprised of the five articles, summarised above, and presented in full length below. These articles are implicitly built on a sociological rational choice approach, which this introduction tries to make explicit. This approach consists of adding "bridges" in the form of additional theories about what might affect the individuals' maximisation of utility in order to make a more realistic model of human action than simple rational choice theory. The strength of this approach is that it exposes the assumptions in the articles about what affects support for the welfare state, and for this reason creates very clear hypotheses about how individuals will act. The results of this dissertation do not point to a "master variable" that helps to explain the continuous support for the Nordic welfare model. Instead, the articles outline micro level mechanisms through which the features that make the Nordic welfare model distinctive also help to create support for the Nordic welfare model. These mechanisms of policy feedback from the existence of welfare services, universal benefits, and a comparatively larger degree of the workforce in the public sector are not exclusive to the Nordic countries, but should be more prevalent here and thus help explain the continued support for the welfare model. The articles deal with two instances where support for the welfare state policies is potentially challenged in the form of negative debates on social assistance recipients and the rise of neo-liberalism. In both cases, the articles show mechanisms by which the potential threats are "diffused", and thus support for the welfare state is not undermined.

This is not an exhaustive overview of the possible social mechanisms that help generate support for the Nordic welfare model or the possible threats to the Nordic welfare model. However, I do believe that this covers some of the most important mechanisms and challenges. These results should, however, not be interpreted to mean that the support for the Nordic welfare model will forever remain strong. New threats can arise, both internal and external, that this model of feedback mechanisms cannot overcome and the support for the welfare model might therefore crumble. Another very real possibility is that politicians will fundamentally change the model, whether for ideological reasons or more by accident in the process of muddling through, in ways that weaken or stop the feedback loops that help sustain the current stability in support

APPENDIX

Table 5: Characteristics used to describe the Nordic welfare states in six select works.

	Nordic stateness Universalism	Service and care tasks	Equality or gender equality	Labour market or industrial relations
Titmuss 1974	"This model sees social welfare as a major integrated institution in society, providing universalist services outside the market on the principle of need. It is in part based on theories about the multiple effects of social change and the economic system, and in part on the principle of social equality. It is basically a model incorporating systems of redistribution in command-over-resources-through-time." (146).			
Esping-Andersen 1990	"countries in which the principles of universalism and de-commodification of social rights were extended also the new middle class […] Rather than tolerate a dualism between state and marked, the social democrats pursued a welfare state that would promote an equality of the highest standards" (27) " This model crowds out the marked, and consequently constructs an essentially universal solidarity in favor of the welfare state" (28).	"that services and benefits be upgraded to levels commensurate with the even the most discriminating tastes of the new middle classes" (27).	"It is, accordingly, committed to a heavy social-service burden, not only to service family needs, but also to allow women to choose work rather than the household" (28).	"Perhaps the most salient characteristic of the social democratic regime is its fusion of welfare and work. On is at once genuinely committed to a full-employment guarantee, and entirely dependent on its statement" (28).
Andersen et al. 2007	"a comprehensive welfare state with an emphasis on transfers to households and publicly provided social service financed by taxes, which are high notably for wage income and consumption" (14).	"a lot of public and/or private spending on investment in human capital, including child care and education as well as research and development (R&D)" (14).	"a set of labour market institutions that include strong labour unions and employer associations, significant elements of wage coordination, relatively generous unemployment benefits and a prominent role for active labour market policies." (14).	

Alestalo, Hort & Kuhnle 2009	"The Nordic welfare model is based on an extensive prevalence of the state in the welfare arrangements." (2).	"In the Nordic countries the principle of universal social rights is extended to the whole population. Services and cash benefits are not targeted towards the have-nots but also cover the middle classes." (3).		"The historical inheritance of the Nordic countries is that of fairly small class, income, and gender differences." (3).	
Kautto 2010 (Based on a number of texts)	"The extensive Role of the State and the wide scope of policies" (591)	"[social] schemes stand out as being uniquely 'encompassing' " (591)	"the Nordic strategy of redistribution is constituted by generous and broad coverage of transfers, combined with a strong emphasis on free or strongly subsidized service provision" (591)	"women friendly, giving women autonomy" (519)	"the importance of a positive interplay between the unique nature of industrial relations […] and welfare state development" (592)
Dølvik et al. 2014		"Public welfare services based on universal schemes to secure income and living standards contributed to high levels of labour market participation and mobility. Tax-funded health and social services and free education were intended to promote gender equality and more equitable living conditions, health services and work opportunities. " (19)		"Organized working life based on the interplay of statutory and collective bar-gaining regulation, labour peace during contractual periods, and centralized coordination of wage setting." (19)	"Macroeconomic governance based on active, stability-oriented fiscal and mon-etary policies, free trade and coordinated wage formation to promote growth, full employment and social cohesion." (19)

Note: Titmuss (1974) and Esping-Andersen (1990) do not describe the Nordic or Scandinavian countries, but ideal types partly inspired by the Nordic countries.

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ARTICLE I: HOW PROXIMATE AND VISIBLE POLICIES SHAPE SELF-INTEREST, SATISFACTION, AND SPENDING SUPPORT: THE CASE OF PUBLIC SERVICE PRODUCTION

Troels Fage Hedegaard & Christian Albrekt Larsen[14]

INTRODUCTION

The basic idea behind policy feedback is that once a policy has been enacted, and an institution has been created, it can impact the attitudes and actions of certain groups or entire populations. The idea is often traced back to E.E. Schattschneider, who in 1935 argued that new policies create new politics (Pierson 1993, Skocpol 1992). This chapter examines how public service provision, namely child-care, primary- and secondary public school and elderly care, creates a new political game. We focus on Denmark, where this kind of service production is particularly widespread. Together with what Esping-Andersen famously labelled "social democratic welfare regimes" (Esping-Andersen 1990), Denmark stands out in terms of its large public service production. In 2009 the Danish public expenditure on child-care (including pre-primary education) amounted to 1.4 per cent of GDP; twice the size of the OECD average of only 0.7 per cent and only surpassed by Iceland (1.7 per cent). In 2009 the Danish expenditures on primary and secondary schools amounted to 5 per cent of GDP, topping all OECD states (OECD Socx database). Finally, Danish elderly care expenditures were around 2.6 per cent of GDP in 2009 (surpassed only by Sweden and the Netherlands); the EU-average was around 1.2 per cent of GDP. Denmark is clearly a good case to study in terms of how public service production influences the electorate in a generous welfare state context.

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A dominant idea within the policy feedback literature is that policies shape the preferences of a self-interested electorate. Those who stand to benefit from the policies develop a concentrated interest in their preservation and expansion (Pierson 1996). If the group of users is large enough, as is the case in Danish service production, they will generate political pressure, thereby leading to maintained or increased expenditures. Drawing on this logic, observers have claimed that the Nordic welfare states in particular will face a demand-overload situation, that is, the demands will supersede the possible level of taxation (Crozier et al. 1975). In this chapter we find support for the 'demand-overload' thesis, or, put more neutrally, the 'self-reinforcing feedback', by showing how self-interest shapes expenditures preferences for child-care, schools and elderly care. But the self-interest mechanism is accompanied by a 'service-satisfaction-mechanism': Not only does self-interest matter, but how satisfied people are with the services is also of importance. The simple idea is that citizens might actually become satisfied with the service provision, thereby potentially moderating the 'self-reinforcing feedback' from users' self-interest (in contrast to the demand-overload thesis, which tends to assume that users' service needs are infinite). However, service production might also produce dissatisfaction, which has the potential to accelerate the problems expected by the demand-overload thesis (according to our results, it is not only self-interest but also perceptions of low quality that drive demand for public spending, even among citizens with no self-interest in the scheme; see below). The aim of this chapter is to uncover these complex feedback processes, which we believe are best examined at the micro-level.

The chapter is divided into seven sections: In the first section we discuss the policy feedback approach and establish a theoretical framework for analysing feedback effects from Nordic service production. In the second section we introduce the data. The following four sections cover our empirical analyses. Finally, the last section summarizes and discusses the results.

THE COMPLEX FEEDBACK FROM SERVICE PRODUCTION

Paul Pierson (1993, p. 595) is among the most prominent political scientists currently working with the policy feedback approach, arguing that "increasing government activity made it harder to deny that public policies were not only outputs of but important inputs into the political process,

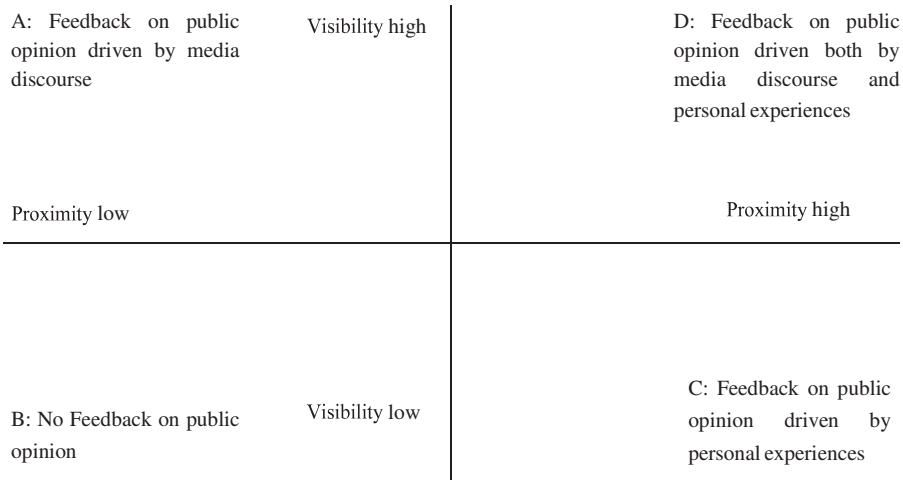
often dramatically re-shaping social, economic, and political conditions." With this point of departure, he states that the importance of feedback is likely to increase as the welfare state grows, and as the forces behind the emergence of the welfare state decline, such as the waning strength of the working class in the Nordic countries. In this new environment, new actors and dynamics are responsible for shaping the so-called "new politics of the welfare state" (Pierson 1996). Following this line of reasoning, we analyse the preferences of new large groups of welfare users, as created by the expansion of public child- and elderly-care services created in the Nordic countries.

Specifying how exactly policy feedback effects actually work has not been an easy task. Pierson initially suggested that policy feedback can take two different forms: path dependency and policy learning. Path dependency is a complicated concept, but the basic idea is that once a policy is chosen, a country enters onto a path from which it is increasingly difficult to deviate (Pierson 1993, 1996, 2000). In our case, once service production has been established publicly, it is difficult to shift service production to the family or to the market. The costs associated with a shift in paths are underscored in much of the economic literature on path dependency (Pierson 2000). Policy learning describes how welfare policies and institutions can teach citizens about the problems that are considered important, how they should be addressed and what role the state should have in solving them (Pierson 1993; Svallfors 2003). Thus, the Nordic preference for state intervention can conceivably be traced back to public experiences of state solutions being possible, desirable and normal. A similar argument can be found in Svallfors' (e.g. 2003) extensive works. While Pierson's policy feedback approach certainly is plausible, in order for it to be convincing it must be substantiated by empirical findings at the micro-level, which Pierson seldom provides (Campbell 2012).

The Nordic countries provide a good laboratory for policy feedback (Kumlin 2002). We examine child-care, schools, elderly home-care and nursing homes in Denmark. Most Scandinavians' experiences with the state originate from daily interactions with this kind of public service production. Throughout the analysis we will distinguish between the direct users, the second-order users (close family members of the users) and the non-users. Our thesis is that the status as a direct or second-order user shapes the preferences of the electorate. We show that while institutions do indeed shape the self-interest of Danish citizens, other paths of policy feedback also need to be taken into account. Below we develop six more specific theses about the feedback process from public service production. The main theoretical

inspiration for our further specification of Pierson's policy feedback approach can be found in the work by Soss and Schram (2007). They suggest that in order to explain how the public forms attitudes toward a policy we need to take two dimensions into account: proximity and visibility. The proximity dimension represents the notion that people's concrete experiences with a policy influence their attitudes toward it. The visibility dimension touches on the classic idea within electoral research that public opinion is strongly tied to the salience of a given issue in the public sphere, here we refer to the context of a given policy. Soss and Schram used this framework to explain why the introduction of harsh workfare elements in the American AFCD-scheme (relabelled TANF) failed to have a positive effect on the public opinion of the scheme. Their main argument had to do with the scheme's high visibility in the mass media, which led the public to form strong negative opinions, namely that it was a salient issue. But it was also a very distant scheme, as few received the benefit or even knew someone who did. It therefore did not make any difference when content of the policy changed. Drawing on insights from this example, we can generate specific theses about policy feedback from service production. The overall argument is that Nordic service production is both proximate and visible, and thereby initiates a rather complex feedback process (located in the upper-right quadrant, see Figure 1). Soss and Schram (2007, p. 122) argue that "with multiple mechanisms available, feedback processes in this quadrant will be more likely and more complicated".

Figure 1: Proximity, visibility and feedback on public opinion



Source: Modified version based on Soss and Schram, 2007.

In terms of proximity, Nordic service production represents the opposite of the distant policy that Soss and Schram analysed. Child-care, schools and elderly care are much more proximate to Nordic citizens than the social assistance provided mainly to the poor, predominately minority single mothers (e.g. Gilens 2000). These proximate Nordic policies may be able to generate positive attitudes toward the welfare state among all citizens. The popularity could, for example, be explained by the fact that it is 'deserving' groups (children, elderly and hard-working parents) who are aided by the state (van Oorschot 2000; Petersen 2011; Larsen 2006), or by the fact that these services are organized around universal criteria, which increase the perception that citizens are treated equally (e.g. Rothstein 1994, 1998). While these effects on the entire population are likely to be present, those who have experiences with the state may be most affected by the public service provisions. Distinguishing between users and non-users therefore enables one to study the foundations of policy feedback at the micro-level. The classic argument is that the users of the services have a strong self-interest in the schemes. We test this argument by analysing whether the direct and second-order users have a stronger preference for spending on 'their' schemes than non-users do.

Hypothesis 1: The direct and second-order users of public service production have stronger preferences for spending on schemes from which they benefit.

Another argument is that service production creates direct personal contact with public employees, which has the potential to foster satisfaction with the service. This has been found in a number of studies (e.g. Lolle 1999) and could be caused by the establishment of positive emotional bonds between the citizen and the public front-line staff. This type of non-self-interest feedback effect has received even less attention. We will however test this argument by analysing whether the direct users are more satisfied with the service production than second-order users and non-users.

Hypothesis 2: The direct users are more satisfied with the public service production than second-order users and non-users.

Finally, the direct and second-order users' interactions with the proximate state could also generate negative experiences. This often happens if the institutions are not (perceived to be) responsive to the needs and demands of users (Kumlin 2002, Chapter 9; Solevid 2009). Responsiveness is a difficult term (in particular, the extent of responsiveness within a bureaucracy remains a matter of contention (Goodsell 1981); in this context, however, we define it as the degree to which direct and second-order users perceive that they can influence the character of the public service they receive. This leads to the next thesis:

Hypothesis 3: The satisfaction with the service production among the direct- and second-order users is contingent on the experienced level of responsiveness.

In terms of visibility, the Nordic service production might be thought of in terms of policies that make the state highly visible for the public. While the media discourse surrounding policies can be both negative and positive, it is the negative stories that generally receive more attention. The extensive Nordic public service production provides many opportunities for the media to focus on negative stories about state provision (see also Chapter 14 in this volume by Staffan Kumlin). Despite the services being universal and helping "deserving" citizens, some may view them as being too expensive, too inefficient or low quality. The negative media discourse on Danish home-care services serves as a good example. Over the period analysed, a critical national discourse on elderly care policies was present (Goul Andersen and Nielsen 2006). The policies were accused of being inefficient and low quality, with both parties from the left and the right calling to improve the home-care scheme (Brugge and Voss 2003, Borre and Goul Andersen 2003). This is a clear example of a one-sided public media discourse (Zaller 1992). The question is how the public reacted to such negative media discourses. As demonstrated in the work of Zaller (1992), this is not always easy to ascertain. It is a matter of media exposure, ideological orientation (we have a tendency to accept things that fit our world view and reject things that do not) and the capacity to reject (those with more political knowledge are better at rejecting a one-sided media discourse). We however propose two different implications based on the media discourse.

Hypothesis 4: The direct users are more immune to a one-sided negative media discourse than non-users are.

Thesis 4 touches on the idea that the direct users have first-hand experience with the services that enable them to reject a one-sided negative media discourse about the low quality of the provided service (for similar argument see Kumlin 2002). Put simply, direct users are able to perform a reality check, which often reveals that the media discourse is exaggerated.

Hypothesis 5: Second-order users' satisfaction is more susceptible to a one-sided negative media discourse than are both the users and non-users.

Thesis 5 reflects the idea that while the second-order users do not have these first-hand experiences, they are however likely to be tuning into the media messages because of family members dependent on the service. We therefore expect the second-order users of the Nordic public services to be highly sensitive to a one-sided negative media discourse on the public service production as they are (1) likely to be interested and therefore exposed to the discourse but (2) less able than the first order users to make a reality check.

Finally, it is important to study how the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the public service production influences public spending preferences. Based on the path-dependency literature, we argue that citizens are faced with a classic 'double payment problem', creating a 'lock-in' effect. Dissatisfied citizens could of course opt out of the public services and look for alternatives within the private market or the family. However, this would be expensive (as they still would pay the taxes underpinning the public service production). At the same time, the market for such services is underdeveloped in the Nordic countries (crowded out by state organized service production) and the capacity of the family is limited due to the dual earner employment structure (which is also highly dependent on the many jobs filled by women in public service production). It is therefore reasonable to assume that dissatisfied Nordic citizens' demand increased spending on public schemes that do not meet their expectations:

Hypothesis 6: Dissatisfaction with Nordic service production leads to a preference for increasing expenditures on the program, while satisfaction has the opposite effect.

The 'positive' Nordic feedback process from dissatisfaction is dependent on the lock-in effect from the institutional setup discussed above and could lead to what has been labelled as overload. However, thesis 6 also suggests that satisfied citizens actually have lower spending preferences for a given scheme, thus suggesting some degree of moderation in the feedback loop if a service is perceived to be of good quality. While the direct- and second-order users may have an inherent tendency to prefer increases in spending (thesis 1), the satisfaction of the direct users (thesis 2) and their immunity to negative media discourses (thesis 4) could moderate the overload effect.

DATA

The data used in this chapter comes from three nationwide Danish surveys from 1995 (N 5 1626), 1998 (N 5 3424) and 2001 (N 5 1260). The data were collected through postal surveys among a random sample of the adult population and reached response rates above 80 per cent. The three surveys were identical in terms of wording, length and data collection methods. The data features detailed measurements of the use of public services, service specific satisfaction and service specific spending preference thereby delivering more specific data than what can be obtained for example by the European Social Survey (van Oorschot and Meuleman 2012, Kumlin 2007). As mentioned, we distinguish between users, second-order users and non-users. 'Users' are those directly exposed to the public service provision. The data contains 219 persons who receive home-care assistance and 34 persons who live in a nursing home. The 'second-order users' are the 'users' close relatives. The data contains 786 persons who have children in public child-care facilities, 1,179 persons who have children in the public schools, 694 persons who have a close relative receiving public home-care assistance and 282 people with a close relative living in a public nursing home. The 'non-users' are defined as the remaining group in relation to each service.

The attitudes toward 'the state' can be measured on various levels. The data allow us to measure satisfaction with the public services in the specific areas: satisfaction with the public child-care, the public schools, elderly home-care and the nursing homes. Satisfaction is measured on a five-point scale: 'very satisfied', 'satisfied', 'neither satisfied nor unsatisfied', 'unsatisfied' and 'very unsatisfied'. The respondents were also given the option to answer 'don't know', which is frequently given by the non-users. In aggregate figure below, the

'don't know' answers have been merged with the neutral category of 'neither satisfied nor unsatisfied'. This dependent variable has been transformed into an index ranging from 0 to 100, with 0 indicating a situation where all respondents answered 'very dissatisfied' and 100 a situation where all respondents answered 'very satisfied'. We present both the means and the standard deviations of the indices. In the last section, the preference for public spending in service specific fields is used as the dependent variable (see the following section for further specification).

THE SATISFACTION AMONG USERS, SECOND-ORDER USERS AND NON-USERS

Table 1 provides a first overview of the link between the micro-level experiences with the public service production and attitudes toward the welfare services.

Table 1: Summary measures of area-specific satisfaction among users, second-order users and non-users. Mean of index from 0 – 100 and variation (standard deviation)

	Area-specific satisfaction		
	Average satisfaction (mean)	**Variation** (standard deviation)	**N** (min.)
Child-care:			
Second-order users	62**	34	765
Non-users	58	24	5235
Schools:			
Second-order users	64**	29	1164
Non-users	58	22	4268
Elderly home-care assistance:			
Users	48*	38	197
Second-order users	36**	32	674
Non-users	41	25	2386
Nursing homes:			
Users	67**	33	29
Second-order users	40*	32	269
Non-users	44	25	3827

Note: ** Statistical different from 'non-users' at 0.01 level. * Statistical different from 'non-users' at 0.05 level. ns Not statistical different from 'non-users' 0.05 level.

In the area of child-care, the second-order users (the parents) are more satisfied than the non-users. The mean satisfaction among the parents is 62, compared to the significantly different score of 58 among the non-users. The second-order users, however, are more polarized in terms of area-specific satisfaction (standard deviation = 34) than the non-users (standard deviation = 24). While a large part of the latter effect stems from the fact that many non-users answered 'don't know', second-order users also had very diverse (both good and bad) experiences (see below). The same pattern is found for satisfaction with schools. The second-order users are significantly more satisfied with the public schools than the non-users. Again, the second-order users are more polarized than the non-users (standard deviation of 29 and 22, respectively). For the elderly home-care assistance and nursing homes we have the opportunity to include all three user categories. In terms of overall satisfaction, the users of the two services are more satisfied than the non-

users and the second-order users, though not significantly different for nursing home users due to the low number of respondents. This supports the thesis that service production produces a positive image of the schemes among the direct users (thesis 2), and/or the direct users are immune to the negative media discourse (thesis 4).

We see also a very interesting effect when looking at the satisfaction levels of the second-order users of elderly care and nursing homes. In contrast to the second-order users of child-care and public schools, the second-order users of elderly care are significantly less satisfied than both the users and the non-users. This supports the thesis (5) that public service production renders some groups, particularly second-order users, highly sensitive toward negative media discourses about the welfare state.

THE IMPACT OF INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN: SCHOOL AND CHILD-CARE FACILITIES

Second-order users' satisfaction with child-care facilities and schools can be interpreted in various ways. We explore the idea that the effect is contingent upon the responsiveness of the institutions (thesis 3). In the previous section we demonstrated that second-order users tended to have both satisfied and dissatisfied experiences with the services. The data furthermore allow us to explore the degree to which this effect is contingent upon the perception of responsiveness. The second-order users of child-care and public schools were asked to evaluate the possibilities of influencing the service production (see Table 2). The correlation between the perceptions of responsiveness and service-specific satisfaction is moderate to strong and clearly significant. Those who find the institution responsive are more satisfied than those who do not. In the child-care field the correlation is moderate (Pearson 0.11; gamma 0.16), for schools the correlation is strong (Pearson 0.54, gamma 0.61). This lends support to thesis 3.

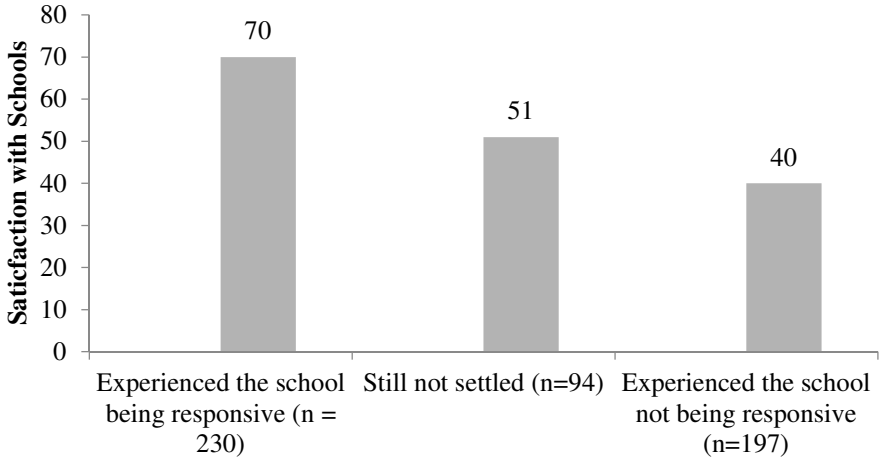
Table 2: Perceived responsiveness of child-care and schools among second-order users

	Very good	Good	Neither good nor bad	Bad	Very bad	N
Childcare	14	46	29	9	2	741
School	11	41	29	15	4	1,140

Note: 'Don't know' excluded.

In cross-sectional data it is often difficult to determine the direction of causality. It could be the case that dissatisfaction with the service establishes the perception that responsiveness is low, and not the other way around. In terms of attitudes toward schools we do however have the possibility of including a time perspective. The second-order users were asked whether they had tried to influence something at their children's school within the last year: 45 per cent of the parents indicated that they had; 55 per cent answered 'no'. While dissatisfaction might be a strong motivator in terms of trying to change something at the school, the level of dissatisfaction is unlikely to have a strong impact on whether a school was responsive or not. Those who have tried to influence the school were asked whether their concerns or demands were largely met: 44 per cent answered 'yes', 38 per cent answered 'no' and 18 per cent stated that the matter was 'not settled yet'. This gives us a group of second-order users who have experiences of the school as responsive, a group with that experienced an unresponsive school and also a group that is still waiting to see. The connection between these experiences with responsiveness within the last year and the current level of satisfaction with the school is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Experienced responsiveness within the last year and current satisfaction with schools among parents (second-order users) who have tried to influence the school



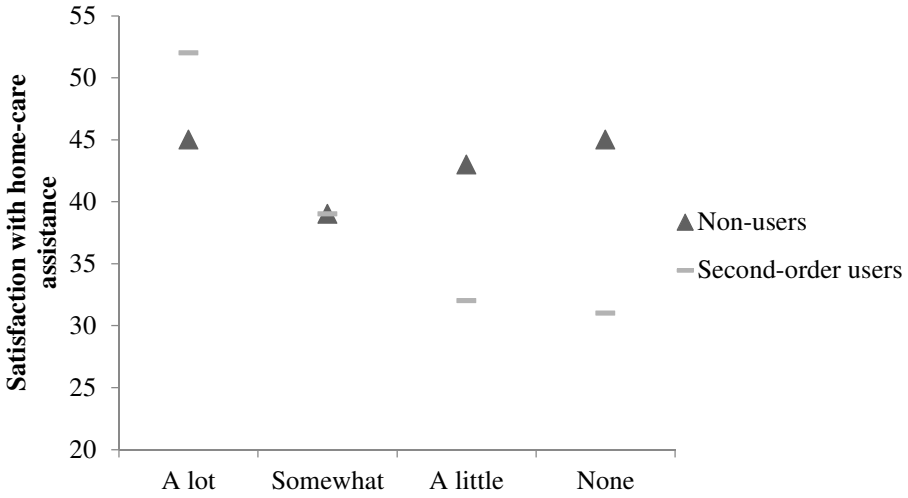
There is a very clear link between experienced responsiveness and the level of service-specific satisfaction among the second-order users. Those who got their wishes and demands fulfilled were much more satisfied than those who had the opposite experience. As expected, in the case of pending decisions, the level of satisfaction is somewhere in-between. The relationship is strong (Pearson 0.50; gamma 0.69). This is the closest we can get with cross-sectional data to demonstrating a causal relationship between concrete experiences with responsiveness and satisfaction with the service production among second-order users (see also Kumlin 2002, pp. 265–267). The evidence supports the argument that service production can indeed produce positive images of the state. Those who attempted to exert influence and succeeded in doing so were more satisfied (70) than the second-order users in general (64). However, the data also indicate that the opposite could be the case: Negative experiences can be a strong driver of negative images of the state. Second-order users who tried to influence the service production but did not succeed have much lower levels of service-specific satisfaction (40) than the non-users (58, see Table 1).

MASS MEDIA AND DISCOURSES: THE CASE OF HOME-CARE ASSISTANCE

The low level of satisfaction among the second-order users of elderly-care is likely to be caused by the negative one-sided media discourse that dominated the analysis period. In the timespan covered in the survey elderly home-care was the subject of a negative media discourse as well as criticism from both the right and the left (Brugge and Voss 2003; Borre and Goul Andersen 2003). The overall levels support thesis 4 (the direct users are the most satisfied and thereby seem to be more immune to the media discourse) and thesis 5 (the second-order users are the most dissatisfied and thereby seem to be more susceptible to the media discourse). However, the high level of satisfaction among the direct users could both be a matter of the creation of psychological bonds (thesis 2) and immunity toward the negative media discourse (thesis 4).

We further elaborate on the validity of thesis 5 by analysing the relationship between interest in local politics and the level of satisfaction with home-care assistance (as no measure of exposure to the media discourse about home-care assistance is available, for example, whether the respondent has followed the debate). Following Zaller (1992), the idea is that more interested people have more contextual information about local politics (including the home-care issue) and are therefore less susceptible to a one-sided media discourse. But the ability to reject a one-sided media discourse should be most important for those who have been the most exposed to the media discourse on home-care assistance. Thus, if interest in local politics (our proxy for ability to reject a one-sided negative media discourse) matters more for the level of satisfaction with home-care assistance among second-order users than among non-users, we have indirect evidence for the proposition that the second-order users are very likely to have followed the negative media debates about the scheme benefitting their elderly parents.

Figure 3: Satisfaction with home-care assistance among second-order users and non-users by self-reported interest in local politics



Note: The axis showing satisfaction has been cropped

In Figure 3 we do see two distinct attitude patterns. As expected, the level of satisfaction with home-care among the non-users does not seem to be strongly dependent on the level of political interest. Those who are 'somewhat' interested in local politics are the most affected, that is, they show the lowest levels of satisfaction with the service. This finding corresponds to Zaller's classic framework, which explains that this group has generally been exposed to media messages (in contrast to those without any interest in politics) but, at the same time, is unable to reject them (in contrast to those with a strong interest in politics). However, for our argument the important thing is that the pattern is different for the second- order users: As expected, second-order users with high self-reported interest in local politics are significantly more satisfied than those with lower interest (all significantly different from 'a lot', p .0.05). This is the pattern one should expect if all second-order users received the negative media discourse (even those with little general interest in local politics); some are nevertheless able to reject the message due to their political knowledge. Overall, the findings suggest that the public service production renders part of the population, the second-order users, very sensitive to negative media discourses about the state (thesis 5).

THE USE OF PUBLIC SERVICE PRODUCTION AND THE PREFERENCES FOR PUBLIC SPENDING

We demonstrated above how public service production has the potential to create patterns of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Home-care assistance was a good case for showing the potential negative effect. However, even in the case where dissatisfaction with service production creates a negative picture of the state, the end result might still be a positive feedback loop after all (thesis 6). This occurs when dissatisfaction is followed by a demand for increasing expenditures on the services, rather than a demand for the state to redraw from the service production. In the case of home-care assistance, it is actually the dissatisfied second-order users who show the strongest support for increasing spending on home-care assistance and are the least supportive of the idea of private companies being in charge of elderly service (paid by the state). This general pattern can also be found in the Danish data.

Using logistic regression models, we show in this section that being a user, and especially a second-order user, of public services creates a preference for spending money on this program. The spending preference was measured by the question, "When the municipality makes its budgets in coming years, what do you think the municipality should spend less money on, the same amount of money on or more money on?". A number of areas were mentioned and the respondents could answer 'less money' 'the same amount of money', 'more money' or 'don't know'. In the model shown 'more money' was coded 1 and all other categories were coded 0. We also ran the models with preference for 'less money' (coded 1, else 0). While we do not present these models, we do comment on them. The control variables used were gender (as women in Scandinavia tend to be more pro-welfare state than men), household income (as low-earners tend to be more pro-welfare than high-earners) and educational level (as the highly educated in Scandinavia tend also to have a more favourable view of the welfare state).

Table 3: The connection between user status regarding public service production and preference for spending more (51; other categories 0) within different areas: public schools, child-care, home-care and nursing homes. Odds-ratios and level of significance

	Spending preference on… (Model I)				Spending preference on… (model II)			
	Child-care	Schools	Home-care	Nursing homes	Child-care	Schools	Home-care	Nursing homes
User home care	0.54**	0.50**	1.47ns	1.22ns	0.47**	0.37**	2.57**	1.24ns
User nursing home	2.23ns	2.48ns	1.15ns	1.26ns	3.23*	3.46*	0.68ns	1.37ns
Second-order user child-care	3.46**	1.55**	0.96ns	0.75**	4.2**	1.47**	0.94ns	0.82*
Second-order user schools	1.35**	4.44**	0.80**	0.84*	1.60**	5.00**	0.79**	0.73**
Second-order user home-care	1.17ns	1.33**	2.09**	1.36**	1.19ns	1.37**	2.22**	1.29*
Second order user nursing home	1.43**	1.19ns	1.33ns	1.74**	1.35ns	1.27ns	1.18**	1.71**
Level of dissatisfaction with area	-	-	-	-	1.025**	1.012**	1.032**	1.032**
N	5053	5057	5093	5097	4753	4612	5032	5036

Notes: [1] Effects from control variables are not shown. Income measured on a six-point scale (gross household DKK, 0 – 50 000; 150 000 – 250 000; 250 000 – 350 000; 350 000 – 450 000; 450 000 – 600 000; 600 000 or above). Education measured as rough distinction between those with and without secondary education.

[2] ** Statistical different from 'non-users' at 0.01 level. * Statistical different from 'non-users' at 0.05 level. ns Not statistical different from 'non-users' 0.05 level.

Overall, the results in Model I indicate a degree of competition around the resources of public service production (thesis 1), though some effects do point in other directions. In terms of child-care, being a second-order user of public child-care is the strongest predictor of spending preference. Parents with children in public child-care are estimated to have a 3.46 higher chance of answering 'more money' than other respondents in the sample (controlling for other characteristics). These parents are also significantly less likely to answer 'less money' (models not shown). While there is also a positive relationship between being second-order user of public schools and preferences for

spending on child-care, the relationship is weaker (odds-ratio 1.35). For some reason there is also a positive relationship between being a user of nursing homes (odds-ratio 2.23, but not significant) and second-order users of nursing homes (1.43, significant) and preferences for increased child-care spending. These groups are however not less inclined to answer 'less money' (they actually tend more to answer 'less money', but the difference is not significant). Finally, there is no effect of being a second-order user of home-care. And most interestingly, users of home-care are less likely to answer 'more money' for child-care (odds-ratio 0.54); they are not much more inclined than others to answer 'less money' for child-care. What we witness is therefore a preference for not spending more on child-care.

The pattern is quite similar regarding spending preferences for public schools. Being a second-order user of public schools is the strongest predictor (odds-ratio 4.44), while there also is a positive effect of being a second-order user of child-care. Second-order users of nursing homes are also positively linked to school spending (but not in a statistically significant way); there is furthermore a modest positive effect of being second-order user of home care. These other user groups are however not less inclined to answer 'spend less' on schools (they tend to prefer the opposite, but the effects are not statistically significant). Finally, the user of home-care service is again less inclined to answer 'more money' (odds-ratio 0.50), and in the school area they are more inclined to answer 'less money' (significant at the 0.08 level) for spending in this competing service area.

The preference for spending on home-care and nursing homes reveals a somewhat different pattern. Again, the second-order users of the services have a strong preference for increased spending, meaning that the close relatives of the elderly want to spend more (odds-ratios of 2.09 and 1.74, respectively). Interestingly, however, being a direct user of the service does not substantially influence spending preferences. In other words, those who receive home-care or live in nursing homes do not wish to spend much more on these areas (odds-ratios of 1.47 and 1.26, respectively – not significant). This supports the argument that being a direct user creates a buffer around the negative media discourse. Actually, home-care users are statistically more inclined to answer 'less money' on home care than are other groups (odds-ratio 3.74, significant at 0.01). The same result is found for users of elderly care homes, but due to the limited group size, the effect is not significant. An overall picture of competition over the resources needed for public service production is also reflected in the data on spending preferences for elderly care.

Being a second-order user of schools and child-care reduces the preference for additional spending on nursing homes. The same can be said for second-order users of schools and their preferences for spending on home-care. While these groups are also more inclined to answer 'less money', regarding home-care and nursing homes the differences are insignificant. Thus, it is mainly a matter of competition over new resources.

The second set of models shows the strong link between dissatisfaction with public service and spending preferences (Model II). In all four areas, those who are most dissatisfied with the service production have the strongest preferences for additional spending on the area, thereby supporting thesis 6. The effects are strong (odds-ratios on a scale of 0-100: 1.025 for child-care; 1.012 for schools; 1.032 for home-care and 1.032 for nursing homes) and highly significant. Thus, even when experiences with the service created a negative image, measured as dissatisfaction, a public demand for increased intervention was produced, measured by preferences for more spending. Another set of models (not shown) indicates that satisfaction also increases the chance of answering 'less money' for child-care, home-care assistance and nursing homes. In terms of schools, however, this was not the case. Although dissatisfaction increased the tendency to answer 'more money' (see Table 1), satisfaction did not increase the tendency to answer 'less money', thereby indicating the existence of an expensive 'one-way-overload mechanism' in the school area.

These models also show that users' and second-order users' preferences for spending are not a matter of their dissatisfaction. As expected (thesis 1), the effect of being a second-order user of child-care, schools, home-care and nursing homes remains, even when controlling for the level of satisfaction with the service. In fact, the effect increases. In the case of home-care, after controlling for the level of satisfaction, being a direct user of home care produces a preference for spending (odds-ratio 2.57), which could not be found in model I. Thus, the direct users' lack of preferences for increased spending seems to be linked to their satisfaction (theses 2 and 6). For some reason the control for satisfaction did not create an effect for being a direct user of nursing homes, although the change in the odds-ratio was in the expected direction (from and odds-ratio of 1.26 in model I to 1.37 in model II).

Finally, a third set of models (not shown) tested for interaction effects. These models tested whether dissatisfaction among users and second-order users created a preference for spending more. Perhaps dissatisfaction among the non-users could lead to a preference for spending less, that is, withdraw the state from service production. This, however, was not the case. In general being dissatisfied led to a preference for spending more. This preference was held by users, second-order users and non-users of child-care, schools and nursing homes. There was, however, a clear interaction effect in terms of home-care. Among the second-order users, satisfaction with home-care did not lower the preference for spending more on that service. This finding fits nicely with the interpretation (see above) that the second-order users of home-care were strongly influenced by the negative media discourse.

THE FEEDBACK FROM NORDIC SERVICE PRODUCTION REVISITED

The chapter has shown how proximate and visible policies, such as the Nordic public service production, create a rather complex feedback process. On the one hand, we found clear evidence for the importance of self-interest, which is a standard line of reasoning within the policy feedback literature, although it is also a contested one (Campbell 2012). As the data allowed us to distinguish between various user groups and their area-specific spending preferences, we could clearly document strong effects from self-interest. But, on the other hand, our findings also suggest the presence of an additional feedback path, wherein the level of satisfaction with the delivered service is the main mediating variable, which both could moderate and accelerate the public demand for spending within a given area.

The level of service-specific-satisfaction depends on the proximity and visibility of the state. The level of satisfaction was clearly shaped by the proximity of the state. In line with previous Nordic research, we found that at the micro-level, direct users of public services were more satisfied with the service than second-order and non-users (thesis 2). While the data only allowed us to study direct users of elderly care, we were however able to examine second-order users of child-care and public schools. The second-order users (i.e. the parents) were more satisfied than the non-users, a relationship that was highly dependent on the experience of state responsiveness (thesis 3). This mechanism was clearly illustrated in the area of public schools: those whose demands had been met were much more satisfied than those who experienced the state being unresponsive. Public service production is therefore not a guarantee for the creation of positive images of the proximate state; rather it is a constant process of the state proving its worth.

The level of satisfaction, however, is also shaped by the visibility of the state. The Nordic service production not only increases the proximity of the state, but it also magnifies the visibility of the state, which renders the second-order users particularly sensitive to negative media discourses (thesis 5). This mechanism was illustrated by the impact of a negative media discourse surrounding home-care assistance. The media discourse is the most obvious explanation to the second-order users being more dissatisfied with the home-care scheme than both the direct and the non-users. Thus, the Nordic citizens are by no means immune to negative stories about the state due to high levels of proximity. Public service production actually creates a number of second-order users that are highly sensitive to such stories.

The most central mechanism in the Nordic feedback process, however, is how dissatisfaction and satisfaction shape spending preferences (thesis 6): Dissatisfaction generates a demand for more – not less – spending on public service production. The negative media discourse surrounding home-care assistance illustrates this mechanism. By producing dissatisfaction, a public demand for increased spending was generated. Moreover, our statistical models demonstrated it was in fact a general finding: The dissatisfied wanted to spend more than the satisfied, and this was not only a matter of direct and second-order users' self-interest. There is a strong independent effect from level of dissatisfaction/satisfaction on spending preference (thesis 6). Similar patterns have been reported by Edlund (2006) at the micro-level in Sweden. We explain this pattern using Pierson's arguments regarding lock-in effects, which can be further specified to double payment problems and lack of alternatives (few market alternatives and low capacity of service production in a dual career family structure). However, the mechanism also works the other way around: All else being equal, citizens satisfied with the specific service area lower their demand for spending on the specific area. The best example of this was that it was the (generally satisfied) direct users of home-care assistance that were most inclined to indicate that a municipality should spend less on this kind of service. Thus, once a country has entered onto a path of public service production, establishing an efficient and responsive service that satisfies the needs of the citizens is one of the most promising ways to combat 'demand-overload' tendencies.

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ARTICLE II: THE POLICY DESIGN EFFECT: PROXIMITY AS A MICRO-LEVEL EXPLANATION OF THE EFFECT OF POLICY DESIGN ON SOCIAL BENEFIT ATTITUDES

Troels Fage Hedegaard[15]

Public and individual support for a policy is affected by how it is designed – that is, how eligibility is determined. This results in universal policies being more popular than contributions-based policies, which in turn enjoy more public support than the selective kind. The literature on welfare attitudes have argued that this 'policy design effect' can be explained by a combination of self-interest patterns, public perceptions of the recipient group and whether eligibility under the policy is perceived as fair or arbitrary. The explanations, however, lack micro-level theory and testing as to why the design of a policy affects individual and public support. This article seeks to explain this policy design effect by theoretically outlining and testing how being proximate to recipients of a social benefit affects attitudes towards the benefit. A survey of attitudes towards spending on five social benefits in Denmark shows a large impact on attitudes from being proximate to recipients under selective policies, little or no impact from universal policies and a pattern that falls in-between for the contributions-based policy. This article thus provides micro-level evidence for the different impacts on attitudes depending on the design of a policy, and a possible explanation for why the design impacts attitudes differently.

INTRODUCTION

This article focuses on the 'policy design effect' – that is, the fact that differences in how eligibility is determined creates differences in individual and public support for social policies. The question posed by the article is why the design of a policy has an effect on the public's support of it. As will be argued below, other explanations

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for the policy design effect rely on macro-explanations and do not provide individual-level testing of the explanations. As a micro-level explanation of the variation in support for the different designs of policies, the article explores the effect of being proximate to recipients of various social benefits. This is based on the idea that being proximate to recipients creates feelings of sympathy for and positive perceptions of the recipient group and, at the same time, self-interest expressed in the wish for increased spending. This effect is, however, not always the same and depends on the policy design, which can explain the differences in individual and public support. This connection between being proximate to recipients of social benefits and attitudes towards the benefits is outlined in the later in the article. Before that however, the common theoretical explanations of attitudes towards social policies are outlined and applied to a Danish survey of attitudes towards social benefits.

THEORETICAL EXPLANATIONS OF SUPPORT FOR SPENDING

The fact that some citizens find a given social benefit too generous, while others find the spending level too low has been given various explanations. Following Kumlin (2007) and Svallfors (2010), I distinguish between three overall explanations: self-interest, social justice norms and policy feedback. The theoretical explanations are outlined first in order to place the policy design effect in a theoretical context and to have a theoretical reference point for discussing the impact of being proximate to recipients of social benefits.

Self-interest

Self-interest theory draws inspiration from rational choice theory to formulate what guides welfare attitudes. In the narrowest definition of this theoretical explanation, attitudes towards social benefits are guided by self-interest, which is defined as personal, short-term and material interests (Taber 2003). According to Hasenfeld and Rafferty (1989, 1031), this shapes attitudes though a process whereby 'people adopt social ideologies that best explain and are most congruent with their life experiences'. This is, however, a very narrow definition of self-interest, and often wider interpretations of the term are used to incorporate the potential gains offered by the protection of the welfare scheme, or indirect gains, for example to or from close family members (Cusack et al. 2006). The explanatory power of self-interest has, however, been poor: 'Short-term, material self-interest, it turns out in study after study, has remarkably little to do with public opinion on a wide range of political issues' (Taber 2003, 447). This also holds true for welfare attitudes where some studies find a limited effect from self-interest (Cusack et al. 2006; Blekesaune

& Quadagno 2003; Kumlin 2002), while others find very little or no effect (Van Oorschot & Meuleman 2012; Goul Andersen 2005; Svallfors 2012). One possible reason why the self-interest explanation produces such poor results is that welfare attitudes are often measured at a general level. Kumlin (2007) argues that there is no natural connection between receiving a single benefit and attitude change towards abstract and ideologically laden issues like the role of government or redistribution. Therefore a self-interest effect is more likely to be found at a policy level, where the connection between spending on a social benefit and the personal gains is much more direct.

Social Justice Norms

The second theoretical explanation asserts that attitudes towards social benefits are guided by norms of what is perceived to be socially just. For Kumlin (2007), the origin of these norms can either be described as a set of interconnected values or as heuristics regarding the deservingness of recipients. The idea that perceptions of what is socially just can be traced back to a system of internally cohesive values is present in much of the literature on welfare attitudes (Feldman & Zaller 1992; Feldman 2003). Different labels have been used to describe the opposing value systems. Perhaps the most famous example of this is Lipset's (1963) opposition of achievement and equality values, but also left-wing versus right-wing orientations have been thought to capture the opposing values (Knutsen 1995). The value systems are commonly measured by ideology as a proxy. This is based on the idea that individuals who vote for left-wing parties want more government intervention, whereas right-wing voting expresses a desire for more individual responsibility (Kumlin 2007; Feldman & Zaller 1992; Feldman & Steenbergen 2001). The other theoretical explanation for social justice norms is 'deservingness heuristics', which is a term for the mental shortcuts that individuals use to judge whether recipients are deserving of help from the government. A number of scholars have advanced the use of deservingness heuristics in relation to welfare attitudes (Van Oorschot 2000; 2006; Larsen 2006; Petersen et al. 2011). Studies show that the mental shortcuts are most influential when individuals form opinions about something that they have little or no personal experience or knowledge of (Petersen et al. 2011). Studies by Van Oorschot (2000; 2006) argue that individuals apply five criteria (control, need, identity, attitude, reciprocity) when making judgments of deservingness, of which the recipients' control of their situation and identification with the recipients are the most important.

Policy Feedback

Policy feedback theory describes how attitudes not only affect the welfare state (Brooks & Manza 2007), but also can be affected by feedback from welfare-state policies. Pierson (1993) was the first to theorise the idea of feedback from welfare policies to the general public as an explanation for welfare attitudes. This policy feedback, Pierson argues, affects attitudes through incentive effects and interpretive effects. The incentive effects lead citizens to act in their own self-interest when forming attitudes towards social benefits. This results in citizens having positive attitudes towards spending on social benefits from which they directly or potentially gain. The interpretive effect shapes how social benefits are perceived and thus informs attitudes towards them. Pierson (1993) is less specific on the interpretive effect, but does argue that the design of a policy might affect attitudes: 'The specific design of programs may heighten the visibility of some social and political connections while obscuring others.' (619.)

A number of studies have investigated how the design of a policy may affect both the incentives of recipients and non-recipients, as well as how the recipients are perceived (interpretive effects). The studies show that universally awarded benefits tend to have greater public support than contributions-based benefits that in turn are more popular than selective polices (Svallfors 2012; Jordan 2013; Alston & Dean 1972; Kaase & Newton 1995). To explain this, some studies have pointed to different patterns of self-interest that the designs of the policies generate. Selective policies tend to only generate gains for the recipients, while contributions-based policies provide gains for the recipients as well as potential gains for the contributors. This means that it is in the contributors' self-interest to raise the benefit levels, even though they are not beneficiaries at the same time. The same is true for universal policies, but instead of only the contributors having potential gains, this is now extended to the entire population (Rothstein 1998; Campbell 2011). This is summed up by Esping-Andersen (1990, 28) as a situation in which 'all benefit, all are dependent and will presumably feel obliged to pay'. Other theories have also (or in addition to self-interest) pointed to how the design of a policy affects the public's perception of the recipients. Selective policies also have been argued to create a public discussion of 'where the line between the needy and the non-needy should be drawn; and . . . whether the needy themselves are not to blame for their predicament' (Rothstein 1998, 159). Thus, the interpretive effect leads to a stigma on recipients of selective benefits who are perceived as not deserving. On the other hand, recipients of contributions-based or universal benefits are viewed as deserving of their benefits for being paid through contributions or awarded on the basis of citizenship (Van Oorschot 2000; 2006; Campbell 2011; Schneider & Ingram 1993; Svallfors 2003; Larsen 2008). Rothstein (1998) has also argued that the differences in support of universal and selective policies are due to the perceived procedural justice of the policy designs as selective policies are

awarded by a process of judgment, while universal benefits are awarded on the basis of citizenship (Campbell 2011; Soss 2002; 1999; Levi 1989).

The Social Benefits

As argued above, there is strong evidence that the policy design of a policy impacts public support for it. As an illustration of differences in support for various welfare policies I use a Danish survey on attitudes towards spending on five social benefits. The five social benefits are: social assistance (SA), incapacity benefit (IB), unemployment benefit (UB), state education grant (SEG) and state pension (SP). Social assistance and unemployment benefit are both awarded in the case of unemployment, but are quite different in terms of policy design. The social assistance scheme is a selective benefit with strict and continuous eligibility and means testing. In addition, recipients are not allowed to have personal assets valued above 10.000 DKK (€1,300). Unemployment benefit is a contribution-based and voluntary insurance with more generous transfers than social assistance, less harsh eligibility testing and no means testing. It is, however, not like a private insurance as the requirements and benefit levels are set by the state and the scheme is also largely financed by the state. The state pension is a universal minimum pension for which all citizens above the age of 65 can apply. The state pension can be supplemented by several means-tested benefits in order to combat poverty (but the survey questions only concerned the basic universal benefit). Incapacity benefit is given to citizens who are deemed unable to work, say, through illness or handicap, but not old enough to qualify for the state pension. Access to the scheme is selective and based on strict eligibility testing, but there is no regular testing after the benefit is awarded. The state education grant is a universal benefit given to all above the age of 18 who are enrolled at an educational institution. There is no means testing for this benefit other than a maximum amount the grantee may earn before reductions are made to the grant.

To illustrate the support for each benefit, the opinion balance of the benefit-spending level was calculated by subtracting the percentage who answered that the spending on the benefit was too generous from those who answered that it was too low. This produced a number ranging from +100 (all respondents found the spending level too low) to −100 (all respondents found the spending level too high). The 'don't know' answers were not included in order to give all categories the full range of variance, and because the 'suitable' category to some degree fulfils the same role. Table 1 shows support for the social benefits. The results of course relate to the context of Denmark where they were collected, but they show similar tendencies to results from both national and international surveys (Kumlin 2007; Bechert & Quandt 2009; Svallfors 2011).

Table 1: Attitudes towards the social benefits presented as percentage points and opinion balances

	Too generous	**Suitable**	**Too low**	**Opinion balance**	**N**
Social assistance	36	48	16	-20	897
Incapacity benefit	13	60	27	14	801
Unemployment benefit	12	60	28	16	915
State education grant	7	60	33	26	987
State pension	2	38	60	58	983

Note: The Question wording is 'From what you know of social benefits, do you think that the following benefits are too generous, suitable, or too low?' The data is matched to national averages on sex, age, urbanisation, and voting choice in the last election.

The results in Table 1 show that respondents choose the 'suitable' category most for four of the five social benefits, which reflects satisfaction with the current spending level. If we look at the overall opinion balance of each benefit, there are some notable variations between the social benefits. At one end of the scale, social assistance has by far the lowest opinion balance with a score of −20, reflecting an overall public desire to retrench the benefit. Next, incapacity benefit and unemployment benefit have scores of, respectively, 14 and 16, followed by the state education grant with an opinion balance of 26, and finally the state pension enjoys wide support for increased spending with a score of 58.

By interpreting the result using the theories outlined above, we can see why the policy design explanation is of interest. The self-interest explanation does not explain the ranking of the social benefits very well, especially if we use the narrow definition. An example of this is the state education grant, which is unlikely to provide a direct material gain for most of the respondents in the survey as they already have completed their educations, but it still scored the second highest (Table 1). The value systems explanation does provide an overall account of why some citizens favour spending more on the benefits, while others favour spending less, as left-wing voters do tend to support spending more than right-wing voters. It does not, however, explain the large differences between the policies shown in Table 1. By this theory, it is difficult to explain why individuals with a left-wing orientation support helping the elderly by increasing spending on the state pension, but not the poor who would benefit from more social assistance.

Interpreting the results with deservingness heuristics makes it possible to explain part of the ranking of the social benefits in Table 1. Similarly to Van Oorschot (2000; 2006), the finding that the elderly are perceived as the most deserving group, and the unemployed as the least, means that the state pension and social assistance fall at each end of the spectrum. This fits well with the control criteria since the elderly hardly can be blamed for being old and therefore in need of the benefit, while the unemployed should be able to work and are perceived as less deserving. But the fact that the unemployment benefit enjoys a more positive opinion balance than social assistance, even though both are associated with being unemployed, fits poorly with the deservingness explanation. The opinion balance of the incapacity benefit is also hard to explain by applying the simple interpretation of the deservingness criteria: the permanently sick and disabled who receive incapacity benefits are not in control of their situation, and thus should be deserving recipients. This should result in greater public support for spending on the benefit, yet there is almost no difference between the incapacity benefit and unemployment benefit in terms of the opinion balances. Students are not a part of Van Oorschot's (2000; 2006) ranking of deserving or undeserving groups, but to judge from the 2006 *ISSP Role of Government*, there is overall support for helping students – almost at the level of the sick and the elderly (Bechert & Quandt 2009).This could be explained by most students displaying some level of need, while also being hindered by their studies from working full-time.

Policy design might be the most promising explanation for the ranking in Table 1 as the two social benefits with the highest support also are universal benefits, while the three least supported are either selective or contributions-based. Furthermore, this provides a possible explanation for the differences in the support of the social assistance and unemployment benefits, which though basically targeted at the unemployed, enjoy very different levels of support. A problem with the policy design explanations outlined above is that they do not provide an individual-level explanation and testing of the policy design effect.

A MICRO-LEVEL EXPLANATION

To provide a micro-level explanation I turn to studies of how personal experiences and proximity to welfare institutions can affect attitudes. These studies also make reference to policy feedback theory, but have an explicit focus on individual attitudes and actions. One example of this is a study by Soss (1999) that shows how interactions with selective benefit programmes can create negative perceptions of the state, while interactions with more universally designed policies tend to create positive images of the state. This result is similar to what Kumlin and Rothstein (2005) show – that interactions with universal welfare institutions tend to create social capital, while selective welfare institutions have the reverse effect. Thus,

there seem to be significant differences in the experiences and effects of interactions with selective and universal policies. Soss and Schram (2007) have argued that the feedback from welfare policies to the general population is dependent on the policies being proximate in order to generate everyday experiences. If people are not proximate to the social policy, negative images transmitted by the media have much more impact on attitudes. Building on that framework, Hedegaard and Larsen (2014) show that respondents' own experiences and their being proximate to recipients is important for the impact of media stories on preferences for spending on welfare services.

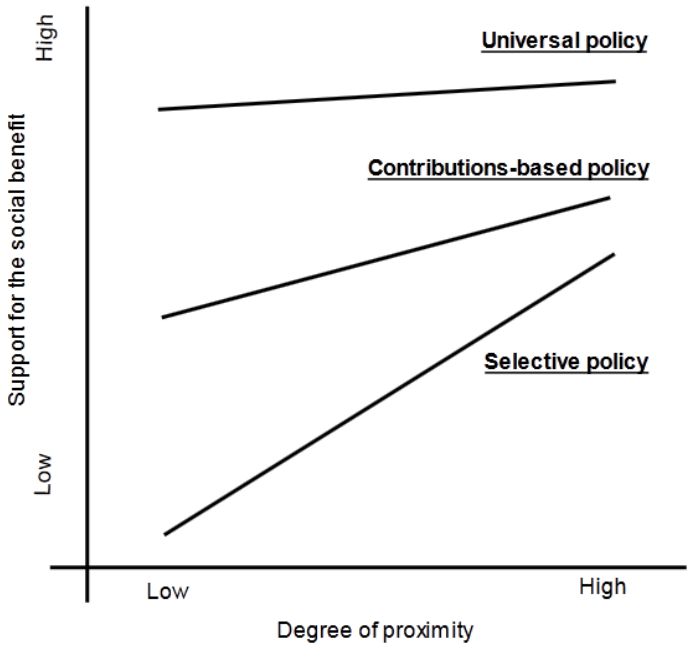
Combined, these studies show that being proximate to a welfare policy might affect attitudes and that this effect might differ with the design of the policy. All of them build on the idea of proximity and how it affects attitudes. The concept of proximity to welfare institutions is, however, very different in the studies cited above, which means that it needs to be clarified. In this article 'being proximate' refers to having either personal experiences, or being close to recipients of the benefit, either as family members or as close friends. To explain policy feedback by building on the effects outlined by Pierson (1993), the impact of being proximate to recipients of the benefit on respondent attitudes could be explained as a combination of incentive effects and interpretive effects. Being proximate to recipients of the benefit should create a self-interested attitude towards the benefit, and thereby an incentive effect, while also creating sympathy and altered perceptions of the recipient of the benefit. It is the effect of proximity that I wish to outline in this section in order to explain the impact of policy design. The policy design effect on attitudes towards social benefits can be explained as the different impacts of being proximate to recipients of the policy. As shown by Van Oorschot (2000), the attitudes towards the group receiving the benefit are determined by whether the group is perceived as deserving. A way to connect proximity and perceptions of the target group is by re-examining Van Oorschot's (2000) identity criteria, which deals with the public's identification with the target group of the benefit and is therefore an important element in determining their perception and support for the social benefit. In Van Oorschot's argument for the identity criteria, the line between the deserving and undeserving groups are drawn between ethnic minorities, asylum-seekers and illegal foreigners, on the one side, and the general population, on the other. However, the literature that Van Oorschot bases the identification criteria on suggests that additional and closer identifications are made (Cook 1979; De Swaan 1988). For De Swaan (1988) there are three criteria for judging whether the poor are perceived as deserving, of which the 'proximity criterion' inspired Van Oorschot's (2000) 'identity criterion'. In De Swaan's definition of 'proximity' several levels of distinction are made, such as the family, town, church or the people. Similarly, Cook (1979) describes the identification as a matter of 'them and us', which could be interpreted as additional and closer lines of identification. It is possible to imagine individuals operating with several levels of identification, as described by De Swaan (1995, 34–5):'Yet, social identifications, no matter how

intensely held, are essentially multiple and unstable.' It is also likely that these levels affect attitudes differently, with greater individual proximity resulting in more positive attitudes towards a social benefit. This can potentially explain some of the differences in the support for universal, contribution-based and selective policies. As described above, the effect of universalism should be that all people feel included and therefore the incentive and interpretive effect of being proximate to recipients of the benefit should be weak. On the other hand, selective policies have a tendency to create public discussion of the singling-out of recipients, both in terms of self-interest related to spending and public image. This should make the effect of being proximate to recipients of social benefits strong as the effect of incentives and interpretations varies. Contribution-based policies should lessen the interpretive effects of creating 'them and us' distinctions as the benefits are, at least in part, paid for by the recipients (Campbell 2011). There should, however, still be an incentive effect of recipients wanting higher benefits than non-recipients. This should create an insider/outsider split whereby the target group is not perceived as undeserving, but there is still a difference between recipients and non-recipients' support for spending on the benefit. This should result in a pattern which falls somewhere between in terms of both overall support and the impact of being proximate. The expected interplay is summed up in Figure 1. Overall, the expectations can be summarised in two theses regarding the impact of being proximate and how that affects attitudes towards social benefits:

H1: Greater proximity to recipients of the social benefits should positively affect attitudes towards spending on the social benefit.

H2: The effect of being proximate to recipients of the social benefit should be weakest for universal policies and strongest for selective policies, while the effect for contribution-based policies should fall between these.

Figure 1. The Policy Design Effect as Explained by Being Proximate to Recipients.



DATA AND VARIABLES

The source of the data used in this article is a web panel collected by Analyse Danmark. The data was collected on 23–27 January 2012 from 1,134 respondents. To avoid bias, the data contains weights to match national averages on sex, age, urbanisation and voting preferences in the last election.

Dependent and Independent Variables

The study uses a dependent variable that measures attitudes at the policy level: 'From what you know of social benefits, do you think that the following benefits are too generous, suitable or too low?' This produces a measurement of how willing or unwilling the public is to spend on the social benefit (see Jeene et al. (2013) for a similar measure).The dependent variable is used in two different ways in the analysis. First, an opinion balance, as in Table 1 above, is used in a bivariate

analysis of the impact of being proximate. Second, logistic regressions compare the group who answered that the spending was 'too low' to respondents who answered that it was 'suitable' in order to measure the impact of being proximate. It would of course have been ideal to run multiple regressions in order to also include the group who answered that the benefits are too generous; however, since very few respondents with proximity answered 'too generous', it was not possible to run these regressions.

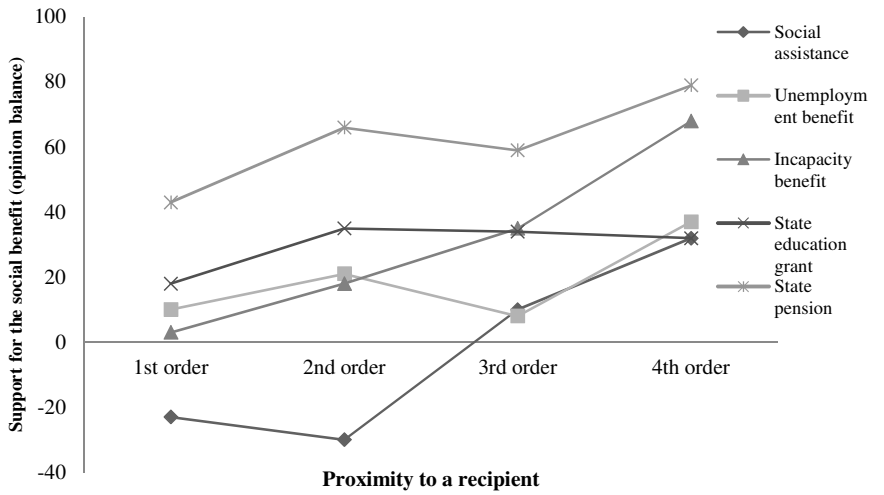
To measure the effect of being proximate to recipients of social benefits the data contains detailed responses on the self-reported proximity to the five social benefits. The respondents were asked whether they, someone in their family or someone in their closest circle of friends received the given benefit. The proximity to the social benefits is separated into four categories named 'orders of proximity'. The 1st order of proximity is the group that is presently, or has been within the last 12 months, recipients of the benefit. This provides the opportunity to test for the effect of being a user, or of having a fresh memory of the experience, but is also a measure of direct self-interest. The 2nd order of proximity contains respondents who are related to recipients of the benefit – that is, spouse/cohabitant, parents, children or siblings. Having a recipient within the immediate family could create strong feelings of sympathy, but also corresponds to the broader definition of self-interest that takes indirect gains into account. The first two orders of proximity thus contain both incentive and interpretive effects. The 3rd order of proximity contains respondents who have a recipient of the benefit within their closest circle of friends. This goes beyond even broad definitions of self-interest and only tests for interpretive effects of being proximate – that is, whether being proximate creates a more positive image of the group. Finally, the 4th order of proximity is a reference category of respondents who have no close relations to a recipient of the benefit. The proximity variables were structured such that respondents who answered that they had 1st order proximity did not count in the less proximate categories, and similarly for the 2nd and 3rd orders. This was done to ensure that the lowest order of proximity was registered as an effect on attitudes. This creates a series of dummy variables which are independent of each other and are treated as such in the analysis (apart from the downward deletion). The 'don't know' answers were omitted out of uncertainty about the proximity of these respondents. A number of other variables were also controlled for to make sure that the impact of being proximate was not a spurious effect. Personal income was controlled for by using a continuous variable with six categories of equal size. Respondents who did not want to disclose their income were not included in the analysis. A categorical, structured variable based on the total years of education controlled for the effect of education. Social justice values were measured as ideology, indicated by whether the respondents voted for a left-wing or right-wing party in the last election. Respondents who did not or could not vote, who withheld their votes or who voted for non-parliamentary parties were

coded as 'other' and not included in the analysis. This dichotomy is not an ideal measure of social justice values, but was the best one available for the survey. Age was measured as a categorical variable with five groups of about equal size. All of the variables, the categories and the responses in each category are presented in Appendix Table 2.

RESULTS

In this section I test the effect of being proximate to recipients of a given social benefit on attitudes towards spending on the benefit. The bivariate analysis relies on the opinion balance described earlier, and represents the overall attitudes towards the social benefits on a scale from −100 to +100. This gives an overview of the effect of being proximate, but without testing for any of the background variables outlined above. In Figure 2, the opinion balances are split by the proximity measures described above. The orders of proximity are arranged from no proximity (4th order) to high proximity (1st order) to imitate the expectations outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 2: The opinion balances of benefit levels split by proximity



Note: N (4th-1st) = SA (705, 99, 62, 31), UB (508, 172, 117, 118), IB (488, 151, 122, 38), SEG (485, 161, 212, 131), SP (307, 199, 409, 149).

Figure 2 shows that for all five benefits there is a pattern of proximity influencing the attitudes such that greater proximity leads to the respondents' having more positive attitudes towards spending on the benefit. This is in accordance with H1: there is an effect of being proximate to recipients of social benefits. As H2 posits, the effect from proximity is not alike among the social benefits. The incapacity benefit is a selective policy that despite being targeted at what other studies found to be a deserving group (Van Oorschot 2000; 2006) scored low on the overall opinion balance (see Table 1). As to the effect of proximity, there is a strong effect for all orders of proximity compared to the no-proximity group (4th order). This fits very well with the outlined expectation for selective policy, especially since the effects also seem to be present for the friends of recipients (3rd order) who have no self-interest tied to the benefit. This indicates that awarding the benefit in a selective manner can affect attitudes in a negative direction, even for a group that other studies have found to be perceived as deserving by the public (Van Oorschot 2000; 2006). Social assistance is the second of the selective policies and was the social benefit with the lowest overall opinion balance. Here the effect of proximity is strong, but only for the 1st and 2nd order proximate persons. The 3rd order proximate are actually the most negative towards spending, which does not fit well with the prediction of an interpretation effect of creating sympathy among friends of the recipients.

The state education grant displays very little effect from proximity and in reality there is only a slight difference in a comparison of respondents with some degree of proximity to respondents who have no close contacts to people who receive the benefit (4th order). This fits the predictions for a universal benefit since the general population also should display a willingness to spend on the benefit. The state pension is the other universal benefit in the article. Somewhat surprisingly, this benefit shows some effect of being proximate, which does not fit the outlined expectation. Finally, the contribution-based unemployment benefit had more overall support than the selective benefit targeted at the unemployed, but still less support than the universal benefit. This benefit fits the prediction of an in-between pattern showing some effect from being proximate. Similarly to the state pension the effect is, however, not linear, with the close family member (2nd order proximate) being somewhat of an outlier. The described patterns can thereby also fit the predictions of *H2*, though there are some deviations from the expected attitudes towards social assistance and state pension.

Comparing the Effect of Proximity

From an analysis of its impact on attitudes, proximity seems a plausible explanation of the policy design effect. Testing the relationship in a bivariate manner helps to illustrate the idea, but does entail a number of problems. The methods used above

provide only a very weak test of the effect of proximity, and the patterns could prove to be spurious effects explainable by other factors such as education levels or ideology. To achieve this I use logistic regression. This method is chosen because the dependent variable is on an ordinal scale with spending 'too generous', 'suitable' or 'too low'. I run logistic regressions to compare the group answering 'too little is being spent' on the social benefit with those answering 'suitable'. Because very few respondents proximate to recipients of the social benefits answered 'too generous' it is impossible to run regressions that compare this group with those answering 'suitable'. The effect of proximity is tested as a series of dummy variables where the groups of respondents with proximity are tested against respondents without proximity (4th order). To control for the relationship I test for sex, personal income, ideology, education and age. Only the regressions for the proximity dummies are shown, but a table with all the regressions is displayed in the Appendix. For detailed descriptions of the variables see the Methods section above.

Table 2: Logistic regressions showing the chance of answering that the benefits are 'too low' compared to 'suitable'.

	Social Assistance	**Incapacity benefit**	**Unemployment benefit**	**State education grant**	**State pension**
1st order proximity	3.2*	6.2***	2.2***	1.6NS	0.9NS
4th order proximity	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
2nd order proximity	3.0**	1.9**	0.9NS	1.4NS	1.1NS
4th order proximity	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
3rd order proximity	2.8**	1.6*	1.1NS	1.3NS	1.1NS
4th order proximity	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref

Notes: Ref = Reference category, NS = not significant, * = p>0.10, ** = p>0.05, *** = p>0.01. For the full model see Table 3 in the Appendix. The regressions have also been run without controlling for respectively ideology and personal income, which produces no major differences in the effect of the proximity dummies.

Table 2 shows the impact of the different orders of proximity on attitudes towards spending on the social benefit. The models separately test for the effect of the proximity dummies against the no-proximity (4th order) reference category. Overall, the table shows the pattern outlined theoretically in Figure 1 and empirically in Figure 2. In the table the effects are, however, much clearer than those displayed in Figure 2, which is due to the controls for education and age (Petersen et al. (2007) have similar results for impact of age). This confirms *H2*'s thesis of a different

impact of being proximate depending on the design of the social policy. For the selective benefits, social assistance and incapacity benefit, there is a strong effect from the different orders proximity. This shows that there is a strong incentive effect for the selective policies – that is, self-interest matters for attitudes. It is notable that the effect of proximity also is present for respondents who only have close friends receiving the selective benefit (3rd order proximate). This shows that the effect of proximity is not created by incentive effects alone, but also by interpretive effects as the 3rd order proximate has no self-interest tied to the benefits. This effect is strongest for social assistance, which might be related to a number of negative media stories on the work ethics of recipients at the time the survey was conducted. For the state education grant and state pensions, which are the two universal benefits, there is no significant effect of being proximate. This non-effect on the state pension is different from the pattern shown in

Figure 2, but the effect disappeared after education and age were controlled for. This shows the effect of potentially including all or most of the population as a micro-effect when there is no significant difference even between recipients (1st order) and respondents without proximity (4th order). Finally, the unemployment benefit seems to fit the in-between pattern for contribution-based benefits. Here there is some effect from proximity, but only for 1st order proximity, which can be interpreted as a self-interest effect.

CONCLUSION

This article sets out to explain why the design of a policy has an effect on public support. A number of surveys, including the one used in this article, have found support differences between selective, contribution-based and universal policies. The macro-explanations given for the differences created by the policy design effect draw on a combination of the image of the target group, self-interest and procedural justice. Inspired by the policy feedback literature, this article has sought to explain part of the design effect on public support as an effect of being proximate to recipients of the policy. 'Being proximate' was defined as either having one's own experiences as a recipient, having close family members who receive the benefit or having close friends who receive the benefit. Being proximate should create an incentive effect where attitudes are motivated by the gains or losses from social benefits. This is supplemented by an interpretive effect where attitudes are formed by the personal experiences and sympathy with the beneficiaries of the benefits.

The effect of being proximate was posited to be strong for selective policies, which tend to single out the recipients, both in terms of media perceptions and self-interest tied to increasing spending. On the other hand, the effect was posited as weak for universal benefits in which bigger parts of the population can potentially benefit

and more positive images of the recipients are created. Contribution-based policies were presumed to fall somewhere in the middle as they create a split between those receiving and those not receiving, but are also partly based on self-payment, which should make the negative images weaker. The results of this article support the outlined differences in the effect from being proximate. This shows that selective policies tend to create distinctions between the deserving and the non-deserving which have an effect on attitudes of those without proximity to the benefit. The contribution-based policy shows somewhat the same pattern, though more weakly than for the selective policies. Finally, the results show no effect of being proximate for the universal benefits. This provides an empirical, individual-level basis to the claim made by many of the theories referenced above that universal policies tend include the entire population. On the other hand, selective policies create a limited and defined constituency of those receiving or close to the recipients, who are much more likely to come under public scrutiny. The results are not in opposition to the other theories on the policy design effect, but do provide an individual-level theory and testing of the effect. Furthermore, the results show that the design of a policy is able to alter the public perception of a policy and the group benefitting from it. In fact, there are no significant differences in public attitudes towards the incapacity benefit and the unemployment benefit, in spite of the benefits being targeted at one perceived deserving group and another which is perceived not to be, and the discrepancy in attitudes towards the unemployed receiving social assistance and unemployment benefits is another example of this.

In a review of the state of the art in the public welfare attitudes, Svallfors (2010) outlines what is missing most in the literature on welfare attitudes. One of these missing elements is mechanisms to link existing theories: 'There seems to be broad agreement that both norms and interest are affected by institutional arrangements and policy feedbacks, but at the present there is no consensus or even clear conception on how they work as a mechanism in creating attitudes towards welfare policies' (Svallfors 2010, 250). With all of the reservations that have to be made about basing results on a single survey, and in a specific national context, I propose that proximity could be one of these mechanisms.

APPENDIX

Table 3: Full version of the logistic regressions showing the chance of answering that the benefits are 'too low' compared to 'suitable'.

	SA	IB	UB	SEG	SP
Proximity					
1st order proximity	3.2*	6.2***	2.2***	1.6NS	0.9NS
4th order proximity	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
2nd order proximity	3.0***	1.9**	0.9NS	1.4NS	1.1NS
4th order proximity	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
3rd order proximity	2.8**	1.6*	1.1NS	1.3NS	1.1NS
4th order proximity	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
Sex					
Male	0.8NS	0.7*	0.9NS	0.8NS	0.9NS
Female	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
Education					
Primary school	1.3NS	2.0**	1.7NS	1.6NS	2.6***
Upper secondary school	1.2NS	3.6***	2.0*	1.3NS	2.4**
Vocational training	0.8NS	1.9*	1.6NS	1.5NS	3.1***
Short higher education (<3 years)	0.7NS	1.9NS	1.3NS	1.5NS	1.9**
Medium higher education (3–4 years)	1.1NS	1.2NS	1.2NS	1.5NS	1.3NS
Long higher education (+4 years)	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
Age					
18-29	1.0NS	0.4NS	0.4*	0.8NS	0.2***
30-39	0.4**	1.0NS	0.3***	1.1NS	0.3***
40-49	2.0**	1.5NS	1.0NS	1.3NS	0.5**
50-59	1.0NS	1.9**	1.5**	1.5*	0.8NS
60-74	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
Ideology					
Left-wing vote	3.0***	2.2***	2.8***	2.1***	1.3NS
Right-wing vote	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
Personal income					
(Income groups 1-6)	1.0NS	1.0NS	1.0NS	0.9NS	0.8**
N	708	670	773	765	822
Nagelkerke pseudo r^2	0.30	0.23	0.23	0.17	0.20

Notes: Ref = Reference category, NS = not significant, * = p>0.10, ** = p>0.05, *** = p>0.01

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of the variables showing responses in each category

	Categories and responses						
	1st order	2nd order	3rd order	4th order			
Proximity SA	31	71	111	921			
Proximity IB	39	146	173	776			
Proximity UB	124	140	204	666			
Proximity SEG	137	227	173	598			
Proximity SP	155	459	132	385			
Sex	Male	Female					
	568	566					
Education	Primary school	Upper secondary school	Vocational training	Short higher education	Medium higher education	Long higher education	
	160	164	211	137	311	151	
Age groups	18–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60–74		
	206	228	233	183	284		
Ideology	Left-wing	Right-wing	Other				
	495	490	149				
Personal income	0–99 999 DKR	100 000–199 999 DKR	200 000–299 999 DKR	300 000–399 999 DKR	400 000–499 999 DKR	500 000 DKR or above	Did not want to disclose
	114	184	187	252	155	127	115

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ARTICLE III: STEREOTYPES AND WELFARE ATTITUDES: A PANEL SURVEY OF HOW 'POOR CARINA' AND 'LAZY ROBERT' AFFECTED ATTITUDES TOWARDS SOCIAL ASSISTANCE IN DENMARK

Troels Fage Hedegaard[16]

What is the impact of a predominantly negative debate about social assistance on public and individual support for the social benefit? Over the course of a year the public debate about social assistance flared up twice in Denmark. The debates drew on classic stereotypes of the social assistance recipients lacking both the financial incentives and the will to work. According to theories of the impact of media on welfare attitudes, this had the potential to undermine public support. A two-wave panel survey, however, showed only a small drop in public support for spending on social assistance, in a comparison of attitudes before and after the debates. The small overall impact on public opinion, however, hid a polarization of attitudes on the individual level. This shows that there was not a uniform reaction to welfare debates, but that people tend to seek out a version of reality that is consistent with their values and self-interest. The article thus shows that people when faced with public debates on welfare policies will seek to confirm their personal biases and this limits the possibility for overall changes in public support.

BREAKING THE 'WELFARE CONSENSUS'?

Across Europe politicians and policy organizations argue that social assistance and other social benefits should be made less generous. The arguments for making the social benefits less generous range from the need to create better incentives, in order to 'make work pay', to the social and moral benefits of working. The

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proposals to cut the social benefit levels do not, however, go unopposed. Some oppose them out of self-interest, as they directly or indirectly gain from the benefit, or because they think they might need this benefit in the future owing to a feeling of exposure of unemployment (Pierson 1996, Iversen, Soskice 2001). Others are against the cuts since they believe that it is important to maintain and extend social protection for ideological reasons (Lipset 1963, Feldman 2003). Therefore political scholars have argued that politicians who seek to retrench social benefits without facing negative electoral consequences need to gather public support for the cuts (Pierson 1996). One way to create public support is to draw on negative stereotypes about the recipients and thus undermine support for the benefit. Stereotypes can play on ethnic prejudices (Gilens 1996, 2000), present the recipients as lacking incentive to work, or simply as lazy and unwilling to work (Golding, Middleton 1982, Baumberg et al. 2012, Larsen, Dejgaard 2012). Golding and Middleton (1982) argue that by drawing these stereotypes politicians can invoke '(…) a series of images and beliefs that have historical continuity and lie very shallowly below a veneer of apparent "welfare consensus"'. (59). Many studies of media depictions and stereotypes are built on the premise that media and elite discourses are able to affect attitudes which then make social reforms more or less politically viable. This article challenges that perception by tracking the impact of a dramatic example of a predominantly negative media debate on social assistance in Denmark. In spite of harsh rhetoric and much media attention, this debate did not seem to break the 'welfare consensus'. This article therefore creates and tests what I believe is a more realistic model of how and why attitudes change from a negative debate.

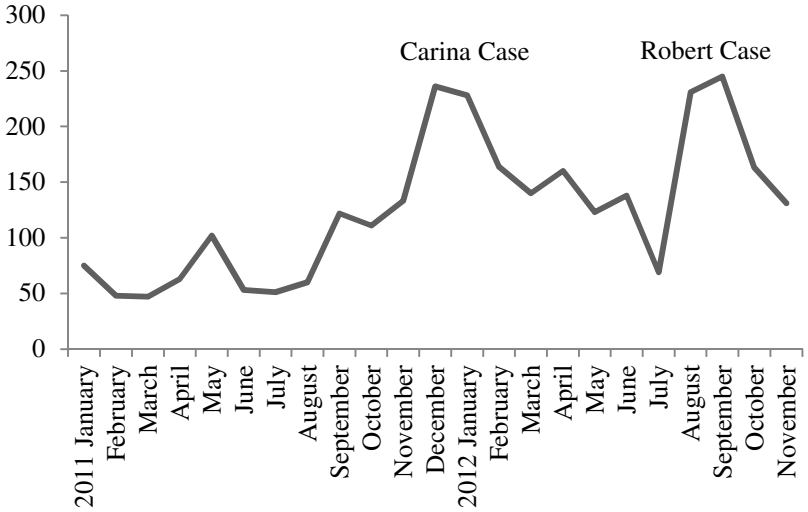
In the next section the cases around which the debate centred will be introduced in detail. Then theoretical perspectives on the impact of media on attitudes are presented, followed by a survey on attitudes before and after the debate. Following this, theses are outlined to explain the attitude pattern. In the section following that the data and variables are introduced, and finally the results of the analysis are presented and discussed.

INTRODUCING 'POOR CARINA' AND 'LAZY ROBERT'

In the spring of 2013 the New York Times reported that the Danes had begun debating: '(…) whether their beloved welfare state, perhaps Europe's most generous, had become too rich, undermining the country's work ethic' (Daley 2013). The newspaper reported that according to experts and politicians the Danes now wanted a tougher line on social assistance recipients. The source of these new attitudes was a debate about social assistance.

That debate had started in the fall of 2011, as a political debate about the existence of poverty in Denmark. This led to a discussion of whether the recipients of social assistance can be considered poor. The neo-liberal party Liberal Alliance supported an absolute definition of poverty, and therefore argued that social assistance is too generous, as it provides far more than the social minimum. The left-wing parties argued for a relative definition of poverty and thus concluded that many recipients are poor, as they cannot participate in society on an equal basis. As a part of this debate Özlem Cekic, a MP for the Socialist People's Party, invited Joachim B. Olsen, MP for Liberal Alliance, to take part in a series of formal debates on this issue. One of these debates involved visiting Carina, a single mother and recipient of social assistance, whom Özlem Cekic had chosen as her case of a poor Dane on social assistance. There were no members of the media present during the visit and the first name Carina was a pseudonym given to her in order to protect her privacy, but afterwards Carina's household budget was made public and the two politicians discussed the visit on a popular evening entertainment program. Carina's budget showed that she could not be considered poor by the OECD-definition, or in comparison to low-wage job holders, because she received additional benefits supplementing her income as a single mother (Vangkilde 2011, Goul Andersen 2012). Though Carina's situation is not representative of most social assistance recipients, her budget became a symbol of some social assistance recipients' luxury expenses (e.g. cigarettes, a flat screen TV, and a dog), and provided a way of discussing the fairness of that. This resulted in the mocking nickname 'poor Carina' in the press and sparked a moral outcry in the public about the disincentives to work created by social assistance. This also prompted strong reactions in the newspapers, with readers comparing the income from low-wage work and social assistance, for example, 'No! She is not poor. This is an insult to all working people' (Eskesen 2011), and 'How sad it is that an idiot like me has not realized there is more money to be made on social assistance!' (Jespersen 2011). The media attention surrounding social assistance slowly faded throughout the spring of 2012, but the debate revived when the state television programme On the Other Side aired a documentary on prime time featuring another recipient of social benefits, Robert Nielsen, who stated that he was a 'lazy bastard' and would rather receive social assistance than take a 'crappy job' like janitorial work at McDonalds. The press quickly nicknamed him 'lazy Robert' and the debate about social assistance peeked through again, though this time the debate focused more on the work ethics of recipients. This again prompted strong reactions in the media and even the social democratic Prime Minister Helle Thorning Smith commented that: '(…) if there are people like 'lazy Robert' out there, then there will be stricter requirements for such "lazy Roberts"' (Søndberg 2012, 7). Overall, the cases focused much media attention on the social assistance scheme, as shown on Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Articles mentioning social assistance in five major newspapers



Note: Based on the newspaper database Infomedia. Newspapers: BT, Ekstra Bladet, Berlingske, Politiken, Jyllands-Posten.

Figure 1 shows the number of articles in five major newspapers using the word 'social assistance' in a period before, during, and a short while after the media events took place. The figure shows how salient the debate was in the period covered. There are normally some mentions of social assistance as a part of general public debate, which is reflected in the period from January 2011 to October 2011, when between 47 and 122 articles made references to social assistance. The figure also has two peaks where the number of references to social assistance more than tripled, compared to the average for the period leading up to the debate. The peaks were around December 2011 and August 2012, coinciding with the publicity surrounding the two cases described above.

THE IMPACT OF MEDIA ON ATTITUDES

Scholars have argued that we view the world as a series of mental images called stereotypes (Zaller 1992, Lippmann 1922). The stereotypes help us make sense of a complicated world, and are especially impactful in dealing with areas where we have little or no personal experience. Therefore the media can have a large impact

on attitudes, helping form the mental images of the unknown. Though the cases of 'poor Carina' and 'lazy Robert' do not portray typical recipients of social assistance (Larsen, Dejgaard 2012), they quickly came to identify recipients in the public debate. They thereby transformed themselves from single cases into stereotypes of how social assistance undermines economic incentives and makes the recipients lazy and unwilling to work. Somers and Block (2005) argue that debates about helping the poor, going back to Malthus' essays on poverty (1798), have always rested on these two categories of critique.

It is, however, important to notice that opposing arguments also were put forward in the debate, which could act as positive 'counter-stereotypes'. The positive stereotypes focused on examples of more deserving recipients of social assistance who had lower disposable incomes and a history of previous work (Flensburg 2012, Nørgaard 2011). The positive counter-stereotypes were, however, less dominant than the negative. A study of 60 articles on social assistance, sampling from three major newspapers in the period from November 2011 to November 2012, showed that about half had a negative slant, about one-fourth had positive representations of social assistance, and one-fourth did not lean one way or the other. The study also showed a sharp rise in the use of negative terms in articles about social assistance in 2011–12 compared to the period from 1998 to 2010 (Jensen, Mose 2012). This marked a break from the previous coverage of social assistance recipients which had been predominantly positive (Larsen, Dejgaard 2012, Jensen, Mose 2012). The debate thus seemed to have the potential to challenge the welfare consensus, as a result of the increased salience of the issue and the changed makeup of the debate (Zaller 1992, Soss, Schram 2007).

EXPLANATIONS OF ATTITUDE CHANGE

A number of theoretical arguments have been put forward as to why negative debates might affect public opinion. From an institutionalist perspective Rothstein (1998) argues that selective policies such as social assistance tend to create a public discussion about '(…) where the line between the needy and the non-needy should be drawn and (…) whether the needy themselves are not to blame for their predicament (…)' (Rothstein 1998, 158-159). Thus in this situation of increased media attention surrounding social assistance, the general population is more likely to question whether the benefit is too generous. Other scholars argue that attitudes on whether recipients deserve benefits are informed by deservingness heuristics (van Oorschot 2000, 2006, Petersen 2009). Heuristics are '(…) decision rules that produce quick judgements based on limited information and, hence, allow for opinion formation even when substantive information is absent'. (Petersen et al.

2011, 26). Quick judgements seem likely to create attitude change in this situation of increased salience but limited information about social assistance. Studies applying these deservingness heuristics show that recipients of benefits who are of working age and perceived as unwilling to contribute to society foster the most negative reactions (van Oorschot 2000, 2006, Petersen 2012). The cases of 'poor Carina' and 'lazy Robert' clash with these criteria, as both of these persons had been out of work for a number of years despite being of working age. Soss and Schram (2007) argue that social assistance constitutes a '(…) potent but distant symbol for the mass public (…)' (122), since attitudes towards social assistance, for most people, are not grounded in everyday experience, but in media representations and stereotypes (Golding, Middleton 1982, Baumberg et al. 2012). A change towards less support for social assistance based on the description of the debate and theory outlined above should be expected. In Table 1 a cross-sectional view of attitudes towards spending on social assistance before and after the publicized cases is presented. The surveys are part of a two-wave panel study in which the first wave was collected about two months before the Carina case and the second, about two months after the Robert case. This provides a baseline of attitudes before the debate and a measurement a short while thereafter.

Table 1**:** Attitudes towards spending on social assistance before and after the Robert and Carina cases in percentages

	Too much	Suitably	Too little	Don't know	N
Before the Robert and Carina cases	23	46	20	11	1997
After the Robert and Carina cases	29	37	19	15	1707

Question: 'Do you think that the government spends too much, suitably, or too little on social assistance?'

From Table 1 we can observe a rise in the number of respondents who think that too much is being spent on social assistance and a small drop in the percentage who think that the amount is suitable. This is a movement towards less willingness to spend compared to the time before and after. However, the movement in attitudes is relatively small. Overall, this shows a relative stability throughout the period, which fits poorly with the expectations outlined above. This leads to the question of why attitudes towards social assistance do not seem to be more affected by the criticism and the media spotlight.

EXPLAINING STABILITY IN ATTITUDES

One possible explanation may be that overall stability hides opposing attitude changes. A panel study by Togeby (2004) finds few variations in the overall public attitudes on a number of issues, but large variations on a few issues. On the individual level Togeby (2004) finds that the issues that display the smallest overall variation have the biggest individual variation. This pattern is created by uniform media messages on some issues which change the attitudes of few respondents but in the same direction. On other issues there is a small overall variation but a large individual variation in both directions created by a mixed media influence. The mixed media message fits with the description above and might help explain the small change in attitudes. Studies from political psychology have also found this polarization effect in survey experiments where both pro-and-con arguments are presented. The studies explain the polarization of attitudes as confirmatory or biased reading of information (Taber, Lodge 2006, Lord, Ross & Lepper 1979). Other studies have also found this to be true for stereotypes: People are more likely to believe information that supports their preconceived stereotypes and they ignore or discredit information that does not (Munro, Ditto 1997, Allport 1954). To

investigate the possible explanation of a polarization in attitudes, I outline four individual-level theses below. The theses cover both why some respondents could become more positive towards spending and why other respondents more negative.

Theses

The literature on individual attitude change takes its starting point in Converse's (1964) seminal essay 'The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics'. In a panel study Converse (1964) found that most citizens answered inconsistently both across the waves of the panel and between related issues. This result led Converse (1964) to question whether most citizens have something resembling real political attitudes, and therefore whether attitudes recorded through surveys are the expression of something more than random answers. The conclusions drawn by Converse (1964) have since been criticized (Page, Shapiro 1992, Achen 1975) and the subsequent literature on attitude formation has since modified that position. In much of the research following Converse (1964) the prevailing position has been that attitude instability is not due to people's lack of political attitudes, but to an ambivalence stemming from their having several and often opposing attitudes regarding most issues (Zaller 1992, Togeby 2004, Chong, Druckman 2007, Saris, Sniderman 2004). In this interpretation of attitudes the media play a big role since they transmit elite messages which are crucial to attitude formation and attitude change. When people are exposed to new or changing media messages on an issue, it can lead to changes in attitudes (Zaller 1992, Togeby 2004). The theses outlined in this study are based in the understanding of attitudes and the role of the media, as presented in Zaller's book *The nature and origin of mass opinion* (1992). In addition, theories of welfare-state attitudes are used to form my theses. I hope this provides a more realistic model of how attitudes are affected by the stereotypes put forward in the debate. Instead of expecting a uniform effect, this model seeks to incorporate personal experiences and political values to explain polarization in the public's attitudes.

Zaller (1992) argues that attitudes, recorded though surveys, are formed 'on the fly', on the basis of available information and predispositions. It is this process of attitude formation that is described in Zaller's (1992) Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) model. This model describes whether the message is received or not, whether the message is accepted or rejected, and finally how the sum of available information is translated into an opinion. An important precondition for Zaller's (1992) model is the fact that people do not have personal first-hand information about most issues they are surveyed about. Therefore they have to rely on

information obtained through the media. On this basis I can outline my first thesis: For the cases to have an impact on attitudes, the respondents need to have received them, that is, they need to still remember the cases.

Thesis 1: Respondents who remember the cases will develop more negative attitudes, while the attitudes of respondents who do not remember the cases will be unchanged.

The debate over social assistance constitutes what Zaller calls a two-sided discourse, since both positive and negative stereotypes were available and could have affected attitudes positively or negatively depending on what stereotypes individuals were most exposed to. In the situation of the two-sided discourse, Zaller (1992) argues that individuals tend to follow arguments that are in agreement with their predispositions or values. One way to schematize the values or predispositions involved is in the opposition of egalitarian versus anti-egalitarian values (Lipset 1963, Feldman 2003). Other researchers have argued that individuals take the position of their political parties (Slothuus, Petersen & Rathlev 2012). However, since left-wing arguments fall in line with egalitarian values, and right-wing arguments fall in line with anti-egalitarian values, this leads to a similar prediction. This opposition of values fits the competing stereotypes seen above: One side of the debate stresses inequality and the other side disincentives and laziness. On this basis I formulate my second thesis about accepting or rejecting the message:

Thesis 2: Respondents with anti-egalitarian values will develop more negative attitudes, while respondents with egalitarian values will develop more positive attitudes.

Together Thesis 1 and 2 outline a simplistic understanding of Zaller's (1992) RAS-model. To achieve greater nuance I further connect Zaller's (1992) general model of attitude formation to the research tradition on welfare attitudes. Here a number of studies have emphasized how attitudes are formed by a combination of political values (Thesis 2) and self-interest, in what is called the dual utility function (Rothstein 1998). Self-interest can be measured in a number of ways, the most straightforward of which is personal gain. However, the indirect gains such as benefits to close family or the protection offered by the benefits also need to be

taken into account (Iversen, Soskice 2001, Kumlin 2007). This forms the basis of my third thesis:

Thesis 3: Respondents who have no direct or indirect self-interest in the social assistance scheme will develop more negative attitudes, while respondents who have a direct or indirect self-interest in the scheme will develop more positive attitudes.

The final thesis is based on the policy-feedback literature, which argues that in addition to self-interest and political values, attitudes are also shaped by feedback from the welfare institutions (Pierson 1993, Campbell 2012). This policy feedback can be in the form of personal experiences or proximity to welfare institutions, which has been shown to affect attitudes towards a number of issues and areas (Hedegaard 2014). Zaller (1992) also acknowledges that some information is created or transmitted though experiences and personal contacts, leading him to describe this as a shortcoming in this theory: 'It would obviously be desirable to be able to measure exposure to interpersonal influence independently of exposure to elite discourse in the mass media.' (44). The impact of interpersonal influences fits with the policy feedback literature with both emphasizing how proximity to social assistance creates more positive attitudes by creating personal experiences to compete with the negative stereotypes.

Thesis 4: Respondents with no proximity to social assistance will develop more negative attitudes, while respondents who are proximate to the social assistance scheme will develop more positive attitudes.

I believe that this outlines a more realistic model of attitude change resulting from the debate. Instead of expecting that attitudes will be uniformly changed, we instead test whether there is a confirmation bias, because people seek out information and stereotypes that fit their predispositions and experiences and therefore attitudes diverge (Taber, Lodge 2006, Lord, Ross & Lepper 1979).

DATA AND VARIABLES

The data used in this paper were collected as a two-wave web-panel study in which 2000 respondents were surveyed in both waves. The 2000 respondents were chosen from a larger pool in the first wave, which insured minimal dropout between the two waves of the panel. The first wave was collected prior to the Carina and Robert cases in September and October 2011 (T1), and the second wave was collected after the cases in November 2012 (T2). The target group of respondents was age 18–65 years and weights were applied to match national averages on age, gender, regions of the country, and education level.

The dependent variable throughout was based on the question which also was used in Table 1 above: 'Do you think that the government spends too much, suitably, or too little on social assistance?' Since the prediction was that the small change in attitudes hid larger variations, a variable was calculated to show developments in attitudes between T1 and T2. The changes in attitudes were measured as attitudes in T2 after subtracting attitudes in T1 (Menard 2002). This is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that attitudes can develop in a very negative direction (- -), a negative direction (-), remain unchanged (0), a positive direction (+), or in a very positive direction (+ +). For example, a respondent who in T1 answered that a suitable amount is being spent and that too much is being spent in T2 constitutes an attitude change in a negative direction (-). In reality, very few respondents moved from one extreme to another (less than two per cent in all), which is why the positive and negative categories were combined in the study.

Table 2: The method for calculating development in attitudes between T1 and T2

Attitude towards spending on social assistance in September/October 2011 (T1)	Attitude towards spending on social assistance in November 2012 (T2)		
	Too little	Suitable	Too much
Too little	0	-	- -
Suitable	+	0	-
Too much	+ +	+	0

Independent Variables

To test the outlined theses a number of independent variables were also outlined. In longitudinal studies the relationship between the dependent and independent variables can be measured in four different ways (Menard 2002). This study investigated how independent variables explained changes in attitudes in both negative ($X \rightarrow \Delta Y\downarrow$) and positive directions ($X \rightarrow \Delta Y\uparrow$).

To investigate Thesis 1 about receiving the message, this question was used: 'Do you remember the so-called 'Carina case' which was discussed in the media about a year ago?' A similar one was asked about the Robert case and the response categories were simply 'yes', 'no', or 'uncertain'. No further help was provided for the respondents and the nicknames provided by the press were not used, as they could have biased the responses.

Thesis 2, concerning accepting or rejecting stereotypes on the basis of egalitarian values, was investigated by the proposition: 'In politics one should strive after securing for everyone the same economic conditions regardless of education and occupation'. The response categories are on a five-point scale: fully agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, and fully disagree. This was only collected in T1, but as values are believed to be relatively stable, they

should not have changed significantly during the one year between the surveys (Halman 2007).

Thesis 4 was studied by means of self-reported proximity to recipients of social assistance. These questions were collected in the second wave of the panel (T2). The proximity to recipients of social assistance is called the 'order of proximity' throughout the analysis, as it measures how proximate or distant the respondent is to recipients of the benefit. The 1st order of proximity is the group that, at the time or up to 12 months previously, were recipients of the social assistance benefit. The 2nd order of proximity contains respondents who were related to recipients of social assistance, that is, spouses, cohabitants, parents, children, or siblings. The 3rd order of proximity contains respondents who had recipients of social assistance within their closest circle of friends. The variables also contained a reference category of respondents who had no close relation to recipients of social assistance. This is listed as the 4th order. The proximity variables were structured such that respondents who answered that they had 1st-order proximity did not count in the other categories, and similarly for the 2nd and 3rd order.

Thesis 3, about direct and indirect self-interest, was based partly on the measure above, as 1st-order and 2nd-order proximity outlined above fits the measures of, respectively, direct and indirect self-interest. Furthermore, a question regarding the self-reported risk of becoming unemployed was also used to capture another form of indirect self-interest: 'To what degree do you feel that you and/or your partner are at risk of becoming unemployed within the next year?' Here respondents could answer: to a high degree, to some degree, to a lesser degree, or not at all. This form of indirect self-interest differed from having family members who received benefits (2nd order proximity), as it measured the protection provided by social assistance.

RESULTS

Using the dependent variable outlined above I could track the individual development in attitudes. I found that 24 per cent of the respondents became more negative towards spending on social assistance, 15 per cent positive or more positive, and 61 per cent did not change their opinion between the surveys (N=1585). This suggests the explanation of overall relative stability hiding larger variations fitting the case, as 39 per cent changed their attitudes over the period. However, in order to further explore the divergence of attitudes and the theses of

why the divergence happened, the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable was tested in two binary logistic regressions.

To test the theses outlined above I constructed two separate binary logistic regressions. The models tested how well the theses explained why respondents became more negative (model 1) or positive (model 2) towards spending on social assistance, compared to respondents who did not change their attitudes. The models were created as separate binary logistic regressions instead of a multinomial logistic regression, as this allowed me to set the reference point for categorical variables, but otherwise the combination of the two models had the same effect as a multinomial logistic regression. The models tested for the outlined independent variables as well as for age and education (not shown). In addition to that, I controlled for the attitudes in T1. Since the dependent variable measured changes in attitudes from a starting point, it might have prevented some groups from becoming significantly more positive or negative compared to their starting attitude. For example, if respondents had a very positive position as a group in T1, it is very unlikely they would become significantly more positive towards greater spending in T2. The models therefore expressed the relative changes in attitudes. The regressions from this control are not shown, as they do not add to the interpretation the models.

Table 3: Logistic regression models of changes in attitudes towards spending on social assistance, odds ratios and significance levels

Model 1 - Negative direction	Odds ratio	*p*	**Model 2 - Positive direction**	Odds ratio	*p*
Remembers the case – Carina			**Remembers the case – Carina**		
Yes	1.1	0.569	Yes	1.0	0.877
No	Reference		No	Reference	
Remembers the case – Robert			**Remembers the case – Robert**		
Yes	1.5	0.128	Yes	0.8	0.282
No	Reference		No	Reference	
In politics one should strive to ensure equality			**In politics one should strive to ensure equality**		
(scale 1–5)	1.2	0.030	(scale 1–5)	0.8	0.000
Proximity to social assistance			**Proximity to social assistance**		
Self (1st order)	0.2	0.022	Self (1st order)	2.3	0.136
Close family (2nd order)	0.9	0.636	Close family (2nd order)	0.8	0.491
Close friends (3rd order)	1.1	0.639	Close friends (3rd order)	1.1	0.795
No proximity (4th order)	Reference		No proximity (4th order)	Reference	
Perceived risk of unemployment			**Perceived risk of unemployment**		
(scale 1–4)	1.2	0.055	(scale 1–4)	0.7	0.002

Note: No change N=739. Positive direction N=164. Negative direction N=284. See methods section for scales of the continuous variables. Model 1 – Negative direction (0=No change, 1=Negative direction). Model 2 – Positive direction (0=No change, 1=positive direction). The models are also controlled for age and education with so significant effects (not shown).

Overall the model presented in Table 3 helped to explain the polarization of attitudes in a negative direction (model 1) and a positive direction (model 2). Model 1 showed some interesting and quite surprising patterns. First, it showed that remembering the cases did not have a significant impact on attitudes. Thus I initially had to reject the first part of thesis 1 – that remembering the cases had a negative impact on attitudes. This initially seemed like a strange result, as it suggested that remembering the cases was entirely separate from a negative reaction. One explanation for this pattern might be that there was an overlap of Thesis 1 about receiving the message and Thesis 2 on rejecting or accepting the message on the basis of egalitarian/anti-egalitarian values. Here model 1 showed a significant effect (odds ratio 1.2, p=0.03) indicating that people with more anti-

egalitarian values were more likely to move in a negative direction. This suggested that people made a self-selection in their sources of news based on predispositions in order to confirm their preconceived stereotypes (Taber, Lodge 2006, Lord, Ross & Lepper 1979). This could happen through people choosing to ignore or discredit news that did not fit their predispositions. This would also explain why the effect of remembering the cases disappeared with control for egalitarian values, compared to the bi-variate relationship between remembering the cases and a movement in a negative direction (not shown). Being a recipient of social assistance now or within the last 12 months (1st-order proximity) also had a significant effect as it made respondents much less likely to move in a negative direction compared to respondents with no proximity. The other proximity variables did not, however, have a significant impact on the chance they would move in a negative direction. The other type of self-interest investigated was the protection offered by social assistance and how it affected respondents who felt more or less at risk of losing their jobs. Here, the more respondents felt secure in their jobs, the more they were likely to move in a negative direction (odds ratio 1.2, p=0.055). This, combined with the proximity variable, indicated the importance of self-interest. This confirmed thesis 3 on the effect of self-interest, but not thesis 4 on the effect of proximity, as the effects were insignificant.

Model 2, which explained movements in a positive direction, displayed the same overall patterns as model 1. Similarly to model 1 there was no effect from remembering the cases, but that was in agreement with Thesis 1, as it states that respondents who do not remember the cases do not change attitudes in any direction. This again might be due to the effect of egalitarian values, which display a strong and significant effect (odds ratio 0.8, p<0.000). The proximity variable did not create significant differences, not even for 1st-order proximate respondents receiving social assistance at the time or within the last 12 months (odds ratio 2.3, p=0.136), though this maybe was due to the low number of respondents (N=31). Finally, the perceived risk of unemployment also showed a significant effect of dependence on the social safety net that benefits represent.

Overall, the results indicate that Danes became more polarized on attitudes towards social assistance. The models outlined above found this polarization to happen along two dimensions: egalitarian values and self-interest. This shows that the chance of picking negative or positive stereotypes of people on social assistance is not uniform in the population. The polarization effect further explains why so little overall effect from the debates was found: It conceals a lot of the movement when looking in the aggregate attitude changes compared to the individual attitude changes.

DISCUSSION

Can negative stereotypes undermine the public's support for welfare-state policies? Much of the literature on welfare attitudes and the impact of media coverage implicitly assume that there is a strong and uniform effect on the public. However, studies from other fields suggest that the effect is more complex. Instead of an overall movement of public opinion we might see a polarization of the public, as individuals seek out information that aligns with their predispositions and thus their confirmation biases.

To investigate the impact of a salient and overall negative debate, the cases of 'poor Carina' and 'lazy Robert' were described. These single-case stories of recipients of social assistance received much attention and presented strong stereotypical images of the recipients. The cases touched on the classic critiques and stereotypes of social assistance which – other studies argue – create negative attitudes in the population. In addition, the case was set in the wake of the financial crisis, when a public discussion of budget cuts was taking place. There were, however, also positive stereotypes of deserving recipients put forward during the debates. This allowed individuals to pick the version of the story that best fit their worldview and self-interest. By using panel data to track individual attitudes before and after the two cases, the article shows that there was only a small drop in public support for social assistance. The small overall change in attitudes, however, hid a larger polarization, as 39 per cent changed their attitudes. Inspired by Zaller's (1992) RAS model and theories of welfare attitudes, I outlined four theses to capture the polarization in attitudes. This, I believe, is a more realistic model of attitude change during increased media attention, as it includes political values, self-interest, and personal experiences. Using the theses to explore the variations in attitudes, I show how part of the population became more polarized along the two dimensions of egalitarian values and self-interest. This article thus shows that people tend to seek out information that aligns with their predispositions and thus confirm their biases. Therefore we should not expect a single debate to create large changes in public support and thereby undermine the existing support for social spending and the welfare state.

The bulk of this article concerns the 39 per cent who changed opinion, but maybe just as importantly, the 61 per cent who did not change their opinion. This shows that it takes more than one debate to alter public opinion. The question is then whether, or for how long, the stereotypes stick in the public's consciousness. If the

stereotypes do stick longer in public consciousness this might lead to a harsher debate the next time, with stronger negative reactions among the 61 per cent, and thus a downward cycle of debates and more sceptical attitudes among the majority. Alternately, if the stereotypes are quickly forgotten or only available to those with anti-egalitarian values, there might be little or no long-term impact from the debate. Another stabilizing factor might be that the universalistic Nordic welfare states tend to create a feedback effect whereby the overall values of the welfare state affect attitudes in other areas (Larsen, Dejgaard 2012, Svallfors 2007, Esping-Andersen 1990).

Finally, it is worth noticing that though the debate had little impact on public opinion, it potentially had an impact on policy developments. In May 2012 the social democratic government introduced a tax reform that tripled the income-tax deductions for working single mothers. This aimed at fixing the incentive problems presented by the Carina case, in which she faced a gap between social assistance and low-wage work, i.e. to make low-wage work financially more attractive than social assistance. This was followed by a large-scale reform of social assistance in January 2014. This reform emphasized moving all 'job-ready' recipients into the workforce, and deepened cuts in benefits to recipients of age 25 to 30 without an education. These were significant policy changes, and I would argue that my findings show that they were not made because of changes in public opinion. Instead we have to look to other possible explanations such as political opportunities and paradigm changes in the perception of the unemployed (Torfing 2004).

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ARTICLE IV: NEO-LIBERALISM AND THE NORDIC WELFARE MODEL: A STUDY OF THE DANISH POLITICAL PARTY LIBERAL ALLIANCE AND THE ADAPTIVE CAPABILITIES OF THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE WELFARE STATE

Troels Fage Hedegaard

This article explores whether the neo-liberal ideology has adapted to the Nordic welfare model by studying the attitudes of voters and grassroots members of the Danish party Liberal Alliance towards the welfare state. This inquiry into one of the key issues for the neo-liberal ideology is inspired theory on how an ideology will adapt to its context. The expectation outlined in the article is thus for the neo-liberals of this party to favour features that make the Nordic welfare model distinctive—extensive government responsibly, especially for children and the elderly, and a universalist approach to providing welfare. This is explored through a mixed methods approach of combining a survey of voters with interviews of grassroots members of the party. Combined, the methods show that the neo-liberals in Liberal Alliance do support a role for the welfare state that extends beyond a minimum welfare state, and especially so in the care for children, while old age is seen mostly as a personal problem. Regarding the universalistic approach to providing welfare the neo-liberals seem to be caught between two pulls, one being that is perceived as a fair way to provide welfare and the other the idea of a selective welfare state as a neo-liberal core idea, which led to ambivalent attitudes. This adds up to what is argued to be a form of the neo-liberal ideology that has adapted to the Nordic welfare model.

NEO-LIBERALISM AND THE WELFARE STATE

Over the last 30 years the neo-liberal ideology has gained considerable political influence across the world (Saad Filho, Johnston 2004, Turner 2008). This is also increasingly becoming the case in the Nordic countries, where scholars have pointed to neo-liberal ideology influencing policies and parties in Sweden (Bergqvist, Lindbom 2003), Norway (Mydske, Claes & Lie 2007), Finland (Jutila

2010) and Denmark (Nielsen 2009). The latest, and perhaps clearest, example of the neo-liberal ideology gaining a foothold in a Nordic country is the Danish party Liberal Alliance, which from 2008 onwards has successfully become established on the political scene. In this article, I seek to describe neo-liberalism in a Nordic country by studying the attitudes among the voters and members of this neo-liberal party.

There is not a single definition of what the term neo-liberalism covers, and there is great variation in how the term is used throughout academic literature. According to Nielsen (2009), these definitions can be sorted into two fundamentally different camps, as some scholars use the term narrowly to describe an ideology, while others apply it in a broader and substantially different way to describe a situation of ideational hegemony (Peck 2011) or a mode of governance, often inspired by Foucault (1988). In this article, I use the term in its narrow definition to describe the ideology in its contemporary form in a Nordic country.

This inquiry into the attitudes of Nordic neo-liberals is inspired by literature on how an ideology will adapt to its context (Turner 2008, Freeden 1998, 2013). The adaptive capabilities of the ideology are studied by focusing on the neo-liberals' attitudes towards the welfare state. Though the neo-liberal ideology informs attitudes towards a wide range of issues, the question of what the role of the state should be is, arguably, the key issue for the ideology (Hartman 2005, Gamble 2013). MacGregor (2005) argues that this is because the neo-liberal ideology primarily arose in reaction to, and in the context of, the developing western welfare states. Similarly, the neo-liberal philosopher Hayek (1979) has described how the term liberal has shifted from describing a general attitude of mind to covering specific views about the proper function of government in its new form (Turner, 2008). The aim of this article is thus to show that the neo-liberal ideology has adapted to the Nordic welfare model. The choice of focusing on this central aspect of the ideology also results in the article drawing together two relatively different fields of study, as I am combining studies of attitudes towards the welfare state with theory of ideological adaption. Though the two fields of study normally live separate lives, I hope that they can enrich each other in the effort of describing neo-liberalism and its possible adaption to the Nordic welfare model.

The rest of this section provides a description of the Liberal Alliance and neo-liberalism in Denmark. The second section outlines the theoretical expectations of how neo-liberalism might adapt to the Nordic welfare model. The third section

outlines the design of the study and the methods that are applied. The fourth section presents the findings, the implications of which are discussed in the fifth section.

NEO-LIBERALISM IN DENMARK

The Danish multiparty system is well suited to capture protest movements and niche parties as a proportional representation system. This, combined with a low barrier of 2% of the votes, makes it relatively easy for a party to be elected to parliament. This ensures a volatile political system, as it was famously displayed in the 'landslide election' of 1973, where three new parties were elected to the parliament for the first time. The largest among these parties was Mogens Glistrup's 'Progress Party', which captured 16% of the votes, partly on the back of neo-liberal anti-tax and anti-welfare rhetoric (Wilensky 1975, Glans 1984). This was the first instance of a party with a neo-liberal streak gaining considerable public support in Denmark. The Progress Party later collapsed onto itself in the mid-1990s and transformed into the new right party Danish People's Party (Andersen, Bjørklund 1990). The Danish People's Party transformed over the first couple of years of its existence from a welfare critical party to hold a more positive, though welfare chauvinistic, perception of the welfare state (Rydgren 2004). This left most of the neo-liberal voters to the more centrist Liberal Party, which throughout the period also housed a strong neo-liberal wing.

This was the state of neo-liberal ideology in Denmark until Liberal Alliance was founded in 2008 on the basis of a failed centre-right party. Today the party has positioned itself as the strongest critic of the welfare state in the eyes of the voters (Stubager, Holm & Smidstrup 2013), and though Liberal Alliance cannot be characterised as a single issue party, it mainly drew attention from its messages critical of the welfare state. The party was first elected to parliament in 2011, with 5% of the vote, and surveys show it has stabilised at that level of support (Danish Broadcasting Corporation 2014). This shows that, although Liberal Alliance is a niche party, it has gathered consistent support among the population.

To explain how the party became an established part of the political scene, it is possible to draw parallels to how the Danish People's Party successfully emerged from the ruins of the Progress Party in the mid-1990s. Rydgren (2004) argues that the primary factor behind the Danish People's Party's success was the convergence of political positions on the immigration issue, as this created a political niche the party could tap into. Though its extreme position on the immigration issue was

initially unpopular in the general population, it acted as the party's 'master frame' under which all policy proposals could be framed. This allowed it to draw social democratic voters by offering similar social policies and a much harsher immigration policy (Arndt 2014).

Similarly, I would argue that Liberal Alliance's success is founded in using generally unpopular welfare state-critical rhetoric, which lets it occupy a niche position on the tax- and welfare-spending issue. Mortensen (2008) argues that this niche started emerging when the right-wing parties began scaling back their neo-liberal attacks on the welfare state after the loss in the 1998 parliamentary election. The Liberal Party, which previously had a strong neo-liberal wing, spearheaded the project of turning the right wing into defender of the welfare state. This proved a very successful strategy for the Liberal Party, as it helped it to win ten years in parliamentary office (Arndt 2014), but potentially also created a political niche that Liberal Alliance could occupy. The Danish Election Surveys also confirm that the changes in rhetoric and policy had an effect on the perceptions of the parties, as the voters perceived the right-wing parties to be increasingly supportive of welfare state spending from the 2001 parliamentary election onwards (Stubager, Holm & Smidstrup 2013).

ADAPTIVE NEO-LIBERALISM

The theoretical argument I present in this section is that the neo-liberal ideology that Liberal Alliance represents has adapted to the Nordic welfare model. In order to do so, I will draw on theories and studies of how ideologies adapt to a given context. Here the work of Freeden (1998, 2013) is central, as it outlines how ideological adaptation, or ideological morphology, as Freeden (1998, 2013) terms it, can be studied. This will be linked to literature on the Nordic welfare model in order to describe the context for neo-liberalism in a Nordic country.

According to Freeden (2013), the morphological approach stands in opposition to the idea that ideologies can be described solely as normative systems of ideas or though studies of significant of political thinkers thoughout history. Instead, the approach argues for a different method where ideologies are studied through 'a ubiquitous practice, under-researched by political theorists, namely, that people in all walks of society think about politics in discernible patterns (…)' (Freeden 2013, 115). These patterns of political thought, and how they might have adapted to the

context of the Nordic welfare states, are central to the approached applied in this article.

The first part of describing ideological adaption is to define what an ideology is. Here a wide range of definitions can be outlined (Gerring 1997); however, since I will draw on the work of Freeden (1998), I will also employ his definition of ideologies, which are the 'distinctive configurations of political concepts […] that […] create specific conceptual patterns from a pool of indeterminate and unlimited combinations' (p. 4). Ideologies are thus defined by the concepts that are at their core. The core concepts make up the central ideas of the ideology, and thus cannot be abandoned without the ideology being threatened in its existence. The core concepts of an ideology are, however, translated into a given context through the adjacent and peripheral concepts (Freeden 1998, 2013). The differences between the concepts can in some regards be likened to Hall's (1993) three orders of change, where the third order or peripheral changes are common, while the first order changes fundamentally alter the worldview. By studying how the concepts are translated in a given context, Freeden (1998, 2013) argues it is possible to study how an ideology adapts to a context.

STUDIES OF NEO-LIBERALISM AND IDEOLOGICAL ADAPTION

Based on Freeden's (1998) theoretical framework, Turner (2008) has tracked the formulations of neo-liberal thinking in Germany, the UK and the US in the book *Neo-liberal Ideology*. Turner (2008) argues that the neo-liberal core concepts are a belief in the marked, general scepticism towards the welfare state, and an emphasis on the legal rights provided to the individual. The core concept of scepticism towards the welfare state, which is the main interest of this article, is then translated into adjacent concepts like support for a minimal state, equality of opportunity, negative rights and personal responsibility. The adjacent concepts then give support for peripheral concepts like support for reduced social spending, workfare and voucher systems. In accordance with the theoretical framework, Turner (2008) finds major differences in how the core concepts are translated into adjacent and peripheral concepts when comparing between countries and over time. Here Turner (2008) argues for large differences in perceptions of the welfare state between Germany and the US, because the German neo-liberalism has it roots in the tradition of ordo-liberalism, which argues that a strong state is not contradictory to personal freedom, but often a precondition to it (Bonefeld 2012).

Overall, this seems to support the idea that the neo-liberal understanding of the welfare state will develop differently, depending on its context (Turner, 2008, chapter 6). Based on the systematic finding of differences, Turner (2008) argues for a 'varieties of neo-liberalism', where the neo-liberal perception of the welfare state vary with the institutional setup and size of the welfare state.

ADAPTION TO THE NORDIC WELFARE MODEL

The countries in Turner's (2008) study, however, have welfare states that are qualitatively different form the Danish case, and therefore neo-liberalism in the Nordic countries may have adapted to a different context. To use Esping-Andersen's welfare regime typology, the countries are typical representatives of the liberal regime (the US and the UK) and the conservative regime (Germany). Denmark is, however, closer to Esping-Andersen's (1990) description of the social democratic regime. Since Esping-Andersen's regime typology refers to the historical actors mainly responsible for the welfare regime, I will instead use the term Nordic welfare model, as it refers to the current institutional setup and further avoids the contradiction in terms of a 'social democratic neo-liberalism'.

The aim is thus to determine whether the Nordic welfare model has indeed impacted on the attitudes of the neo-liberals in the Liberal Alliance. So how can the welfare regime affect the neo-liberal ideology? Going by institutional theory, this adaption could happen through the welfare regime affecting what is perceived as the 'normalcy' in terms of the role of the government in the provision of welfare (Svallfors 2003, Rothstein 1998). A similar conclusion could be reached on the basis of the directional theory of issue voting. This theory argues that the best strategy for a niche party is to place itself at an extreme point on the political scale in order to attract unhappy right-wing voters that seek the most impact of their vote (Kedar 2005). The directional voting theory, however, also contends that this extreme position should not be outside the 'region of acceptability', which is the socially accepted political space on the issue, because being perceived as 'extreme' or 'radical' will carry a harsh penalty from the voters (Rabinowitz, Macdonald 1989). The welfare regime should presumably affect what is perceived as 'normalcy' and 'the region of acceptability', and thus neo-liberalism should be different in a Nordic country. In order to determine if this is the case, I need a set of theoretical expectations. This is rather uncharted territory, but in trying to do this I will emphasise the three features that are common in the descriptions of the Nordic welfare model (Alestalo, Hort & Kuhnle 2009, Kautto 2010, Greve 2007, Andersen et al. 2007).

The first defining feature in the descriptions of the welfare states in the Nordic countries is the fact that the state has the key responsibility that welfare is provided to the citizens. This has been described by scholars as 'Nordic stateness', as the state becomes the central authority in organising how welfare goods are produced and according to which principles they are distributed (Esping-Andersen 1996, Sabbagh, Vanhuysse 2006). Though most descriptions of neo-liberalism do reserve some role for the government in providing welfare for the very poorest, this goes far beyond the idea of a 'minimal state' (Hayek 2014). Therefore, if there is an impact of the Nordic welfare model on their attitudes, I should find that the respondents support the idea that it is the government's responsibility to provide welfare.

Secondly, compared to other welfare state models, the greater responsibility of the state is especially prevalent within welfare service and care tasks (Esping-Andersen 1990, Kautto 2010). A detailed breakdown of social spending data from the OECD by Adema, Fron and Ladaique (2011) shows the areas where the Nordic countries especially differentiate themselves are on non-health welfare services, which cover care for children and the elderly. These two policy areas are thus especially interesting to examine, as they are areas where the state can take over tasks which otherwise could be argued to be a personal or family responsibility. If I find that the neo-liberals argue that it is the government's responsibility to take care of these groups, it would thus support the idea of adaption of the ideology.

The final feature of the Nordic welfare model that is common in the descriptions points to the fact that the Nordic welfare states distinguish themselves from other welfare states by awarding a comparatively larger degree of the welfare by the universal criteria (Esping-Andersen 1990, Greve 2007, Castles 2008). A number of studies have shown that universal policies tend to generate larger public support (Jordan 2013), in part because the recipients tend to be viewed more positively (Campbell 2011, Hedegaard 2014). Thus, I should expect the universal policies to be perceived as normal and part of what should be the government's responsibility (Svallfors 2003). On the other hand, selective policies, targeted at the poorest, are normally considered to be a concept closely connected to neo-liberalism (Turner 2008, Plant 2010). Therefore, if I find support for universal over non-universal welfare programmes, and if I find support for designing policies in a universal manner over a selective or targeted manner, it would be a sign of adaption of the ideology.

The three criteria will be used to both structure the analysis and to evaluate the results. Though these are not strict hypotheses, they will give me a sense of whether it is reasonable to argue for the existence of a neo-liberal ideology that has adapted to the Nordic welfare model.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

In order to study the proposed adaptation of the ideology, I will use a mixed-methods design. This design consists of combining a survey of attitudes towards the welfare state with five interviews with party grassroots members. This approach to studying the ideology was inspired by Skocpol and Williamson's (2012) investigation of the American Tea Party branch of the Republican Party. The authors argue that in order to provide a fuller description of attitudes and ideology of the members of the Tea Party, it is necessary to rely on a combination of methods in what adds up to a mixed-methods design: "Interviews and ethnographic observations are also crucial for understanding what people's survey responses really mean, moving beyond crude characterisations" (Williamson, Skocpol & Coggin 2011, 27).

Going by the categorisations of mixed methods studies by Frederiksen's (2013) this is approach seeks to integrate the methods though the design. According to Frederiksen (2013), this approach is built on two assumptions. The first assumption is that it is possible to describe the object of the research based on theory and existing knowledge. For this article, this would be the theoretical framework outlined above, which is inspired by the theory on both ideological adaption and welfare state attitudes. The second assumption is that the different methods can both describe the object of the research validly, and that the methods can contribute to this with different aspects. In this article, I will use the methods sequentially by presenting the survey and then, in part, inspired by the results of the survey, conduct the interviews with the members of the party. Thus, the method allows me to draw on the strengths of both methods. The survey provides an overview of attitudes towards the welfare state generally, and in specific among people who voted for Liberal Alliance, while the interviews can help clarify the reasoning behind these attitudes.

There are, however, also downsides to choosing this approach. First off, it might be a problematic assumption to make that the attitudes of the voters expressed in a survey show the attitudes and ideology of the party. An objection to this approach could be that the strategy of niche parties is to take very extreme positions in order to attract attention (Meguid 2005), which could lead to the voters being more centrist than the party. Secondly, by interviewing party grassroots members, instead of analysing party programmes and texts from political thinkers, I might get formulations of the ideology that are less crystallised. Consequently, I might get results that are less definitive in terms of attitudes towards the welfare state.

METHODS

The first part of the analysis was based on a 2011 election survey which is, to date, the most comprehensive survey covering attitudes towards the welfare state with Liberal Alliance as a choice of political party. The survey included 6028 respondents, of which 333 voted for Liberal Alliance, which fits their overall support in the elections and polls of about 5%. This was enough respondents to run a meaningful analysis that compared its voters to voters for other parties. Here it is especially the voters of other right-wing parties which are interesting, as this shows the degree to which they differ from the existing parties.

The results of the survey were supplemented by five semi-structured interviews with members of local party committees. Five interviews is quite a small number to conduct, but the purpose of the interviews was not to fully describe the interviewees' attitudes towards the welfare state. Instead, the interviews aimed to look into the reasoning behind the attitudes found in the survey, and possibly dig into differences and ambivalences, and thus to help substantiate the survey results. The group of grassroots members was selected for the interviews that were close to the political discussion within the party, while not having a vested interest in expressing specific attitudes. The respondents (referenced by their initials) were found by sending out a standardised email to the leaders of the local committees. Simple descriptive statics were also collected after the interviews and are presented in the appendix in Table 2. The interviews covered four cities across the country, and their profiles compare reasonably well to the average voters, based on the election survey. The largest divergence from the party is the fact that all respondents were men.

The interviews were analysed using Nvivo 10. In order to do this, I added to structure consisting of two types of 'nodes' to the interviews. The nodes are categories that can be applied to a section of the interviews in order to single out concepts, ideas or questions. The first kind of nodes outlined the structure of the interviews, and the second kind of nodes indicated the theoretically interesting concepts (Bazeley, Jackson 2013). With this system, I could reference concepts and questions during and between the interviews, which allowed for an easy overview and comparison.

SURVEY RESULTS

In the survey-based part of the results, I will present items on whether the government spends too much money, a suitable amount, or too little on several welfare policies. This measure can be interpreted as the overall support for or opposition to each welfare policy. To further illustrate the support for each welfare policy, the overall opinion balance was calculated by subtracting the percentage who answered 'too much' from the percentage that answered 'too little' was spent on the welfare policy. This produces a number ranging from +100 (all respondents found the spending level too low) to -100 (all respondents found the spending level too high). Respondents who answered that the spending is 'suitable' or who answered 'don't know' were included, but did not count as either for or against spending on the opinion balance. The results of this are presented in Table 1 below with full details for Liberal Alliance. To contrast these results, the other Danish parties are divided into three groups: The established centre-right parties, consisting of the Liberal Party and the Conservative People's Party (CPP), Danish People's Party and the left-wing parties. The latter category could be subdivided further, but as the focus mainly is on Liberal Alliance, as compared to the other right-wing parties, I have not done this.

Table 1: Attitudes toward government spending on welfare policies, presented as opinion balances for groups of parties, and with full details for Liberal Alliance.

	Liberal Alliance				Liberal Alliance	Liberal Party and CPP	Danish People's Party	Left-wing parties
	Too much	Suitable	Too little	Don't know	Opinion balance	Opinion balance	Opinion balance	Opinion balance
Education	5	44	45	6	41	34	35	66
Homecare for elderly	9	47	34	10	25	35	63	57
Healthcare	13	44	38	5	25	35	64	67
Childcare	11	50	30	9	19	35	34	53
State pension	19	51	17	10	-2	18	49	35
Unemployment insurance	35	46	9	10	-26	-16	-1	27
Social assistance	52	33	7	8	-45	-36	-20	20

Notes: From a 2011 election survey. N (total) = Liberal Alliance (333), the Liberal Party and Conservative People's Party (CPP) (1446), Danish People's Party (624), left-wing parties (2966).

The results in Table 1 can be broken down in a number of ways. First off, the results demonstrate the overall support for most of the welfare policies covered in the survey, as indicated by the positive opinion balances for most of the welfare policies. This overall support is much in line with Pierson's (1996) predictions of the welfare-state policies creating vested interests that sustain public support. I also find the expected difference between the left-wing parties and the parties on the right, in that the opinion balance is positive for all policy areas for the left-wing parties, while the right-wing parties score negatively on unemployment insurance and social assistance. The results also show that there are major differences between the policy areas in terms of public support. These differences seem to fit the general finding that universal policies are more popular than selective ones, as public support is significantly greater for the universal welfare services in the form of education, homecare for the elderly, healthcare and childcare (Jordan 2013, Hedegaard 2014). Another possible interpretation of ranking between the policy areas is that while the more popular policies are targeted at groups that are universally found to be 'deserving' (the elderly and children), the less popular policies are targeted an the unemployed that generally are perceived as deserving (van Oorschot 2006). This concordance between the explanations might be due to the policy design fostering the perception that the recipient groups are deserving or undeserving (Campbell 2011, Hedegaard 2014).

Looking at Liberal Alliance voters, there is a largely similar attitude pattern, as I find that there is overall support for four of the seven policy areas. This is lower than the other party groups, but still shows a degree of support for welfare spending. This indicates an acceptance of government responsibility, as the first criterion states, which goes far beyond a 'minimal state'. The results for Liberal Alliance voters also show that they are much more polarised between universal and non-universal policies than other groups. The policies awarded by the universal criteria are in the positive range (education, homecare for elderly, healthcare and childcare), while the non-universal policies are in the negative range of the opinion balances. One deviation from this pattern of support among them for universal policies is the state pension. Here they are split down the middle (opinion balance -2), as most find the spending suitable, but 19% of them find the spending too generous. This deviation from the pattern might be explained by reforms that have made the state pension more selective and less available to younger, high-income groups (Goul Andersen 2011). A similar age effect on the attitudes toward state pensions is also present in other parties. The effect is simply stronger among Liberal Alliance, as it has a disproportionate amount of younger voters (not shown). On the two non-universal policies aimed at the unemployed, Liberal Alliance voters are by far the least supportive of spending, and in fact they support retrenching both policies. This thus fits the third criterion of support for universal policies over selective policies. This does not necessarily mean that these voters reject the idea of selective policies, but perhaps they feel that these are too generous. Finally, regarding attitudes towards the government's responsibility for the elderly and children, there is overall support for the government taking responsibility for care tasks (childcare and homecare for the elderly). This support, however, seems to co-exist with the lower support for the state pensions, the reason for which can be explored in the next section.

INTERVIEW RESULTS

What the survey cannot tell is why the neo-liberals express support for some welfare policies but not for others, and more generally, how they perceive the welfare state. This is the aim of the second part of the analysis, which was partially guided by the results above. The results of the interviews are presented in three parts following the criteria outlined in the theory section.

'What we can rightfully call common goods'

As the first criterion focuses on what the government should have in providing welfare, this part of the interviews focuses on what should be government responsibility and what should be privatised.

Though the respondents tackled this question differently, they, in one form or another, answered this by making distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate government tasks. The most descriptive version of this was made by KL, who argued that the state should take responsibility for 'What we can rightfully call common goods. This is that which help the country and society function and from which we all gain. This we get through the common purse, and the common purse is justifiably filled through taxes and fees'. In the further definition of the 'common goods', KL mentioned healthcare and education as examples of things that benefit all citizens and have a positive effect on society, and thus are justified. On the other hand, KL argued that areas in which welfare policies only benefit certain groups, or where the welfare state is in direct competition with private companies, should not be the government's responsibility. Other respondents made distinctions that were either wider or narrower in terms of what was included, but with a similar emphasis on universal welfare policies as legitimate.

The exception in this regard was FB, who argued that the government should take care of the 'core welfare areas' such as education, help for the sick, the handicapped and the involuntarily unemployed. Though this covers some of the same areas as outlined by KL above, this differs in the sense that instead of an opposition between universal and non-universal policy areas, he drew on the heuristics of deserving and undeserving groups (van Oorschot 2000). However, no matter how the distinction of what should and should not be a government responsibility is drawn, this seems to extend far beyond a minimal state.

'You have to presume that this is a personal responsibility, but…'

The interviews also touched on more specific welfare tasks and whether these should be a government responsibility. Following the second criterion outlined above, I was especially interested in attitudes regarding the government's role in taking care of the elderly and children.

As shown above in Table 1, there were somewhat mixed attitudes towards the government taking responsibility for the state pension. This attitude was also echoed in the interviews, as all respondents supported the idea that it should be the personal responsibility of the elderly to ensure their own living standards. As one of the respondents, TF, put it: 'You have to presume that this is a personal responsibility, since you can save for it over your lifetime'. Some of the respondents pointed to policy developments in the state pension, which have transformed into a multipillar pensions system (Goul Andersen 2011), as the reason for this. This can be exemplified with KL, who argued: 'I think we are making it a personal responsibility, and that fits well with my way of thinking, that you have to save for your own old age'. However, KL did not support full privatisation of responsibility, as he in the next sentence added that: 'But again, those who do not save for their own retirement, or for other reasons don't have anything, there I would like to see that they have a sort of minimum income'. KA argued similarly, but as in the discussion above with how to determine what should be a government responsibly, he again kept underscoring how the recipients should be 'deserving', and if the recipients have not contributed to society in their lifetime, then they should not be helped.

On attitudes towards government responsibility for children, the attitudes were more mixed among respondents. One line of argumentation, provided by some of the respondents, mirrored the one for the elderly outlined above. For instance, FB argued: 'Why should I pay such high taxes, just so the state can give me money to have children. You can have all the kids you want, but you have to pay for them yourself'. On the other hand, FB also argued that the one area where he would support increasing government spending was for at-risk children. This follows the same logic of personal responsibility, but with a government provided 'social minimum'. Other respondents did not seem to favour any changes, and thus perceived this as the normalcy: '[state financed] kindergartens are fine; someone has to look after the children while you are at work, so that has to be a responsibility of the government'. Here the primary criticism focused on the lack of choice among private providers, but not with government responsibility as such.

Regarding the second criterion, the attitudes of the neo-liberals seem to support the idea that this should be a personal responsibility, but also that the state should step in when individuals fail. This was the most prominent attitude towards pensions for the elderly—a process possibly pushed along by policy reforms.

'People want something back; it is only natural.'

As outlined by the third criterion, the final part of the interviews focused on the question of whether welfare policies should be universal or targeted at specific groups (selective). As Table 1 displayed, there is little overall support for the non-universal benefits as expressed in a support for decreasing spending, but what the survey does not tell us is the reasoning behind it.

In the discussion of the welfare state generally, and the selective benefits in particular, the respondents kept returning to one core critique—namely, the distortion of incentives. What the respondents argued was that many people are unemployed not because they are unwilling to work, but because they do not have the incentive to work. The respondents thus did not blame people for not having the will to work, but instead pointed to the incentive structures created by the welfare state. As FB, very directly, put it: 'People are not stupid. They will not work for less than what social assistance pays'. KL, who is an employer himself, also argued that there are many of the unemployed that he cannot hire: 'Many of these people just aren't valuable enough', with reference to paying them more than social assistance. The unemployed are, in the respondents' perception, not lazy, but instead rational actors who chose not to work. This also leads them to see a clear solution to the problem: social benefits have to be retrenched in order to give low-skill unemployed enough incentive to work. At the heart of their worldview seems to be an 'economic man' logic, which came through in the interviews (Plant 2010). This 'economic man' logic seems to clash with incentive structures created by selective benefits—the so-called 'poverty traps'. This thus seems to help explain the apparent support for universal benefits and rejection of non-universal benefits displayed in Table 1.

This was also what I found when I asked whether the welfare-state benefits should increasingly be targeted. Here the respondents displayed general support for the idea, coupled with scepticism about whether it was possible and in some cases desirable. An example of this was NN, who argued: 'This is what the welfare state should do—help the poor'. He added: 'It is okay to help the rich and the middle-classes, and that has to remain'. Similarly, KL argued: 'If you exclusively make a community that most people pay into and which more or less ensures that people are not dying in the streets or help the sick and handicapped, then people would not support it. People want something back, it is only natural'. The respondent FB outright rejected the idea of a more targeted welfare state: '(…) it is not either-or. An area like healthcare the reason it is fine to finance commonly is because it can affect anyone, like unemployment, here it makes no sense [to target the welfare]'.

Combined, I would argue that this adds up to a set of attitudes that can best be described as ambivalent. On the one hand, the respondent seems to support the principle of targeting, while also underlining the positives of universalism within a range of welfare tasks.

This result is very close to what Williamson and Skocpol (2012) found in their study: 'Tea Partiers favour generous social benefits for Americans who "earn" them; yet in era of rising federal deficits, they are very concerned about being stuck with the tax tab for "unearned" entitlements handed out to unworthy people' (p. 56). This ambivalent relationship to the welfare state, and the constant search for deserving and undeserving groups, is perhaps the product of a welfare-state critical ideology which has been fostered in the age of massive governments. At least in the third criterion on the attitudes towards selective versus universal principles, I again find the neo-liberals stretched between two positions, which adds up to the general ambivalence.

DISCUSSION

In this article, I put forward the claim that the neo-liberal ideology in the Nordic countries has adapted to the Nordic welfare model. This claim is based in morphological theory on how ideologies will adapt to a given context and thus form a distinct form of the ideology. In order to study this, I focused on a central part of the ideology, what the role of government should be, and whether this has adapted to the context, which in this case is the Nordic welfare model.

This was studied by focusing on the Danish political party Liberal Alliance, which is the newest iteration of a neo-liberal party in a Nordic country. Following the morphological approach, I tracked the attitudes of voters of the party and 'grassroots' members towards the role of government and the welfare state. In order to describe whether it is the case that the Nordic welfare model has affected their attitudes towards the welfare state, three criteria were outlined based on the characteristics of the welfare model. If the neo-liberals of the party generally support a role for the welfare state, a role in the care for elderly and children, and support the existence of universal benefits, I argued that it makes sense to speak of an adapted neo-liberalism in the Nordic countries.

A mixed-methods approach drawing on both a survey and interviews was used to investigate the three criteria. Combined, the methods showed that the neo-liberals in the party overall support a role for the government in providing welfare. The interviews further showed how the respondents made distinctions between the legitimate and the illegitimate roles for the government and the deserving and undeserving recipients. These distinctions also were present in the attitudes towards the government's role in helping the elderly and children. Here the survey showed an overall support for the policies helping these groups. The interviews, however, revealed more tempered attitudes, as the respondents preferred personal responsibility, with the state functioning as a safety net for these groups. Finally, on the question of universalism versus targeting of welfare, the attitudes revealed by the survey showed the neo-liberals to be almost as supportive of universal policies as other right-wing groups, while much harsher on non-universal policies. The interviews showed that the respondents had many reservations regarding the non-universal benefits, as these were seen to interfere with incentives. This, however, does not mean a general rejection of selective policies and targeting of welfare, as the respondents overall supported the principle of the idea. This support, however, co-existed with a strong ambivalence on whether increased targeting is possible and in all cases even desirable. Though the three criteria did not all conclusively point in this direction, I would argue that it makes sense to speak of an adapted neo-liberalism.

However, I believe that this is not a result unique to the Nordic counties and the Nordic welfare model, and in fact, following the idea of morphology, we would expect distinct versions of the ideology in all welfare regimes (as also shown by Turner 2008). This also helps provide a clue about how the regimes remain distinct in the face of ideological and increasing pressure of neo-liberalism, which has been predicted to spark a 'race to the bottom' process of the welfare states increasingly retrenching and becoming more alike (Saad Filho, Johnston 2004, Hall, Lamont 2013). The literature on the impact of welfare models often argues that the stability of the regimes is caused by lock-in effects that make welfare reforms seem politically impossible, due to high economic costs of changing paths (Pierson 2001). Béland (2010), however, argues that the lock-in effect can also be of an immaterial nature, and that the studies of welfare states have focused too much on the material lock-in effects. The finding of an adapted neo-liberalism could be one such immaterial lock-in effect.

Appendix

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for the respondents

Respondent	Sex	Income in DKR	Education	Age	Employment status
TF	Male	300.000 – 499.999	Medium higher education	28	Public sector employment
KA	Male	>149.999	Upper secondary school	33	Student and part-time public sector employment
NN	Male	>149.999	Upper secondary school	26	Student and part-time private sector employment
KL	Male	<900.000	Medium higher education	43	Self-employed
FB	Male	500.000 – 699.999	Long higher education	34	Private sector employment

Note: Based on a short survey collected after the interviews

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ARTICLE V: GUARDIANS OF THE WELFARE STATE: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT ON ATTITUDES TOWARDS RETRENCHMENT OF SOCIAL SPENDING FROM BOTH AN INDIVIDUAL AND A HOUSEHOLD PERSPECTIVE

Troels Fage Hedegaard

This article explores the impact of being employed in the public sector on attitudes to retrenchment of social spending. The idea that public employment affects attitudes towards retrenchment of public spending exists throughout the literature on welfare state development and welfare state attitudes, but the empirical evidence for this link has, however, been poor. The article shows that a link between public employment and attitudes towards public spending can be established, but only when focusing on attitudes towards retrenching public spending. The article further shows that the link between public employment and resistance against retrenchment of social spending can also be established at a household level. The results show that public employees differ most from private sector employees on the policy areas that enjoy the least support, which leads to the conclusion that the impact of public employment cannot be explained in self-interest terms alone.

INTRODUCTION

The idea that public sector employees will stand together and fight against cuts in social spending is taken almost as a given in theories on welfare state development and welfare state support (Pierson 2001, Downs 1967, Niskanen 1971, Dunleavy 1980a, 1986, Offe 1985, Flora 1989, Kitschelt 1994, Knutsen 1986, Kenworthy 2009). Subsequent studies based on this premise have, however, not produced the expected results, as the differences between public sector and private sector employees has mostly been absent (Dolan 2002, Blais, Dion 1991, Garand, Parkhurst & Seoud 1991, Svallfors 1997, Goul Andersen 1992). In this article I elaborate on the nature of this link and show that public employment does in fact create more opposition to retrenchment of social spending, by presenting two ways the link can be strengthened in empirical research. As the basis for this discussion I first will present the theoretical explanations of why public employment might

affect attitudes towards retrenchment of social spending, and following that, studies drawing on this theory.

THEORETICAL EXPECTATIONS AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The theories on why public sector employees will resist cuts in public spending come in different forms, but draw on two fundamentally different logics. Some theories argue that the resistance against cuts among public sector employees are due to the self-interest of the public employees and thus that they fight cuts for their own benefit. Other theories argue that the resistance against cuts in public spending can be attributed to a certain set of values existing among public employees. Examples of both will be presented below.

One of the earliest examples of the self-interest argumentation is found in the public choice theories on bureaucracy. Here scholars argue that bureaucrats will seek to maximise the budget as this helps further career goals, generates higher salaries and creates opportunities for 'slack' in the organisation (Downs 1967, Niskanen 1971). The early versions of the self-interest argument thus offer very clear theoretical explanations, but also an argument that is very limited in scope, as they only describe the individual bureaucrat and organisation.

For this reason the argument is more impactful when it is elevated to a societal level, as it was first in the literature on consumption cleavage. The theory was primarily championed by Dunleavy (1986, 1979, 2014, 1980b) who argues that the production of goods in the public sector tends to create support for the welfare state among those who produce and consume them. This will lead to changes in popular support for the welfare state, which will no longer rest on the traditional economic and ideological cleavage alone (that is, class voting), but also on the self-interest of those producing and consuming the public goods (for criticism see Franklin, Page 1984, Taylor-Gooby 1986). Dunleavy (1986, 1980b) argues that consumption cleavage will not undermine the class-based support for the welfare, but will in some instances run counter to it. An example of this could be the increasing number of white-collar employees in the public sector. Following class voting theory this group would tend to favour less government spending, in a trade-off for lower taxes, as they are better off than the average citizen. However, being employed in the public sector also creates vested interest in sustaining this spending and thus creates a pattern of support that potentially runs counter to the predictions of class voting theory (for empirical examples of the cleavages coexisting see Hoel, Knutsen 1989, Svallfors 1995). Dunleavy (1986), however, predicts that this will not lead to an ever-increasing push for public spending. This is because the

beneficiaries of the consumption cleavage will mainly fight to preserve the goods that they have secured before perusing additional benefits, as well as being due to the support for public intervention in the marked economy having a cyclical nature (Downs 1972).

A very similar line of argumentation can be found in the theory of the welfare clientele. This theory was first developed by Offe (1985) and Flora (1989) and has later come to play a central role in Pierson's (1994, 1996) theory of the 'new politics of the welfare state'. As the name indicates, the welfare clientele theory centres on the groups that are dependent on the welfare state – the public employees and the recipients of the social benefits and welfare services. According to Pierson (1994, 1996) the welfare clientele makes retrenchments of welfare policies politically difficult because people generally are risk adverse, which means they will focus more on the concrete losses than on the potential gains, which means they will focus more on the concrete losses higher than on the potential gains. Following this logic, the concentrated losses of the members of the welfare clientele will lead them to electorally punish any politician who attempts to retrench the welfare state far more than the general population will reward them, as the gains, in the form of marginally lower taxes, are more dispersed. This asymmetry in the reactions to proposed retrenchments is the backbone of Pierson's (1994, 1996) argument, as politicians will seek to avoid the blame associated with retrenchment, and thus will only retrench welfare policies in infrequent situations where they can avoid or pass on the blame (Weaver 1987).

The newest iteration of this argument is found in the literature on the public–private sector cleavage (Dolan 2002, Blais, Dion 1991, Garand, Parkhurst & Seoud 1991, Tepe 2012). The common thread in the studies is that there is not a focus on whether it benefits the individual public employee, but instead a general resistance of all retrenchment of social spending. An example of this is Wise and Szücs who argue that: 'Government workers are assumed to be motivated by self-interest and personal gain and to favour political parties and public policies that would preserve or expand the public sector (…)' (1996: 44). This more general theory on the behaviour of the public employees predicts that they will tend to vote more often, to favour more Left-leaning parties, and to be more opposed to cuts in public spending, compared to those employed in the private sector.

Though the self-interest argument dominates within this literature, other theories have pointed to a specific set of values existing among public employees that might lead them to oppose cutbacks. As to the source of the differences in values between public and private sector employees some theories suggest that this might be

created through the process of recruitment into the public sector (Knutsen 1986). This line of argumentation goes under the name of public service motivation and has been shown to make a link between the values of public employees or potential employees and their sector of work (for an overview of the literature and results see Pedersen 2013). Other theories argue that the differences in values between public and private sector workers are created though a socialisation process. Here the central theory is provided by Kitschelt (1994), who argues that the work in the public sector might lead to changes in values and attitudes. This is due to the fact that many public sector employees come face to face with social problems and the recipients of social benefits and services, as well as other groups of public employees. Kitschelt (1994) argues that these interactions can create egalitarian views, that support the view that public sector spending should not be cut, because they come to see the need of the individual recipients and recognise the role of other groups of public employees. Another theoretical argument in this vain is presented by Knutsen (1986, 2005), who argues for the existence of a 'public sector ideology' of defining problems as a public matters and therefore resisting cutbacks in social spending. Knutsen (2005) argues that this public sector ideology is created and reinforced partly in the educational institutions aimed at the public sector (e.g. education for social workers, nurses and care workers) and partly through the work in the public sector, as outlined by Kitschelt (1994).

There thus seems to be ample theoretical backing for the idea that public employees should be more opposed to cuts in social spending than private sector employees. The studies based on these theoretical expectations have, however, had difficulties proving the connection true. I have only found two studies that systematically show the proposed connection. The first is by Wise and Szücs (1996) and covers attitudes to welfare reforms in Sweden. This study shows that public employees are more opposed to public sector reform that would cut public spending. The second is Tepe's (2012) comparative study of 11 European countries, which found that employees in the public sector express more support for the government taking responsibility for a number of tasks. The effect in Tepe's (2012) study was, however, mostly limited to public employees in the health, education and service jobs. The other studies showed a very weak or no connection between the employment sector and spending attitudes (Dolan 2002, Blais, Dion 1991, Garand, Parkhurst & Seoud 1991, Svallfors 1997, Goul Andersen 1992).

Perhaps it was these discouraging results that led Pierson to conclude that '(…) the evidence that this political cleavage drives the politics of welfare state reform is, to be generous, extremely limited' (2001: 441). I, however, believe that the link between public employment and attitudes towards cuts in public spending can be

strengthened empirically, which I aim to do in three ways in this article. First, it is important to look at retrenchment attitudes and not spending attitudes, that is, to look at attitudes towards spending less, and not towards spending more on social policies. As outlined in the theoretical section, public employees are presumed to be risk adverse (Pierson 2001, Dunleavy 1986), which would lead them to not to push for further spending, especially in the age of 'permanent austerity' (Pierson 2002), but to seek to defend what they have. The one thing the studies that find little or no effect of public employment have in common is that they look at attitudes towards spending more, whereas I will look at resistance against spending less, that is, retrenchment. Secondly, I will examine the link between public employment and attitudes both towards the retrenchment of general social spending and retrenchment of specific areas to show whether there is a difference between policy areas, which has sometimes been neglected by other studies that have presented attitudes towards retrenchment as a summarised index. Thirdly, I will study the impact of public employment at a household level. Having a spouse or cohabitee who works in the public sector might also affect attitudes towards retrenchment, which can potentially expand or negate the impact of public employment, as will be discussed later. This idea has been proposed elsewhere (Pierson 2001), but has, as far as I can tell, never been tested anywhere.

This section sketched out the theoretical basis and the overall aim of the article. The next section outlines the hypotheses that will guide the article. The third section presents the data used in the article and how the variables are structured. The fourth section presents the results of the article, and in the fifth section implications and limitations of the results are discussed.

HYPOTHESES ON THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

Inspired by the theories outlined above, one expectation would be for simple self-interest to be one of the mechanisms driving the impact from public employment (Downs 1967, Niskanen 1971). There should thus be an effect from public employment on the area within which the individual is employed, for example nurses expressing more resistance against retrenching health-care spending. This simple self-interest version of the argument is the most straightforward application of the theory, but also very limited in scope. Further, if one accepts the predictions laid out by Pierson (2001) in the theory of the 'new politics of the welfare state' the relatively small groups working within one field are thus nowhere near the thresholds that would scare off any retrenchment-eager politician.

In addition, the theories after Downs (1967) and Niskanen (1971) also seem to sketch out some general effects from public employment. Based on the theories outlined there might be an effect from public employment on retrenchment of all types of public spending. This idea is present in both the literature on public private cleavages, as exemplified in the quote from Wise and Szücs (Wise, Szücs 1996) above, and in the literature on public sector ideology. This can be termed a 'generalization effect', where support for the welfare state is generalised from the specific area to all welfare policies. This is described in the first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Employees in the public sector will express more resistance against retrenchment of social spending than employees in the private sector.

If the generalisation effect can be found this should presumably be stronger for the jobs generating social expenditures, which are primarily the 'in kind' welfare services (Dunleavy 1986, Goul Andersen 1992). On the other hand, the effect should be weaker for social benefits paid in cash, which only preserve a few administrative jobs, if any. This I term the 'banding effect', which forms the basis of the second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: The impact of public employment on resistance against retrenchment of social spending will be stronger for welfare services than for social benefits.

Finally, I propose that the effect of public employment not only exists on an individual level, but also at a household level. The search for a 'household effect' of public employment is inspired by a debate between Esping-Andersen (1990) and Pierson (2001) on whether the public-private sectorial cleavage will be strongest or weakest in the social democratic Nordic countries. Esping-Andersen (1990) argues that the public–private sectorial cleavage should be larger in the Nordic countries, because the comparatively more comprehensive welfare states require a larger tax base, which widens the cleavage between the public and private sector. Pierson (2001), on the other hand, presents the contrary argument that the large welfare states can potentially blur the line between public and private sector and thus undermine the attitudinal cleavage between the sectors: 'If a private sector worker is married to a public sector worker, (…) then what is the likely alliance pattern?' Based on this, the third hypothesis of a household effect is outlined below:

Hypothesis 3: There is a household effect on attitudes towards retrenchment of social spending. The impact of public employment will be strongest for individuals employed in the public sector, who have a spouse or cohabitant that is employed in the public sector. Conversely, it should be weakest for individuals employed in the private sector that have a spouse or cohabitant who is employed in the private sector. In the case of households that rely both on the public and private sector, and thus are mixed-income households, they should fall in between the purely public and private households.

DATA AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE VARIABLES

The analysis will rely on two separate surveys by drawing on the 'Role of Government' module from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP 2006), and the 'Attitudes to Welfare' Survey from Denmark (SFI 2008). From these a number of similar dependent and independent variables have been constructed, as described below.

Data

I have chosen to use two surveys to study the impact of public employment as they offer different advantages and disadvantages. The fourth wave of the 'Role of Government' survey from the ISSP (2006) contains a wide range of countries and thus allows me to test the impact of public employment comparatively. It does, however, not contain a measure of the sectorial employment of the spouse or cohabitants sector of employment. Therefore I cannot test hypotheses 3 of a household effect using the comparative 'Role of Government' survey alone.

From the 'Role of Government' survey (ISSP 2006) the widest range of Western welfare states have been selected, which in all adds up to 16 countries: Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and USA. Newer welfare states from Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa were available in the ISSP survey, but have not been included since the theories centre on developed Western welfare states. The 16 selected countries represent a total of 23,324 respondents (ISSP 2006), while the 'Attitudes to Welfare' survey only covers Denmark and have 1464 respondents and a response rate of 48 per cent (SFI 2008).

The dependent variable

The resistance against retrenchment of social spending is measured at both a general social spending level and at a policy level. The general social spending level shows whether the public employees display more resistance against retrenchment of welfare spending, regardless of the policy area. The policy level measure allows me to test whether there is a difference in support between welfare services and social benefits, as outlined in hypothesis 2. There is, unfortunately, not a measure of attitudes towards retrenchment of social spending in the 'Role of Government' survey. Therefore I will use a survey item measuring attitudes to government spending for that survey, whereas for the 'Attitudes to Welfare' survey there is a measure of attitudes towards general social spending. The attitudes towards retrenchment of the policy areas are measured with very similar questions, noted under the tables, though more policy areas are available in the 'Attitudes to Welfare' survey. As I am interested in attitudes towards retrenchment the dependent variable is operationalised as a dichotomy between support for the same or a higher level of spending, versus a lower level of government spending. This dichotomous dependent variable also results in the analysis consisting of a series of binary logistic regression models.[17]

Independent variables

The group of publicly employed is defined as respondents employed in the public sector, and this group will be compared against respondents employed in the private sector. Both the 'Role of Government' survey and 'Attitudes to Welfare' survey distinguish between respondents employed in the public sector, respondents employed in publicly owned private sector companies, and respondents employed in the private sector. Since being employed in a publicly owned private company is not linked to social spending, this group has been included as private employees in

[17] The alternative to using resistance against cuts in social spending as the dependent variable is using attitudes towards government responsibility. I, however, believe that the link between public employment and welfare state persistence is best operationalised as attitudes towards social spending. Though attitudes towards government responsibility and social policy spending are highly correlated, these do not measure exactly the same, as support for government responsibility can go hand in hand with support for less spending. For example, an individual can argue that it is the government's responsibility to ensure the living standard of the unemployed, while supporting less spending on unemployment benefits, based on a feeling that the unemployment benefits are too generous. This is not just a theoretical problem as, for example, 23 per cent of the respondents who think it is the governments' responsibility to help the unemployed also support retrenching unemployment benefits (ISSP 2006, the selected countries). Similar patterns exist between the other comparable policy areas and groups.

this matter. With this use of the measure the analyses are thereby limited to the employed respondents. This assures that large parts of the recipient side of the 'welfare clientele' (e.g. the unemployed, pensioners, and students) are removed from the study and thus this is not a general 'welfare clientele' effect that the article finds, but a public employment effect.

The 'Attitudes to Welfare' survey also allows for testing the impact of the employment of the spouse or cohabiting partner. The employment sector has therefore been divided into four groups when using this data. The first is the group of respondents who are employed in the public sector, and if they have a spouse or cohabitee this person is also employed in the public sector. Next are the respondents from mixed-income households. The respondents from the mixed-income households will be divided into a group where the respondent is employed in the public sector and a group where the respondent is employed in the private sector. This subdivision is created to test whether there is an impact of having a spouse or cohabiting partner employed in the public sector while being employed in the private sector. These groups are measured up against the entirely private households, that is, where the respondent is employed in the private sector, and if they have a partner, this person is also employed in the private sector.

A number of controls have been used for both surveys. The effect of education is controlled for using a categorical measure of type of education in both surveys. In addition, the effects are also controlled for sex and age for both surveys, and for household income using a 15-point scale (though only in the 'Attitudes to Welfare' survey). These controls were chosen on the grounds that they should eliminate some of the potential differences between public and private sector employees, which could potentially account for the differences between the groups. I have chosen not to control for the effect of political ideology as this would potentially control away some of the differences in values the theories predict should be present.

THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

The narrowest conceptualisation of self-interest, where public employees support their own policy area, can only be studied somewhat anecdotally, by looking into the ISCO-88 coding of professions in the 'Role of Government' survey. Here I do find what can be argued to be a strong self-interest effect, as, for instance, only 11 of the 779 respondents involved in teaching in primary or secondary schools

supported less spending on education. Similarly for the doctors and nurses, only 5 of the 265 answered that less should be spent on health care (among public employees in the select countries). These are not exhaustive listings of the public employees working within these fields, but this does demonstrate an overwhelming support, which suggests that there might be a self-interest mechanism. However, as also discussed above, these are very limited effects in terms of scope. Therefore it is more interesting to see whether I can find the theorised generalisation effects (hypotheses 1) and banding effects (hypotheses 2).

The first part of looking for the effects outlined above will rely on the ISSP 'Role of Government' survey to comparatively examine the attitudes towards retrenchment of welfare policies among the public sector and private sector workers. This is achieved by comparing the attitudes towards cuts in overall government spending, as well as support for retrenching spending on two welfare services (health care and education) and two social benefits (public pensions and unemployment benefits). For each spending measure a fixed effect logistic regression model has been constructed to test the impact of being employed in the public or private sector on attitudes towards spending more or the same versus spending less. The models are controlled for the effect of sex, age, and type of education, as described above, and the effect of the country of the respondents, using the fixed effects model. Table 1 shows a model consisting of all the select countries pooled together, but separate models for each of the 16 countries have also been run (Table 3 in Appendix). The results are presented as the chance (in odds ratio) of supporting retrenchment, with the levels of significance noted with each.

Table 1: Fixed effects binary logistic regression model showing the chance of answering that more or the same should be spent (0) against answering less should be spent (1) on the government, health care, education, pensions, or unemployment benefits. The models test for the impact of employment sector and control for the effect of sex, age, education and country. The results are presented as odds ratio with levels of significance noted.

	Government spending	**Health care**	**Education**	**State pension**	**Unemployment benefits**
Sector of employment					
Public	0.653***	0.743*	0.847 NS	0.675**	0.739***
Private	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
Sex					
Male	0.971NS	1.486***	1.676***	2.081***	1.389***
Female	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
Years old					
Age	1.043***	1.067*	1.076*	1.081**	0.999 NS
Age^2	1.000**	0.999*	0.999 (*)	0.999*	1.000 NS
Education					
No formal	1.237(*)	0.193**	0.323*	0.350**	1.288 NS
Lowest formal	1.715***	0.484***	0.616*	0.349***	0.561***
Above lowest	1.232***	0.874NS	0.807(*)	0.387***	0.526***
Higher secondary	1.106(*)	0.474***	0.420***	0.400***	0.653***
Above higher secondary	0.944NS	0.556***	0.504***	0.613***	1.533**
University	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
N (total)	12.663	12.975	12.932	12.839	12.772

Notes: Based on the ISSP (2006) 'Role of Government' survey. Government spending: 'Here are some things the government might do for the economy. (…) Cuts in government spending', welfare policies: 'Please show whether you would like to see more or less government spending in each area'.

Ref = reference category, NS = not significant, (*) p > 0.1, * p > 0.05, ** = p > 0.01, *** = p > 0.01.

The results of Table 1 demonstrate that for four of the five areas there is an effect of being publicly employed on attitudes towards spending the same or more.[18] This effect is the strongest for general social spending, which from a rational choice

[18] Using the ISSP 'Role of Government' survey I can also test the impact of public employment on attitudes towards which groups the government should take responsibility for, which was discussed as an alternative dependent variable. Using this measure I can construct some analogues to the spending measures. Here I find that the effects are weaker, but significant, for the living standards of the sick (health care) and the unemployed (unemployment benefits), while there is no effect on attitudes towards the living standards of the elderly (pensions) and students (education). This shows that attitudes to responsibility and spending measures are not entirely the same and is why I believe that in this case, the latter is a better measure.

standpoint makes sense, since retrenchments in this category could potentially hit all public employees, whereas retrenchments in other categories are more 'targeted'.

On the policy level measures there are also significant effects for health care, state pension and unemployment benefits. The deviation from this pattern is on attitudes to retrenching education, where the difference between the public and privately employed is not significant. This partially supports hypothesis 1, which suggests a generalisation effect, where public employees support social spending regardless of the area. There is, however, no support for hypothesis 2 of a banding effect, where public employees support the job-generating social services. In fact, finding the strongest effect among the policies on unemployment benefits is counter-intuitive in a self-interest argumentation, as public employees are perceived as less prone to unemployment in many Western countries (Clark, Postel-Vinay 2009).

The reason for this somewhat surprising pattern is that the difference between the public and private in terms of support for retrenchment is smallest for education (1.9 per cent support for retrenchment among publicly employed and 2.1 per cent among privately employed). Similarly the differences are not large on health care (public and private employees respectively 2.4 and 3.0) and education (2.7 and 4.1), which can make the differences between publicly and privately employed harder to detect. On the other hand, the differences are much larger for unemployment benefits (22.8 and 28.5) and overall government spending (50.8 and 60.9), which account for the stronger effects of public employment.

On the background variables there is a strong effect of the gender of the respondent on policy level measures, where men are more likely than women to support retrenchment, and of age, where increased age leads to more support for retrenchment. Noticeably, there are also strong effects from education, which is the best proxy for classic variables in the study. This shows how the effects of different cleavages can coexist.

The results of the first part of the analysis thus suggest that the publicly employed tend to resist all types of cuts in social spending, but that only stands out compared to the privately employed when focusing on less popular areas. This can be termed a 'guardian effect', as the publicly employed provide popular support for the areas of the welfare state most prone to retrenchment. Noticeably, when I run similar models, but with a dependent variable that measures attitudes towards spending more versus spending less or the same there is only an effect for general public spending, but not for the other four measures (not shown). This further supports the interpretation of public employees stepping in as guardians against retrenchment, but not as drivers of social spending.

Running the same models as in Table 1 for each country at a time, I find that the impact of public employment is strongest in the Nordic countries (Table 3 in the Appendix). These are at the same time the countries with the highest shares of public employees of the total population, according to the UN statistics (2012), with around one-third of the workforce being publicly employed. This fits into the discussion between Esping-Andersen (1990) and Pierson (2001) described above on whether the public–private sectorial cleavage is widened or simply disappears in the Nordic countries, when viewing it from a household perspective. Using the data and variables outlined above it is possible to test Pierson's (2001) predictions in a Nordic country.

HOUSEHOLD EFFECTS OF PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

The 'Attitudes to Welfare' survey, and the measure of household employment constructed above, allows me to describe how the workforce is composed in Denmark, when viewing it from a household perspective. Here the descriptive statistics show that 20 per cent of the respondents are in a public household, where if the person has a spouse or cohabitant this person is also employed in the public sector, 34 per cent live in mixed-income households, and 46 per cent are living in private households. In accordance with Pierson's (2001) predictions, I do find a strong gender divide in the sectorial employment. In the public income households 65 per cent of respondents are female. In the mixed-income families with a public respondent 85 per-cent are female; conversely, of the privately employed respondents in mixed-income families 83 per cent are male. In the private households there is a slight majority of 54 per cent males. This shows how public employment might not only create a cleavage, but also can potentially close it, by blurring the lines.

I will test for the effect of the household employment on attitudes towards retrenchment of social spending with a series of binary logistic regressions. The impact of public employment, as outlined in four groups above, is tested for both overall social spending and for a number of welfare services and social benefits. The support for overall social spending is based on a question of whether social reforms should be maintained at the current level or whether people should be less reliant on the state, while the support for individual policies are measured as support for either spending more or the same versus spending less. The models are controlled for sex, age, type of education, and household income. Only the results of the public employment are displayed below to maintain clarity, but the full effects of controls are displayed in Table 4 in the Appendix. The results of the models are presented in two groups, in accordance with hypothesis 2. The top row thus covers attitudes towards overall spending and social services, while the bottom row covers attitudes towards social benefits.

Table 2: Binary logistic regression models showing the chance of answering that more or the same should be spent (0) against answering less should be spent (1) on social policies, health care, education, pensions, and unemployment benefits. The models test for the impact of household employment. The regression models are controlled for sex, age, education and household income. The results are presented as odds ratio with levels of significance noted.

	Social spending	**Health care**	**Education**	**Childcare**	**Home help**
Household employment					
Public	0.506 **	NA	NA	0.717 NS	0.529 NS
Mixed – public respondent	0.658 (*)	0.718 NS	1.024 NS	0.597 NS	0.545 NS
Mixed – private respondent	0.854 NS	0.906 NS	0.218 NS	NA	NA
Private	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
	Unemployment benefits	**Social assistance**	**State pension**	**Incapacity benefit**	**Education grant**
Household employment					
Public	0.452 **	0.751 *	0.632 NS	0.505 *	0.662 NS
Mixed – public respondent	0.497 *	0.869 (*)	0.317 NS	0.140 (*)	0.889 NS
Mixed – private respondent	0.606 (*)	0.708 (*)	0.655 NS	0.441 (*)	0.756 NS
Private	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref

Notes: Based on the 'Attitudes to Welfare Survey' (SFI 2008). Social spending: 'Do you agree with A or B? A says: "The social reforms, that have been implemented in our country, should be upheld in at least the same scale as now." B says: "One has gone too far with the social reforms in this country. People should do more without the social insurance and contributions from society". Welfare policies 'Now we would like to ask about your opinion about public expenses in a number of areas […]'.

Ref = reference category, NS = not significant, NA = not available, due to too few respondents, (*) p > 0.1, * p > 0.05, ** = p > 0.01, *** = p > 0.01.

Table 2 shows that there is an effect from the type of household employment for some welfare policies, but not for all. On the overall level of social spending there is a strong effect from being in public households, as predicted by the hypothesis. The impact of being in a mixed-income household is, however, more varied with a weak effect from those in a mixed household that are publicly employed, but no effect for those privately employed. Looking at the welfare services, in the top row, I find no significant effects for being in either a public or mixed-income household. Similar to the results for the 'Role of Government' survey presented abov,e this again is linked to the overwhelming support for spending on these welfare policies, which simply suppresses any potential differences (see Table 5 in Appendix for support for the policy areas divided by employment sector). This overwhelming support is probably due to these services being administrated as universal benefits,

which tends to gather massive public support and thus suppress any potential differences (Hedegaard 2014, Rothstein 1998). On attitudes towards retrenching the welfare benefits there are, however, greater differences which also make it easier to detect any differences based on the household status. These effects are present when examining the three least popular policies: social assistance, unemployment benefits, and incapacity benefits. Here I again find that the public household are most distinct from the private households, but there are also some effects from the mixed-income households. When I run the same models at an individual level, as in Table 1, I find overall similar effects (not shown). They are, however, stronger at the individual level, which might suggest that the household effects might indeed blur some of the lines, as suggested by Pierson (2001), though the effect does not entirely disappear.

IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

This article examined the link between public employment and resistance against retrenchment of social spending. The idea that public employees will resist cutbacks in public spending is a mainstay within a wide range of theories of welfare state attitudes and welfare state development. The empirical results have, however, not been convincing of the fact that this political cleavage exists, which was the inspiration for this article.

The results of the article show that a link between public employment and attitudes towards retrenchment of welfare policies can be established. This effect is, however, limited to attitudes towards retrenchment of social spending, which suggests that this is primarily an explanation of social spending persistence, and not a driver of social spending. The impact of public employment did not differ between welfare services and benefits in the expected manner of more resistance against cuts in welfare services than for social benefits. Instead, the cleavage was the most distinct for policies that were the least popular and thus the most at risk for retrenchment, which is termed a ‘guardian effect’. Finally, the article shows that this guardian effect of public employment can be extended to mixed-income families, that is, families where one member of the household is employed in the public sector. This effect is present, even if that person is employed in the private sector.

The results of the article thus seem to confirm the overall idea of the literature within the field, that public employees do oppose retrenchment of social spending,

more than private sector employees. The findings do, however, question whether self-interest is the main driver behind this effect, as the results in several instances did not fit a self-interest pattern. Therefore the literature might have to lean more heavily on the values-based explanations in order to explain the phenomenon.

APPENDIX

Table 3: Country level binary logistic regression models showing the chance of answering that more or the same should be spend (0) against answering less should be spent (1) on the government, health care, education, pensions, and unemployment benefits. The models show the impact of being employed in the public sector versus being employed in the private sector (reference category). The effects are controlled for sex, age, and education (not shown).

	Government	Health care	Education	Pension	UB
Nordic					
Denmark	0.500***	0.863 NS	0.838 NS	0.282*	0.507**
Finland	0.450***	0.321 NS	0.325*	0.888 NS	0.640(*)
Norway	0.414***	NA	1.254 NS	0.804 NS	0.826 NS
Sweden	0.734*	0.140(*)	1.034 NS	0.527 NS	0.557**
Central and Southern European					
France	0.500**	0.539*	0.427*	0.637 NS	0.763(*)
Germany	0.848 NS	0.977 NS	0.372 NS	0.432*	0.962 NS
Netherlands	0.457**	0.759 NS	NA	0.926 NS	0.717 NS
Portugal	0.669 NS	1.094 NS	NA	NA	0.347 NS
Spain	0.899 NS	0.938 NS	0.704 NS	NA	1.059 NS
Switzerland	1.052 NS	0.825 NS	1.565 NS	0.366 NS	0.590 (*)
Anglo-Saxon					
Australia	0.705**	NA	NA	0.944 NS	0.838 NS
Canada	0.559**	1.483 NS	0.328 NS	0.567 NS	0.943 NS
Ireland	0.557*	NA	NA	NA	0.443*
New Zealand	0.750 NS	0.653 NS	1.679 NS	0.735 NS	0.473***
GB	0.943 NS	0.231 NS	NA	0.826 NS	1.019 NS
USA	0.718(*)	0.880 NS	1.359 NS	0.689 NS	1.038 NS

Notes: Based on the ISSP (2006) 'Role of Government' survey. Government spending: 'Here are some things the government might do for the economy. (…) Cuts in government spending', welfare policies: 'Please show whether you would like to see more or less government spending in each area'. N (min) = Australia (1527), Canada (584) Denmark (825), Finland (650), France (928), Germany (803), Ireland (564), Netherlands (597), New Zealand (824), Norway (795), Portugal (1079), Spain (1227), Sweden (768), Switzerland (632), United Kingdom (525), USA (993).

Ref = reference category, NS = not significant, NA = not available, due to too few respondents, (*) $p > 0.1$, * $p > 0.05$, ** = $p > 0.01$, *** = $p > 0.01$.

Table 4: Full version of binary logistic regression models showing the chance of answering that more or the same should be spent (0) against answering less should be spent (1) on social policies, health care, education, pensions, and unemployment benefits. Part 1.

	Social spending	**Health care**	**Education**	**Child care**	**Home help**
Household employment					
Public	0.506 **	NA	NA	0.717 NS	0.529 NS
Mixed – public respondent	0.658 (*)	0.718 NS	1.024 NS	0.597 NS	0.545 NS
Mixed – private respondent	0.854 NS	0.906 NS	0.218 NS	NA	NA
Private	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
Sex					
Male	0.713 NS	0.727 NS	0.797 NS	1.121 NS	0.343 NS
Female	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
Age					
Age	0.881 **	0.701 **	0.951 NS	1.141 NS	1.556 NS
Age^2	1.001 *	1.004 **	1.001	0.999 NS	0.994 NS
Education					
No formal	0.832 NS	1,187 NS	2.352 NS	0.220 NS	NA
Vocational	0.603 NS	0.115 (*)	0.901 NS	0.636 NS	0.154 *
Short higher education	0.317 NS	1,253 NS	0.675 NS	0.673 NS	0.799 NS
Medium higher education	0.673 NS	0.512 NS	0.274 NS	0.203 NS	NA
Long higher education	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
Household income (15 categories)	0.981**	0.067 NS	1.096 NS	0.917 NS	0.993 NS
N (total)	767	811	805	814	801
Nagelkerke R^2	0.091	0.191	0.128	0.086	0.279

Notes: Based on the 'Attitudes to Welfare Survey' (SFI 2008). Ref = reference category, NS = not significant, NA = not available, due to too few respondents, (*) $p > 0.1$, * $p > 0.05$, ** = $p > 0.01$, *** = $p > 0.01$.

Table 4: Full version of binary logistic regression models showing the chance of answering that more or the same should be spent (0) against answering less should be spent (1) on social policies, health care, education, pensions, and unemployment benefits. Part 2.

	Unemployment benefits	**Social assistance**	**State pension**	**Incapacity benefit**	**Education grant**
Household employment					
Public	0.452 **	0.751 *	0.632 NS	0.505 *	0.662 NS
Mixed – public respondent	0.497 *	0.869 (*)	0.317 NS	0.140 (*)	0.889 NS
Mixed – private respondent	0.606 (*)	0.708 (*)	0.655 NS	0.441 (*)	0.756 NS
Private	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
Sex					
Male	0.832 NS	0.749 *	0.527 NS	0.394 ***	0.641 NS
Female	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
Age					
Age	0.964 ***	0.849 *	0.882 NS	0.766 ***	1.069 NS
Age^2	1.059 ***	1.001(*)	1.001 NS	1.003 ***	0.999 NS
Education					
No formal	0.435 *	0.586 NS	0.495 NS	0.361**	0.591 NS
Vocational	0.724 NS	1.150 NS	0.042 **	0.221 ***	1.274 NS
Short higher education	0.522 (*)	1.199 NS	0.493 NS	0.588 NS	0.542 NS
Medium higher education	0.640 (*)	0.650 NS	0.540 NS	0.300 ***	0.481 NS
Long higher education	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
Household income					
(15 categories)	1.165 ***	1.114 **	1.145 **	1.146 ***	1.182 *
N (total)	800	789	798	782	792
Nagelkerke R^2	0.135	0.088	0.188	0.201	0.177

Notes: Based on the 'Attitudes to Welfare Survey' (SFI 2008). Ref = reference category, NS = not significant, NA = not available, due to too few respondents, (*) p > 0.1, * p > 0.05, ** = p > 0.01, *** = p > 0.01.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics of categorical variables showing responses in each category

Retrenchment attitudes	**Social spending**	**Health care**	**Education**	**Childcare**	**Home help**
More or the same	689	846	858	823	845
Less	135	11	12	59	13
Spending attitudes	Unemployment benefits	Social assistance	State pension	Incapacity benefit	Education grant
More or the same	701	654	830	750	814
Less	164	199	33	95	42
Household employment	Public	Mixed – public respondent	Mixed – private respondent	Private	
	173	138	161	414	
Sex	Male	Female			
	449	437			
Education	No formal	Vocational	Short higher education	Medium higher education	Long higher education
	87	259	93	249	155

Notes: Based on the 'Attitudes to Welfare Survey' (SFI 2008).

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