

# Legitimacy of the welfare state

Reflections on solidarity and re-distributive justice

Redistribution

Solidarity

Justice

Discussion: future challenges?

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## **WELFARE STATE**

**... state organised redistribution of life chances**

**REDISTRIBUTION** assumes two actions

**... to contribute: a matter of solidarity**

**... to re-allocate: a matter of justice**

## **SOLIDARITY from a SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

### **... individuals contributing to a collectivity**

(Durkheim, Weber, Parsons, Hechter, Mayhew)

## **MOTIVES for CONTRIBUTION to COMMON GOOD**

- Empathy
- Moral duty
- (Enlightened) self-interest
- Accepted authority

## Why pay social security contributions?

% (strongly) agree

	Netherlands 1995	Belgium 2001	Netherlands 2006
<b>Paying contributions is obligatory, but I also do it because ...</b>			
<i>Interest</i> ...it secures me of a benefit when I am in need myself	82	83	85
<i>Moral principle</i> ...it is a moral duty towards the less well off in society	64	58	65
<i>Affection</i> ...I personally feel pity for claimants	42	45	38

## Using social security benefits (% , 1995, NL)

(excl. pensions)

	UB	DB	SP	SA	1 or more
- respondent now (excl. 65+)	3	5	2	3	12
- other household member now	6	9	3	2	16
- friend now	38	46	29	36	71
- respondent in past	23	8	39	9	55
- high perceived future chance respondent (excl. 65+)	40	45	59	34	59
- respondent: now, in past, in future					79
- dito, plus household member, friend now					92

UB = Unemployment Benefit

DB = Disability Benefit

SP = Sick Pay

SA = Social Assistance

## REDISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

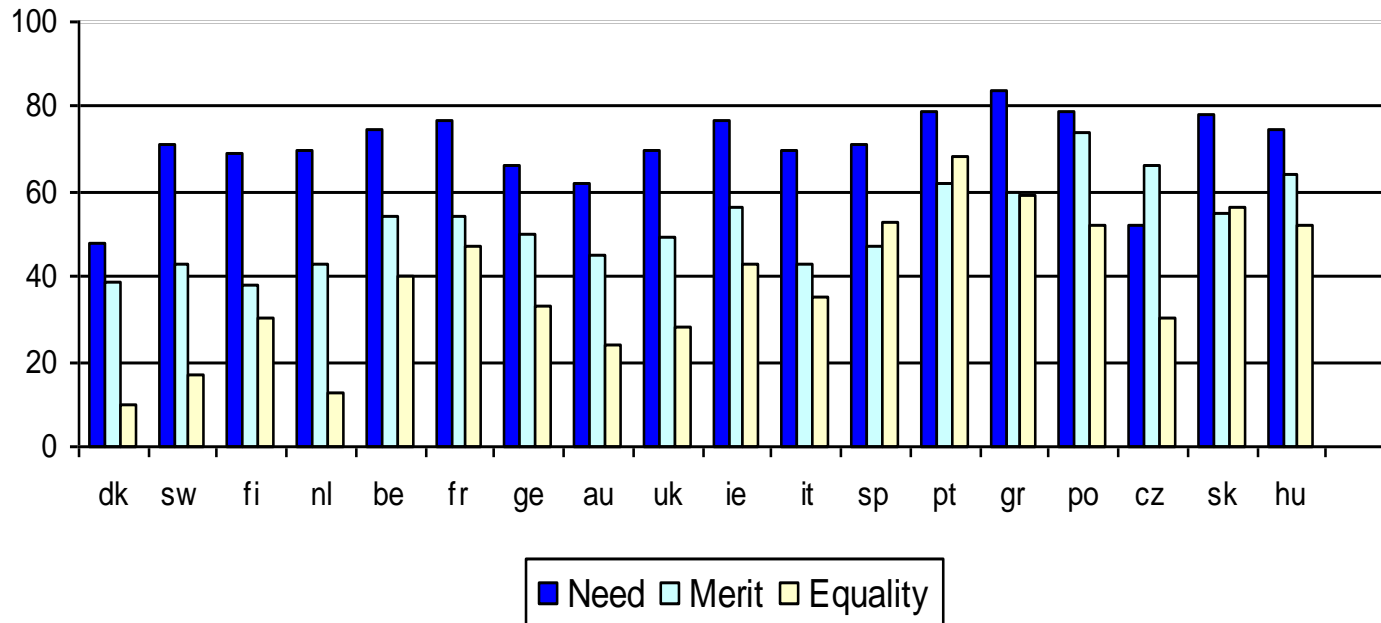
### *Principles*

- merit/desert/equity
- equality
- need

### *Deservingness images*

- degree of need
- responsibility (control)
- identity
- attitude
- reciprocity

### Opinions on importance of principles of re-distributive justice (% 'very important')



Source: EVS 1999/2000

*In order to be considered "just", what should a society provide?*

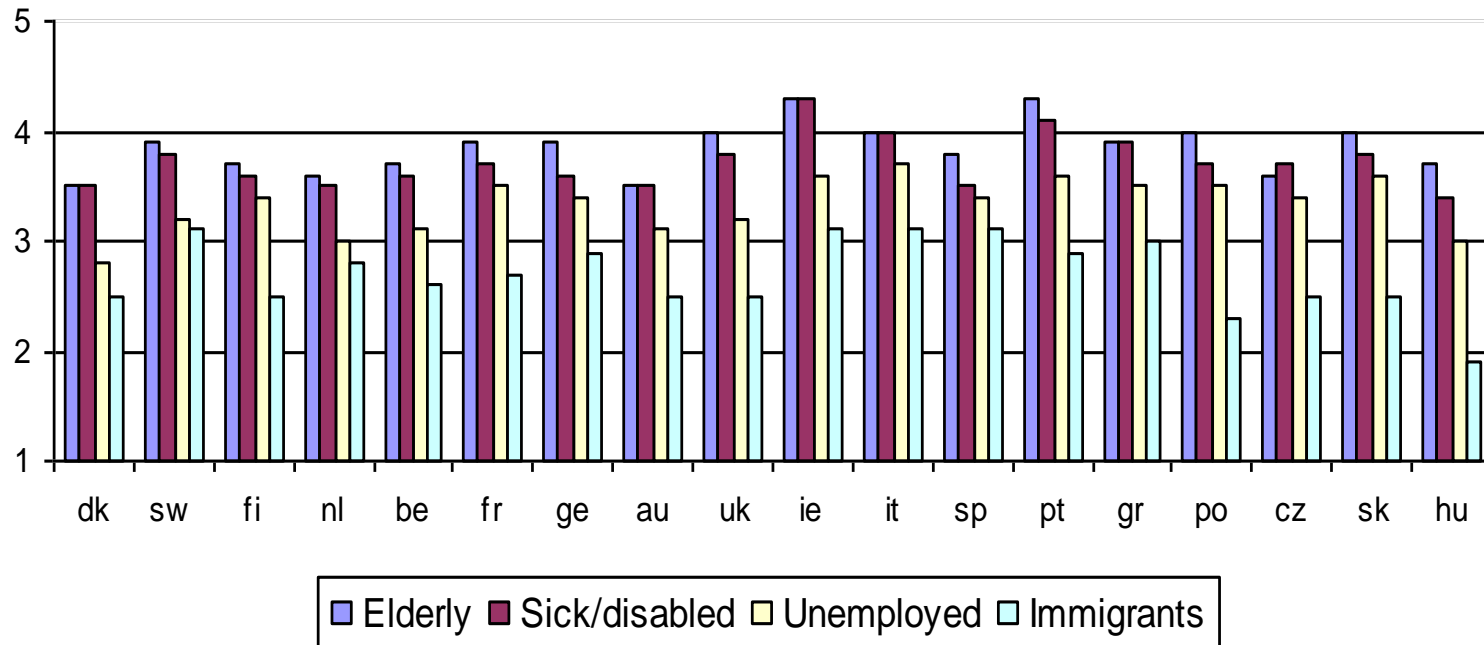
*(1 means very important; 5 means not important at all. )*

- 1. Guaranteeing that basic needs are met for all, in terms of food, housing, cloths, education, health*
- 2. Recognizing people on their merits*
- 3. Eliminating big inequalities in income between citizens*

## Deservingness rankorder predictions

	Elderly	Sick/disabled	Unemployed	Immigrants
<b>Need</b>	++	++	+/-	+
<b>Responsibility</b>	++	++	+/-	+/-
<b>Identity</b>	++	+	+	-
<b>Attitude</b>	++	+/-	+/-	+/-
<b>Reciprocity</b>	++	+	+/-	-

### Deservingness rank order by country (national averages)



Source: EVS 1999/2000

'To what extent do you feel concerned about the living conditions of:

1. elderly people in your country
2. unemployed people in your country
3. immigrants in your country
4. sick and disabled people in your country'

(1=not at all, 2= not so much, 3= to a certain extent, 4=much, 5=very much)

## DISCUSSION

### **Globalisation and residualisation of welfare?**

A permanent discussion on the deservingness of the poorest, with a gradual deterioration of the social protection for the weakest?

### **Emphasis on personal responsibility**

Increased victim blaming?

Reluctance to pay for the poor through vertical solidaristic redistribution?

Demand for equivalence instead of horizontal solidaristic redistribution?

### **Increasing cultural diversity**

Deservingness of immigrants? Dualisation of welfare?

Erosion of welfare-based willingness to contribute?

## References

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