

*Converging Cultures? Attitudes toward Income Redistribution across Eastern and Western
European Union States*

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INTRODUCTION

Similarities in European Union (EU) citizens' norms and values have been essential in facilitating political and economic integration among EU member states. However, despite some similarities in citizens' beliefs, scholars have debated the extent to which a common "European" political culture exists. In particular, several have argued that Eastern Europeans hold different attitudes toward the government's role in providing social protection (Guillaud 2010; Corneo & Gruner 2002; Mason 1995; Arts et al 1995). They argue that Eastern Europeans demand more from the welfare state than Western Europeans because of their ideological socialization under communism. By contrast, others have argued that the EU accession process socialized Eastern Europe into common Western norms and values (Schimmelfenning 2000, 2005; Checkel 2005). Consequently, Eastern Europeans and Western Europeans may no longer hold significantly different attitudes toward the welfare state.

Using data from the International Social Survey Project's (ISSP) 1999 and 2009 Social Inequality surveys, I examine whether Eastern and Western Europeans' attitudes toward income redistribution have converged over time. Do significant differences in Eastern and Western EU citizens' attitudes toward income redistribution remain even after Eastern Europe's accession to the EU? Do the same individual-level and contextual factors shape support for income redistribution in both the East and the West? More specifically, I examine whether individuals' socio-demographic characteristics and beliefs about social mobility similarly affect Eastern and Western Europeans' support for income redistribution. I also examine how contextual factors such as the actual level of inequality in a country, government consumption, and unemployment affect individuals' support.

Comparing Eastern and Western Europeans' attitudes toward income redistribution offers some important insights to whether Eastern Europeans have been socialized into Western norms of government welfare responsibility. Alderson (2001, 417) defines state socialization as "the process by which states internalize norms originating elsewhere in the international system," and identifies individual belief change as a key aspect of state socialization. If Eastern Europeans' attitudes toward income redistribution have converged with those of Western Europeans after EU accession, then EU accession may have been a process that motivated Eastern Europeans to internalize Western market oriented values. Analyzing Eastern and Western Europeans' attitudes toward redistribution can consequently provide a deeper understanding of whether and how regional organizations transmit norms that shape domestic political culture.

My study begins with a survey of past research on various factors that affect attitudes toward income redistribution and social welfare policies. First, I review the literature on micro-level factors that may shape individuals' attitudes toward income redistribution. I find that most analyses of attitudes toward the welfare state identify both self-interest and ideology as individual-level predictors of people's attitudes. I then examine what country-level contextual factors shape citizens' attitudes. In particular, I examine how socialization into the EU may have changed Eastern Europeans' attitudes toward the welfare state. Drawing on past research, I present my hypotheses on the ways that both country-level contextual factors and individual characteristics and beliefs might affect support for redistribution. Then, I proceed with a description of my methodology for testing my hypotheses and subsequently present my results. I

find that there has indeed been a convergence between Eastern and Western Europeans' attitudes toward redistribution. However, this convergence is largely due to an increase in support for redistribution among Western Europeans. Eastern Europeans' support for redistribution remained remarkably stable from 1999 to 2009. I conclude with a summary of my findings and some brief remarks about the ways Eastern Europeans' socialization under communism continues to affect political culture even after its accession to the EU.

MICRO-LEVEL FACTORS SHAPING ATTITUDES TOWARD REDISTRIBUTION

Much of the past research on attitudes toward income redistribution has explored the ways that socio-demographic characteristics shape people's self-interest in welfare state policies. Research suggests that people are typically more supportive of income redistribution if they come from groups who are likely to benefit from more government social protection (Hasenfeld & Rafferty 1989; Svalfors 1997; Luo 1998). Hasenfeld and Rafferty's (1989) study of social welfare attitudes in the United States shows that support for welfare assistance in the United States is greatest among young adults and low income people who are more likely to benefit from unemployment, child care, and other public benefits. Other studies similarly show that employed people and those with high incomes have particularly negative attitudes toward the welfare state because they are unlikely to benefit from it directly (Guillaud 2010; Jaeger 2006; Moene & Wallerstein 2001). Studies also show that educated people have less support for redistribution, in part because education is an indicator of higher class status (Jaegger 2006; Linos & West 2003; Andress & Hein 2001).

On the other hand, some researchers doubt that employment and class factors play a significant role in shaping attitudes (Fong 2000; Papadakis & Bean 1993; Papadakis 1993). Lipsmeyer and Nordstrom (2003) suggest that employment and class factors may have different effects on attitudes toward social welfare assistance in both Eastern and Western Europe. They show that employment status is a significant predictor of attitudes toward government welfare spending in Western Europe, but employment is not significantly related to Eastern Europeans' preferences. Fong (2000) also shows that even the rich have considerable support for certain redistributive benefits and argues that that financial self-interest is an insufficient explanation for variations in redistribution attitudes.

In addition to examining the ways that class and employment affect social welfare attitudes, several scholars have explored the ways that other socio-economic group identities affect people's support for social welfare assistance. Blekesaune and Quadagno (2003) find that women are more likely than men to favor expansive welfare state arrangements and suggest that women's higher level of support may stem from historical differences in gendered work roles. Because women have traditionally performed most of the unpaid work caring for the sick or elderly, women are likely to be the primary beneficiaries of the state paying them to perform these tasks. Women are also more likely than men to become disabled and need long term care in their old age (Romoren & Bleksaune 2003) and are more likely to benefit from assistance to widows or single-parents (Hernes 1984; Sainsbury 1996; Blekesaune and Quadagno 2003). Thus, because women experience more benefits from the welfare state than men, they may have more self-interest in supporting income redistribution.

Hypothesis 1: Drawing on previous research that points to a relationship between support for government welfare assistance and socioeconomic class, education, gender, and employment status, I hypothesize that people of lower socioeconomic classes, without a college education, women, and the unemployed are likely to show particularly high levels of support for income redistribution. I suspect that these socio-demographic factors have had similar effects on attitudes toward redistribution in both Eastern and Western Europe.

Although previous research sometimes identifies age as a socio-demographic group factor that may shape support for social welfare policies (Lipsmeyer 2003; Hansfeld & Rafferty 1989; Jaegger 2006), I do not suspect that age will significantly affect people's self-interest in welfare policies. Older people may benefit from pensions and other forms of social protections targeted to the elderly, yet they also may have more wealth accumulated than younger people. Their attitudes toward redistribution may also be more a function of their past socialization. Consequently, I hypothesize that older cohorts show more support for redistribution in Eastern Europe because of their ideological socialization under communism. Arts et al. (1995) argue that under communism, Eastern Europeans developed different perceptions of justice that were routed in Marxist ideological perceptions. Older Eastern Europeans' experience under communism may therefore make them more likely than younger Eastern Europeans to support income redistribution.

Hypothesis 2: I suspect that age will be a significant predictor of Eastern Europeans' support for redistribution, but age will not be a significant predictor of Western Europeans' support.

In addition to examining how socio-demographic groups shape individuals' support for social welfare policies, several studies have examined how ideology and belief systems affect welfare preferences (Fong 2000; Luo 1998; Groskind 1994; Papadakis & Bean 1993; Jaeggens 2006; Linos & West 2003; Lipsmeyer & Nordstrom 2003). In fact, Papadakis (1993) argues that there is little relationship between socioeconomic class and support for the welfare state. He finds that party identification and policy orientations can much better account for variations in people's support for welfare policies. In their analysis of Americans' attitudes toward social welfare policy, Feldman & Zaller (1992) also show that people readily use values and principles when discussing their preferences.

Studies that examine ideology's effect on social welfare attitudes often identify people's belief about social mobility as a key predictor of support for income redistribution (Linos & West 2003; Guillaud 2010; Groskind 1994; Luo 1998). For example, Luo (1998) finds that attitudes toward intergenerational mobility significantly affect attitudes toward government's responsibility in reducing income inequality. Those who believe that exogenous factors (unrelated to individual work-ethnic) are likely to cause inequality are also likely to have lower support for social welfare policies. Linos and West (2003) similarly find that beliefs about why people get ahead significantly affect attitudes toward social welfare policies in Australia and the United States. However, their study also suggests that contextual factors may play a key role in properly specifying social mobility beliefs' effect on welfare preferences. In particular, they find that social mobility values have an insignificant effect on Germans' and Norwegians' support for welfare policies.

Hypothesis 3: I hypothesize that in both Eastern and Western Europe, those who believe that social mobility is related to exogenous factors will have stronger support for redistribution than those who believe social mobility is related to hard-work and other individual characteristics.

MACRO-LEVEL FACTORS SHAPING ATTITUDES TOWARD REDISTRIBUTION

Previous research on attitudes toward the welfare state suggests that country-level contextual factors may also play a role in shaping individuals' support for income redistribution. In particular, many scholars have drawn on Epsing-Andersen's (1990) categorization of capitalist welfare regimes into liberal, conservative, and social democratic to explore welfare regime's effect on attitudes (Andre & Hein 2001; Dallinger 2010; Svalfors 1997; Papadakis & Bean 1993). Their works have generated considerable debate on the extent to which welfare regime type affects individuals' attitudes. Svalfors (1997), for example, finds that each of Epsing-Anderson's welfare regime types and an additional "post-socialist" regime has a distinct effect on support for welfare-state intervention. Among Western capitalist countries, support for welfare state intervention is highest among social democratic regimes and lowest among liberal regimes. By contrast, Dallinger (2010) finds that support for income redistribution does not always follow regime type because there is considerable variation between countries of the same regime type. Countries of different regime types also appear to have similar levels of support. However, like Svalfors (1997), she also finds that post-socialist countries have a distinctly high level of support for income redistribution.

Although several researchers have found a distinct post-socialist regime effect on welfare state attitudes (Dallinger 2010; Andre & Hein 2001; Svalfors 1997; Arts et al 1995), their works have largely relied on data prior to the East's EU accession. The EU accession process leveraged profound structural changes in Eastern Europe (Vachudova 2005; Pridham 1999; Kopstein & Reilley 2000; Schimmelfennig & Scholtz 2008, 2010) and may have caused substantial changes in attitudes as well. Schimmelfennig (2000, 2005), for example, suggests that EU accession provided incentives for Eastern states to adopt Western norms and thereby socialized them into Western values systems. Although his work largely focuses on the Eastern states' socialization into Western democratic norms, it is possible that the EU accession process also socialized Eastern European individuals into Western market values systems. EU accession required Eastern countries to transition to market economies and to adhere to the EU's requirements for budget austerity. If the accession process indeed socialized the East into Western norms, then it may have caused Eastern Europeans' beliefs about justice to change from more socialist orientations to more neo-liberal orientations.

Hypothesis 4a: I suspect that the EU accession process has socialized Eastern Europeans into common European attitudes toward income redistribution. Thus, I hypothesize that the difference between Eastern and Western Europeans' support for income redistribution has diminished after the East's accession to the EU.

Hypothesis 4b: Drawing on research that points to welfare regime's effect on attitudes toward welfare state intervention, I suspect that welfare regime type accounts for considerable variations among Western Europeans' attitudes toward income redistribution. However, I suspect that welfare regime's effect on attitudes has diminished over time as both Western and

Eastern European countries become increasingly integrated in the EU's common market structures.

In addition to cultural contextual factors, scholars have pointed to several country-level socioeconomic factors that might affect attitudes toward income redistribution. In particular, previous research suggests that the level of inequality in a country may be a contextual factor associated with citizens' support for income redistribution. Moene and Wallerstein (2001) find that income inequality increases political support for redistributive benefits because it increases the distance between the mean and median income. If more people fall below the mean income, then more people may show more support for social protection benefits.

By contrast, Dallinger (2010) observes that there is often an inconsistent relationship between the actual level of inequality in a country and citizens' demands for income redistribution. She suggests that the level of inequality may have an inconsistent relationship with support for redistribution because people's social justice values may cause them to hold different attitudes regarding identical levels of inequality (Lubker 2004, 2007; Dallinger 2010). Consequently, Eastern and Western Europeans may have different attitudes toward income redistribution because of their different social justice values.

However, despite finding that inequality is sometimes a significant predictor of attitudes toward redistribution, Dallinger nevertheless argues that it is the East's lower levels of economic development, rather than its communist ideological socialization, that accounts for its higher support for redistribution. She observes little difference in support for redistribution among different Western welfare regime types, which ostensibly have different beliefs and ideologies about the welfare state. She therefore concludes that more economically developed and mature welfare states on the whole have less support for redistribution than poorer and less mature welfare states.

Hypothesis 5: In accordance with Dallinger (2010), I hypothesize that level of income inequality does not have a significant effect on demands for redistribution in Western European countries because Western European countries typically have mature welfare states. In Eastern Europe, I suspect that the level of inequality had a significant effect on support for redistribution before EU accession because communist ideology may have still had a significant effect on Eastern Europeans' social justice perceptions. However, I suspect that after the East's accession, the level of income inequality does not significantly affect attitudes toward redistribution.

Finally, previous research suggests that country-level unemployment rates may also affect individuals' support for redistribution (Bleksaune 2007; Bleksaune & Quadago 2003). In fact, Bleksaune (2007) argues that individual-level factors can only explain a small part of people's support for income redistribution and that macro-economic contextual factors are more powerful predictors of people's support. He finds that lower unemployment rates are specifically related to support for redistribution because economic worries may boost preferences for governments to provide more social protection.

Hypothesis 6: I suspect that higher levels of national unemployment increase people's support for redistribution in both the East and the West because higher levels of unemployment may lead people to believe that more government intervention is necessary to support the unemployed.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY:

Data

I test my hypotheses using a multi-level analysis of data from the ISSP's Social Inequality III (1999) and IV (2009) surveys. The Social Inequality surveys ask people a variety of questions about their attitudes toward inequality and the government's responsibility in redistributing income. In my analysis, I examine attitudes toward redistribution in seven Western European countries (Austria, France, Germany¹, Great Britain², Portugal, Spain, and Sweden) and seven Eastern European countries (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, the Slovak Republic, and Slovenia). Although other European countries have administered the Social Inequality survey in 1999 or 2009, I restrict my analysis to EU member states that administered the survey in both 1999 and 2009³.

Dependent Variable

I measure support for income redistribution using a sum index of two questions on the ISSP Social Inequality survey. Respondents are asked to note the extent to which they agree that 1) inequality is too high in their country and 2) that it is the government's responsibility to reduce inequality. I sum respondents' answers to the two questions and then linearly transpose the sum so that values span from 1 through 9. High values indicate support for government reducing inequality along with a feeling of too much inequality, while low values indicate opposition to government intervention in reducing inequality and a feeling that there is not too much inequality.

I use a sum index to measure support for redistribution, rather than respondents' perceptions of the government's responsibility to reduce inequality, because past research suggests that an index better captures people's normative and cognitive attitudes toward redistribution. Dallinger (2010) argues that it is inappropriate to measure attitudes toward redistribution by only taking into account respondents' views on whether the government should reduce income differences. This question "mixes cognitive and normative aspects when asking people whether the state should intervene in income inequality" (2003, 339). By contrast, the sum index assesses respondents' preferences for income redistribution, relative to the degree of inequality they

¹ Although many early studies of attitudes toward income redistribution conducted separate analyses for East and West Germany, I treat East and West Germany as a united country. East and West Germans may differ in their attitudes toward income redistribution, yet they share the same contextual environment. While examining East Germany as a separate post-communist country may have been reasonable in the initial years after unification, I do not believe that it is still appropriate to consider East Germany as its own country in the same way as I treat other Eastern European countries. Consequently, I treat East and West Germany as a united Germany and weight the ISSP data to take into account the relative sizes of the East and West German populations.

² The ISSP did not administer the 2009 Social Inequality survey in Northern Ireland. I consequently limit my analysis of the United Kingdom to Great Britain. However, I apply contextual data for the United Kingdom to Great Britain in order to maintain consistency in using country-level contextual data rather than regional contextual data.

³ A list of subjective response survey questions used for this analysis is provided in the Appendix.

perceive in their country. It thereby avoids the “ambivalence of whether the ideal or the realistic attitude towards state redistribution is being measured” (Dallinger 2010, 339)⁴.

Micro-Level Independent Variables

I use people’s self-reported sex, age, education level, socioeconomic class, and employment status as socio-demographic factors that may affect support for income redistribution (see Appendix for coding). I also include marital status as a standard control variable used in analyzing attitudes toward the welfare state. I measure education level as a dummy variable indicating whether the respondent has a university degree. Unemployment is also measured as a dummy variable indicating whether the respondent reported being unemployed at the time of the survey. I measure class as the respondent’s subjective class status, self-reported on a scale from 1 to 10. High values indicate that the respondent believes he belongs to a high social class. Although income offers a more objective measurement of class status, I chose to omit it from the analysis. For one, a sizeable number of respondents refused to provide their income. Because lower income respondents may be less likely to provide a response for their income, data for income is unlikely to be missing at random (MAR). It is therefore inappropriate to include income in the model⁵. Secondly, income is highly correlated with both education and socioeconomic class, and including all three variables presents a problem with multicollinearity.

In examining the ways that individual ideological beliefs may affect attitudes toward redistribution, I am primarily interested in examining how attitudes toward social mobility affect support for redistribution. Drawing on Linos and West’s (2003) analysis of social mobility beliefs and support for income redistribution, I measure social mobility beliefs as respondents’ views toward what is essential in “getting ahead” in society. In both 1999 and 2009, the ISSP asked respondents to indicate the extent to which they believe that 1) coming from a wealthy family, 2) knowing the right people, and 3) being corrupt are important for individuals’ social positions. These indicators represent exogenous factors that may affect social mobility. Respondents who believe that these factors are important for social mobility may consequently be more likely than others to support redistribution because they may be less likely to blame low income people for their economic status. I average respondents’ views on the three social mobility items to identify the extent to which respondents believe that exogenous factors are important for social mobility.⁶

I also include a variable for personal social mobility to take into account the ways that individuals’ personal intergenerational mobility may affect attitudes toward redistribution. It is

⁴ Creating a sum index is also methodologically appropriate because both items are strongly related. In 2009, the items had a Cronebach’s alpha of .64 in the East and .68 in the West. In 1999, they had a Cronebach’s alpha of .55 in the East and .70 in the West.

⁵ When income (measured as respondent’s country-specific income decile) was included in regression models, it had an insignificant effect on attitudes toward redistribution. I suspect that the insignificance stems from the variable’s high correlation with both education and socioeconomic class. Particularly for Eastern European data, it would be inappropriate to compare models with income and without income because including income decreases the number of respondents by almost 1,000.

⁶ It is appropriate to average respondents’ views across the three social mobility items because responses are highly related. In 1999, they had a Cronebach’s alpha of .51 in the East and .53 in the West. In 2009, they had a Cronebach’s alpha of .51 in the East and .43 in the West.

possible that people's beliefs about social mobility are partly shaped by their own experiences, and not only by their observations of others. I measure personal social mobility as respondents' answer to a question of whether their occupation is of a higher social class than their father's occupation.

Macro-Level Independent Variables

I use countries' post-tax, post-transfer Gini coefficient as a contextual indicator of the actual level of inequality in a country. Data for the Gini coefficient come from the Standardized World Income Inequality Database (Solt 2012), which reports levels of inequality across the world. Because the inequality data come from the same source, I can make reasonable comparisons about the ways that actual levels of inequality are associated with respondents' support for redistribution.

Although past studies on attitudes toward income inequality included dummy variables for welfare regime (Dallinger 2010; Svalfors 1997), I operationalize welfare regime as the size of the government and measure it as government consumption expenditure as a percent of GDP. Studies that include a dummy variable for welfare regime often include several countries that could be placed in Epsing-Andersen's (1990) welfare regime types (social democratic, conservative, and liberal). Because the number of countries I use is limited, my analysis cannot produce generalizable conclusions about the effect of any particular welfare regime. For instance, Great Britain is the only country that fits within the liberal category and Sweden is the only country that fits within the social democratic category. I could not generalize about liberal or social democratic countries using results from only those two countries. Thus, methodologically, measuring welfare regime as the size of the government offers the advantage of increasing variability in the independent variable. It is also theoretically reasonable to measure welfare regime through government consumption expenditures because Epsing-Andersen (1990) categorizes regimes according to the types of social assistance that governments provide. If governments provide considerable social services, then they are likely to have high levels of government consumption expenditure.

Finally, I include the country-level unemployment rate as another macro-economic indicator that may shape individuals' attitudes toward redistribution and country-level GDP per capita as a control variable. I obtain data for these indicators, as well as for government consumption expenditure, from the World Bank's Databank.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS:

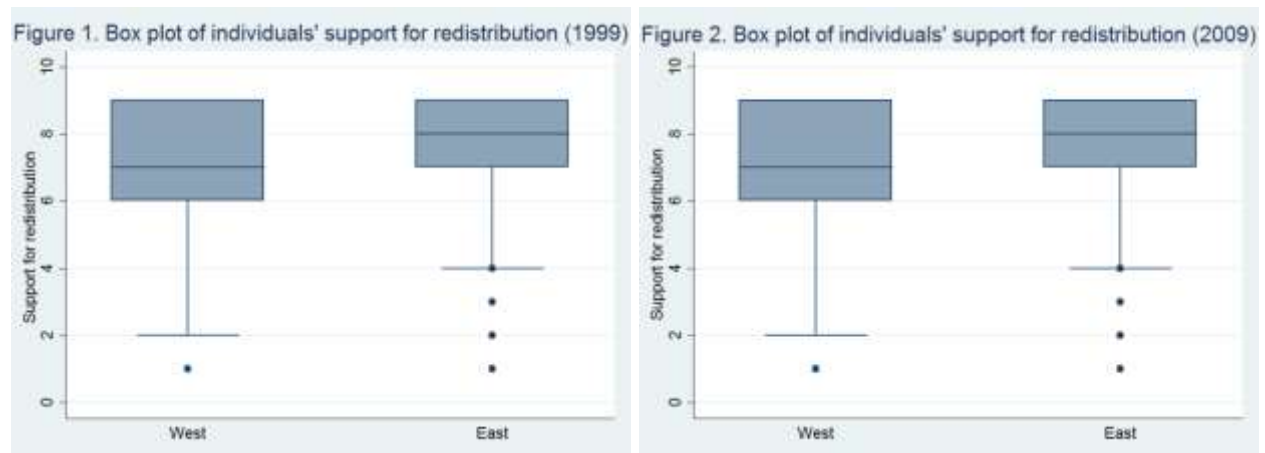
My analysis proceeds with both a cross-regional and cross-time comparison of support for income redistribution. Because I am interested in examining whether Eastern Europeans have been socialized into Western social welfare norms, I first examine whether there has been a convergence in attitudes over time. I then use multi-level models to compare the individual-level and contextual factors shaping Eastern and Western Europeans' attitudes toward redistribution in 1999 and in 2009. This allows me to examine whether the factors that shape Eastern and Western Europeans' attitudes have changed over time. In my model, I use a random intercept to account for country differences within both the East and the West. I also perform separate regression

analyses for East and West in 1999 and 2009 to allow for a better comparison across regions and across time periods.

Differences between East and West

I begin my analysis by comparing the distribution of responses and mean responses in the East and West in 1999 and in 2009. Figures 1 and 2 show box plot comparisons between Eastern and Western Europeans' support for redistribution in 1999 and 2009, respectively. The box plots illustrate that the distribution of attitudes toward income redistribution have remained remarkably stable in both the East and West from 1999 through 2009. The median level of support did not change in either the East or the West from 1999 to 2009.

The plots also show that compared to Western Europeans, Eastern Europeans typically report a higher level of support for redistribution. They also show that there is much more variation among Western Europeans' support for redistribution than Eastern Europeans. The larger variation among Western Europeans may suggest that cultural variation among Western welfare regimes does, in fact, affect people's attitudes toward redistribution. While Eastern Europeans were socialized into similar social justice values, Western Europeans' social justice values may differ considerably depending on their country's welfare regime type.



Although the distribution of support for income redistribution has not changed over time, I find some convergence in attitudes toward redistribution from 1999 to 2009 (Table 1). However, unlike what I expected, the convergence does not stem from Eastern Europeans' attitudes changing to reflect Western Europeans' attitudes. Eastern Europeans have maintained remarkably stable attitudes toward income redistribution from 1999 to 2009. On the other hand, Western Europeans' attitudes have changed somewhat, such that Western Europeans show higher support for redistribution in 2009 than in 1999. Nevertheless, using independent t-tests, I find that the regions' average levels of support for redistribution remain significantly different in both 1999 and 2009⁷.

⁷ Independent t-tests show significant differences at the $p=0.01$ level. Eta correlations between region and support for redistribution are .1651 in 1999 and .1131 in 2009, where East = 1 and West = 0.

Table 1. Average support for redistribution (linearized standard errors in parentheses)⁸

	1999	2009	Change
Eastern Europe	7.609 (.102)	7.609 (.137)	0.000
Western Europe	7.050 (.234)	7.245 (.218)	+0.195
East-West Difference	+0.559	+0.364	

Regression analysis of factors shaping support for redistribution

I continue my analysis by examining what factors shape attitudes toward income redistribution. Below, Table 2 highlights results from a multi-level analysis of both individual-level and country-level contextual factors on support for redistribution. On the whole, the results show that contextual factors explain much more of the variation in attitudes toward inequality than individual-level factors. However, it appears that much of the variation in attitudes is captured by GDP per capita. In the 1999 models, GDP per capita is the only contextual factor to have a significant effect on attitudes. However, GDP per capita's effect is weaker among Eastern European countries and becomes insignificant in the 2009 Eastern European model. GDP per capita has a significant and negative effect on support for redistribution in the West in both 1999 and 2009.

In accordance with Dallinger's (2010) findings, my results show that the level of inequality and welfare regime type, as measured by government consumption expenditure, do not significantly shape individuals' attitudes toward redistribution. This shows that neither Eastern Europeans nor Western Europeans react strongly to the actual level of inequality in their country. Furthermore, the insignificance of government expenditure suggests that countries with higher levels of government spending do not experience higher levels of support for income redistribution than countries with lower levels of government spending. Consequently, the type of welfare regime may not be a factor that socializes people into stronger support for redistribution. My findings may therefore support Dallinger's (2010) findings that the type of welfare regime may not have an independent effect on support for redistribution. Rather, it seems that people living in wealthier and more mature welfare states tend to have less support for additional income redistribution than those of less developed welfare states. People of more developed welfare states may be in less need of income supports and may therefore express less support for additional income redistribution.

Country-level unemployment has a significant effect on inequality only in Western Europe in 2009. Ironically, however, the unemployment rate does not have its expected effect. I suspect that its significant, negative effect among Western Europeans in 2009 could be tied to reactions to the global economic crisis in 2008. Sihvo and Uusitalo (1995) examine public opinion toward the welfare state in Finland before and after economic crises. They find that people have more

⁸ Figures and results in tables 1 and 2 take into account survey weights for non-probability samples in Bulgaria and Germany in 1999 and Great Britain, Bulgaria, Germany, and the Czech Republic in 2009.

negative attitudes toward the welfare state during economic crisis because people are more critical of government spending. More research would be necessary to determine whether people's attitudes had in fact adjusted to the economic crisis by 2009 and whether the economic crisis caused people to be more critical of welfare state policies.

Table 2. Multi-level analysis of support for income redistribution

	East 1999	West 1999	East 2009	West 2009
<i>Socio-demographic factors</i>				
Sex (1= male, 2= female)	.227** (.035)	.299** (.067)	.127** (.037)	.208** (.065)
Age				
Second cohort (ages 31-45)	.102 (.052)	.062 (.053)	.134* (.067)	.061 (.079)
Third cohort (ages 46-60)	.283** (.048)	.153** (.0532)	.216** (.057)	.117* (.048)
Fourth cohort (ages 60 +)	.416** (.078)	.017 (.080)	.216* (.092)	.133 (.081)
Marital status (1 = married/ cohabitating)	.124** (.044)	-.005 (.046)	.154** (.025)	.023 (.059)
University degree (1= yes)	-.540** (.105)	-.494** (.072)	-.554** (.096)	-.272** (.010)
Subjective class status	-.132** (.026)	-.217** (.043)	-.163** (.021)	-.190** (.041)
Unemployed (1= unemployed)	.065 (.074)	.236* (.117)	.038 (.052)	-.009 (.023)
<i>Attitudes toward mobility</i>				
Exogenous factors are necessary to get ahead	.309** (.041)	.326** (.066)	.254** (.056)	.335** (.058)
Higher class than father (1=yes; 0=no)	.095 (.073)	.128 (.053)	.021 (.046)	.022 (.048)
<i>Contextual factors</i>				
Log GDP per capita	-.195* (.097)	-3.667** (.308)	-.381 (1.092)	-2.469** (.339)
Gini coefficient	-.032 (.042)	-.039 (.042)	-.012 (.048)	-.021 (.017)
Unemployment rate	-.014 (.018)	-.026 (.022)	.014 (.027)	-.025** (.009)
Government expenditures	.014 (.053)	-.046 (.064)	.026 (.079)	-.030 (.034)
<i>Constant</i>	9.114** (.748)	46.325** (4.157)	10.583 (11.745)	33.729** (4.113)

Continued below

Table 1 (Continued)

	East 1999	West 1999	East 2009	West 2009
Log pseudolikelihood	-12413.228	-13531.478	-11834.065	-14787.353
Explained variance ^a				
R ² (BR)—Level 2	67%	79%	42%	75%
R ² (BR)—Level 1	10%	10%	10%	8%
N	6,944	7,167	6,790	7,961
* p<.05; ** p<.01; Robust standard errors are included in parentheses				
a. R ² is calculated using the Bryk and Raudenbush R ² for multi-level models.				

Among individual-level factors shaping support for redistribution, it appears that attitudes toward social mobility are strongly associated with support for redistribution. Individuals who believe that exogenous factors are critical in helping people advance in society appear more likely to support income redistribution. However, individuals' personal experience with intergenerational mobility is unlikely to affect attitudes toward redistribution. Those who report belonging to a higher social class than their fathers do not express significantly higher levels of support for redistribution than others.

Socio-demographic variables appear to have some varied effects on attitudes toward redistribution across regions. In particular, age has a significant and positive effect on people's support for redistribution in the East and a virtually insignificant effect on support in the West. Older Eastern Europeans may be particularly supportive of income redistribution because they were socialized under a communist ideology that promoted egalitarianism. As a result, they may have been less likely than younger Eastern Europeans to internalize Western market norms. Older Eastern Europeans were also particularly vulnerable to market forces during the transition because they had fewer opportunities than younger people to acquire the skills necessary to compete in the market economy. Their higher support for redistribution may consequently point to some self-interest in redistributing income from people who could take more advantage of the transition's economic opportunities to more vulnerable people.

In addition to age, marital status has a different effect on Eastern and Western Europeans' attitudes toward redistribution. In both 1999 and 2009, married or long-term cohabitating Eastern Europeans showed more support for income redistribution than unmarried or single Eastern Europeans. By contrast, in Western Europe, marital status does not appear to have a significant effect on Western Europeans' attitudes toward redistribution. Previous research suggests that young parents may be more supportive of the welfare state because they are likely to benefit from child care subsidies (Jaegers 2006). The higher level of support for redistribution among married/ cohabitating Eastern Europeans may consequently be a reflection of their support for the welfare state and their self-interest in securing family benefits. Because child care subsidies and family benefits may be better established in Western European countries, Western European

married people may not be as concerned with maintaining state support as Eastern European married people.

Sex, education, and subjective class status have their expected effects in both the East and the West in 1999 and 2009. Men, educated people, and people of higher subjective classes have less support for redistribution than others. This supports previous research that points to a relationship between support for redistribution and class status and gender. Unemployment has an insignificant effect on attitudes toward redistribution in the East at both time points and in the West in 1999. Its insignificant effect may be due to its high correlation with subjective socioeconomic class status.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Results from my analysis show that there is still a significant difference between Eastern and Western Europeans' attitudes toward income redistribution. Eastern Europeans are more likely than Western Europeans to perceive inequality as being too high and to demand that government take more responsibility for reducing it. Unlike in Western Europe, age is a significant predictor of people's attitudes toward redistribution in Eastern Europe. Older Eastern Europeans, who were socialized under communism, show more support for income redistribution than younger Eastern Europeans. By contrast, in the West, older and younger people appear to hold similar views toward income redistribution. Furthermore, while marital status does not have a significant effect on Western Europeans' support for redistribution, results show that married Eastern Europeans have greater support for income redistribution than single Eastern Europeans. This may reflect some uncertainty that Eastern Europeans have about family and child care benefits.

The difference in attitudes toward income redistribution suggests that despite their recent accession to the EU, Eastern Europeans have not been completely socialized into Western European norms regarding inequality and government social welfare responsibility. Thus, it appears that Eastern Europe's communist legacy continues to shape citizens' views on what constitutes an appropriate level of inequality and how much responsibility the government should take for reducing inequality. While Eastern and Western Europeans' attitudes appear to be converging, they do not seem to be converging because Eastern Europeans' attitudes are beginning to reflect Western Europeans' attitudes. Instead, it appears that Western Europeans may be expressing more support for income redistribution, while Eastern Europeans' attitudes remain stable.

Appendix

A1. Number of responses (East)

	1999	2009
Bulgaria	1102	1,000
Czech Republic	1834	1,205
Hungary	1208	1,010
Latvia	1100	1,069
Poland	1135	1,263
Slovak Republic	1082	1,159
Slovenia	1006	1,065
Total	8,467	7,771

A2. Number of responses (West)

	1999	2009
Austria	1,016	1,019
Germany	1,432	1,395
France	1,889	2,817
Portugal	1,144	1,000
Spain	1,211	1,215
Sweden	1,150	1,137
Great Britain	804	958
Total	8,646	9,541

A3. Average support for redistribution by country (East)

	1999	2009
Bulgaria	8.107*	7.697
Czech Republic	7.333	7.009*
Hungary	7.772	8.091
Latvia	7.506	7.783
Poland	7.473	7.416
Slovak Republic	7.682	7.548
Slovenia	7.554	7.867

A4. Average support for redistribution (West)

	1999	2009
Austria	7.102	7.212
Germany	6.361*	6.931*
France	7.111	7.723
Portugal	8.272	7.933
Spain	7.232	7.160
Sweden	6.460	6.478
Great Britain	6.776	6.561*

* Data is weighted to take into account non-probability sampling.

A4. Survey subjective response questions used for the analysis

1. Support for redistribution (indexed):

Q1. Differences in income in <R's country> are too large.

Q2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: It is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences in income between people with high incomes and those with low incomes.

Possible answers include:

1. Strongly agree
 2. Agree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Disagree
 5. Strongly disagree
 6. Can't choose
-

2. Belief that exogenous factors are necessary to get ahead (indexed):

To begin we have some questions about opportunities for getting ahead. Please tick one box for each of these to show how important you think it is for getting ahead in life.

Q1. How important is coming from a wealthy family?

Q2. How important is knowing the right people?

Q3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: To get all the way to the top in <R's country> today, you have to be corrupt.

Possible answers include:

1. Essential
2. Very important
3. Fairly important
4. Not very important

5. Not important at all
 6. Can't choose
-

3. *Belief about father's social class.*

Q1. Please think about your present job (or your last one if you don't have one now). If you compare this job to the job your father had when you were <14,15,16>, would you say that the level of status of your job is (or was).

Possible answers include:

1. Much higher than your fathers
 2. Higher
 3. About equal
 4. Lower
 5. Much lower than your fathers
 6. I never had a job
 7. I don't know what my father did, father never had a job, never knew father
 8. Don't know
-

4. *Subjective class status:*

Q1. In our society there are groups which tend to be towards the top and groups which tend to be towards the bottom. Below is a scale that runs from top to bottom. Where would you put yourself now on this scale?

Possible answers:

1. 1
 2. 2
 3. 3
 4. 4
 5. 5
 6. 6
 7. 7
 8. 8
 9. 9
 10. 10
-

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