

# Attitudes towards the Market and the Welfare State

Incorporating attitudes towards the market  
into welfare state research

**Arvid Lindh**



**Department of Sociology**  
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*To my family*



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## **List of original papers in the thesis**

- I. The Democratic Class Struggle Revisited: The Welfare State as a Vehicle of Social Cohesion and Political Conflict. *Submitted to journal.*
- II. Institutional Trust and Welfare State Support: On the Role of Trust in Market Institutions. *Journal of Public Policy, Vol 33, no 3 (2013), pp. 295-317.*
- III. Public Opinion against Markets? Attitudes towards Market Distribution of Social Services: A Comparison of 17 Countries. *Resubmitted to journal.*
- IV. Public Support for Corporate Social Responsibility in the Welfare State: Evidence from Sweden. *Resubmitted to journal.*

# Abstract

**Background** Social policy and its associated institutions are central political arenas for societal compromise and conflict. The capacity to attract strong support from a wide constituency of citizens is, therefore, a defining feature of welfare policy legitimacy. While there is much research measuring attitudes towards state-organized welfare, the overall aim of this thesis is to incorporate attitudes towards the market into this research field. This aim is carried out through four empirical studies that add a market component to the analysis of different topics covered in current welfare state research.

**Methods** The articles in this thesis either compare attitudes across countries or deploy Swedish public opinion as a test case. Newly designed or previously underutilized survey measures are used that explicitly cover attitudes towards the market. Latent class analysis, structural equation modeling, and multilevel analysis are used to study how attitudes vary both within and across countries.

**Results** Citizens' perceptions and evaluations of the market are found to be shaped by their everyday life experiences within the market structure. Moreover, citizens' trust in the performance of market institutions is found to be important in structuring their welfare policy preferences. In addition, attitudes towards the market appear to be influenced by the institutional context: citizens living in countries with more ambitious welfare states are less inclined to support market distribution of social services, and class differences in political welfare attitudes tend to be larger in countries with more encompassing welfare states. Collected findings thus suggest that citizens living in countries with more generous welfare states are more inclined to think that the legitimate scope of the market nexus should be negotiated and calibrated via social policy.

**Conclusion** By incorporating attitudes towards the market in relation to welfare state support, this thesis contributes to deepening our understanding of the political and moral mindset of citizens in advanced political economies. Public attitudes towards the welfare state are to a significant degree formed by perceptions and evaluations of the market and its actors. In order to further our knowledge about preferences regarding the role of the state in modern society, and to stay in tune with ongoing policy developments, future socio-political research is well advised to bring the main alternative to the state – the market and its actors – into the analytical framework.



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*Stockholm, May 2014*

*Arvid Lindh*

# Introduction

Social policy and its associated institutions are central political arenas for societal compromise and conflict. The capacity to attract strong support from a wide constituency of citizens is, therefore, a defining feature of welfare policy legitimacy. While there is much research measuring attitudes towards state-organized welfare (see Svallfors 2012a, 2014 for recent overviews), the overall aim of this thesis is to incorporate attitudes towards the market into this research field. There are two main reasons for focusing on the market in this respect. First, the welfare state is theorized as a political instrument for counteracting various “market failures” and market insecurities/injustices (Korpi 1983, 2006; Esping-Andersen 1985, 1990; Therborn 1987; Korpi & Palme 1998, 2003; Hall & Soskice 2001). Consequently, citizens’ beliefs about the performance of the market are likely to shape their (perceived) needs and preferences for state-organized welfare. Simply put, public support for the welfare state is affected by citizens’ conceptions of what the market *cannot* do. Differences in trust and attitudes towards the market may thus be important in accounting for variation in welfare state support both within and between countries.

Second, matters of social welfare are not necessarily administered by the state (Rothstein *et al.* 2011). In most industrialized countries, the most consistent institutional alternative to the state in providing for citizens’ welfare is the market (Esping-Andersen 1985, 1990). Hence, in many situations, citizens are likely to conceive of market-based welfare as a (good or bad) concrete alternative to state-led policies. Exploring citizens’ attitudes towards market-based welfare can thus offer insights concerning the extent to which citizens would prefer to have the market provide these services and insurances as a complement or alternative to state-organized welfare. All in all, examining attitudes towards the market thus renders a more complete picture of how citizens understand the proper balance of institutional responsibility between the state and the market in today’s society.

Extending the analytical focus to include market institutions is timely. First, rising economic inequality and the recent financial crisis – with its aftermath of macro-economic instability – have resurrected old questions concerning the tension between capitalist markets and social cohesion (OECD 2011; Lounsbury & Hirsch 2010; Streeck & Schäfer 2013). In this regard, studies of public opinion can provide insights concerning the legitimacy of market institutions in today’s society (Uslaner 2010), as well as trace what political solutions ordinary citizens favor for addressing (perceived) market failures, inequalities, and/or injustices. Second, contemporary welfare policy

developments are characterized by marketization at the expense of state-organized welfare. For example, in Sweden as in many other countries, social insurance benefits – such as unemployment insurance – have become much less generous in recent decades (Ferrarini *et al.* 2012). In addition, market actors are increasingly given responsibility for delivering basic social services that were previously administered more or less exclusively by the state (Blomqvist & Rothstein 2000; Trydegård 2001; Blomqvist 2004; Bergh 2007; Hartman 2011). The “historical compromise” instituted during the last century, involving a relatively strict institutional division of labor between the state and the market, is thus currently being shaken up and renegotiated at the political level, seemingly moving us towards a new situation where the market and its principal actors carry a larger share of the institutional responsibility for provision of welfare (Streeck & Thelen 2005; Glyn 2007). Since previous research has largely neglected the study of attitudes towards the “market-side” of welfare policy, we still know relatively little based on empirical research about what ordinary citizens think about these ongoing policy transitions.

This thesis contains four empirical studies that seek to inform essential inquiries in welfare state research by studying citizens’ attitudes towards the market. The first article explores the complex ways in which welfare state institutions mediate class conflicts. The second article studies citizens’ trust in market institutions and how it matters for their welfare policy preferences. The third article examines public support for market distribution of social services from a country-comparative perspective. The fourth article investigates whether Swedes think of corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a viable complement to state intervention in the market.

The outline of this introductory chapter is as follows. It starts with a theoretical section that discusses how this thesis approaches the relationship between capitalist markets and the welfare state. Following that is a discussion of three overlapping topics in welfare state research for which a focus on market attitudes might be useful. This is followed by a methodological section where data, variables, and statistical methods are presented. The main results from the four empirical studies are then summarized. The concluding section discusses the theoretical bearing and the “policy relevance” of the overall findings. The limitations of this work are brought up and some opportunities for future research are outlined as well.

# Capitalist markets and the welfare state

The sociological classics studied the interface between economy and society in order to understand and explain pivotal societal conditions and historical courses of events (Marx 1992 [1867]; Durkheim 1964 [1893]; Veblen 2005 [1899]; Simmel 2004 [1900]; Weber 2002 [1905]; Schumpeter 2013 [1942]; Polanyi 2001 [1944]). In the spirit of these classical writings, the basic argument in modern-day economic sociology is that economy and society are constitutive of each other (Smelser & Swedberg 2010; Beckert & Streeck 2008). Studying the economy thus requires paying careful attention to social and political structures and institutions. Correspondingly, studies of social order should take into account the distinguished characteristics of the economic system that is embedded in society. From this analytical perspective, “a [market] capitalist society is a society that has instituted its economy in a capitalist manner, in that it has coupled its material provision to the private accumulation of capital, measured in units of money, through free contractual exchange in markets driven by individual calculations of utility” (Streeck 2012:2). More specifically, a market can be described as a “social structure for exchange of property rights, which enables people, firms and products to be evaluated and priced” (Aspers 2006:427).<sup>1</sup>

The market capitalist economy is distinguished from other historical economic systems by “the legitimacy it affords to competition – to depriving one’s peers of their livelihood by outbidding them – and in the absence of a ceiling on legitimate economic gain” (Streeck 2012:5). This procedural logic is a driving force for economic expansion. Such expansion gets manifested in recurrent economic innovation, globalization and growth – but also in a tendency for market forces and for-profit activities to strengthen their presence in spheres of life traditionally associated with other logics of exchange (Polanyi 2001 [1944]; Beckert & Streeck 2008; Beckert 2009; Streeck 2012).

The market logic is maintained by institutions. Institutions can be understood as “formal arrangements for aggregating individuals and regulating their behavior through the use of explicit rules and decision processes enforced by an actor or set of actors formally recognized as possessing such power” (Levi 1990:405). In concrete terms, the concept can refer to different entities depending on analytical focus. On the one hand, the concept can refer to specific “rules of the game,” such as private property rights or anti-trust laws. On the other hand, the concept can be applied to a

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<sup>1</sup> See Ingham (2013) for a thorough theoretical discussion of the properties of the market capitalist economy.

specific category of organizations/actors, such as corporations, “to the extent that their existence and operations are in a specific way publicly guaranteed and privileged, by becoming backed up by societal norms and the enforcement capacities related to them” (Streeck & Thelen, 2005:12).

Institutional analysts contend that a large-scale market capitalist economy cannot be maintained solely on the basis of spontaneous action and interchange: “formal rules, compliance procedures, and standard operating practices” (Hall 1992:96) are also necessary (Streeck 2011). In practice, this prescribes a central role for the state “intervening” in the market (Streeck 1997; Rothstein 2011b; Ingham 2013). The relationship between state and market capitalism is one of both mutual dependence and antagonism (Ingham 2013). On the one hand, the state and the market economy are co-dependent: while the market economy provides the state with necessary resources, including tax revenues, government institutions provide the market with public goods that enable economic exchange, including a monetary system, a system of law and order (that, among other things, protects private property rights) and public infrastructure (such as a road system) (Streeck 1998; Rothstein 2011b; Ingham 2013). Since government intervention is necessary for maintaining the system, a large-scale market capitalist economy should not be treated as a spontaneous order but as a historically specific socio-political construction (Streeck 2011, 2012).

While the state is necessary for maintaining the market, it also works as to *constrain* the practical impact of the market on society. The need for a *welfare state* grows out of citizens’ experiences of industrial market capitalist society (Marshall & Bottomore 1992; Esping-Andersen 1990). First, the dynamic and unpredictable nature of the market causes uncertainty in social relations and fluctuation in living conditions (Polanyi 2001 [1944]; Streeck, 2012). This makes it rational for *risk-averse* citizens to seek political solutions that provide social insurance against risks people face in the course of their lives as a consequence of labor market participation (Korpi & Palme 1998, 2003; Esping-Andersen 1990). Second, by providing certain basic goods and services according to need, the welfare state reduces citizens’ dependence on the market nexus for material subsistence and full-fledged societal participation (Huber & Stephens 2000).

Hence, the welfare state can be understood as an institutional device for calibrating the relative importance of the market in determining living conditions and life chances. For example, Korpi and Palme (2003:427) conceptualize welfare states “in terms of policies to affect outcomes of, and conditions for, distributive processes in the sphere of markets so as to decrease inequality and/or poverty.” Similarly, welfare policy models are

usually rated, classified, and compared both theoretically and empirically with reference to differences in their “decommodifying” capacities (Esping-Andersen 1990; see also Korpi & Palme 1998; Huber & Stephens 2000; Scruggs & Allen 2006).<sup>2</sup>

There is a lot of historical research emphasizing how the public ascribes moral meaning to the market. In this sense, the economy is not only an instrumental order but also a moral order; the material economy is reflected in a specific *moral economy* (Polanyi 1944; Thompson 1971; Moore 1978; Etzioni 1988; Booth 1994; Arnold 2001; Mau 2006; Streeck 2012). From this analytical perspective, the market and the welfare state are distinguished from each other by the different principles of justice they encapsulate and promote. Whereas the principle of “*market justice* /.../ emphasizes the entitlement of partners in market transactions to obtain what was agreed upon between them in contracts they voluntarily entered into, i.e. desert on the basis of contractual agreements” (Offe 2000:80, italics added), “social rights in their modern form imply an invasion of contract by status, the subordination of market price to *social justice*, the replacement of the free bargain by the declaration of rights” (Marshall & Bottomore 1992:40, italics added). Political struggles in society can be described as an ongoing negotiation between these two competing concepts of justice (Streeck 2012). The concept of moral economy has also been used to describe how popular support for the welfare state is partly rooted in deep-seated social norms of reciprocity and social justice (Svallfors 1996, 2006, 2007a, 2012; Mau 2003). Similarly, studying attitudes towards welfare policy can offer insights concerning the legitimate scope of market principles of justice in stratifying life chances and living conditions within a population.

To sum up, the capitalist market economy is distinguished by a spirit of unlimited profit making that is pursued through competitive relations. This economic system is ultimately maintained by political institutions. While historically unparalleled in terms of innovative capacity and economic growth, this economy also provides many citizens with a sense of social insecurity and/or injustice. By providing social insurance and certain basic goods and services, the welfare state delimits the relative scope and force of

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<sup>2</sup> The fact that the welfare state constrains the relative importance of the market nexus in determining life chances and living conditions does not necessarily imply that such policies are dysfunctional for the market capitalist economy. Instead, many have argued that the welfare state plays a central role in preserving the legitimacy and function of market capitalism (Offe 1982; Therborn 1987). For example, state-administered social services provide public goods that secure a healthy and productive labor force (Huber & Stephens 2000). In addition, the social safety net that public insurance offers is likely to enable people to participate and take economic risks in the (labor) market (Hall & Soskice 2001).

the market nexus and market principles of justice in social exchange and distributive processes.

## **Welfare policy and welfare attitudes: three overlapping research topics**

The “citizen perspective” that public opinion studies offer can elucidate basic inquiries in welfare state theory and research. This thesis contends that public opinion research has not yet reached its full potential in this respect as attitudes towards the market have been largely neglected in research. On the following pages, three overlapping research topics are discussed for which a focus on market attitudes might be useful.

### **Welfare policy and class**

Economic resources and opportunities are unequally distributed in society. While all historical economic systems have generated some degree of economic inequality, their structure and underlying mechanisms take distinct forms in different economic systems. In market capitalist societies, the labor market is essential to the stratification system, meaning that an individual's relation to the labor market is decisive for her/his living conditions and life chances. The *class* concept can be used to map structural positions within the labor market and describe how inequalities in resources and opportunities arise from individuals' different locations within these positions (Erikson & Goldthorpe 1992; Wright 2005).

From a historical perspective, societal conflict and social unrest have often been triggered by class inequalities (Marshall & Bottomore 1992). Hence, a lot of social research has been devoted to the question of how class inequalities and conflicts are mediated by political institutions. The welfare state is essential in this regard due to its capacity to redistribute risks and resources between groups that are better and worse off within the (labor) market (Korpi & Palme 1998, 2003). Empirically, countries with more ambitious welfare states (such as Sweden) typically demonstrate more economic equality than countries with relatively residual welfare states (such as the United States) (Korpi & Palme 1998). Thus, while the fundamental class structure is similar across countries, the degree of economic inequality across positions within the class hierarchy differs significantly between countries depending on their politico-institutional characteristics (Korpi & Palme 1998; le Grand & Tåhlin 2013).

The class concept has proven useful in welfare-political analysis. According to class-based welfare state theory, “the extent of popular support for the /.../ welfare state, and thus the preconditions for more fundamental changes in its construction, is of both theoretical and political interest.” (Korpi 1983:200) An analytical starting point in this theory is that people with relatively few market-derived resources have reason to favor (welfare) state *redistribution*, while those in more privileged market positions are more likely to support societal arrangements that prescribe a stronger role to the market-property nexus in distributive processes. Such conflicting interests provide a central part of the explanation for why social policy constitutes an arena of recurring political struggle (Korpi 1983, 2006; Korpi & Palme 2003).

From a country-comparative perspective, the size and redistributive capacity of the welfare state correlate positively with the strength of working class organization. Yet working class mobilization alone cannot explain the historical origin of the welfare state – broader class coalitions were also necessary (Korpi 1983, 2006; Esping-Andersen 1985, 1990). For example, in Sweden during the 1930s, powerful actors within the market – most notably, business elites – also came to provide political support for the welfare state as part of a broader “historical compromise” that guaranteed industrial peace and economic efficiency as distributive struggles were largely removed from the sphere of production into welfare politics (Korpi 2006). The historical emergence of the welfare state can thus be described as a process whereby conflicts in society become institutionalized and resolved in an organized and (relatively) “peaceful” way as part of parliamentary politics, rather than being played out at the site of production or in the streets (Korpi 1983, 2006). Welfare state institutions are thus understood to play an important role in calibrating social tension/cohesion (Kumlin & Rothstein 2005; Rothstein & Uslander 2005; Larsen 2013).

There are multiple reasons for paying attention to class in this thesis. First, since the class structure is an essential element of market capitalism, studying citizens’ perceptions of class cleavages/conflict says something important about how people perceive the “performance” of the market capitalist economy. Second, class might be an important factor accounting for individual-level variation in attitudes towards the market. As a general starting point, we might expect people in more favorable class/market positions to be more positive towards the market than people in class positions characterized by a weaker class/market position (Svallfors 2006). Third, since the welfare state can be understood as a political device for modifying class and market-based economic inequalities (Marshall & Bottomore 1992; Korpi 1983, 2006, Esping-Andersen 1985, 1990; Korpi &

Palme 1998, 2003), attitudes towards welfare policy arrangements might be influenced by class as well (Svallfors 2006; Edlund 2007; Kumlin & Svallfors, 2007).

This thesis adds to existing attitude research dealing with the link between welfare policy and class in at least three ways. First, this thesis makes an analytical distinction between *social* and *political* class conflict. Thus, besides studying class differences in attitudes towards welfare policies and outcomes (political conflict), this thesis also examines whether welfare policy institutions mediate citizens' perceptions of class-related social tension/cohesion (social conflict) (Article I). Second, it investigates whether the link between class position and welfare policy preferences is mediated by trust in market institutions (Article II). Third, class differences in support for market-based welfare policies are studied both with regard to Sweden (Articles II and IV) and from a country-comparative perspective (Article III).

### **The quality and social responsibilities of institutions**

A theory of the welfare state that has received considerable attention in recent years is the "Quality of Government" approach (Rothstein 2011a). This theory stresses that impartial and efficient public institutions are necessary for the maintenance of a system of encompassing state-organized welfare. The citizen perspective is essential to this argument: it is only when citizens *trust* public institutions to be efficient and impartial that they are willing to support and provide resources to state-organized welfare. In situations where such trust is lacking, citizens will turn to other more trusted institutional alternatives to satisfy their needs for social security. Hence, according to this theory, differences in citizens' institutional trust might prove important for understanding why welfare state development, effort, and popular support differ between countries and historical periods (Rothstein *et al.* 2011).

For the sake of this thesis, there are two pieces to this argument that are of particular interest. First, citizens' desire for social security and social justice are not necessarily transformed into support for the welfare state *per se*; citizens might instead prefer that other institutions handle various "social responsibilities." Second, citizens' trust and evaluations of actual institutional performance are likely to matter for their welfare policy preferences. These theoretical arguments make it necessary to pay closer attention to market attitudes.

Market institutions are increasingly given an actual role in providing social welfare (Gingrich 2011; Crane *et al.* 2008). Such trends are highly visible in

Sweden, a country historically known for its heavy reliance on state-organized welfare. While social services remain mainly tax-funded in Sweden, user fees have become more significant. Even more notable is that private firms have come to deliver services on a regular basis, and public providers have been re-organized so as to compete internally and externally through “quasi-markets” (Blomqvist & Rothstein 2000; Trydegård 2001; Blomqvist 2004; Bergh 2007; Hartman 2011).

Both proponents and opponents of these kinds of policy reforms are found in the literature: some are supportive, understanding reforms as promoting moral values such as freedom and providing practical solutions to government problems of efficiency and quality (Osborne & Gaebler 1992; Savas 2000; Lundsgaard 2002), while others are resistant, understanding market expansion as detrimental to social solidarity and democratic control (Leys 2003; Suleiman 2003; Pollock 2004). The desirability of ongoing policy transitions is thus a controversial political issue that ordinary citizens are likely to be concerned about. Most existing studies focusing on support for state-organized welfare do not give citizens the opportunity to express their opinions on this matter.

Moreover, previous studies that focus on citizens’ trust in institutional performance and how it influences their welfare policy preferences focus only on trust in *public* institutions. These studies report contradictory results (e.g. Edlund 1999, 2006; Svallfors 2002, 2012b; Kumlin 2007a). This might be because these studies do not consider citizens’ trust in regard to conceivable policy alternatives. Theoretically, welfare policy preferences are assumed to express attitudes regarding the extent to which the state should intervene in the market and modify market outcomes (Kumlin 2007b). This makes it particularly important to study trust in *market* institutions alongside trust in public institutions. Welfare state support is likely to be a function of trust in *both* the state and the market; public support for the welfare state is not only affected by citizens’ conceptions of what the *state can* do but also by citizens’ conceptions of what the *market cannot* do.

There are a few recent studies conducted in Sweden that contain information on public support for market-based welfare policies. Overall findings suggest that despite an ongoing privatization trend, welfare policy preferences have, by and large, remained stable over time: a vast majority of Swedes continue to support tax-financed welfare delivered by the public sector as the *main* method of social welfare provision (Svallfors 2011). At the same time, there are signals of increasing support for a “mixed” model where social services are publicly financed but delivered by private firms (Edlund & Johansson Sevä 2013).

This thesis moves beyond these previous studies in at least three ways. First, this thesis partly adopts a country-comparative approach (Article III). Second, this thesis elaborates on a wider definition of institutional social responsibility by exploring public support for so-called “corporate social responsibility” (CSR) (Brammer *et al.* 2012; Crouch 2011; De Geer *et al.* 2009) as a complement to state intervention in the market (Article IV). Third, this thesis covers citizens’ trust in the performance of market institutions and how it relates to their welfare policy preferences (Article II).

### **Between-country variation in welfare institutional design and welfare policy support**

The institutional configurations of a particular society consist of a specific balance between the institutional logics of state, market, and civil society. These configurations vary across countries, forming different “welfare regimes” and “varieties of capitalism” (Esping-Andersen 1990, Korpi & Palme 1998; Hall & Soskice 2001). Institutional theory emphasizes how enacted policies and institutions tend to reinforce their legitimacy and popular support over time by shaping citizens’ economic interests, cognitive mindsets, and social identities (Evans *et al.* 1985; Pierson 1993; Rothstein 1998). According to this line of theory, the relationship between welfare policy institutions and public opinion is one of mutual influence: public opinion provides input to politicians and policy makers, but attitudes are also shaped by “policy-feedback effects” on the output side of the political process (Rothstein 1998; Mettler & Soss 2004).

This anticipated mutual responsiveness between citizens and policy design can be explored by comparing attitudes across countries with varying institutional configurations. There are many empirical studies exploring the relationship between welfare policy institutions and attitudes from a country-comparative perspective. These studies typically focus on attitudes towards welfare *state* responsibilities. These studies show that aggregate public support for the welfare state is relatively strong in all countries (with the United States as a notable exception in many respects). Some but far from all of these studies find a clear relationship between institutions and attitudes (see Svallfors 2012a for a recent review of the collected findings). For example, previous research focusing on support for state-administration of social services offers inconclusive evidence: some studies report that support for government effort is stronger in countries with stronger welfare state commitment (Gevers *et al.* 2000; Jordan 2010), whereas other studies do not find any association between policy design and attitudes (Bean & Papadakis 1998; Wendt *et al.* 2010; Missinne *et al.* 2013).

Paying closer attention to market attitudes might generate a deeper understanding of how welfare attitudes vary across countries in tandem with between-country variation in policy design. Simply put, since the state carries significant responsibility for social welfare administration in all relatively affluent countries, it is not surprising that most citizens in most countries endorse basic welfare state functions. There are nevertheless important differences between countries in the degree to which state-led welfare policies provide a full-scale substitute for market-based social insurance and services (Esping-Andersen 1990; Korpi & Palme 1998). The question of what relative *share* of institutional responsibility citizens ascribe to the state in providing basic social welfare thereby becomes analytically interesting. Hence, while public support for basic welfare state functions is known to be strong in all countries, there might still be considerable differences between countries regarding the extent to which citizens support market-based welfare as a *complement* to state-organized welfare. This question is not scrutinized sufficiently in previous research as it only covers support for state-led policies.<sup>3</sup>

Most existing public opinion research that focuses on the market concentrates on attitudes towards wage inequality. These studies find that there is considerable between-country variation in the acceptance of pay differentials: people living in countries with less economic inequality accept greater wage inequality. At the same time, there is a similar pattern in that most citizens, independent of country of belonging, want a substantial *decrease* in wage inequality (Osberg & Smeeding 2006; Svallfors 2007b). This strong public preference for lowering wage/income inequality is partly explained by a widespread belief that existing inequality in outcomes has negative consequences for equality of *opportunity* as well (Kenworthy & McCall 2009; McCall 2013).

Research exploring the legitimate scope of market inequality from a public opinion perspective can benefit from paying more careful attention to the welfare policy domain. As welfare policy constitutes the primary *political* device for modifying market-based inequalities and enhancing equality of opportunity in today's society, studying attitudes towards the market from a welfare policy perspective can tell us something about how and to what extent citizens think that (perceived) market failures, inequalities, and insecurities should be addressed *politically*.

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<sup>3</sup> Some might contend that displayed support for state-organized welfare automatically verifies a lack of support for market-based welfare policies, and that such a (proclaimed) trade-off makes it redundant to study market attitudes. The findings in this thesis demonstrate that this assumption is far too simplistic: *empirically*, attitudes towards the market are not simply mirror images of attitudes towards the welfare state.

Displayed between-country variation in the “decommodifying” capacity of existing welfare policies makes it particularly interesting to explore this matter from a country-comparative perspective, as theories of policy responsiveness and/or “policy feedback” anticipate a close relationship between mass-political mindsets and actual welfare policy design, suggesting that there might be significant differences between countries in the extent to which citizens think that the legitimate scope of market inequality should be negotiated via social policy.

This thesis explores the relationship between attitude patterns and welfare policy design from a country-comparative perspective in two ways. First, it explore the extent to which *aggregate* support for market distribution of social services varies between countries in correspondence with between-country variation in actual policy design (Article III). Second, this thesis explores how class conflicts are shaped in relation to welfare policy arrangements (Articles I and III).

## **Methodology**

### **Contexts of inquiry**

The articles in this thesis either compare attitudes across countries or deploy Swedish public opinion as a test case. Sweden provides a useful case for exploring attitudes towards the market from a welfare policy perspective. Traditionally, the Swedish welfare state has been conceived as the closest fit to the encompassing or social democratic welfare regime ideal type (Esping-Andersen 1990; Korpi & Palme 1998). In Sweden, the state has, to a greater extent than in most other countries, provided generous social insurance and high-quality social services to the vast majority of the population. In this sense, the Swedish model arguably provides the most distinguished empirical example of concrete “politics against markets” (Esping-Andersen 1985).

However, Swedish welfare policy is currently undergoing transformation. Eligibility rules have been tightened and replacement rates have been lowered in social insurance systems (Ferrarini *et al.* 2012). In addition, while social services are still publicly funded, there is a strong trend of privatization concerning the *delivery* of social services across a range of policy areas, including health care, education, elderly care, and child care (Blomqvist 2004; Berg 2007; Hartman 2011). In parallel, some have suggested that “market-friendly” ideology has grown in significance among economic and political elites (Blyth 2001; see also Crouch 2004).

There is also reason to look beyond the Swedish context by comparing attitudes across countries. First, on a general basis, comparing countries makes it possible to evaluate whether patterns uncovered in a single country are applicable to a larger set of countries, or if they are instead unique to that specific national context. Second, theories often suggest that patterns and variations in public opinion are explained by welfare policy institutions found at the country level. In order to be able to explore institutional variation and its relationship to attitudes, one needs to compare countries with different policy configurations of the state-market nexus (Ragin 1982).

The studies in this thesis compare attitudes across the relatively affluent OECD countries. This includes most of Western Europe, the Anglo-Saxon countries (Australia, Canada, Great Britain, New Zealand, United States), and Japan. The reason for this selection of countries is mainly theoretical: influential welfare state theories claim to account for the history and current welfare state arrangements of the relatively affluent countries (e.g. Esping-Andersen 1990; Korpi & Palme 1998; Hall & Soskice 2001). In addition, a strength of this thesis is that it looks beyond the European context, as previous research has shown that the most significant differences in both political attitudes and policy design are found between the Anglo-Saxon world and European countries (Svallfors 2007a).

## **Data**

As a reflection of the lack of attention being paid to the market in previous research, there is a general shortage of existing databases covering citizens' attitudes towards the market. To overcome this obstacle, two strategies were used in this thesis. First, new survey measures were constructed for the *Swedish Welfare State Survey (SWS)*, conducted in 2010; and the *Employment, Material Resources, And Political Preferences Survey (EMRAPP)*, conducted in 2011. In addition, underutilized indicators from the *International Social Survey Programme (ISSP)* were used for country-comparative analyses.

## **Variables**

*Attitude indicators:* In all four empirical articles, attitudes towards the market are contrasted with attitudes towards the welfare state. Since the empirical indicators covering attitudes towards the welfare state are known from previous research, they are not discussed further here (for descriptions of these measures, please see the separate articles). However, since the empirical indicators covering attitudes towards the market are less common, it might be useful to highlight them in this introductory chapter as well.

The first article used a survey battery (with four individual items) from the ISSP covering perceptions of market/class-derived social conflict. The survey question reads as follows: “In all countries, there are differences or even conflicts between different social groups. In your opinion, in <country> how much conflict is there between: (i) “poor people and rich people”; (ii) “the working class and the middle class”; (iii) “management and workers”; (iv) “people at the top of society and people at the bottom.” These four items were combined into an additive index. Using multiple items is one way to account for the fact that public discourse concerning class conflict might be framed somewhat differently in different national contexts.

The second article used newly designed questions covering citizens’ trust in the performance of market institutions. These questions were developed against the notion that business firms are crucial actors in the market capitalist economy as well as components of the market sphere with which citizens regularly come into direct contact in their daily lives (Crane *et al.* 2008; Crouch 2011; Hall & Soskice 2001). Conceptions of business firms are thus likely to be decisive for citizens’ understanding of market institutions in general, and trust in market institutions is measured by asking for citizens’ conceptions of business firm performance in embrative terms. The survey battery (with four individual items) is formulated as follows: “To what extent do you think that business firms in general”: (i) “offer reasonable prices on goods and services”; (ii) “turn business opportunities into job opportunities”; (iii) “offer favorable terms of employment for employees”; (iv) “adapt their enterprise to new knowledge and technology”. A latent variable covering trust in market institutions was constructed from these four items.

The third article used two indicators from the ISSP, asking about the appropriateness of market distribution of education and health care. The two items read as follows: “Is it just or unjust – right or wrong – that people with higher incomes can buy better [health care] [education for their children] than people with lower incomes?” These two items were combined into an additive index measuring level of support for market distribution of social services.

In the fourth article, a newly designed survey battery covering the issue of corporate social responsibility was used. The battery is intended to capture whether respondents think that the responsibilities of firms should reach beyond their immediate market relationships and interests. The wording is as follows: “There are different opinions about what tasks private firms should give priority to in order to be considered to be ‘doing the right thing.’ A number of tasks are listed below. Specify for each of them if you think that a private firm in general should give priority to the task or not”: (i) “solve

societal problems (such as environmental degradation)”; (ii) “ensure a job for everyone who wants one”; (iii) “make donations to charities and the like.” Patterns in responses to these items were explored using latent class analysis.

*Class:* Classes can be understood as structural positions defined from relations in production units and labor markets (Erikson & Goldthorpe 1992). Besides the fundamental distinction between employer and employee, further class distinctions can be made among employees. In this regard, the well-known Erikson-Goldthorpe-Portocarero (EGP) approach is used (Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992). A basic distinction among employees is that between the service classes and workers. Compared to the service classes, workers tend to enjoy less privileged positions within labor markets and employing organizations. Among other things, they tend to have less of the following: pay, organizational authority, work autonomy, employment security, on-the-job-training, and career opportunities (Evans 1992, 1996; Evans & Mills 1998a, 1998b; Goldthorpe & McKnight 2004; Edlund & Grönlund 2010; le Grand & Tählin 2013).<sup>4</sup>

Individuals are sorted into class categories on the basis of occupation (ISCO88) and employment status (employee/self-employed). As in previous attitude research dealing with class (Svallfors 2006; Edlund 2007; Kumlin & Svallfors 2007), the schema used in this thesis distinguishes six class positions: Self-employed, Service class I, Service class II, Routine non-manuals, Skilled workers, Unskilled workers.

The EGP approach defines “economic” classes (Scott 2002). Hence, rather than incorporating notions of *social* consciousness and action as theoretical building blocks of class, the question of whether social identities and behaviors are structured by class is treated as an open empirical one (Goldthorpe & Marshall 1996:101f). This thesis explores the empirical relationship between class position and attitudes, as well as how this relationship is mediated by the institutional context.

*Welfare policy indicators:* Macro-level indicators covering countries’ welfare policy design were constructed from economic data from the OECD. The first article combines data on tax revenues, social spending, and redistribution

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<sup>4</sup> The field of class analysis is characterized by vigorous debate. For example, there is an ongoing debate concerning the properties and “causal components” underlying the EGP schema (Goldthorpe 2000; Tählin 2007; le Grand & Tählin 2013). Moreover, there exist multiple theoretical approaches within class analysis (see Wright 2005; Esping-Andersen 1993; Grusky & Weeden 2005; Oesch 2006). This thesis uses the EGP approach since it provides a relatively straightforward measure of the labor market *hierarchy* (other approaches put more emphasis on various types of *horizontal* differentiation).

into a broad measure of welfare state effort (cf. Edlund 2007). The third article combines data on private spending on education and private out-of-pocket payments on health care to measure the share of private spending on social services (cf. Wendt et al. 2010; Busemeyer 2013). In addition, data on public sector employment was used to measure the share of services delivered by the public sector (cf. Stoy 2012).

Indicators of more immediate welfare policy design were not used in this thesis since such available indicators do not cover the social service dimension of the welfare state (high-quality databases such as the Social Citizenship Indicator Program [SCIP] cover particular social insurance programs). Still, it should be pointed out that economic data tend to be highly correlated with more direct measures of welfare policy institutional design. For example, countries with the highest levels of taxation, social spending, and redistribution are also those with the most extensive universal policy programs (Åberg 1989; Edlund & Åberg 2002; Korpi & Palme 1998).

## **Methods**

In this thesis, different statistical methods are used depending on the specific research question that is explored in a particular paper.

The second paper uses *structural equation modeling* (SEM). This method fits the aim of this particular paper since it conceptualizes associations between indicators in terms of linear relationships. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is a basic ingredient of SEM. When estimating a latent variable, CFA uses the co-variation between a set of manifest indicators. The variance part in each indicator that is unrelated to the latent variable is excluded from it, a procedure that reduces measurement error. In addition, within the SEM framework, it is possible to model the structural relationships between multiple latent variables in a rigorous fashion (Brown 2006; Schumacker & Lomax 2010). This latter property is important for the purposes of the second article since it evaluates the added value of bringing the variable of trust in market institutions into an established theoretical model.

The fourth paper uses *latent class analysis* (LCA). LCA constructs non-ordered latent variables (nominal scale). This method fits the purposes of the fourth article since it seeks to distinguish qualitatively different views concerning combined support/disapproval of CSR and state intervention in the market, respectively. LCA distinguishes prevalent attitude constellations in the data and allocates respondents with similar response patterns into specific clusters (McCutcheon 1987; Hagenaars & Halman 1989). Multiple

model-fit statistics are used to determine the number of clusters that are needed to effectively represent the data (Vermunt & Magidson 2005).

The two country-comparative papers (Articles I and III) use *multilevel analysis* (MLA). MLA is well-suited for country-comparative analyses as it provides a statistical tool for exploring relationships between variables that belong to different hierarchical levels (Hox 2010; Steenbergen & Jones 2002). In this case, the effects of contextual variables (welfare policy institutions) on an individual-level outcome (attitudes) are estimated, as is the extent to which a specific individual-level characteristic (class position) moderates this effect.

## **Results: Summary of the four articles**

### **ARTICLE I: The Democratic Class Struggle Revisited: The Welfare State as a Vehicle of Social Cohesion and Political Conflict**

This paper explores how patterns of class conflict differ between modern welfare states. In contrast to previous research exploring this question from a citizen perspective, this study explores class conflict from two different angles. Whereas previous attitude research has solely explored political conflict, this study also adds a dimension of *social* conflict. With this analytical distinction as the starting point, this study elaborates on the theoretical argument outlined in Korpi's (1983) classic study of *the democratic class struggle*, suggesting that welfare policy institutions mediate the extent to which institutionalized political conflict has come to replace unorganized social conflict in industrialized (democratic) societies. When comparing attitudes across 20 countries, using data from the two latest waves of the ISSP Inequality module (fielded in 1999 and 2009, respectively), some empirical support is found for this argument. First, citizens living in countries characterized by more encompassing welfare state arrangements and less economic inequality perceive society as characterized by *less* social tension compared to citizens living in countries characterized by relatively residual welfare states and greater economic inequality. Second, and in sharp contrast, the magnitude of class differences in attitudes towards welfare state redistribution correlates *positively* with the size of the welfare state: class differences in attitudes towards welfare state redistribution are stronger in countries with larger welfare states. Third, a negative country-level correlation between these two types of class conflict is found: countries with *more* political conflict tend to display *less* social conflict.

By extending the analytical framework to include market-based social conflict, this paper adds new insights to research dealing with welfare policy and class. In particular, findings suggest that theory and empirical analyses need to distinguish between different aspects of class conflict when seeking to draw conclusions concerning the mediating role of welfare policy. Whereas a more encompassing welfare state tends to decrease class-related social tension, it also works to consolidate/reinforce class conflicts in the domain of welfare politics.

The results in this study demonstrate that class-based material inequality and social conflict can be substantial without being transformed into political class conflict. Correspondingly, lively political conflict does not imply that society in general is marked by social tension. It is disparities in collective organization and political articulation, rather than differences in material circumstances as such, that account for between-country variation in the strength of the link between economic class cleavages and mass political action.

All in all, the findings provide an important piece to the puzzle of how welfare policy institutions channel class conflicts.

## **ARTICLE II: Institutional Trust and Welfare State Support: On the Role of Trust in Market Institutions**

The importance of institutional trust for structuring welfare state support has been advanced by several scholars. Yet, the thesis has not received convincing empirical support. Within this article, it is argued that the weak evidence observed by previous research is partly caused by the failure to extend the analytic framework beyond the study of public institutions. Using Sweden as a test case, the analytic framework in this study covers trust in both public institutions and market institutions. Using newly-designed measures included in the *Swedish Welfare State Survey*, conducted in 2010, a positive correlation is found between the two different dimensions of institutional trust. Hence, contrary to popular beliefs, people who trust the state also tend to trust the market. However, the two dimensions of trust have different effects on welfare policy preferences. Whereas greater trust in public institutions increases welfare state support, greater trust in market institutions decreases support for state-organized welfare. In addition, the theoretically expected relationship between trust in public institutions and welfare state support is strengthened when controlling for trust in the market. Moreover, trust in market institutions is found to mediate the relationships between socio-economic position and welfare state support.

The findings in this study suggest that citizens' level of institutional trust is important for structuring welfare state support. However, in contrast to previous theoretical thinking, the empirical evidence suggests that trust in the market is more important than trust in the state for shaping welfare policy preferences. These findings underline the importance of studying trust and attitudes towards institutions that are seen as conceivable alternatives to the state for administering social welfare, not least in studies interested in the link between institutional trust and support for the welfare state.

### **ARTICLE III: Public Opinion against Markets? Attitudes towards Market Distribution of Social Services: A Comparison of 17 Countries**

This paper studies how citizens view the appropriateness of market criteria for allocating services commonly associated with social citizenship rights and welfare state responsibility. The paper focuses specifically on a potential role for the market in the provision of social services. The relationship between welfare policy institutions, class, and attitudes is explored by comparing attitudes across 17 OECD countries, using multilevel modeling and data from the 2009 ISSP. Results show that public support for market distribution of services is relatively weak in most countries. Still, attitudes are found to vary widely across countries in tandem with between-country variation in welfare policy design. First, aggregate public support for market distribution of services is stronger in countries where there is more private spending on services. Second, class differences in attitudes are larger in countries with more extensive state-led delivery of services. Third, a zero-correlation is found at the country-level between support for market distribution and support for state-led service provision. Thus, while public support for state provision of social services is strong in all countries, this study shows that there are considerable country differences in the extent to which citizens think of the market as a viable complement to the state in providing these services.

Results point to the operation of normative feedback effects flowing from existing welfare policy arrangements. Thus, in contrast to much previous welfare state research on this matter, this study finds considerable country differences in welfare policy attitudes and popular justice beliefs. The empirical results presented in this paper suggest that future research exploring the relationship between welfare policy and attitudes from a country-comparative perspective is well advised to place greater focus on the market institutions that, to varying extents in different countries, act as supplements to the state in the administration of social welfare.

## **ARTICLE IV: Public Support for Corporate Social Responsibility in the Welfare State: Evidence from Sweden**

Several scholars have claimed that we are currently witnessing a growing saliency of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Yet, while there is a lot of theoretical work suggesting that public opinion might prompt firms to behave in socially responsible ways, there is a lack of empirical studies exploring the extent to which ordinary citizens actually support CSR. Moreover, the state is conventionally theorized as the main institutional device for governing markets and their social consequences, and there is a growing literature exploring the relationship between CSR and the role of government. On the basis of these observations, this paper juxtaposes public attitudes towards CSR and state intervention in the market. Two opposing narratives are outlined concerning the texture of public opinion. The first narrative suggests that citizens favor voluntary CSR as a substitute for state intervention in the market; the alternative narrative contends that they favor CSR in combination with encompassing state intervention in the market. Using latent class analysis and Swedish survey data collected in 2011, the empirical results demonstrate that the latter narrative is the more accurate. Most Swedes in favor of CSR are highly supportive of state intervention in the market.

This study finds public opinion to be divided on the matter of CSR. This cast doubt on the theoretical idea that CSR behavior has a uniform positive effect on a firm's reputation; it appears more probable that CSR behavior strengthens trust in the firm among certain groups but not among others. This raises concerns as to whether existing public pressures for CSR are enough to compel firms to engage with CSR voluntarily. Analogously, this result might provide part of the explanation for why firms are not always severely penalized when they behave in (apparently) socially irresponsible ways.

Moreover, the finding that most people in favor of CSR also support state intervention signals that Swedes do not see a clear contradiction between CSR and a generous welfare state. Results also show that social groups with fewer marketable resources are strongly overrepresented in supporting a combination of CSR and state intervention in the market. People in relatively strong market positions, on the other hand, are overrepresented in supporting a "conventional" market model of welfare provision (where neither state nor firms prioritize social responsibilities). Interestingly, no clear social profile is found for the relatively small group of people who support voluntary CSR as a large-scale substitute for the welfare state. Taken together, these results suggest that CSR ideology/discourse is relatively

marginalized in Sweden and that CSR is unlikely to offer a serious alternative to the welfare state.

## Concluding discussion

The overall aim of this thesis is to incorporate attitudes towards the market into welfare state research. This aim is carried out through four empirical studies that add a market component to the analysis of questions covered in current welfare state research. The theoretical implications of each respective study are discussed at greater length in the full articles. Still, a number of more general conclusions deserve to be underscored as well.

Concerning popular evaluations of market performance, overall findings suggest that citizens' perceptions are shaped by their everyday life experiences within the market structure. People who find themselves in more beneficial market/class positions put more trust in the general performance of market institutions (Article II) and perceive the market as characterized by less conflict (Article I) compared to people in less privileged market positions. In addition, a relationship is found between the level of economic inequality and the level of social tension: countries with more inequality typically display more social tension between those in the upper and those in the lower level of the socio-economic hierarchy (Article I).

At the same time, dissatisfaction with market performance does not automatically turn into support for "decommodifying" welfare policies. Aggregate support for both welfare state redistribution and market distribution of social services is found to be uncorrelated with a country's level of economic inequality (Articles I and III). In addition, class differences in attitudes towards redistribution are found to be *weaker* in countries with more economic inequality (Article I).

Citizens' attitudes towards the market in regard to the welfare policy domain are instead found to follow a somewhat different pattern and logic. Welfare policy attitudes appear to be shaped more by the character of existing welfare policy institutions than by crude economic conditions. First, aggregate support for market distribution of social services is found to be stronger in countries with a larger share of private spending on services (Article III). Hence, citizens' attitudes towards the legitimate scope of the market are found to be socially constructed in close correspondence with the makeup of actual welfare policy design. Citizens living in countries with less ambitious welfare states are more inclined to think of market-based welfare as a useful complement to state-organized welfare. In other words, citizens

more used to market-based service systems are more willing to accept market principles of justice playing a significant role in the distribution of services, whereas citizens used to public provision are more inclined to view these services as social rights that should be distributed independent of market logic. Second, the magnitude of class differences in political welfare attitudes is found to be stronger in countries with more encompassing welfare state arrangements (Articles I and III). Taken together, these findings suggest that citizens living in countries with stronger traditions of state-organized welfare are more inclined to think that the legitimate scope of the market nexus should be negotiated and calibrated via social policy.

From a theoretical perspective, the Swedish case is particularly interesting for examining attitudes towards the market from a welfare policy perspective. A number of important conclusions can be drawn on the basis of the empirical analysis in this thesis. One basic question concerns the role played by public opinion within ongoing processes of welfare marketization. In this regard, results demonstrate that public support for market-based provision of social welfare is relatively weak – only a small proportion of Swedes support a policy model that relies on market-based welfare provision (Articles II, III and IV). This indicates that ongoing reforms are unlikely to be driven by broad layers of the ordinary population pushing for such policy change. This does not mean that public opinion is without importance for current policy developments. Instead, it suggests that the prevailing texture of public opinion functions more as a *constraint* than a driving force within ongoing processes of welfare marketization.

Another interesting finding is that Swedes who distrust the state also tend to distrust the market (Article II). This result problematizes portraits of public opinion conveyed in mass media and public debate. In particular, reports of citizens' skepticism concerning the quality and performance of existing public welfare programs are sometimes interpreted as signaling public support for private insurance and other types of market-based welfare (e.g. Danielsson 1997; Magnusson 2011a, 2011b). According to this thesis, such inferences are premature and, probably, too simplistic. This is because many citizens who are skeptical about the performance of the welfare state also distrust market-based policy alternatives. Hence, to be able to draw conclusions on this and similar matters, trust/attitudes towards the market need to be explicitly incorporated into the analysis.

In addition, this thesis offers a take on the burgeoning debate on corporate social responsibility (CSR). In this respect, results show that most people who favor corporate social responsibility also support the welfare state (Article IV). Hence, there are no signs that a large share of Swedes think of

CSR as a full-scale alternative to the welfare state, or that public discontent with the state is fueling public demand for CSR. Instead, findings suggest that public opinion concerning the role of business in society resonates with more “traditional” distributive and ideological struggles. People less equipped with marketable resources seek to constrain the “pure” market logic, in particular by means of state intervention in the market – and to some extent also via CSR policies – whereas those well equipped with scarce productive resources tend to support welfare provision through the “free” market. Hence, there are no clear signs that the (proclaimed) growing saliency of CSR would signal a fundamental shift in the way that ordinary citizens think and act politically in relation to the market and its social consequences: Swedes continue to think of the state as the ultimate guarantor of welfare, and only a small segment of the population supports market alternatives as a substitute for the welfare state.

Moreover, Sweden stands out from a country-comparative perspective due to its substantial class differences in political welfare attitudes. On average, people in more privileged class positions perceive less market-based social conflict (Article I), place more trust in the institutional performance of the market (Article II), are more positive towards market-based provision of welfare (Articles II, III and IV), and are more resistant towards welfare state redistribution (Article I). These findings demonstrate that class remains important for understanding Swedish welfare politics, and that those narratives describing the Swedish model as a large-scale “societal compromise” between partly conflicting political interests rooted in the labor market are not misplaced.

This thesis has to a large extent explored unknown territory. Hence, quite naturally, there are limitations to this project that could trigger future research. First, this thesis solely covers cross-sectional associations. Longitudinal analyses might be a fruitful strategy to further establish how attitudes vary in tandem with the design of welfare policy. At least in a short-term perspective (depending on future policy changes and developments), the Swedish case will be of particular analytical interest for longitudinal analysis due to its unique tradition of encompassing state-organized welfare combined with a relatively steady pace of welfare marketization in the present.

Future research should also look at a broader range of welfare policy areas, as popular beliefs about the legitimate scope of the market might vary between policy domains. For example, some theorists have described ongoing policy change as distinguished by a process whereby private insurance systems become *layered* onto existing public programs (Hacker

2005; Streeck & Thelen 2005). Building on these theories, it would be interesting to study the extent to which citizens in Sweden and elsewhere learn to support private insurance as *supplements* to existing public insurance systems, for example in regard to health care.

Second, in this thesis, exploration of research questions dealing with institutional trust and corporate social responsibility is limited to the specific case of Sweden. As demonstrated by the country-comparative studies in this thesis, attitudes towards the market sometimes vary considerably between countries. Public opinion towards CSR might thus vary across countries displaying different institutional “varieties of capitalism.” Hence, while this thesis reveals marginal public support for CSR as a large-scale substitute for welfare state intervention in the market, such a policy model might draw stronger public support within an alternative politico-institutional setting. Future studies dealing with trust in the market should also look beyond the Swedish context, as it has been suggested that “social traps” generated by a general lack of trust in both institutions and people in general might explain why certain countries have had problems developing well-functioning welfare states and markets (Rothstein 2005, 2011a). In addition, on a general basis, as both institutional theories and statistical databases develop, the geographical scope of country-comparative welfare attitude research should be broadened, for example by paying more attention to Eastern Europe (Bohle & Greskovits 2012). Future studies seeking to depict citizens’ attitudes towards the proper mix of institutional social responsibility in its full complexity should also consider attitudes towards various components of civil society.

To conclude, the collected findings of this project offer empirical insights into one of the central tenets in welfare state theory: that is, between-country variation in welfare state development, effort, and popular support need to be understood in relation to the “decommodifying” functions of the welfare state (Korpi 1983, 2006; Esping-Andersen 1985; 1990; Korpi & Palme 1998, 2003; Huber & Stephens 2000). In addition, the respective empirical studies demonstrate that focusing on attitudes towards the market elucidates important inquiries in current welfare state literature, including research dealing with class cleavages, institutional trust, institutional feedback effects, and corporate social responsibility. By incorporating attitudes towards the market in relation to welfare state support, this thesis contributes to increasing our understanding of the political and moral mindset of citizens in advanced political economies. Public attitudes towards the welfare state are to a significant degree formed by citizens’ perceptions and evaluations of the market and its actors. In order to further our knowledge about preferences regarding the role of the state in modern society, and to stay in

tune with ongoing policy developments, future socio-political research is well advised to bring the main alternative to the state – the market and its actors – into the analytical framework.

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