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The role of the state and performance of the welfare state in Russian people's opinions: What lessons can be learned with respect to the welfare regime and class situation?

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Abstract

This study addresses Russian people's attitudes toward the welfare state along two dimensions: the perceived performance of welfare institutions (how things *are*) and the desired role of the welfare state (how things *should be*). The 2015 Social Distinctions of Modern Russia survey provides the data for the analysis, which sheds light on the combined welfare state opinions. These attitudinal indicators are set against the backdrop of European survey results by Roosma et al. (2014). The results show similarities to the findings of the European survey as to the proportions of respondents falling within the fourfold combined welfare state opinions. Contrary to Roosma et al.'s findings, we found little variance in terms of education, subjective income, egalitarianism, or labour market position in Russians' combined welfare state opinions. Conclusions for class analysis in the Russian context are drawn.

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Introduction

Researching attitudes is not an easy task; criticism has shown how difficult it is to grasp people's opinions when it comes to the construction of attitude scales (Gardner 1975) or approaching the middle response category (Moors 2008). The number of welfare attitude studies is growing and this area of research date back to the late 1970s and early 1980s (Chung et al. 2018). However, enquiries into attitudes towards some institutions, for example the welfare state, provide crucial information for policy-makers. It is important to study attitudes toward the welfare state, since such considerations unveil something about the legitimacy of the welfare state (Toikko and Rantanen 2017).

Analyses of opinions can be uni-dimensional, taking only for instance a satisfaction angle into account, or they can provide a more nuanced picture about the dynamics of the phenomenon under scrutiny. We argue that accounts that consider how things *currently are* (in people's opinions) are not capable of constituting the whole picture of what people think of their institution, but such considerations need to be complemented by accounts of people of how things *should be*. Such a notion, adopted from Roosma et al. (2014), does not only provide us with a multi-dimensional means for analysing people's attitudes, but it also invests us with capabilities to see a dynamic aspect of the institution in question. In other words, the combined welfare state opinions (constituted by dimensions of how respondents see how things are and how they should be) allow us to form a link between the past, present, and future of the Russian welfare state.

What is more, the study by Roosma et al. (2014), based on the European Social Survey's analysis of people's opinions in 22 European countries, provides us with a comparative perspective to analyse in which aspects Russians' welfare state attitudes differ from those of European people representing

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Conservative, Liberal, Mediterranean, Post-Communist, and Social-Democratic welfare state regimes. An interesting issue is how opinions on the Russian welfare state differ from the Post-Communist regime (representing Eastern and Central European countries). Another hypothetical point concerns the similarity between the Social-Democratic regime (consisting of the Nordic countries), which is characterized by people's strikingly positive accounts of the institutions of the welfare state and wide support for the role of the state in the provision of social services. A quarter of a century has passed since the collapse of the Soviet Union, but there might still be legacies from the Soviet era in terms of public support for social services in Russia.

Throughout the post-Soviet decades, welfare-oriented attitudes have shown their endurance in post-communist countries. In the Czech Republic, the residual model combined with *ad hoc* social policy solutions has encountered resistance in the minds of the people. They regard it as unjust, costly, and mismanaged (Rabušic and Sirovátka 1999). Butkeviciene (2012) found that Lithuanian people have high expectations for the role of the state in welfare provision. More specifically in Butkeviciene's study, there was wide support for the care of the elderly, unemployed, and ill as well as people living with physical and mental disabilities being organized publicly.

Public attitudes towards the welfare state have been traditionally overwhelmingly positive in Scandinavia (Nordlund 1997), a group of countries often referred to under the denominator 'Social-Democratic' regime (Esping-Andersen 1994). In Finland, there is a strong legitimacy for the provision of social services by public actors. According to a survey done in 2006, 90% of the respondents agreed with the statement that the state and municipalities should produce the majority of social services as well as health and sickness care; however, as many as 57% according to the same survey agreed that private services should be increased (Muuri 2008: 47).

Besides the aforementioned Post-Communist and Social-Democratic welfare regimes, there are also other European welfare regimes that might be worth noting in this connection: the Conservative (or Christian Democratic), Liberal (Anglo-Saxon) and Mediterranean regimes (Esping-Andersen 1994, Roosma et al. 2014, Toikko and Rantanen 2017).ⁱ It is possible that these types of welfare regime have also extended their attitudinal influence to Russia, although given Russia's historical trajectory and neighbourhood influence, the Post-Communist and Social-Democratic regimes would be the closest to the Russian model of the welfare state.

In the following, we first elaborate on tendencies in the Russian and more generally, the post-Soviet welfare state. Secondly, we elucidate the link between people's opinions and policy-making, and class situations related to this. Thirdly, we present the analytical framework by Roosma et al. (2014). Then, we proceed to data description, analysis, and conclusions.

Tendencies in the Russian (and the post-Soviet) welfare state

Social policy issues have been a largely neglected area of public policy in Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union. As a result, there has been 'an inadequate, unpopular and uneven system of social provision' (UNRISD 2015). Moreover, the post-communist welfare states in general are notorious for their low spending on governmental programmes; often such a state of affairs is due to ideological choices (Fenger 2007, Toikko and Rantanen 2017).

During the post-communist era, social policy in Russia has taken a direction from universal to more means-tested social benefits. The social policy reform in 2000 resulted in a greater number of children receiving benefits but a marginal improvement in the poverty situation (Notten and Gassmann 2008). A large-scale monetization of in-kind benefits (*l'goty*) – the conversion of free or discounted use of various public services into allowances – occurred when a new *l'goty* law came into force in 2005

(Wengle and Rasell 2008). The administrative reform, which had a special focus on the border regions, partly addressed this problem (Izhikova 2013, 113, Tarasenko forthcoming). An overall objective of the reform was to provide citizens with access to services of high quality.

In Russian social policy strategy documents, the following areas have assumed priority: social policy for families with children, elderly people, invalids, and citizens living below the poverty line (Zubarevich and Gorina 2015: 2, Tarasenko forthcoming). In the crisis year of 2014, the analysis done by Zubarevich and Gorina (2015: 22) showed that not only had the more indebted regions of Russia cut social policy expenditures, but so had regions with stronger business activity. There is regional disparity in financial resources allocated to different regions in Russia, which might have consequences for social policy programmes (and eventually, for the geographical variation of welfare attitudes). Wengle and Rasell (2008) reported that the *l'goty* system shifted the responsibility for welfare onto individuals and institutionalized the spatial differentiation of welfare provision.

Nevertheless, the variation in the level of per capita social policy expenditure between the Russian regions is surprisingly even in monetary terms. Although the regions vary hugely between the most well-off oblast (Moscow), at 22,000 rubles in 2014, and the least well-off oblast (Chukotskiy), at around 3,000 rubles, there is a more regular pattern of variation within regions, the central area clearly getting more than the peripheral areas. The mean level of social policy expenditure per capita in Russia was 10,000 rubles in 2014. As to the average, only Moscow (in the Central region) and the Evreyskaya oblast (in the Far Eastern region) outweighed it remarkably (22,000 and 18,000, respectively); accordingly, in the Central and Far Eastern regions the within-region variation was highest (at 3.4 times and 6.9 times, respectively). In the rest of the regions (North-Western, Southern, North Caucasian, Volga, Ural, and Siberian), variation occurred between 15,000 and 6,000 rubles between the centre and the periphery. (Zubarevich and Gorina 2015: 30.)

It is noteworthy that an epoch of negligence of social policy development has also been evidenced in other post-Soviet countries, such as the Baltic States (Aidukaite 2003). The neo-liberal social protection systems in other post-Soviet republics, the Baltic States, do not exactly mimic any of the social protection models developed in other regions of Europe (Paas et al. 2004: 4). The anti-socialist political climate has left an imprint on the evolution of the welfare regimes in the Baltic States (Aidukaite 2011). Even left-leaning politicians have regarded the Nordic Social-Democratic welfare model as too 'leftist' and instead favoured the Continental European *Sozialstaat* (Toots and Bachmann 2010). Traditional models based on gender-role attitudes are relatively persistent (Motiejunaite and Kravchenko 2008), which complies with the Continental European model that renders the dependents reliant on the entitlements of the breadwinner (Esping-Andersen 1996: 67). Households tend to respond to the social costs of the transition from communism to capitalism by cultivating informal economic strategies (Round and Williams 2010). In the transitional context, for example, households create family-based strategies in order to cope with social risks (for the Baltic States, see Karelson and Pall 2003).

The social policy choices in Russia, however, diverge from the mainstream post-communist ones. For example, pensions are fully state-funded, and receiving social benefits still bears Soviet-patriotic legacies (Tarasenko, forthcoming), which hints at the persistence of the Soviet social contract of 'social security over efficiency' (Cook and Dimitrov 2017: 18, Tarasenko forthcoming). Changes in such norms can even cause resistance in contemporary Russia (Tarasenko forthcoming).

The link between attitudes, policy, and class

There are different theoretical approaches to explain variations of welfare attitudes in a given population. The *socializing* explanation stems from an assumption that individual socialization processes, based upon group characteristics such as occupation, sex, or age, will lead to different values and norms that explain inter-individual variation in attitudes towards the welfare state (Andreß and Heien 2001). The *institutionalist* paradigm seeks to explain the variation in welfare attitudes based on the dominant ideology (Andreß and Heien 2001); in the Russian case, the (dominant) communist ideology has changed to something else, which one might expect to have traits of either neo-liberalist, Conservative or Soviet corporatist ideologies. Żukowski (2009: 28) places the Eastern European countries of the EU within the Bismarckian, low social protection type of regime (against the Beveridgean, high social protection type) in their typology of European welfare states. Although the social policy development of the Russian Federation might not follow the same path as that of the Eastern European countries, the Bismarckian model based on income maintenance and earnings-related benefits is a possible path to follow in the post-Soviet state's financial situation.

Blekesaune and Quadagno (2003) argue that public attitudes towards welfare state institutions have both individual and collective explanations. They trace these two ways of understanding attitudes towards the welfare state back to 'situational' and 'ideological' determinants or factors. They find more evidence of the ideological (in their study egalitarian ideology) explanation than the situational (in their study unemployment) one for welfare state attitudes. They hence confirm the results of Hasenfeld and Rafferty (1989) who maintain that self-interest and the ideologies of work ethic and social equality affect public support of welfare state programmes. According to Blekesaune and Quadagno (2003), there is mixed evidence of the effect of institutional welfare structures (or 'regimes') on public attitudes towards the welfare state. They propose a different line of reasoning, that of taking both individual-level and country-level variables into account: '... national variation in attitudes is presumed to reflect national differences in both individual- and nation-level characteristics' (418).

Class situation is an important predictor of a person's opinions on the welfare state. Roosma et al. (2014) speak of 'structural position' as a close equivalent to class situation.ⁱⁱ They maintain that people in a weak structural position have a lower income and lower education than those in a strong structural position, and that the former are more likely to become dependent on social benefits and services. Hasenfeld and Rafferty (1989) found traces in their study on Detroit Metropolitan area of the interlinkage between a 'working-class' situation or social-democratic orientation and support for the welfare state. In a strong welfare state such as Sweden, political orientation might not predict opinions on the welfare state. Svallfors (2011) found that the fact that Social Democrats lost Parliamentary elections and the Conservatives became the leading party in Sweden did not affect the strong legitimacy of the welfare state. In Sweden, this might be derived from the coalition between the middle class and the working class on the issue of organizing the welfare state, as Korpi's (1983) power resource theory points out.

Besides the socializing, institutional, and class factors, the 'culture of welfare' explanation for the link between attitudes and the perception of the welfare state is worth considering. To an extent, the cultural way of reasoning can be considered to be close to Andreß & Heien's (2001) socializing paradigm, in which socializing processes lead to the adoption of different values and norms. Pinker (1986: 114) elaborates on the concept of the 'culture of welfare' as follows:

The culture of welfare includes the complex meanings and values which influence the choices made in social policy and therefore determine in a given society what needs will be met, and on what terms, whether needs will be met by formal intervention, or left to informal care, and what kind of relationship will hold between the formal and the informal sectors.

The notions of ‘welfare state ideology’ and ‘culture’ can be used to denote almost the same thing (Andreß and Heien 2001, Blekesaune and Quadagno 2003), and cultural theory can be used as an explanation of internalized values and norms (Larsen 2008). Although Larsen relates the advance in the cultural line of reasoning to ‘disappointing’ findings for the institutional line of reasoning, we will not exclude the possibility that the prevailing norms and values in society would constitute a potential explanation for Russians’ attitudes towards the welfare state.

Combined welfare state opinions

A distinction can be made in opinion surveys between the preferred role of the welfare state and the perceived outcomes of welfare programmes (Roosma et al. 2014). Toikko and Rantanen (2017) call these two forms of attitudes *abstract* (how people value the institution in question, the ‘should’ dimension) and *concrete* (based on people’s experiences of the institution and programmes, how they are). These dimensions can also be distinctively approached either by measuring the support for the government as a ‘guarantor or supporter of welfare’ (Rantanen et al. 2015) or as perceptions by which people assess institutions or programmes as ‘good or bad, harmful or beneficial, pleasant or unpleasant, and likeable or dislikeable’ (Ajzen 2001, Tuokko and Rantanen 2017).

However, previous literature on the preferred role and the performance of the welfare state provide mixed accounts of the interplay of these two: in other words, there is no clear indication that the idea of how things really are predicts the idea of how they should be, or vice versa (Roosma et al. 2014). Therefore, Roosma et al. (2014) suggest that these two dimensions should be approached independently, ‘... allowing individuals to have a positive stance towards one dimension, while being critical on the other dimension’ (Roosma et al. 2014: 202). Roosma et al. (2014) use the following fourfold table to illustrate sentiments toward the welfare state that combine both desired (how things should be) and perceived (how things are) attitudinal aspects:

Table 1 – Four attitudinal clusters of combined welfare state opinions

Preferred role	Perceived performance	
	Good	Bad
Strong	Overall positive	Performance critical
Weak	Role critical	Overall critical

There is a class situation aspect in the combined model by Roosma et al. (2014). They assume that:

- People in a strong structural position will be more likely to evaluate the outcomes as good (overall positive or role critical cluster) because they are less acquainted with the levels of benefits or the quality of public services since they are not at risk or do not have to rely on them
- People with a weaker structural position depend more on welfare benefits and therefore are more critical of the actual outcomes (overall critical or performance critical cluster)

- People with left-wing or egalitarian sympathies will be more in favour of a strong welfare state (overall positive or performance critical cluster), than people with a right-wing or conservative ideology (overall critical or role critical cluster)

Roosma et al. (2014) build the hypotheses of their study on the basis of the aforementioned statements, although not all of them were confirmed and some were partly confirmed. More specifically, according to their results:

- The *overall positive* cluster was characterized by a status that implied higher than average levels of subjective income without any clear ideological profile
- The *performance critical* cluster involved more of those who shared egalitarian values and a left-wing ideology and whose subjective income was meagre
- The *role critical* cluster was characterized by respondents who had higher incomes and who shared more right-wing ideology, with the exception of the Mediterranean and post-communist countries in which the cluster was not substantially represented
- The *overall critical* cluster diverged most by regime type, and was characterized by profiles with lower subjective incomes, more left-wing aspirations and less often disability or sickness

Further, it is worth noting that in the post-communist bloc countries in Roosma et al.'s (2014) consideration, people with a right-wing ideology were considerably more likely to have an overall critical position than people with a leftist ideology; this was in sharp contrast with the other (Social-Democratic, Conservative, Liberal and Mediterranean) regimes.ⁱⁱⁱ This might indicate a missing link between the class situation and class interests in the post-communist bloc countries. We expect to confirm this finding in the Russian context, where, however, the picture might appear more confused because the anti-communist atmosphere (Crowley 2003; Sippola 2013) has less relevance in the latter context than in the Eastern European countries.

Data and methods

Data

This article uses the Social Distinction in Modern Russia (SDMR) survey data from 2015. The SDMR offers cross-sectional data with a sample of 5,349 respondents. The data cover a wide range of questions on Russian society and provide us with a set of attitudinal measures on what we call in this study Russian people's welfare state opinions. Data were collected via face-to-face interviews and only one person per household was interviewed. In this chapter, respondents from the Crimea region were excluded, resulting in data for 5,238 respondents.

Variables

Differently from Roosma et al. (2014), who used the latent class factor analysis for operationalizing and empirically describing the dispersion of people over the four opinion clusters, we approached the topic from a somewhat different perspective. First, we classified Russian people based on two welfare state opinion measures, and secondly, we used logistic regression to profile Russian people falling into the four opinion clusters, along six background variables: age, sex, education, income, egalitarianism, and labour market position.

Dependent variables

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The dependent variables were selected from the SDMR data. The variables were adopted from Roosma et al. (2014), who used European Social Survey data from 2008. The measures in these two datasets differ in some aspects. Roosma et al (2014) measured *preferred role* by what they call the range dimension ‘that indicates people’s support for the role of government in different policy areas’ (Roosma et al 2014: 204). They used six items altogether, e.g. including themes such as government’s responsibility to provide health care for the sick and government’s responsibility to provide child care (Roosma et al 2014: 205). *Perceived performance* was measured by ‘items asking people’s evaluation of the outcomes on different policy areas’ (Roosma et al 2014, 204). For this variable, they used six items, e.g. items such as evaluation of state of the education, or evaluation of the state of the health care system.

In our study, *perceived performance* was measured using the question, ‘In general, how satisfied are you with the functioning of: 1) health care, 2) education system, and 3) local social services’. Perceived performance was measured on a scale from 1 to 5 (completely satisfied – completely unsatisfied). Only three of the eleven items in the SDMR survey were included in our analysis since we focused only on social policy service-related items. The excluded items measured satisfaction with the local administration, regional administration, State Duma, federal government, the president, opposition parties, police, and courts. Cronbach’s alpha for the three items of perceived performance was 0.81.

In order to build a fourfold arrangement to illustrate Russian welfare state opinions, a sum variable of perceived performance was created and then turned into a dichotomous variable that separated satisfied and unsatisfied respondents. The neutral value ‘3’ of the sum variable ‘somewhat satisfied, somewhat not’ (23% of all respondents) was coded as unsatisfied. In what follows, perceived performance of welfare state is considered in this study as ‘good’ if the respondent belonged to the satisfied group and as ‘bad’ if the respondent belonged to the unsatisfied group (see also Table 1).

The social policy-related items that we decided to take into account when measuring perceived performance are subject to criticism in the sense that respondents might not be competent enough to make their assessments. For example, if a respondent does not have children at school, their evaluation on the performance of the educational system might be based on, for example, what is said about the issue in public debates on TV. Moreover, young people might have similarly little idea of how health care services perform, since they might not have had a point of contact with such services. The measurement bias that this might cause is supported by studies on social benefits: the benefit a person is likely to receive has the potential to be evaluated most positively (e.g. Laenen 2018). We acknowledge the potential for such a bias. However, we will not consider different groups (young, old, benefit users, etc.) differently but approach the data as a whole. In so doing, we replicate the research setting of Roosma et al. (2014); they did not differentiate the respondents by such groups, either. In a word, we will get a general and perhaps simplified picture of the complex nature of the real world.

Preferred role is measured by the question, ‘In your view who should run the following services. Citizens themselves, private companies, local authorities, regional authorities, or federal authorities?’ The four items are: 1) Taking care of children, 2) Taking care of the elderly, 3) Taking care of people with disabilities, and 4) Taking care of orphans.^{iv} Five out of nine items were excluded since our focus was solely to analyse social policy-related services. The excluded items included communal services, leisure institutions, medical care, schools, and universities.

The measures of preferred role were turned into a dichotomous variable that included those respondents who considered that at least two of the services (i.e. taking care of the elderly, children,

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people with disabilities, or orphans) should be run by governmental authorities (i.e. local, regional, or federal authorities) versus those who considered that they should be run by non-governmental authorities. The preferred role of the welfare state is ‘strong’ in the former group of the variable and ‘weak’ in the latter (see also Table 1).

Table 2 gathers the descriptive results of the binary coded measures for perceived performance and preferred role, where 44% of respondents the perceived performance of the welfare state as good and 77% considered their preferred role of the welfare state as strong. The measure for perceived performance included 86 missing cases (see Table 1), which limited our data to 5,152 respondents in the later analysis.

Table 2 – Welfare state opinion measures: perceived performance and preferred role of the welfare state

Perceived performance			Preferred role		
	%	n		%	n
Good	44	2266	Strong	71	3721
Bad	56	2886	Weak	29	1517
	100	5152		100	5238

Background variables

We used gender (male/female), age (four age groups), education (low, middle, high), labour market position, subjective income, and egalitarianism as background variables in the logistic regression models.

The measure for education included three categories: low (primary, fewer than 8 grades; incomplete secondary; general secondary), middle (secondary special; secondary technical; unfinished higher), and high (higher; higher scientific; scientific degree).

The measure for labour market position included the categories working, unemployed, at school, pensioned off as handicapped, retired, and other (including reasons such as maternity leave, house person, a long leave without pay, and other reason).

Subjective income was measured by a question asking respondents which of the six characterized groups they belong to.^v The respondents were divided into three categories with low, middle-level, and high income. The ‘middle’ group included respondents for whom durables are a problem or really expensive things are a problem.

Egalitarianism was measured by a sum variable based on four items measured on a scale from completely disagree – fully agree: 1) In our country income gap is too big, 2) The government must ensure that the unemployed live decently, 3) The government must spend less on supporting the poor, and 4) Citizens must care about themselves without calling on government support. Items 3 and 4 were reverse-coded. Cronbach’s alpha for the four items was very low (.43).

The methods included descriptive methods and binary logistic regression analysis. Altogether, four different regression models were built. In each of the four models, the fourfold welfare state opinion, i.e. respondent belonging to the overall critical, performance critical, role critical, and overall positive groups, is explained by background variables which were chosen based on previous studies (e.g. Roosma et al 2014). IBM SPSS Statistics version 23 was used in the analysis.

Results

Descriptive results

In the first part of the study all respondents were classified into four groups based on the fourfold structure introduced by Roosma et al. (2014). The measures measured perceived performance and preferred role. Table 3 indicates the number and share of respondents in each group. Nearly one third (31%) of the respondents were classified as overall positive, 41% as performance critical, 13% as role critical and 15% as overall critical.

Table 3 – Fourfold welfare state opinion in Russia (n = 5152)

	Perceived Performance	
Preferred Role	Good	Bad
Strong	Overall positive n= 1585 (31%)	Performance critical n= 2095 (41%)
Weak	Role Critical n= 681 (13%)	Overall critical n= 791 (15%)

The results show that although there is room for dissatisfaction with the performance of the welfare state in Russia, the performance critical cluster there is smaller than in the Post-Communist and Mediterranean regimes portrayed in Roosma et al.'s (2014) analysis. In attitudes towards the welfare state, Russians seem otherwise to follow the pattern of the Mediterranean and Post-Communist regimes: the performance critical cluster is remarkably larger than the overall positive cluster in all three contexts; the positions concerning these two clusters are opposite in the Social-Democratic, Conservative and Liberal regimes (Roosma et al. 2014). Another common characteristic of the Russian context and the Mediterranean and Post-Communist regimes is the small proportion of the overall critical and role critical clusters (the overall critical cluster in the Social-Democratic regime is small, too). However, in the case of these latter clusters, Russians seem to be significantly more role critical and overall critical than the respondents in the Mediterranean and Post-Communist contexts.

Table 4 shows descriptive results that indicate how the fourfold welfare state groups and background variables are connected. Apart from the gender variable, there are statistically significant differences between the background variables and the welfare state opinion variable.

Table 4 – Descriptive results

	Overall critical (%)	Performance critical (%)	Role critical (%)	Overall positive (%)	Total (%)	Total (N)
<i>Gender</i>						
Male	50	48	49	46	48	2454
Female	50	52	52	54	52	2698

*Age****

[Type here]

30 years and under	29	27	34	35	31	1576
31-45 years	29	31	31	26	29	1500
46-60 years	32	30	25	27	29	1496
61 years and older	10	12	9	12	11	579
<i>Education***</i>						
Low	21	18	25	23	21	1087
Middle	48	49	47	48	48	2472
High	31	34	28	29	31	1593
<i>Subjective income**</i>						
Low	15	13	11	10	12	622
Middle	76	79	81	83	80	4121
High	9	8	7	7	8	392
<i>Egalitarianism***</i>						
Less	7	4	7	6	6	282
Neutral	57	53	62	61	57	2911
More	36	43	31	34	37	1910
<i>Labour market position***</i>						
Working	57	58	51	53	55	2839
Unemployed	9	8	6	6	7	366
At school	5	5	11	9	7	350
Pensioned off as handicapped	4	4	3	5	4	207
Retired	14	15	16	17	16	802
Other	12	11	14	11	11	588

Significance of x2-test: $p < 0.05 = *$, $p < 0.01 = **$, $p < 0.001 = ***$

Logistic regression

The second part of the analysis included a logistic regression analysis. The results are presented in Tables 5 and 6. In each model, belonging to each of the four welfare state opinion groups is explained against belonging to the other three groups. The regression models were controlled for six background variables: gender, age, egalitarianism, and three class-related measures, education, subjective income, and labour market position (see also the descriptive results in Table 4). All control variables were added to the models as categorical variables and the enter method was applied. The goodness-of-fit of the models was evaluated using the Hosmer and Lemeshow test in which a non-significant chi-square result indicates a good model (Tabachnick and Fidell 2007: 458). The result of the Hosmer and Lemeshow test was non-significant in the cases of all four models.

First, we studied *overall critical* respondents. There is only little explanatory power in this model since only subjective income was statistically significant in the model and the control variables explained only 1% of the variance of the model. The results indicate that respondents with a low income level have a higher risk of being overall critical in their welfare state opinion compared to those with a middle-range income. In this group, income seems to be the only class-related

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antecedent, in contrast to other class-related variables in our study, i.e. education and labour market position.

In terms of class-related factors, the *performance critical* group of respondents differs from the overall critical group in the sense that instead of income, both education and labour market position are connected. Respondents with a low or middle-level education have a lower risk of belonging to the performance critical group compared to those who have a high education. Respondents who are at school or retired have a smaller risk of being performance critical compared to respondents who are working. In addition, young respondents have a slightly lower risk of belonging to the group than those 61 years old or older. Further, respondents who expressed egalitarian values have a higher risk of being performance critical than those who expressed neutral egalitarian values. The constant of the model was, however, non-significant.

With regard to *role critical* respondents, two of the class-related variables, labour market position and education, are statistically significant variables in the model. Those at school, retired, or in the 'other' group (i.e. reasons such as maternity leave, house person, a long leave without pay, or other reason), have a higher risk of being role critical compared to those who are working. Respondents with low education have a higher risk of being role critical compared to those with high education. Age is also connected: those 30 years older or younger and 31-45-year-old have a higher risk of belonging to the role critical group than those 61 or older. Those who shared more egalitarian values have lower risk of being role critical than those who positioned themselves neutrally.

The last model includes *overall positive* respondents, i.e. people who consider welfare state performance and state role as positive. In terms of overall positive respondents, all class-related variables were connected to this welfare state opinion group. Those with low or high income have lower risk of being overall positive compared to those with a middle-level income. People with a lower education have a higher risk of being overall positive. With regard to labour market position, persons who are pensioned off as disabled have a higher risk of being overall positive than those who are working. In addition, the measure for egalitarianism is also linked to the overall positive opinion group. Those who share more equal values have a lower risk of being overall positive compared to those with neutral values; the same result also applied to the role critical group.

With respect to all these models, however, we have to admit that items that we enumerated as results indicated only a small increased risk, not any significant risk of representing any cluster. The explanatory power of the models is very low. The Nagelkerke R^2 values for the logistic regression models were very low, ranging from 1% to 3%, which indicates that only 1-3 percentages of the variance of the model are explained. Moreover, the 95% confidence intervals for odds ratios of several statistically significant variables are very close to the odds ratios.

In this chapter, we attempted to find out how the chosen background variables are connected to the welfare state opinion groups. We therefore concentrated on studying whether factors introduced by Roosma et al (2014) are connected to welfare state opinions in the Russian context. Our results indicate that variables such as gender, age, education, subjective income, egalitarianism, and labour market position explain only very little whether a person belongs to one of the four groups, 'overall critical', 'performance critical', 'role critical' or 'overall positive'.

The limitations of this study are linked first and foremost to the measures used and that were available in the SDMR data. However, the best measures available were chosen to capture the perceived performance and preferred role of the welfare state in the Russian context.

Table 5 – Logistic regression models for the overall critical and performance critical groups

	OVERALL CRITICAL					PERFORMANCE CRITICAL				
	B	S.E.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)		B	S.E.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
				Lower	Upper				Lower	Upper
Gender (ref. female)	0,123	0,082	1,13	0,963	1,327	-0,003	0,06	0,997	0,886	1,121
Age (ref. 61+)										
30 years and under	0,001	0,193	1,001	0,686	1,46	-0,331	0,139	0,718*	0,547	0,944
31-45	-0,002	0,187	0,998	0,691	1,441	-0,141	0,135	0,869	0,667	1,131
46-60	0,182	0,168	1,2	0,863	1,667	-0,115	0,12	0,892	0,705	1,128
Education (ref. High)										
Low	0,015	0,116	1,015	0,808	1,275	-0,392	0,087	0,676***	0,57	0,801
Middle	0,006	0,092	1,006	0,84	1,205	-0,143	0,067	0,866*	0,76	0,988
Subjective income (ref. Middle)										
Low	0,263	0,117	1,301*	1,034	1,638	0,113	0,091	1,12	0,938	1,337
High	0,272	0,141	1,312	0,995	1,73	0,091	0,111	1,095	0,882	1,36
Egalitarianism (ref. Neutral)										
Less	0,179	0,164	1,196	0,867	1,649	-0,236	0,134	0,79	0,608	1,026
More	-0,059	0,084	0,942	0,8	1,11	0,371	0,061	1,449***	1,287	1,632
Labour market pos. (ref. Working)										
Unemployed	0,168	0,15	1,183	0,882	1,587	-0,01	0,117	0,99	0,787	1,245
At school	-0,377	0,199	0,686	0,464	1,012	-0,407	0,14	0,666**	0,506	0,876
Pensioned off as handicapped	-0,177	0,213	0,838	0,552	1,271	-0,186	0,153	0,83	0,615	1,121
Retired	-0,118	0,155	0,889	0,656	1,204	-0,228	0,114	0,796*	0,637	0,995
Other	0,099	0,131	1,104	0,854	1,427	-0,182	0,098	0,834	0,688	1,011
Constant	-1,871	0,192	0,154***			-0,128	0,138	0,88		
N=5144; df=15; x2=27,386; p<0,05; Nagelkerke R2=0,9%						N=5144; df= 15; x2= 113,814; p<0,001; Nagelkerke R2=3%				

Table 6 – Logistic regression models for the role critical and overall positive groups

	ROLE CRITICAL					OVERALL POSITIVE				
	B	S.E.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)		B	S.E.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
				Lower	Upper				Lower	Upper
Gender (ref. female)	0,095	0,088	1,1	0,927	1,306	-0,121	0,064	0,886	0,782	1,005
Age (ref. 61+)										
30 years and under	0,448	0,215	1,565*	1,026	2,387	0,123	0,147	1,131	0,848	1,508
31-45	0,666	0,208	1,946**	1,296	2,922	-0,16	0,144	0,852	0,643	1,129
46-60	0,342	0,183	1,408	0,984	2,014	-0,158	0,127	0,854	0,666	1,095
Education (ref. High)										
Low	0,24	0,122	1,271*	1	1,614	0,236	0,091	1,266**	1,06	1,512
Middle	0,052	0,101	1,054	0,865	1,284	0,109	0,073	1,115	0,966	1,286
Subjective income (ref. Middle)										
Low	0,001	0,135	1,001	0,768	1,304	-0,318	0,102	0,727**	0,596	0,888
High	-0,075	0,162	0,928	0,675	1,275	-0,267	0,123	0,765*	0,601	0,974
Egalitarianism (ref. Neutral)										
Less	0,25	0,167	1,284	0,925	1,783	-0,007	0,135	0,993	0,762	1,293
More	-0,29	0,092	0,748*	0,625	0,895	-0,233	0,066	0,793***	0,697	0,901
Labour market pos. (ref. Working)										
Unemployed	-0,192	0,186	0,826	0,573	1,189	-0,085	0,129	0,919	0,713	1,183
At school	0,642	0,168	1,901***	1,367	2,644	0,145	0,133	1,156	0,891	1,501
Pensioned off as handicapped	-0,262	0,259	0,769	0,463	1,279	0,413	0,156	1,511**	1,112	2,053
Retired	0,489	0,166	1,631**	1,178	2,257	0,106	0,121	1,111	0,877	1,409
Other	0,298	0,135	1,347*	1,033	1,756	-0,099	0,105	0,905	0,737	1,112
Constant	-2,514	0,215	0,081***			-0,712	0,147	0,491***		
N=5144; df=15; x2=62,111; p<0,001; Nagelkerke R2=2,2%					N=5144; df=15; x2=73,437; p<0,001; Nagelkerke R2=2%					

Conclusion

The proportions of Russians falling into different clusters of the ‘combined welfare state opinions’ framework were by and large similar to the patterns of different welfare state regimes in Roosma et al.’s (2014) study. Nearly one third of Russian respondents were classified as overall positive, 41% as performance critical, 13% as role critical and 15% as overall critical. There were fewer overall positive and role critical respondents in Russian than in Roosma et al.’s total sample, but more overall critical and a lot more performance critical respondents. The high presence of performance critical opinions is also typical in the Mediterranean and Post-Communist welfare regimes in Roosma et al.’s study.

The logistic regression analysis revealed little differences in terms of education, subjective income, egalitarianism, or labour market position in Russians’ combined welfare state opinions. However, these variables had some explanatory power in indicating the respondents’ risk of falling into the clusters. With respect to the ‘overall critical’ cluster (representing those who perceived the performance of the welfare state badly and preferred other than public welfare service provision), only subjective income was statistically significant in the regression: respondents with a low income level had a higher risk of being overall critical in their welfare state opinion compared to those with a middle-range income. This was similar to Roosma et al.’s (2014) overall findings.

The ‘performance critical’ cluster represented people who wanted more publicly provided welfare arrangements and perceived the performance of the welfare state negatively. Somewhat analogously to Roosma et al.’s (2014) general findings, Russian respondents who shared more egalitarian values had a higher risk (OR 1.449) of being performance critical compared those in the middle. Differently from Roosma et al., we did not find any effect of subjective income on the combined welfare opinions.

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The ‘role critical’ cluster encompasses those who are more satisfied with the performance of the welfare state but regard the state as not the proper provider of the services. Among Russians, labour market position was a statistically significant variable. Somewhat surprisingly, those at school, retired or in the ‘other’ group (i.e. reasons such as maternity leave, house person, a long leave without pay, or other reason), had a higher risk of being role critical compared to those who were working. Contrary to the performance critical profile, there were fewer of those who shared egalitarian values in the role critical group. These findings were somewhat opposite to Roosma et al.’s (2014) results on the role critical cluster. In their study, this cluster was likely to be composed of high income, right-wing ideology people.

The ‘overall positive’ cluster encompasses those who think the welfare state performs well and perceive the role of the state as positive in providing welfare services. In light of our results, it appears that people with lower education have a higher risk of being overall positive, while those who advocate egalitarian values have a lower risk. There was no indication that subjective income would affect belonging to this cluster, as in the study by Roosma et al. (2014).

The results can be approached from two perspectives. Firstly, they can be considered as reflecting something of the perceived role and performance of the Russian welfare state, where different class situations in Russia relate to the framework of ‘combined welfare state opinions’. Secondly, the results can be set against the backdrop of an analogous ‘combined welfare state opinion’ framework used in other studies, in this case Roosma et al.’s. As to the former approach, the Russian Government should not neglect the fact that a majority of Russian respondents perceived the performance of the welfare state as bad. Among those who perceived the performance as bad (the ones falling into the performance critical or overall critical cluster), the difference lay in the fact that the performance critical shared more egalitarian values than the overall critical ones. In other words, in compliance with previous literature (e.g. UNRISD 2015), the performance of the Russian welfare state is perceived as bad, although people would prefer ‘social security over efficiency’ (Cook and Dimitrov 2017, Tarasenko forthcoming).

These findings draw a somewhat different picture of Russia than any of the regimes represented in Roosma et al.’s (2014) study, in which more clear-cut variance was found by profile types falling within different clusters (although with respect to the overall critical cluster, some variance also occurred by regime type). In other words, not a single one of the clusters of combined welfare state opinions related to different European welfare regime types has an analogy in the Russian context. According to our analysis, the profiles that fall within different clusters in Russia are more homogenous than the profiles falling within different European welfare regimes. Gender, age, education, income, egalitarianism, or labour market position seem to little explain Russians’ opinions on what the state of Russian social policy is and how it should be.

The results also imply that people’s different class situations bear little significance in the division of Russian citizens into the four clusters. Three class situation-related independent variables that we tested – education, subjective income and labour market position – play in some cases minor and mostly insignificant role in explaining the Russian respondent’s risk of falling into any of the clusters. The same can be said with respect to a ‘class interest’ related independent variable, egalitarianism. In other words, there are other factors lying behind which clusters Russians fall into. Has the notion of ‘class situation’ been rendered irrelevant as a factor for opinion-building in post-socialist Russia in such a manner that class interests (e.g. the desire to protect the welfare state) have diverged from class situation? Or alternatively, are Russians *as a collective* in a weak structural position, a position that

Roosma et al. (2014) characterized as prone to falling into the overall critical or performance critical clusters? Or, in accordance with Korpi's (1983) power resource theory, does this imply the formation of a coalition between the middle and working classes to organize the welfare state with no significant difference in opinions on the running of social policy between the middle- and working-class situations? We can only hypothesize around this. In a way, however, our findings are consistent with Kivinen's (forthcoming) results, according to which the lack of class-consciousness and the almost non-existent difference between the working and middle classes in Russia can be – from the Western class analysis point of view – considered as an anomaly.

Our primary theoretical focus was to look at what lessons could be learned from the results with respect to the welfare regime and class situation. In addition to the class consideration, the findings can provide some ideas of the relevance of institutional and cultural paradigms for explaining welfare-related attitudes. The low variation along the egalitarianism variable and class situation-related variables seem to support Kivinen's (2009: 122) argument that the social classes have not organized themselves around real interest politics, as they have done in the Nordic countries. Neither do welfare issues follow any particular post-communist 'dominant ideology' pattern. This means that the institutionalist paradigm (Andreß & Heien 2001) cannot solely explain the patterns of the combined welfare opinions in the Russian context. Instead, 'welfare state ideology' or 'culture' explanations (Andreß and Heien 2001, Blekesaune and Quadagno 2003, Larsen 2008) might hold some explanatory power, as a sort of collective form of 'socializing' processes leading to different values and norms that explain variations in attitudes towards the welfare state (Andreß and Heien 2001). The same tendency is seen in the 'socializing' of ideologies: those who 'socialized' under communism encounter difficulties fitting their views into the left-right dimensions, in contrast to those socialized in democratic European countries (Otjes 2018). Therefore, theoretically, our findings provide support for a hybrid of Andreß and Heien's (2001) socializing and institutional paradigms explaining variation in welfare state attitudes.

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ⁱ In addition to these European welfare regimes, an East Asian welfare state model can also be distinguished, characterized by Confucian ideas of welfare models (Toikko and Rantanen 2017).

ⁱⁱ In our study, we refer to the notion of 'class situation' as an analytical unit, encompassing by and large what Kivinen (forthcoming) regards as the 'reproduction situation' (education, income, labour market position). Therefore, we will not cover the aspects of 'class position' in our analysis (implying ownership structures).

ⁱⁱⁱ There are mixed reports on the attitudinal climate in the post-communist countries with respect to left vs. right ideologies. Otjes (2018) found that citizens who had socialized during communist times had more difficulties fitting their views into the left-right dimension than those socialized in democratic European countries; this notion gives evidence for a hybrid of Andreß and Heien's (2001) *socializing* and *institutional* paradigms explaining variation in welfare state attitudes.

^{iv} The selected groups on whom various social policy measures (benefits, services) are focused, are subject to the 'deservingness' argumentation found in attitude surveys. According to van Oorschot et al. (2006), the elderly are seen as most deserving whereas the unemployed are regarded as less deserving and migrants the least (25). However, migrants – which would be a rather controversial group as regards Russians' opinions – as subject to social policy measures are not included in the items asked about, thus decreasing the 'deservingness' bias.

^v The six income groups are: 1) We cannot make ends meet. There is not enough money even for food; 2) We have money only for food, the purchase of clothes is a problem; 3) We are able to buy food. We can also buy clothes, if we stick to the cheap kind. However, we have a problem when there is a need to buy durables such as a TV set or a refrigerator; 4) We have enough money for food. We can also buy good expensive clothes. If we save money, we can buy durables, but things that are really expensive such as a summer cottage or a car are beyond our means; 5) We can buy durables without any problems. If we save, we can buy an inexpensive car or a modest summer home. However we do not have a chance to go for really expensive things such as an apartment or a modern house; 6) We have no material problems, we can buy whatever we want including real estate, an expensive car or an expensive tourist trip.