Broad Reciprocity, Elderly Poverty, and the Retiree/Nonretiree Cleavage in the Demand for Public Retirement Income Support

Juan J. Fernández, *University Carlos III of Madrid*

This article examines whether a structural or a neo-institutionalist approach best explains cross-national variations in the retiree/nonretiree cleavage regarding pension policy preferences. Prior research on welfare policy attitudes shows that in European countries retirees are more likely to support intensive public pension provision than are nonretirees, while in the United States both groups are as likely to support it. As an alternative to the increasingly predominant, neo-institutionalist approach, I propose a structural explanation that focuses on the role of elderly poverty. I argue that higher levels of elderly poverty induce nonretirees to establish their pension policy preferences based on a principle of broad reciprocity. First, in a context of high elderly poverty, nonretirees react to the demand for reciprocity by their impoverished elderly parents by supporting improvements in public pension protection. Second, in the same context, due to perceptions of retirees as highly deserving of public support, nonretirees feel more compelled to demand more public pension protection that improves the economic well-being of retirees. The results are consistent with this expectation. Using a sample of 30 OECD country years and multilevel models, countries with higher levels of elderly poverty present smaller retiree/nonretiree divides in support of public pension provision and pension spending increases. Keywords: pension policy; attitudes; political cleavages; reciprocity; elderly poverty.

Due to numerous pension policy reforms in all affluent democracies since the early 1990s, social policy scholars have shown increasing interest in public attitudes towards public pension programs. In the past two decades, many studies have examined the support base for public pension policies to help clarify prospects for further reforms in this policy arena. The emerging literature indicates an overwhelming endorsement of existing public pension arrangements and a general opposition to retrenchments across all affluent democracies (Hicks 2001). Yet, regarding the attitudinal divide between the elderly and nonelderly (or retirees and nonretirees),[1] the research also reveals "striking," cross-national differences (Lynch and Myrskylä 2009:18). In European countries, the elderly are significantly more supportive of intensive public pension provision than the nonelderly (Busemeyer, Goerres, and Weschle 2009; Smith 2000). By contrast, in several English-speaking countries—particularly the United States—the elderly are as likely as the nonelderly to demand intensive public pension provision (Cook and Czaplewski 2008; Hamil-Luker 2001). How can this puzzling, cross-national variation in the age (retiree/nonretiree) cleavage in pension policy attitudes be explained? This article examines the question by comparatively

1. In the introductory section, as well as the following two sections, the dichotomies of elderly/retiree and nonelderly/nonretiree are used as synonyms.

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analyzing attitudes towards public pension spending and the role of the state in protecting the elderly. It demonstrates that a structural approach provides the most suitable explanation for the differences in the retiree/nonretiree cleavage in pension policy preferences.

Surprisingly, welfare attitudes research has paid little attention to cross-national variations in attitudinal cleavages regarding concrete welfare policies (for an exception, see Conde-Ruiz and Profeta 2007), even though such analyses have substantial theoretical potential. By opening the possibility to empirically assess predictions from the institutional and structural approaches, a comparative analysis of cross-national variations in this attitudinal cleavage allows us to test macrosocial theories of supra-individual factors shaping political attitudes. Since public pension programs commonly have more beneficiaries than other welfare programs (Korpi and Palme 2007), this policy domain provides an adequate setting to examine whether policy feedbacks (Mettler and Soss 2004; Pierson 1993; Svallfors 2007, 2011) or structural inequalities actually shape individual preference formation. Additionally, an analysis of the extent of the retiree/nonretiree cleavage in pension policy preferences is also justified because this attitudinal divide can affect the political activism of retirees and the likelihood of pension reform. A retiree/nonretiree attitudinal cleavage is a necessary condition for the mobilization of retirees as an interest group, which could generate a new political fault line (Busemeyer et al. 2009).

This study builds on recent comparative research regarding the cleavages in support for welfare redistribution (for a review, see Svallfors 2007) by analyzing the relationship between macrosocial conditions, the institutional context, and the retiree/nonretiree divide in the support for public pension policy in 16 OECD countries in the mid-1990s and mid-2000s. Using slope-as-outcomes multilevel models, it explores whether cross-national variations in the cleavage between retirees and nonretirees in the support for state involvement in retirement income provision and public pension spending are due to structural or institutional conditions.

Variations in the attitudinal cleavage between the elderly and nonelderly have been attributed to the preexisting institutionalization of class politics (Kohli 2008) and the elderly bias in the welfare state (Busemeyer et al. 2009; Henjak 2008). My argument, however, emphasizes the role of structural conditions, particularly the problem of elderly income deprivation. Building on recent theoretical work regarding motivations for cooperation and welfare legitimacy (Bowles and Gintis 2000, 2011; Elster 2007; van Oorschot 2000), I contend that the extent of the retiree/nonretiree cleavage can best be explained through what I term *broad reciprocity*. First, higher levels of elderly poverty undercut the life chances of a group perceived as deserving public support, thus triggering sentiments of norm-based reciprocity among nonretirees. Second, high levels of poverty increase the demands of care and kin reciprocity of seniors on their adult children, fostering nonretiree interest in improvements in public pension protection. Ultimately, the combination of these two pressures induced by high elderly poverty should shrink the attitudinal cleavage between retirees and nonretirees. The structural approach provides the most robust explanation for cross-national variation in the age divide. The higher likelihood to demand more public pension provision among retirees is significantly reduced in countries where the elderly suffer more income deprivation.

Pension Policy Attitudes in Comparative Perspective

Since the early 1990s, social policy analysts have paid increasing attention to attitudes towards public pension provision. As public pension programs have matured and the effects of population aging have become more prominent, many scholars have examined pension policy attitudes to better understand the long-term evolution of these programs. In the United States, this scholarship has revolved around the "intergenerational equity" debate, which emerged from concerns that the development of more public programs for the elderly than for children could produce an age-differential in poverty rates (Preston 1984). In Europe, scholars have been mostly interested in the

age cleavage in pension policy preferences due to concerns about the sustainability of long-term growth in public pension spending (Boeri et al. 2001).

The literature on pension policy attitudes indicates that the population of affluent democracies is overwhelmingly supportive of available programs. Large majorities in all affluent democracies believe that "it is the state responsibility to provide a decent standard of living for the old" and support increases in public old-age pension spending (Dion and Roberts 2008; Hicks 2001; Smith 2000). This large support for public pension programs extends to its key organization principles, including pay-as-you-go financing and the redistributive and insurance principles that characterize most public pension programs (Kohl 2003). Accordingly, the population of affluent democracies is opposed to pension retrenchments oriented to cushion the financial impact of population aging. Cutbacks in generosity levels aimed at strengthening the long-term finances of these programs are generally rejected in these countries (Boeri, Börsch-Supan, and Tabellini 2002; Janky and Gál 2007).

Beyond noting average support levels resulting from the process of population aging, many studies have also considered age-based differences in pension policy attitudes. In this regard, the dominant expectation derives from the rational-choice approach, which indicates that retirees should be more supportive of public pension programs than the nonelderly and nonretirees. Retirees or pensioners have selective interests in pension generosity improvements because they would only fund the necessary tax increases over a shorter period, specifically while they are pension beneficiaries. By contrast, the working age population must finance those improvements for many years before they can become beneficiaries (Browing 1978; Persson and Tabellini 1990). Furthermore, the institutional context helps to raise awareness of this divide in pecuniary interests. As pension programs mature, the collective identity of pensioners should be reinforced (Campbell 2003; Pierson 1994). Consequently, a self-interest approach predicts the existence of a divide between retirees and nonretirees in pension policy preferences.

Consistent with this, analyses of pension policy attitudes that pool a large sample of countries indicate that on average retirees tend to be more supportive of generous public pension provision than younger citizens (Armingeon 2006; Blekesanue and Quadagno 2003; Tepe 2006). However, the literature also indicates puzzling cross-national differences in this regard. In European countries, there are indications of substantial age cleavages in pension policy attitudes. In France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and Scandinavia, the support for more pension spending and providing "a decent standard of living for the old" increases substantially with age (Andersen et al. 1995; Busemeyer et al. 2009; Smith 2000; Svallfors 2008). Moreover, European seniors are significantly more opposed to pension retrenchments (Boeri et al. 2002), pension provision through private means (Gelissen 2002), and increases in social security contributions (Janky and Gál 2007) than European nonseniors.[2]

At the same time, comparative studies indicate the absence of an age cleavage in pension policy preferences in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States (Hicks 2001; Kohli 2008; Taylor-Gooby 2001). Particularly in the United States, there is overwhelming evidence that age or retiree status does not structure preferences regarding the Social Security program (Cook and Czaplewski 2008; Hamil-Luker 2001; Ponza et al. 1998; Quadagno 1989; Street and Cossman 2006). "Although seniors are more sensitive to threats to Social Security, younger Americans are consistently just as supportive (if not more so) of the overall program" (Jacobs and Shapiro 1998:357). Thus, the scholarship reveals a substantial, cross-national variation in the age cleavage in pension policy preferences. Three recent studies have noted the magnitude of this variation (Busemeyer et al. 2009; Henjak 2008; Lynch and Myrskylä 2009). Still there is a dearth of multivariate research seeking to explain the differences in the attitudinal cleavage between retirees and nonretirees.

2. For an exception, see Lynch and Myrskylä (2009).

Elderly Poverty, Broad Reciprocity, and the Attitudinal Retiree/Nonretiree Divide

To account for the cross-national variation in attitudinal cleavage, this article follows a structural approach. My argument is that the objective, material needs of the elderly manifested in the elderly poverty rate shape the preferences of nonretirees towards these programs. Under conditions of higher elderly poverty, nonretirees become more concerned with the economic well-being of pensioners. In that context, nonretirees should be more supportive of generous public pension provision, thus reducing the divide with retirees in pension policy preferences.

By focusing on the level of elderly poverty deprivation, I draw on a central principle of the logic of industrialism theory, which holds that acute income deprivation among the elderly creates the demand for state-run, retirement income provision. With the collapse of premodern, informal mechanisms of elderly protection and the resulting higher risk of extreme elderly poverty, citizens of all ages identified the state as the agent responsible for meeting the income needs of the elderly (Cutright 1965; Kerr et al. 1964). Modern states thus created welfare programs to protect the population against the "risk" of longevity and chronic illness that can lead to substantial income losses, severe deprivation, and social isolation (Baldwin 1990; de Swann 1988; Wilensky 1975). This centrality of poverty-prevention goals in public pension systems is currently manifested in the existence of means-tested or flat-rate programs, as well as redistributive provisions in public earnings-related programs.

The linkage, therefore, between elderly poverty and public pension provisions noted by the logic of industrialism approach necessarily occurs through collective concerns about the economic standing of the elderly. Additionally, although the logic of industrialism approach does not elaborate the theoretical implications of this point, there are reasons to believe that concerns about the economic standing of the elderly vary mainly among nonretirees and according to structural conditions. Due to their shorter horizon, retirees can be expected to follow their self-interests and show consistent high support for intensive retirement income provisions. This means that the critical, pivotal group in the demand for public pension provision is the nonretired population, which relies on perceptions of the economic standing of retirees to establish their pension policy preferences. My argument is that if there is a substantial problem of elderly poverty such that retirees cannot attain a minimum economic well-being, nonretirees determine those preferences based on principles of reciprocity.

Regarding the objective position of the elderly, it is widely recognized that despite progress in recent decades, large pockets of elderly poverty persist in post-industrial societies. The evolution of public pension programs during the twentieth century has certainly improved the economic standing of the elderly.[3] As programs increase their coverage and generosity levels, relative and absolute elderly poverty rates have fallen in all affluent democracies (Holzman 1988; Myles 2002). Such strides, however, have not meant a final victory against income deprivation among this age group. Substantial, cross-national differences persist in contemporary levels of relative elderly poverty (Brady 2004, 2009; Duncan and Smith 1989). Figure 1 shows the percentage of the elderly living with less than 60 percent, 50 percent, and 40 percent of the median national income in the mid-1990s and mid-2000s for the 16 OECD countries considered in this study.[4] It indicates that many OECD countries still face high levels of elderly poverty.

3. In support of the expectation of a causal link between improvements in public pension provision and decreases in elderly poverty, Brady (2004) reports a negative relationship between social security transfers and elderly poverty in 18 affluent democracies.

4. Although within countries the three indicators have very different values, the three proxies are highly correlated. Pearson correlation are .796 ($p < .1$) between elderly poverty (50 percent) and elderly poverty (40 percent), .776 ($p < .1$) between elderly poverty (50 percent) and elderly poverty (60 percent), and .6021 ($p < .1$) between elderly poverty (60 percent) and elderly poverty (40 percent).

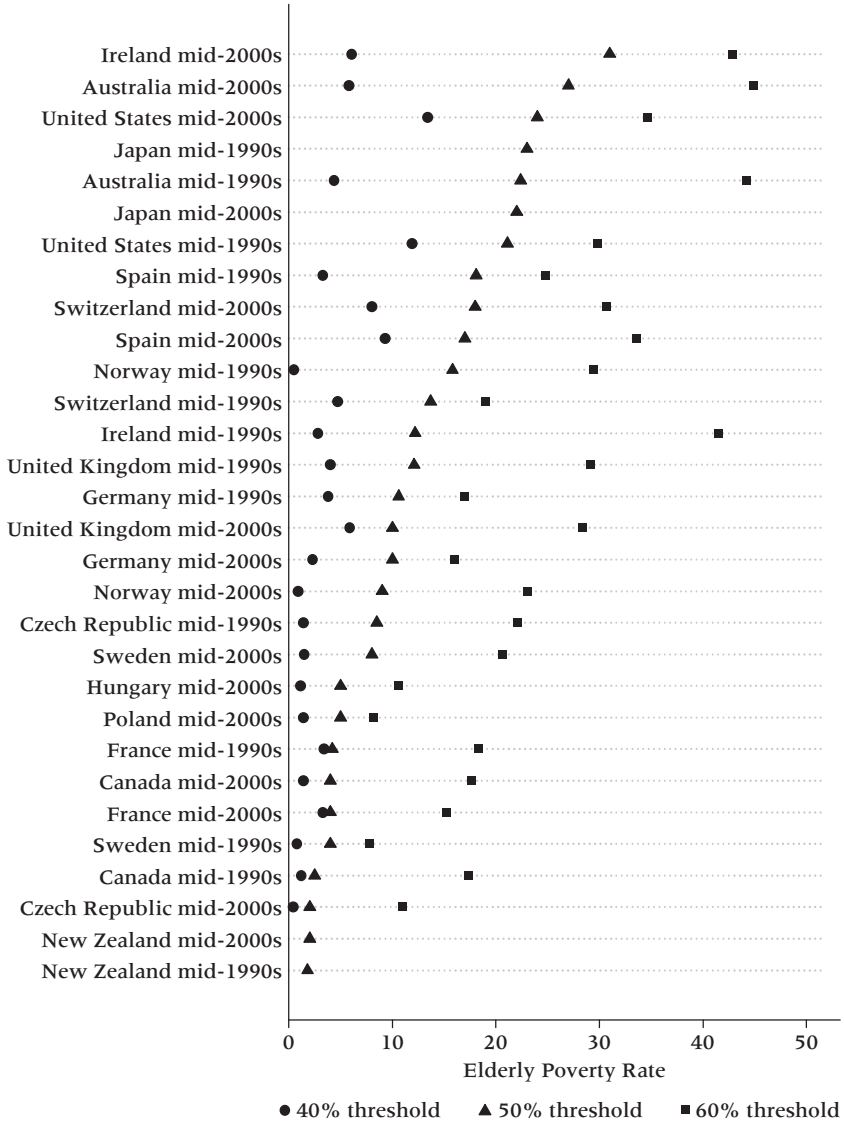

Figure 1 • ***Elderly Poverty Rates (40%, 50% and 60% of the Median Income) in 16 OECD Countries, Mid-1990s and Mid-2000s***

Sources: OECD 2008a:140; Luxembourg Income Studies 2012

Note: The three indicators correspond to the percentage of elderly population living with an income lower than 60 percent, 50 percent, and 40 percent of the median national income respectively.

My contention is that this variable level of elderly poverty should shape the welfare policy attitudes of nonretirees because it triggers a principle of broad reciprocity. A long tradition in sociological theory underscores the role reciprocity plays as a conditional and self-interested form of cooperation (Gouldner 1960). More recently, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (2000, 2003, 2011)

have made a substantial conceptual contribution to this literature by distinguishing "weak" from "strong reciprocity." Weak reciprocity occurs in a two-stage process in which A worsens its utility by transferring resources to B under the conditional expectation of a proportional repayment by B. This form of reciprocity has been documented among kin (Hamilton 1964; Maynard Smith 1964) and nonkin individuals (Pfeiffer et al. 2005; Trivers 1971). Strong reciprocity occurs instead when individuals establish their cooperation decisions based on deeply held social norms like fairness and inequity aversion (Fehr and Gintis 2007).[5] Following these norms strong reciprocators cooperate and punish shirkers even when they are aware that such action will reduce their personal payoff.[6]

Although this distinction represents a major step forward, both forms of reciprocity still have important similarities. First, neither weak nor strong reciprocators are fully altruistic. Their behavior remains a form of reciprocity. This is because they cooperate conditional on the formal commitment of all participants (weak reciprocity) and their fulfillment of a given generalized norm (strong reciprocity). Second, neither reciprocator is necessarily utility maximizing. Repayments to weak reciprocators may be insufficient and punishments of strong reciprocators may be individually borne. For this reason I propose the term broad reciprocity to include those forms of cooperation that precondition the fulfillment of some norm by payment receivers and that may not maximize the utility of the participants.

Particularly with nonretirees, high elderly poverty could trigger both dimensions of broad reciprocity, thus shaping their pension policy attitudes.[7] First, because high elderly poverty creates dire economic straits among retirees, who then seek direct care from their adult children as a form of kin reciprocation (Hamilton 1964; Maynard Smith 1964), high elderly poverty increases the interest of nonretirees in pension generosity improvements. Thus, in high elderly poverty countries, nonretirees have selective incentives to support improvements in public pension provision that reduce their need to provide direct care to their impoverished parents.

Second, since retirees are commonly perceived as highly deserving welfare support, their material deprivation should trigger a norm-based or strong form of reciprocity. The social sciences provide many instances in which prejudices against disadvantaged groups, such as retirees, prevent the activation of an other regardingness by the dominant group (Duckitt 2003). For instance, misconceptions that African Americans predominate among welfare recipients and are lazy help to explain white Americans' limited support for anti-poverty programs (Gilens 1999; Huddy and Feldman 2009). Yet, in this sense, the elderly (or retirees) constitute an exceptional case. Emerging literature on welfare legitimacy provides persuasive evidence that, according to public perceptions, formal and informal solidarity should be highest with the elderly. In all European countries and the United States, citizens perceive retirees as more deserving of public support than the sick/disabled, the unemployed, and immigrants (van Oorschot 2000, 2008; see also Page and Shapiro 1992). This consistent pattern can be explained by the perceptions that, contrary to immigrant or ethnic minorities, retirees meet the socially dominant conditions for deservingness: full membership in the community, a long history of contributions, and an immediate incapacity to attenuate their deprivation (de Swaan 1988). As a result, we could expect nonretirees to be consistently preoccupied with the economic well-being of

5. As Bowles and Gintis (2003) write, "A strong reciprocator comes to a new social situation with a predisposition to cooperate, is predisposed to respond to cooperative behavior on the part of others by maintain or increasing his level of cooperation, and responds to free-riding behavior on the part of others by retaliating against the offenders, even at a cost to himself, and even when he cannot reasonably expect future personal gains from such retaliation" (p. 433).

6. See also Engelen (2007, 2008) and Mau (2003). Fong, Bowles, and Gintis (2006) and Fehr and Gächter (2002) provide instances of empirical support for norm-based reciprocity.

7. Due to personal social networks and the prominence of the poverty issue in the mass media, nonretirees should be informed about the seriousness of elderly income deprivation in their country. Supporting this expectation, at the country level there is a high and positive correlation between the objective poverty level (Atkinson et al. 2010) and the average, national percentage of citizens who consider that there is poverty in their area (Pearson correlation = .504; $p < .1$) (European Commission 2007b).

retirees. In a context of high elderly poverty, this means that nonretirees should be likely to conform to the norm of protecting the elderly by endorsing more public protection for the largely transfer-dependent group of retirees.

Therefore, under conditions of high elderly poverty, nonretirees have self-interested and norm-based reasons—i.e., they act based on broad reciprocity—to support pension generosity improvements. Providing micro-individual support to the mediational impact of elderly poverty on pension policy preferences of nonretirees, Leonie Huddy, Jeffrey Jones, and Richard Chard (2001) show that the nonelderly Americans who perceive that the financial situation of the elderly has worsened in the past year are more likely to endorse increases in pension benefits. In sum, I argue that higher levels of elderly poverty deactivate the short-term interest of nonretirees, increasing their support for pension generosity improvements and reducing the attitudinal gap with retirees.

H1: In countries with higher elderly poverty, there is a smaller divide between retirees and nonretirees in the support for public pension provision.

Alternative Accounts

Few studies analyze cross-national, attitudinal differences in retiree/nonretiree cleavages regarding welfare policy. Therefore, I can only identify three alternative explanations, all having an institutional focus, in contrast to the structural approach used in this article. Respectively, they suggest that the age orientation of the welfare state, the institutionalization of social class categories for political mobilization, and the extent of social provision affect the cross-national variation in the retiree/nonretiree cleavage regarding pension policy preferences.

The account stressing the role of welfare state structures draws on the fact noted by Gøsta Esping-Andersen (1990) and, later on Julia Lynch (2001, 2006), that welfare states differ as much in their class orientation (i.e., the degree of redistribution between income groups) as in their age orientation (i.e., the degree of redistribution between age groups). Lynch's (2006) quantitative analysis shows that, although all welfare states in affluent democracies have an elderly bias, the bias is highest in Southern Europe, Austria, the United States, and Japan and lowest in Scandinavian countries. Since variations in the age orientation of the welfare state involve cross-national differences in the allocation of welfare resources along the life cycle, Marius Busemeyer and colleagues (2009) and Andrija Henjak (2008) hypothesize that this age orientation might also shape the cleavage between retirees and nonretirees in pension policy preferences. They argue that in very elderly-biased systems, potential pension spending increases are particularly harmful for nonelderly interests, because they complicate the expansion of already underfunded welfare policies such as family or active labor market programs. In these systems, therefore, the nonelderly may be comparatively less likely to support generous public provision, which may widen the attitudinal divide between retirees and nonretirees.

H2: In countries with more public welfare resources devoted to the elderly, there is a larger divide between retirees and nonretirees in support of public pension provision.

The second institutionalist approach, formulated by Martin Kohli (2006, 2008), argues that the entrenchment of class-based, welfare politics shapes the age cleavage in pension policy preferences. Kohli links the evolution of class and age attitudinal cleavages as part of a critique of the median voter approach that assumes a mechanical translation of the demographic weight of pensioners into the generosity of pension policy. Drawing on Fred Pampel's (1994) work, Kohli suggests that a strong organized labor institutionalizes the social class as the appropriate cleavage for mobilization in pension politics, preempting the importance of an age cleavage. "Self-interested mobilization by age is thus more likely in countries which do not have class-based institutions that emphasize *intra*-generational over *inter*generational cleavages in conflicts." (Kohli 2008:203; emphasis in original).

In other words, a preexisting class cleavage crowds out a retiree/nonretiree cleavage in pension politics. This implies that in countries with class-based pension politics either political elites co-opt age-based organizations, or citizens find it inappropriate to mobilize according to their age-based self-interest. In a case study of Sweden, contrary to Kohli's hypothesis, Stefan Svallfors (2008) reports a positive association between the class and age cleavage in pension policy preferences. Sweden, however, may be an exceptional case in this regard, which suggests testing Kohli's argument in a larger sample of countries.

H3: In countries with stronger organized labor, there is a smaller retiree/nonretiree divide in the support of public pension provision.

The third alternative account focuses on the degree of social provision in the country.[8] Since advanced democracies differ substantially in the generosity of their overall welfare states, this cross-national variation could be consequential for age differences in pension policy preferences. In a context of limited social provision like the United States, nonretirees may be more likely to support old-age pension provision and demand more pension generosity because it represents one of the few nonmarket-based mechanisms to ensure their future standard of living. This means that under conditions of low (high) overall social provision, the age cleavage in pension policy provision should be small (large).

H4: In countries with more social expenditure, there is a larger retiree/nonretiree divide in the support of public pension provision.

Data and Methods

The four hypotheses specified above are tested through a multilevel analysis of the cumulative file from the International Social Survey Program's (2012) module "Role of Government." The analysis includes all 30 surveys in the file that were conducted in 1996 and 2006. This source was selected over two recent Eurobarometers (European Comission 2004, 2007a) and the 2008 wave of the European Social Survey (Norwegian Social Science Data Services 2008), because the ISSP allows me to examine a group of non-European countries, including the United States. To ensure the comparability of the countries, the analysis also includes 16 affluent democracies with mature public pension systems: Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. For all countries, except Hungary and Poland (where only the 2006 wave is available), the 1996 and 2006 waves were employed.

Given the multidimensionality of public pension policy, the analysis examines attitudes towards the "extensiveness" and "intensiveness" of state involvement in retirement income provision (Borre and Goldsmith 1995:10). It draws on two questionnaire items that ask, first, about the state role in ensuring a minimum standard of living for the elderly; and second, on the preferences regarding old-age pension spending. The first item reads "On the whole, do you think that it should or shouldn't be state responsibility to provide a decent standard for the old?," and the possible answers are (1) "definitely should," (2) "probably should," (3) "probably should not," and (4) "definitely should not." The second item reads "listed below are various areas of government spending. Please show whether you would like to see more or less government spending in each area. Remember that if you say 'much more' it may require a tax increase to pay for it . . . old age pensions," and the five possible answers are (1) "spend much more," (2) "spend more," (3) "spend the same," (4) "spend less," and (5) "spend much less."

Given that these are ordinal variables, a straightforward analytical strategy would involve using multilevel ordinal models. However, ordinal logistic models rest on the assumption that

8. The author thanks an anonymous reviewer for suggesting this alternative explanation.

β effects are the same regardless of the response category, which is commonly violated (Long and Freese 2006). This assumption is also violated in this case. On the basis of two ordinal logit models with the six individual-level independent variables, the Rollin Brant (1990) test indicates the existence of significant differences in the coefficients predicting the support for state involvement in pension provision (χ^2 =54.81; $p < .01$) and attitudes towards pension spending (χ^2 =153.50; $p < .01$). Therefore, following Ralph Bender and Ulrich Grouven (1998), I transform the original survey items into three dichotomous variables and analyze them through multilevel logit models. *Definitely should protect* distinguishes those who consider that the state "definitely" should protect the elderly (1) from the rest (0). *More/much more pension spending* differentiates those individuals supporting "more" (1) or "much more" (1) pension spending from the rest (0). Finally, *much more pension spending* differentiates those individuals supporting "much more" pension spending (1) from the rest (0).[9]

Independent Variables

Given that the key, theoretical, individual-level prediction states that pensioners are, in general, more supportive of public retirement income provision (Browing 1978; Persson and Tabellini 2000), the main individual-level variable should be an indicator of old-age pensioner status. In this sense, a dichotomous variable that distinguishes age groups (whether 65+ or 60+ from the rest) would not reflect cross-national variations in effective retirement ages (OECD 2006). Instead, the following analysis relies on *retiree*, which distinguishes self-declared, "retired" individuals (1) from the rest (0), and endogenizes cross-national variations in effective retirement ages.[10] The models also include controls for *female* and educational level (*above primary education*, *secondary education*, *above secondary education*, and *tertiary education*) that have been found related to pension policy attitudes (Blekesaune and Quadagno 2003; Gelissen 2000). The models do not control for the objective social class of individuals because questions regarding the retirees' last occupation were not asked in all countries.

At the country level, there are six key variables. First, elderly poverty is commonly operationalized as the proportion of elderly population living with less than 60 percent, 50 percent, or 40 percent of the median household, equivalized national income. Since elderly poverty rates can be sensitive to the particular threshold, I use these three proxies: *elderly poverty (60 percent)*, *elderly poverty (50 percent)*, and *elderly poverty (40 percent)*. The values correspond to the mid-2000s and mid-1990s and were obtained from the OECD (2008a) and the Luxembourg Income Studies (2012).[11] Second, *ENSR*, or the elderly/nonelderly-spending ratio with education, captures the orientation of the welfare state. Following Lynch (2006), ESNR represents the average elderly spending per elderly (i.e., pensions and survivor programs) as a proportion of the GDP per capita divided by the average nonelderly spending per nonelderly (i.e., active labor market, education, family, and unemployment programs) as a proportion of the GDP per capita. Social spending data averages the values for the two years prior to the survey (1994–1995 and 2004–2005) (OECD 2008c). Third, following the convention in quantitative research on welfare generosity levels (Huber and Stephens 2001), I operationalize the strength of organized labor through the presence of left parties in the executive. *Left party cabinet portfolios* represents the average proportion of cabinet portfolios held by left parties in the 20 years preceding the survey (or since the first democratic election) (Armingeon, Careja et al. 2010; Argmineon, Engler, et al. 2010). Fourth, the influence of

9. Two additional, potential dependent variables are *probably/definitely should protect* and *less/much less pension spending*. However they do not indicate any meaningful variation. The total proportion of citizens who consider that the state "probably" (1) or "definitely" (1) should protect the elderly is 95.30 percent. The total proportion of citizens who support "less" (1) or "much less" (1) pension spending is only 3.28 percent. For this reason they have not been included in the analysis.

10. Obviously, the population of retirees is heavily concentrated among old-age groups—88.20 percent of all retirees are 60 or older and 71.35 percent 65 or older.

11. Elderly poverty (50 percent) refers to population "aged over 65" (OECD 2008a:137). Elderly poverty (40 percent) and elderly poverty (60 percent) refer to population "65 or older" (LIS 2012).

overall social provision is measured through the mean public *social expenditure* as a proportion of the GDP in the two years prior to the survey (OECD 2008c).

Finally, although prior research has no discussion on the role the level of population aging plays in determining policy preferences among retirees/nonretirees, given its importance in political economy debates, it has the potential to shape this attitudinal cleavage. Hence, the slopes-as-outcomes submodels also include *old-age dependency ratio* that represents the total population 65 or older as a proportion of population 15 to 64 years old (OECD 2008b). Finally the models include an additional control, *old-age public pension spending* as a percentage of the GDP in 1995 and 2005, which captures the effect of the size of the public pension system (OECD 2008c).

Analytical Approach

Because this article seeks to explain cross-national variations in the effect of retiree on pension policy preferences and the dependent variables are dichotomous, I estimated multilevel slopes-as-outcomes logit models. This is the appropriate statistical technique when the data have a hierarchical structure, since it adjusts the standard errors of country-year level variables for the error correlations among individuals (Raudenbush and Bryk 2002). The individual-level model is:

$$\begin{aligned}\eta_{ij} = \mathrm{Log}[p_{ij}/(1-p_{ij})] = {} & \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}(female)_{ij} + \beta_{2j}(above\ \ primary\ \ education)_{ij} \\ & + \beta_{3j}(secondary\ \ education)_{ij} + \beta_{4j}(above\ \ secondary\ \ education)_{ij} + \beta_{5j}(tertiary\ \ education)_{ij} \\ & + \beta_{6j}(retiree)_{ij} + r_{ij}\end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

where η_{ij} is the log odds of supporting each of the three statements for individual i in country year j; β_{0j} is the intercept; $\beta_{1j} \ldots \beta_{6j}$ are the effects of one-unit increase in each individual-level independent variable; and r_{ij} is the individual-level random effect. Dichotomous variables are in their raw metric. However, to facilitate the interpretation, all continuous variables have been grand centered. The country-year level models are:

$$\begin{aligned}\beta_{0j} = {} & \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(elderly\ poverty)_j + \gamma_{02}(ENSR)_j + \gamma_{03}(left\ party\ cabinet\ portfolios)_j \\ & + \gamma_{04}(old\text{-}age\ public\ pension\ spending)_j + \gamma_{05}(old\text{-}age\ dependency\ ratio)_j \\ & + \gamma_{06}(social\ expenditure)_j + u_{0j}\end{aligned} \quad (2.1)$$

. . .

$$\begin{aligned}\beta_{6j} = {} & \gamma_{60} + \gamma_{61}(elderly\ poverty)_j + \gamma_{62}(ENSR)_j + \gamma_{63}(left\ party\ cabinet\ portfolios)_j \\ & + \gamma_{64}(old\text{-}age\ dependency\ ratio)_j + \gamma_{65}(social\ expenditure)_j + u_{6j}\end{aligned} \quad (2.2)$$

where β_{0j} represents the log odds of the dependent variable in country j when all independent variables are 0, i.e., for the mean values in country-year level variables and the reference group (nonretiree males with primary education); γ_{00} is the country-year level intercept; $\gamma_{01} \ldots \gamma_{06}$ represent the impact of country characteristics on the support for each of the four statements among the reference group; and u_{0j} is the random variation associated with each country. The three hypotheses mentioned above are tested in the slopes-as-outcome submodel (Equation 2.1). γ_{60} represents the effect of retiree in country-year j; and u_{6j} is the random variation in the individual-level slopes across country years. γ_{60} can be interpreted as the increase in the log odds of supporting each of the three statements for retirees while holding elderly poverty, ENSR, left party cabinet portfolios, old-age dependency ratio, and social expenditure at the average sample value.

In this submodel, the individual effect of retiree is set as random and regressed on the level of elderly poverty (γ_{61}), ENSR (γ_{62}), left party cabinet portfolios (γ_{63}), old-age dependency ratio (γ_{64}), and social expenditure (γ_{65}). A significant, positive coefficient of $\gamma_{61} \ldots \gamma_{65}$ reveals that the impact of retiree increases in countries with, respectively, higher elderly poverty, ENSR, left party cabinet portfolios, old-age dependency ratios, and social expenditure. $\beta_{1j} \ldots \beta_{5j}$ have been modeled as fixed (i.e., $\beta_{qj} = \gamma_{q0}$). The analysis was conducted in Stata 12 with the "xtmelogit" command.

Descriptive Results

It is useful to begin the analysis by considering the degree of cross-national variations in the age attitudinal cleavage. If seniors are not more likely to support generous public pension provision and this effect does not vary cross-nationally, an examination of the determinants of changes in that divide would not be justified. Yet the evidence supports the expectation of a retiree/nonretiree cleavage. Figure 2 displays the effect of retiree on the probabilities of supporting three indicators of attitudes towards public pension policy in the 30 country years considered. The values were obtained from 90 logistic regressions including the six individual-level variables (female, above primary education, secondary education, above secondary education, tertiary education, and retiree). Figure 2 revels that the retirees tend to be more supportive of the state involvement in retirement income provision than nonretirees. In most countries, retirees are significantly more likely to think that the state "definitely should protect" the elderly and to support "more/much more" and "much more" pension spending.

More importantly, Figure 2 shows a substantial cross-national variation in the age cleavage in pension policy attitudes. The evidence indicates that the retiree/nonretiree attitudinal divide is largest in two Eastern European countries (Czech Republic and Hungary); intermediate-high in two Scandinavian (Norway, Sweden) and three Continental (France, Germany and Spain) countries; intermediate-low in three English-speaking countries (Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom); and the smallest in Switzerland and the United States. Consistent with previous research, retirees in the United States are not more likely to support any of the three statements than nonretiree Americans. In fact, the American nonretirees are significantly more likely to support increases in public pension spending and to consider that the government should definitely protect the elderly (in 2006). Furthermore, the variance components in Table 1 reveal the presence of significant differences in the country effects of retiree.

Multivariate Results

This section first presents the results from Table 1, which provides the baseline equations with the six individual-level and cross-level interactions between retiree and elderly poverty (50 percent). Later, it discusses additional results that include other indicators of elderly poverty. The objective of the analysis is to test whether the levels of elderly poverty, age orientation of the welfare state, average left party cabinet portfolios, and old-age dependency ratio influence the retiree/nonretiree cleavage in the support for public pension provision.

Table 1 indicates that the effective level of old-age pension spending is unrelated both to the average support for state involvement in pension provision and the demand for public pension spending increases. Similarly, the age orientation of the welfare state (ENSR), the strength of organized labor (left party cabinet portfolios), the level of population aging (old-age dependency ratio), and social provision (social expenditure) do not shape the average support for state involvement in pension provision. Only the level of elderly poverty (measured with the 50 percent threshold) affects that support. In countries with more elderly poverty, there is larger support for "much more"

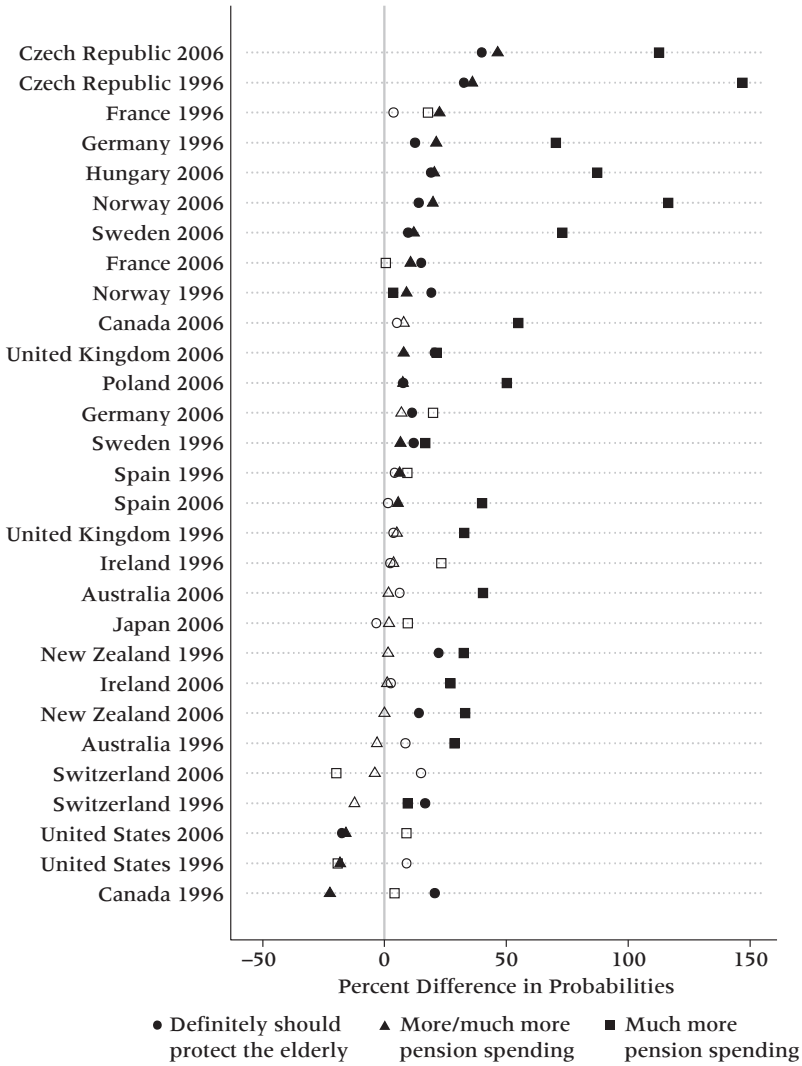

Figure 2 • ***Percent Difference in the Probability of Supporting Public Retirement income and Public Pension Spending Increases Among Retirees and Non Retirees, 1996 and 2006***

Notes: The probabilities = [(Probability for retirees)/(Probability for nonretirees) − 1] * 100. The probabilities were estimated from 90 logit models including retiree and five control variables (female, above primary education, secondary education, above secondary education, and tertiary education). Filled markers are statistically significant at the 90 percent confidence level.

pension spending.[12] In relation to the individual-level controls, Table 1 also shows that the gender and educational level affect the support for public pension provision. *Ceteris paribus*, females and individuals with primary education have a significantly higher likelihood of thinking that the state has a responsibility in protecting the elderly, as well as supporting increases in public pension spending.

12. This specific result is sensitive to the elderly poverty threshold (see Tables 1, A3, and A4).

Table 1 • ***Determinants of Preferences Regarding Old Age Pension Policy in 16 OECD Countries with the 50 Percent Poverty Threshold (logit regressions), 1996 and 2006***

	Model 1 Definitely Should Protect	*Model 2 More/Much More Expenditure*	*Model 3 Much More Expenditure*
Intercept	.570***	.839***	−1.190***
	(.124)	(.122)	(.102)
Elderly poverty (50% threshold)	.014	.026	.030**
	(.018)	(.018)	(.015)
ENSR	.040	−.000	−.006
	(.150)	(.134)	(.122)
Left party cabinet portfolios	.011	.003	−.004
	(.008)	(.007)	(.006)
Old-age pension spending	−.133	.044	.101
	(.179)	(.152)	(.145)
Old-age dependency ratio	−.030	−.041	−.045
	(.061)	(.057)	(.049)
Social expenditure	.072	−.023	−.015
	(.064)	(.059)	(.051)
Female (ref. cat. male)	.258***	.199***	.161***
	(.022)	(.021)	(.027)
Above primary education (ref. primary education)	−.119***	−.287***	−.348***
	(.035)	(.035)	(.039)
Secondary education (ref. primary education)	−.368***	−.586***	−.575***
	(.035)	(.035)	(.040)
Above secondary education (ref. primary education)	−.447***	−.781***	−.751***
	(.039)	(.039)	(.047)
Tertiary education (ref. primary education)	−.687***	−1.160***	−1.194***
	(.038)	(.038)	(.052)
Retiree (ref. cat. nonretiree)	.318***	.309***	.433***
	(.043)	(.077)	(.061)
Retiree * elderly poverty (50% threshold)	−.026***	−.027**	−.019**
	(.006)	(.012)	(.009)
Retiree * ENSR	−.068**	.071	−.001
	(.028)	(.053)	(.038)
Retiree * left party cabinet portfolios	.001	.006	.002
	(.002)	(.004)	(.003)
Retiree * old-age dependency ratio	.001	.011	−.035
	(.018)	(.032)	(.025)
Retiree * social expenditure	−.007	−.010	.004
	(.016)	(.029)	(.023)
Level 2 Intercept	.646***	.838***	.633***
Level 2 retiree	.154***	.284***	.367***
N level 1	41104	41746	41746
N level 2	30	30	30

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. The reference category is a nonretiree male with primary education.
*$p < .10$ **$p < .05$ ***$p < .01$ (two-tailed tests)

Furthermore, due to the use of grand-mean and cross-level interaction, the coefficient retiree has to be interpreted in relation to the level of five country-level factors. This interaction term indicates that at the sample mean of elderly poverty (50 percent), ENSR, left party cabinet portfolios, old-age-dependency ratio, and social expenditure, retirees are significantly more likely to consider that the state "definitely" should protect the elderly, as well as to demand "more/much more" and "much more" pension spending. In addition, it is noteworthy that the impact of

retiree status is larger than the impact of gender. But more importantly, Table 1 reveals that the cross-level interaction term retiree*elderly poverty (50 percent) is negative and significant in Models 1, 2, and 3. This means that the level of elderly poverty moderates the effect of retiree on the demand for public pension provision. According to Table 1, in countries with higher elderly poverty, there is a significantly smaller retiree/nonretiree cleavage in the support for pension spending increases and in relation to the claim that the state "definitely" should be involved in the protection of the elderly. This finding is consistent with H1.

Table 1 also allows us to examine the moderational effect of ENSR, left party cabinet portfolios, old-age dependency ratio, and social expenditure on the variable retiree. Inconsistent with H2, the interaction term retiree*ENSR is significant in only one of the three Models and it has the opposite sign than expected. Hence, a larger elderly bias in welfare systems does not consistently shape the attitudinal retiree/nonretiree cleavage. Also inconsistent with H3, the interaction term retiree*left party cabinet portfolios is not negative and significant in any of the three models. This evidence thus indicates that a more entrenched organized labor does not consistently influence the retiree/nonretiree divide in pension policy attitudes. Left party organizations may provide channels for the mobilization of both class-based and age-based interests. Cross-national differences in the level of the old-age dependency ratio and social expenditure do not help either to explain variations in the retiree/nonretiree attitudinal cleavage.

Hence, the evidence in Table 1 suggests that the level of elderly poverty (measured with the 50 percent threshold) shapes the retiree/nonretiree cleavage because in countries with higher levels of elderly poverty there are smaller differences in pension policy attitudes between retirees and nonretirees. However, the evidence in Table 1 cannot indicate in which range of values of elderly poverty is the variable retiree significant. Only if the coefficient changes substantially across the range of elderly poverty values, can we claim that elderly poverty has a substantial moderational effect. To assess this, Figure 3 depicts the changes in the logit coefficient of retiree associated with one and two standard deviations change in elderly poverty, ENSR, left party cabinet portfolios, old-age dependency ratio, and social expenditure for each dependent variable.

Consistent with Table 1, Figure 3 reveals that elderly poverty has the strongest and most robust effect of the four country-level variables. Figure 3 further shows that for the three dependent variables retiree is not significant over the whole range of values in elderly poverty (50 percent threshold). The positive effect of retiree on the support for the statements that the state "definitely" should protect the elderly are significant only from the minimum value (1.10 percent) in elderly poverty (50 percent threshold) up to one standard deviation above the mean (19.61 percent) in elderly poverty (50 percent threshold).[13] In addition, the positive effect of retiree on the support for "more/much more" and "much more" pension spending is also significant up to one standard deviation above the mean (19.61 percent) and two standard deviations above the mean (27.51 percent) in elderly poverty (50 percent threshold), respectively. Therefore, the evidence in Figure 3 confirms that the level of elderly poverty has a substantial moderational impact on the retiree/nonretiree cleavage in pension policy preferences. At low levels of elderly poverty, the effect of retiree on the demand for public pension provision is consistently positive and significant, while at high levels of elderly poverty the effect of retiree on the demand for public pension provision tends to become insignificant or at least severely reduced.

Having found evidence consistent with the structural approach, it is useful to examine if the predicted probabilities support the notion of broad reciprocity. According to this concept, nonretiree attitudes should be the most responsive to the levels of elderly poverty, so that a higher elderly poverty reduces the retiree/nonretiree cleavage mainly because it provides a larger demand for public pension provision among nonretirees. To this effect, Table 2 provides the predicted probabilities of supporting each of the three statements for retirees and nonretirees under conditions of low and high elderly poverty. First, Table 2 indicates that a higher elderly poverty

13. The noncentered, minimum, mean, and maximum values of elderly poverty (50 percent threshold) are 1.10, 11.71, and 30.52, respectively.

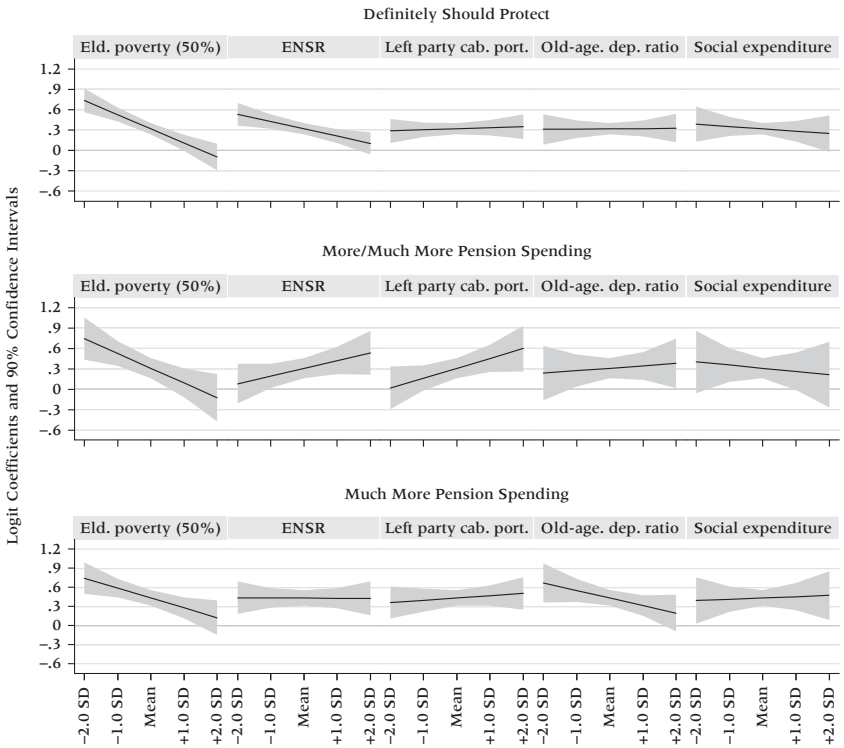

Figure 3 • ***Logit Coefficients Relating Retiree to the Support for Income Retirement Policies at Different Standardized Levels of Elderly Poverty (50% Threshold), ENSR, Left Party Cabinet Portfolios, Old Age Dependency Ratio, and Social Expenditure in 16 OECD Countries, 1996 and 2006***

Table 2 • ***Predicted Probabilities of Supporting Each of the Three Statements for Retirees and Nonretirees in Countries with Low and High Levels of Elderly Poverty (estimated from Table 1)***

	Should Definitely Protect			*More/Much More Pension Spending*		
	Low Elderly Poverty ($\bar{x}-1SD$)	*High Elderly Poverty ($\bar{x}+1SD$)*	*Percent Difference*	*Low Elderly Poverty ($\bar{x}-1SD$)*	*High Elderly Poverty ($\bar{x}+1SD$)*	*Percent Difference*
Retiree	.696	.660	−5.172	.725	.721	−0.552
Nonretiree	.587	.637	8.512	.618	.703	13.754
	Much More Pension Spending					
	Low Elderly Poverty ($\bar{x}-1SD$)	*High Elderly Poverty ($\bar{x}+1SD$)*	*Percent Difference*			
Retiree	.295	.330	11.864			
Nonretiree	.193	.275	42.487			

Notes: The probabilities have been estimated from the models in Table 1 and holding all other variables at value 0. Low and high elderly poverty have been defined as, respectively, one standard deviation below and above the mean. The % difference = 100 − [(probability low elderly poverty)/(probability high elderly poverty) * 100].

increases nonretiree demand for public pension protection and pension spending increases. Second, it indicates that the pension policy preferences of the nonelderly are more responsive to the level of elderly poverty than the pension policy preferences of the elderly. In regard to two of the three dependent variables (particularly concerning pension spending), a transition from low to high elderly poverty produces a larger proportional change in the predicted probabilities of nonretirees than in the predicted probabilities of retirees.[14] This evidence is consistent with the expectation that elderly poverty mostly affects the preferences of nonretirees.

Robustness Checks

One possible concern with the results thus far presented is that they are driven by outlier countries. Due to substantial cross-national differences in elderly poverty rates and the retiree status cleavage, these factors could be associated mainly because of a deviant country year. To examine this possibility, I reestimated the three models in Table 1, eliminating one country year at a time.[15] Excluding one country year at a time, the cross-level interaction retiree*elderly poverty (50 percent threshold) is still always negative and significant (results available upon request).

Another possible concern with these results is that the moderational impact of elderly poverty on the retiree status cleavage could be sensitive to the specific 50 percent threshold used so far to operationalize elderly poverty. If that is the case, elderly poverty should lose its moderational influence if it is operationalized with other income thresholds. In order to examine this possibility, I reestimated the three models presented in Table 1 but with the, respectively, more and less restrictive indicators elderly poverty (40 percent threshold) and elderly poverty (60 percent threshold) (Tables A3 and A4). Based on these additional Models, Figure 4 replicates Figure 3 (which depicts changes in the retiree coefficient at different standardized values of elderly poverty (50 percent threshold)) using the 40 percent and 60 percent thresholds. Figure 4 reveals that elderly poverty still has a strong influence on the retiree status cleavage with these alternative indicators, particularly when considering elderly poverty (40 percent threshold). For the three dependent variables, retiree is only significant until roughly one standard deviation above the mean (35.84 percent) in elderly poverty (60 percent threshold). For all dependent variables, retiree is only significant until roughly the mean value (4.25 percent) in elderly poverty (40 percent threshold). Therefore, using alternative indicators of elderly poverty this dimension still shapes substantially the retiree status cleavage. All in all, results show that the retiree/nonretiree cleavage is shaped by the level of elderly poverty and is not driven by outlier countries.

Discussion

Recent research on pension policy attitudes has greatly improved our understanding of popular preferences regarding this key policy domain. It has allowed us to note additional factors and overcome the simple finding that the population of affluent democracies is overwhelmingly supportive of state intervention in pension provision. We currently know that, due to population aging, most citizens are now less confident that current generosity levels will be maintained (Walker 1999), even though the population of these countries remains predominantly opposed to pension policy retrenchments. Furthermore, prior research also reveals striking cross-national differences. There is substantial evidence that in European countries retirees are more supportive of intensive,

14. In this regard, Table 2 shows that as elderly poverty increases retirees actually tend to reduce their support to the statement that the "state should definitely provide a decent standard of living for the elderly." This particular result may reflect that under conditions of high elderly poverty retirees are more concerned about the generosity of ongoing pensions than the effective pension coverage rates.

15. This involved estimating 30*3 = 90 additional models.

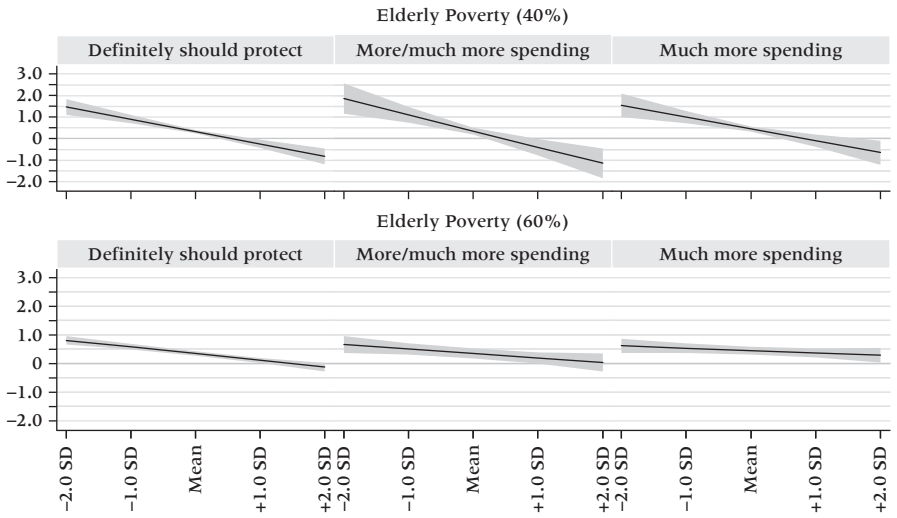

Figure 4 • ***Logit Coefficients Relating Retiree to the Support for Income Retirement Policies at Different Standardized Levels of Elderly Poverty (40% and 60% Thresholds), ENSR, Left Party Cabinet Portfolios, Old Age Dependency Ratio, and Social Expenditure in 16 OECD Countries, 1996 and 2006***

public pension policies than nonretirees; while in the United States, retirees are as supportive of intensive public pension policies as nonretirees. This finding is puzzling because it challenges the still predominant assumption of political attitudes research that countries with similar sociopolitical systems should have consistent attitudinal cleavages.

To account for the cross-national variation in the retiree/nonretiree cleavage in pension policy attitudes, this article presents a structural theory of political preferences. I argue that faced with high-level elderly poverty the nonretired determine their pension policy preferences based on a principle of broad reciprocity. Broad reciprocity occurs when actor A expects full repayment of a transfer of resources made to B, and if actor C transfers resources to actor D because the latter has previously fulfilled a cultural norm. In particular, in a context of high elderly poverty, nonretirees increase their support for generous public pension provision as a mechanism to undercut the risks of a group perceived as highly deserving of public support (strong reciprocity), as well as to undercut the demands of their elderly parents for direct care (kin reciprocity). In combination, these two pressures undermine nonretiree generic interest in moderate pension generosity, inducing an attitudinal convergence between retirees and nonretirees.

Consistent with this account, the empirical analysis shows that elderly poverty has a consistent, moderational impact on the variable retiree in the demand for intensive public pension provision. Using three indicators of elderly poverty (40, 50, and 60 percent thresholds) and three dependent variables, results indicate that countries with higher elderly poverty have significantly smaller retiree/nonretiree cleavages in the support for public pension provision and more public pension spending. In fact, at medium-high levels of elderly poverty the effect of the retiree/nonretiree divide on the demand for public pension provision and more spending becomes statistically insignificant. Furthermore, outlier countries do not drive this moderational influence. Therefore, a higher elderly poverty induces reductions in retiree/nonretiree attitudinal differences in pension policy preferences.

Nevertheless, the causal argument cannot be mechanically inverted, namely: a larger attitudinal cleavage does not reduce the elderly poverty rate. As noted in the results section, larger

retiree/nonretiree cleavages are defined by a reduction in the demand for public pension provision by nonretirees, which necessarily means a reduction in the average demand for public pension provision. Therefore, this lower average demand would have to be associated with a lower elderly poverty rate, which is the opposite of what we can expect. Since prior research suggests that lower preferences for public social provision translate into lower levels of social provision (Burstein 2010) and lower pension generosity should induce higher elderly poverty (Brady 2004), increases in the attitudinal cleavage cannot lower elderly poverty rates.

While the structural theory presented in this article received robust supportive evidence, three alternative, neo-institutional accounts provided very limited or no supportive evidence. Contrary to the proposition that the age orientation of the welfare state shapes the retiree/nonretiree attitudinal cleavage, a larger elderly bias in the welfare state does not significantly increase the retiree effect on the support for public pension provision and increases in pension spending. In addition, neither does the institutionalization of class-based politics measured by the entrenchment of leftwing parties or the overall level of public social provision affect the retiree/nonretiree divide in the demand for state protection for the elderly.

More broadly, these findings suggest the usefulness of the broad reciprocity concept and the importance of structural factors in the formation of political preferences. Structural conditions such as inequality or poverty levels can affect cleavages in political preferences by shaping the priorities of actors. These conditions have the capacity to bolster short- and long-term self-interests that can induce different political attitudes. Similarly, structural conditions have the potential to activate informal norms and social conventions regarding the relationship between social groups, which can also induce different political attitudes. Therefore, structural approaches should gain prominence as a necessary complement to institutionalist theories, which are rapidly becoming predominant in the analysis of political preferences.

In particular, clear theoretical implications emerge from the foregoing analysis. The case of the retiree/nonretiree cleavage in pension policy attitudes indicates three conditions under which structural factors and broad reciprocity affect attitudinal divides: First, an objective, structural, social problem must produce a group of welfare losers; second, these welfare losers must comply with cultural norms of welfare deservingness; and third, in the past, these welfare losers must have acted generously with another group that self-perceives as a debtor. If all three conditions—or the first and second, or first and third—are met, we could expect structural conditions to influence attitudinal divides.

Further research could help broaden the research agenda on welfare policy attitudes by examining the influence of these three conditions in neighboring welfare policy domains. Given that the unemployed are not generally perceived as highly deserving of welfare support, higher unemployment rates should not reduce the divide between the unemployed and employed in the support for improvements in unemployment benefit compensation. Similarly, given that immigrants also suffer perceptions of low deservingness, higher income deprivation among them should also have very limited influence on the immigrant/nonimmigrant divide in the support for minimum-income policies. However, in contrast, given high deservingness perceptions of children, a context of high child poverty should reduce the divide between young parents and the remaining population in the support for improvements in family benefit programs. Further research examining these three hypotheses would substantially improve our understanding of key attitudinal conflicts in welfare policy arenas.

Appendix

Table A1 • *Descriptive Statistics for all Dependent and Independent Variables*

	Mean	*St. Dev.*	*Minimum*	*Maximum*
Dependent variables				
Definitely should protect the elderly	.592	.492	0	1
More/much more pension expenditure	.598	.490	0	1
Much more pension expenditure	.198	.398	0	1
Independent variables				
Elderly poverty (50% threshold)	0	8.012	−11.893	32.007
Elderly poverty (60% threshold)	0	11.588	−22.150	27.921
Elderly poverty (40% threshold)	0	3.199	−3.858	26.251
ENSR	0	1.596	−2.771	4.928
Left party cabinet portfolios	0	23.110	−36.900	48.780
Old-age pension spending	0	2.306	−5.917	4.304
Old-age dependency ratio	0	3.417	−13.493	8.688
Social expenditure	0	4.785	−17.947	12.153
Female	.519	.500	0	1
Above primary education	.225	.418	0	1
Secondary education	.249	.432	0	1
Above secondary education	.148	.355	0	1
Tertiary education	.153	.360	0	1
Retiree	.210	.408	0	1
Retiree * elderly poverty (50% threshold)	−.305	3.558	−11.193	18.007
Retiree * elderly poverty (60% threshold)	−.366	5.196	−22.150	21.120
Retiree * elderly poverty (40% threshold)	−.089	1.336	−3.858	9.148
Retiree * ENSR	.022	.739	−2.252	4.928
Retiree * left party cabinet portfolios	.192	9.678	−36.900	48.780
Retiree * old-age dependency ratio	.010	1.541	−5.572	8.688
Retiree * social expenditure	.146	2.178	−7.397	12.153

Table A2 • *Average Value of Noninteracted Variables per Country*

	Definitely Should Protect	*More/ Much More Pension Spending*	*Much More Pension Spending*	*ENSR*	*Left Party Cabinet*	*Public Pension Spending*	*Old-Age Dep. Rat.*	*Soc. Expenditure*	*Female*	*Above Primary*	*Secondary*	*Above Secondary*	*Tertiary*	*Retiree*
Australia 1995	.37	.49	.11	−1.92	23.16	−3.31	−3.94	−5.3	.51	.46	.27	.00	.20	.24
Australia 2005	.56	.53	.15	−1.38	16.39	−2.39	−2.62	−4.5	.52	.00	.11	.45	.24	.17
Canada 1995	.48	.29	.08	1.55	−36.90	−2.67	−4.13	−1.7	.47	.14	.23	.39	.17	.16
Canada 2005	.59	.53	.13	−1.16	−36.90	−3.17	−2.92	−4.1	.49	.10	.20	.34	.31	.25
Czech R. 1995	.64	.67	.19	.30	−36.90	−1.38	−2.43	−3.7	.51	.42	.28	.02	.11	.31
Czech R. 2005	.55	.62	.19	1.36	7.09	.46	−1.95	−2.3	.58	.40	.35	.03	.11	.33
France 1995	.51	.32	.11	1.10	7.35	3.61	1.39	7.6	.41	.16	.26	.33	.13	.23
France 2005	.53	.46	.15	.35	1.74	3.90	3.58	9.1	.44	.25	.14	.14	.24	.36
Germany 1995	.54	.49	.15	1.14	−11.42	.87	1.95	5.4	.51	.32	.07	.05	.08	.22
Germany 2005	.48	.52	.15	−.01	−2.97	4.30	6.94	6.3	.51	.36	.08	.05	.11	.29
Hungary 2005	.66	.77	.32	−.11	5.64	1.67	1.02	1.5	.55	.25	.25	.17	.04	.32
Ireland 1995	.77	.75	.29	−2.25	−22.36	−3.90	−4.05	−2.7	.51	.31	.18	.15	.10	.09
Ireland 2005	.84	.90	.55	−1.81	−25.17	−4.01	−5.57	−5.0	.58	.20	.23	.20	.14	.16
Japan 1995	.49	.59	.27	2.39	−33.30	−1.79	−.88	−7.4	.54	.07	.41	.14	.13	.08
Japan 2005	.45	.56	.25	2.77	−32.13	1.58	8.69	−2.5	.50	.00	.42	.15	.17	.11
New Zealand 1995	.58	.46	.12	−.38	−5.53	−1.22	−4.20	−2.2	.52	.27	.18	.35	.14	.15
New Zealand 2005	.58	.53	.16	−1.90	19.76	−2.69	−3.76	−2.9	.51	.08	.16	.31	.21	.18
Norway 1995	.86	.57	.13	−1.90	35.02	.24	2.85	2.6	.48	.26	.28	.10	.19	.14
Norway 2005	.84	.59	.14	−1.78	2.94	−.39	.59	.6	.52	.14	.32	.14	.30	.17
Poland 2005	.72	.92	.49	4.93	.88	3.70	−3.04	−.05	.52	.29	.26	.13	.12	.33
Spain 1995	.80	.67	.17	.60	31.95	1.30	.65	.65	.51	.10	.34	.08	.06	.20
Spain 2005	.79	.82	.28	−.18	25.23	.98	2.54	.05	.51	.30	.21	.07	.11	.18
Sweden 1995	.70	.57	.16	−1.77	18.03	3.21	5.61	12.2	.49	.30	.18	.07	.17	.16
Sweden 2005	.67	.61	.17	−1.35	48.78	2.76	4.63	8.1	.53	.30	.15	.10	.26	.17
Switzer. 1995	.28	.37	.08	−.05	−8.33	−.46	−.04	−3.6	.53	.00	.64	.00	.23	.11
Switzer. 2005	.28	.55	.10	−1.11	−8.33	−.30	1.57	−.8	.57	.55	.08	.12	.11	.27
UK 1995	.73	.80	.28	−.67	−2.20	−1.41	2.68	−1.0	.59	.49	.11	.15	.11	.22
UK 2005	.63	.74	.26	−1.60	4.37	−.89	1.50	−.55	.59	.20	.15	.14	.17	.23
US 1995	.38	.51	.13	1.68	−36.90	−1.55	−2.44	−5.6	.55	.11	.54	.23	.08	.11
US 2005	.57	.64	.25	1.67	−36.90	−1.59	−3.28	−5.0	.53	.10	.32	.27	.25	.14

Table A3 • ***Determinants of Preferences Regarding Old Age Pension Policy in 16 OECD Countries with the 40 Percent Poverty Threshold (logit regressions), 1996 and 2006***

	Model 1 Definitely Should Protect	*Model 2 More/Much More Expenditure*	*Model 3 Much More Expenditure*
Intercept	.580***	.895***	−1.232***
	(.141)	(.142)	(.114)
Elderly poverty (40% threshold)	−.026	.020	.045
	(.046)	(.047)	(.037)
ENSR	−.001	.044	−.174
	(.191)	(.171)	(.149)
Left party cabinet portfolios	.012	.007	−.003
	(.008)	(.008)	(.007)
Old-age pension spending	−.115	−.041	.219
	(.211)	(.181)	(.164)
Old-age dependency ratio	−.053	−.017	−.155*
	(.103)	(.099)	(.081)
Social expenditure	.051	−.034	−.016
	(.069)	(.066)	(.054)
Female (ref. cat. male)	.266***	.221***	.170***
	(.023)	(.023)	(.028)
Above primary education (ref. primary education)	−.133***	−.317***	−.363***
	(.037)	(.037)	(.041)
Secondary education (ref. primary education)	−.387***	−.602***	−.592***
	(.038)	(.038)	(.043)
Above secondary education (ref. primary education)	−.491***	−.850***	−.760***
	(.042)	(.043)	(.051)
Tertiary education (ref. primary education)	−.715***	−1.221***	−1.253***
	(.041)	(.041)	(.056)
Retiree (ref. cat. nonretiree)	.324***	.355***	.450***
	(.042)	(.079)	(.062)
Retiree * elderly poverty (40% threshold)	−.072***	−.094***	−.068***
	(.014)	(.026)	(.021)
Retiree * ENSR	−.033	.114**	.026
	(.029)	(.057)	(.040)
Retiree * left party cabinet portfolios	−.002	.004	−.000
	(.002)	(.004)	(.003)
Retiree * old-age dependency ratio	.026	.011	−.012
	(.025)	(.047)	(.036)
Retiree * social expenditure	−.013	−.015	−.008
	(.017)	(.032)	(.025)
Variance components			
Level 2 intercept	.680***	.689***	.537***
Level 2 retiree	.129***	.345***	.248***
N level 1	36,852	37,350	37,350
N level 2	26	26	26

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. The reference category is a nonretiree male with primary education.
*$p < .10$ **$p < .05$ ***$p < .01$ (two-tailed tests)

Table A4 • ***Determinants of Preferences Regarding Old Age Pension Policy in 16 OECD Countries with the 60 Percent Poverty Threshold (logit regressions), 1996 And 2006***

	Model 1 Definitely Should Protect	*Model 2 More/Much More Expenditure*	*Model 3 Much More Expenditure*
Intercept	.580***	.895***	−1.229***
	(.141)	(.140)	(.114)
Elderly poverty (60% threshold)	−.010	.012	.016
	(.016)	(.016)	(.013)
ENSR	−.042	.040	−.115
	(.192)	(.183)	(.152)
Left party cabinet portfolios	.012	.005	−.005
	(.008)	(.008)	(.007)
Old-age pension spending	−.108	.017	.219
	(.212)	(.198)	(.169)
Old-age dependency ratio	−.076	−.014	−.119
	(.099)	(.096)	(.078)
Social expenditure	.053	−.043	−.023
	(.067)	(.065)	(.053)
Female (ref. cat. male)	.266***	.221***	.171***
	(.023)	(.023)	(.028)
Above primary education (ref. primary education)	−.138***	−.319***	−.364***
	(.037)	(.037)	(.041)
Secondary education (ref. primary education)	−.389***	−.603***	−.592***
	(.038)	(.038)	(.043)
Above secondary education (ref. primary education)	−.492***	−.851***	−.760***
	(.042)	(.043)	(.051)
Tertiary education (ref. primary education)	−.717***	−1.222***	−1.252***
	(.041)	(.041)	(.056)
Retiree (ref. cat. nonretiree)	.341***	.351***	.454***
	(.040)	(.088)	(.071)
Retiree * elderly poverty (60% threshold)	−.029***	−.020*	−.010
	(.005)	(.010)	(.008)
Retiree * ENSR	−.137***	.025	−.018
	(.033)	(.067)	(.051)
Retiree * left party cabinet portfolios	.001	.006	.001
	(.002)	(.004)	(.003)
Retiree * old-age dependency ratio	−.027	−.047	−.053
	(.023)	(.050)	(.040)
Variance components			
Level 2 intercept	.680***	.679***	.535***
Level 2 retiree	.112**	.398***	.303***
N level 1	36,852	37,350	37,350
N level 2	26	26	26

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. The reference category is a nonretiree male with primary education.
*$p < .10$ **$p < .05$ ***$p < .01$ (two-tailed tests)

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