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HOW BASIC HUMAN VALUES SHAPE PREFERENCES FOR REDISTRIBUTION

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Abstract

Redistribution is an important element of public policy in most advanced economies. Understanding preferences for redistribution is therefore crucial for informed policy decisions. This thesis examines how basic human values shape redistribution support and how this relationship is conditioned by political orientation and institutional trust. Using individual-level data for 30 European countries, results show that universalism—value emphasizing concern for others’ welfare—is positively correlated with redistribution support, while security—prioritizing safety and stability—exhibits weaker and more conditional effects. The findings highlight the importance of accounting for political and institutional processes when linking values to individual redistributive preferences.

Keywords: Redistribution preferences; Basic human values; Political orientation; Institutional trust; ESS.

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1. Introduction

Citizens' preferences regarding redistributive policies are a fundamental driver of democratic governance, as they influence public debate and ultimately affect decisions surrounding policy implementation. Political actors and parties have strong electoral incentives to align their proposals with public opinion (Brooks and Manza, 2006), thus, understanding what influences preferences for redistribution is essential for understanding the political dynamics that shape policy outcomes. Despite rising wealth concentration and inequality across established democracies, the demand for welfare policies is not growing proportionally, with preferences varying significantly across different social and national contexts.

This disconnect underscores the need to look beyond objective economic indicators to understand why citizens favor or oppose redistribution policies (Trump 2023). This paradox is further complicated in the context of increasing inequalities (Emanuele and Marino 2024; Iyengar et al. 2025) and right-wing populism, which often tries to frame redistribution and who benefits from it as an economic risk (Mudde 2004; Wolf, Bachleitner and Bufkin 2025).

To understand why individuals respond differently to similar economic conditions and political contexts, this study turns to Schwartz's theory of basic human values, which highlights that these are stable motivational priorities that guide how individuals evaluate socio-political issues (Schwartz 1992 2015). Values shape how individuals interpret political and economic information (Bénabou and Tirole 2006; Feldman 2003; Nemčok et al. 2025). As ideological identities become more salient, attitudes toward equality are increasingly interpreted in distinct ways, often aligning with their political orientation (Van Hootegeem 2025). At the same time, perceptions of institutions shape how redistributive policies are evaluated (Murtin et al. 2018; OECD 2017, 2021).

To capture how values translate into redistributive preferences, this study follows the public opinion formation framework proposed by Nemčok et al. (2025), where public opinion is conceptualized as a dynamic process shaped by stable sources and intervening mechanisms. Within this framework, values represent core sources of preferences, while political and institutional perceptions and contexts condition how these values are translated to public opinion. In this analysis, political orientation and institutional trust are examined as key conditioning processes shaping the effect of value orientations into preferences towards redistribution.

Recent work by Reinl et al. (2024) demonstrates that the relationship between human values and support for an EU-wide social benefit scheme is conditional, with universalism strongly increasing support, while security displays a weaker and less consistent effect. Building on this, the present study shifts the focus to general redistribution preferences and examines how political orientation and institutional trust moderate the relationship between values and preferences for redistribution.

Using individual level data from 30 European countries included in the European Social Survey (ESS), this study shows that universalism consistently amplifies support for redistribution across ideological positions and levels of institutional trust. By contrast, the association between security and preferences for redistribution is conditioned only by political orientation. Among individuals at the political center and right, security is associated with higher redistribution support, whereas for left-leaning individuals, it is associated with lower support.

The remainder of the thesis is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the literature on redistributive preferences, with a focus on basic human values, political ideology, and trust. Section 3 presents the empirical strategy and sample data. Section 4 discusses the empirical results, while Section 5 summarizes the main findings, discussing their implications and limitations, ending with suggestions for future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Determinants of preferences towards redistribution

Redistributive preferences differ across socioeconomic groups. Classical models argue that individuals with lower incomes should express greater support for redistribution, reflecting their material self-interest (Meltzer and Richard 1981). Empirical research confirms this prediction, showing that both objective and subjective income are strong predictors of preferences towards redistribution (Olivera 2015). Some studies measure income using household income satisfaction to capture perceived economic insecurity (Gärtner et al. 2017). More specifically, Dimick et al. (2016) shows that preferences for redistribution decreases with income.

Women generally show higher preferences for redistribution (Alesina and Giuliano 2011; Perugini and Vladislavljević 2025), while age shows negative or null effects (Arikan and Bloom 2015; Olivera 2015). Alesina and Giuliano (2009) showed that individuals are more favorable in early years and then less favorable to redistribution. Retired and unemployed individuals generally show stronger redistribution preferences (Olivera 2015), reflecting their economic vulnerability. Higher education is often associated with weaker redistributive preferences, likely linked to beliefs of upward mobility, associated with expectation of a higher future income (Alesina and Giuliano 2011; Olivera 2015). A positive correlation was found between religiosity and redistribution support (Alesina and Giuliano 2009; Arikan and Bloom 2015).

Policy preferences influence welfare state outputs, as political parties have an incentive to incorporate voters' preferences into welfare policies to avoid electoral loss (Brooks and Manza 2006). Recent research has shifted attention toward understanding how redistributive preferences themselves are formed. Particularly, scholars emphasize the role of underlying beliefs, perceptions,

and normative orientations that shape how individuals evaluate inequality and state intervention. Among these, basic human values represent a key motivational foundation for public opinion.

2.2. Basic human values

Personal values have long been considered important to comprehend how policy preferences are structured and judged (Feldman 1988, 2003). Scholars such as Hilton and Piliavin (2004) and Miles (2015) call for bigger attention to the role of values in sociopolitics research. Values shape what individuals notice and their perception, acting as lens through which information about the welfare state is filtered and evaluated. Attitudes towards redistribution are therefore seen as a translation of these abstract value orientations into concrete context specific judgments (Feldman 2003).

Schwartz (1992) conceptualizes values as steady motivational goals that guide how individuals evaluate actions, policies and people. This theory identifies ten distinct basic human values (universalism, benevolence, achievement, power, self-direction, stimulation, security, conformity, tradition and hedonism), which are organized in a circular structure where adjacent values share similar motivations and opposing values reflect conflicting ones (see Appendix for value definitions and the circle configuration). These ten values can be grouped into two higher-order value dimensions: self-transcendence versus self-enhancement and openness to change versus conservation (Schwartz 1994). Self-transcendence (universalism and benevolence) concerns for others' welfare, whereas self-enhancement (achievement and power) focuses on personal success. The second dimension contrasts values that favor independent thought and change (self-direction and stimulation), with those that tend to be more conservative (security, conformity and tradition). Hedonism is related both to self-enhancement and openness to change.

Schwartz (2015) proposes that value orientations are measured as relative scores, considering how individuals prioritize specific values within their personal value structure. These compare the importance assigned to a specific value with their own average response rate across all value items.

The ESS still adopts the 21-items basic human value scale, developed by S. Schwartz (2003). Although the theoretical basis is dated, this measure is seen as configural and metric invariant across countries (Davidov, Schmidt, and Schwartz 2009) with subsequent studies confirming its continued empirical validity and cross-country applicability.

While still limited, the predictive power of human values has been established for a range of policy preferences. Choi (2021) finds that universalism, power and achievement are positively associated with support for a universal basic income, while benevolence shows a negative effect. Reinl et al. (2024) explicitly highlights the conditional nature of security, while showing that prioritizing universalism rises support for a European Union (EU) social benefit scheme. Their findings suggest that security does not translate directly into policy preferences, being influenced by an individual's ideological self-placement, their level of European identity and support for EU integration.

Kulin and Meuleman (2015) finds that self-transcendence consistently increases support for the welfare state across Europe, especially in more generous welfare states, while the effects of conservation vary substantially across countries. Kulin and Svallfors (2013) find that redistribution preferences are positively related to self-transcendence and negatively with self-enhancement values, with this link being generally stronger in more privileged socio-economic classes.

Although Schwartz's framework distinguishes ten basic values, universalism and security emerge as especially relevant for understanding redistributive attitudes, similarly highlighted in Reinl et al. (2024). The two value orientations have distinct theoretical relevance for redistribution, but

security has a less consistent established result. There is also evidence that self-transcendence value orientations, particularly universalism, being strongly associated with redistribution preferences and the welfare state, whereas for security, individuals who emphasize the government's role in ensuring safety against all threats, shows a weaker and more inconsistent association.

2.2.1. Universalism

Empirical evidence shows that universalism is a strong predictor of people's social and economic policy views (Cappelen et al. 2022). In Schwartz' theory of basic human values, universalism belongs to the self-transcendence dimension, which reflects concern for the welfare of society. Unlike benevolence, that mainly focuses on the wellbeing of a closer inner circle, universalism reflects a broad and more inclusive orientation toward equality and concern for all individuals. These characteristics make universalism particularly relevant for understanding redistributive attitudes, which require extending solidarity beyond one's closer social circle.

2.2.2. Security

The value security attributes greater importance to safety and stability of society and self (Davidov and Meuleman 2012; Schwartz 1992). Within Schwartz's framework, the security value includes two different spheres, valuing both primarily individual interests, such as avoiding personal risk and collective interests, like social order and stability (Schwartz 1992, 2015). These distinct components suggest that security is likely linked to redistributive preferences, while their effect has no clear theoretical prediction regarding the sign of this relationship.

As a conservation value, security can harm support for redistributive policies when welfare transfers are perceived as a threat or disruptive risk to social or economic stability (Reinl et al. 2024). Contrarily, security is linked to risk aversion, which can lead individuals to see redistribution

as a form of collective insurance against shocks (Gärtner et al. 2017). In contexts of rising inequality, inequality itself is increasingly identified as a threat to stability and social cohesion (Nashrurrahman et al. 2025) potentially further aligning individuals who prioritize security to view redistribution as a protecting tool for potential economic risks.

While values represent stable motivational sources of preferences, their influence on redistribution depends on the processes through which individuals interpret political and institutional contexts. Drawing on Nemčok et al. (2025), opinion formation in welfare states can be understood as involving three interconnected dimensions: sources, processes, and political consequences. Values are relatively stable sources of preferences that capture what people consider important, whereas traits, another source of public opinion, describe what people are like (Caprara et al. 2006). Processes represent individual interactions with the welfare state that influence perceptions about it, while consequences are broader effects that emerge from opinion formation. Having already established values as stable sources that influence redistributive preferences, this section turns to the processes through which these value orientations are translated into policy.

Stantcheva (2024) argues that policy preferences are not only based on reality, but also influenced by perceptions of inequality, social mobility, diversity, immigration and one's social position. Alesina and Angeletos (2005) argues that beliefs about fairness and the role of luck versus effort are important determinants of redistributive preferences. Alesina and Giuliano (2009) empirically showed that attitudes toward redistribution are influenced by a combination of ideology, institutional trust, social mobility beliefs and income. These findings highlight that values influence redistributive preferences through political and social attitudes. Thus, ideological orientation and institutional trust may function as processes that condition the influence of value priorities.

2.3. Political orientation

Political ideology is one of the strongest and most consistent determinants of redistributive preferences, with consistent findings indicating that left-wing individuals support more redistribution than right-wing ones (Alesina et al. 2004; Alesina and Giuliano 2011; Olivera 2015).

Across Europe, political polarization has intensified since the Global Financial Crisis (Emanuele and Bruno 2024; Iyengar et al. 2018), increasing the extent to which redistributive policies are interpreted through ideological lenses, ultimately deepening divisions. Affective attachments to ideological labels further reinforce these different lenses (Torcal and Harteveld, 2025), shaping how policy proposals are evaluated across groups. Research shows that political orientation reflects deeper motivational value orientations. Individuals tend to support political options that protect their core values, with universalism more strongly associated with left-leaning and security with right-leaning alignment (Caprara et al. 2006; Piurko et al. 2011). Thus, ideology operates as a key moderating process through which value orientations translate into redistributive preferences.

2.4 Institutional Trust

Institutional or political trust refers to the confidence citizens have that public institutions act reliably, fairly and for the common interest, reflecting evaluative beliefs or expectations about institutional performance (Devos, Spini and Schwartz 2002; Diržytė, Patapas and Adame 2024). Such trust is shaped by perceptions of institutional integrity, responsiveness, competence, reliability, openness and fairness (Murtin et al. 2018; OECD 2017, 2021). These evaluations are not formed in isolation, with value orientations playing an important role in shaping how individuals evaluate institutional behavior. Individuals valuing universalism tend to hold institutions to higher standards of fairness and inclusiveness, which may be associated with lower levels of trust, whereas those emphasizing security are more likely to view institutions as

instruments of social order and stability and therefore express higher trust (Devos, Spini and Schwartz. 2002).

Previous research provides mixed evidence on the relationship between institutional trust and preferences for redistribution. Perugini and Vladisavljević (2025) finds that less trust in institutions performance might drive people to seek more redistribution. Evidence also shows that higher confidence in policy implementation as fair and effective creates more support for welfare policies (Habibov et al. 2019) and redistribution (Rothstein et al. 2012; Svallfors 2013), whereas Scheve and Stasavage (2016) find that even when institutions are perceived as fair and open, this does not necessarily increase preferences towards redistributive taxation. Kuziemko et al. (2015) states that low government trust, particularly regarding efficiency, decreases preferences towards redistribution. Devine (2024) similarly finds that political trust has an insignificant impact on redistribution preferences, even when perceptions of governmental honesty or corruption are experimentally altered. Together, these inconsistencies suggest that institutional trust does not operate uniformly, while being strongly related to how people perceive it.

3. Empirical Strategy

This study investigates how basic human values shape *preferences for redistribution* and whether this relationship is conditioned by *political ideology* and *institutional trust*. The empirical analysis relies on an ordinary least squares (OLS) linear probability model, using as the dependent variable a binary indicator of *support for redistribution*. Following prior studies, the original ESS item is recoded so that only respondents who clearly agree that “the government should take measures to reduce income differences” are coded as supportive. This dichotomization enhances interpretability and reflects the highly skewed distribution of responses.

The baseline model estimates both the absolute and relative effect of *universalism* and *security* on *redistribution preferences*, controlling for relevant socio-demographic characteristics and cross-national differences. The estimation equation is specified as:

$$Y_{ic} = \alpha + \beta_1 U_{ic} + \beta_2 PU_{ic} + \beta_3 S_{ic} + \beta_4 PS_{ic} + \gamma X_{ic} + \delta_c + \varepsilon_{ic} \quad (1)$$

Where Y_i is a binary variable indicating *preferences for redistribution* for an individual i in country c . The explanatory variables *universalism* and *security* enter the model assuming each two binary forms. As importance scores (U_{ic} and S_{ic}), the OLS coefficients measure differences in *support for redistribution* between individuals who highly score either value and those who do not. As proposed by Schwartz (2003), values also enter the equation as centered *prioritization* measures (PU_{ic} and PS_{ic}) and reflect the relative importance that an individual attributes to each value within their typical response to all value items. Incorporating both measures enables the analysis to account for response-style bias, such as a tendency to rate all values highly, while still being able to capture the direct effect of highly valuing *universalism* and *security* on *preferences towards redistribution*. The coefficient vector X_{ic} includes individual controls typically used in redistribution literature, such as *gender*, *age*, *education*, *employment status*, *household subjective income*, and *religiosity*. Country fixed effects (δ_c) account for unobserved national characteristics.

Building on previous research, several hypotheses guide the baseline analysis. *Universalism* is expected to rise *preferences for redistribution*, as it reflects concern for equality and others' welfare. *Security*, in theory, seems to be related to redistributive preferences, but their signal is ambiguous. People who highly value security might perceive redistribution as disruptive, leading to less support, but redistribution can also be viewed as a form of collective insurance, protecting individuals against economic risks, which may instead enhance redistribution preferences. Thus,

both values are expected to influence redistribution preferences, with universalism showing a clearer positive association. These expectations motivate the following hypotheses:

H1. *High universalism scores, measured as both absolute importance and value prioritization, are positively associated with the probability of supporting redistribution.*

H2. *High security scores, measured as both absolute importance and value prioritization, are associated with preferences towards redistribution, while their effect may be positive or negative.*

H3. *Universalism effects are expected to have stronger and more consistent association with redistribution support than security.*

As values shape public opinion through perceptions of political and institutional contexts, their influence on redistribution preferences is expected to vary across ideological and institutional positions. The next models test this by adding interaction terms between *value priorities* with *political ideology* and *institutional trust*, estimated in two separate models to allow clearer interpretation of moderation patterns. Therefore, the extended model is estimated as follows:

$$Y_{ic} = \alpha + \beta_1 PU_{ic} + \beta_2 PS_{ic} + \theta_1 M_{ic} + \theta_2 (PU_{ic} \times M_{ic}) + \theta_3 (PS_{ic} \times M_{ic}) + \gamma X_{ic} + \delta_c + \varepsilon_{ic} \quad (2)$$

Each mechanism (M_{ic}) enters the regression both as a direct predictor of preferences towards redistribution and through interactions with *prioritizing universalism* and *prioritizing security*. Both mechanisms are included as categorical variables to capture potential non-linear patterns.

The first moderation analysis examines whether value effects vary across ideological positions. Political orientation has been shown as a strong predictor of redistribution support and literature suggests that they are closely related to value orientations, with individuals tending to support political options that are congruent with their core values. The theoretical expectations are that:

H4. *Across ideological groups, individuals who prioritize universalism have a higher probability of supporting redistribution than those who do not.*

H5. The magnitude of the positive effect of prioritizing universalism across political groups is larger among left-leaning groups than in right-leaning groups.

H6. The association between prioritizing security and preferences for redistribution varies across ideological groups, with no uniform direction expected.

H7. Political orientation moderates the association between prioritizing universalism and support for redistribution more consistently than it moderates the association for prioritizing security.

The second moderation analysis considers the influence of an individual's *institutional trust* on the relationship between *value prioritization* and *redistribution preferences*. Although existing research provides mixed evidence, several studies highlight that both high and low *levels of trust* can reinforce these preferences. High trust can reinforce support by increasing confidence in the state's capacity to implement redistributive policies fairly and effectively. Also, individuals with low trust might seek redistribution to address perceived institutional failures. By contrast, the role of institutional trust in moderating the relationship between security and redistribution is less clear, but it may shape whether security concerns align with greater or lower support for redistribution.

It is expected that:

H8. High trust is expected to amplify the positive association between prioritizing universalism and the probability of an individual demonstrating preferences towards redistribution.

H9. The association between prioritizing security and preferences for redistribution varies across different trust levels, with no uniform direction expected.

H10. Prioritizing security has a weaker and less consistent moderating association across levels of institutional trust than prioritizing universalis.

3.1. Sample Data

The empirical analysis uses data from round 11 (2023-2024) of the ESS, a biennial cross-national survey that provides information about sociodemographic characteristics, values, politics and trust. This wave includes more than 40,000 respondents from 30 countries across Europe: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland,

Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and United Kingdom. This section describes the construction and measurement of all variables. Full item wording and categorization explanations appear in the Appendix. Cases with redundant responses were removed (“*Not applicable*”, “*Refusal*”, “*Do not know*”, or “*No answer*”).

The dependent variable is derived from respondents’ level of agreement with the following statement: “*The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels*”. A clear majority of respondents (71%) show agreement (Table A3), with strong disagreement remaining rare (2.27%). Thus, the original five-point Likert scale is recoded into a binary variable to distinguish respondents that (strongly) agree, from those who do not show preferences towards redistribution. This is a common practice in redistributive literature (Busemeyer and Sahm 2021; Gärtner et al. 2017; Jaime-Castillo and Marqués-Perales 2019; Olivera 2015), that facilitates interpretation while accounting for the strong positive skew towards support.

Universalism and *security* are measured using the Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ) from ESS, where respondents rate how similar each description is to themselves on a 1 (“*Not like me at all*”) to 6 (“*Very much like me*”) scale. The original scores were reversed so that higher values indicate greater importance. *Universalism* is captured through three items and *security* uses two items from the 21-item basic human values scale. Absolute scores are constructed for *universalism* and *security*, as the mean of the relevant item answers and are subsequently dichotomized to identify individuals who clearly assign high importance to each value (scoring 5 or above) versus those who do not. These measures aim to assess whether strongly scoring a given value is directly associated with higher or lower support for redistribution.

However, raw value scores ignore the integrated nature within value systems (Schwartz 1996), motivating a focus on the relative importance of *universalism* and *security*. Following ESS and Schwartz (2003) guidelines, the relative priority scores using the Mean Rating Across all Items (MRAT) correction, which subtracts each respondent's average rating, across all 21 value items, from their absolute value score. The resulting centered scores are dichotomized to capture meaningful prioritization, being referred to as *prioritizing universalism* and *prioritizing security*, with positive values indicating that a given value is rated above an individual's typical response level, whereas zero or negative scores reflect a lack of prioritization of these values.

Political orientation is measured using respondents left–right self-placement in the political spectrum. The scale is recoded into five groups to capture meaningful distinctions in a context of political polarization, allow for non-linear ideological effects and to address the concentration at the midpoint. These categories correspond to *Extreme left* (0–2), *Left* (3–4), *Center* (5), *Right* (6–7) and *Extreme right* (8–10). Additionally, *Institutional trust* is measured using the mean of six ESS items capturing confidence in the national parliament, the legal system, the police, politicians, political parties and the European Parliament. Each item is rated from 0 (“*No trust at all*”) to 10 (“*Complete trust*”). Considering that the effect on redistributive preferences may not increase uniformly across the trust scale, this indicator was further categorized into three groups: *Low institutional trust* (< 4), *Moderate institutional trust* (4–6) and *High institutional trust* (> 6).

All individual controls included are recoded into conceptual and analytical meaningful categories. Gender is coded as a binary variable, taking the value 1 for women and 0 for men. Age is grouped into three categories that reflect different life stages, distinguishing individuals aged between 15–29, 30–59 and 60 years or above. Education is grouped, according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), into low (ISCED 0–2), medium (ISCED 3–4) and high levels

(ISCED 5-6) of education. Employment status is coded as *employed*, *retired* and a group including *unemployed or not in the labor market* individuals, creating as much conceptually distinct groups with sufficient observations in each category. The *household subjective income* is constructed in line with Olivera (2015), by grouping respondents feeling around their income into *comfortable*, *coping* and *difficulty* categories. As it reflects perceived financial constraints rather than objective income, it should be interpreted with caution. Religiosity, originally measured on an 11-point scale, was divided into five ordered categories reflecting increasing *levels of religiosity* commitment. The detailed cut-points for each category are reported in the Appendix. The original and recategorized variable measurements are reported in the Appendix (Table A4 and Table A5).

4. Descriptive Statistics

The sample is composed of 49,169 individuals from the 30 European countries considered (Table A6), with some variables having fewer observations due to non-response. Table A7 presents the weighted descriptive statistics for all variables in the pooled sample. Table A8 shows that, after reweighting, respondents' characteristics continue to display substantial variation in education, income perceptions, and religiosity, while exhibiting a balanced gender composition and a predominance of employed individuals.

Table 1 reports country-specific weighted means for redistribution preferences and values prioritization, shows that there is cross-national heterogeneity. Support for redistribution is generally high across Europe, but this magnitude varies between countries, going from around 59% in Estonia and Montenegro and peaking in Portugal (89%). Prioritizing universalism has relatively low shares in Montenegro (4%) and Bulgaria (20%), and high levels in Sweden (87%) and Finland

(85%). Security has a higher share of being prioritized in countries like Serbia and Ukraine, exceeding 70%, while remaining below 10% in countries such as Iceland and the Netherlands.

Finally, Table A10 reports on the country-level distribution of political orientation and institutional trust. It shows that extreme ideological positions are present in all countries, but represent relatively small shares of the population, while centrist orientations and moderate levels of institutional trust are more prevalent. The relative size of these groups varies substantially across countries, particularly with respect to institutional trust, where some countries exhibit high concentrations of low trust while others display considerably higher confidence in institutions.

Table I- Descriptive Statistics of main variables (shares), in terms of average mean for all countries

	Code	Mean of support for redistribution	Mean of prioritizing universalism	Mean of prioritizing security
Austria	AT	85.79%	53.41%	55.18%
Belgium	BE	68.33%	60.14%	16.97%
Bulgaria	BG	85.22%	19.95%	42.75%
Switzerland	CH	68.37%	69.50%	16.75%
Cyprus	CY	76.11%	52.207%	74.03%
Germany	DE	67.61%	74.77%	46.23%
Estonia	EE	58.98%	61.44%	53.42%
Spain	ES	68.03%	78.83%	60.73%
Finland	FI	61.50%	84.63%	40.66%
France	FR	71.78%	77.91%	42.71%
United Kingdom	GB	69.94%	73.68%	38.09%
Greece	GR	85.43%	30.53%	69.73%
Croatia	HR	83.42%	60.23%	64.32%
Hungary	HU	77.98%	29.26%	41.52%
Ireland	IE	76.12%	54.97%	51.65%
Israel	IL	62.77%	27.68%	37.61%
Iceland	IS	68.42%	82.97%	2.95%
Italy	IT	80.82%	42.10%	59.05%
Lithuania	LT	73.28%	24.60%	64.20%
Latvia	LV	75.60%	26.23%	68.79%
Montenegro	ME	58.11%	4.32%	28.42%
Netherlands	NL	62.76%	67.16%	2.31%
Norway	NO	67.62%	68.63%	14.30%
Poland	PL	58.75%	59.86%	68.68%
Portugal	PT	89.27%	44.49%	42.11%
Serbia	RS	75.11%	49.24%	75.30%
Sweden	SE	65.97%	86.57%	7.69%
Slovenia	SI	77.36%	53.34%	45.78%
Slovakia	SK	73.36%	31.31%	55.21%

Ukraine	UA	65.49%	55.31%	76.84%
Total		48,616	48,616	48,616

Notes: The table reports country-specific weighted means of the main variables used in the analysis. These means represent the share of respondents in each country supporting redistribution, prioritizing universalism, and prioritizing security (all binary indicators that are equal to 1, respectively for scores ≥ 4 and for values scores ≥ 5). Country means are calculated using ESS design weights. Data retrieved from the ESS, round 11.

5. Results

The results from the main linear probability models are presented in Tables 2 and Table 3, which presents the full set of estimates for the control variables. Panel A shows the effects of *universalism* and *security* distinguishing absolute and value prioritization effects on preferences towards redistribution. Absolute scores are only included in Column (1). Panel B adds *political orientation* as a moderating factor in the relationship between values and support (Column 2), while Panel C examines moderation by *institutional trust*. These effects are interpreted using average marginal effects present in Table A11 and Table A12 from Appendix.

Table 2 - Results from OLS regression for redistribution support

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Panel A - Basic human values			
Universalism			
High universalism (absolute)	0.090*** (0.009)		
Prioritizing universalism	0.063*** (0.013)	0.049** (0.023)	0.142*** (0.019)
Security			
High security (absolute)	0.019** (0.011)		
Prioritizing security	-0.015 (0.012)	0.056*** (0.019)	0.007 (0.015)
Panel B – Political orientation			
Political orientation (ref. Center)			
Extreme left		0.120*** (0.041)	
Left		0.043 (0.036)	
Right		-0.133*** (0.035)	
Extreme right		-0.112*** (0.037)	
Prioritizing universalism*Political orientation (ref. Center)			
Prioritizing universalism*Extreme left		0.088** (0.038)	

	(1)	(2)	(3)
<i>Prioritizing universalism*Left</i>		0.113*** (0.034)	
<i>Prioritizing universalism*Right</i>		0.078** (0.035)	
<i>Prioritizing universalism*Extreme right</i>		0.005 (0.034)	
Security * Political Orientation (ref. center)			
<i>Prioritizing security*Extreme left</i>		-0.096*** (0.027)	
<i>Prioritizing security*Left</i>		-0.096*** (0.024)	
<i>Prioritizing security*Right</i>		-0.022 (0.027)	
<i>Prioritizing security*Extreme right</i>		-0.006 (0.029)	
Panel C – Institutional trust			
Institutional trust (ref. Moderate institutional trust)			
<i>Low institutional trust</i>			0.077*** (0.025)
<i>High institutional trust</i>			0.011 (0.029)
Prioritizing universalism*Institutional trust (ref. Moderate trust)			
<i>Prioritizing universalism*Low trust</i>			-0.073*** (0.023)
<i>Prioritizing universalism*High trust</i>			0.006 (0.028)
Prioritizing security*Institutional trust (ref. Moderate trust)			
<i>Prioritizing security*Low trust</i>			0.002 (0.020)
<i>Prioritizing security*High trust</i>			-0.033 (0.022)
Constant	0.688 (0.023)	0.693 (0.033)	0.669 (0.028)
Individual controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Absolute universalism and security	Yes	No	No
R ²	0.056	0.077	0.049
Observations	47,031	40,609	46,937

Notes: All models are estimated using OLS, including individual-level controls and country fixed effects. Following Kaminska (2020), ESS post-stratification weights (*anweight*) are used. Robust standard errors (clustered at the primary sampling unit (*psu*) level) are reported in parentheses and significance levels are denoted by: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

All models apply ESS weights (*anweight*) to ensure population representativeness. The number of observations varies across models due to differences in available data, ranging from around 40,000 to 47,000 respondents. Model fit, as measured by R², ranges from 0.049 to 0.077, with the highest explanatory power observed in the specification including political orientation.

Across all models, universalism is strongly and positively associated with *redistribution support*. Model 1 shows that individuals who assign high importance to *universalism* (scores of 5 or above) have a 9 percentage points (p.p.) higher probability of *supporting redistribution*, compared to those who do not score high on this value, while *prioritizing universalism* has a smaller but still positive association (6 p.p.). For *security*, only the absolute importance yields a significant effect (1.9 p.p.).

For Model 2, among individuals who do not prioritize either value above their average value response, the probability of *supporting redistribution* increases for individuals in the left-leaning groups and decreases for those who belong to the right-leaning groups, relative to the *Center* category. The *Left* group does not differ significantly from the *Center*, while support decreases more strongly among the *Right*. To assess moderation by political orientation, the analysis relies on average marginal effects (Table A11), which capture differences in predicted support between individuals who prioritize a given value and those who do not, within each ideological group, from which the association may be zero. *Prioritizing universalism* is associated with significantly higher *support for redistribution* across the political spectrum, with the largest effects among *Left* respondents (16.21 p.p.), while still creating substantial effects for right-leaning groups. (12.7 p.p. for *Right* and 5.39 for *Extreme right*). Contrarily, the association between *prioritizing security* and *redistribution support* is ideologically asymmetric. *Prioritizing security* increases the probability of support among *Center*, *Right* or *Extreme right* respondents, compared to non-prioritizers within the same ideological group, while it is negatively associated with support among the *Left* group.

From Model 3, it is estimated that among respondents who do not *prioritize universalism* neither *security*, individuals with *Low institutional trust* exhibit a higher 7.7 p.p probability of supporting redistribution, than those with *Moderate trust*, while *High trust* individuals does not show significant differences from the reference group. Additionally, average marginal effects (Table

A12) show that *prioritizing universalism* is positively associated with the probability of supporting redistribution across all trust levels, with the magnitude of the effect increasing for individuals in higher trust groups. Among respondents with *Low institutional trust*, it raises the probability of *support* by around 7 p.p., relative to those who do not *prioritize universalism*. The effect more than doubles among those with *High institutional trust* (15 p.p.), showing a similar effect to those with *Moderate institutional trust*. In this model, *prioritizing security* does not lead to statistically significant associations with redistribution at any level of institutional trust.

5.1. Other factors affecting support for redistribution

Table 3 reports the effects of socioeconomic characteristics on support for redistribution across all model specifications. Women consistently express a significant higher support for redistribution than men. Individuals with *ages* between 30 and 59 show a slightly higher probability of supporting redistribution only in Model 2, while respondents *over 60* do not differ significantly from the youngest group in any model. *Retired* individuals exhibit moderately higher and consistent support, throughout models, compared to *employed* respondents. *Education* estimates show consistent coefficients with *medium education* being associated with an increase in the likelihood towards redistribution support, compared to the reference category, whereas *higher education* is associated with a decrease. *Subjective income* is one of the strongest predictors, with respondents expressing financial *difficulty* displaying substantially higher support for redistribution.

The level of *religiosity* suggests a non-linear, almost U-shaped association with support for redistribution, with *moderately religious* respondents showing a lower support for redistribution compared to other groups. However, this loses statistical significance, once political ideology is included. The *least* and *most religious* groups do not show any statistically significant estimates.

Although small in magnitude, *religiosity* coefficients have relatively consistent values and signals across models.

Table 3 - Results from OLS regression for redistribution support

Socioeconomic characteristics	(1)	(2)	(3)
Gender (ref. <i>Male</i>)			
<i>Female</i>	0.034*** (0.007)	0.022*** (0.007)	0.039*** (0.007)
Age Group (ref. <i>15-29 years old</i>)			
<i>30-59 years old</i>	0.012 (0.012)	0.023** (0.013)	0.007 (0.012)
<i>More than 60 years old</i>	0.002 (0.014)	0.016 (0.016)	-0.004 (0.014)
Employment status (ref. <i>Employed</i>)			
<i>Retired</i>	0.027** (0.013)	0.032** (0.014)	0.027** (0.013)
<i>Unemployed or not in labor market</i>	0.005 (0.011)	0.002 (0.012)	0.004 (0.011)
Education level (ref. <i>Low level: ISCED 0–2</i>)			
<i>Medium level (ISCED 3–4)</i>	0.026** (0.011)	0.031** (0.012)	0.031*** (0.222)
<i>High level (ISCED 5–6)</i>	-0.031** (0.012)	-0.033** (0.013)	-0.020* (0.012)
Household subjective income (ref. <i>Living comfortably</i>)			
<i>Coping on present income</i>	0.051*** (0.010)	0.049*** (0.011)	0.046*** (0.010)
<i>(Very) difficult on present income</i>	0.122*** (0.012)	0.115*** (0.171)	0.116*** (0.012)
Level of religiosity (ref. <i>Not religious (0-1)</i>)			
<i>2-4</i>	-0.018 (0.012)	-0.015 (0.011)	-0.019 (0.012)
<i>5</i>	-0.030** (0.013)	-0.021 (0.014)	-0.026** (0.013)
<i>6-8</i>	-0.022** (0.011)	0.003 (0.032)	-0.018 (0.011)
<i>9-10</i>	-0.013 (0.014)	0.022 (0.015)	-0.003 (0.014)
Constant	0.682 (0.023)	0.485 (0.033)	0.669 (0.028)
R ²	0.056	0.077	0.049
Observations	47,031	40,609	46,937

*Notes: All models are estimated using OLS, including individual-level controls and country fixed effects. ESS post-stratification weights (anweight. Robust standard errors (clustered at the primary sampling unit level) are reported in parentheses and significance levels are denoted by: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.*

5.2. Robustness Checks

A series of robustness checks confirms the stability of the main findings (see Appendix Table A15 and Table A16). For Model 1 a series of alternative model specifications were tested, including a

baseline model without individual-level control variables (Column 4), different operationalizations including a variable for employment situation with more categories, as well as using the original categorical specification for subjective household income (Columns 6 and 7). Additional specifications indicate that absolute value importance and value prioritization exert additive rather than interactive effects (Column 5). Also, alternatives with only three categories for political orientation and using institutional trust as binary (Column 8 and 9) were estimated.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

Current debates on the welfare state suggest that redistribution preferences increasingly reflect subjective interpretations of reality rather than objective economic conditions. This study confirms that basic human values serve as motivational sources of support for redistribution, focusing on universalism and security as two theoretically relevant value orientations and investigates how political ideology and institutional trust conditions the translation of these values into support for redistribution. The study contributes to a better understanding of the processes linking value mechanisms to public opinion towards redistribution.

This study shows that basic human values play a central role in shaping support for redistribution across a sample of European countries, and their influence depends on political ideology and institutional trust. A higher sense of universalism, reflecting care for the welfare of all people and nature, consistently has a positive effect on redistributive preferences, amplifying the effects persisting across ideological positions and levels of institutional trust. By contrast, security, which attributes importance to safety and societal harmony, influences preferences towards redistribution and this effect is differently expressed across political ideologies.

The results align with prior research highlighting the positive influence of universalism on redistributive policies and the conditional effects of security (Kulin and Meuleman 2015; Kulin and Svallfors 2013; Reinl et al. 2024). The asymmetry between the effects produced reflects the distinct motivational logics of each value, as universalism is directly oriented toward equality, whereas security encompasses both personal and collective considerations that can translate into opposing policy preferences depending on ideological context (Schwartz 1992, 2015). These findings show that redistribution support is formed through an integrated dynamic in which stable value orientations are conditioned by political and institutional processes (Nemčok et al. 2025).

Differences between ideological orientations are as expected, with right-leaning individuals expressing lower support for redistribution than those on the left, consistent with prior research (Alesina and Giuliano 2011; Olivera 2015). Prioritizing universalism amplifies support towards redistribution by attenuating ideological resistance among right-leaning individuals. Additionally, the effect of security is positive among right-leaning respondents and negative for the left group, suggesting that security concerns may be interpreted differently across the ideological spectrum.

Institutional trust further conditions how value priorities affect redistributive preferences, with both low and high trust increasing support as predicted in previous research (Perugini and Vladislavljević 2025; Rothstein et al. 2012; Svallfors 2013). Universalism requires institutional confidence to fully translate into redistribution preferences, being positively associated with support across all trust levels. However, the positive effect of universalism significantly rises with higher institutional trust, further suggesting that low confidence in institutions constrain the positive translation of universalism into policy support. Contrary to expectations, security does not vary meaningfully across trust levels. Finally, individual controls behaved as conceptualized in previous sections, with higher support for redistribution among women, retirees, and economically constrained

individuals. Subjective income consistently proves to be a strong predictor, underscoring the importance of perceived economic insecurity in shaping redistributive preferences. The negative association with higher education is consistent with theories of upward mobility. Also, the loss of explanatory power once political ideology is controlled suggests that religious beliefs may shape redistribution preferences largely through their alignment with broader ideological orientations.

This study is subject to several limitations. First, the analysis relies on cross-national self-reported survey data, making this model able to identify associations rather than allowing a causal inference between values and redistributive preferences. Secondly, the use of dichotomized measures for redistribution support and value prioritization could be problematic, since it may involve some loss of information and measurement imprecision. However, robust checks for different specifications were made and the overall findings remained unchanged. The analysis also focuses on individual level attitudes, which may appear disconnected from policy outcomes, however, this level of analysis remains substantively meaningful as part of public opinion formation that is integrated into the public debate. Lastly, the ESS redistribution item captures general preferences for income redistribution and it may not fully reflect attitudes toward specific policy instruments, while the operationalization of security combines personal and collective dimensions, potentially contributing to the instability of its effects.

Future research could disentangle the personal and collective dimensions of security or explore additional moderators, such as social trust. While this study does not examine political messaging directly, the findings suggest that future experimental research could explore whether framing redistributive policies in terms emphasizing universalism increases their appeal towards redistribution in polarized contexts.

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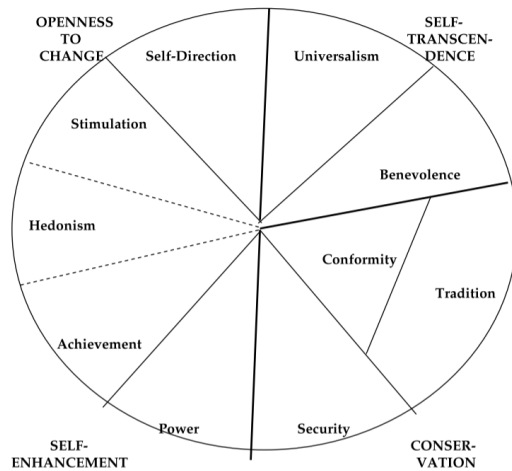
Appendix

Table A1 - Basic human values and motivational emphasis

Value dimensions	Value	Motivational emphasis
Self-transcendence	Universalism	Understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature. (broadminded, wisdom, social justice, equality, a world at peace, a world of beauty, unity with nature, protecting the environment).
	Benevolence	Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact. (helpful, honest, forgiving, loyal, responsible).
Conservation	Security	Safety, harmony and stability of society, of relationships, and of self. (family security, national security, social order, clean, reciprocation of favors).
	Tradition	Respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide the self. (humble, accepting my portion in life, devout, respect for tradition, moderate).
	Conformity	Restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms. (politeness, obedient, self-discipline, honoring parents and elders).
Self-enhancement	Power	Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources.
	Achievement	Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards.
	Hedonism	Pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself (pleasure, enjoying life, self-indulgence).
Openness to change	Stimulation	Excitement, novelty, and challenge in life. (daring, a varied life, an exciting life).
	Self-direction	Independent thought and action-choosing, creating, exploring. (creativity, freedom, independent, curious, choosing own goals).

Sources: Schwartz (2003). *Definitions of Motivational Types of Values in Terms of their Goals, the Single Values and the dimension that they represent*

Figure A1 - Circular continuum representing basic human values and higher-order value types (Schwartz)



Sources: Schwartz (2003). Definitions of motivational types of values in terms of their goals, the single values and dimension that they represent.

Table A2 - List of main hypotheses being tested

Hypotheses
H1. High universalism scores, measured as both absolute importance and value prioritization, are positively associated with the probability of supporting redistribution.
H2. High security scores, measured as both absolute importance and value prioritization, are associated with preferences towards redistribution, while their effect may be positive or negative.
H3. Universalism effects are expected to have stronger and more consistent association with redistribution support than security.
H4. Across ideological groups, individuals who prioritize universalism have a higher probability of supporting redistribution than those who do not.
H5. The magnitude of the positive effect of prioritizing universalism across political groups is larger among left-leaning groups than in right-leaning groups.
H6. The association between prioritizing security and preferences for redistribution varies across ideological groups, with no uniform direction expected.
H7. Political orientation moderates the association between prioritizing universalism and support for redistribution more consistently than it moderates the association for prioritizing security.
H8. High trust is expected to amplify the positive association between prioritizing universalism and the probability of an individual demonstrating preferences towards redistribution.
H9. The association between prioritizing security and preferences for redistribution varies across different trust levels, with no uniform direction expected.
H10. Prioritizing security has a weaker and less consistent moderating association across levels of institutional trust than prioritizing universalism.

Table A3 - Descriptive Statistics of main variable with original response categories

Response category	Obs.	(%)
Agree strongly	15,804	29.10
Agree	20,067	40.72
Neither agree nor disagree	8,268	17.45
Disagree	4,053	9.46
Disagree strongly	977	2.27
Total	49,169	100%

Notes: Percentages are weighted using the ESS analysis weight and account for the complex survey design (stratification and clustering). Reference categories are indicated in parentheses. ---- to represent sample of population rather than raw value

Table A4 – Survey items and original response scales

Concept		Question Wording	Response Scale
<i>Support for redistribution</i>	<i>gincdif</i>	“The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels.”	1=“Agree strongly” 2=“Agree strongly” 3=“Neither agree nor disagree” 4= “Disagree” 5=“Disagree strongly”
		“Now I will briefly describe some people. Please listen to each description and tell me how much each person is or is not like you. Use this card for your answer.”	
<i>Universalism</i>	<i>Ipeqopta</i>	“She/he thinks it is important that every person in the world should be treated equally. She/he believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life”	1=“Not like me at all” 2=“Not like me” 3=“A little like me” 4= “Somewhat like me” 5=“Like me” 6=“Very much like me”
	<i>Ipudrsta</i>	“It is important to her/him to be humble and modest. She/he tries not to draw attention to herself/himself.”	
	<i>Impenva</i>	“She/he strongly believes that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important to her/him.”	
<i>Security</i>	<i>Impsafea</i>	“It is important to her/him to live in secure surroundings. She/he avoids anything that might endanger her/his safety.”	1=“Not like me at all” 2=“Not like me” 3=“A little like me” 4= “Somewhat like me” 5=“Like me” 6=“Very much like me”
	<i>ipstrgva</i>	“It is important to her/him that the government ensures her/his safety against all threats. She/he wants the state to be strong so it can defend its citizens.”	

<i>Political orientation</i>	<i>lrscale</i>	“In politics people sometimes talk of 'left' and 'right'. Using this card, where would you place yourself on this scale, where 0 means the left and 10 means the right?”	0=“Left” — 10=“Right”
<i>Institutional trust</i>	<i>trstprl</i>	“Using this card, please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much you personally trust each of the institutions?” “Trust in country’s parliament?”	
	<i>trstlgl</i>	“Trust in the legal system?”	0 =“No trust at all” —
	<i>trstplc</i>	“Trust in the police?”	10=“Complete trust”
	<i>trstplt</i>	“Trust in politicians?”	
	<i>trstprt</i>	“Trust in political parties?”	
	<i>trstep</i>	“Trust in the European Parliament?”	
<i>Age</i>	<i>agea</i>		15 - 90 years old
<i>Gender</i>	<i>gndr</i>		1 = Male 2 = Female
<i>Education</i>	<i>edulvlb</i>	“What is the highest level of education you have successfully completed?”	“Not completed ISCED 1” — “ISCED 6”
<i>Employment status</i>	<i>mnctic</i>	“Main activity, last 7 days.”	1=Paid Work 2=Education 3=Unemployed, looking for job 4=Unemployed, not looking for job 5=Permanently sick or disabled 6=Retired 7=Community or military service 8=Housework, looking after children, others 9=Other
<i>Household’s income</i>	<i>hincfel</i>	“Which of the descriptions on this card comes closest to how you feel about your household's income nowadays?”	1=Living comfortably on present income 2=Coping on present income 3=Difficult on present income 4=Very difficult on present income
<i>Religiosity</i>	<i>rlgdgr</i>	“Regardless of whether you belong to a particular religion, how religious would you say you are?”	0 =“Not at all religious” — 10=“Very religious”

Notes: Data retrieved from ESS Data Portal.

Table A5 – Final categorization of variables used in OLS analysis

Variable Name	Type of Variable	Options
Support for Redistribution	Dummy	1 = “Agree strongly and “Agree” 0 = “Neither agree nor disagree”; “Disagree” and “Disagree strongly”
Universalism (absolute)	Dummy	1 = Universalism score ≥ 5 ; 0 = Universalism score < 5 .
Prioritizing universalism	Dummy	1 = Universalism $>$ individual’s mean value score; 0 = Universalism $\leq$ individual’s mean value score.
Security (absolute)	Dummy	1 = Security score ≥ 5 0 = Security score < 5
Prioritizing security	Dummy	1 = Security $>$ individual’s mean value score; 0 = Security $\leq$ individual’s mean value score
Political Orientation	Categorical	1= Extreme left (0-1) 2= Left (2- 4) 3= Center (5) 4=Right (6-8) 5= Extreme right (9-10)
Institutional trust	Categorical	1= Low institutional trust (trust score < 4) 2=Moderate institutional trust (4-6) 3=High institutional trust (trust score > 6)
Age	Categorical	1=15-29 years (<i>ref.</i>) 2=30–59 years 3=60+
Gender	Dummy	1 = Male 0 = Female
Education	Categorical	1=Low education level (ISCED 0–2) (<i>ref.</i>) 2=Medium education level (ISCED 3–4) 3=High education level (ISCED 5–6)
Employment Status	Categorical	1=Employed 2=Retired 3=Other (students, unemployed, disabled or sick, housework, military)
Household’s income	Categorical	1 =Living comfortably on present income (<i>ref.</i>); 2=Coping on present income; 3=(Very) Difficult on present income.
Religiosity	Categorical	1=Not at all religious (0-1) 2= Low religiosity (2-4) 3= Moderate religiosity (5) 4= High religiosity (6-8) 5=Very religious (9-10)

Table A6 – *Complete list of countries, ESS codes, total number of observations and mean in the analysis scope*

	Code	Obs.	(%)
Austria	AT	2,301	4.68
Belgium	BE	1,589	3.23
Bulgaria	BG	2,225	4.53
Switzerland	CH	1,356	2.76
Cyprus	CY	668	1.36
Germany	DE	2,393	4.87
Estonia	EE	1,262	2.57
Spain	ES	1,804	3.67
Finland	FI	1,548	3.15
France	FR	1,749	3.56
United Kingdom	GB	1,606	3.27
Greece	GR	2,719	5.53
Croatia	HR	1,544	3.14
Hungary	HU	2,103	4.28
Ireland	IE	1,976	4.02
Israel	IL	884	1.80
Iceland	IS	839	1.71
Italy	IT	2,825	5.75
Lithuania	LT	1,354	2.75
Latvia	LV	1,207	2.45
Montenegro	ME	1,552	3.16
Netherlands	NL	1,685	3.43
Norway	NO	1,333	2.71
Poland	PL	1,381	2.81
Portugal	PT	1,352	2.75
Serbia	RS	1,499	3.05
Sweden	SE	1,215	2.47
Slovenia	SI	1,226	2.49
Slovakia	SK	1,422	2.89
Ukraine	UA	2,552	5.19
Total		49,169	100

Notes: The table reports the number of individual respondents per country included in the analysis sample. Observations are restricted to respondents with non-missing values on the redistribution support variable.

Table A7 –Table with descriptive statistics for mean of all countries

	Obs.	Mean (%)
Socioeconomic characteristics		
Gender (ref. <i>Male</i>)	50,116	
<i>Female</i>		52.17%
Age group (ref. 15-29)	49,723	
30-59 years old		46.47%
More than 60 years old		34.15%
Employment status (ref. <i>Employed</i>)	49,837	
<i>Retired</i>		24.72%
<i>Unemployed or not in labor market</i>		24.06%
Education level (ref. <i>Low level (ISCED 0–2)</i>)		49,734
<i>Medium level (ISCED 3–4)</i>		40.76%
<i>High level (ISCED 5–6)</i>		32.68%
Household subjective income (ref. <i>Living comfortably</i>)	49,411	
<i>Coping on present income</i>		44.41%
<i>(Very) difficult on present income</i>		20.24%
Level of religiosity (ref. <i>0-1</i>)	49,731	
2-4		19.28%
5		13.70%
6-8		29.97%
9-10		11.27%
Support for redistribution		
High support for redistribution (scores ≥ 4)	49,169	70.76%
Values		
<i>High universalism (score ≥ 5)</i>	49,555	59.31%
<i>Prioritizing universalism</i>	49,555	83.99%
<i>High security (score ≥ 5)</i>	49,508	57.38%
<i>Prioritizing security</i>	49,508	74.63%
Political orientation (ref. <i>Extreme left</i>)	42,627	
<i>Left</i>		21.74%
<i>Center</i>		32.29%
<i>Right</i>		19.26%
<i>Extreme right</i>		13.21%
Institutional trust (ref. <i>Low trust in institutions</i>)	49,968	
<i>Moderate trust in institutions</i>		37.84%
<i>High trust in institutions</i>		23.74%

Notes: The table reports weighed descriptive statistics for all variables used in the empirical analysis. “Prioritizing” measures indicate whether a value is rated above the individual’s mean importance across all values. All variables are coded as categorical variables, with reference categories shown in parentheses. Data is retrieved from ESS round 11.

Table A8 - Population country means

Individual controls	AT	BE	BG	CH	CY	DE	EE	ES	FI	FR	GB	GR	HR	HU	IE
<i>Woman</i>	51 %	51 %	52 %	50 %	51 %	51 %	53 %	51 %	51 %	52 %	51 %	52 %	52 %	53 %	51 %
Age group															
<i>15-29 years old</i>	18 %	22 %	18 %	19 %	20 %	21 %	19 %	19 %	21 %	22 %	19 %	17 %	16 %	19 %	21 %
<i>30-59 years old</i>	51 %	46 %	49 %	50 %	42 %	44 %	50 %	50 %	43 %	46 %	49 %	51 %	41 %	50 %	56 %
<i>More than 60 years old</i>	31 %	32 %	33 %	32 %	39 %	35 %	32 %	30 %	37 %	32 %	32 %	32 %	43 %	31 %	24 %
Education level															
<i>Low level (ISCED 1–2)</i>	21 %	26 %	20 %	13 %	26 %	21 %	15 %	45 %	22 %	26 %	29 %	31 %	21 %	21 %	20 %
<i>Medium level (ISCED 3–4)</i>	49 %	36 %	56 %	45 %	36 %	51 %	48 %	22 %	44 %	40 %	25 %	43 %	57 %	55 %	36 %
<i>High level (ISCED 5–6)</i>	30 %	38 %	24 %	42 %	38 %	28 %	36 %	33 %	34 %	34 %	46 %	26 %	22 %	24 %	44 %
Employment status															
<i>Employed</i>	54 %	47 %	51 %	59 %	51 %	52 %	60 %	53 %	48 %	52 %	56 %	56 %	43 %	60 %	57 %
<i>Retired</i>	28 %	23 %	25 %	23 %	28 %	24 %	21 %	18 %	30 %	27 %	24 %	19 %	37 %	25 %	16 %
<i>Unemployed or not in labor market</i>	17 %	30 %	24 %	18 %	21 %	24 %	19 %	29 %	22 %	21 %	20 %	26 %	21 %	15 %	27 %
Subjective income															
<i>Living comfortably on present income</i>	37 %	42 %	7 %	56 %	28 %	46 %	25 %	41 %	31 %	40 %	44 %	9 %	33 %	15 %	42 %
<i>Coping on present income</i>	50 %	38 %	43 %	34 %	41 %	45 %	58 %	41 %	56 %	46 %	40 %	46 %	51 %	60 %	41 %
<i>(Very) difficult on present income</i>	13 %	20 %	50 %	11 %	31 %	9 %	17 %	18 %	14 %	14 %	16 %	45 %	17 %	26 %	18 %
Level of religiosity															
<i>Not religious</i>	24 %	29 %	29 %	23 %	7 %	33 %	40 %	31 %	25 %	31 %	40 %	6 %	15 %	31 %	20 %
<i>2 to 4</i>	24 %	20 %	23 %	24 %	10 %	22 %	26 %	20 %	23 %	17 %	23 %	13 %	15 %	20 %	20 %
<i>5</i>	15 %	11 %	22 %	14 %	12 %	13 %	13 %	13 %	11 %	11 %	9 %	15 %	15 %	14 %	15 %
<i>6 to 8</i>	29 %	29 %	21 %	30 %	50 %	25 %	16 %	29 %	32 %	25 %	21 %	47 %	39 %	27 %	37 %
<i>Very religious</i>	8 %	12 %	5 %	9 %	21 %	7 %	5 %	7 %	9 %	16 %	7 %	18 %	16 %	8 %	8 %

(...)

Individual controls	IL	IS	IT	LT	LV	ME	NL	NO	PL	PT	RS	SE	SI	SK	UA
Woman	53 %	49 %	52 %	54 %	56 %	51 %	50 %	49 %	51 %	53 %	51 %	49 %	50 %	52 %	63 %
Age group															
15-29 years old	25 %	29 %	15 %	17 %	17 %	11 %	22 %	25 %	16 %	18 %	19 %	20 %	18 %	16 %	16 %
30-59 years old	49 %	60 %	42 %	53 %	46 %	74 %	45 %	46 %	43 %	49 %	47 %	47 %	49 %	57 %	51 %
More than 60 years old	27 %	12 %	44 %	31 %	37 %	15 %	32 %	29 %	41 %	34 %	34 %	33 %	33 %	27 %	33 %
Education level															
Low level (ISCED 1–2)	11 %	16 %	46 %	9 %	14 %	11 %	26 %	24 %	13 %	51 %	15 %	19 %	18 %	13 %	6 %
Medium level (ISCED 3–4)	52 %	45 %	39 %	53 %	54 %	58 %	38 %	37 %	58 %	26 %	58 %	40 %	52 %	62 %	41 %
High level (ISCED 5–6)	37 %	38 %	15 %	38 %	33 %	31 %	36 %	39 %	28 %	23 %	27 %	41 %	31 %	25 %	53 %
Employment status															
Employed	58 %	68 %	45 %	55 %	49 %	50 %	56 %	54 %	49 %	56 %	46 %	54 %	53 %	59 %	45 %
Retired	15 %	6 %	25 %	21 %	26 %	12 %	19 %	20 %	34 %	25 %	25 %	23 %	27 %	22 %	29 %
Unemployed or not in labor market	27 %	26 %	30 %	25 %	25 %	38 %	25 %	25 %	16 %	18 %	29 %	23 %	20 %	20 %	26 %
Household subjective income															
Living comfortably on present income	34 %	58 %	30 %	24 %	7 %	20 %	65 %	56 %	17 %	16 %	29 %	68 %	58 %	19 %	7 %
Coping on present income	43 %	31 %	50 %	59 %	54 %	30 %	28 %	36 %	70 %	51 %	56 %	27 %	32 %	53 %	27 %
(Very) difficult on present income	23 %	11 %	21 %	17 %	39 %	50 %	7% %	8% %	12 %	33 %	15 %	6% %	9% %	28 %	66 %
Level of religiosity															
Not religious	20 %	26 %	12 %	16 %	38 %	6 %	35 %	35 %	10 %	12 %	9 %	39 %	20 %	16 %	16 %
2 to 4	22 %	23 %	18 %	19 %	23 %	14 %	21 %	31 %	14 %	18 %	12 %	33 %	19 %	10 %	16 %
5	12 %	15 %	15 %	19 %	17 %	26 %	9% %	12 %	16 %	21 %	17 %	10 %	19 %	14 %	21 %

6 to 8	36 %	29 %	45 %	37 %	18 %	42 %	28 %	17 %	41 %	34 %	39 %	14 %	31 %	39 %	30 %
Very religious	10 %	8% %	10 %	9% %	4% %	12 %	8% %	5% %	19 %	15 %	23 %	5% %	12 %	21 %	17 %

Table A9 - Descriptive Statistics of main variables (shares), in terms of average mean for all countries

	Code	Mean of support for redistribution	Mean of prioritizing universalism	Mean of prioritizing security
Austria	AT	85.79%	53.41%	55.18%
Belgium	BE	68.33%	60.14%	16.97%
Bulgaria	BG	85.22%	19.95%	42.75%
Switzerland	CH	68.37%	69.50%	16.75%
Cyprus	CY	76.11%	52.21%	74.03%
Germany	DE	67.61%	74.77%	46.23%
Estonia	EE	58.98%	61.44%	53.42%
Spain	ES	68.03%	78.83%	60.73%
Finland	FI	61.50%	84.63%	40.66%
France	FR	71.78%	77.91%	42.71%
United Kingdom	GB	69.94%	73.68%	38.09%
Greece	GR	85.43%	30.53%	69.73%
Croatia	HR	83.42%	60.23%	64.32%
Hungary	HU	77.98%	29.26%	41.52%
Ireland	IE	76.12%	54.97%	51.65%
Israel	IL	62.77%	27.68%	37.61%
Iceland	IS	68.42%	82.97%	2.95%
Italy	IT	80.82%	42.10%	59.05%
Lithuania	LT	73.28%	24.60%	64.20%
Latvia	LV	75.60%	26.23%	68.79%
Montenegro	ME	58.11%	4.32%	28.42%
Netherlands	NL	62.76%	67.16%	2.31%
Norway	NO	67.62%	68.63%	14.30%
Poland	PL	58.75%	59.86%	68.68%
Portugal	PT	89.27%	44.49%	42.11%
Serbia	RS	75.11%	49.24%	75.30%
Sweden	SE	65.97%	86.57%	7.69%
Slovenia	SI	77.36%	53.34%	45.78%
Slovakia	SK	73.36%	31.31%	55.21%
Ukraine	UA	65.49%	55.31%	76.84%
Total		48,616	48,616	48,616

Notes: This table presents descriptive statistics of the main variables (shares), in terms of average mean for all countries. Different colors don't have any theoretical meaning, only useful to visualize heterogeneity (heatmap visualization). Equal to Table 1.

Table A10 – Distribution of Political Orientation and Institutional Trust by country (shares)

	<i>Political orientation</i>					<i>Institutional trust</i>		
	<i>Extreme left</i>	<i>Left</i>	<i>Center</i>	<i>Right</i>	<i>Extreme right</i>	<i>Low trust</i>	<i>Moderate trust</i>	<i>High trust</i>
AT	10%	24%	41%	18%	7%	23%	42%	35%
BE	11%	20%	34%	24%	11%	29%	40%	31%
BG	13%	11%	34%	22%	19%	55%	36%	9%
CH	12%	22%	27%	26%	12%	9%	36%	56%
CY	15%	13%	38%	14%	21%	47%	42%	12%
DE	13%	26%	39%	17%	5%	29%	37%	34%
EE	4%	13%	41%	24%	18%	26%	40%	33%
ES	18%	24%	29%	16%	13%	39%	40%	21%
FI	10%	19%	25%	25%	21%	8%	27%	65%
FR	13%	23%	28%	20%	16%	34%	45%	21%
GB	18%	23%	36%	17%	7%	40%	40%	20%
GR	9%	22%	29%	23%	17%	47%	41%	12%
HR	11%	15%	40%	16%	17%	63%	28%	9%
HU	15%	12%	27%	20%	25%	30%	39%	31%
IE	12%	21%	44%	16%	8%	25%	38%	37%
IL	11%	15%	23%	17%	34%	49%	37%	14%
IS	17%	25%	25%	23%	9%	21%	36%	44%
IT	11%	23%	26%	25%	15%	30%	47%	22%
LT	11%	15%	40%	16%	18%	29%	45%	26%
LV	4%	10%	41%	20%	25%	50%	35%	15%
ME	29%	18%	30%	14%	8%	38%	49%	13%
NL	10%	25%	26%	29%	10%	15%	38%	47%
NO	13%	24%	20%	25%	17%	10%	28%	62%
PL	14%	16%	27%	16%	28%	52%	36%	12%
PT	11%	22%	36%	15%	15%	40%	41%	19%
RS	19%	14%	39%	14%	14%	56%	29%	14%
SE	16%	25%	18%	26%	14%	12%	39%	49%
SI	14%	18%	42%	13%	13%	39%	40%	21%
SK	19%	18%	30%	18%	14%	41%	34%	25%
UA	9%	14%	49%	16%	13%	69%	25%	6%

Table A11 - Average marginal effects of values prioritization on support for redistribution, by 5 different levels of ideological orientation

	(1) dx / dy.	(2) dx / dy.
Political orientation		
<i>Extreme left</i>	13.65 ***	-3.92
<i>Left</i>	16.21***	-3.95**
<i>Center</i>	4.88**	5.64***
<i>Right</i>	12.70 ***	3.47*
<i>Extreme right</i>	5.39 **	5.06**

Notes: marginal effects of prioritizing values on support, across different ideological orientation. Column (1) sees the effect of prioritizing universalism and Column (2) of prioritizing security.

Table A12 - Average marginal effects of values prioritization on support for redistribution, by Low, Moderate and High levels of institutional trust

	(1) dx / dy.	(2) dx / dy.
Institutional trust		
<i>Low trust in institutions</i>	6.97***	0.94
<i>Moderate trust in institutions</i>	14.23***	0.73
<i>High trust in institutions</i>	14.78***	-2.60

Notes: marginal effects of prioritizing values on support, across different levels of institutional trust. Column (1) sees the effect of prioritizing universalism and Column (2) of prioritizing security

Table A13 - Spearman correlations between support for redistribution and value importance and priorities

	Support for redistribution	<i>Universalism</i>	<i>Prioritizing universalism</i>	<i>Security</i>	<i>Prioritizing security</i>
Support for redistribution	1				
<i>Universalism</i>	0.133*	1			
<i>Prioritizing universalism</i>	0.076*	0.665*	1		
<i>Security</i>	0.117*	0.373*	-0.032*	1	
<i>Prioritizing security</i>	0.067*	0.030*	0.085*	0.782*	1

Table A14 - Spearman correlations between Universalism and Security, both in absolute and prioritized form

	<i>Universalism</i>	<i>Prioritizing universalism</i>	<i>Security</i>	<i>Prioritizing security</i>
<i>Universalism</i>	1			
<i>Prioritizing universalism</i>	0.665	1		
<i>Security</i>	0.373	-0.030	1	
<i>Prioritizing security</i>	0.028	0.086	0.781	1

Table A15 - Robustness checks for Model 1

	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Panel A - Basic human values				
<i>Universalism</i>				
Absolute universalism	0.085*** (0.009)			0.090*** (0.009)
Prioritizing universalism	0.069*** (0.013)	0.090*** (0.009)	0.090*** (0.009)	0.063*** (0.013)
Absolute universalism*Prioritizing universalism		0.063*** (0.013)	0.063*** (0.013)	
<i>Security</i>				
Absolute security	0.026** (0.026)	(0.038)		0.019* (0.011)
Prioritizing security	-0.005 (0.014)	0.019** (0.011)	0.019* (0.011)	-0.014 (0.012)
Absolute security*Prioritizing security		-0.015 (0.012)	-0.015 (0.012)	
Panel B - Socioeconomic characteristics				
Gender (ref. <i>Male</i>)				

	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
<i>Female</i>		-0.007 (0.027)		
Age Group (ref. 15-29 years old)				
<i>30-59 years old</i>		0.034*** (0.007)	0.035*** (0.007)	
<i>More than 60 years old</i>		0.016 (0.012)	0.005** (0.013)	
Employment status (ref. <i>Employed</i>)				
<i>Retired</i>		0.002 (0.014)	-0.006 (0.014)	
<i>Unemployed + Not in labor market</i>		0.027** (0.013)	0.029** (0.019)	
<i>Unemployed</i>		0.005 (0.011)	.	
<i>Not in labor market</i>		.	0.008 (0.019)	
<i>Permanently sick or disabled</i>		.	-0.009 (0.012)	
Education level (ref. <i>Low level: ISCED 0–2</i>)				
<i>Medium level (ISCED 3–4)</i>		.	0.074 (0.024)	
<i>High level (ISCED 5–6)</i>		0.026** (0.011)	0.025** (0.011)	
Household subjective income (ref. <i>Living comfortably</i>)				
<i>Coping on present income</i>		-0.031** (0.012)	-0.032*** (0.012)	
<i>(Very) difficult on present income</i>		0.051*** (0.010)	0.049*** (0.010)	
<i>Difficult on present income</i>		0.122*** (0.012)	0.118*** (0.012)	
<i>Very difficult present income</i>		0.034*** (0.014)	0.035*** (0.013)	
Level of religiosity (ref. <i>Not religious (0-1)</i>)				
2-4		-0.018 (0.012)	-0.018 (0.012)	
5		-0.030** (0.013)	-0.030** (0.013)	
6-8		-0.022** (0.011)	-0.021** (0.011)	
9-10		-0.013 (0.014)	-0.013 (0.013)	
Constant		0.688 (0.023)		

Notes: This table presents robustness checks for Model 1. Column (4) excludes individual controls. Column (5) adds interactions between absolute and prioritization values. Column (6) applies an alternative employment categorization, and Column (7) uses the original subjective income category. The main patterns remain qualitatively unchanged. Regression

was estimated using OLS, including analysis weights, country fixed effects and full controls. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Table A16 - Robustness checks for Models 2 and 3

	(8)	(9)
Panel A - Basic human values		
Universalism		
High universalism (absolute)		
Prioritizing universalism	0.085*** (0.017)	0.066*** (0.008)
Security		
High security (absolute)		
Prioritizing security	0.028* (0.018)	-0.029*** (0.008)
Panel B – Political orientation		
Political orientation (ref. <i>Center</i>)		
<i>Left</i>	0.102*** (0.030)	
<i>Right</i>	-0.121*** (0.028)	
Prioritizing universalism*Political orientation (ref. <i>Center</i>)		
<i>Prioritizing universalism*Left</i>	0.079*** (0.030)	
<i>Prioritizing universalism*Right</i>	-0.010 (0.025)	
Security * Political Orientation (ref. <i>center</i>)		
<i>Prioritizing security*Left</i>	-0.078*** (0.021)	
<i>Prioritizing security*Right</i>	0.032 (0.022)	
Panel C – Institutional trust		
Institutional trust (ref. <i>Low trust</i>)		
<i>High trust</i>		-0.049***
Prioritizing universalism*Institutional trust (ref. <i>Low trust</i>)		
<i>Prioritizing universalism*High trust</i>		0.034*** (0.010)
Prioritizing security*Institutional trust (ref. <i>Low trust</i>)		
<i>Prioritizing security*High trust</i>		-0.009 (0.010)
Panel D - Socioeconomic characteristics		
Gender (ref. <i>Male</i>)		
<i>Female</i>	0.0248*** (0.007)	0.035*** (0.007)

	(8)	(9)
Age Group (ref. 15-29 years old)		
30-59 years old	0.022* (0.013)	0.008 (0.006)
More than 60 years old	0.0168 (0.016)	0.012* (0.015)
Employment status (ref. Employed)		
Retired	0.029** (0.013)	0.017** (0.007)
Unemployed or not in labor market	0.001 (0.012)	0 (0.006)
Education level (ref. Low level: ISCED 0–2)		
Medium level (ISCED 3–4)	0.029** (0.012)	0.015*** (0.006)
High level (ISCED 5–6)	-0.03** (0.013)	-0.032*** (0.006)
Household subjective income (ref. Living comfortably)		
Coping on present income	0.048*** (0.011)	0.050*** (0.005)
(Very) difficult on present income	0.116*** (0.013)	0.090*** (0.006)
Level of religiosity (ref. Not religious (0-1))		
2-4	-0.017 (0.012)	-0.008 (0.006)
5	-0.022 (0.014)	-0.008** (0.007)
6-8	-0.002 (0.011)	-0.007** (0.006)
9-10	0.020 (0.015)	-0.010 (0.008)
Constant	0.685 (0.027)	0.688 (0.023)
Individual controls	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Absolute individual importance for both values	No	No
R ²	0.0748	0.0624
Observations	40,609	46,937

Notes: This table presents robustness checks for Models 2 and 3. Column (10) collapses political orientation into three categories to assess whether moderation patterns depend on five ideological distinctions, while Column (9) uses a binary specification of institutional trust to test whether results are driven by the low-trust versus higher-trust divide. The main interaction patterns remain qualitatively unchanged. Regression was estimated using OLS, includes analysis weights, country fixed effects and full controls. Robust standard errors in parentheses.