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Chapter 10

Multi-level Determinants of the Public's Informal Solidarity towards Immigrants in European Welfare States

Wim van Oorschot and Wilfred Uunk

Introduction

There is a large body of empirical evidence showing that negative images of immigrants and the related subtle – and sometimes blatant – prejudice against them are widespread phenomena among the populations of European countries (Pettigrew and Meertens, 1995; Brika, Lemaine and Jackson, 1997; Bruecker et al., 2002; Scheepers, Gijsberts and Coenders, 2002; Citrin and Sides, 2004; Vala, Lima and Lopes, 2004). Yet, only occasionally do empirical studies in this field relate people's images of immigrants to issues of welfare rights, income benefits and social services (for exceptions, see Appelbaum, 2002; Raijman, Semyonov and Schmidt, 2003). This is remarkable, given that in many European countries immigrants are over-represented among claimants of unemployment, social assistance and family benefits (see Boeri, Hanson and Cormick, 2002; EUMC, 2003; Münz, 2004) and that the number of immigrants entering Europe has increased substantially over the past few decades. These two tendencies may undermine the overall legitimacy of the comprehensive welfare systems of European countries: increased welfare dependency poses fiscal problems and an increased influx of immigrants might fragment the sense of a shared community which allegedly underlies the comprehensive welfare state (Banting, 1998; Alesina and Glaeser, 2004). Comprehensive welfare states may be even more threatened since their social benefit systems may act as 'welfare magnets' attracting ever increasing numbers of migrants (Giorgi and Pellizzari, 2003). It is therefore not surprising that in the debate on challenges to the European Social Model the influx of migrants, and related tensions regarding the distribution of welfare and the overall legitimacy of the welfare state, have come to figure prominently on the agenda (see for example Bommers and Geddes, 2000).

Increasing immigration and welfare use among immigrants in comprehensive welfare states and resulting challenges to welfare state legitimacy raise the question of whether the (indigenous) populations of these welfare states are at all more tolerant and solidaristic towards immigrants than the (indigenous) populations of countries with less comprehensive systems. It also raises questions concerning the effects of a country's share of immigrants. This chapter investigates these central questions by exploring the effects of a nation's welfare spending and immigration levels on its residents' relative informal solidarity towards immigrants, that is, their (informal) solidarity towards immigrants compared to their (informal) solidarity towards other

needy groups in society. We do this for a sample of 18 European countries using data from the European Values Study, 1999/2000. These data contain questions on individuals' felt concern about the living conditions of needy groups (including, among others, immigrants), which we use to measure informal solidarity.¹

Our chapter contributes to the existing literature in several ways. First, we focus on perceptions of solidarity towards immigrants in comparison with other categories of needy people. As said before, a large body of literature shows evidence of the rather widespread existence of negative popular images of immigrants in European countries, on the basis of which one might assume that informal solidarity towards immigrants is low. However, research has shown that negative images also exist concerning other needy groups in society, such as the unemployed or claimants of social assistance in general (Coughlin, 1980; Furnham, 1982; Fridberg and Ploug, 2000; Furaker and Blomsterberg, 2002; Larsen, 2002). Thus, concern about the negative effects of migration on European welfare states should be taken more seriously if it can be shown that, especially in comparison with other needy groups, solidarity towards immigrants is lowest.

A second way in which we contribute to the existing literature is that we explicitly study the effect of country-level characteristics, that is, a nation's welfare spending and immigration levels. Most studies on ethnic prejudice have made clear that economic and cultural conditions at the country level affect people's views of immigrants, net of personal characteristics. For example, people in countries with higher rates of immigrants and unemployment have more negative attitudes towards immigrants than do people in other countries (Scheepers, Gijsberts and Coenders, 2002). Similar country-level effects were found in studies on public support of welfare rights for needy groups such as the unemployed, sick and elderly (Blekesaune and Quadagno, 2003). We posit that the comprehensiveness of a country's welfare system may influence people's feelings of solidarity towards vulnerable groups. The direction of the effect is not, however, immediately clear, which makes it interesting to study. On the one hand, higher welfare spending may evoke more solidarity with immigrants relative to others, because of less perceived economic competition and a higher degree of solidarity felt generally. On the other hand, it could make for less favorable views because in countries with higher welfare spending the fear of welfare magnetism may be higher, and indigenous people have more to lose if a large stock of immigrant dependents would lead to welfare retrenchment measures. The former argumentation points to a direct effect of welfare spending on solidarity towards immigrants, the latter to an indirect effect through the level of immigration. In this chapter we test what the total – direct and indirect – effects of welfare spending are, that is, how welfare spending (if at all) affects the public's relative solidarity towards immigrants.

1 Formal solidarity on the level of individuals regards the degree to which people actually take part in and contribute to collectively organized arrangements for the improvement of living conditions of groups in society. Because in European countries most such arrangements are statutory, measures of formal solidarity do not indicate welfare legitimacy and felt solidarity towards different groups well.

Thirdly, we contribute to the literature by investigating – in addition to the effect of country characteristics – individual-level determinants of relative informal solidarity towards immigrants. What kind of people feel more solidaristic towards immigrants, and why? Previous studies on ethnic prejudice, as well as on welfare opinions and deservingness of needy groups, have demonstrated the importance of economic and cultural factors at the individual level (for a brief overview, see below). We want to investigate whether these factors also hold regarding people's informal solidarity. Do people in an economically more precarious position feel less solidaristic towards immigrants than people who are in an economically better position? And do people with greater cultural acceptance of immigrants also feel more solidaristic?

Fourthly, we add to the literature by analyzing the joint, independent effects of characteristics of countries and individuals by multilevel analyses. As we will discuss later, this has advantages over alternative methods that have commonly been used until recently.

In short, our research questions are:

1. What is the public's informal solidarity towards immigrants in European countries, compared to that towards other groups of needy people?
2. What is the influence on people's relative solidarity towards immigrants of:
a) the economic and cultural characteristics of these people, and b) the degree of welfare spending and the level of immigration of the country in which they live?

Theory and Hypotheses: Determinants of the Relative Informal Solidarity Towards Immigrants

On the basis of prejudice studies one might expect that informal solidarity towards immigrants is generally low. Yet while some people might place them far off from other categories on their personal scale of solidarity, others may not make such a big distinction between their solidarity towards immigrants and towards other needy groups. In other words, some persons' informal solidarity is more strongly conditioned by the question of whether it regards migrants or non-migrants, while for others such conditionality is less important. It is this degree of conditionality, or the relative informal solidarity towards immigrants, in which we are interested.

Individual-level Determinants

We review studies from two strands of literature to derive hypotheses on determinants of perceived relative deservingness. The first strand of literature concerns studies on public opinion regarding welfare rationing and solidarity. The second strand of literature concerns studies on ethnic prejudice, racism and xenophobia. We first discuss empirical findings and then theoretical explanations.

Studies of opinions on welfare rationing, deservingness, and solidarity towards needy social categories mostly focus on assessing support for various types of welfare benefits and services (see Coughlin, 1980; Taylor-Gooby, 1985; Forma and

Kangas, 1997; Hills, 2002; Debusscher and Elchardus, 2003; Larsen, 2005). These studies say hardly anything about the category of immigrants or about the degree to which people rank social groups. Regarding the relative position of immigrants in a welfare context we know of two studies, one by Raijman, Semyonov and Schmidt (2003) on the question to what degree foreigners deserve social and political rights in the eyes of the German and Israeli publics, and one by Appelbaum (2002), analyzing the perceived welfare deservingness of various groups of immigrants among samples of German students.² Raijman et al. found that people with lower socio-economic status, unemployed persons, less educated persons, and people with a more rightist, conservative ideology have more negative views than others on immigrants' deservingness of social rights. Literature on people's conditional solidarity in general, that is, regardless of the ethnic status of target groups, has shown that in the Netherlands older people, less educated persons, persons with a lower socio-economic position, and persons holding a more rightist political view are more conditional in their solidarity than others (van Oorschot, 2000).

In the second strand of literature, studies on ethnic prejudices, similar economic and cultural effects were found. The studies show that education, employment status, social class and income are important correlates of ethnic prejudice. Less educated people, manual workers, the unemployed and people with lower income appear to have more antagonistic attitudes towards ethnic minorities than do other social categories. Of these factors, education proves to have the most consistent and strongest effect (see for example Fuchs, Gerhards and Roller, 1993; Pettigrew and Meertens, 1995; Hamberger and Hewstone, 1997; Scheepers, Gijsberts and Coenders, 2002).

In the literature on popular welfare rationing and on ethnic prejudice, comparable explanations have been given for the observed positive effects of employment and education on immigrants' deservingness of social rights. Both Raijman, Semyonov and Schmidt (2003) and van Oorschot (2000) interpret their findings as evidence of perception of an economic threat by those who, due to their low socio-economic position, are most closely in competition with immigrants over resources and benefits (Raijman et al.); or by those who are in a more risky social position in general, which induces them to prefer stricter conditionality in welfare rationing to prevent social protection they might need in the future from being available now to people who do not really deserve it (van Oorschot, 2000). In the literature on ethnic prejudice, a similar economic explanation is used to account for the observed positive effects of employment and education on ethnic tolerance. The sometimes implicit and sometimes explicit underlying theory is economic self-interest (or economic threat) theory.³ According to this account, hostile attitudes between members of two ethnic

2 Because Appelbaum's study is confined to German students only, we do not present evidence from this study on the determinants of informal solidarity towards immigrants.

3 Realistic group theory and social identity theory are two other theories widely used in ethnic prejudice studies. Realistic group theory is related to economic self-interest theory and states that competition among ethnic groups over scarce resources fosters ingroup favoritism and outgroup hostility. It may account for the positive effect of immigration on ethnic prejudice, yet it cannot account well for individual differences in ethnic prejudice

groups reflect an underlying clash of personal self-interests. Individuals develop negative attitudes towards individuals with whom they are in direct competition (from Coenders, 2001, p. 35). This competition is primarily economic, that is, competition for jobs and promotion (Bobo and Kleugel, 1993), but may also involve other tangible benefits such as shelter, safety and the protection of the future well-being of oneself and one's children (Sears, Hensler and Speer, 1979).

We too use notions from economic self-interest theory to develop our predictions on the socio-economic determinants of relative informal solidarity with immigrants. Given the overrepresentation of ethnic minorities among lower socio-economic groups, we predict that persons with a lower educational level and a lower socio-economic status feel relatively less solidaristic towards immigrants than do people with a higher level of education and a higher socio-economic status (hypothesis 1) (see Coenders and Scheepers, 1998 and Giles and Evans, 1984 for similar predictions regarding ethnic prejudice). Persons with lower socio-economic status will namely be more threatened (economically) than persons with higher socio-economic status by the presence of ethnic minorities.

Much of the theoretical work in ethnic prejudice literature uses the notion of economic self-interest and threat to account for group and individual variation in these prejudices. An alternative, more culturally-orientated explanation is offered by the work of Sears and colleagues (Kinder and Sears, 1981; Sears, 1988; see also Coenders, 2001). In their studies on voting preferences, they found strong effects of political conservatism and racial prejudice, and almost no effect of direct personal threat, that is of economic self-interest (also see McConahay, 1982). They argued that a new form of 'symbolic racism' had emerged, which they defined as:

a blend of anti-black affect and the kind of traditional American moral values embodied in the Protestant Ethic ... [it] represents a form of resistance to change in the racial status quo based on moral feelings that blacks violate such traditional American values as individualism and self-reliance, the work ethic, obedience, and discipline (Kinder and Sears (1981, p. 416).

The theory assumes that this new, more symbolic form of racism is acquired during the pre-adult socialization period; it is rooted in 'deep-seated feelings of morality and propriety and in early-learned racial fears and stereotypes' (Kinder and Sears (1981, p. 416). Thus, rather than economic competition and self-interest, this theory states that culturally-rooted attitudes regarding ethnic minorities influence solidarity towards them.

Cultural theory offers an alternative explanation for the positive effect of education on ethnic tolerance: higher educated may be more tolerant towards

(Coenders, 2001, p. 34). Social identity theory is a social-psychological account of ethnic prejudices. It holds that processes of social categorization and social comparison influence individual (social) identity and in-group favoritism. Although social identity theory offers an explanation of the psychological mechanisms of ethnic prejudices, it does not predict the social conditions of these prejudices.

immigrants than lower educated not so much because they are competing less with immigrants, but because they are socialized at home and at school with a wider horizon than lower educated people, learning to accept other people's distinct cultural habits and behavior (Hyman and Wright, 1979). In the literature on welfare opinions a similar cultural theory has been used to account for differences in support for welfare (van Oorschot, 2002). In addition, such research has generally found that support for welfare – generally, or targeted to specific groups – depends not only on self-interest, but also on people's ideological beliefs (Kangas, 1997; van Oorschot, 2002; Blekesaune and Quadagno, 2003).

We use the cultural model also to derive hypotheses on the influence of culturally based factors on the perceived relative deservingness of immigrants. First, we expect that a person's beliefs about welfare redistribution affect his or her relative informal solidarity. People who are more of the opinion that a society should eliminate substantial inequalities and should guarantee the basic needs of all citizens – typical functions of a solidaristic welfare state – will feel a solidarity towards immigrants that is closer to their solidarity towards other groups. Second, we expect that ethnic intolerance will have an influence. Those who are more prejudiced against immigrants will feel relatively less solidaristic towards them. The example of the US welfare state shows that popular negative images of racial and ethnic minorities underlie the low degree of solidaristic feelings towards welfare recipients there, although there are additional determinants (Gilens, 1999; Rein, 2001). Our analyses will show whether ethnic intolerance in European countries is also a comparably significant determinant of solidarity towards the vulnerable group of immigrants. Our general hypothesis from the cultural model is hence that higher educated people, people who endorse welfare redistribution more, and people who are ethnically more tolerant feel relatively more solidaristic towards immigrants than do their counterparts (hypothesis 2).

Country-level Determinants

In addition to assessing effects of individual-level characteristics, we are interested in effects of country-level characteristics, specifically of welfare spending and immigration levels. While these macro phenomena are positively correlated (possibly because of a welfare magnet mechanism, whereby higher-spending welfare states attract more immigrants), the correlation is not perfect, implying that the effects can be assessed independently of each other (in our data set Pearson r correlation at country level is 0.37, $p = 0.13$) (see also Giorgi and Pellizzari, 2003; Menz, 2004).

We have two competing hypotheses on the effect of a nation's immigration level on its population's relative solidarity towards immigrants. On the basis of the economic self-interest model, a straightforward hypothesis would be that people living in countries with a higher proportion of immigrants would be more inclined to lower relative solidarity, because in such countries inter-group competition over scarce goods, such as employment and welfare, is higher. Indeed, there is evidence in the prejudice literature that higher immigrant rates relate to stronger prejudice (Quillian, 1995; Scheepers, Gijsberts and Coenders, 2002). The alternative hypothesis, based on the cultural model, is also plausible: living in a culturally diverse country may have

a socializing effect towards the understanding of 'others', teaching people to deal and live with immigrants without feeling particularly threatened.⁴ Such a perspective might explain why, as Scheepers, Gijsberts and Coenders (2002) found, Europeans who live in urban areas with a much higher concentration of immigrants evince more favorable attitudes towards civil rights for immigrants than do Europeans living in rural areas. Because of these two competing predictions, we are unable to anticipate the overall effect of the share of immigrants on people's relative solidarity towards immigrants.

Our hypotheses from the economic and cultural models on the effect of a nation's welfare spending are more in line with each other. According to the economic self-interest model, the effect of welfare spending on relative solidarity should be positive since competition over welfare between indigenous people and immigrants may be weaker if welfare spending is higher. According to the cultural model, welfare spending should also have a positive effect since values of solidarity and equality are embedded in the institutions of more comprehensive welfare states (more than in less comprehensive welfare states) and are possibly internalized in the welfare values system of the general public. We therefore expect a positive (direct) effect of a nation's welfare spending on its residents' relative solidarity towards immigrants (hypothesis 3).

As pointed out in the introduction, welfare spending may also have an indirect effect on relative solidarity. This is the case when welfare spending influences perceptions of relative deservingness through immigration. Such an indirect effect is likely given the fact that welfare spending is positively correlated with immigration level, possibly because of the welfare magnet mechanism. The direction of the indirect effect depends on the effect of immigration on relative solidarity. If the immigration effect is negative, as predicted by the economic self-interest theory, the indirect effect of welfare spending will also be negative. In this case, the logic might be that welfare spending increases the share of immigrants, this increase may promote competition over social welfare and cause a fear on the part of the indigenous population of cut-backs in social welfare, and may thus lead to lower relative solidarity towards immigrants. Conversely, if the immigration effect is positive, as is predicted by cultural theory, the indirect effect will be positive. In other words, welfare spending will cause people to be relatively more solidaristic towards immigrants because greater welfare spending attracts more immigrants, and an increase in the share of immigrants is likely to foster more ethnic tolerance. Either way, we will analyze both the direct and indirect effect of welfare spending.

4 Such a positive effect of immigration on ethnic tolerance is also predicted from contact theory (Allport, 1954). According to this theory, contact between distinct population groups increases mutual understanding and decreases ethnic prejudices.

Data and Methods*Data*

Our data source is the European Values Study (EVS) survey, round 1999/2000, fielded in 33 European countries (Halman, 2001; see also www.europeanvalues.nl). This dataset is well suited to our purposes since it is cross-nationally comparable in its design; large-scale and thus containing many cases, including most European countries; and focused on attitudinal questions. Our analysis is confined to the 18 countries for which we have adequate additional, aggregate data at the time of analysis: France, Great Britain, Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Ireland, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. The country samples consist of at least 1,000 and at most 2,000 respondents each. Our pooled dataset contains 21,857 individuals with valid answers on both dependent and independent variables.⁵ These individuals are men and women aged 18 and over. The number of cases per country is about 1,200 on average, with a minimum of 818 for Great Britain and a maximum of 1,889 for Italy.

Dependent Variable: The Relative Informal Solidarity towards Immigrants

Our central dependent variable measures people's relative informal solidarity towards immigrants, compared to other needy groups. The EVS survey contains questions about informal solidarity towards four different groups: the elderly; the sick and disabled; the unemployed; and immigrants. We have opted to take solidarity towards the elderly as the reference category for solidarity towards immigrants, because across countries, as well as among social categories, the elderly rank highest on informal solidarity and immigrants lowest (on this, see Van Oorschot, Arts and Halman, 2005). The specific questions from EVS which we use here are:

To what extent do you feel concerned about the living conditions of:

- elderly people in your country
- immigrants in your country

(1 = not at all, 2 = not so much, 3 = to a certain extent, 4 = much, 5 = very much)

⁵ Our technique of analysis, multilevel analysis, requires non-missing observations. The percentage of missing observations is low for the variables studied, respectively 1.7 per cent for relative informal solidarity, 0.0 per cent for age and sex, 0.9 per cent for education, 0.5 per cent for employment status, 3.2 per cent for ethnic intolerance, and 1.7 per cent and 1.0 per cent for our two indicators on distribution beliefs. Cumulatively, 6.1 per cent of the observations are omitted due to a missing value on any of these variables. Income is not included in the analyses, although it would be an interesting characteristic to study from the perspective of economic competition theory. The share of missing income values is too high (15 per cent) for our purposes.

Our assumption is that respondents' felt concern reflects their informal solidarity towards these groups.⁶ It should be noted that the same EVS question also asked for concern about the groups of 'sick and disabled people' and 'unemployed people'. This means that the two questions we use here are framed within a context of concern for groups that occupy a vulnerable position in society generally.

Our dependent variable, relative solidarity towards immigrants, is measured as the difference between people's concern for immigrants and their concern for the elderly. Scores can range between -4 (not at all concerned about immigrants; very much concerned about the elderly) and +4 (very much concerned about immigrants; not at all concerned about the elderly).⁷ We are aware that the term 'immigrants' in the survey question is an unspecified category, leaving room for interpretation of which specific immigrant groups respondents had in mind when answering the question. As in most European surveys of popular prejudice towards immigrants, we assume that the overall association is with ethnic minorities coming from non-EU countries.

Independent Variables: Individual Characteristics

We distinguish the following individual-level, independent variables:

1. *Gender* is a dummy variable (0 = male, 1 = female) and functions as a control variable in the analyses
2. *Age* is measured in years since birth and also functions as a control variable.
3. *Education* is measured by the highest level of education attained. It was coded by the data collectors into a common metric containing eight categories, ranging from inadequate education (code 1) to higher education, upper-level tertiary certificate (code 8).
4. *Employment* is self-reported employment status. We distinguish between employed, unemployed, retired and 'other inactive' (housewife, unemployed, student, other). For the employed, we further distinguish class position. The class variable is based on the current occupation of the respondent.

⁶ An alternative interpretation is that expressed concern reflects the degree to which people perceive the living conditions of Group A as problematic. This problem awareness may be related to the perceived or actual level of social protection for Group A offered by the state. If in a country the social protection of Group A is weaker than for other groups, more people will be inclined to say that they are (more) concerned with the living conditions of Group A relative to other groups, and Group A will get a higher score on the variable. However, elsewhere we showed that this interpretation does not hold: informal solidarity is consistently highest towards the elderly and the sick and disabled, which are the groups all European welfare states offer better protection, compared to the unemployed and immigrants (Oorschot et al., 2005).

⁷ In practice, only a minority of respondents (4 per cent) have positive values on the measure of relative informal solidarity (expressed concern for immigrants is greater than expressed concern for the elderly). This again indicates the low ranking of immigrants as compared to elderly on people's scale of solidarity. The mean score on the measure of relative informal solidarity is -1.11, with a standard deviation of 1.16.

Because of sample-size considerations we recoded the original class scheme available in EVS to five categories: a) higher white collar (employers and professionals), b) lower white collar, c) higher blue collar, d) lower blue collar, and e) farmer.

5. *Beliefs on redistribution* are measured by two items from a question on what a society should provide to be considered 'just': a) 'eliminating big inequalities in income between citizens', and b) 'guaranteeing that basic needs are met for all, in terms of food, housing, clothes, education, health'. Answer categories ranged from 1 (very important) to 5 (not at all important), and were recoded so that five indicates 'very important' and one 'not at all important'. The Pearson r correlation between these two items is moderate (0.33, $p < 0.01$), which is a reason not to construct one scale but to use the two items separately.
6. *Ethnic intolerance* is measured by the following question: 'How about people from less developed countries coming here to work. Which one of the following do you think government should do?'⁸ Answer categories are: 1) 'Let anyone come who wants', 2) 'Let people come as long as jobs are available', 3) 'Put strict limits on the number of foreigners who can come here', 4) 'Prohibit people coming here from other countries'. We leave response scores as they are.

Independent Variables: Country Characteristics

We further distinguish the following country-level, independent variables:

1. *Welfare spending* is measured by a country's total social spending as a percentage of GDP, all based on OECD figures (OECD, 2004). To average out some of the difference in GDP development across countries we took the arithmetic means of welfare effort over the period 1994–1998.
2. To measure the *relative size of the immigrant population* we take the rates of foreign-born citizens from an OECD report, which critically discusses the validity and reliability of European migration rates for use in international comparison (Dumont and Lemaitre, 2004). National statistics on 'immigrants', on which such rates are usually based, vary rather widely in definition of an 'immigrant'. The OECD report suggests a better comparable measure of foreign-born nationals, which is calculated from OECD countries' 2000 censuses that asked for people's country of birth and nationality. An obvious disadvantage of this measure is that foreign borns include not only non-western immigrants, but also western ones. Much of the discussion on immigrants in Europe concerns non-western immigrants, while western immigrants are perceived as far less of a problem. A better measure would include non-western immigrants only, yet such a measure is not available for

⁸ There are other questions on peoples' views of immigrants in the EVS 1999/2000 data. The question we chose, however, is especially suited here, since it refers to preferences on the influx of immigrants, which are most relevant in a context of possible welfare state magnetism.

the 18 countries we analyze. We expect, therefore, to find rather conservative estimates of the effect of immigration.

Table 10.1 lists the country means of the country-level characteristics.

Table 10.1 Means of country characteristics

	Welfare spending (social expenditure as % of GDP)*	Immigration (% of foreign borns)**
France	29.3	10.0
Great Britain	22.5	8.3
Germany	27.5	12.5
Austria	26.5	12.5
Italy	23.8	7.0
Spain	21.2	5.3
Portugal	18.5	6.3
Netherlands	24.8	10.1
Belgium	28.1	10.7
Denmark	31.6	6.8
Sweden	32.4	12.0
Finland	30.0	2.5
Ireland	18.0	10.4
Poland	23.5	2.1
Czech Republic	19.1	4.5
Slovakia	19.0	2.5
Hungary	21.0	2.0
Greece	21.9	10.3
Average	24.5	7.8

Source: * OECD (2004); ** Dumont and Lemaitre (2004).

Results

A Description of Informal Solidarity towards Immigrants and the Elderly

Figure 10.1 shows the country-level differences in people's informal solidarity towards immigrants and the elderly, as well as in their relative solidarity towards immigrants. People in Great Britain, Portugal, and the Eastern European countries Poland, Slovakia and Hungary display marked differences in their solidarity towards immigrants and the elderly, whereas differences are relatively small in Italy, Spain, the Netherlands and Sweden.⁹

⁹ Unreported ANOVA analysis of country differences in relative solidarity has shown that most of these differences are statistically significant. Only Belgium, Denmark, Finland

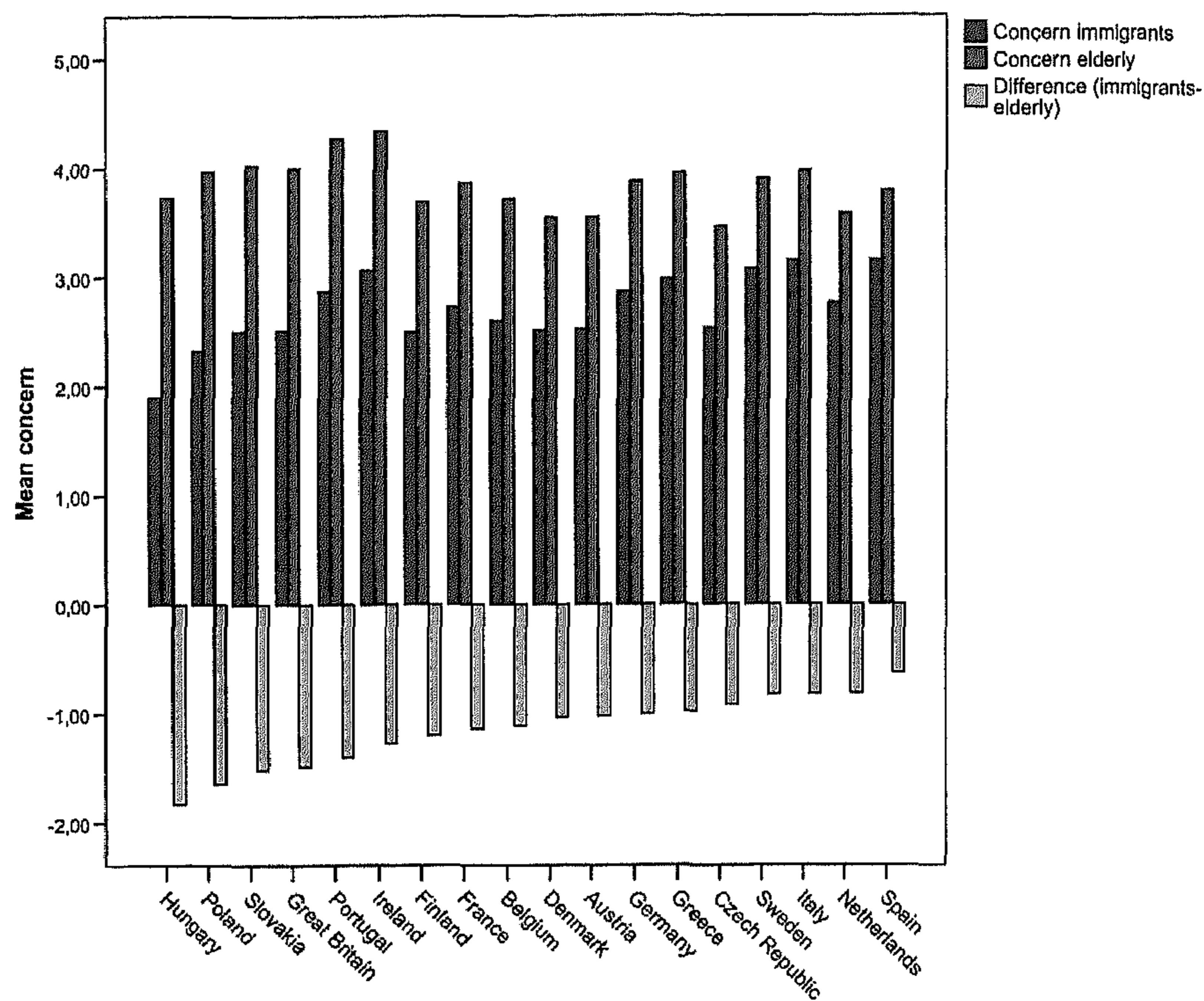


Figure 10.1 Concern for immigrants, the elderly, and the difference in concern for immigrants and the elderly (relative solidarity), by country
 Source: EVS 1999/2000 (own calculations).

Not surprisingly, Figure 10.1 also shows that countries with lower absolute scores on concern for immigrants score relatively lower (more negatively) on relative solidarity. In other words, in countries where there exists rather low solidarity towards immigrants, the distance to solidarity with older people is larger. However, this is not a perfect relation. For example, in Ireland concern for immigrants is fairly high, but concern for the elderly is considerably higher, which yields fairly low relative solidarity towards immigrants.

Do the country differences in relative solidarity coincide with levels of welfare spending and immigration? Figures 10.2 and 10.3 do suggest this. They show that in countries with higher welfare spending and in countries with greater shares of immigrants, the relative solidarity towards immigrants is relatively higher than in other countries.

and France do not differ significantly from the European mean.

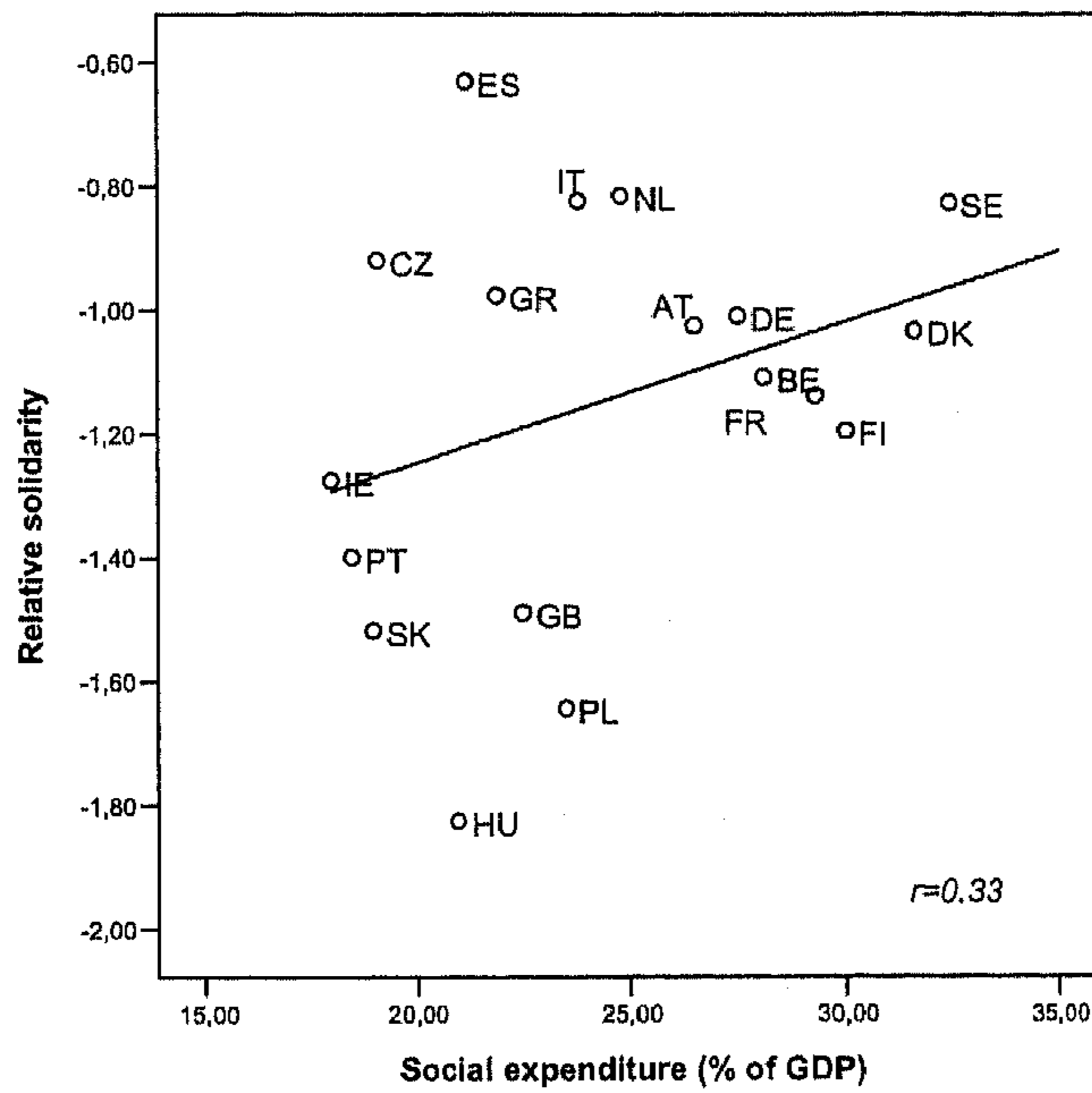


Figure 10.2 Relative solidarity towards immigrants by welfare spending (country-level)

Source: EVS 1999/2000 (own calculations).

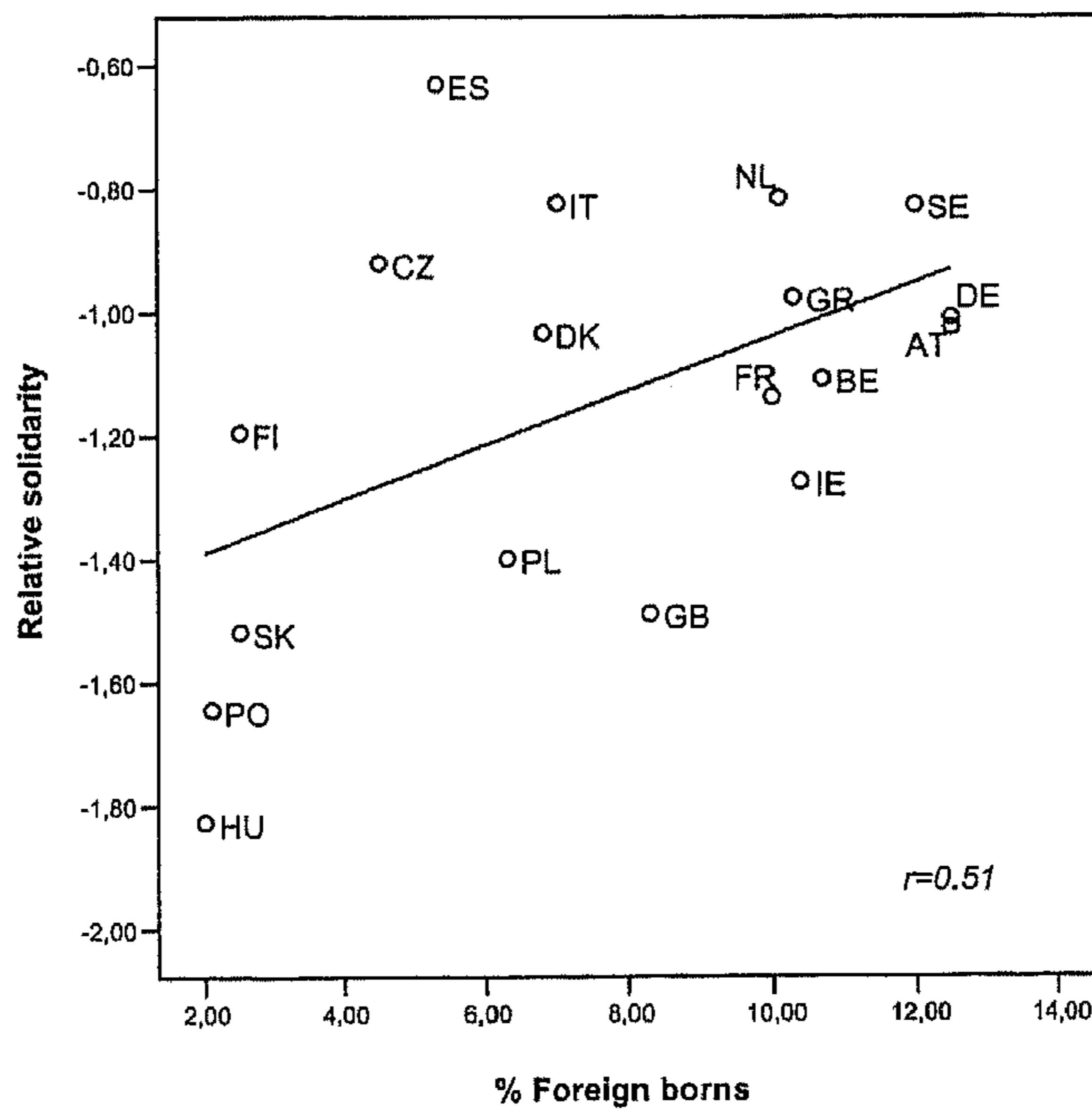


Figure 10.3 Relative solidarity towards immigrants by the rate of immigration (country-level)

Source: EVS 1999/2000 (own calculations).

The Pearson r correlations at the country level are 0.33 ($p = 0.18$) for relative solidarity and welfare spending, and 0.51 ($p = 0.03$) for relative solidarity and share of immigrants. We observe that most countries are around the plotted correlation line, but that some countries deviate, notably Hungary and Spain. In Hungary relative solidarity towards immigrants is lowest among the countries investigated, despite the fact that Hungary's welfare expenditures outrank those of other East European countries. In Spain, on the other hand, the relative solidarity towards immigrants is the most positive among the 18 countries, despite rather low levels of welfare and immigration.

That country differences in relative solidarity coincide with levels of welfare spending and immigration does not, however, mean that a country's welfare spending and immigration affect individual attitudes on immigrants and other needy groups. First, the above analyses are aggregate-level analyses, relating mean levels of relative solidarity to country-level factors. Such aggregate-level analyses do not take into account individual variance in solidarity and, if not carefully interpreted, present the risk of an ecological fallacy. Second, the two macro-level factors were not estimated independently of each other. That is, we do not yet know the net effect of welfare spending and immigration. Third, population composition characteristics were not taken into account, such as, for example, educational level. Population composition could also be a disturbing factor since, for example, countries with higher welfare spending have a more highly educated population than countries with less welfare spending, while higher education may be expected to increase relative solidarity towards immigrants.

Determinants of Perceived Relative Solidarity towards Immigrants

To estimate effects of individual-level and country-level characteristics on individual solidarity in a statistically appropriate way, we ran multi-level regressions. Multi-level regression models correct for the nesting of individuals within higher-level units (in our case, countries), and take into account the variability associated with each level of nesting. This is an improvement not only over aggregate-level analyses, but also over analyses where macro-level characteristics are disaggregated to the individual level, a research design that is still quite common in social science research. In comparison with the latter design, the multilevel design provides less biased estimates of the effects of macro-level characteristics since standard errors are corrected appropriately (see, for example, Snijders and Bosker, 1999).

Table 10.2 lists several multi-level models. We start with an 'empty' model, containing the intercept only (Model 1). This model shows that individual, within-country variation in relative solidarity is much larger than country variation (by a factor 3.6), yet both variance components are statistically significant. This indicates that perceptions of relative solidarity do differ across countries and, within countries, among individuals.

Model 2 of Table 10.2 introduces economic and cultural determinants at the individual level. It estimates effects of people's educational level, their employment status, their redistribution beliefs, and the effects of the two control variables: gender

Table 10.2 Multilevel regressions of relative solidarity towards immigrants, compared to the elderly: effects of individual-level and country-level characteristics (N = 21,857 individuals, 18 countries)

and age. As predicted by economic self-interest theory, the parameter estimates of

Model	1	2	3	4	5
Intercept	-1.147**	-1.077**	-0.103*	-0.658**	-0.725**
<i>Individual variables</i>					
Age		-0.009**	-0.009**	-0.009**	-0.009**
Woman (ref.=man)		-0.046**	-0.050**	-0.050**	-0.050**
Education		0.069**	0.052**	0.053**	0.052**
Employment status					
higher white collar		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
lower white collar		-0.032	-0.022	-0.023	-0.023
higher blue collar		-0.081**	-0.062**	-0.062**	-0.062**
lower blue collar		-0.071**	-0.042	-0.042	-0.042
farmer		-0.178**	-0.132*	-0.132*	-0.132*
unemployed		0.006	0.023	0.023	0.023
retired		-0.085**	-0.060**	-0.061**	-0.061**
other inactive		-0.001	0.005	0.005	0.004
Redistribution: reduce inequal.		0.026**	0.022**	0.022**	0.022**
Redistribution: basic needs		0.002	-0.005	-0.005	-0.005
Ethnic intolerance			-0.343**	-0.343**	-0.343**
<i>Country variables</i>					
Welfare spending				0.023*	0.015
Immigration					0.025
<i>Between-country variance</i>	0.310**	0.303**	0.256**	0.235**	0.219**
<i>Within-country variance</i>	1.118**	1.088**	1.063**	1.063**	1.063**
<i>Explained country variance</i>	0.0	2.3	17.4	24.2	29.4
<i>-2*Log Likelihood</i>	66976.8	65812.4	64760.8	64757.8	64755.3

Source: EVS 1999/2000 (own calculations).

Note: ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$, ref. = reference group.

Model 2 show that economically threatened social categories are less solidaristic towards immigrants as compared to elderly people. Blue-collar workers – both high and low blue-collar workers – and farmers have significantly lower scores on relative solidarity than the reference group of higher white-collar workers, while lower white-collar workers are on a par. Self-interest and economic competition for benefits might also explain why retired workers score low on relative solidarity towards immigrants (and high on solidarity towards the elderly). Surprisingly, however, we find that the unemployed do not differ from higher white-collar workers in their relative solidarity. Self-interest theory would expect the lowest relative solidarity within this social group, based on their economic situation and their competition with ethnic minorities for jobs and welfare benefits. Additional, unreported (multilevel) analysis has shown that unemployed people indeed are – compared to the reference group

of white-collar workers – less solidaristic towards both immigrants and the elderly. Because unemployment reduces concern for the elderly more than for immigrants, the unemployed appear quite solidaristic towards immigrants on an aggregate level.

In line with studies on ethnic prejudice and on opinions concerning welfare rationing, Model 2 shows that education has a positive effect. Higher educated people are more solidaristic towards immigrants, relative to the elderly, than are lower educated people. This is a fairly significant effect. The difference in relative solidarity between the lowest educational level and the highest educational level is [$8 \times 0.069 =$] 0.58, while for employment status the difference is at maximum 0.09. As mentioned, the positive effect of education may be interpreted both as an economic and as a cultural effect. Higher educated people may be more positive towards immigrants compared to the elderly because they compete less with immigrants on the labor market, but they may also be more positive because they are socialized with more tolerant views on differing groups.

Model 2 also displays that beliefs on redistribution matter for relative solidarity towards immigrants. However, only the belief that society should reduce inequalities has a significant effect, not the belief that a society should guarantee basic needs for all. People who are more in favor of the reduction of income inequalities place immigrants closer to the elderly on their personal scale of informal solidarity than do people who support this belief less.

Model 3 adds an effect of ethnic intolerance to Model 2. This factor appears to have a strong negative effect on relative solidarity towards immigrants. Scoring one category higher on ethnic intolerance lowers the solidarity score by -0.34. Overall, the effect appears to be the strongest of all the effects we investigated: the difference in deservingness perceptions between the lowest and highest category of ethnic intolerance is [$4 \times -0.34 =$] 1.36, more than twice as strong as that of the next strongest determinant, educational level (0.58). Perhaps even more interesting is that the introduction of ethnic intolerance in the analyses reduces some of the earlier observed economic and cultural effects. The strongest reduction pertains to the education effect: the effect drops from 0.069 in Model 2 to 0.052 in Model 3, a reduction of one-quarter in effect size. This means that part of the education effect on relative solidarity is due to ethnic intolerance. In other words, higher educated people are in part more solidaristic towards immigrants than towards the elderly because they hold more tolerant attitudes towards immigrants. Yet, that the education effect remains significant net of ethnic (in)tolerance indicates that the education effect is not just ethnic tolerance, but that education conveys more solidaristic views as well. Or more generally stated: People's degree of relative solidarity towards immigrants is not only an expression of ethnic (in)tolerance, but also of feelings of solidarity.

The effects of the country characteristics are shown in Models 4 and 5 in Table 10.2. Model 4 starts by including a country's level of welfare spending. In line with the above aggregate-level analyses, the 'crude' (total) effect of welfare spending is significantly positive. This means that people in countries with higher levels of welfare spending are relatively more solidaristic towards immigrants than are people in countries with lower levels of spending. However, the crude effect still does not show that it is welfare spending that leads to a feeling of greater solidarity

in higher-spending countries. The people in those countries may also appear more solidaristic because of the high levels of immigration.

To test the independent effects of a country's welfare spending and immigration on relative informal solidarity towards immigrants, Model 5 in Table 10.2 estimates the two macro-level determinants simultaneously. The effect of immigration appears non-significant in the table, yet closer inspection reveals that the effect is barely significant with a p-value of 0.101. This indicates that the level of immigration impacts people's relative solidarity towards immigrants. The positive estimate shows that a higher share of immigrants in a country promotes relative solidarity towards immigrants through placing them closer to the elderly. This is in line with the cultural explanation, yet not with the economic self-interest explanation. Larger immigration numbers obviously promote mutual understanding and do not decrease solidarity towards immigrants by increased ethnic competition. Interestingly, we observe that once immigration is taken into account, the effect of welfare spending disappears: whereas it was significantly positive in Model 4 (containing welfare spending only), in Model 5 (both welfare spending and immigration) it proves non-significant. This is an important finding, since it indicates that it is not welfare spending itself that promotes relative solidarity of immigrants in higher-spending countries, but immigration. In other words, the effect of welfare spending is indirect and not direct. This indirect effect of welfare spending is positive: more welfare spending attracts more immigrants and more immigrants make people more solidaristic towards immigrants.

Conclusions and Discussion

Against the background of a concern about the possible effects of migration on European welfare states, and the related fear of future tensions concerning the redistribution of welfare and its societal legitimacy, we studied the degree to which Europeans are solidaristic towards immigrants, relative to their solidarity towards the elderly, which usually are regarded as a highly deserving category. Since in European welfare states immigrants are not the only vulnerable group which is popularly perceived in an unfavorable light, this relative solidarity towards immigrants is more informative in the context of welfare state concerns than just solidarity towards immigrants as such.

We were especially interested in the effects of two factors that are central to the issue: a country's degree of welfare spending and its level of immigration. Is people's relative solidarity towards immigrants dependent upon these country characteristics? And if so, what is the direction of the effects? In addition, we were interested in the effects of individual characteristics. With reference to theories from the literature on popular welfare rationing and ethnic prejudice, we postulated some hypotheses on individual and country-level determinants of relative solidarity. By applying multi-level regression analysis to data from the European Values Survey 1999/2000, we were able to assess the effects of country-level and individual-level determinants in a sample of 18 European countries.

We found that the relative solidarity towards immigrants is higher among European people living in higher spending welfare states. However, it is not the level of welfare spending itself that makes people in these countries more solidaristic, but the level of immigration. More welfare spending is associated with a greater share of immigrants, and more immigration makes people more solidaristic with immigrants as compared to the elderly. These findings suggest that fear of tensions about welfare redistribution towards immigrants in European countries – which spend plentifully on welfare, and which host a(n) (increasingly) large number of immigrants – is not well justified. On the contrary, speculations in the literature that people in higher spending welfare states would feel a greater economic threat from immigration because they would have more to lose, or that they would perceive a greater threat to the sense of community underlying their welfare system, do not hold up against our evidence. We interpreted the positive effect of a country's level of immigration as evidence of the idea that living in a culturally diverse country may have a socializing effect that is conducive to the understanding of 'others', and teach people to deal and live with them without feeling threatened.

As for individual characteristics, we found – in line with our predictions from economic self-interest theory – that relative solidarity towards immigrants is higher among social categories that perceive a lesser economic threat from large numbers of immigrants. Solidarity is higher among workers who hold a higher socio-economic position and higher among highly educated people than among others. However, being unemployed did not show the negative effect predicted by economic self-interest theory. The unemployed evinced the same relative solidarity towards immigrants vs. the elderly as the group of workers with the highest socio-economic position, high white-collar workers. Closer analyses reveal that the unemployed hold more negative attitudes towards both immigrants and the elderly than do high white-collar workers. This may, after all, be understood with economic self-interest reasoning. Cultural theory – which states that people's ideology rather than economic self-interest influences their solidarity towards immigrants – also deserves credit. This is indirectly evidenced by the positive effect of education on relative solidarity, and more directly evidenced by the influence of egalitarian attitudes and ethnic prejudices. People with more egalitarian views – that is, people who adhere more to the idea that society should generally make efforts to reduce inequalities – appear to be more solidaristic than people with less egalitarian views. The strongest individual-level determinant of relative solidarity was found to be people's degree of ethnic (in)tolerance: higher levels of intolerance towards immigrants relates to lower levels of relative solidarity.

More generally, our findings suggest that people's relative solidarity towards immigrants is influenced partly by considerations of economic self-interest as shown by the effects of social class, and partly by ideology and values, as shown by educational level and attitudes towards welfare redistribution and immigrants. Although sometimes presented as opposing mechanisms, our finding is in line with ideas recently developed in the literature on the public's reactions to immigrants, which state that both types of factors may play a role at the same time (see for example Sniderman, Hagendoorn and Prior, 2004). Our finding also corroborates studies on popular welfare support and welfare rationing, which show that both

interest-related and ideological factors play a role (van Oorschot, 2002; Blekesaune and Quadagno, 2003).

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