



**AALBORG UNIVERSITY**  
DENMARK

**Aalborg Universitet**

## **Does a multiethnic society lead to less trust?**

Torpe, Lars; Lolle, Henrik

*Publication date:*  
2008

*Document Version*  
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication from Aalborg University](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Torpe, L., & Lolle, H. (2008). Does a multiethnic society lead to less trust? a comparison of 25 European countries. Paper presented at Paper prepared for the presentation at the Nordic Political Science Association Conference, Tromsø, 2008 august 6-9, .

### **General rights**

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- ? Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- ? You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- ? You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal ?

### **Take down policy**

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us at [vbn@aub.aau.dk](mailto:vbn@aub.aau.dk) providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

# **Does a multiethnic society lead to less trust? A comparison of 25 European countries.**

Paper prepared for the Nordic Political Science Association Conference  
Tromsø, 2008 August 6-9

Henrik Lolle (Aalborg University)  
lolle@epa.aau.dk

Lars Torpe (Aalborg University)  
larsto@epa.aau.dk

# 1. Introduction

In later years a growing issue in the discussion of social capital has been whether a transition to a more diverse, multicultural society will affect the generation of social capital. Since there is widespread agreement that social capital constitutes an important resource for both individuals, groups and societies, the findings of Robert Putnam (2007) that across local areas ethnic heterogeneity is associated with lower social capital have been widely discussed. Not surprisingly the sceptics of a multiethnic society have found some support in Putnam's results. As it was stated in a Danish newspaper: Now "the most prominent international sociological research supports the warnings of the Danish People Party's against a multicultural society" (Qvortrup, 2007).

This is of-course a too hasty conclusion. First of all, one cannot just transfer Putnam's findings in the US to Europe. Secondly, so far only a few studies have been carried out in Europe on this matter and the result of these are not that clear as in the case of the US. Opposite to the US where both social trust and networks of civic engagement appear to be negatively associated with ethnic diversity at the community level (Putnam, 2007; Costa & Kahn, 2003), two studies in the UK show that only trust is affected (Pennant, 2005; Letki, 2008).

Anyway, the preliminary results from the US and the UK indicate that ethnic diversity might constitute a barrier for social capital at least with regard to trust and at least at the community level. Is this a predominant US and UK phenomenon, or is it a more general phenomenon? Two studies carried out at the country level and based on the World Value Survey seem to confirm the last (Delhey and Newton, 2005; Anderson & Paskeviciute, 2006). In the study of Delhey and Newton 60 countries are included, while Anderson & Paskeviciute includes 44 countries. In both cases ethnic fractionalization survives several control variables and therefore seems to have some explanatory force. However, neither at this level is there a clear picture. A study by Bjørnskov (2006) does not confirm the results of Delhey & Newton and Anderson & Paskeviciute. Furthermore, Bjørnskov concludes that "In general, while the size of the estimates remains about the same the significance of ethnic diversity depends of which countries are included" (Bjørnskov, 2006:12).

This observation indicates that perhaps more attention should be paid to context. For statistical reasons it may be advantageous to have as many countries as possible included in the model. But what is gained with respect to reliability could be lost with respect to validity, if the included countries are highly different with regard to the nature of fractionalization. In this context it is not the objective characteristics of race or ethnicity that are important, but how the concept of ethnic diversity is constructed. And we cannot just take for granted that ethnic diversity means the same in Africa, Asia, Latin America and North America, where ethnic diversity has a long history, as in Europe, where ethnic diversity is a relatively new phenomenon primarily related to new waves of immigration from non-western countries. While it is comprehensible that prejudices of race and systematic differences in social status and life-chances related to race will lead to less social trust, it is not in the same way obvious that the new reality of ethnic diversity in Europe should constitute a barrier for social capital. Those arguing that more diversity lead to less trust often confuse social capital with a sense of community and togetherness, not seeing that social capital is only one dimension of a broader concept of social cohesion, and that “bridging social capital” is exactly the kind of capital that develops across social and cultural differences (Lolle & Torpe, 2007). Therefore, social capital may actually be strengthened at the same time as other dimensions of social cohesion are weakened.

We shall in this paper analyze the relation between ethnic diversity and one important dimension of social capital, namely social trust, in a European context, where focus is upon the new dimension of ethnic conflict caused by growing immigration from non-western countries. There are several hypotheses on this relationship. One is that in more heterogeneous societies trust is lower because contacts across ethnic groups are more frequent. This can be called the “aversion to heterogeneity” interpretation (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2002: 226). A second interpretation is to see lower trust as a result of less trusting surroundings. If for instance trust is low among ethnic minorities in a particular area, the ethnic majority in the same area is less trusting than the ethnic majority living in a more homogeneous area. This may be called the “local interaction” interpretation (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2002: 225-226). A third theory of “ethnic competition” has been imported from research in anti-immigrant attitudes (Schneider, 2007; Putnam, 2007, Hooghe, 2008). According to this theory lower trust is a reaction to “perceived threats”; for example perceived *economic threats* if members of one ethnic group fear they will loose economic and social privileges to members of another ethnic group, or perceived *cultural threats* if representatives of the majority culture see a minority

culture as incompatible or as a threat to the majority culture. Such perceived threats do not necessarily rely on concrete experiences. They may also be influenced by the way ethnic diversity is articulated and interpreted in the political public. Towards these “conflict” theories stands a so-called “contact” theory arguing that inter-ethnic contacts foster inter-ethnic tolerance, solidarity and trust (Putnam, 2007). This contact theory does not necessarily contradict the “conflict” theories. Rather, the two types of theories can be combined, as contacts across ethnic groups are seen to modify the negative effects of diversity on trust (Stolle et.al., 2008).

Trust is most frequently related to the size of ethnic fractionalization. But perhaps it is not the size of immigrant groups that is most important for trust. In particular, if lower trust is a reaction to perceived threats, sudden changes of society from levels of relative homogeneity to levels of relative heterogeneity could be more important. Rather than the presence of people of another ethnic origin, it may be the *rise* of the presence of other ethnic groups that is important for trust (Hooghe, 2008).

In the literature on trust two broad approaches can be distinguished: One that sees trust as a moralistic category and one where trust is understood in more instrumental terms (Hooghe, 2007). In the first approach trust is seen as a “moral commandment to treat people *as if* they were trustworthy” (Uslaner, 2008). Trust is a moral value that in public life assumes character of a civic virtue or a citizenship norm parallel with other civic virtues as tolerance, obey laws etc. Such moral values are often formed early in life and does not change over night. They may even be seen as embedded in the particular culture the individual is born into. The family is thus assumed to play an important role (Uslaner, 2002), but also other socialising institutions such as the church, the school, voluntary associations etc. can be influential.

In the second approach trust is linked to the expected behaviour of others, namely to how trustworthy we perceive them to be. According to this approach trust is not a constant phenomenon but will vary according to the expectations of the future reliability of the actors (Rothstein, 2003:111). Information about the reliability of actors is of-course important, but often such information is incomplete just as it may be based on second hand information as reputation, vague notions, prejudices, stereotyping, etc. (Hooghe, 2008: 716). Also moral dispositions can play a role. Persons who believe one should trust others are willing to do that until there are indications of the

opposite, while persons without such dispositions tend to be more suspicious (Rothstein, 2003:111). In this approach the institutions of society are seen as important determinants of trust, since they may provide individuals with incentives or disincentives to trust others (Rothstein & Stolle, 2007).

As appears the two approaches do not exclude each other. Trust can be based on instrumental reasons as well a moral norm. But related to the theme of diversity it is important whether trust is to be understood mostly in instrumental terms or in moralistic terms. If it is the first we expect trust among ethnic minorities, in this context understood as non-western immigrants, to vary across countries with different levels of trust and different institutional set-ups. If on the contrary trust is mostly to be seen as a moral value, we expect trust among non-western immigrants to be mostly influenced by the culture into which they were born and grew up. In that case we expect trust to be about the same among similar groups of immigrants no matter what country they now live in.

As indicated by these considerations the question of the relationship between ethnic diversity and trust is more complicated than is seen from statistic correlations alone. Before generalizations can be made about the relationship various considerations should be made. Summarizing:

- The relation between ethnic diversity and trust should be investigated at different levels of society, just as we should also apply a dynamic view on the relationship. Rather than diversity as such, demographic changes and how these are political articulated and interpreted in public, could be important. A negative relationship could be only a contemporary phenomenon, as it takes time for the majority ethnic population to accommodate to a more heterogeneous society in the same way, as it takes time for the minority ethnic population to adjust to a society, where relations are more trustful, particular if trust is mostly cultural based.
- To assess the future size of the problem it has some importance whether trust is mostly instrumental and context-dependent, or trust is mostly moralistic and cultural inherited. If trust furthermore is associated with perceived threats not only the political articulation and interpretation of ethnic diversity is important but also how integration issues are handled by the political authorities. The effects of this may first be seen in the long run.

Social trust is most frequently measured by a variable saying that “in general most people can be trusted....” Positive answers to this question are taken as valid indications of generalized, social trust. The question is however to what extent this is correct. We will discuss that briefly in the following.

It is common to draw a distinction between generalized and particularized trust, a distinction that corresponds to the distinction between bonding and bridging social capital. Generalized trust means trust in the abstract “other” opposed to particularized trust that is understood as trust in concrete, identifiable persons. Therefore, the term abstract trust is also often used. This is an important distinction in relation to ethnic diversity. While generalized trust in principle includes all individuals, particularized trust develops inside the borderlines of for examples ones family, ones friends, ones local community and, important for this study, ones ethno-cultural group.

It has been argued several times that the variable “do you think in general most people can be trusted....” captures the underlying theoretical concept of “trust in strangers” (Uslaner, 2002; Bjørnskov, 2006). But since the question makes no mention of context, we are not quite certain what respondents have in mind, when they give a positive answer to this question. Presumably, they do not think of “most people” in the world. Rather, they think of “most people” in society, i.e. people you meet at your workplace, in the neighbourhood, on the streets, in the institutions etc. In that sense it is most people among “us” that is in their minds, and it is exactly the perception of “us”, which is important in this context, for instance whether “us” is to be understood in cultural terms or in citizenship terms.

Several analysis of trust stresses the importance of equality. It is easier for equal societies to overcome the barriers of particularized trust and to develop generalized trust. Different aspects of politics of equality are pointed out as important for trust, for instance universalistic welfare arrangement (Kumlin & Rothstein, 2005), the impartiality of the legal and administrative branches of the state, including equality for the law (Rothstein & Stolle, 2007), the equal distribution of resources (Uslaner, 2003) and the policies towards the poor (Albrekt, 2007). In these approaches both the legal and the distributive character of the liberal and the welfare state is underlined. The argument covering the two first statements that institutions embodying principles of procedural fairness generate trust seems rather convincing. If citizens think that institutions do what they are

supposed to do in a *fair* and *effective* manner, then they have reasons to believe that the chance of people getting away with treacherous behaviour is small (Rothstein & Stolle, 2007:114; Herreros & Criado, 2008).

In contrast, the argument that policies of redistribution have a positive effect on trust is not equally obvious. It may furthermore take different directions. In one scenario trust can be related to social homogeneity, i.e. a society with higher social mobility, less segregation and more frequent contact between the “ups” and “downs” of society. In a second scenario trust can be related to what has been called the “negotiated economy” or the “negotiation democracy” (Campel et.al., 2006), i.e. a society where it has become more easy to handle conflicts and enter agreements between representatives of different segments of the population. In both scenarios policies of redistribution rest on the recognition of “the other’s” right to have a fair share of what is now seen as a common possession. There are, however, different understandings of what is meant by a common possession. While some stress *citizenship* as a common possession, i.e. the rights and obligations as a citizen in the national state, others stress the *national culture* as a common possession and heritage.<sup>1</sup> In both cases a new source for national unity and loyalty is provided. However, the identities as citizens can take different directions and for the kind of trust that is generated it is not unimportant, whether trust is based on a conception of citizenship as a common possession or a concept of a national culture as a common possession. The question is thus, if we trust other people more, because we share the same rights and obligations as citizens, or if we trust other people more, because we have become culturally more alike, i.e. across social divisions eat the same food (almost), live in the same places (almost), wear the same clothes (almost), cultivate the same leisure activities (almost), share the same division of work at home (almost), have our children in the same nursery schools (almost) etc.

---

<sup>1</sup> One may think that T.H. Marshall (1950), who developed the concept of citizenship, would stress citizenship as the basis of new forms of common identification. However, apparently his concept of social integration and coherence comes closer to that of a common national culture. He thus speaks of a common culture as a “common possession and heritage”, i.e. a culture that is to be seen as a “common national culture” (Kymlicha, 2002: 328). In Kymlicha’s words: “They (i.e. members of the working class) ought to be co-owners of the national culture...since they were of course native-born English” (Ibid). And this would at the same time, so he assumed, “help integrate previously excluded groups into a common national culture, and thereby provide a source of national unity and loyalty” (Ibid). No doubt, Marshall was attentive to what happened after World War I, where members of the working class had paid huge sacrifices in the trenches of Flandern but was never rewarded for their loyalty.



In the first case it seems obvious that trust is generated from a base that includes all individuals in a political defined community. In the second case trust seems to be generated from a base that only includes individuals belonging to a certain national culture. With such a limitation trust in “most people” is not only of a more generalized, bridging kind, but also of a particularized, bonding kind. Rather than trust in “fellow citizens”, trust could mean trust in “fellow Danes”, “fellow Norwegians” etc.

Empirically, it is not easy to decide whether a positive answer to the question of trust in “most people” is of a bonding or a bridging kind, and we have no data at hand that enable us to make a distinction here. We will therefore use this standard measure of trust in the following but at the same time be aware that it could include some elements of particularized trust.

The following sections examine the hypothesis of a negative relationship between ethnic diversity and social trust both at the country level, the community level and the level of the individual. In section 3 we shall test the relationship between ethnic diversity and social trust for Europe only. In section 4 we examine whether lower trust is a reaction to sudden changes in the ethnic composition and the political debate following such changes. In section 5 we move to the community-level to investigate whether people are less trustful in areas with many people belonging to racial or ethnical minority groups. Finally in section 6 we compare levels of trust between non-western immigrants living in different European countries.

## **2. Data-material and method**

As stated above we shall in this study use the same indicator of social trust that is mostly used, namely whether in general “most people can be trusted” or “you can’t be too careful in dealing with people”. The European Social Survey data set, which constitute the basic data for this study, includes however two more items that could measure generalized trust, namely “Do you think most people will try to take advantage of you if they got the chance, or would they try to be fair” and “Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful or that they are mostly looking out for themselves”. In a recent study Tim Reeskens & Marc Hooghe (2008) has tested the reliability of these measures of generalized trust across countries in Europe. Based on their recommendations we construct a scale of trust that includes the two first items. Also the second item includes the wording

of “most people”. Therefore, nor does this variable escapes the suspicion that some elements of particularized trust could be included.

Addressing the independent variable we shall try to identify persons that belong to one or another ethnic minority group. This is not easy. There is no single definition of what constitutes “ethnicity”. Generally, we identify persons from a minority ethnic group by a combination of their appearance, typically their colour of skin, their religion, their cultural customs and their language. But, it is impossible to point out exact criteria by which we can separate those belonging to the majority ethnic group and those belonging to minority ethnic groups. In this study we use three measures. The first one is identical with the measure Delhey and Newton (2005) have used in their study of 60 countries. Actually, this measure comprises three indexes, each one measuring fractionalization, and developed by Alesina et.al. (2003): Ethnic fractionalization<sup>2</sup>, language fractionalization and religious fractionalization. The second one is based on OECD-statistics (Dumont & Lemaitre, 2005). Ethnic minorities are here identified as the non-western population living in Europe but born outside the EU-25, North America and the Oceania (Lolle & Torpe, 2007). The third one also tries to identify non-western immigrants. This is however based on survey-data from European Social Survey (ESS), where respondents are asked where they and their parents were born. Non-western immigrants are here identified as 1) those born outside the present EU, the Nordic countries, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino, Switzerland and the Vatican state, and whose parents were not born in these countries, and 2) those descendants whose mother was born outside the above mentioned countries.<sup>3</sup> This variable thus also includes so called second generation immigrants that do not figure in the official statistic in many countries.

### **3. 3. Ethnic diversity and social trust at the national and regional levels**

As shown in Figure 1, there are tremendous variations in the level of trust between the 25 countries included in the analysis.<sup>1</sup> As Figure 1 also shows, the countries tend to group in major clusters. With few exceptions, the general picture is as follows: the Nordic countries at the top, the South and East European countries at the bottom, and the Central European countries in the middle. As indicated

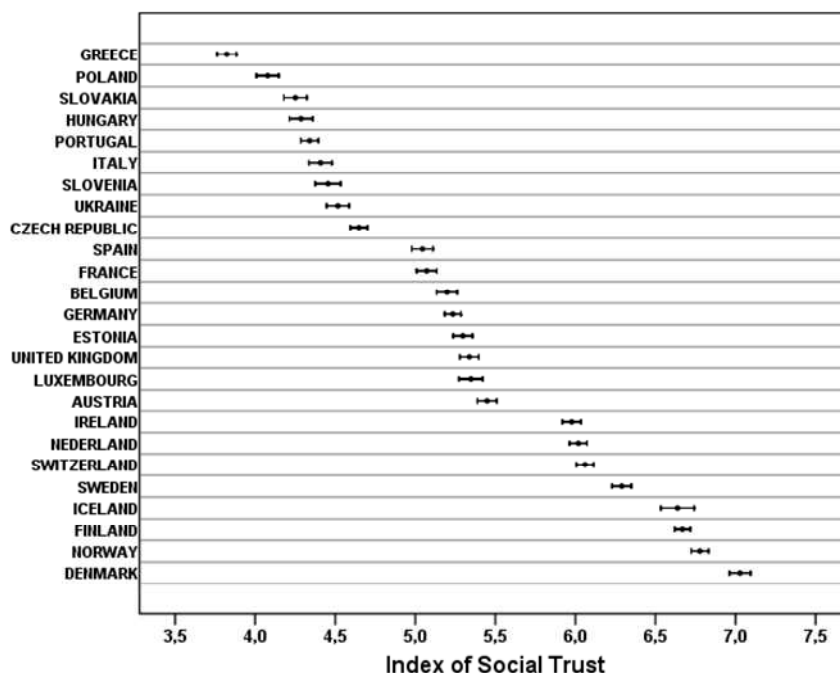
---

<sup>2</sup> The variable for ethnic fractionalization is constructed so that also countries like Switzerland and Luxembourg get high scores while other West European countries with the same or a higher level of immigration from non western countries get lower scores. In our context this is probably not a good idea, and this is one reason for trying different operational definitions of the concept ethnic heterogeneity.

<sup>3</sup> This definition is an approximation to the definition used by Statistics Denmark.

by the intervals, some of the minor differences between the countries could be coincidental, while the major differences are more systematic.

**Figure 1: Social trust in 24 European countries. European Social Survey 2004**



How do we explain such variance? As mentioned above, Delhey & Newton (2005) ends up with an overall model in which *ethnic homogeneity* and *Protestantism* are the two independent variables and *good governance*<sup>ii</sup>, *national wealth* (GDP) and *income equality* (gini coefficient) are the intervening variables<sup>iii</sup>. The question is whether ethnic homogeneity/ethnic heterogeneity is also a determining factor for trust in the European context. To answer this question, the Delhey & Newton model is applied for the 25 countries included in the European Social Survey from 2004<sup>iv</sup>. To be able to compare directly with Delhey and Newton, we use the single item measure of trust, whether “most people can be trusted or you can’t be too careful”, as the dependent variable. For the overall conclusion it makes however no difference whether this variable is used or we use the two item measure of trust.

As most East European countries are “low-trusting” and these countries furthermore are different from West European countries concerning the character of immigration, two different analyses are carried out in the first round of analyses at the country level: One that include all 25 countries and

one that include only 18 West European countries. The second round of analyses is further supplemented with the two different measures of ethnic heterogeneity mentioned above, just as we include the regional level in the analysis.

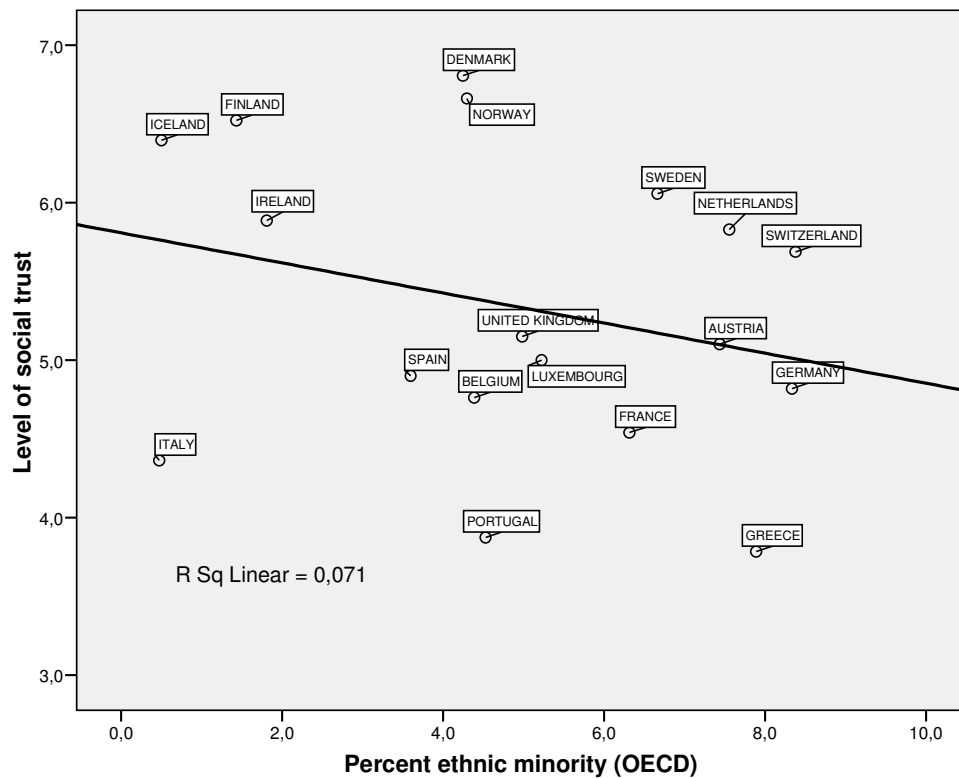
Table 1 shows the bivariate effects of country level variables on social trust. As appears the effects of *good governance*, *national wealth*, *income equality (the gini coefficient)* and the two dummies for Protestantism are rather strong, while the effects of percent non-western immigrants and ethnic fractionalization is non-significant both for Europe as a whole and for Western Europe. We do, however, observe a moderate correlation between ethnic heterogeneity and social trust in Western Europe. As appears in Figure 2 this is caused by the combination of relative ethnic homogeneity and high social trust in the Nordic countries. No effect remains if these countries are taken out of the analysis.

**Table 1: Correlations between social trust and a series of country specific characteristics. Country level analyses.**

	—— Pearson's <i>r</i> ——	
	25 countries (West & East)	18 countries (West)
<i>Country-specific variables:</i>		
Pct. non-Western immigrants (OECD)	-.01 NS	-.27 NS
Ethnic fractionalization	-.18 NS	-.20 NS
Linguistic fractionalization	.04 NS	-.01 NS
Religious fractionalization	-.12 NS	-.02 NS
Good governance	.74 ***	.83 ***
National wealth (GDP pr. capita)	.69 ***	.56 **
Gini index	-.39 *	-.77 ***
Protestant or mixed Protestant and Catholic	.77 ***	.79 ***
Protestant	.71 ***	.66 ***

NS: Non Significant; \* p < 0.1; \*\* p < 0.05; \*\*\* p < 0.01

**Figure 2** Correlation between social trust and percent belonging to ethnic minority groups.



The question is now whether in Western Europe ethnic heterogeneity has an effect on trust in analyses, where ethnic heterogeneity are seen in combination with other variables of the Delhey-Newton model, and where individual level characteristics and different combinations of country level variables are controlled for at the same time. With only 18 cases (countries) available, though, it is not advisable to include more than two independent variables at the country level in each model at a time. By running different combination we aim for the best possible model in terms of explained variance and variables that are significant at the .05 level. Even this can, however, be questioned. The results of these analyses must therefore be seen as tentative. Fortunately, the analysis can be strengthening by including the regional level into a three level model. The 18 countries have 77 regions and for each region we can estimate the proportion of non Western immigrants from the ESS data.

**Table 2: Ethnic heterogeneity and social trust in Western Europe. Multilevel analysis. Raw regression coefficients and random effects.**

	<i>Model 0</i>	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>
	<i>Empty model</i>	<i>Bivariate effect from percent non-Western</i>	<i>+ individual level characteristic</i>	<i>Best model with both individual- and country-specific variables</i>	<i>+ percent from ethnic minority groups in region. Three-level model</i>
<b>Fixed effects</b>					
Intercept	5.34 ***	5.80 ***	4.55 ***	2.50 ***	2.32 ***
<i>Individual level variables:</i>					
Age (in tens) .....			.05 ***	.05 ***	.05 ***
Education (1-6).....			.26 ***	.25 ***	.25 ***
<i>Regional level variable (minimum to maximum effect)<sup>A</sup>:</i>					
Percent non-Western immigrants (ESS) .....					.05 NS
<i>Country-level variables (minimum to maximum effects)<sup>A</sup>:</i>					
Percent non-Western immigrants (OECD) .....		-.75 NS	-.49 NS	—	—
Ethnic fractionalization				—	—
Linguistic fractionalization				—	—
Religious fractionalization				—	—
Good governance				1.58 **	1.61 **
National wealth (GDP)				—	—
Income equality (Gini index)				—	—
Protestant/mixed Protestant & Catholic .....				.79 **	.76 *
Protestant				—	—
<b>Random effects</b>					
Variance at individual level .....	5,05 ***	5,05 ***	4,92 ***	4,92 ***	4,93 ***
Variance at regional level.....					.07 ***
Variance at country level.....	.86 ***	.85 ***	.69 ***	.16 **	.18 **
Intra-class correlation (country).....	.14	.14	.12	.04	.03
Explained variance at individual level .....			3 pct.	3 pct.	3 pct.
Explained variance at regional level <sup>B</sup> .....					13 pct.
Explained variance at country level .....		1 pct.	20 pct.	81 pct.	79 pct.

\* p < 0.05; \*\* p < 0.01; \*\*\* p < 0.001

Note: The following analyses are based on respondents who are more than 20 years of age. Included in the analysis is a *design weight* constructed by the team behind the European Social Survey. This weight adjusts for differences in selection probability among different groups inside the countries. This gives a somewhat better representativity, although the practical effect of the weights is rather small. The variable of education is calculated as the level of completed or ongoing education.

A. The variables have been rescaled to a range of 1, which means that the regression coefficient displays the effect on trust when changing the independent variable from the minimum value to maximum value in the sample.

B. Information from an empty three-level model (not shown) is used in the calculation of the explained variance at the regional level.

The results are shown in Table 2. Model 0 displays the estimates from an empty model with no fixed effects, i.e. without independent variables. In this model, we only see how the variance of the

dependent variable is divided between the two levels: individuals and countries. Of the overall variance (which amounts to 5.91), 0.86 is caused by the variation between the countries, and 5.05 is caused by the variations between the individuals. The intra-class correlation (ICC) measures the proportion of the overall variance caused by national differences. In this case, most variance is caused by individual variations, though a considerable amount of variation is also caused by national variation (14 percent). Model 1 shows the bivariate effect of percent *non-Western immigrants (OECD)* on social trust. Model 2 includes two individual-level control variables, *age* and *education*, and together with *non-Western immigrants* these explain 20 percent of the country-level variance. Model 3 presents the best two-level models. It is found after having run a number of models with different combinations of variables, including two independent variables at the national level. As appears this model includes none of the two different measures of ethnic heterogeneity.

Model 4 displays the three level model results at the regional level. The regional level variable is based on data from the European Social Survey and measured as the share of non-western immigrants in different regions of Europe. As appears the effect is limited and statistically insignificant.

All together, for Europe as a whole the hypothesis that ethnic heterogeneity is associated with lower level of social trust is not confirmed. This is the case both at the country level and at the regional level. However, for Western Europe it appears that ethnic heterogeneity correlates negatively with social trust. This is explained by the combination of high trust and relative low ethnic heterogeneity in the Nordic countries. The correlation is, however, not statistically significant and it is furthermore reduced in combinations with variables that both correlates with social trust and are characteristic for the Nordic countries, namely good governance, high BNP pr. capita, income equality and Protestantism. Rather than ethnic homogeneity it is such variables we presume explains the high level of trust in the Nordic countries.

#### **4. Ethnic diversity and trust at the local level**

The relationship between ethnic diversity and trust at the local level is examined by utilizing a proxy measure for the size of ethnic minorities, namely a variable from the European Social Survey

2002, in which respondents are asked to describe the area they currently live in (see Appendix). The analysis is carried out in eight selected Western European countries sharing in common a growth in the proportion of Third World immigrants since the 1960s, namely Belgium, Germany, the UK, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Denmark.<sup>v</sup>

Not only are third world immigrants among the poorest in society in terms of education, income etc. Many of them also live in so called deprived areas, i.e. areas characterized by high crime, high unemployment, bad health, low income, low network resources etc. As Letki (2007) has shown such characteristics may also help explain lower trust. These should therefore be taken into account when analyzing the effects of ethnic diverse communities on trust. As we have no exact information of such neighbourhood characteristics we shall include some variables in the analysis that are able to “capture” effects from such context parameters (model 3 below).

The statistical analysis includes four models with different blocks of variables. All of them include the independent variable of how many people of a different ethnic group are residing in the area. This variable is operationalized as a discrete variable with a dummy for two of the three categories. Moreover, the models include (see Appendix for a further description of the variables):

*Model 1:* A number of country dummies.

*Model 2:* Individual background information, including age, level of education, number of students, unemployment, income, and urbanization. These variables are meant to control for spuriousity. The variable of urbanization is included because living in an urban area, which most immigrants do, may have a different impact on trust than living in rural areas.

*Model 3:* Some variables that lie further ahead in the causal chain, which may also help control for spuriousity: 1) whether the respondent or a member of their household has fallen victim to a burglary or assault in the last five years; 2) how the individual respondent estimates their own health and financial situation; and 3) two variables pertaining to network membership.

*Model 4:* This model does not intend to control for spuriousity, but to test whether lower trust in areas with many members of a different ethnic minority group is related to perceived threats. In this context, *perceived threats* functions as an intervening variable and is constructed as a mean of six items pertaining to the respondent’s views on immigrants and immigration<sup>vi</sup>.



Model 1 shows the score of the independent variable on social trust adjusted for only national differences. It would appear as though the respondents living in areas with many members of different ethnic groups score about half a point lower on the index for social trust than respondents living in areas with few or no ethnic minorities. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the effect is not monotone; the effect could have been estimated using a single dummy indicating whether the respondent lives in an area with *many* persons belonging to a different ethnic group or few or no persons belonging to a different ethnic group.

In Model 2, it turns out that up to almost 25 percent of the effect of living in areas with many persons belonging to a different ethnic group can be explained by background variables such as age, level of education, income etc. In this model, the respondents living in areas with many persons belonging to a different ethnic group are estimated to score around 0.4 points lower than respondents that live in areas with very few persons belonging to a different ethnic group.

In Model 3 with all control variables roughly half of the effect of living in an area with many or few persons belonging to a different ethnic group is explained. Persons living in a local community with *many* persons belonging to a different ethnic group typically score 0.28 points lower on the social trust scale than those living in areas with very few persons belonging to a different ethnic group. Although statistically significant<sup>vii</sup>, this must nonetheless be considered to be a rather limited effect.

Model 4 investigates whether this effect can be related to the hypothesis pertaining to the perceived threats of immigrants; however, this is not the case. *Perceived threats* only explain a very limited part of the effect from the proportion of people belonging to ethnic minority groups.

**Table 3: The effect on trust of living in areas with many members of different ethnic group (index). Linear regression. Unstandardized regression coefficients<sup>A</sup> and explained variance. N = 13,390.**

	<i>Model 1</i> <i>country dummies</i>	<i>Model 2</i> <i>+ background variables</i>	<i>Model 3</i> <i>+ Further test for spuriousity</i>	<i>Model 4</i> <i>+ Perceived threats</i>
Intercept	6.80 ***	5.46 ***	5.22 ***	4.08 ***
<i>Country dummies:</i>				
Germany	-1.96 ***	-2.01 ***	-1.74 ***	-1.65 ***
Belgium	-1.94 ***	-1.95 ***	-1.78 ***	-1.67 ***
Great Brittan	-1.86 ***	-1.81 ***	-1.66 ***	-1.55 ***
Switzerland	-1.17 ***	-1.24 ***	-1.05 ***	-1.12 ***
Netherlands	-1.16 ***	-1.15 ***	-1.05 ***	-1.02 ***
Sweden	-.79 ***	-.80 ***	-.70 ***	-.91 ***
Norway	-.42 ***	-.49 ***	-.44 ***	-.42 ***
Denmark (ref.)	—	—	—	—
<i>Respondent's estimate of how many members of a different ethnic group that live in the area:</i>				
Very few	.51 ***	.42 ***	.32 ***	.30 ***
Some	.44 ***	.37 ***	.31 ***	.23 ***
Many (ref.)	—	—	—	—
Gender (female)		.13 ***	.16 ***	.15 ***
Age in tens		.07 ***	.10 ***	.10 ***
Education (0-6)		.23 ***	.19 ***	.11 ***
Student		.39 ***	.30 ***	.19 ***
Unemployed, looking for work		-.28 ***	-.07 NS	.00 NS
Unemployed, not looking for work		-.33 *	-.12 *	-.13 NS
Low income		-.23 ***	-.06 NS	-.03 NS
Urbanization		-.05 ***	-.03 *	-.05 ***
Assault or burglary last 5 years			-.23 ***	-.20 ***
Health (1-5)			.18 ***	.16 ***
Difficult to live on present income (1-4)			-.26 ***	-.22 ***
Social network (1-7)			.09 ***	.08 ***
Organizational network (1-3)			.15 ***	.10 ***
Perceived threats (0-10)				.29 ***
R <sup>2</sup>	.13	.16	.19	.24
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.13	.16	.19	.24

\*\*\* p < 0.005; \*\* p < 0.01; \* p < 0.05

<sup>A)</sup> The effect of the independent variable of primary interest, i.e. the number of people belonging to ethnic minority groups, is estimated with two dummy variables. This means, for instance, that Model 2 estimates that people living in areas with many inhabitants from minority groups typically score 0.52 points lower on the index for social trust than people living in areas with very few from minority groups. The country dummies are also interpreted in this manner. The rest of the variables are either single dummies or assumed interval-scaled variables with the further assumption of linear effects. In Model 3, for instance, it is estimated that females typically score 0.13 times higher than men and that each point on the education scale typically gives 0.23 points higher on the dependent variable. Parentheses indicate minimum and maximum values. All variables are fully described in Appendix

How do we then explain that trust is generally slightly lower among the ethnic majority in neighbourhoods with many persons of a different ethnic origin? One possible explanation lies in the “local interaction” interpretation (see Introduction). According to this interpretation lower trust among the ethnic majority in ethnic mixed areas is the result of less trusting surroundings, e.g. of lower trust among the ethnic minorities living in such areas.

**Table 4: The effect on trust of living in areas with many of different ethnic groups for each country. Linear regression (OLS). Unstandardized regression coefficients and explained variance.**

		<i>Model 1</i> <i>Ethnic minority</i> <i>in local area</i>	<i>Model 2</i> <i>+ background</i> <i>variables</i>	<i>Model 3</i> <i>+ further test for</i> <i>spuriousity</i>	<i>Model 4</i> <i>+ perceived</i> <i>threats</i>
<i>Respondent's own estimate of number of people belonging to ethnic minorities in local area:</i>					
<i>Germany:</i> <i>(N = 2173)</i>	Very few	.65 ***	.55 ***	.46 ***	.42 ***
	Some	.71 ***	.63 ***	.54 ***	.41 ***
	Many (ref.)	—	—	—	—
<i>Belgium:</i> <i>(N = 1331)</i>	Very few	.55 **	.28 NS	.06 NS	.08 NS
	Some	.56 **	.35 NS	.23 NS	.16 NS
	Many (ref.)	—	—	—	—
<i>Great Brittan:</i> <i>(N = 1823)</i>	Very few	.37 *	.24 NS	.15 NS	.07 NS
	Some	.34 *	.29 NS	.22 NS	.12 NS
	Many (ref.)	—	—	—	—
<i>Switzerland:</i> <i>(N = 1709)</i>	Very few	.31 *	.27 *	.22 NS	.22 NS
	Some	.23 NS	.16 NS	.15 NS	.11 NS
	Many (ref.)	—	—	—	—
<i>Netherlands:</i> <i>(N = 1551)</i>	Very few	.52 **	.33 NS	.24 NS	.16 NS
	Some	.32 NS	.18 NS	.16 NS	.03 NS
	Many (ref.)	—	—	—	—
<i>Sweden</i> <i>(N = 1703)</i>	Very few	.51 ***	.47 *	.32 NS	.34 NS
	Some	.42 **	.40 NS	.29 NS	.22 NS
	Many (ref.)	—	—	—	—
<i>Norway</i> <i>(N = 1878)</i>	Very few	.69 ***	.62 ***	.55 ***	.51 ***
	Some	.48 ***	.42 **	.38 *	.31 *
	Many (ref.)	—	—	—	—
<i>Denmark</i> <i>(N = 1219)</i>	Very few	.59 ***	.59 ***	.53 **	.52 **
	Some	.61 ***	.57 ***	.53 **	.47 *
	Many (ref.)	—	—	—	—
<i>France</i> <i>(N = 129)</i>	Very few	.06 NS	.17 NS	.15 NS	.16 NS
	Some	.10 NS	.13 NS	.09 NS	.02 NS
	Many (ref.)	—	—	—	—
<i>Austria</i> <i>(1274)</i>	Very few	.30 NS	.26 NS	.17 NS	.15 NS
	Some	.48 **	.44 *	.36 *	.22 NS
	Many (ref.)	—	—	—	—

\*\*\* p < 0.005; \*\* p < 0.01; \* p < 0.05

In Table 4, the same analyses are carried out for each country. As we can observe there is a bivariate positive effect of living in neighbourhoods with few or some immigrants, but as also appears the effect disappears in a number of countries after the control is carried out. It is mainly in the Nordic countries that a significant effect remains. The overall positive relationship between ethnic homogeneity and trust at the community level is thus caused by a positive relationship in particular Denmark and Norway. This is not surprisingly considering that it is also in these two countries we find the greatest distance in trust between the ethnic majority and the ethnic

minorities. Therefore, the “local interaction” interpretation seems to apply for these two countries. This interpretation is supported by the observation that it makes no big difference for the level of trust whether one lives in an area with nobody of a different ethnic group or an area with some people of a different ethnic group.

#### **4. Trends in ethnic diversity and social trust**

Until now, the analysis has been based on estimates of the size of ethnic minority groups at a certain point in time. However, rather than the presence of persons of different ethnic origins, is it possible that the *rise* of the presence of minority ethnic groups leads to lower trust? Country A and Country B may have the same proportion of ethnic minority groups, but while this is the result of a stable development in Country A, it is possibly the result of a sudden change – perhaps accompanied by political conflict – in Country B. The assumption that changes in the ethnic composition rather than the size of ethnic minority groups in itself is what has an influence on trust can be related to the theory of perceived threats. For many, the ongoing process of globalization and the emergence of a multiethnic society do not represent a challenge, but is perceived to pose a threat; either an economic threat or a threat against that which is understood to be “our national culture”. Less social trust thus results from the sense of being invaded by foreigners: persons coming to take “our” jobs, who do not respect “our” customs and traditions, and who possibly even wish to enforce their “way of life” upon “us”.

There are major differences between various countries in Europe – regarding the scope, timing and pace of immigration – just as the various countries have reacted differently to the challenges raised by the advent of multiethnic society. In some European countries, ethnic diversity has developed gradually since the 1960s in response to a growing need for immigrant workers. For other European countries, the increasing flow of refugees in the 1980s and 1990s caused rapid changes. In some countries, these changes have provoked anti-immigrant movements and parties. Research indicates that there are more positive attitudes towards immigrants in countries in which immigration has been seen as a planned response to a growing demand for foreign labour than in countries in which growing diversity has resulted from an unplanned influx of refugees (Goul Andersen, 2002).

However, it is impossible to obtain a precise picture of the development of immigration in Europe. The demographic information is rather incomplete, particularly before 2000. We only have information regarding the country of origin of foreign-born persons for a few countries, and the simple use of non-citizens is inadequate due to different naturalization praxis. Instead, we provide a rough picture based on OECD figures (2007) together with qualitative information. Five partly overlapping groups of countries can be identified:

1. Countries that were historically relatively ethnically homogeneous but underwent a rapid increase in the number of immigrants in the 1980s and 1990s, particular asylum seekers from the Middle East, Asia, Africa and the Balkans (e.g. Austria, Sweden, Norway and Denmark). Germany, the Netherlands, UK and France also received an influx of Third World immigrants in this space of time, but these countries were not as ethnically homogeneous as Austria and the Scandinavian countries before 1980.
2. Countries in which the influx of immigrants has been accompanied by the rise of anti-immigrant movements and where immigration – and subsequently religion – have become major sources of conflict (Austria, Denmark, Norway, France, and later to some extent in the Netherlands and the UK).
3. Countries that have gradually become more ethnically heterogeneous and where immigrants are mainly immigrant-workers (Luxembourg, Belgium and Switzerland).
4. Countries that remained relatively ethnic homogeneous prior to 2000 (Finland, Iceland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Ireland).

The question thus becomes whether the flow of immigrants and debate over this issue are reflected in the development of social trust. Are there any indications of trust being influenced by the increase of non-Western immigrants in countries such as Austria, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany, France, the Netherlands and the UK from 1980 to 2006 compared to countries such as Luxembourg, Belgium, Switzerland, Finland, Iceland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, where immigration has either developed more gradually or where the proportion of immigrants remains quite low? Furthermore, and in accordance with the threat hypothesis, one would particularly expect to see a drop in social trust among the unemployed and persons with limited education, who perceive immigrants as a cultural and economic threat (Schneider, 2007) on the grounds that they will compete for jobs, opportunities and limited social welfare benefits.

**Table 5: The development of social trust. Percentage stating that most people can be trusted 1981, 1990 and 1999 among the whole population and among the unskilled and unemployed (World Value Studies).**

	1981			1990			1999		
	All	Unskilled	Unempl.	All	Unskilled	Unempl.	All	Unskilled	Unempl.
Austria				32	26	(30)	34	20	(14)
Sweden	57		29	66	58	49	66	50	47
Norway	61	52	63	65	54	70	65		
Denmark	51	39	42	58	48	46	67	52	62
Netherlands	44	30	27	53	35	54	60	53	(87)
Germany	31	23	24	32	22	28	35	33	31
UK	44	33	25	44	38	34	30	25	17
France	24	17	24	23	5	17	22	14	15
Belgium	29	31	22	33	27	27	31	20	21
Finland				63		(57)	58	46	45
Iceland	41	36	(0)	44	39	(0)	41	30	29
Czech Rep.				26	17	20	24	20	33
Hungary				25	18	21	22	17	11
Ireland	42	38	40	47	40	24	36	38	29

\*) empty cells: No data available.

( ) with less than 30 respondents in the cell.

Table 5 illustrates the lack of systematic trends to support the hypotheses, neither generally nor with regard to the subgroups of unskilled or unemployed persons.<sup>1</sup> Only in the UK do we observe less trust in 1999 than in 1980. In the other countries, trust is on the rise or remains at the same level. Moreover, we do not observe any systematic differences between the various groups of countries listed above. The same is the case if we consider the subgroups of the unskilled and unemployed. Only in Austria, Sweden and partly Belgium does the threat hypothesis receive some support with regard to these groups. In Austria and Sweden, trust has fallen among the unskilled and unemployed in both absolute and relative terms; and in Belgium only in relative terms. In the other countries, the gap between the level of trust in the entire population and level of trust among unskilled and unemployed persons is roughly the same or has even been reduced. This is the case in Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany and partly UK (among the unskilled) and France, where trust has a curvilinear development. The development in social trust across the countries therefore does not provide any indication of trust as influenced by the rise of new ethnic groups or by growing conflicts over the dawning of a multiethnic society. However, we cannot exclude that this is possibly the case to some extent in Austria and Sweden.

## **5. Trust among ethnic minorities compared to ethnic majorities.**

As was observed in section 3 members of ethnic minorities are generally less trusting than members of the ethnic majority. This is not surprising. In particular, if trust is to be understood as a moral norm founded early in life, we should expect non-western immigrants to have lower trust, since trust generally is lower in the countries, where the immigrants come from (Svendsen & Svendsen, 2006: 88-91). Consequently, if the share of non-western immigrants continues to rise, this may in the long run have a negative impact on the level of trust in western societies.

Eric Uslaner (2006) has investigated the meaning of cultural heritage versus the environment for descendants of immigrants in the US and arrives at the conclusion that trust is mainly inherited. If you descend from Scandinavian immigrants you are more trusting than if you descend from South European immigrants. But he also shows that it has a positive impact on trust to live in a high trusting environment, just as concrete experiences play a role. Cultural heritage is, however, the major determinant. Lise Togeby (2007) has examined the same question in a different way, and she does not arrive at the same conclusion. In contrast to Uslaner she finds, by an examination of three immigrant groups, former Yugoslavs, Turks and Pakistanis and their descendants, that cultural heritage and environment play an equal important role.

We shall in this section make a further investigation into the role of cultural heritage versus the environment and through that get an idea how a continuing rise in the share of non-western immigrants will influence trust. The investigation is carried out through a comparison of trust between groups of non-western immigrants living in different European countries. We shall, furthermore, include the descendants of non western immigrants, the so-called second generation immigrants, in the investigation. We have selected ten countries, where the ethnic minority population constitutes around 5 percent or more of the total population, namely France, Germany, Austria, UK, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

As can be seen from Table 6, in each of the selected countries ethnic minorities display lower levels of trust than the ethnic majority. But we also see variations in trust among the ethnic minority groups that come rather close to the variations in trust among the ethnic majority. In countries where trust among the ethnic majority is high, trust among ethnic minorities is also high and visa versa. Furthermore, the distance between minorities living in France, Belgium, Germany and the

UK and minorities living in the Scandinavian countries is larger than the distance between the ethnic majority and the ethnic minorities in Scandinavia. Assuming that there are no big differences between the various groups of non-western immigrants living in different European countries that may explain this variation, the results can be taken as a rather strong indication of the importance of the environment, i.e. that the environment plays a stronger role than the belonging to a specific minority group.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 6 Trust among the ethnic majority and minorities in 10 European countries.**

	FR	BE	DE	UK	AT	CH	NL	SE	NO	DK
Ethnic majority group	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.5	6.0	6.0	6.4	6.8	7.1
Ethnic minority group	4.7	5.1	5.0	5.0	4.8	5.6	5.4	5.5	6.1	6.1

*Source:* European Social Survey 2002-2004, aggregated dataset.

In the debate on cultural heritage versus the environment, the results thus seem to support a hypothesis of the environment as a major determinant for trust. This is, however, not the same as to say that trust among immigrants is to be seen as mostly an instrumental category. We can not be certain that immigrants learn by *experience* that most people in their new environments can be trusted. It could also be the case that immigrants adjust to a moral norm in their new home-country saying that one *ought* to trust most people.

As mentioned above Eric Uslaner (2002) sees trust as a moral commandment that is socialized through childhood and that persists through adulthood (Uslaner, 2008). To him “generalized trust represents a sense of social solidarity, a belief that other people, especially people unlike yourself, are part of your moral community” (Uslaner, 2008: 290). This norm is not part of the moral baggage immigrants have brought with them, but it may be a norm immigrants adjust to; an

---

<sup>4</sup> Among relevant parameters such as age, length of stay in the country, religion and level of education, the only significant correlation in the group of non-western immigrants in the ten countries is between education and trust, and this is not particular strong. Even if ethnic minorities in the Scandinavian countries are slightly better educated than in most of the other countries, but for instance not the UK, a control for education would not make a substantial difference. Nor is it likely that internal differences between non-western immigrants in terms of the country of origin are of any importance.



adjustment that can be seen as part of a broader adjustment to western values. One can imagine an immigrant saying to himself: “In this country, where I have come to, you are seen as a good citizen, if you trust other people and as a bad citizen, if you do not trust others. Since I want to be a good citizen, I trust other people”.

However, if trust should be seen as a moral value parallel with other public moral values, we would expect trust to be associated with such similar values. European Social Survey includes a battery on “human values”, where two items come rather close to the definition of Uslaner on social trust as a moral value (see above). The first item is about equal opportunities, and the second item is about understanding people who are different from one self. In the survey respondents are asked to state, how much he/she identifies with a person that is described in the following way:

- He/she thinks it is important that every person in the world should be treated equally. He/she believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life.
- It is important to him/her to listen to people who are different from him/her. Even when he/she disagrees with them, he/she still wants to understand them.

These two items are rather strongly inter-correlated (Pearson 0.34), but they do only correlate very weakly with trust (Pearson 0.02 and 0.05), and among ethnic minorities the correlation is non-significant. Furthermore, the variations between the ten countries are much lower as in the case of trust (std. deviation 0.85 against 1.9 for trust), just as the ranking of the countries is different. Finally, in contrast to trust, and a little surprising considering the debate over “the clash of civilizations”, ethnic minorities have a slightly higher score on these two items than the ethnic majority.<sup>5</sup> For these reasons trust does not seem to be a part of the same moral dimension as these two items. This supports the interpretation of trust as related to experience-based expectations of the future reliability of the actors rather than to a moral commandment of being trustful.

But culture apparently also plays a role. As appears from Table 6 non-western immigrants are in every country less trusting than the ethnic majority. To this can be added that contrary to our expectations trust was in 2002/2004 lower among second generation immigrants than among first

---

<sup>5</sup> These results are however in accordance with data from a Danish investigation (Integrationsministeriet, 2007).

generation immigrants except for the Scandinavian countries. In 2006 there is still a gap between first and second generation immigrants, but it is less than in 2002, and in the Scandinavian countries trust among second generation is somewhat higher than among first generation immigrants. It remains to be seen whether this trend continues. One could imagine that problems of integration and for instance the feelings of not being treated fair could explain lower trust among second generation immigrants. A comparison between the countries based on our knowledge of ethnic conflicts does, however, not provide a clear picture. All together, the rather small, but stable difference between the ethnic majority and the ethnic minorities, including second generation immigrants, indicates that cultural heritage still play a role.

The results, however, also indicate that we don't need to have great anxieties if the share of non-western immigrant should rise in the future. In itself the share of immigrant only means a little for the overall level of trust. In 2002 the average level of trust among ethnic majorities in all the ten countries was 5.4, while the average among ethnic minorities was 4.9. In 2006 these figures have increased to 5.5 and 5.2 respectively.

## **6. Conclusion**

We have in this paper investigated the relationship between ethnic diversity and trust at the country level, the community level and the individual level. At the country level we have tested the model of Delhey and Newton as well as other models. The results are quite clear. For Europe we are not able to confirm the findings of Delhey and Newton and others that "high trust countries are characterized by ethnic homogeneity". This is important, for it confirms the findings that "the significance of ethnic diversity depends of which countries are included" (Bjørnskov, 2006:12). We therefore believe that future research based on international survey data should be more sensitive to context. Ethnic diversity means something else in Europe than in Africa, Asia and America.

Taking the European context into consideration, it may, however, be misleading to rely only on cross country data at a particular time. There are vast differences between the European countries concerning not only the scope, but also the time and pace of ethnic diversification, just as there are differences in the degree to which immigration has been accompanied by political conflicts. Such differences should be taken into consideration. Rather than diversity in itself it might be the rise of ethnic fractionalization that causes concern and thus affects trust. We have, however, not been able

to verify this assumption. There are no common patterns to signify that growing diversity influences trust.

While we were not able to find any relationship at the country level we found a significant although rather small effect of ethnic diversity on trust at the community level. People who live in an area with many of a different ethnic group are less trusting than people, who live in areas with only some or almost nobody of a different ethnic group. A control for several parameters that may characterise people living in ethnic mixed areas reduces the strength of the relationship but does not remove it. One may assume that lower trust in such areas could be explained by “perceived threats”, i.e. that the ethnic majority sees immigrants as a potential treat, economically or culturally. This is, however, not the case. So far the most plausible explanation is that lower trust is a consequence of less trusting surroundings. This is supported by the finding that it makes no difference for the level of trust whether one lives in an area with nobody of a different ethnic group or an area with some people of a different ethnic group. All together these results support the so called “local interaction” interpretation and can furthermore be seen to support an interpretation of trust as a context-dependent category.

This interpretation is strengthened when we compare trust between ethnic minority groups living in different European countries. The results indicate that immigrants adjust to the level of trust that exists in their new home countries. The results furthermore indicate that this adjustment is more related to an instrumental way of reasoning than to a moral commandment of being trustful. There is, however, a gap between the ethnic majority population and the ethnic minorities with regard to trust. Considering that this gap in most countries is rather narrow, and that it mostly can be explained by a kind of “cultural backlog”, we do not need to worry about the future level of trust, even if the share of non-western immigrants should continue to rise.

All in all, in Europe ethnic diversity does not seem to be associated with lower level of trust except for those local areas, where non-western immigrants are concentrated. The results do therefore not support the assimilation line that has been adopted by some countries in Europe, among others Denmark. On the other hand the results may speak in favour of policies of integration that counteract ethnic segregation and the establishment of so called parallel societies.



## Appendix A – List of variables

(Dummy variables recoded from original variables are shown without codes. For all of these, a value of 1 indicates the category while a value of 0 indicates that the respondent isn't belonging to that category.)

### Dependent variables:

**Social trust** (one item). “Most people can be trusted or you can't be too careful” (Scale from 0 to 10).

0 = You can't be too careful

1 = Most people can be trusted

**Social trust** (index measured as a mean of two items, the above described and the following) “Do you think that most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance, or would they try to be fair?”

0 = Most people would try to take advantage of me

10 = Most people would try to be fair

### Independent variables (individual level):

#### **Gender**

0 = Male

1 = Female

**Age** (in years or tens of years)

**Ethnic minority** (not western).

**Educational level.** “What is the highest level of education you have achieved?” Ordinary scale from 0 to 6<sup>6</sup>

0 = Not completed primary education

1 = Primary or first stage of basic

2 = Lower secondary or second stage of basic

3 = Upper secondary

4 = Post secondary, non-tertiary

5 = First stage of tertiary

6 = Second stage of tertiary

**Student** (main activity is studying).

**Unemployed, looking for a job.**

**Unemployed, not looking for a job.**

**Low income** (below half the median income of country).

Urbanization (ordinal scale 1 to 5)<sup>7</sup>

1 = A farm or home in the countryside

2 = A country village

3 = A town or a small city

4 = The suburbs or outskirts of a big city

5 = A big city

**Health.** “How is your health in general? Would you say it is ...” (ordinal scale 1 to 5)

1 = Very good

2 = Good

3 = Fair

4 = Bad

5 = Or, very bad?

**Difficult to live on present income.** “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 = Finding it difficult on present income

4 = Finding it very difficult on present income

**Crime victim.** “Have you or a member of your household been the victim of a burglary or assault in the last 5 years?”

**Social network.** “How often do you meet socially with friends, relatives or work colleagues?”

1 = Never

---

<sup>6</sup> Note

<sup>7</sup> Categories reversed in comparison with original variable.

- 2 = Less than once a month  
 3 = Once a month  
 4 = Several times a month  
 5 = Once a week  
 6 = Several times a week

**Respondent's own estimate of amount of people belonging to ethnic minority groups in local area.** "How would you describe the area where you currently live?"

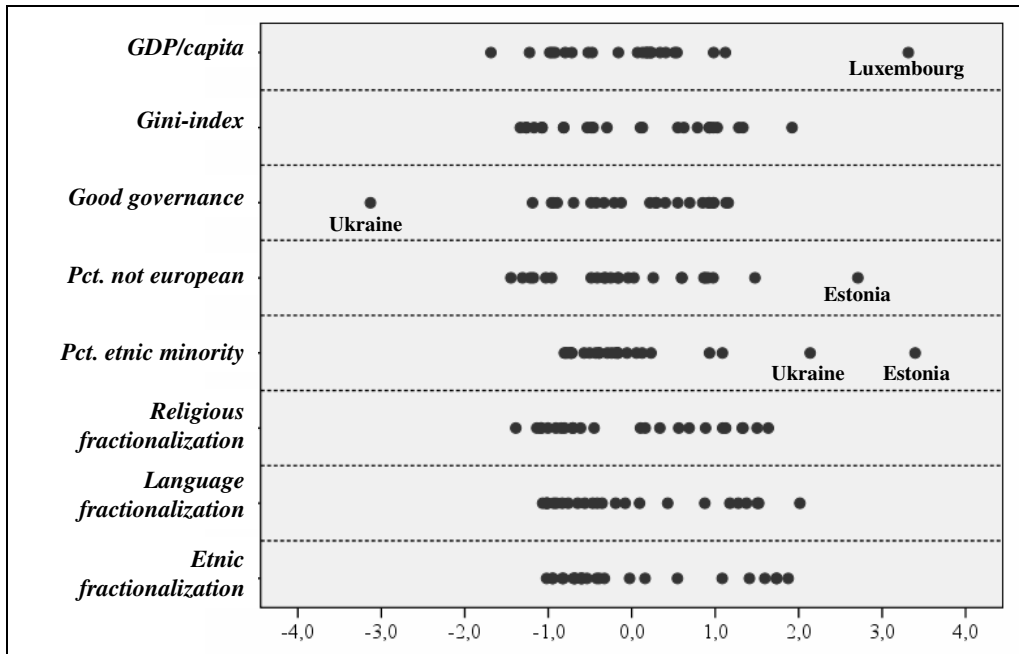
- 1 = An area where almost nobody is of a different race or ethnic group from most country people  
 2 = Some people are of a different race or ethnic group from most [country] people  
 3 = Many people are of a different race or ethnic group.

**Independent variables on country level (used in Chapter 3)**

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.dev.</i>
<i>Pct. not european.</i> Se tabel på følgende side.	5.55	3.49
<i>Frac. ethnic.</i> Ethnic fractionalization (from Alesina et al 2003)	0.23	0.18
<i>Frac. lang.</i> Language fractionalization (from Alesina et al 2003)	0.24	0.20
<i>Frac. rel.</i> Religious fractionalization (from Alesina et al 2003)	0.38	0.21
<i>Good governance.</i> Sum-index based on five World Bank variables concerning voice and accountability, political stability/no violence, government effectiveness, rule of law, and control of corruption. World Bank 2004.	1.24	0.61
<i>GDP pr. capita</i> (US Dollar). IMF 2005.	28.32	12.52
<i>Gini index.</i> World Bank (except for Iceland: Statistics Iceland)	30.36	4.24
<i>Protestant or mixed protestant and catholic</i> (Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland).	0.21	
0 = Small share of protestants		
1 = Big share of protestants		
Protestant (Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland). Or Universalistic Welfare State.	0.33	
0 = Mostly catholic/orthodox		
1 = Protestant country/Universalistic Welfare State		

## Appendix B – Country level independent variables

Interval scaled country specific independent variables. Standardized score. Spotting univariate outliers.



Note: Analysis on country-level data set.

**Bivariate correlations (Pearson's r) between independent country specific variables. Significance level shown in parentheses.**

	1) Pct. not European	2) Pct. ethnic minority	3) Ethnic fract.	4) Lang. fract.	5) Rel. fract.	6) Gini index	7) Good Govern.	8 )GDP/capita	9) Mixed prot. & cat.
2) Pct. ethnic minority	<b>0.86</b> *** (0.000)								
3) Ethnic fractionalization	<b>0.39</b> * (0.062)	<b>0.43</b> * (0.034)							
4) Language fractionalization	<b>0.43</b> ** (0.037)	<b>0.36</b> * (0.081)	<b>0.86</b> *** (0.000)						
5) Religious fractionalization	<b>0.33</b> ns (0.118)	<b>0.22</b> ns (0.314)	<b>0.21</b> ns (0.331)	<b>0.30</b> ns (0.154)					
6) Gini index	<b>0.26</b> ns (0.220)	<b>0.34</b> ns (0.104)	<b>0.22</b> ns (0.299)	<b>0.09</b> ns (0.690)	<b>-0.06</b> ns (0.777)				
7) Good Governance	<b>-0.26</b> ns (0.226)	<b>-0.45</b> ** (0.028)	<b>-0.27</b> ns (0.204)	<b>-0.06</b> ns (0.795)	<b>-0.27</b> ns (0.211)	<b>-0.14</b> ns (0.528)			
8) GDP/capita	<b>-0.18</b> ns (0.389)	<b>-0.33</b> ns (0.111)	<b>0.03</b> ns (0.876)	<b>0.18</b> ns (0.394)	<b>-0.39</b> * (0.063)	<b>-0.07</b> ns (0.731)	<b>0.74</b> *** (0.000)		
9) Mixed prot. & catholic	<b>-0.16</b> ns (0.458)	<b>-0.26</b> ns (0.219)	<b>-0.30</b> ns (0.161)	<b>-0.24</b> ns (0.262)	<b>0.01</b> ns (0.955)	<b>-0.37</b> * (0.073)	<b>0.61</b> ** (0.002)	<b>0.29</b> ns (0.168)	
10) Protestant/Universalistic welfare state	<b>0.35</b> * (0.093)	<b>-0.30</b> ns (0.150)	<b>-0.43</b> ** (0.037)	<b>-0.30</b> ns (0.148)	<b>-0.40</b> * (0.055)	<b>-0.60</b> *** (0.002)	<b>0.53</b> * (0.008)	<b>0.27</b> ns (0.209)	<b>0.73</b> *** (0.000)

Note: Analysis on country-level data set.

\*) Sign. < 0.10 \*\*) Sign. < 0.05 \*\*\*) Sign. < 0.01



## Appendix C – Country specific analyses of the effect of concentration of immigrants in neighbourhoods on social trust

Effect from respondents own measure on amount of people in local area from minority race or ethnicity on social trust (index). Linear regression in each single country. Raw regression coefficients <sup>A</sup> and explained variance.											
		<i>Model 2</i> + Ethnic minority in local area		<i>Model 3</i> + background variables		<i>Model 4</i> + further test for spuriousity		<i>Model 5</i> + perceived threads		<i>Model 6</i> + Institutional trust	
<i>Respondent's own estimate off amount of people belonging to ethnic minorities in local area:</i>											
<i>Germany:</i>	Very few	.54	***	.41	**	.35	*	.34	*	.36	**
(N = 2228)	Some	.57	***	.49	***	.43	***	.32	*	.29	*
	Many (ref.)	—		—		—		—		—	
<i>Belgium:</i>	Very few	.33	NS	.08	NS	-.17	NS	-.12	NS	-.14	NS
(N = 1289)	Some	.28	NS	.08	NS	-.05	NS	-.10	NS	-.14	NS
	Many (ref.)	—		—		—		—		—	
<i>Great Brittan:</i>	Very few	.36	**	.16	NS	.13	NS	.06	NS	.02	NS
(N = 1952)	Some	.27	NS	.19	NS	.19	NS	.10	NS	-.01	NS
	Many (ref.)	—		—		—		—		—	
<i>Chwitzerland:</i>	Very few	.23	*	.20	NS	.15	NS	.15	NS	.14	NS
(N = 1693)	Some	.16	NS	.08	NS	.08	NS	.03	NS	.02	NS
	Many (ref.)	—		—		—		—		—	
<i>Nederlands:</i>	Very few	.74	***	.41	*	.29	NS	.22	NS	.19	NS
(N = 1612)	Some	.52	**	.29	NS	.24	NS	.10	NS	.15	NS
	Many (ref.)	—		—		—		—		—	
<i>Sweden</i>	Very few	.77	***	.54	**	.40	*	.48	*	.40	*
(N = 1741)	Some	.64	**	.45	*	.35	NS	.34	NS	.29	NS
	Many (ref.)	—		—		—		—		—	
<i>Norway</i>	Very few	.72	***	.62	***	.56	***	.53	***	.43	**
(N = 1917)	Some	.52	***	.43	**	.40	**	.33	*	.26	NS
	Many (ref.)	—		—		—		—		—	
<i>Denmark</i>	Very few	.68	***	.63	***	.57	**	.57	**	.58	***
(N = 1242)	Some	.67	***	.61	**	.57	**	.53	**	.53	**
	Many (ref.)	—		—		—		—		—	
<i>France</i>	Very few	.16	NS	.20	NS	.18	NS	.19	NS	.18	NS
(N = 1397)	Some	.34	**	.23	NS	.20	NS	.14	NS	.11	NS
	Many (ref.)	—		—		—		—		—	
<i>Austria</i>	Very few	.46	**	.36	*	.25	NS	.22	NS	.19	NS
(1314)	Some	.58	***	.51	**	.41	*	.27	NS	.24	NS
	Many (ref.)	—		—		—		—		—	

Significance levels (based on robust standard errors via the procedure GENLIN in SPSS): \*\*\* < 0.001 \*\* < 0.01 \* < 0.05

## References

- Alesina, A. & La Ferrara, E. (2002). Who trust others? *Journal of Public Economics*. Vol 85, pp. 207-234.
- Alesina, Alberto et al (2003): "Fractionalization". *Journal of Economic Growth*, 8, 155-194.
- Anderson, C.J. & Paskeviciute (2006). How Ethnic and Linguistic Heterogeneity Influence the Prospect for Civil Society: A Comparative Study of Citizenship Behavior. *The Journal of Politics*. Vol 68, no. 4, pp. 783-802.
- Bjørnskov, C. (2006). Determinant of generalized trust: A cross-country comparison. *Public Choice*. 130:1-21.
- Cambell, John L., Hall, John A. & Pedersen, Ove K. (2006). *National Identity and Varieties of Capitalism. The Danish Experience*. Copenhagen: DJØF Publishing.
- Costa, D.L. & Kahn, M.E. (2003). Civic engagement and community heterogeneity: An economists perspective. *Perspectives on Politics* 1, pp. 103-111.
- Delhey, J. & Newton, K. (2005). Predicting Cross-National Level of Social Trust: Global Pattern or Nordic Exceptionalism? *European Sociological Review*. 21:4 pp.311-327.
- Dumont, Jean-Christophe & Lemaitre, Georges (2005). *Counting immigrants and expatriates in OECD Countries: A new perspective*. OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers. 25
- European Social Survey (2004): *Weighting European Social Survey Data*. <http://ess.nsd.uib.no/>
- Goldstein, Harvey (1995): *Multilevel Statistical Models*. Arnold.
- Goul Andersen, Jørgen (2002). *Danskernes holdninger til indvandrere. En oversigt*. AMID Working Paper Series 17. Aalborg University.
- Herreros, F & Criado, H. (2008). The state and the development of social trust. *International Political Science Review* Vol. 29, no. 1, pp. 53-71.
- Hox, Joop (2002): *Multilevel Analysis. Techniques and Applications*. Mahwah, New Jersey & London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Hooghe, M. (2008). Social capital and diversity. Generalized trust, social cohesion and regimes of diversity. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*. Vol 40, no. 2: 709-732.
- Kaufmann, Daniel., Aart Kraay & Massimo Mastruzzi (2006): *Governance Matters V: Governance Indicators for 1996-2005*. World Bank, September 15, 2006. <http://www.worldbank.org/>
- Kumlin, S. & Rothstein, B. (2005). "Making and breaking social capital. The impact of welfare-state institutions". *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol 38, no. 4, pp. 339-365.
- Kymlich, W. (2002). *Contemporary Political Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Larsen, C. A. (2007). How welfare regimes generate and erode social capital: The impact of underclass phenomena *Comparative Politics*. Vol 40, no 1, pp. 83-101.
- Letki, N. (2008). Does Diversity Erode Social Cohesion? Social Capital and Race in British Neighbourhoods. *Political Studies*. Vol 56, no 1, pp. 99-126.
- Lolle, Henrik (2004): "Multilevel analyse. En introduktion med eksempel." *Metode & Data*, nr. 90 2004, pp. 41-57.
- Lolle, Henrik (2003): *Multilevel analyse i SPSS 11.5*. Arbejdsrapport fra Institut for Økonomi, Politik og Forvaltning, Aalborg Universitet.
- Lolle, H. & Torpe, L. (2007). Social kapital, social sammenhængskraft og multikulturalisme. Fører et mere multietnisk samfund til mindre social kapital? *Arbejdsrapport*. Institut for Økonomi, Politik og Forvaltning. Aalborg Universitet.

- Marshall, M. & Stolle, D. (2004). Race and the City: Neighbourhood Context and the Development of Generalized Trust. *Political Behaviour*. 26:2 pp. 125-153.
- OECD (2005): *PISA 2003 Data Analysis Manual*. OECD.
- OECD (2007): *International Migration Outlook*.
- Pennant, R. (2005). *Diversity, trust and community participation in England*. Findings 253. Home Office. Research, Development and Statistic Directorate.
- Putnam, R. D. (2000): *Bowling alone. The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Putnam, R.D. (2007). E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and community in the twenty-first century. The 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture. *Scandinavian Political Studies*, Vol 30, no. 2.
- Qvortrup, Mads (2007). Skilleveje. Multikulturalismens umulighed? Politiken 22.8.2007.
- Rawls, John (1993). *Political Liberalism*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Reeskens, T & Hooghe, M (2008). Cross-cultural Measurement equivalence of Generalized Trust. Evidence from the European Social Survey (2002 and 2004). *Social Indicator Research*. No. 85, pp. 515-532.
- Rothstein, B. (2003). *Sociala fällor och tillitens problem*. Stockholm: SNS Förlag.
- Rothstein, B. & Stolle, D. (2007). The Quality of Government and Social Capital. A theory of Political Institutions and Generalized Trust. *Q&G Working Paper Series 2007:2*. Göteborg University.
- Schneider, Silke L. (2007). Anti-immigrant Attitudes in Europe: Out-group Size and Perceived Ethnic Threat. *European Sociological Review*, Oktober.
- Stolle, D., Soroka, S & Johnston, R. (2008). When does diversity erode trust? Neighbourhood diversity, interpersonal trust and the mediating effect of social interaction. *Political Studies*. Vol 56: 57-75.
- Torpe, Lars (2007). Social kapital og demokrati pp. 199-216 i Hegedahl, Paul & Rosenmeier, Sara Lea (red.) *Social kapital som teori og praksis*. København: Forlaget Samfundslitteratur 2007.
- Togeby, L. (2007). "Integration og social kapital" pp. 141-166 in Hegedahl, Paul & Rosenmeier, Sara Lea (red.) *Social kapital som teori og praksis*. København: Forlaget Samfundslitteratur 2007.
- Uslaner, E.M. (2002). *The Moral Foundation of Trust*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Uslaner, E.M. (2003). Trust, democracy and governance: Can government policies influence generalized trust. pp. 171-190 in Hooghe, M. & Stolle, D. *Generating social capital. Civil society and institutions in comparative perspective*. Palgrave: London.
- Uslaner, E.M (2004). Where you stand depends of where your grandparents sat: The inheritability of generalized trust. *Working Paper*. University of Maryland.
- Uslaner, E.M. (2008). "Trust as a moral value", in Castiglione et.al. (eds). *Handbook of social capital*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

---

<sup>i</sup> The intervals are constructed by multiplying the standard error by 1.4. This method assures that if two countries do not have overlapping intervals, they will have different mean trust in the population at a 0.05 significance level (Goldstein 1995, pp. 36-37).

<sup>ii</sup> The variable for *good governance* is a scale based on five different variables constructed by the World Bank (Kaufmann et.al.,2006). See Appendix A for further description of the independent variables.

<sup>iii</sup> Delhey & Newton finds an effect of ethnic homogeneity on social trust both before and after control for *Protestantism*. The Delhey & Newton variable for ethnic diversity (*ethnic fractionalization*) is constructed from

---

demographic information, first and foremost from the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. The details and country-specific values are described in Alesina et al. (2003).

<sup>iv</sup> In fact 26 countries are included in EES 2004; however, Turkey is left out of this analysis.

<sup>v</sup> Unfortunately, France and Austria cannot be included in the analysis, as the French data has no comparable variables for income, while there is no comparable variable for education in the Austrian dataset. Documented in country-specific reports which can be downloaded from the ESS homepage: <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/>

<sup>vi</sup> See Schneider (2007) and Appendix.

<sup>vii</sup> Regarding the statistical significance, one should of course keep in mind that the number of respondents is rather great (even with only eight countries). This means that even very weak effects become statistically significant at the 0.05 level.