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RESEARCH NOTE

Welfare Support in Europe: Interplay of Dependency Culture Beliefs and Meritocratic Contexts

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Beliefs about lazy and undeserving welfare recipients are widespread in liberal societies that consider that hard work and self-reliance—rather than need or entitlement—should determine individuals' outcomes (McNamee & Miller, 2004). In this view, the welfare system is presented as leading to a culture of dependency that erodes both self-reliance and community values by encouraging people to stay on benefits rather than seek work. Conservative politicians and media often portray welfare recipients as free riders prone to misuse benefits. The efficacy of such anti-welfare discourse on public opinion is evidenced by social psychological research showing that negative stereotypes of welfare recipients lead to decreased support for public welfare (Gilens, 1999; Henry, Reyna, & Weiner, 2004; Mullen & Skitka, 2009). However, little research has studied the moderating conditions that might strengthen or weaken the influence of negative welfare beliefs on citizens' support for actual welfare policies (see Petersen, Slothuus, Stubager, & Togeby, 2011, for an exception). Relying on social representations theory (Elcheroth, Doise, & Reicher, 2011; Moscovici, 1961/2008; Staerklé, Clémence, & Spini, 2011), we examine in this article the role of two factors moderating the relationship between dependency culture beliefs and welfare support, namely the degree of deservingness of welfare target groups (old and sick vs. unemployed), and the importance of meritocratic values present in the larger cultural context.

Social representations theory describes the origins and social functions of shared knowledge about socially relevant issues (for an overview, see Sammut, Andreouli, Gaskell, & Valsiner, 2014). Essentially, the theory claims that individuals refer to culturally elaborated, simplified, and stereotypical knowledge to understand and make sense of social and political events. Such shared knowledge may find its origins in mass communications by powerful political pressure groups whose aim is to justify

or to promote political arrangements that are in their interest (Staerklé, 2014). Importantly, representations are not consensual, but individuals actively position themselves in relation to the majority point of view, by endorsing or rejecting it.

Beliefs about welfare and welfare beneficiaries are a good example of social representations, as they are widespread and at the center of political controversy. A large literature has, for example, examined survey research on attitudes toward the welfare state (Andresß & Heien, 2001; Bean & Papadakis, 1998; Bonoli, 2000; Jaeger, 2006a; Mau, 2003; Svallfors, 1997). One common finding is that attitudes toward welfare intervention largely depend on shared beliefs regarding the perceived deservingness of certain beneficiary groups (Petersen et al., 2011; van Oorschot, 2000, 2006). Both correlational and experimental research has shown that if a stereotype contains information regarding the personal responsibility of the group members for their behaviors (i.e., characteristics that are internal and controllable, such as being hardworking), it is likely to be used to judge whether the group deserves sympathy and support (Henry et al., 2004; Reyna, Henry, Korfmacher, & Tucker, 2005; Rudolph, Roesch, Greitemeyer, & Weiner, 2004; Weiner, Osborne, & Rudolph, 2011).

In this article, however, we tackle another key representation in the welfare domain, namely *dependency culture beliefs* that refer to the detrimental impact of institutional support on the psychology of welfare beneficiaries. Such beliefs are part of neo-conservative thinking and state that social benefits and services lead to lower willingness to work (Mead, 1986; Murray, 1984) and to less concern for others (Etzioni, 1994). They have recently been studied as “negative moral consequences” of the welfare state (van Oorschot & Meuleman, 2012b; van Oorschot, Reeskens, & Meuleman, 2012). In this article, we examine the explanatory role of such beliefs in orienting attitudes toward welfare policies, and propose that dependency culture beliefs are conceptually and empirically different from deservingness beliefs. Although both are detrimental to welfare support, perceived deservingness refers to individual failings such as lacking work ethic, whereas dependency culture refers to beliefs about the relationship between the beneficiary and welfare institutions he or she is allegedly dependent on. Culture of dependency is thus viewed as an inevitable psychological byproduct of overly generous welfare institutions rather than as an individual attribute as such. Considering the prevalence of political and media debates around culture of dependency (see e.g., Humphrys, 2013), we believe it is timely to offer an analysis of the phenomenon.

Based on research showing that attitudes toward different target groups are at least partially determined by different factors (Blekesaune & Quadagno, 2003; van Oorschot & Meuleman, 2012a), our first research question asks whether dependency culture beliefs are stronger predictors of attitudes toward the (undeserving) unemployed than toward the (deserving) old and sick. In Europe, survey research on the deservingness of different beneficiary groups has shown that elderly as well as sick and disabled people are seen as more deserving than unemployed people and immigrants, reflecting the idea that not all groups are seen as equally responsible for their fate (van Oorschot, 2006). Similarly, dependency culture beliefs are expected to have a stronger negative effect on support for the unemployed than on support for the old and sick, as ageing and illness are less likely viewed as consequences of institutional action than being unemployed. In addition, the difference in support for the groups can be

predicted from a self-interest perspective: More people are likely to benefit from and therefore support services for the old and the sick than services to the unemployed (Roller, 1999). Thinking of oneself as a potential beneficiary (as in the case of the old and the sick) may weaken the perceived likelihood of falling into a culture of dependency.

A social representations approach highlights the role of shared knowledge as a determinant of political attitudes, in particular through the impact of “meta-representations”, that is, beliefs about the beliefs of other people (Elcheroth et al., 2011). Acknowledging that citizens form political opinions with reference to beliefs held by others (Inglehart, 1977; van Oorschot et al., 2012), recent research has begun integrating measures of the national culture—sets of shared values and moral beliefs—as predictors of individual opinions (Blekesaune & Quadagno, 2003; Kunovich & Slomczynski, 2007; Sarrasin et al., 2012; van Oorschot et al., 2012). Research on the spiral of silence (Noelle-Neumann, 1974, 1984) and on pluralistic ignorance (Prentice & Miller, 1996) has also demonstrated how shared cultural norms and values—social representations—orient policy attitudes.

Our second research question thus examines the effect of shared values and norms that are prevalent in the larger cultural context on the link between perceived dependency culture and welfare attitudes. Research has shown that perceived violations of important values by others (or by institutions) are likely to elicit strong attitudinal reactions (Henry & Reyna, 2007; Wetherell, Reyna, & Sadler, 2013). Hence, the more dominant a value in a society, the more likely individuals will react strongly to perceived violations of that value. In other words, dominant values, such as egalitarianism or work ethic, will be used to evaluate the behaviors of individuals and groups simply because they are more available in people’s minds (Breznau, 2010; Feldman, 2003; Staerklé, Likki, & Scheidegger, 2012). Meritocracy is the notion that individuals ought to be allocated social goods in proportion to their individual abilities and efforts (Kluegel & Smith, 1986; McNamee & Miller, 2004). With respect to welfare, meritocratic values of individual responsibility and hard work have been shown to be key predictors of policy attitudes, such as rejection of public health care in the U.S. (Wetherell et al., 2013). Hence, we expect the degree of societal meritocracy to determine at least to some extent the importance of a perceived dependency culture in predicting welfare attitudes: In contexts where values of meritocracy are dominant, dependency culture beliefs should be stronger predictors of welfare support than in contexts where such values are less central. To our knowledge, no study has yet examined whether representations shared at the national level moderate the relationship between beliefs about the detrimental effects of welfare institutions and attitudes toward welfare policies.

In sum, based on the literature reviewed above, the first hypothesis states that dependency culture beliefs have a stronger effect on support for the unemployed than on support for the sick and the old. We do, however, expect a spillover effect even on the sick and the old, where a perceived culture of dependency is generalized to the sick and the old. The second hypothesis states that the role of dependency culture beliefs in predicting welfare attitudes varies across countries as a function of the societal degree of meritocracy, such that the relationship is stronger in countries with higher levels of meritocracy.

Data and Measures

To answer these questions, we used data from the 2008 wave of the European Social Survey (ESS), a comparative biennial survey project. We used data from all 29 countries available,¹ with 50,820 respondents.² For each country, ESS offers a probability-based sample of at least 1500 respondents of ≥ 16 years. For the most part, data were collected between fall 2008 and 2009. The response rates varied between 45.7% (Croatia) and 78.7% (Cyprus).³ The countries included in the analyses as well as descriptive statistics for the main variables can be found in the Appendix.

The data consists of individuals (level 1) nested within countries (level 2) so we chose to use multilevel modeling instead of standard linear regression, using maximum likelihood estimation (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). The analyses were conducted using nonweighted data, but we checked that using design weights provided by ESS (that correct for the possible over- and underrepresentation of certain population groups) yielded almost identical results to those using nonweighted data.

Dependency Culture Beliefs

Three items were used to create a measure of perceived dependency culture: “To what extent do you agree or disagree that social benefits and services (1) make people lazy? (2) make people less willing to care for one another? (3) make people less willing to look after themselves and their family?” Responses ranged from 1 = *disagree strongly* to 5 = *agree strongly*. The reliability of the resulting scale was adequate, with Cronbach’s alphas ranging from .74 to .92. Overall $\alpha = .85$.⁴

Welfare Support

Following Blekesaune and Quadagno (2003), we used two outcome measures for welfare support. The first one measured *support for the unemployed* with a composite score of the items: “How much responsibility you think governments should have to (1) ensure a job for everyone who wants one? (2) ensure a reasonable standard of living for the unemployed?” Overall correlation between the two items was .50 ($p < .001$). The second one measured *support for the sick and the old*⁵ with a composite

¹With the exception of Austria where fieldwork was conducted 2 years later than in other countries.

²All cases with missing values on the predictor variables were deleted to compare the different multilevel models, leaving 50,820 cases out of 56,752.

³Full information on precise fieldwork periods and response rates can be found on the ESS Web site (<http://ess.nsd.uib.no/ess/round4/deviations.html>).

⁴We ran additional analyses to establish the content validity of the measures. A principal component analysis of the three dependency culture belief items together with two items measuring perceived deservingness of beneficiaries revealed a two-dimensional structure in 11 countries and a one-dimensional structure in 18 countries. When analyzing the total sample of 29 countries, a two-dimensional solution explained 73.4% of the variance compared with 54.2% in the one-dimensional solution.

⁵Grouping together the old and the sick is justified by research showing that both groups are considered as highly deserving (van Oorschot, 2006). We also checked that there were no differences in the interpretation of the results when analyzing support for the old and support for the sick as two separate outcome variables. The only effect that changed was the effect of education on support for the sick, which was non-significant (as compared with a negative effect on support for the old). Full results for these analyses can be obtained from the authors.

score of the items: (1) “How much responsibility you think governments should have to ensure adequate health care for the sick? (2) ensure a reasonable standard of living for the old?” Overall correlation between the two items was .72 ($p < .001$). Participants rated all items from 0 = *Not governments’ responsibility at all* to 10 = *Entirely governments’ responsibility*.⁶

Societal Level of Meritocracy

Meritocracy at the country level was measured by aggregating responses to the item “Large differences in people’s incomes are acceptable to properly reward differences in talents and efforts” within each country. This aggregated measure reflects the definition of meritocracy as the shared belief that individuals should receive social goods in proportion to their individual abilities and efforts. It thereby assumes a normative view of meritocracy that assesses the extent to which meritocratic principles should organize the society (as opposed to factual or objective levels of meritocracy, cf. Kunovich & Slomczynski, 2007).

To demonstrate that dependency culture beliefs explain welfare support over and above the effects of social position, we controlled for the effects of three measures of social position, considered as proxies for self-interest (Jaeger, 2006b). *Education* was measured on a 7-point scale ranging from 0 = *not completed primary education* to 6 = *second stage of tertiary*. *Subjective material insecurity* was measured with a three-item scale of perceived likelihood of life course events with negative material consequences occurring in the next 12 months: (1) having less time for paid work than desired because of the care given to family members, (2) not having enough money for household necessities, and (3) not receiving health care in case of illness. Responses ranged from 1 = *not at all likely* to 4 = *very likely* ($\alpha = .48-.84$). Finally, we also included a measure of whether the respondents had ever been *unemployed* for a period of more than 3 months (26.2% answered yes). These factors related to social position were included in the models because previous research has shown that they are potent predictors of welfare attitudes (Gelissen, 2000; Staerkle et al., 2012; Svallfors, 1997).

We also included age, gender, and egalitarianism (measured with the item “For a society to be fair, differences in people’s standard of living should be small”) as individual-level control variables, again to demonstrate the role played by the specific construct of dependency culture beliefs.⁷

⁶For the four welfare support items, a principal component analysis across the 29 countries with the default option (eigenvalues > 1) yielded a single factor explaining 62.8% of the variance. This reflects common covariance that is due to the semantic proximity of the items (all were formulated as “government responsibility” items). However, when constraining the number of factors to two, the differentiation of deserving (sick and old) and undeserving (unemployed) beneficiaries explained as much as 80.6% of the variance. Considering the theoretical reasons outlined above, we decided to keep these two dimensions apart.

⁷Ideological positioning on the left–right scale was not included in the models owing to a high level of missing values in many countries (e.g., 36.7% missing in Russia, 32.5% in Portugal, and 27.8% in Bulgaria). Income was also not controlled for due to high numbers of missing values (e.g., 58.6% missing in Portugal, 39.2% in Greece, and 26.3% in Israel). Furthermore, information for the income variable was completely missing for Bulgaria, Cyprus, and Slovakia. Running the models with income as a control did not, however, change the main results.

All individual-level predictors were group mean centered, meaning that the effects can be interpreted as pure within-country effects. On the country level, we controlled for GDP per capita (centered) and the country means of dependency culture beliefs (also centered). The latter were included to examine context effects, that is, whether the general level of perceived dependency culture in a country affects individuals' welfare support regardless of their own endorsement of dependency culture beliefs. Context effects can be obtained by subtracting the individual-level effect of dependency culture beliefs (within-effect) from the effect of country means (between-effect).

Results

A total of 14% of the variation in support for the unemployed and 8% of the variation in support for the sick and the old was related to the country level (intra-class correlations = .138 and .081, respectively), indicating that a multilevel approach was warranted. In addition, the variance components on both individual and country levels were larger for attitudes toward the unemployed, indicating that public opinion in Europe is more divided on the role of government regarding jobs and unemployment than old age and health care.

We first analyzed the relationship between dependency culture beliefs and welfare support. Model 1b in Table 1 shows that perceived dependency culture decreases both support for the unemployed and support for the sick and the old, even when controlling for a number of sociodemographic and ideological variables.⁸ According to hypothesis 1, dependency culture beliefs were expected to be stronger predictors of welfare support for the unemployed than of welfare support for the sick and the old. To test this, we ran, for each outcome variable separately, first a multilevel regression model with all the individual-level predictors except for dependency culture beliefs (see model 1a in Table 2), and, second, a model including this measure (model 1b in Table 2). We then compared the model fit (-2 Loglikelihood) of the two models. For support for the unemployed as the outcome variable, the change in deviance scores was 1,492.42. This difference score follows the chi-square distribution and is highly significant with one degree of freedom ($p < .001$). With support for the sick and the old as the outcome variable, the change in deviance scores was 607.56, which is also highly significant with one degree of freedom ($p < .001$). Comparing the difference scores across the models (1,492.42 and 607.56) shows that the improvement in model fit after introducing dependency culture beliefs is, although significant in both cases, clearly higher for support for the unemployed compared with support for the sick and the old. The results thus suggest that while perceived dependency

⁸Egalitarianism was included as a control variable to get at the specific effect of dependency culture beliefs, rather than some general value constellation. However, we also ran the models without controlling for egalitarianism. In these analyses, most of the individual-level effects, including the effect of dependency culture beliefs, became slightly larger. Overall, the interpretation of the results remains identical when egalitarianism is removed from the models.

Table 1
Hierarchical Generalized Linear Models Predicting Welfare Attitudes in 29 European Countries

| Variables | Support for the unemployed | | | | Support for the sick and the old | | | |
|--|----------------------------|-----|----------|-----|----------------------------------|-----|----------|-----|
| | Model 1 b | | Model 4 | | Model 1b | | Model 4 | |
| | B | SE | B | SE | B | SE | B | SE |
| Intercept | 6.96 | .15 | 6.96 | .10 | 8.59 | .08 | 8.59 | .06 |
| Individual characteristics | | | | | | | | |
| Age | .00*** | .00 | .00*** | .00 | .00*** | .00 | .00*** | .00 |
| Female | .15*** | .02 | .15*** | .02 | .07*** | .01 | .07*** | .01 |
| Education | -.14*** | .01 | -.14*** | .01 | -.02** | .01 | -.02** | .01 |
| Subjective insecurity | .22*** | .01 | .22*** | .01 | .04*** | .01 | .05*** | .01 |
| Past unemployment | .16*** | .02 | .15*** | .02 | .12*** | .02 | .12*** | .02 |
| Egalitarianism | .46*** | .01 | .46*** | .01 | .27*** | .01 | .26*** | .01 |
| Dependency belief | -.36*** | .01 | -.36*** | .02 | -.18*** | .01 | -.18*** | .02 |
| Country characteristics | | | | | | | | |
| GDP | - | - | -.02* | .01 | - | - | -.01 | .01 |
| Mean dependency belief | - | - | -1.65*** | .31 | - | - | -1.09*** | .19 |
| Societal meritocracy | - | - | -.15 | .31 | - | - | -.32 | .21 |
| Interaction term | | | | | | | | |
| Meritocracy*Dependency belief | - | - | -.21** | .07 | - | - | -.15* | .06 |
| Variance components | | | | | | | | |
| Residual variance | 3.55*** | .02 | 3.53*** | .02 | 2.25*** | .01 | 2.24*** | .01 |
| Random intercept variance | .64*** | .17 | .27*** | .08 | .21*** | .05 | .12*** | .03 |
| Random slope variance | - | - | .01** | .00 | - | - | .01** | .00 |
| Covariance between random intercept and random slope | - | - | .03* | .01 | - | - | .02** | .01 |

Note. N = 50,820 (level 1) and 29 (level 2).
*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.

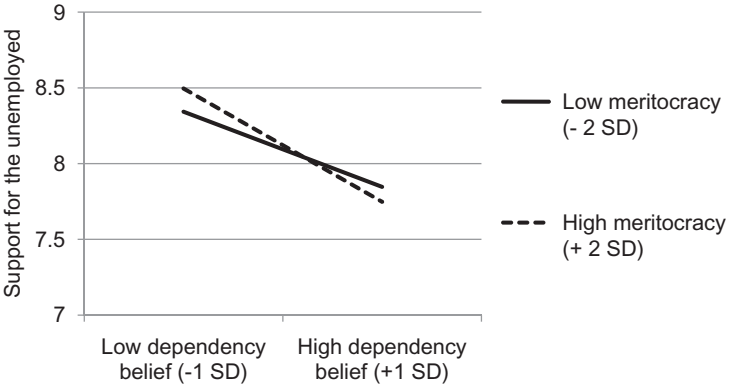
Table 2
Hierarchical Generalized Linear Models of Welfare Attitudes in 29 European Countries

| Models | Support for the unemployed | | | Support for the sick and the old | | |
|---|----------------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| | -2* | Δ -2* | Δ df# | -2* | Δ -2* | Δ df |
| | Loglikelihood | Loglikelihood | | Loglikelihood | Loglikelihood | |
| 0 Intercept only | 213,909.18 | | | 187,787.07 | | |
| 1a Individual characteristics (without dependency culture beliefs) | 209,947.27 | 3,961.91*** | 6 | 186,020.66 | 1,766.41*** | 6 |
| 1b All individual characteristics | 208,454.85 | 1,492.42*** | 1 | 185,413.10 | 607.56*** | 1 |
| 2 1b + random slope for dependency beliefs | 208,308.19 | 146.66*** | 2 | 185,265.00 | 148.1*** | 2 |
| 3 2 + country characteristics | 208,275.65 | 32.54*** | 3 | 185,237.43 | 27.57*** | 3 |
| 4 3 + Interaction meritocracy *Dependency beliefs | 208,268.18 | 7.47** | 1 | 185,231.43 | 6.00* | 1 |

Note. $N = 50,820$ (level 1) and 29 (level 2).
 # Difference to the model on the line right above
 * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Figure 1

Societal level of meritocracy moderates the effect of dependency stereotypes on support for the unemployed



culture is a stronger predictor of welfare support in the domain of jobs and unemployment, it is also a potent predictor in other policy domains such as health care and old age.⁹

According to hypothesis 2, perceived dependency culture should be more strongly related to lower welfare support in countries with higher levels of societal meritocracy. First, we tested a model that allowed the slope of dependency culture beliefs to vary across countries without including any country-level variables (model 2). Comparing deviance scores against model 1b (without the random slope) showed that introducing the random slope significantly improved the model fit for both dependent variables with two degrees of freedom, meaning that the effect of dependency culture beliefs on welfare attitudes varies across countries.

In support of our hypothesis that this variation should be related to the degree of societal meritocracy, for both dependent variables a model including a cross-level interaction between individual-level dependency culture beliefs and country-level meritocracy (model 4) showed a significantly better model fit than model 3 (without the cross-level interaction) with one degree of freedom. We see from Figure 1 illustrating this effect (with support for the unemployed as the outcome variable) that the slope of dependency culture beliefs is steeper in more meritocratic climates (two standard deviations above the mean meritocracy level) than in less meritocratic climates (two

⁹To show that culture of dependency differs from the concept of perceived deservingness, we ran the models controlling for a 2-item measure of deservingness perceptions, consisting of the sum of the items: “Most unemployed people do not really try to find a job” and “Employees often pretend they are sick to stay at home.” Deservingness perceptions were related to lower welfare support and their introduction resulted in a small decrease in the effect of the culture of dependency measure. The fact that its effect remained strongly significant clearly indicates the independent contributions of each dimension for explaining welfare support. Furthermore, all other effects remained virtually unchanged by the introduction of the deservingness measure. Full results for these analyses can be obtained from the authors.

standard deviations below the mean meritocracy level). Country-level meritocracy explained 25.9% of the random slope variance of dependency culture beliefs for support for the unemployed and 21.6% for support for the sick and the old.

We also find a context effect of dependency culture beliefs in model 4. While the individual-level effect of group-mean centered dependency culture beliefs reflects the effect within countries (within-effect, $-.36$ ($p < .001$) for support for the unemployed), the country-level effect of country means of dependency culture beliefs (between-effect, -1.65 ($p < .001$) for support for the unemployed) is a combination of composition effect and context effect. The context effect can be calculated by subtracting the within-effect from the between-effect [$-1.65 - (-.36) = -1.29$, $z = 4.15$, $p < .001$]. This effect suggests that even individuals with lower levels of personal dependency culture beliefs were less supportive of welfare if surrounded by others with high levels of such beliefs.

Conclusion

This study first showed that dependency culture beliefs were associated with more negative attitudes toward welfare policies in favor of groups traditionally considered undeserving (the unemployed), but also toward policies in favor of deserving groups (the sick and the old). Second, in line with a social representations approach, we demonstrated that this influence varied as a function of the prevalence of meritocratic values in national contexts, thereby pointing to the importance of studying the role of shared social representations in public opinion formation.

Using data from 29 European countries, we found that dependency culture beliefs were potent predictors of welfare support above and beyond the effects of social position and ideological variables. Although stronger in predicting support for the unemployed, the relationship was also present for support for the sick and the old. This finding suggests a spillover effect whereby a welfare dependency discourse that mainly targets populations that can be blamed for their neediness is generalized to undermine solidarity with groups such as the sick and the old that are generally perceived as more deserving (van Oorschot, 2006).

We suggest that dependency culture beliefs are best understood as the representational outcome of perceived violations of central societal values (Staerklé, 2009). As abstract and general principles, values are exogenous to political attitudes and are often used as a yardstick to evaluate the morality or appropriateness of behaviors or outcomes (Feldman, 2003; Rokeach, 1973). Our findings are in line with research showing that the more a group is seen as transgressing central values of self-reliance and hard work, the more likely it is considered as undeserving of institutional support (Henry & Reyna, 2007). Our findings further indicate that the more an institutional action (in this case, welfare benefits and services) is perceived as violating central values, the more likely it is rejected. The prevalence of dependency culture themes in political and media discourse suggests that value violations can also be strategically communicated for the purpose of moral inclusion and exclusion, that is, to include some (such as the hard-working citizens) and to exclude others (such as the lazy welfare abusers) from the moral community and entitlement to social rights (Gibson, 2009; Opatow, 1990).

With respect to the moderating role of societal meritocracy, we found that the role of dependency culture beliefs in delegitimizing welfare support was stronger in more meritocratic contexts. We also presented evidence for a context effect where even individuals who did not endorse culture of dependency ideas expressed lower support for the welfare state when surrounded by others with high levels of dependency culture beliefs. These findings are consistent with a social representations approach, as they underline the impact of the ideological context on opinion formation, for example, through awareness of dominant values and beliefs in society. A long research tradition in social influence and social representations has established the impact of shared views on the way individuals interpret events and issues and form their opinions (Cialdini & Trost, 1998; Moscovici, 2000; Noelle-Neumann, 1984). Our findings on the moderating role of societal meritocracy suggest that public opinion research may benefit from including normative contexts more systematically into analytical models. In particular, the analysis of prevalent norms and values may help account for the impact of stereotypes and prejudice toward minority and subordinate groups on a variety of key policy issues such as immigration, social welfare, and crime.

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Appendix

Means, Standard Deviations, and Cronbach’s Alphas of Dependency Culture Beliefs, Meritocratic Beliefs, and Welfare Attitudes

| Number of items & scale | Dependency culture beliefs (3 items: 1–5) | | | Belief in meritocracy (single: 1–5) | | | Support for the unemployed (2 items: 0–10) | | | Support for the sick and the old (2 items: 0–10) | | |
|-------------------------|---|-----------|----------|-------------------------------------|-----------|---|--|-----------|----------|--|-----------|----------|
| | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | α | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | – | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>r</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>r</i> |
| Country | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Belgium | 3.07 | 0.86 | .77 | 3.38 | 1.05 | – | 6.15 | 1.72 | .34 | 7.95 | 1.33 | .63 |
| Bulgaria | 2.76 | 1.12 | .92 | 3.35 | 1.15 | – | 7.23 | 2.42 | .52 | 9.09 | 1.50 | .82 |
| Switzerland | 3.00 | 0.86 | .78 | 3.36 | 0.99 | – | 5.55 | 1.92 | .36 | 7.43 | 1.73 | .55 |
| Cyprus | 2.48 | 0.97 | .90 | 3.33 | 1.10 | – | 7.09 | 1.88 | .48 | 8.88 | 1.34 | .78 |
| Czech Republic | 3.04 | 1.00 | .82 | 3.87 | 1.00 | – | 6.21 | 2.31 | .45 | 8.32 | 1.98 | .78 |
| Germany | 3.02 | 0.86 | .80 | 3.44 | 0.98 | – | 6.35 | 2.13 | .42 | 7.99 | 1.66 | .53 |
| Denmark | 2.85 | 0.85 | .79 | 3.67 | 0.96 | – | 6.03 | 1.84 | .42 | 8.58 | 1.26 | .53 |
| Estonia | 2.49 | 0.88 | .86 | 3.63 | 0.96 | – | 6.91 | 2.24 | .55 | 8.66 | 1.49 | .72 |

(continued)

Continued

| Number of items & scale | Dependency culture beliefs (3 items: 1–5) | | | Belief in meritocracy (single: 1–5) | | | Support for the unemployed (2 items: 0–10) | | | Support for the sick and the old (2 items: 0–10) | | |
|-------------------------|---|-----------|----------|-------------------------------------|-----------|---|--|-----------|----------|--|-----------|----------|
| | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | α | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | – | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>r</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>r</i> |
| Spain | 2.80 | 0.90 | .80 | 3.35 | 1.07 | – | 7.66 | 1.69 | .47 | 8.88 | 1.19 | .72 |
| Finland | 2.88 | 0.88 | .82 | 2.68 | 1.12 | – | 7.10 | 1.55 | .45 | 8.59 | 1.13 | .64 |
| France | 3.29 | 1.01 | .82 | 3.21 | 1.26 | – | 5.99 | 1.98 | .40 | 7.98 | 1.52 | .64 |
| The U.K. | 3.39 | 0.83 | .81 | 3.51 | 0.97 | – | 5.97 | 1.97 | .38 | 8.65 | 1.28 | .57 |
| Greece | 2.43 | 0.96 | .90 | 3.89 | 0.93 | – | 8.31 | 1.85 | .61 | 9.06 | 1.42 | .78 |
| Croatia | 2.89 | 0.99 | .90 | 3.27 | 1.01 | – | 7.84 | 2.03 | .62 | 8.81 | 1.64 | .84 |
| Hungary | 3.21 | 1.07 | .88 | 2.53 | 1.18 | – | 7.43 | 2.00 | .40 | 8.90 | 1.55 | .67 |
| Ireland | 3.20 | 0.86 | .80 | 3.44 | 0.99 | – | 6.53 | 1.88 | .43 | 8.52 | 1.48 | .76 |
| Israel | 2.87 | 0.88 | .83 | 3.44 | 1.10 | – | 7.64 | 1.99 | .46 | 9.09 | 1.48 | .83 |
| Latvia | 2.34 | 0.86 | .90 | 3.75 | 0.93 | – | 8.48 | 1.82 | .54 | 9.26 | 1.39 | .83 |
| The Netherlands | 3.03 | 0.78 | .74 | 3.42 | 0.93 | – | 5.82 | 1.60 | .31 | 7.99 | 1.17 | .51 |
| Norway | 2.99 | 0.74 | .74 | 3.36 | 0.96 | – | 6.68 | 1.76 | .40 | 8.81 | 1.20 | .56 |
| Poland | 3.17 | 0.90 | .82 | 3.63 | 0.93 | – | 6.71 | 2.26 | .47 | 8.75 | 1.53 | .73 |
| Portugal | 2.97 | 0.88 | .80 | 3.22 | 1.05 | – | 7.24 | 1.95 | .55 | 8.74 | 1.68 | .84 |
| Romania | 2.98 | 0.96 | .87 | 3.90 | 0.88 | – | 7.54 | 2.31 | .61 | 7.95 | 2.30 | .72 |
| Russian Federation | 2.34 | 0.91 | .89 | 3.07 | 1.05 | – | 7.47 | 2.26 | .43 | 9.18 | 1.55 | .76 |
| Sweden | 2.82 | 0.80 | .78 | 3.24 | 1.01 | – | 6.72 | 1.75 | .48 | 8.59 | 1.29 | .65 |
| Slovenia | 3.08 | 0.84 | .82 | 2.94 | 1.03 | – | 6.85 | 1.98 | .43 | 8.49 | 1.54 | .71 |
| Slovakia | 3.07 | 0.93 | .84 | 3.02 | 1.07 | – | 6.16 | 2.14 | .47 | 8.42 | 1.79 | .83 |
| Turkey | 3.09 | 1.13 | .87 | 3.57 | 1.16 | – | 7.65 | 2.24 | .60 | 8.23 | 2.14 | .84 |
| Ukraine | 2.27 | 1.05 | .90 | 3.70 | 1.16 | – | 8.52 | 1.94 | .45 | 9.35 | 1.53 | .78 |
| All 29 countries | 2.89 | 0.97 | .85 | 3.39 | 1.09 | – | 6.95 | 2.15 | .50 | 8.58 | 1.61 | .72 |

M = Mean; SD = standard deviation.

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