Globalization, Social Structure, and the Willingness to Help Others: a Multilevel Analysis Across 26 Countries

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This article investigates whether the process of globalization through which countries become increasingly interconnected is related to people's intention to help others in society. The willingness to help others may be lower in open countries because of more porous national boundaries and lower social cohesion. On the other hand, the openness of countries can also strengthen local structures and increase the awareness of mutual interdependence. Whether globalization is negatively or positively related to the willingness to help others is assumed to dependent on the social structure of countries. In this article, hypotheses are tested using individual level data from the *European Values Study* and country level data from the *KOF Index of Globalization*, the *Eurobarometer*, and the *International Monetary Fund*. The combined data set includes 31,554 individuals living in 26 European countries. The multilevel analyses show that economic and social openness are not related to the intention to help the sick and disabled and that the willingness to help immigrants is positively related to economic and social openness. The positive relationship between openness at the national level and the individual citizen's willingness to help immigrants is explained by the social structure of a country; if people receive more positive information about the behaviour of others, they are more willing to help immigrants.

Introduction

Despite the fact that there is a great deal of debate concerning its precise historical roots and its possible consequences, most researchers agree that globalization is indeed taking place (Guillén, 2001). The notion of globalization refers to a process leading to greater inter-dependence and mutual awareness amongst economic, social, and political units (Waters, 1995; Held *et al.*, 1999). The driving forces behind this process are revolutions in transport and communication technologies and the internationalization of capital that bridge temporal, spatial, and cultural distances (Guillén,

2001). As a result, it is believed that the world is becoming a global society consisting of networks in which flows of commodities, services, capital, technology, information, ideas, forms of culture, and people cross national boundaries (Castells, 1996; Held *et al.*, 1999).

These worldwide developments can affect the societies that are part of it. One of the concerns stressed in the literature is that globalization leads to an erosion of local cultures and traditions (Inda and Rosaldo, 2002; Kellner, 2002). Such cultural changes are attributed to more porous national boundaries that become less clear and may no longer function as a fence between the inside and the outside world and

can result in the disappearance of identification with one's own country (Marcussen, *et al.*, 1999; Jones and Smith, 2001). If globalization means that national boundaries become less important, it is possible that it also decreases people's willingness to help each other because of lowered social cohesion and interdependence among them. Nevertheless, countering this expectation it can be argued that globalization makes local social structures more important, for instance because citizens are more aware of their mutual dependence. If globalization strengthens local structures, it can increase people's intention to help each other. From the existing literature it is not clear if the level of helping behaviour is negatively or positively related to globalization. This article is geared towards researching this question.

Globalization is a very broad term that refers to the different processes by which the world becomes increasingly interconnected. Empirical studies examining the effects of globalization do not use an all-inclusive definition of globalization but instead tend to focus on a particular dimension of it such as economic openness (Rodrik, 1998), international relations (Clark, 1999), migration (Zimmermann, 1995), and Internet use (Wellman *et al.*, 1996). These different forms of globalization can be grouped in three main dimensions in which countries can vary, namely economic, social, and political openness (Dreher, 2006). The first two of these dimensions—economic and social openness—are most likely to be related to the social structure of countries in which helping behaviour takes place and are investigated in this study.

This article is structured as follows. The next section discusses the willingness to help others and how it is linked to social structure. The two dimensions of globalization are introduced in section Economic and Social Openness. Hypotheses about the relationship between globalization, social structure, and the willingness to help others are formulated in the Hypotheses Section and empirically tested in the next section. The article closes with a discussion of the results and their consequences for future research.

Social Structure and the Willingness to Help Others

Some groups of people are better off than others, because resources and chances are unequally distributed amongst them, for instance. Within modern societies the position that people have on the labour market influences their financial and other resources to a large extent. People who are far removed from the labour market can be dependent on others within society because they have difficulty finding a job and making a living on their own. This article focuses on the willingness to help two groups of people, namely sick and disabled people and immigrants. Sick and disabled people have difficulty finding a job that fits their abilities and for immigrants it may be difficult to find a job because their credentials do not fit the labour market (Thorslund, 2000; Aguilera and Massey, 2003). These groups are distinguished because it makes it possible to investigate whether globalization is related to the willingness to help others in general or that it is related to the intention to help specific groups in society.

There are different ways through which people can help those who need assistance. Volunteering is part of a general cluster of forms of helping behaviour through formalized relationships (Wilson, 2000) and support for the welfare state concerns the willingness to provide financial resources to certain groups in society, and therefore only refers to formal arrangements provided by the state (Svallfors, 1997). Instead of focusing on such specific forms, this article studies a general form of helping behaviour—the willingness to help certain groups—without specifying the means through which it is provided. Nevertheless, the presence of formals means such as welfare state provisions offered through the government may influence the willingness to assist others. It is possible that a lot of people are willing to help others but if most of the assistance is already paid for through the tax system and dealt with by the state, these formal kinds of help can crowd out informal kinds of helping behaviour (Van Oorschot and Arts, 2005). This is accounted for in the empirical analyses by adjusting for the influence of formal assistance that is organized through the welfare state.

Helping behaviour involves at least two parties: a person or a group of people providing help and a person or a group of people receiving help. When two persons are involved, there is one provider and one receiver and this kind of help can be either one-sided, if resources are only flowing from the giver to the receiver and not vice versa, or two-sided, when the receiver provides help in return. When more people are involved, the situation is slightly different. Analytically, it is possible to study helping behaviour between two groups in the same manner as in a situation concerning two individual people, but it is also necessary to take into account that these groups of givers and receivers consist of individual actors who

form a group that can produce a collective good that benefits the receivers. As with all collective goods it holds that its production may be problematic because for each individual it is costly to provide help while there is no direct compensation or benefit for that person (Hechter, 1987). Given this characteristic of a collective good, it is not likely that individuals will engage in such behaviours. However, such an approach to people's behaviour assumes that people operate in isolation and do not have social relations with others (Granovetter, 1985). In real life, people interact with each other and have social relations that are embedded in time and are part of a larger system of social networks (Granovetter, 1985; Buskens and Raub, 2002). These forms of embeddedness affect the level of trust amongst people because they make learning and control possible. Learning refers to the information people have about the intentions and behaviour of others; when this information is positive, it is likely to increase the intention of people to help others. The availability of control mechanisms increases helping behaviour because they provide a means to punish uncooperative acts and enforce cooperative behaviours (Buskens, 2002).

Learning and control apply to the relationship between the providers and the receivers as well as to relationships amongst the group of providers. Helping out the sick and disabled people and immigrants will not be motivated by the expectation of a future return alone (if at all), instead the general norm can be that some groups are in a needy situation for reasons outside their own influence, as is the case with the group of sick and disabled people, and with regard to immigrants people can be of the opinion that this group needs some assistance to get adjusted to the new situation that they live in. Many people are willing to share resources with these different groups of people and probably the most important thing they expect from them is that they will not misuse their generosity by acting opportunistically (Bowles and Gintis, 2000). Through a process of learning, information is acquired about such opportunistic behaviours. When control is possible, negative sanctions can be provided to these opportunistic individuals, for instance by withholding help in the future.

Learning and control can also increase the contributions that people make to the collective good. People are likely to be more willing to help others if they know that others will do the same. Put simply, if only one person is willing to help out others in society it will not make much of a difference, but when there are more people willing to do that they will be able to

create a collective good. Therefore, positive information about what others will do enhances a person's willingness to help others and knowing that others will not contribute is likely to decrease it (Murnighan, 1994). Control is also possible amongst the givers. People who are very generous can be rewarded for that through social approval. They can improve their reputation and create goodwill amongst other people. Those who are not willing to help others run the risk of facing negative sanctions, getting a bad reputation and are likely to receive less help from others.

Several features of the social structure of a country facilitate or hinder learning and control among citizens that may influence their willingness to help others. Learning refers to the information people receive about the behaviour and intentions of others through their social contacts. In this article, positive information about fellow citizens is investigated by the extent to which people can rely on other citizens in their country and the overall level of trust in other citizens. Such positive information about others is likely to increase people's willingness to help others because they have less reason to believe that their fellow citizens will take advantage of them. Control is also related to the social structure of countries. If mutual control is effective it induces norms regarding helping behaviour that are enforced through stable and dense social structures (Coleman, 1990). The stronger these norms are and the more people follow them, the more costly it becomes for an individual to deviate from them. If globalization is related to the extent to which people are able to learn from each other and control each other, it will be reflected in the willingness to help others.

Economic and Social Openness

There are a great number of definitions and theories of globalization (Guillén, 2001). In this article, globalization is defined as the increasing worldwide cross-border economic, social, and political linkages. The extent to which a country takes part in such linkages refers to its openness. This article focuses on two dimensions of globalization: the economic and social openness of countries.

Economic openness refers to a country's integration into the world market through international trade and capital flows. The most often used indicators of economic integration are trade openness—international trade measured as imports and exports relative to the gross domestic product (GDP) of countries—and the

multinationalization of production through Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) (Rodrik, 1998). Integration into the world market affects countries in multiple ways. First and foremost, countries benefit from the gains of international trade (Samuelson, 1939), which is an important incentive to develop trade relations in the first place. Integration into the world market influences national policies, especially with respect to welfare state provisions (Brady *et al.*, 2005). Despite a large body of research, researchers do not agree on how economic openness affects welfare spending (Koster, 2007). While one body of research emphasizes that increasing capital mobility and competition severely limit the autonomy of countries with respect to welfare state spending (Bowles and Wagman, 1997), a different approach argues that there is a positive relationship between economic globalization and welfare spending based on the reasoning that financially open countries require large welfare state investments to shield off their citizens from external shocks caused by insecurities on international markets (Katzenstein, 1985; Rodrik, 1998). Which statement of the two is the most valid is subject to an ongoing debate that is far from settled, but it seems likely that the social stability of countries is affected in at least three different ways (Rodrik, 1997): (i) economic openness changes the employment relationship and makes large segments of the working population more easily substitutable across national boundaries creating a division between people who have skills and mobility that flourish in global markets and those who do not have these skills or lack mobility; (ii) economic openness can undermine domestic norms and social institutions; and (iii) economic openness can undermine social cohesion because governments are no longer able to provide social security. In addition to that, it is argued that several groups of people face increased insecurity because of economic openness (Blossfeld *et al.*, 2006).

Social openness refers to the cross-border interactions between people through international telephone traffic, the Internet, international travel and tourism, and migration. International telephone traffic enables personal and business communication without travelling to different parts of the world and has provided the possibility of creating linkages between global organizations and the maintenance of ties between people (Fischer, 1992). The number of Internet users increased between 2000 and 2007 from 246 million to more than 1 billion (Castells, 2000; Internet World Stats, 2007). Even more than telephone traffic, the Internet provides possibilities for people to be in contact with each other and create online ties and even virtual communities. These ties can be work-related or can be created when people are socializing informally through the Internet (Kollock and Smith, 1999). Instead of providing a platform for simple instrumental exchanges, emotional and complex interactions are possible. The rapid expansion of the Internet raises questions about its implications for social organization (Wellman and Hampton, 1999). It is likely that its future development does affect people's interactions in multiple ways. On one hand, it is easier to get in contact with people in other parts of the world but on the other hand, there is evidence that computer networks can enhance relations in the home, workplace, and neighbourhood and thus encourage the formation and strengthening of local relationships (Franzen, 2000; Hampton and Wellman, 2000). International tourism developed because of rising living standards, longer paid vacations and the improvement of means of transportation. Between 1950 and 1998, receipts from international tourism rose from US$2.1 billion to US$445 billion and the number of international tourist arrivals rose from 25.3 million to 625 million (Milne and Ateljevic, 2001). Tourism has several economic and social effects for the host countries (Cohen, 1984); it can generate foreign exchange (Gray, 1982), it can provide income and employment for the host country (De Kadt, 1979), and it can change interpersonal relationships between people in the host country (Stott, 1978). In addition to that, the increasing number of travellers results in cultural globalization, which may either lead to cultural homogenization, polarization or hybridization (Holton, 2000), each of which may have an effect on the willingness to help others. Another dimension of social openness is migration, which involves cross-border interaction because people move from one country to another. It is estimated that there are currently 192 million people living outside their place of birth, a number that is growing annually by 2.9 per cent (International Organization for Migration, 2005).

Hypotheses

Economic and social openness may affect the internal social structure of countries that offer the possibilities for learning and control, which in turn are—negatively or positively—related to the willingness to help others. In the literature, there are two contrasting views on how globalization is related to social structure. The major argument for thinking that globalization undermines mutual help in society concerns the more porous boundaries of countries that function less as a clear dividing line between insiders and outsiders.

Contrary to that, it has been argued that the importance of local structures has increased because of globalization and people may be more willing to help each other because of increased mutual inter-dependence. The argument that is advanced and tested in this article is that the level of economic and social openness is related to the willingness to help others depending on the consequences it has for the social structure that people live in—and the possibilities these structures offer for learning and control—and that this relationship may be negative and positive. Both possibilities are considered and two contrasting hypotheses are formulated.

Openness is Negatively Related to the Willing to Help Others

The economic openness of countries may be negatively related to the willingness to help others. Countries with a high degree of economic openness are involved in international economic relations and are affected more by what happens on the world market than countries that have a relatively closed economy. When the world market gets into a depression the economic-ally closed countries are affected far less than the economically open ones. In addition to that, there are more exit options for companies and citizens in economically open countries. As the costs of moving from one country to another are decreasing it is believed that an increasing number of companies choose to move their production to low-wage countries and that individuals similarly move to places where tax levels are lower. A consequence of these characteristics of economic openness is that countries that citizens face a higher level of *insecurity* and that *social norms are undermined* in countries with a higher degree of economic openness (Rodrik, 1997; Blossfeld *et al.*, 2006), eroding the social structure that is a necessary condition for helping behaviour.

The expectation that there will be a negative relation between the social openness of a country and the willingness to help others is based on the assumption that the level of *heterogeneity* within a country is higher in socially open countries, which results from the inflow of people from other countries. Heterogeneity may, in turn, lower the level of social cohesion within societies (McPherson *et al.*, 2001). When the internal structure is more heterogeneous, the willingness to help others can decrease because of less interdepen-dence and identification among citizens. Due to less social cohesion it can be more difficult to produce and sustain a collective good like the assistance of vulnerable groups. These theoretical arguments lead to the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a: Economic openness at the national level is negatively related to the individual citizen's orientation toward helping others because it increases the level of insecurity and undermines societal norms.

Hypothesis 1b: Social openness at the national level is negatively related to the individual citizen's orientation toward helping others because it increases the hetero-geneity of the social structure.

Openness is Positively Related to the Willing to Help Others

Contrastingly, it may be argued that the economic openness of countries is positively related to the willingness to help others in society. If economic openness means that people are more economically insecure, it implies that the need for protection and mutual help is greater. People may respond to this heightened *demand for assistance* by helping groups that are in need. To make sure that everyone contributes people may be more involved in learning and mutual control, thus the levels of support within society may be higher and local structures may be more important (Inda and Rosaldo, 2002). When such mechanisms apply, the willingness to help others is expected to be higher in economically open societies compared to relatively closed countries.

Social openness may also mean that people become more aware of their country's boundaries; when they are living in a socially open country they can be more aware of the fact that their country is part of a worldwide development than when they are living in a relatively closed country and take their country's boundary for granted. This means that in these socially open countries people are more aware that they share a common fate with fellow citizens. Such a view emphasizes that social openness increases the notion that there is such thing as a community to which people belong and that are more *aware of their mutual dependence*. Instead of blurring the national bound-aries, this may in fact enhance the notion of who is an insider and who is an outsider. These considerations lead to the hypotheses that:

Hypothesis 2a: Economic openness at the national level is positively related to the individual citizen's orientation toward helping others because it increases the demand for helping behaviour.

Hypothesis 2b: Social openness at the national level is positively related to the individual citizen's orientation toward helping others because it increases the awareness of mutual interdependence.

This study investigates how developments at the macro level influence behaviours at the micro level. The hypotheses do not state a relation between the willingness to help people and the economic and social openness of a country *per se*, but it is argued that this relation is conditional on the social structure of a country. According to the first two hypotheses the level of help offered in more open countries is expected to be lower because the social structure that is assumed to offer less possibilities for learning and control. The second two hypotheses lead to the expectation that in more open countries the social structure will adapt to provide help to people that need assistance. For the empirical analysis this means that the relationship between the willingness to help others and the openness of a country should be mediated by the social structure of a country.

Data

Four different datasets are used to test the hypotheses. The *European Values Study* is a large-scale, cross-national, and longitudinal survey research program regarding basic human values (Halman, 2001). It gives insight into the preferences and orientations of the populations of societies covering a wide range of economic, social, political, and cultural variations. In 1999–2000, the third wave of this ongoing project was conducted among 39,797 respondents in 32 countries in Western, Central, and Eastern Europe. The *KOF Index of Globalization* measures economic, social, and political dimensions of globalization (Dreher, 2006). Data are available on a yearly basis for 123 countries concerning the period from 1970 to 2003. Country-level data on social structures are provided by Fidrmuc and Gërxhani (2005). These measures are based on the *Eurobarometer survey 1998, 1999, and 2001* and the *Candidate Countries Eurobarometer survey 2002*. Information on welfare state effort is provided through the *IMF Government Finance Statistics 2001* (International Monetary Fund, 2001). The four data sets are merged into one data set. The country-level datasets did not provide information for all of the countries surveyed in the European Values study (EVS). The final data set includes 31,554 respondents in 26 countries.

Measures

Dependent Variables

The European Values Study provides data on the *willingness to help the sick and disabled* and *the willingness to help immigrants*. The exact wording of these items is: 'Would you be prepared to actually do something to improve the conditions of:' followed by 'the sick and disabled people in your country?', and 'immigrants in your country?'. These variables range from 1 (absolutely no) to 5 (absolutely yes).

Independent Variables

Openness

The KOF Index of Globalization includes data measuring the economic and social openness of countries between 1970 and 2003. Scales are developed for each of the kinds of openness that run from 0 (totally closed) to 10 (totally open). *Economic openness* is measured with data on actual flows, trade (in per cent of GDP), FDI (in per cent of GDP), Portfolio Investment (in per cent of GDP), income payments to foreign nationals (in per cent of GDP), hidden import barriers, mean tariff rate, taxes on international trade (in per cent of current revenues), and capital account restrictions. *Social openness* includes data on outgoing telephone traffic, transfers (in per cent of GDP), international tourism, telephone average costs of call to USA, foreign population (in per cent of total population), telephone mainlines (per 1,000 people), Internet hosts (per capita), Internet users (as a share of population), cable television (per 1,000 people), daily newspapers (per 1,000 people), radios (per 1,000 people), and the number of McDonald's restaurants in a country (per capita).

Each variable is transformed to an index with a 0–10 scale; higher values denote more openness. The weights for the different indexes are calculated using principal components analysis. The year 2000 is used as the base year and for this year the analysis partitions the variance of the variables that are used. The weights are then determined in a way that maximizes the variation of the resulting principal component (Dreher, 2006).

Social structure

Three indicators of social structure are used: reliance on others, national norms of giving, and mean level of trust. Data for the first two indicators are calculated by Fidrmuc and Gërxhani (2005) using data from the

Eurobarometer survey and the data on trust are constructed performing similar calculations on the EVS. The individual level data from the Eurobarometer survey and the EVS are aggregated to the country level to give an indication of its social structure. The variable *reliance on others* is measured with the following item: 'If you needed to borrow money to pay an urgent bill, like electricity, gas, rent, or mortgage, is there anyone you could rely on to help you, from outside your own household?' This variable is coded 0 for people who do not have someone to rely on and 1 for people who do. At the national level, this variable indicates the fraction of citizens that can rely on others for help. The variable *national norms of giving* is measured with the item: 'Now thinking about poor or socially excluded people, in the last twelve months, have you given money or goods to poor or socially excluded people at least once a month, less often or have you not done it?' The item is coded as 0 for those who have not contributed, 1 for those who contributed less than once a month, and 2 for those who have done so more often. This variable indicates how strong the norm for helping others is within a country. The variable *mean level of trust* is not measured in the Eurobarometer survey and is computed in a similar fashion using the EVS. The indicator for trust in other people used in the EVS is: 'Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?' This variable is coded 0 for people who say that you cannot be too careful and 1 for those who state that most people can be trusted. This variable indicates the fraction of citizens that trust other people.

Statistical Control Variables

Welfare spending

There are different ways in which formal help provided through the welfare state can be measured and each of them has advantages and drawbacks (Rudra and Haggard, 2005). In this regard, *welfare spending* is measured with social spending as a share of total government spending based on the data from the IMF.

Individual level control variables

The independent variables are at the individual and the country level. Because the dependent variables concern the opinions of people, objective characteristics of the respondents are included in the analyses. At the individual level, the following independent variables are analysed. *Religious denomination* is measured with the item: 'Do you belong to a religious denomination' (0 = no; 1 = yes). *Gender* is coded 0 = male and 1 = female. *Employed* is measured with the item: 'Are you yourself employed or not?' (0 = no; 1 = yes). *Stable relationship* is measured with the item: 'Whether you are married or not, do you live in a stable relationship with a partner?' (0 = no; 1 = yes). The age of respondents is recoded into three groups: *age-low* (people younger than 35 years); *age-middle* (people between 35 and 65 years); *age-high* (people older than 65 years). *Educational level* is recoded into three groups: *low educational level* (inadequately completed elementary education, completed elementary education, and elementary education and basic vocational qualification); *moderate educational level* (secondary intermediate vocational qualification, secondary intermediate general qualification, and full secondary maturity-level certificate); *and high educational level* (higher education, lower-level tertiary certificate and higher education, and upper-level tertiary certificate). *Town size* is recoded into three groups: *small town* (under 5,000); *medium town* (between 5,000 and 100,000); *and big town* (100,000 and more).

The variables are measured at two different levels, the individual level and the country level. Table 1 provides an overview of the variables, the level at which they are measured, and the source from which the data are taken.

Table 2 provides the mean level of the willingness to help sick and disabled and immigrants, as well as the country level data on reliance on others, national norms of helping, and trust for each of the countries.

Table 2 shows that on average the willingness to help the sick and disabled is higher than the willingness to help immigrants (*m = 3.77* and *m = 2.91*). The willingness to help both groups is high in Sweden and Ireland and low in Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia. The most economically open countries are Luxembourg and Ireland and the socially most open countries are Sweden and Denmark. Romania and Poland are the least economically open countries and Romania and Lithuania are socially the least open countries in the sample. In Ireland and Portugal, many people can rely on others, whereas people in Malta and Latvia report the lowest level of reliance on others. In Ireland and Malta there is a strong national norm of giving and in the Czech Republic and Bulgaria the weakest norm of giving is found. The mean level of trust in others is high in Denmark and Sweden and low in Romania and Portugal.

Table 1 Data sources

Variable	Level	Data source
Dependent variables		
Willingness to help others	Individual	European Values Study
Independent variables		
Openness		
Economic openness	Country	KOF Index of Globalization
Social openness	Country	KOF Index of Globalization
Social structure		
Reliance on others	Country	Eurobarometer (calculated by Fidrmuc and Gërxhani, 2005)
National norms of giving	Country	Eurobarometer (calculated by Fidrmuc and Gërxhani, 2005)
Mean level of trust	Country	European Values Study (own calculations)
Control variables		
Welfare spending	Country	International Monetary Fund
Individual control variables	Individual	European Values Study

Table 2 Country level means

Country	N	willingness to help the sick and disabled[a]	Willingness to help immigrants[a]	Economic openness[b]	Social openness[b]	Reliance on others[c]	National norms of giving[c]	Mean level of trust[a]
France	1,605	3.73	2.75	4.72	2.45	0.79	0.75	0.21
Great Britain	972	3.66	2.66	4.47	2.98	0.79	0.92	0.29
Germany	2,005	3.49	2.94	4.26	2.65	0.65	0.59	0.38
Austria	1,502	3.66	2.84	4.99	3.14	0.76	0.78	0.33
Italy	1,981	3.99	3.39	3.88	1.54	0.82	0.92	0.33
Spain	1,172	3.60	3.29	4.62	1.47	0.79	0.87	0.39
Portugal	995	3.86	3.01	4.71	1.66	0.91	0.66	0.12
Netherlands	1,001	3.70	3.18	5.53	3.08	0.88	1.09	0.60
Belgium	1,902	3.83	2.95	5.40	2.00	0.66	0.65	0.29
Denmark	993	3.81	2.92	4.38	3.39	0.87	0.72	0.67
Sweden	1,009	4.14	3.71	5.02	4.24	0.90	0.74	0.66
Finland	1,020	3.84	2.86	5.25	3.44	0.84	0.84	0.57
Ireland	1,000	4.13	3.27	5.83	2.63	0.91	1.17	0.36
Estonia	960	3.31	2.48	5.05	1.91	0.77	0.41	0.23
Latvia	953	3.54	2.38	4.17	1.41	0.60	0.59	0.17
Lithuania	938	3.06	2.14	4.16	1.06	0.68	0.89	0.26
Poland	1,063	3.87	2.71	3.37	1.33	0.76	0.89	0.18
Czech Rep.	1,877	3.93	2.80	4.42	1.82	0.80	0.45	0.25
Slovakia	1,299	3.89	2.74	4.11	1.13	0.79	0.52	0.16
Hungary	987	3.59	2.25	4.21	1.73	0.73	0.65	0.22
Romania	1,086	3.83	2.63	3.28	0.81	0.68	1.08	0.10
Bulgaria	914	3.79	2.70	3.53	1.11	0.67	0.32	0.27
Greece	1,135	3.88	3.10	4.55	1.42	0.70	0.82	0.24
Malta	1,000	4.05	3.08	3.94	2.94	0.56	1.22	0.21
Luxembourg	1,188	3.72	3.24	8.97	3.00	0.78	0.93	0.25
Slovenia	997	3.84	3.06	4.07	1.67	0.79	0.70	0.22
Total	31,554	3.77	2.91	4.65	2.14	0.76	0.76	0.30

Data sources: [a]European Values Study (EVS).
[b]KOF Index of Globalization.
[c]Eurobarometer (EB).

Table 3 Correlations social structure and change in openness

	Reliance on others[c]	National norms of giving[c]	Mean level of trust[c]
Economic openness 1995–1999[b]	0.22	0.11	0.10
Social openness 1995–1999[b]	0.46[*]	0.35[†]	0.64[**]

26 countries.
Data sources. [b]KOF Index of Globalization.
[c]Eurobarometer (EB).
[†]$P<0.10$; [*]$P<0.05$; [**]$P<0.01$.

Analysis

The empirical analyses concern variables at different levels of analyses because the dataset includes data at the individual level (level 1) and the country level (level 2). Ordinary regression analysis cannot be applied to analyse such data since it requires variables at the same level. Furthermore, the assumption of independent explanatory variables is not met since the openness variables are the same for all people within the same country. Aggregation of individual data to the country level (using the mean of the individual variables) is not preferable, since the variation within countries and information at the individual level is then lost. Multilevel regression analysis (or Hierarchical Linear Modelling) allows investigating effects at different levels of analysis at the same time (Bryk and Raudenbush, 1992; Snijders and Bosker, 1999). The two ways in which multilevel models explain micro-level outcomes are by showing that the parameters at the micro-level are a function of the macro-level and by showing that relationship can be expressed in terms of the macro-level variables (Diprete and Forristal, 1994).

In this study, the dependent variables—the willingness to help sick and disabled and the willingness to help immigrants—are measured at the individual level and the independent variables are measured at the individual and the country level. By using multilevel regression analyses it is possible to distinguish the variations at level 1 and level 2. The multilevel analyses are performed in several steps and for each of these models the log-likelihood statistic is computed. The difference in likelihood between two models (called the Deviance) indicates whether the fit of the model increases when variables are added to it.

Results

First, it is investigated whether changes in economic and social openness are related to the social structure of countries. Table 3 presents the correlations between the change in economic and social openness between 1995 and 1999 and reliance on others, national norms of giving, and mean level of trust in 1999. According to Table 3, change in economic openness is not related to these variables and change in social openness is related to reliance on others ($r=0.46$, $P<0.05$), national norms of giving ($r=0.35$, $P<0.10$), and mean level of trust ($r=0.64$, $P<0.01$). This indicates that increasing social openness has affected the social structure of countries.

Multilevel Analysis

Three multilevel regression analyses are performed with the two dependent variables *willingness to help the sick and disabled* and *willingness to help immigrants*. The effects are investigated in several steps. An empty model (Model 0) is calculated that functions as a baseline for comparing the other models. Model 1 includes the statistical control variables. Economic openness is added in Model 2a and social openness in Model 3a. The theoretical model states that the relationship between openness and the intention to help is mediated by the social structure of the country. To test this, the three variables measuring social structure are added in Models 2b and 3b. If an effect of openness on the willingness to help others is found and this effect disappears after adding the variables measuring social structure, it means that the effect results from differences in the social structure between relatively open and relatively closed countries.

The results of the multilevel regression analyses are shown in Tables 4 and 5. The statistical control variables that are added have similar results for both dependent variables. Adding these variables improves the models. The relationship between the statistical control variables and the dependent variables are almost the same for both models with some minor differences. Tables 4 and 5 show that the willingness to help others turns out to be unrelated to the country level variable *welfare spending*. *Religious denomination* is positively related to the willingness to help others;

Table 4 Multilevel analysis of the willingness to help the sick and disabled[a]

Model	(1)	(2a)	(2b)	(3a)	(3b)
Country level (level 2)					
Openness					
Economic openness[b]		0.00	−0.03		
		(0.04)	(0.04)		
Social openness[b]				0.08	0.08
				(0.05)	(0.07)
Social structure					
Reliance on others[c]			1.01[†]		0.89[†]
			(0.52)		(0.49)
National norms of giving[c]			0.22		0.17
			(0.19)		(0.19)
Mean level of trust[a]			−0.05		−0.36
			(0.32)		(0.41)
Control variables					
Country level (level 2)					
Welfare spending[d]	0.00	0.00	0.00	−0.00	−0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Individual level (level 1)[a]					
Religious denomination	0.09**	0.09**	0.09**	0.09**	0.09**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Gender	0.07**	0.07**	0.07**	0.07**	0.07**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Stable relationship	0.05**	0.05**	0.05**	0.05**	0.05**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Employed	−0.02	−0.02	−0.02	−0.02	−0.02
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Age–low	−0.12**	−0.12**	−0.12**	−0.12**	−0.12**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Age–high	−0.06**	−0.06**	−0.06**	−0.06**	−0.06**
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Education–low	−0.05**	−0.05**	−0.05**	−0.05**	−0.05**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Education–high	0.03*	0.03*	0.03*	0.03*	0.03*
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Town size–small	−0.04**	−0.04**	−0.04**	−0.04**	−0.04**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Town size–big	−0.04**	−0.04**	−0.04**	−0.04**	−0.04**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Intercept	3.71**	3.71**	3.71**	3.71**	3.71**
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Deviance	785.21**	0.01	5.36**	2.18**	4.05**
Intraclass correlation	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.07	0.06

31,554 respondents in 26 countries. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported; standard errors are in parentheses.
Data sources. [a]European Values Study (EVS).
[b]KOF Index of Globalization.
[c]Eurobarometer (EB).
[d]IMF Empty model: Intercept 3.76**
(0.05); −2*loglikelihood: 77,526.30; Intraclass correlation: 0.07.
[†]$P<0.10$; *$P<0.05$; **$P<0.01$.

Table 5 Multilevel analysis of the intention to help immigrants[a]

Model	(1)	(2a)	(2b)	(3a)	(3b)
Country level (level 2)					
Openness					
Economic openness[b]		0.10[†]	0.05		
		(0.06)	(0.05)		
Social openness[b]				0.17[*]	0.09
				(0.07)	(0.09)
Social structure					
Reliance on others[c]			1.17[†]		1.30[†]
			(0.67)		(0.65)
National norms of giving[c]			0.28		0.26
			(0.25)		(0.25)
Mean level of trust[a]			0.49		0.17
			(0.41)		(0.53)
Control variables					
Country level (level 2)					
Welfare spending[d]	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Individual level (level 1)[a]					
Religious denomination	0.10[**]	0.10[**]	0.10[**]	0.10[**]	0.10[**]
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Gender	0.07[**]	0.07[**]	0.07[**]	0.07[**]	0.07[**]
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Stable relationship	0.04[**]	0.04[**]	0.04[**]	0.04[**]	0.04[**]
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Employed	−0.02[†]	−0.02[†]	−0.02[†]	−0.02[†]	−0.02[†]
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Age–low	−0.06[**]	−0.06[**]	−0.06[**]	−0.06[**]	−0.06[**]
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Age–high	−0.12[**]	−0.12[**]	−0.12[**]	−0.12[**]	−0.12[**]
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Education–low	−0.16[**]	−0.16[**]	−0.16[**]	−0.16[**]	−0.16[**]
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Education–high	0.20[**]	0.20[**]	0.20[**]	0.20[**]	0.20[**]
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Town size–small	−0.05[**]	−0.05[**]	−0.05[**]	−0.05[**]	−0.05[**]
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Town size–big	−0.00	−0.00	−0.00	−0.00	−0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Intercept	2.84[**]	2.84[**]	2.83[**]	2.84[**]	2.83[**]
	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Deviance	1,218.36[**]	2.74[**]	8.17[**]	5.37[**]	5.45[**]
Intraclass correlation	0.11	0.10	0.08	0.09	0.08

31,554 respondents in 26 countries. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported; standard errors are in parentheses.
Data sources. [a]*European Values Study (EVS).*
[b]*KOF Index of Globalization.*
[c]*Eurobarometer (EB).*
[d]*IMF Empty model: Intercept 2.89** (0.07); −2*loglikelihood: 83,440.02; Intraclass correlation: 0.13.*
[†]*P<0.10;* [*]*P<0.05;* [**]*P<0.01.*

this effect is slightly lower for the willingness to help immigrants. The results for *gender* indicate that women are more willing to help others than men. Living with a partner in a *stable relationship* is positively related to the willingness to help others. Being *employed* does not affect the willingness to help others. *Age* is curvilinear related to the willingness to help others; both younger and older people are less willing to help others compared to people in the age group of between 35 and 65 years old. *Educational level* has a curvilinear relation with the willingness to help others; lower educated people are less willing to help others. The difference between lower educated and higher educated persons is large in the model of the willingness to help immigrants. *Town size* has a curvilinear effect; people living in a medium-sized town are more willing to help others than those living in small or big towns. The effects of the statistical control variables remain the same after adding the openness and social structure variables.

Willingness to Help the Sick and Disabled

The relationship between openness, social structure, and the willingness to help sick and disabled are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4 shows that economic openness (Model 2a) is not related to the willingness to help sick and disabled ($b = 0.00$, n.s.). The model does improve after social openness (Model 3a) is added to the model ($Deviance = 2.18$, $P < 0.01$) but the effect of this variable is not statistically significant. Adding the variables for social structure leads to an improvement of Model 2b ($Deviance = 5.26$, $P < 0.01$) and Model 3b ($Deviance = 4.05$, $P < 0.01$) and in both cases only the variable reliance on others is positively related to the willingness to help sick and disabled ($b = 1.01$, $P < 0.10$ for Model 2b and $b = 0.89$, $P < 0.10$ for Model 3b). The conclusions drawn from the results shown in Table 4 is that the willingness to help the sick and disabled is not related to the economic and social openness of countries and that the higher the level of reliance on others is in a country, the higher the willingness to help this group of people.

Willingness to Help Immigrants

Table 5 shows the multilevel regression for the willingness to help immigrants.

From Table 5 it can be read that economic openness (Model 2a) and social openness (Model 3a) are positively related to the willingness to help immigrants ($b = 0.10$, $P < 0.10$ for economic openness and $b = 0.17$, $P < 0.05$ for social openness). In both instances the fit

of the model improves ($Deviance = 2.74$; $P < 0.01$ for economic openness and $Deviance = 5.37$, $P < 0.01$ for social openness). After adding the variables for social structure in Models 2b and 3b, the fit of the models increases ($Deviance = 8.17$, $P < 0.01$ for economic openness and $Deviance = 5.45$, $P < 0.01$ for social openness). In Models 2a and 3a, the effects of economic openness and social openness are not significant. In these two final models the variable reliance on others is positively related to the willingness to help immigrants ($b = 1.17$, $P < 0.10$ for economic openness and $b = 1.30$, $P < 0.10$ for social openness). From the analyses that are presented in Table 5 it is concluded that the willingness to help immigrants is positively related to the economic openness and the social openness of countries and that these effects are mediated by the variable reliance on others.

The results from the multilevel analyses show that openness is not related the willingness to help others in general but that the effects of openness differ for the two groups. The willingness to help the sick and disabled is not related to economic and social openness. These two kinds of openness are related to the willingness to help immigrants. Concentrating on the willingness to help this group, support is found for Hypothesis 2a (stating a positive relationship between economic openness and the willingness to help others) and Hypothesis 2b (stating a positive relationship between social openness and the willingness to help others). These relations are mediated by the extent to which people can rely on fellow citizens. Therefore, it is concluded that economic openness and social openness have a positive effect on the willingness to help immigrants, resulting from positive information about the behaviour of others in society.

Discussion and Conclusion

The first and main conclusion drawn from the outcomes of this study is that the willingness to help others is not negatively related to the economic and social openness of countries based on the finding that these two kinds of openness are not related to the willingness to help the sick and disabled and that they are positively related to the willingness to help immigrants. Therefore, the claim that globalization undermines social structures and the willingness to assist others is not supported. This finding is consistent with the conclusions that can be drawn from the studies examining the relationship between economic openness and the welfare state. In the literature and

also among politicians there is the tendency to argue that the welfare state cannot be sustained under the condition of globalization. The existing research evidence in this field does not support this statement, since most of the empirical studies show that the generous welfare state and economic openness are not in conflict (Koster, 2007). The second conclusion is that economic openness and social openness are not related to the willingness to help others in general. This conclusion is based on the finding that the willingness to help the sick and disabled is not related to the openness of countries whereas the willingness to help immigrants is positively related to the openness of countries. The third conclusion is that reliance on others explains the positive relationship between openness and the willingness to help immigrants; the more open countries are also the countries in which the mean level of reliance on others is higher. That people living in open countries have better access to social resources than people in less open countries supports the idea that learning from the behaviours of others increases the willingness to assist this particular group. It should be noted that the current study does not allow to conclude that the higher level of reliance on others results from an increase in openness, it is also possible that the countries in which people can rely on others are better suited to engage in cross-border interactions with other countries. If the higher level of reliance on others is indeed a response to increasing levels of openness, then there may be reason to speculate that the less open countries will follow a similar path as the open countries. However, this is a prediction that cannot be tested at this moment. According to the theoretical predictions of this study, the mean level of trust and national norms of giving should also be related to the willingness to help others. There can be different reasons why these effects did not show up in the multilevel regression analysis. A possible explanation is that the effect of reliance on others obscures the other effects. A different explanation is that these two variables do not affect the willingness to help others. From these findings, the following implication is drawn. The presence of a norm of giving and a certain level of trust within society is not enough to make people help each other. What seems to be necessary is that people are relatively sure that others are also willing to provide help, in the present study this was indicated with the extent to which people can rely on others.

The analyses show that welfare state effort is not related to the willingness to help others. There are three different interpretations of this finding, depending on how the questions in the EVS about the willingness to help others are interpreted. The first interpretation deals with the relationship between the welfare state and informal forms of help. The welfare state can encourage people to show help toward others or it may well be that informal assistance declines because helping others is already safeguarded through formal provisions (Van Oorschot and Arts, 2005). According to this first interpretation, neither encouragement nor crowding out occurs since there is no effect of welfare spending on the willingness to help others. The second interpretation argues that attitudes towards the welfare state are reflected by people's willingness to help others; an extensive welfare state should then be positively related to the willingness to help others. This interpretation leads to the conclusion that there is little public support for welfare state provisions in the countries that were investigated in the present study. A third interpretation is that the willingness to help others refers to a broader attitude that people have towards others in society who they think should be assisted. Such assistance can be offered informally, for instance by directly helping these groups, or formally through the welfare state. In this article, the third interpretation is followed. Additional research is required to develop more specific claims about the relationship between the size of the welfare state on the one hand and informal ways of helping others and support for the welfare state on the other hand.

This study has some limitations. First, the relationship between openness and the willingness to help others was examined with cross-sectional data, and therefore no statements can be made about the causal effects of openness. A major problem with such an investigation is that it requires longitudinal data about openness and the assistance of others. Although data sets are being constructed with respect to historical developments of openness, longitudinal data about people's attitudes are harder to reconstruct because this would require large-scale surveys over a longer time period. As more waves of the EVS and other surveys are gathered that include the same countries for a longer period it will be possible to examine patterns over time and to investigate how changes in the openness of countries affect the willingness to assist others. Second, this study investigated the willingness to support specific groups in society. There may be a difference between the willingness to help others and the actual help that people are giving to others. To get a fuller account of whether and how the openness of countries is related to their attitudes and behaviours future studies should also include measures of actual behaviours.

Acknowledgements

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