Public Support for European Welfare Solidarity

An Empirical study of the effect of Subjective Socioeconomic Insecurity

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1. Introduction and Research Question

In the last two decades, the European welfare states became substantially challenged due to the economic, social and political pressures affecting the European Union (Meuleman et al., 2016). The emergence of new dynamic social risks— risks which are longer absorbed by the family, the labor market and the ever-changing nature of partisan politics, present significant implications for European welfare regimes (Esping-Anderson, 2002; Barr, 2012; Svallfors, 2012). Thus, they raise concerns about welfare states' sustainability and European integration (Lahusen & Grasso, 2018). Consequently, Eurozone crisis countries, left-leaning politicians from wealthier EU countries and scholars have grown in favor of transnational solidarity in the European Union to manage these social risks (Fernandes & Maslauskaite, 2013; Baute et al. 2019; Gerhards et al., 2019). However, the rise of Euroscepticism, nationalism and the lack of support for European integration has sparked an ongoing debate concerning the feasibility of the various forms of transnational solidarity: fiscal, welfare, territorial, and external & internal refugee solidarity.

In light of these discussions, scholars have argued that welfare solidarity can absorb the disintegrative effects of globalization and Europeanisation (Brunkhorst, 2005; Lahusen, 2016; Gerhards et al., 2016; Lahusen & Grasso, 2018). As a social institution, European welfare solidarity mirrors the national welfare states' objectives to support vulnerable individuals by contributing to institutions that provide solidarity (Baute et al., 2019; Gerhards et al., 2019). For the advancement of a 'Social Europe', this study considers public views and opinions as a relevant tool in explaining whether adopting a social policy will match the interests of EU citizens (Svallfors, 2012; Roosma et al., 2014; Lahusen & Grasso, 2018; Gerhards et al., 2016; 2019). Scholars have recommended individual predispositions[1] as drivers of public support for transnational solidarity (Svallfors, 2012). This research investigates the impact of individuals' perceptions of risk experienced across social classes through the effects of institutional trust, income inequality, welfare expenditure, and migration on EU attitudes towards European welfare solidarity. Therefore, the overall research question of this study is:

What is the effect of subjective socioeconomic security on EU public attitudes towards European welfare solidarity?

To answer this research question, I use data from the European Social Survey 2016 wave question module (ESS Round 8), administered in 23 European countries and the European Social Survey Multilevel Data Resource 2016 (ESS MDR). This study employs a large-N research design

[1] Individual predispositions such as: beliefs about welfare policies, social values, personal values, institutional trust, risks and threat perceptions (Svallfors, 2012).

using cross-sectional data that is limited to 17 EU member states. For the individual and country-level analysis, I perform a multiple linear regression, employing a conditioning and moderation strategy to capture the possible effects of subjective socioeconomic insecurity on support for welfare solidarity in Europe.

This study's findings indicate that support for welfare solidarity in Europe increases as subjective socioeconomic insecurity increases. Thus, suggesting that individuals who are likely to be unemployed in the next 12 months are more likely to support welfare solidarity in Europe. The positive effect of subjective socioeconomic insecurity on support for welfare solidarity aligns with the economic interest argument and social rivalry hypothesis that individuals behave rationally in favor or opposition to European welfare solidarity. This rational behavior is based on the likelihood of receiving welfare benefits (Esping-Anderson,1990; Corneo & Gruner 2002). Moreover, this study identifies structural cleavages formed based on income class, that support welfare solidarity in Europe. More specifically, individuals from low-income households have more positive attitudes towards a uniform welfare scheme in Europe than individuals from middle-income and high-income households. For the moderation strategy, this study suggests caution when interpreting the interaction effect. The individual-level moderation analysis suggests that trust in EU institutions influences the positive effect of subjective insecurity on support for welfare solidarity in Europe.

This study finds that support for welfare solidarity increases in countries with high-income inequality for the country-level analysis. Also, support for welfare solidarity is lower in countries with high welfare expenditure. These findings supplement the structural cleavage argument suggested by (Gerhards et al. 2019; 2016) that country-level structural characteristics also drive social welfare preferences. On the other hand, immigration rates appeared not to affect welfare solidarity, thus supporting empirical research (Auspurg et al 2019; Eger & Breznau, 2017; Kwon & Curran, 2016; Eger 2010; Mau & Burkhardt, 2009) that detaches the effect of migration on welfare attitudes.

In Chapter 2 of this study, I review existing literature on the European welfare state, solidarity in the European Union, and subjective insecurity to measure external risks in the labor market. In Chapter 3 of this study, I elaborate on the conceptual framework, the relevant theories, and the theoretical model of the study. In Chapter 4, I explain and justify my research design. I present the analysis of my results in Chapter 5. Finally, in Chapter 6, I discuss the study's theoretical and practical implications and conclude my main insights.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The European Welfare State

European welfare states were developed in the late 19th century and founded in the nation-state—within stable boundaries, with the fundamental aim of creating equality by providing welfare solidarity to individuals and the society (Esping-Anderson, 1990; Arts & Gelissen, 2001; Keating, 2020). Although there are different welfare state regimes (Esping-Anderson, 1990; Scruggs & Allan, 2006) (see Table 1) with different social policies (Arts & Gelissen, 2002; van Kersbergen, 2014), the European welfare states are the main feature of the European social model (Svallfors, 2012). The welfare state through its laws, policies and institutions protects individuals in different ways against the negative consequences of common life-course risks—for example, 'by offering economic support in periods of hardship: unemployment, disability, old age or by ensuring access to care and services' (Svallfors, 2012; Yerkes et al., 2012).

Southern Region EU member states	
Mediterranean regimes	Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain
Eastern Region EU member states	
Baltic states	Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania
Central and Eastern European countries	Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia
Western Region EU member states	
Anglo-Saxon countries: *Liberal Welfare regimes*	Ireland & the UK
Continental countries: *Conservative & Hybrid Welfare regimes*	Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands
Scandinavian countries: *Social Democratic Welfare regimes*	Denmark, Finland and Sweden

Table 1: Welfare state typologies in Europe

Source: Eurofond (2017); Esping-Anderson (1990) & Scruggs & Allan, 2006, own compilation

Over time, the European welfare states developed dynamically due to various structural transformations: democratization, industrialization, and states (Wilensky, 1975; Korpi, 1983; Baldwin, 1990; Skocpol, 1992; Rodrik, 1998; Burgoon, 2001). However, in the last two decades, the European welfare states became substantially challenged due to the economic, social and political pressures affecting the European Union (Meuleman et al., 2016). The emergence of new dynamic social risks—risks which are longer absorbed by the family or the labor market and the ever-changing nature of partisan politics present significant implications on European welfare regimes (Esping Anderson et al., 2002; Barr, 2012; Svallfors, 2012). Thus, they raise concerns about welfare states' sustainability and European welfare solidarity (Lahusen & Grasso, 2018).

2.1.1 Income Inequality between EU member states

The convergence of the conviction that the European welfare states are under threat stems from concerns over rising levels of inequality in Europe. Even before the Great Recession, there were concerns about the existing income disparities between European countries, especially after the eastern enlargement of the European Union (Iversen & Wren, 1998; de Beer, 2012; Piketty, 2014; Bogliacino & Maestri, 2014; Vacas-Soriano & Fernandez-Macias, 2018). Empirical research connotes over the past three decades; there has been a rising trend in income inequality especially in advanced economies, thus widening social class differences (Cingano, 2014; Jaumotte & Lall, 2013). Some economists have argued that rising inequality may have inflamed the financial crisis of 2008-2009, leading to the Great Recession (Rajan, 2010; Piketty, 2014). The Great Recession is one of the most catastrophic crises due to its severe impact on the economies and labor markets of advanced economies and developing economies. During this period, Europe experienced slower growth rates and a decline in real-term GDP, thus, exacerbating inequality levels (Vis et al., 2011; Jenkins et al., 2012; Diamond & Lodge, 2013).

The concurrence of the financial crisis and the sovereign debt crisis weighed heavily on European countries' economy due to the threat of bankruptcy facing Southern region EU member states, hence raising concerns about the stability of the euro (Haidar, 2012). Essentially, a collapse of the euro would lead to high asset losses for the creditor countries and their banks (Western region countries), causing collateral damage to their economy (Gerhards et al., 2019 p. 12). The Great Recession had a wide-ranging and long-lasting impact on the labor market across Europe, resulting in wage cuts, rising unemployment rates, income inequality, rising poverty rates and thus considerably affecting the living conditions of European citizens (de Beer, 2012; Rueda, 2014; Heidenreich, 2016).

Despite the economic downturn of the economic recession, Western region EU member states recovered from the economic crisis and regained economic stability, due to different macroeconomic and social policies (Haidar, 2012; Andor, 2019). Contrastingly, Southern and Eastern region EU member states experienced significantly higher unemployment rates. Even so in the long run, the unemployment rates in these two regions took longer to stabilize, resulting in a substantial rise in income inequality (Gerhards et al., 2019). To determine rising income inequalities, economists looked at the changes in individual earnings, earnings of all household members and public redistribution through taxes and transfers: pensions, unemployment benefits and social assistance (Dauderstadt & Keltek, 2013; Piketty, 2013; Raitano, 2016; Vacas-Soriano & Fernandez Macias, 2018). Firstly, Ireland and Southern region EU member states that experienced significantly higher unemployment rates also experienced rising market income inequalities compared to Western region EU member states (Gerhards et al., 2019). According to de Beer (2012), Western region EU member states experienced a significant increase in earnings, especially for high skilled workers compared to low skilled workers despite reducing the working hours. Conversely, in low-income countries, a reduction of working hours resulted in income losses, especially for low skilled workers at the bottom of the income distribution.

Secondly, the rising unemployment rates attributed to the recession impacted disposable income inequality across EU member states. Empirical evidence from), indicates that between 2009-2014 income inequalities expanded in two-thirds of the EU member states: most notably in Mediterranean countries. Conversely, in the one-third of the EU member states such as Belgium, Portugal, the UK, Poland, Lithuania and Latvia, inequality levels declined significantly (Vacas-Soriano & Fernandez Macias, 2018). However, the changes in disposable income between countries were cushioned by the public tax and benefit systems that limited the changes in gross cash transfers and net taxes, resulting in relatively stable wage inequality levels (Raitano, 2016; Vacas-Soriano & Fernandez-Macias, 2018).

The recession negatively impacted income differentials between East and Central European and Western region EU member states. After the great transformation three decades ago and the Eastern enlargement, income levels in East-Central European economies started to grow from the mid-1990s and appeared to be converging with Western region EU member states (Andor, 2019). However, after the recession, the East-Central European countries reported slower economic growth and productivity rates, halting wage convergence with the Western region countries (Vacas-Soriano & Fernandez Macias, 2018; Frederiksen, 2012; Dauderstädt & Keltek, 2013, Andor 2019). The authors indicate that even with different inequality measures: disposable income, average per capita income and full-time earnings, the wage convergence between Western and Eastern region EU member states narrowed the inequality gap. However, after the recession, inequality between these regions went up.

2.1.2 Welfare spending in the European Welfare States after the Great Recession of 2009

In the European welfare state, welfare expenses account for a large proportion of government spending in member state countries (Hemerijck, Vandenbroucke & Andersen et al., 2012). However, the Great Recession intensified pressures on the welfare state, thus diverting welfare regimes into new paths (van Kersbergen et al., 2014). In the first phase of the financial crisis, EU member governments responded using Keynesian approaches by reserving or investing in resources to prevent banks' collapse. In the second phase of the financial crisis, considering that the financial crisis's concurrence and the sovereign debt crisis impacted Eurozone countries, the EU developed fiscal policies to bail out for these countries.

During the recession, most EU member state countries considered expanding social programs to cushion the shock of the crisis and its aftermath. This response is in line with the compensation hypothesis: in economies exposed to external risks (globalization, financial crisis), governments respond by increasing social spending because the government plays a risk-reducing role (Rodrik, 1998; Burgoon, 2001; Vis et al., 2011). As the economic recession developed, Scandinavian and Continental countries mitigated rising unemployment rates and inequality through automatic stabilizers, generous unemployment benefits, pension arrangements and welfare cash transfers. On the other hand, countries less affected by the recession like Iceland and Slovenia introduced a mix of welfare policies to maintain aggregate demand for welfare benefits and its citizens' economic well-being (Olafsson et al., 2016). Not all empirical studies support the welfare expansion response by governments after the recession mainly because the recession resulted in pension (increase in the statutory retirement ages) and labor law reforms in most EU countries due to demographic and fiscal pressures (Hemerijck, Vandenbroucke & Andersen et al., 2012).

Other studies emphasize that the Great Recession resulted in welfare retrenchment. To salvage hard-hit Eurozone crisis countries, the EU and international creditors (IMF) developed fiscal policies, such as the European Financial Stability Facility, the European Stability mechanisms and the Stability & Growth Pact. The purpose of this response was to provide financial support, avoid the solvency of banking systems to improve structural deficits in order to stabilize the euro (Lahusen & Grasso, 2018; Gerhards et al., 2019). However, the conditional nature of these measures triggered austerity measures in Southern region EU member states, resulting in cutbacks in welfare spending: reduction in unemployment benefits and an increase in the statutory retirement age (Raitano, 2016; Vacas-Soriano & Fernandez-Macias, 2018; Buendía et al., 2020). Thus, widening the inequality gap. Figure 1 shows the balance between government spending and revenue in OECD countries for 2009-2013. The figure provides a comparison of countries that implemented expenditure-based and tax-based austerity policies. For instance, policymakers in Greece and Ireland opted for expenditure-based austerity policies rather than tax-based policies. As government revenue increased, government spending reduced, affecting the government's spending on social protection (Olafsson et al., 2016; Afonso, 2019).

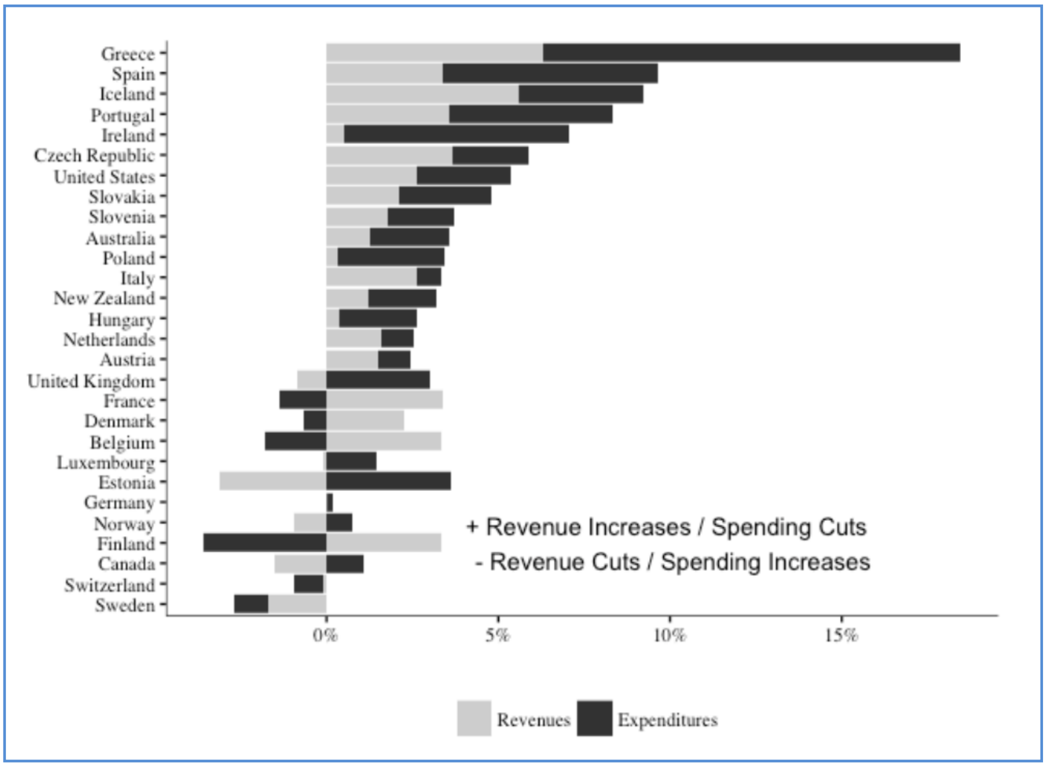

Figure 1: Cumulative changes underlying primary revenues and expenditure, 2009-2013 (% of real GDP)
Source: OECD, 2015; Olafsson et al., (2016, p.41).

On the other hand, in the Baltic states: governments employed fiscal consolidation techniques through internal devaluation techniques: the downward adjustment of the nominal wages throughout the economy (Raudla & Kattel, 2013). The authors suggest that this adjustment strategy was backed by the European Union, arguing that an external devaluation: the devaluation of their currency would hurt these countries' economy, more so, there would be spillover effect to other Central and Eastern EU member states. For the Baltic countries to restore confidence in the capital markets and boost foreign investment return, they introduced welfare retrenchment policies (Raudla & Kattel, 2013).

Regarding Central and Eastern region EU member states, due to the slow-down in industrialization and the detrimental impact of the recession on the real GDP lessened the government's social spending (Andor, 2019). So far, government responses to the economic recession in the Southern and Eastern EU member states align with the efficiency hypothesis. This hypothesis suggests that external risks: globalization and the economic recession, may have triggered a reduction in government sector size and government capacity due to austerity measures, pushing countries to cut back on social spending (Swank & Steinmo; 2002; Meinhard & Potrafke, 2012). In the short term, the adoption of austerity measures in Southern and Eastern EU member states only worsened the wellbeing of already vulnerable citizens (Andor, 2019; Afonso, 2019).

To some extent, Western EU member states also experienced austerity policies. Kersbergen et al., (2014), found that in Denmark, the government increased its spending on social investments policies like active labor market policies and maternal and paternal leave to protect the most vulnerable groups and cut back spending on earlier social investment policies such as childcare and education. On the other hand, the authors found that in the UK, Germany and the Netherlands governments adopted cost containment/retrenchment measures that reduce public expenditure but maintain formal entitlement to benefits and enforcing stricter eligibility criteria for social assistance.

Pierson (2001, p.455) states ‘there is not a single new politics of the welfare state, but different politics of the welfare state, but different politics in different configurations’. Even among Western region EU member states, responses to mitigate the recession was different due to differences in economic growth, changes in the level of demand for specific benefits, demographic developments, and political reforms that impact social protection legislation (European Commission, 2020). A decade after the recession, EU member states increased their social spending, with the largest proportion of spending directed towards old age. Regardless, there are differences between countries on the preferred welfare policy. Also, there are differences in the amount of spending. EU member states with more stable economies like France, Finland, and Denmark recorded the highest social spending percentage. On the other hand, countries like Ireland, Malta and Romania with less stable economies reported lower social spending as a percentage of the country's GDP.

2.2 Solidarity in the European Union

Solidarity is a core value of the EU and the cornerstone of European integration (Gerrits, 2015). The reference to solidarity in the EU is evoked in the Treaty of Lisbon that emphasizes mutual solidarity and fair sharing of responsibilities as a core principle of solidarity to govern relations among member states in external and security policies (Treaty of Lisbon, 2007). However, the legal and institutional frame of reference for mobilizing European solidarity remains ambiguous and undefined in the EU law (Knodt & Tews, 2017; Kotzur, 2017; Lahusen et al., 2018).

Across various disciplines, voluminous literature focuses on solidarity in the EU and its normative power (Durkheim, 1997; Stjernø, 2004; De Witte 2015; Biondi et al., 2018; Ross, 2020). From an empirical standpoint, numerous studies have extensively investigated the forms of European solidarity and measured EU citizens' attitudes towards these forms of European solidarity (Baute et al., 2018; Lahusen & Grasso, 2018; Gerhards et al., 2016). Principally, scholars have raised several questions on whether or not the various forms of solidarity can: restore trust in Europe, Europeanized politics, resolve Eurozone crisis or overshadow nation-state solidarity (Lahusen et al., 2018; Grimmel & Giang, 2017; Ross, 2020; Lahusen & Grasso, 2018; Gerhards, 2018; 2020).

European solidarity connotes 'Social Europe', which is a form of EU governance that intertwines the social and economic aspects of the EU to strengthen European integration (Martinsen & Vollard, 2014; Fernandes & Maslauskaite, 2013; Baute et al., 2019). Furthermore, it is regarded as a multidimensional phenomenon experienced on various levels: the micro- individual level, the meso-organized and the macro-level (Lahusen et al., 2018). According to Knodt & Tews (2017), the organization of solidarity can be analyzed either via a vertical dimension that looks at solidarity in different levels or via the horizontal dimension that looks at solidarity within one government level. Also, the authors state that solidarity can occur within or across and between different actor categories. This study focuses on the transnational dimension (see table 2).

Dimension / Actor category	Horizontal dimension	Vertical dimension
Individual actors	***Transnational solidarity***	***Supranational solidarity***
Collective actors	***International solidarity***	***Intergovernmental solidarity***

Table 2: Forms of European solidarity

Source: Knodt & Tews (2017, p.51)

Within the transnational dimension, Gerhards et al. (2020) identify four European solidarity domains: Fiscal, Territorial, External & Internal refugee solidarity and Welfare solidarity. Due to extensive literature on the first three domains of European solidarity, this study will focus on Welfare solidarity. In the light of emerging social risks in the EU, scholars and left-leaning politicians and member states hard hit by the great recession and the migrant crisis have considered the integration of European welfare policies to handle these social risks by providing social insurance, developing policies that regulate the labor market and collective labor agreements (Fattibene, 2015; Fernandes & Maslauskaite, 2013; Yekes & van der Veen, 2011).

Gerhards et al. 2020 (p. 14) states that the European Union can manage the poverty and inequality rates in Europe by collectively employing territorial solidarity and welfare solidarity. The authors suggest that territorial solidarity allows for redistribution between prosperous and less prosperous countries within the European Union. In contrast, welfare solidarity will ensure that the EU countries take responsibility together for individuals in need and those living within the EU territory regardless of their nationality. However, territorial solidarity through the redistribution between wealthier and less wealthy countries is not openly welcomed, resulting in a new socio-political cleavage of nationalism and populism that supports the devolution of the European Union, anti-immigration and nationalization over economic integration with the global community (Kriesi et al., 2006; 2008; Hoblot & de Vries, 2016; Gerhards et al., 2020).

In practice, the dimension of welfare solidarity is neglected by the EU. When it comes to implementing welfare solidarity across the EU member states, the complexity of institutions at a supranational level and legal restriction that ties welfare policies at a national level limit the EU (Ferrera, 2018, p.22). Nevertheless, the EU has shown its interests in developing policies around European welfare solidarity. For instance, in 2014 the EU launched the Youth Employment Initiative as part of the European Social Fund that seeks to improve youth employment in regions where unemployment exceeds 25% such as Greece, Italy, Portugal and France (European Parliament Research Service, 2017). Moreover in 2013, the EU launched the Horizon 2020: SOLIDUS and Trans SOL projects to research about the citizens support for policies to assist the vulnerable and reducing inequalities through the introduction of transnational solidarity arrangements such as a minimum income benefit scheme (European Social Survey, 2016; European Commission, 2016)

From a theoretical standpoint, scholars are sceptical about the possibility to develop stable forms of transnational solidarity within the EU because the financial crisis undermined the societal and institutional foundations of European solidarity (Galpin 2012; Streeck, 2015; Lahusen, 2016). On the other hand, from a political and constitutional standpoint, scholars have argued that the transnational form of solidarity can absorb the disintegrative effects of globalization and Europeanisation (Brunkhorst, 2005; Lahusen, 2016; Gerhards et al., 2016; Lahusen & Grasso, 2018). Gerhards et al., 2020 suggests three arguments that would sustain support for European welfare solidarity.

Firstly, EU citizens view social security as a universal right, allowing everyone to have access to welfare state benefits when needed. The support for welfare solidarity links to welfare solidarity's spillover effect as a societal norm to fundamental universal human rights. The authors argue that there could also be a spillover effect where welfare solidarity is contextualized as exercising universal human rights across European territorial spaces. Therefore, the integration of social rights across all member states could yield citizens preference for European welfare solidarity through the path-dependent consequence of the expansion of civil, political and economic rights through the European integration process (Gerhards & Lengfeld, 2015). Secondly, European welfare solidarity is dependent on the overall European integration process. So far, transnational processes that emerge from the integration of institutions and social processes across member state borders such as cross border cooperation and labour division have yielded a new form of social integration (Munch, 2010. p.67) that would translate into welfare solidarity

2.3 Public opinion on European Welfare Solidarity

When it comes to theoretical and empirical research on welfare solidarity in Europe as a component of European solidarity, there is fragmented and incomplete knowledge. European welfare solidarity is a new phenomenon; thus, few studies focus on EU citizens' attitudes towards European welfare solidarity. Generally, studies that look at welfare attitudes tend to focus on national welfare state attitudes (Roosma et al., 2013). On the other hand, the most recent studies either measure EU attitudes on all forms of transnational solidarity or entirely focus on European Social Citizenship (Gerhards et al., 2016; Ciornei & Recchi, 2017; ESS Round 8, 2016; Baute et al., 2018a; Gerhards et al., 2020).

So far, empirical studies on the national welfare state attitudes across EU member states have indicated that welfare attitudes do not follow Esping-Andersen's three worlds (1990) welfare typology. Instead, Roosma et al. (2013; 2014), find two worlds: the North-Western and the Eastern-Southern part of Europe. In North West countries, citizens positively evaluate redistribution and the welfare state responsibility for citizens' well-being. In South and East countries, citizens positively evaluate redistribution principles but are discontent with the public service delivery of welfare benefits. Moreover, the differences in institutional welfare design of social policies affect specific attitudes regarding these policies, indicating that individuals from stable economies are more supportive of the welfare state and act more in solidarity than individuals from weaker economies (Van Oorschot & Meuleman, 2012; 2014).

Conversely, Roosma et al. (2013) & Baute et al. (2018a), point out that the European solidarity is a multidimensional concept based on the two functions of the welfare state: to provide social security & protection and to maintain redistribution. With this knowledge, Gerhards et al. (2020) identify two forms of European welfare attitudes: attitudes towards social security and attitudes towards redistribution. However, due to limited research on the European welfare attitudes, existing studies are solely founded on established theoretical and empirical research that have looked into citizens attitudes towards the national welfare state (Gerhards et al., 2016; Ciornei & Recchi, 2017; ESS Round 8, 2016; Baute et al., 2018; 2019a).

2.4 Subjective Economic Security

Economic insecurity is examined in two distinct ways: subjective economic insecurity (SEI) and most commonly, objective insecurity (Klandermans et al., 2010). From a macroeconomic standpoint, researchers have looked into the impact market volatilities generated by globalization, restructuring of the welfare state, dualization of the labor market into well-protected insiders and precarious outsiders on job security (Scheve & Slaughter, 2004; Rueda, 2007; 2014; Standing, 2011; Emmenegger et al., 2012). On the other hand, some researchers have focused on the impact of institutional setting changes on job security such as labor market regulations, wage bargaining and the welfare benefits system (Blanchard & Wolfers, 2000; Blanchard, 2006). Thus, scholars and policymakers have made a common assumption that providing employment, regulating the labor market, and providing social security translates into feelings of security and increased subjective well-being (Chung & Mau, 2014). However, this is not the case as suggested by (Chung & Mau, 2014; Towe, 2014) who argue that these studies only focused on the objective measure of economic insecurity, ignoring that the feelings of SEI could strengthen the impact when analyzing macroeconomics conditions (Towe, 2014).

According to Hacker (2006), objective insecurity closely couples with what people experience. Therefore, subjective insecurity exists as an objective state, but it depends: on an individual's perceptions of the outcome of a situation, the experiences and capabilities in coping with these insecurities (Chung & Mau, 2014). Subjective insecurity is more than an individual's reaction to the objective state of affairs; thus, SEI is a multidimensional concept that constitutes cognitive and affective states of job insecurity (Chung & Mau, 2014). The former implies a sense of economic anxiety while the latter refers to a worker's estimate of how secure their job is or the probability of losing his or her job in the future (Ashford et al., 1989; Borg & Elizur, 1992; De Witte & Naswall, 2003; Anderson & Pontusson, 2007). Also, SEI comprises labor market insecurity that: 'measures an individual's perception on how easy it will be to find another job with more or less equivalent characteristics as the one they have at the moment' (Anderson & Pontusson, 2007, p.214-215).

2.4.1 Subjective Economic Insecurity & Socio-Economic Factors

Comparative studies have shown that economic conditions play a role in explaining subjective insecurity(Chung & Van Oorschot, 2010; Mau et al., 2012; Chung & Mau, 2014). For instance, the wealth of a country (GDP per capita) and economic growth rates that indicate the demands for employment from organizations influence an individual's perceptions of job loss risk (Mau et al., 2012). Therefore, individuals from relatively developed and prosperous economies display higher levels of subjective economic security than individuals from less developed and prosperous countries (Haller & Hadler, 2006; Bohnke, 2008; Chung & Van Oorschot, 2011). Secondly, the level of unemployment can explain an individual's SEI (Anderson & Pontsuson, 2007; Erlinghagen, 2008; Chung & Van Oorschot, 2010; Mau et al., 2012; Chung & Mau, 2014).

Empirical studies indicate that individuals from countries with low unemployment levels have higher economic insecurity feelings than individuals from countries with higher unemployment levels (Frey & Stutzer, 2000;2002). Individuals from countries with high levels of unemployment may presume that a large number of people may be dismissed and thus raising fears of job stability or that there will be intense competition in the labor market when finding a new job if one loses his/her job (Chung & Mau, 2014). Thirdly, Wilkinson & Pickett (2009) have urged that the level of income inequality in a country portrays a difference in socioeconomic status between individuals in society and high competition levels. By comparing different EU countries, Mau et al., (2012), find that individuals from countries with high levels of income inequality often express higher levels of SEI, but only if the individual is from a less privileged occupational class (routine non-manual workers, small self-employed and unskilled manual workers).

2.4.2 Subjective Economic Insecurity & Institutional Factors

Some welfare state models can influence citizens well-being (Anderson & Pontusson, 2007). Studies have found that indeed having a generous welfare benefits system can explain SEI levels (Blomberg et al., 2012; Mau et al., 2012). Mau et al., (2012), find that individuals from countries with higher levels of social expenditure express fewer feelings of SEI in comparison to individuals from countries with lower levels of social expenditure; however, the effect is more substantial when testing the wealth of a country compared to using social expenditure. Concerning labor market regulation, the implementation of active labor market policies (ALMP) through training programs and job search activities has shown to increase employees' skill set, increasing employees' feelings of SEI (Blanchard, 2006). Chung & Van Oorschot (2011; 2014) find that decreasing lay off risks and re-employment opportunities increases an individual's feelings of SEI. Mau et al. (2012) find that labor market regulations impact an individual's feeling SEI, but this depends on an individual's occupational class. He argues that individuals in privileged occupational classes (service classes, small self-employed and skilled manual workers, and low-grade technicians) who benefit from stricter employment protection display lower SEI levels.

2.5. Gaps in the Literature

Firstly, when it comes to theoretical and empirical research on welfare solidarity in Europe as a component of European solidarity, there is fragmented and incomplete knowledge mainly because existing studies tend to conflate all dimensions of European solidarity when measuring citizen attitudes (Gerhards et al., 2016; Ciornei & Recchi, 2017; ESS Round 8, 2016; Baute et al., 2018; 2019a; Gerhards et al., 2020). Furthermore, there is limited cross-national research since existing studies either focus on a single case study[2] (for within-country differences) or a limited sample size[3] to analyze citizens attitudes towards European solidarity (Gerhards et al., 2016; Baute et al., 2019b; Gerhards et al., 2020). Secondly, few studies have tested SEI together welfare attitudes. Generally, most studies focus on the objective measures of job insecurity, leaving out the subjective measure of insecurity (Swank & Steinmo, 2002; Rueda, 2007). Moreover, there is limited research on the influence of institutional trust and country contextual factors when testing the effect of individual predispositions on welfare attitudes.

3. Theory and Research Hypotheses

3.1 Conceptual Framework

3.1.1 European Welfare Solidarity

Across various disciplines, solidarity is widely conceptualized, mainly following the contributions of Durkheim (1997) and Weber (1968). This study adopts the concept of solidarity as defined by Paskov & Dewilde (2012), as the willingness to promote other people's welfare. Also, Van Oorschot & Komter (1998) insist that solidarity behavior arises from acting in the interest of the group and its members. Moreover, Stjernø (2004), suggests that solidarity is in the interest of those who are less privileged and that the underprivileged should stick together. Weber (1968, p.24), identifies four motives that motivate actions of solidarity: self-interest (instrumental rational behavior), values (value rational behavior) affectual ties (affectual behavior) and traditional (habitual behavior). This study utilizes the first motives to explain the solidaristic actions since citizens' attitudes can measure European welfare solidarity. The instrumental rational behaviour suggests that when pursuing a goal of an action, one makes rational calculations on the use of resources and the consequences of actions. Solidaristic actions based on self-interest arise if actions benefit the giver of solidarity and the recipient of solidarity if the action is motivated by this benefit. Durkheim (1997) interprets this self-interest behavior as organic solidarity.

This study adopts the concept of welfare solidarity as defined by (Gerhards et al., 2020, p. 139) as a form of institutionalized solidarity that aims to support vulnerable individuals by contribution to institutions providing such solidarity' (Gerhards et al., 2019, p. 139). As a social institution, the European welfare solidarity mirrors the objectives of the national welfare states (Baute et al., 2019a; Gerhards et al., 2019). This study uses the two objectives stated by Gerhards et al. (2019, p.140) to

[2] The authors used a post-electoral survey in Belgium and Germany using European Election Studies data

[3] Alternatively, the study by Gerhards et al. (2016), employed the TESS but only surveyed 13 countries.

conceptualize European welfare solidarity. Firstly, the protection against compensation for socials risks such as the risk of being sick, risk of being unemployed, risk of becoming old and risk of becoming poor. Secondly, it involves reducing social inequalities through reduction policies such as taxes or redistribution policies to mitigate the income difference between rich and poor people through progress tax schemes and monetary funding programs. All in all, European welfare solidarity is prescribed for EU citizens.

3.1.2 Attitudes towards European Welfare Solidarity

New forms of social risks arising from precarious and insecure life courses have raised concerns for the welfare states' sustainability (Taylor-Gooby, 2004; Standing, 2011; Mau et al., 2012; Svallfors, 2012). These social risks, attributed to labor market changes and competitive pressures arising from globalization, could impact an individual's preference towards redistribution (Burgoon, 2001; Esping-Anderson, 2002). Therefore, it is ostensible that welfare states' sustainability depends on citizens preference for redistribution (Neustadt & Zweifel, 2010). Firstly, an individual's preferences towards redistribution connect to rational calculations based on their state of vulnerability and risks they are exposed to (Iverson & Soskice, 2001; Rehm, 2009).

Alternatively, an individual's preference for redistribution shapes cognitive and ideational factors rather than interests. These factors comprise religion and religiosity (Stegmueller et al., 2013), political socialization (Grasso et al., 2017), general beliefs on income inequality (Reeskens & Van Oorschot, 2015; Mewes & Mau, 2013; van der Waal et al., 2013) and perceptions of deservingness of the vulnerable individuals (Van Oorschot, 2006; Van Oorschot & Meuleman, 2014). This study adopts the concept of attitudes towards "Social Europe" developed by European Social Survey (2016) in the European Social Survey Round 8 which refers to citizens' opinions regarding the involvement of Europe in social policy. The operationalization of this concept consists of two dimensions: firstly, citizen's perceptions on whether the involvement of Europe is an opportunity or rather a threat for social protection in their country. Secondly, the support for European wide transnational solidarity arrangement through redistribution of welfare through a minimum income benefit. This study will focus on the first dimension.

3.1.3 Subjective Socioeconomic Insecurity

Scholars have attempted to conceptualize SEI to allow for the cross-national examination of macroeconomic conditions. Lowe (2018) suggests that SEI could constitute two dimensions: perceived employment precarity and perceived financial precarity. Perceive employment precarity consists of two dimensions perceived job precarity conceptualized as the perceived likelihood of an individual losing their job in the future. On the other hand, perceived skill precarity is related to individual skill development and training such that: an individual's perceived likelihood of losing his/her job or maintaining his/her situation in the labor market is based on the employer or their responsibility to develop their skills and manage their careers (Hacker, 2008). Individuals who view their skills are advantageous to the economy are likely to accept a risky job (Smith, 2001).

Finally, Lowe (2018), insists that financial precarity is the dimension of SEI since it overlaps with affective and cognitive states of economic insecurity. Conversely, Chung & Mau (2014, p. 306) emphasize a new measure of SEI' employment insecurity' that combines cognitive job insecurity with labor market insecurity to capture the social risk associated with an individual's labor market status. This definition is extensive when analyzing SEI with macroeconomic factors contrary to the reliance on affective, cognitive or labor market insecurity as dimensions of subjective insecurity (Bockerman et al., 2004; Anderson & Pontusson, 2007; Erlinghagen, 2008; Pacelli et al., 2008; Chung & Van Oorschot, 2010). This study adopts the concept of subjective economic insecurity (SEI) by Chung & Mau (2014 p, 306, 310) that measures the perceptions of the likelihood of job loss and the perceived difficulty of finding another job relatively easily' (p. 306, 310).

3.2 Theoretical Consideration

3.2.1 Economic Self-interest and attitudes towards European Welfare Solidarity

This study uses theoretical arguments previously used in context to citizens attitudes towards national welfare attitudes. On an individual level, citizens' welfare attitudes arise from an individual's rational calculation of the use of resources and the consequences of their actions when pursuing their goals of action (Weber, 1968). Weber argues that in context to solidarity, solidaristic actions are instrumentally rational if the action benefits the recipient of the solidarity and the giver of solidarity and if the action is motivated by this benefit. With this line of reasoning, it is assumed that individuals behave rationally in favor or opposition to European welfare solidarity based on the likelihood of receiving welfare benefits. Social classes play a role in an individual's support for the welfare state (Esping- Anderson, 1990). This study employs the social rivalry hypothesis (Corneo & Gruner 2002 p. 87) that suggests that an individual's preferences for social welfare and redistribution depend on whether government redistribution affects the quality of the individual's social environment (where they stand in the socioeconomic hierarchy and their standard of living compared to other people in their networks). Empirical studies that focus on within-country attitudes towards European solidarity (Baute et al.,2019b & Ciornei & Rechi, 2017) have found that affluent individuals show little interest in supporting European welfare solidarity mainly because redistribution generated from taxation will directly affect the income/wealth ceiling of the wealthiest members of society.

Furthermore, for a causal mechanism between individual-level factors and macro-level factors, Rehm (2009) relates welfare and redistribution to income and risk-exposure. He argues that an individual's support for welfare and redistribution goes beyond class and income lines (Iversen & Soskice 2001; Cusack et al., 2006) instead, people demand welfare and redistributions because of risk exposure and job insecurity. Objective job security (Cusack et al., 2006), skill specificity (Iversen & Soskice, 2001) nonstandard forms of employments (Burgoon and Dekker, 2010), as well as subjective socioeconomic insecurity (Mau et al., 2012), have shown to influence preferences for support the welfare state. In Europe, the Great Recession and the migrant crisis have significantly heightened the perceived risk of unemployment, raising the demand for welfare provisions (Lahusen & Grasso, 2018; Gerhards et al., 2019). This argument leads to the following hypothesis:

H1: Individuals who experience higher levels of subjective socioeconomic insecurity are likely to express more positive attitudes towards European welfare solidarity.

3.2.2 Cleavages and attitudes towards European Welfare Solidarity

According to (Gerhards et al., 2019, p.151), an individual's structural position and social group signified as a structural cleavage can drive preferences for social welfare and redistribution. Also, the interplay between an individual structural characteristic and the country's economic situation may lead to the emergence of structural cleavages. Concerning the motives of solidarity, self-interest behavior refers to an individual or a country's socio-cultural position whereas affective attachment and value rational behavior is classified as cultural characteristics (Gerhards et al., 2019, p.31). Thus, as Rehm et al. (2012) suggested, welfare attitudes emerge from exposure to high risk and low-income levels. In the power resource theory, Esping-Anderson (1990) suggests that less affluent citizens dependent on wage for their labor income and lacking substantial capital seek a generous welfare state to protect them from poverty and economic dislocation. From these arguments, Gerhards et al. (2016; 2019) suggests that a structural cleavage in support for welfare emerges based on an individual's income level. In addition to this, Gerhards et al. (2016; 2019) identify a country's structural characteristics as another feature for forming structural cleavages in support of the welfare state. Therefore, this study identifies income inequality as a contextual socioeconomic condition that could play a role in explaining individual preferences for welfare solidarity in Europe. From this argument, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H2: The positive effect of subjective socioeconomic insecurity on support for welfare solidarity in Europe will be stronger in countries with higher income inequality.

Secondly, the Great Recession of 2009 unevenly impacted EU member states' welfare spending, leading Eastern and Southern region countries to impose expenditure-based austerity policies rather than tax-based austerity policies (Olafsson et al., 2016; Afonso, 2019). Empirical evidence from Gerhards et al. (2016, p.687) on Germany, Poland and Spain indicate that individuals who live in countries with a higher scope of welfare spending will reject the idea of a Europeanized welfare state compared to individuals who come from countries with lower levels of welfare spending. Following the structural cleavage argument by Gerhards et al. (2019, p.155), this study includes welfare expenditure as an institutional factor that would drive the formation of a structural cleavage in support for welfare solidarity in Europe. Therefore, this argument leads to the following hypothesis:

H3: The positive effect of subjective socioeconomic insecurity on support for welfare solidarity in Europe will be stronger in countries with lower welfare expenditure.

Thirdly some scholars have suggested that immigration could threaten the sustainability of the welfare state (van Oorschot, 2008; De Giorgi & Pellizzari, 2009). These arguments are founded on ample evidence that non-EU migrants are over-represented among users of unemployment, social assistance and family benefits (Boeri et al.,2002; De Giorgi & Pellizzari, 2006). Moreover, other studies that have looked into migrant attitudes point out that EU citizens are least solidaristic towards migrants (Van Oorschot, 2008). These public views are mostly attributed to fear of competition from immigrants in the labor market and accessing social benefits (Afonso et al., 2020; Van Oorschot, 2008). These arguments are founded in the ethnic competition theory that asserts that the perceptions of threat by the dominant group (natives) towards the ethnic group (migrants) is heightened by the competition for ‘scarce resources’(social benefits, employment opportunities).

According to Meuleman et al (2009 p.354), the ‘perceptions of competition are driven by changes in the actual competition level. Lancee & Pardos-Prado (2013) expound on this argument by suggesting that a rise in minority group size could affect economic conditions, thus influencing economic threat perceptions. Scheepers et al. 2002 emphasize that the perceptions of economic threat are more heightened for socioeconomically vulnerable individuals. Conversely, other scholars find evidence that migration either has a slight influence or not influence on welfare attitudes (Auspurg et al 2019; Eger & Breznau, 2017; Kwon & Curran, 2016; Eger 2010; Mau & Burkhardt, 2009). From these arguments, this study hypothesizes that:

H4: The positive effect of subjective socioeconomic insecurity on support for welfare solidarity in Europe will be stronger in countries with higher shares of immigrants.

3.2.3 Trust as a factor for attitudes towards European Welfare Solidarity

Citizens mainly think about state intervention and welfare redistribution within national boundaries (Baute et al., 2019a). Concerning European welfare solidarity, scholars have argued that individuals who advocate the national welfare state will be more favorable towards European welfare solidarity (Baute et al., 2019a; Gerhards et al., 2019). This argument follows the congruence mechanism (Muñoz et al., 2011; Baute et al., 2019a: spillover mechanism), which implies that citizens' attitudes are congruent across policy levels. Correspondingly, employing the cue taking theory (Anderson, 1998) would imply that citizens' pro-welfare attitudes towards European welfare solidarity arise out of their attitudes towards their country's national welfare state, this is because domestic politics are proxies on which citizens base their EU related attitudes (Anderson, 1998). Hence this argument suggests that citizens' evaluations of national and European institutions are congruent to institutional trust[4] (Muñoz et al., 2011). Therefore, there is a dual relationship between trust in national institutions and European institutions (Muñoz et al., 2011).

From this basis, the spillover hypothesis suggests that citizens with feelings of distrust on a national level will transfer these attitudes to the supranational level. Conversely, citizens with feelings of trust on a national level will transfer these attitudes to the supranational level. This hypothesis occurs at the individual level. Since citizens with high levels of institutional trust are more likely to demonstrate support welfare attitudes (Muñoz et al., 2011; Baute et al., 2019a) and considering that citizens' feelings of job security may influence feelings of trust in institutions (Wroe, 2014) this study assumes the following hypothesis:

H5: Individuals who experience higher levels of subjective socioeconomic insecurity are likely to express more positive attitudes towards welfare solidarity in Europe if they trust in EU institutions.

[4]For this study, institutional trust is limited to political trust that capture trust in political institutions and actors at all social levels.

3.3. Theoretical Model

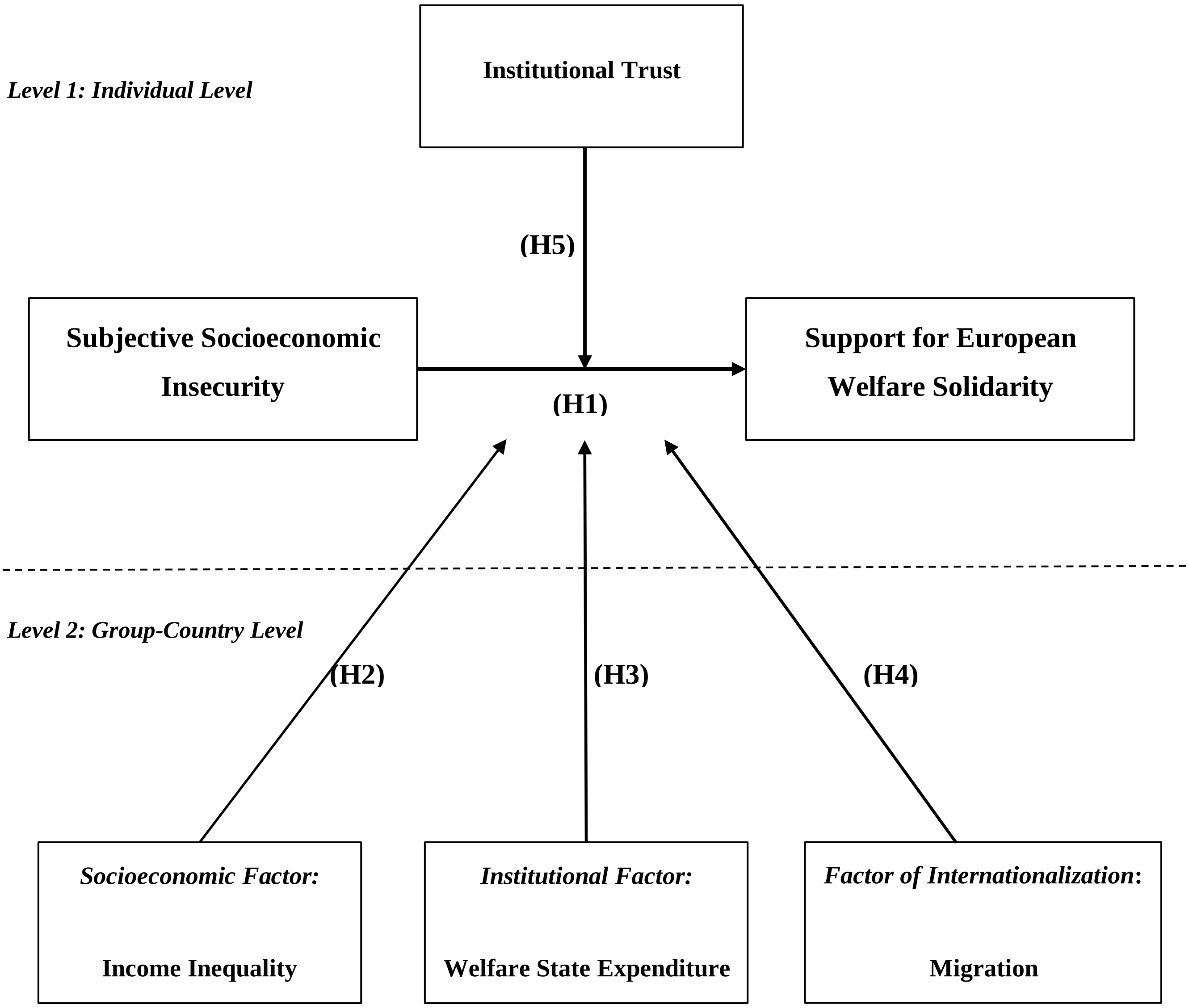

Figure 2: Theoretical Model (Own compilation)

4. Research Design

4.1 Operationalization and Measurement

The dependent and explanatory variables for this study are operationalized from the European Social Survey 2016 wave question module (ESS Round 8), the European Social Survey Multilevel Data Resource (ESS MDR) (compiles data from the OECD databases and the Eurostat dissemination). The dependent variable in this study is *Support for Welfare Solidarity in Europe*. In the ESS Round 8, the dependent variable is connoted as 'attitudes towards Social Europe', which refers to the involvement of Europe in social policy. This study employs the operationalization of this concept as support for a European-wide transnational solidarity arrangement such as a European-wide minimum income benefit scheme, paid from a common European budget and dependent on the standard of living in the respective countries (European Social Survey, 2016). The survey question that measures this concept first off provides the features of a European wide social benefits scheme (see details in Appendix A). This is followed with a 4-point Likert scale question: (Item E37) *Would you be against or in favor of having such a European Union-wide social benefits scheme?* The possible answers are: (*1) strongly against, (2) against, (3) in favor, (4) strongly in favor of, (7) don't know (8) refusal and (9) no answer*. In this study, the responses, *don't know, refusal* and *no answer* are omitted since they provide unclear observations[5].

Subjective socioeconomic insecurity as an independent variable for the individual level and country level of this study is operationalized as risk perception, which refers to the perceived risk of experiencing major welfare problems in the near future (European Social Survey, 2016). For the purpose of this study, risk perception is operationalized in context to Chung & Mau (2014 p, 306, 310) as the likelihood to loss a job and the perceived difficulty in finding another job. In the ESS Round 8, risk perception is measured with a 5-point Likert scale question: (Item E39) *How likely is it that during the next 12 months you will be unemployed and looking for work for at least four consecutive weeks?* The possible answers are: *(1) not at all likely, (2) not very likely, (3) likely, (4) very likely, (55) never worked or no longer working and not looking for work, (77) don't know, (88) refusal and (99) no answer*. Similarly, the responses *don't know, refusal* and *no answer* are omitted[6].

Following the suggestion by Rehm (2009), this study identifies income as a possible factor that could influence an individual's support for welfare solidarity. In the ESS Round 8, income is

[5] According to (Lavrakas, 2008), omitting responses: don't know, no answer and refusal does not substantially affect the quality of the data since these options are often considered as non-substantive and a form of item non-response.
[6]According to (Lavrakas, 2008), omitting responses: don't know and refusal does not substantially affect the quality of the data since these options are often considered as non-substantive and a form of item non-response.

operationalized as household net income, after tax and compulsory deductions (Item, F41). The survey groups individuals into ten income deciles in order of their income levels, such that the first decile indicates lowest income. In this study, the ten income groups are recoded into three groups low (1^{st}-3^{rd} income decile), middle (4^{th}- 7^{th} income decile), and high (8^{th}-10^{th} decile) income class: (low= 0, middle= 1, and high= 2).

At the contextual level, explanatory variables are categorized in three dimensions: socioeconomic factors, institutional factors and factors of internationalization (Mau et al., 2012). Firstly, the indicator for the socioeconomic factor: *income inequality* is measured using the Gini coefficient[7] based on the equivalized household disposable income, after or before taxes and transfers (ESS Multilevel Data Resource (ESS MDR), 2019). The relevant data for this variable is retrieved from the ESS MDR that complies data from the Eurostat dissemination (data from 2005). Secondly, the indicator for the institutional factor: *welfare state expenditure* is measured as the level of social expenditure (in percentage of GDP) to indicate the amount of social protection a country provides. The relevant data for this variable is compiled from the OECD social expenditure database (SOCX) and retrieved from the ESS MDR (data from 2005). Thirdly, the indicator for the factor of internationalization: *migration* is measured as the share of the population born abroad (as the percentage of total population) to indicate the presence of immigrants in a given country. The relevant data for this variable is compiled from the Eurostat and retrieved from the ESS MDR (data from 2008). To derive the share of the population born abroad as percentage of the total population, I calculated country specific averages using the total population data derived from the ESS MDR from 2005-2015.

For the interaction effect at the individual level, this study considers trust in EU institutions as a measure of institutional trust. However, in the ESS Round 8, trust in supranational institutions is measured only for the EU parliament. Nevertheless, this option is considered for the study because the indicators of trust in institutions at the individual level are strongly associated. In the survey, this variable is measured with the following question: (Item B6) *Please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much you personally trust each in the European Parliament?* The responses are *0=no trust at all to 10= complete trust*. In this study, the responses *don't know, refusal* and *no answer* are omitted from the analysis.

The control variables for this study consist of individual and socio-demographic characteristics (retrieved from ESS Round 8). The individual characteristics associated with the economic self-

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[7] According to the ESS Multilevel Data (2019): the Gini Coefficient is defined as the area between the Lorenz curve (which plots cumulative shares of the population from the poorest to the richest, against the cumulative share of income that they received) and the 45-degree line, taken as a ratio of the whole triangle. The value of the Gini coefficient range between 0, in the case of ‘perfect equality’ (i.e., each share of the population gets the same share of income), and 1, in the case of perfect inequality (i.e., all income goes to the individual with the highest income).

interest that could influence an individual's perceptions such as: type of employment contract is controlled for (contract types are coded as: 1=unlimited contract, 2=limited contract and 3=no contract). The socio-demographic factors that could influence welfare attitudes and feelings of subjective insecurity such as age[8], education level[9](recoded into *low= 0, middle= 1* and *high=2*, following the ES ISCED), number of individuals in households and gender[10] (1= male, 2=female) are controlled for. The variable used for the individuals level analysis retrieved from the ESS Round 8 are accessible in Appendix A.

4.2 Case Selection

To answer my empirical research question, at the individual level, I use cross-sectional data from the European Social Survey 2016 wave (ESS Round 8), which is administered in 23 countries. The ESS Round 8 consists of a random probability sample with a minimum target response rate of 70 percent, and the unit of analysis is individuals (ESS-8, 2016). For the interaction effects at the individual level, I use data from the ESS Round 8. At the country level, I use data from the European Social Survey Multilevel Data Resource to analyze the ESS Round 8 respondents in context to the countries they live in (ESS MDR, 2016). The ESS MDR is compiled country-level data from the OECD social expenditure databases (SOCX), administered in 37 OECD countries and the Eurostat dissemination. Since the study aims at measuring the support for a European Union-wide social benefit scheme, the empirical analysis is limited to EU member states, n=17 (out 23 countries Austria (n=998), Belgium (n=1070), Czech Republic (n=1137), Estonia (n=1228), Finland (n=854), France (n=1077), Germany (n=1719), Hungary (n=593), Ireland (n=1178), Italy (n=710), Netherlands (n=968), Poland (n=494), Portugal (n=631), Slovenia (n=699), Spain (n=854), Sweden (n=967), United Kingdom (n=1035) (since the survey is before the Brexit). For the country-level analysis, Italy is not included in the analysis due to missing data.

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[8] Age can explain the feelings of insecurity and the attitudes towards redistribution. For instance, older people display positive attitudes towards redistribution and higher levels of subjective insecurity because they fear being displaced in the labor market by younger people (Green, 2009). On the other hand, younger people are also likely to display higher feelings of subjective insecurity: particularly those in the middle age (Fullerton & Wallace, 2007).

[9]Generally, high levels of education provide insurance against the adverse labor market effects, therefore highly educated people will demand less welfare and also display lower levels of subjective insecurity (Rehm et al., 2009; Mau et al., 2012).

[10]Women are more likely to support welfare redistribution than men and have shown to display higher levels of subjective insecurity (Rehm et al., 2009; Burgoon & Dekker, 2010; Mau et al., 2012).

4.3 Research Method

4.3.1 Data Collection

For individual-level data, I extract data from the ESS Round 8, whereas country-level data is extracted from the ESS Multilevel Data Resource (ESS MDR). The survey data from the ESS Round 8 was collected in 2016, through face-to-face interviews (ESS-8, 2016). On the other hand, country-level data for the contextual variables (income inequality, welfare state expenditure and share of population born abroad from the period 2005-2015) is extracted from the ESS MDR which compiles data from OECD Social Expenditure Database (SOCX) and the Eurobarometer dissemination respectively (ESS MDR, 2016).

4.3.2 Data Analysis

This study is a large-N observational research that seeks to identify causal effects by comparing the distribution of citizens' support for European welfare solidarity across a subset of EU individuals and EU member countries as defined by subjective socioeconomic insecurity. The analysis employs an adjusting conditioning strategy using cross-sectional data. The adjusting strategy identifies the confounding factors and takes away their influences so that the actual relationship we are interested in can shine through (Toshkov, 2019, p.220). The research is also supplemented with country-level data on income inequality, welfare expenditure, and the share of foreign-born populations that are aggregated at the country level. Multilevel data provides an additional dimension of variation to allow for cross country comparison; thus, causal inference can be drawn on a country level.

Additionally, this study employs a moderation technique for the individual and country-level analysis. Firstly, for the individual level analysis, institutional trust is considered as a possible moderating variable. Generally, there is a lack of consensus among scholars about institutional trust's influence on subjective socioeconomic insecurity (Chung & Mau, 2014) and welfare attitudes (Berg, 2007; Edlund & Lindth, 2013; Wroe, 2014). A mediation strategy could be a viable method to draw out the causal explanation of subjective socioeconomic insecurity on support for welfare solidarity in Europe; however, this study considers a moderation technique where institutional trust is hypothesized to increase the effect of subjective socioeconomic insecurity on support for welfare solidarity in Europe. Secondly, for the country-level analysis the contextual factors: income inequality, welfare expenditure and the share of foreign-born populations are used as moderating variables to analyze the effect of subjective insecurity on support for welfare solidarity in Europe.

To test the individual and country-level hypothesis, I conduct multiple linear (ordinary least squares: OLS) regressions using the software R for each level of analysis. For the individual level, I estimate and report a model for the explanatory variables of the study followed by another model which introduces the control variables, excluding the interaction effect. To identify the interaction effect at the individual level, I round up a model including the moderator: institutional trust. For the country-level analysis, I conduct linear regressions that test the effect of contextual factors on the relationship between subjective socioeconomic insecurity and support for welfare solidarity in Europe.

4.4 Validity and Reliability

The use of a large-N research design benefits external validity. Survey data retrieved from the ESS Round 8, is drawn from a large sample which consists of a random probability sampling. Therefore, the results of this study can be generalized to all EU citizens. Moreover, considering that the European Social Survey and the European Multilevel Data Resource is easily accessible, this study can be replicated. Also, R software's use allows for replicability of the results of this study; thus, benefitting external validity. By including the control variables: gender, type of contract, age, and level of education, this study controls alternative explanations, thus benefitting internal validity. The adjusting conditioning strategy used in the study identifies the confounding factors and takes away their influences so that the effect of subjective insecurity on support for welfare solidarity can shine through (Toshkov, 2019, p.220).

This study employs a cross-sectional design, mainly because research on citizen attitudes towards welfare solidarity is a new research phenomenon. The most recent surveys that capture support for welfare solidarity in Europe are from 2016, and so far, no follow up surveys have been conducted. Otherwise, this study would have used a panel design to compare the effect of subjective insecurity on support for welfare solidarity over time. Therefore, the results of this study should be interpreted with caution. Generally, the cross-sectional design is prone to biases and selection effects because the design variables are blocked by common time effects (Toshkov, 2019, p.232). This study employs a conditioning strategy by controlling for alternative explanations to reduce reversed causality, thus improving the results' precision. Additionally, employing a moderation technique refines the causal hypothesis (Wu & Zumbo, 2008).

5. Analysis

This section provides an analysis of the results using data from the ESS Round 8, 2016 for the individual level and the ESS MDR, 2016 for the country level analysis in relation to the theoretical framework of the study.

5.1 Descriptive Analysis

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations and Bivariate correlations of Individual Level variables

	M	**SD**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
1. Support for EU welfare solidarity	2.65	0.76	1							
2. Subjective Insecurity	1.82	0.94	0.09***	1						
3. Income class [a]	1.94	0.81	-0.07***	-0.18***	1					
4. Age	47	15.67	-0.02**	-0.22***	-0.12***	1				
5. Level of education [b]	1.91	0.80	-0.02**	-0.08***	0.34***	-0.43***	1			
6. Type of contract [c]	1.29	0.57	0.06***	0.24***	-0.17***	-0.16***	-0.07***	1		
7. Gender [d]	1.52	0.50	0.02 **	0.007	-0.04***	0.006	0.07***	0.001	1	
8. Trust	4.38	2.41	0.10***	-0.047**	0.11***	-0.14***	0.18***	-0.02**	0.05***	1

[a] Income(low= 0, middle= 1, high= 2); [b] Education (low= 0, middle= 1, high=2); [c] Contract type(1=permanent, 2=temporary, 3=no contract); [d] Gender (1= male, 2=female). ** denotes significance at 10% level, ** at 5% level and *** at 1% level.*

Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations and correlations of the variables based on a sample of 16512 respondents from 17 EU member states. The dependent variable: support for an EU-wide social benefit scored M=2.65 (s.d. =.76), showing that on average respondents are in favor of an EU wide social benefits scheme. The study's explanatory variables: firstly, subjective socioeconomic insecurity scored M= 1.82 (s.d. =.94), indicating that on average respondents are likely to be unemployed in the next 12 months and looking for work for at least four consecutive weeks. Secondly, income class based on household income deciles scored M= 1.94 (s.d. =.81), indicating that on average respondents belong to middle-income households (4th-7th income deciles). On the other hand, the moderator, trust in EU institutions scored M= 4.36 (s.d. =.72), indicating that on average respondents had low levels of trust in EU institutions.

The correlation matrix in Table 1 shows positive and significant relationships between support for welfare solidarity in the EU and subjective socioeconomic insecurity (r=.09, p <.01), the type of contract (r=.06, p <.01), gender (r=.02, p <.05) and trust in EU institutions (r=.10, p <.01). While negative and significant relationships are identified for support for welfare solidarity and income class (r=-.07, p <.01), age (r=-.02, p <.05) and the level of education (r=-.03, p <.05). Moreover, negative and significant relationships between subjective socioeconomic insecurity, income (r=-.18, p <.01), age (r=-.22, p <.01), level of education (r=-.08, p <.01) and trust (r=-.05, p <.01) are identified. Conversely, a positive and significant relationship with subjective socioeconomic insecurity and contract type (r=.24, p <.01) is identified.

Table 2: EU member states opinions on Welfare Solidarity in Europe

Would you be against or in favor of a European Union-wide social benefits scheme?		
	Total Against%	**Total In Favor%**
Western Region EU member states		
Austria	46.9	53.1
Belgium	33.1	66.9
Finland	49.5	50.5
France	43.3	56.7
Germany	38	62
Ireland	32	68
Netherlands	51.2	51.2
Sweden	45	55
United Kingdom	49	51
Eastern Region EU member states		
Czech Republic	37.4	62.6
Hungary	15.8	84.2
Estonia	42.4	57.6
Poland	22.5	77.5
Slovenia	13.7	86.3
Southern Region EU member states		
Italy	18.2	81.8
Spain	13.6	86.4
Portugal	10	90

(N=17 countries, n=16512, % relative frequencies, only valid responses)

Table 2 shows the relative frequencies for EU citizens opinions on an EU-wide social benefit scheme, matched to their countries and categorized according to the welfare state typologies (Esping-Anderson (1990); Scruggs & Allan, 2006). Generally, EU citizens support welfare solidarity in Europe. Countries with the highest levels of support for a uniform EU welfare scheme are Southern and Eastern region EU member states like Portugal (90%), Spain (86.4%), Hungary (84.2%), Slovenia (86.3%), Italy (81.8%) and Poland (77.5%). Western region countries showed lower support levels for a uniform welfare scheme in Europe than Eastern and Southern region EU member states. The country-level descriptive analysis of public attitudes towards welfare solidarity in Europe (Table 2) is matched to socioeconomic (income inequality), institutional (welfare expenditure) and internationalization factors (migration). However, this study notes that the country level descriptive analysis does not infer causality. The relative frequencies for country-level contextual factors are available in Appendix B.

Firstly, a country's income inequality level, measured as the average Gini coefficient from 2005 to 2015, was linked to the level of support for welfare solidarity in Europe. Figure 3 shows that Eastern and Southern Region countries with higher levels of income inequality: Portugal (35.4%), Spain (33.3%), Estonia (32.9%), Poland (31.8%) and Ireland (30.2%), have high levels of support for a uniform EU social benefits scheme. Interestingly, the United Kingdom, which had a high average Gini coefficient (32.5%) showed slightly lower support levels for an EU-wide social benefit scheme at 51% compared to other countries in the Western region with lower income inequality levels: Sweden and Belgium. Also, Slovenia, which had the lowest income inequality level, had the highest support for welfare solidarity in Europe at 86.3% compared to Estonia at 57.6% from the Eastern region.

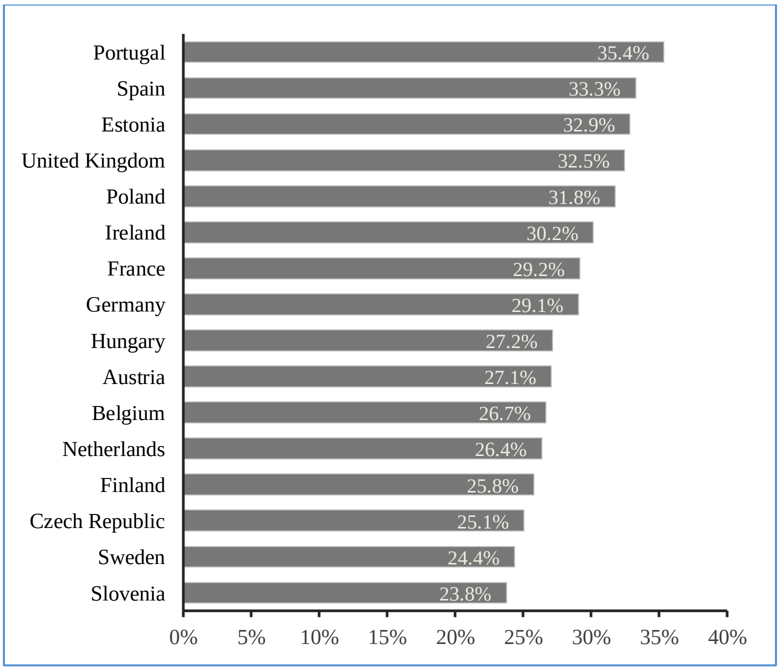


Figure 3: Average Gini coefficient for EU member states based on equivalized household disposable income after or before taxes and transfers from 2005-2015. Source: ESS MDR 2016, own calculations.

Secondly, support for welfare solidarity in Europe was linked to countries' welfare expenditure, which is measured as a percentage of GDP. Figure 4 shows that countries with lower welfare spending levels like Poland (20%) show more support for welfare solidarity in Europe at 77.5%. On the other hand, countries with higher welfare spending levels like France (30.1%), have fewer positive attitudes towards welfare solidarity in Europe, at 56.7%. Interestingly, there are exceptions for countries like Estonia (15.7%) and the Czech Republic (19.2%) with lower welfare spending levels and lower support levels for welfare solidarity in Europe at 57.6% and 62.6%. Contrastingly, France, which had the highest welfare spending level (30.9%), demonstrated slightly lower levels of support an EU-wide social benefit scheme at 51.9% compared to other countries with lower welfare spending. Western region countries (Austria, Finland and Sweden) with higher spending levels, had fewer positive attitudes towards welfare solidarity in Europe.

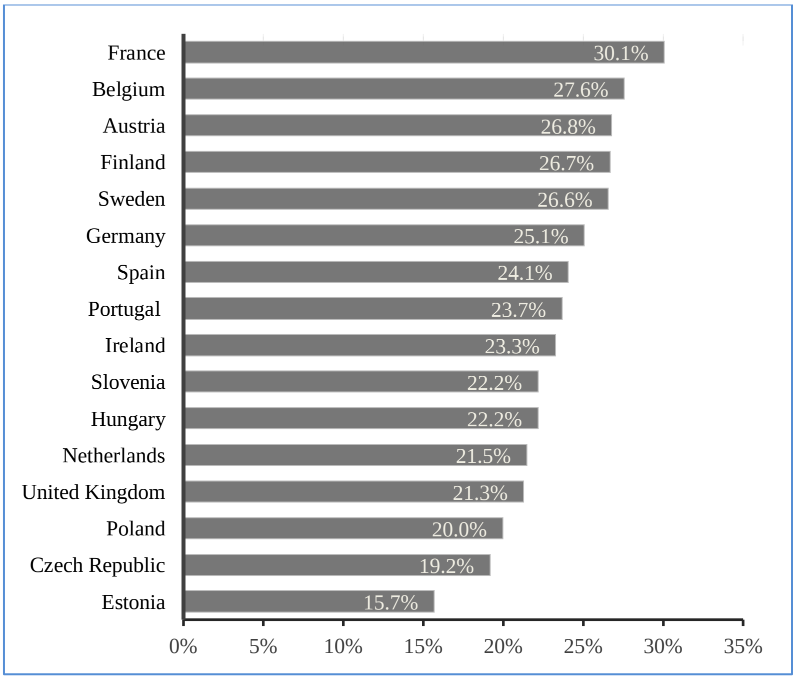


Figure 4: Average Welfare Expenditure for EU member as a percentage of GDP from 2005-2015.

Source: ESS MDR 2016, own calculations.

Finally, countries that had higher immigration rates (population born abroad as a percentage of GDP) such as Ireland (14.6%) and Estonia (11.7%) (shown in Figure 5) demonstrated opinions in favour of an EU-wide social benefit scheme at 57.6% and 68%, respectively. Similarly, countries with low immigration rates like Poland (0.2%) showed support for welfare solidarity in Europe at 67.5%. In contrast, countries such as Austria and Estonia, which had high immigration rates: 10.9% and 14.6%, reported low levels of support for welfare in solidarity in Europe at 53.1% and 57.6%, respectively. On the other hand, countries with low immigration rates like the Netherlands (4%) and Sweden (6.2%), also had low support levels for an EU-wide social benefit scheme at 51.2% and 55%.

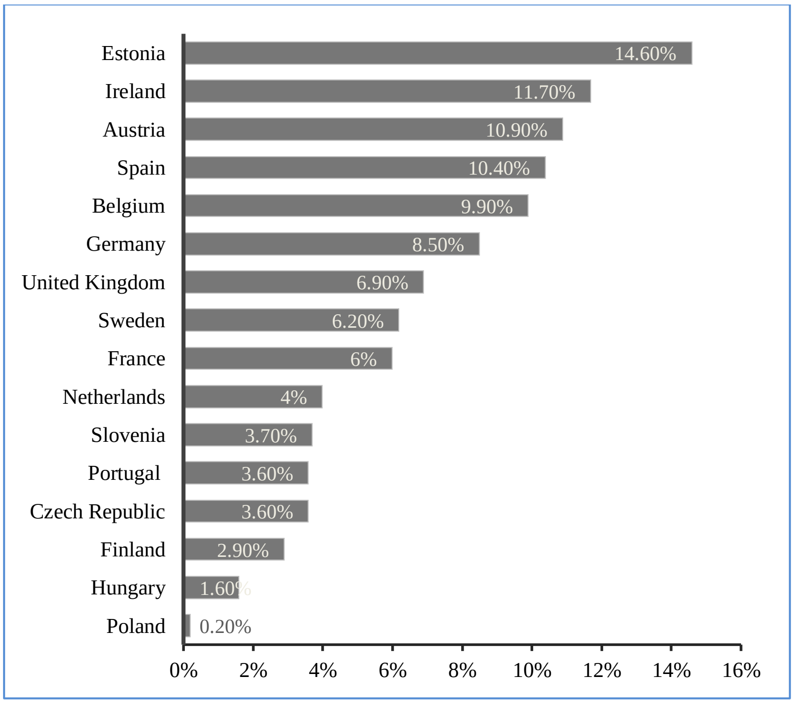


Figure 5: Average Immigration rates (population born abroad as a percentage of the population) from 2005-2015.
Source: ESS MDR 2016, own calculations.

5.2 Inferential Analysis

To test the hypotheses of the study (shown in Table 3), multiple linear regressions were conducted for the individual level and country level analysis.

Table 3: Hypotheses

H1	***Individual Level Analysis:*** Individuals who experience high levels of subjective socioeconomic insecurity are likely to express positive attitudes towards European welfare solidarity.
H2	Individuals who experience high levels of subjective socioeconomic insecurity are likely to express positive attitudes towards welfare solidarity in Europe if they trust in EU institutions.
H3	*Country Level Analysis:* The positive effect of subjective socioeconomic insecurity on support for welfare solidarity in Europe will be stronger in countries with higher income inequality.
H4	The positive effect of subjective socioeconomic insecurity on support for welfare solidarity in Europe will be stronger in countries with low welfare spending.
H5	The positive effect of subjective socioeconomic insecurity on support for welfare solidarity in Europe will be stronger in countries with higher shares of immigrants.

5.2.1 Individual Level Analysis

Table 4 shows the results of the OLS linear regression for the individual-level analysis. In Model 1 and 2, subjective socioeconomic insecurity positively and significantly affects support for welfare solidarity in Europe. Therefore, individuals who are likely to be unemployed in the next twelve months and looking for work in the next four consecutive weeks show positive attitudes towards an EU-wide social benefit scheme. These findings support this study's first hypothesis that individuals with a high level of subjective socioeconomic insecurity express positive attitudes towards welfare solidarity in Europe. Previously, studies on welfare attitudes focused on the objective measures of job insecurity, such as changes in institutional settings (labor market regulations) and the impact of market volatilities (globalization). This study finds support for job insecurity's subjective measure to study welfare attitudes, as suggested by Chung & Mau's (2014). Furthermore, the significant effect of subjective socioeconomic insecurity on support for a uniform welfare scheme in Europe corresponds to Rehm's (2009) argument that individual preferences for social welfare and redistribution result from risk exposure and job insecurity.

Moreover, this study identifies income class as a structural cleavage that drives individual preferences for social welfare, as suggested by Gerhards et al. (2019). Table 4 shows that income class significantly affects EU citizens' preferences for welfare solidarity in Europe. EU citizens from middle- and high-income households have more negative attitudes towards welfare solidarity in Europe than citizens from low-income households. These findings complement Baute et al. (2019b) and Ciornei & Rechi (2017) that affluent individuals show little interest in supporting welfare solidarity. Firstly, individuals behave rationally in opposition or in favor of welfare solidarity based on their likelihood of receiving welfare benefit, as suggested by Weber (1968) and Esping-Anderson (1990). Secondly, individuals support or oppose welfare depending on whether government redistribution affects the quality of the individual's social environment (where they stand in the socioeconomic hierarchy and their standard of living compared to other people in their networks) Corneo & Gruner (2002, p.87). In this case, individuals who come from middle and high-income households show less support for a uniform welfare scheme in Europe than individuals from low-income households mainly because a uniform welfare scheme will be generated from taxation which will directly affect their income/wealth ceiling (Baute et al., 2019b; Ciornei & Rechi, 2017).

The control variables of gender and type of contract contribute significantly to this study. By holding the control variables constant and adjusting for their effects, the actual positive effect of subjective insecurity on support for welfare solidarity is revealed, as suggested by Toshkov (2019). In Table 4, the positive effect of subjective insecurity on support for welfare solidarity reduces but, remains positive and significant after including the control variables. Model 2 shows that women have

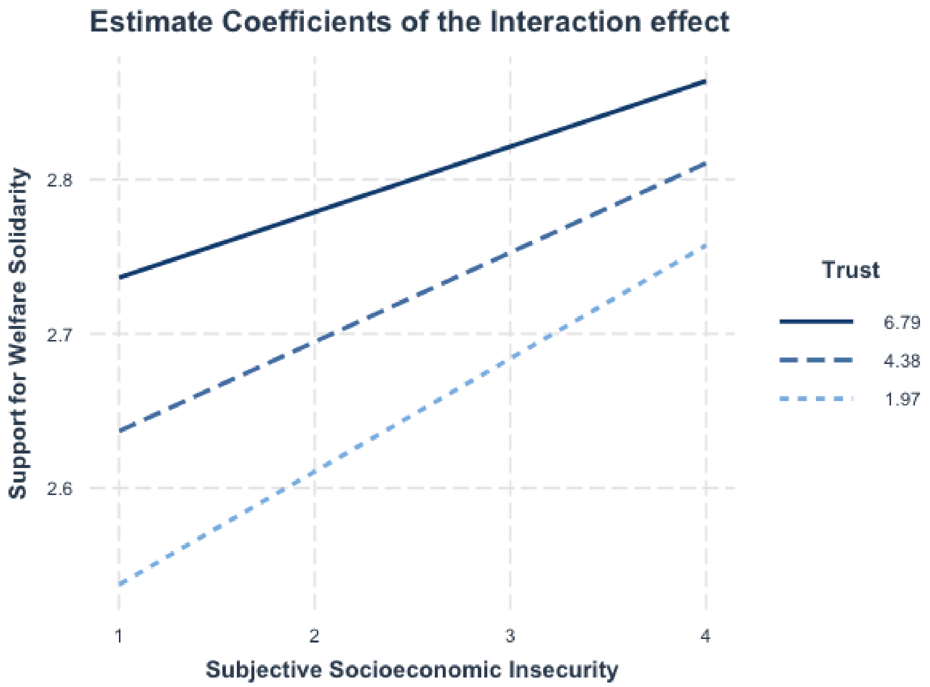
Table 4: Linear Regression for the Individual Level Analysis

	Model (1) Variables of Interest	**Model (2) Including control variables**	**Model (3) Including moderating variable**
Subjective socioeconomic Insecurity	0.065*** (0.006)	0.053*** (0.007)	0.086*** (0.012)
Low-income class	(reference)	(reference)	(reference)
Middle Income class	-0.054*** (0.014)	-0.047*** (0.014)	-0.053*** (0.014)
High income class	-0.109*** (0.015)	-0.101*** (0.016)	-0.110*** (0.016)
Control variables			
Male		(reference)	(reference)
Female		0.029** (0.012)	0.022** (0.012)
Age		-0.0002 (0.0004)	-0.0004 (0.0004)
Low level education		(reference)	(reference)
Middle level education		0.001 (0.014)	-0.012 (0.014)
High level education		0.0002 (0.016)	-0.031* (0.016)
Permanent contract		(reference)	(reference)
Temporary contract		0.091*** (0.017)	0.084*** (0.017)
No contract		0.043* (0.025)	0.037 (0.025)
Moderating variable			
Trust			0.048*** (0.005)
Interaction with Trust			-0.006* (0.002)
Constant	2.582*** (0.016)	2.576*** (0.030)	2.352*** (0.038)
Observations	16,512	16,512	16,512
R^2	0.011	0.014	0.026
Standard errors in parentheses, * denotes significant at 10% level, ** at 5% level and *** at 1% level			

slightly more positive towards an EU-wide social benefit scheme than men. On the other hand, individuals who have a temporary contract have more positive attitudes towards a uniform welfare scheme in Europe than individuals with permanent contracts. Individuals without a contract have slightly more positive towards an EU-wide social benefit scheme than individuals with a permanent contract. Also, younger people show less support for welfare solidarity. However, this effect is insignificant. Finally, middle level and high-level educated people have positive attitudes towards welfare solidarity, but this effect is insignificant for both groups.

Individual Level Moderation Analysis

After including institutional trust in model 3, the effect of subjective socioeconomic insecurity on support for welfare solidarity increases significantly. Contrastingly, when subjective socioeconomic insecurity interacts with trust in institutions, the interaction effect turns negative and significant[11].



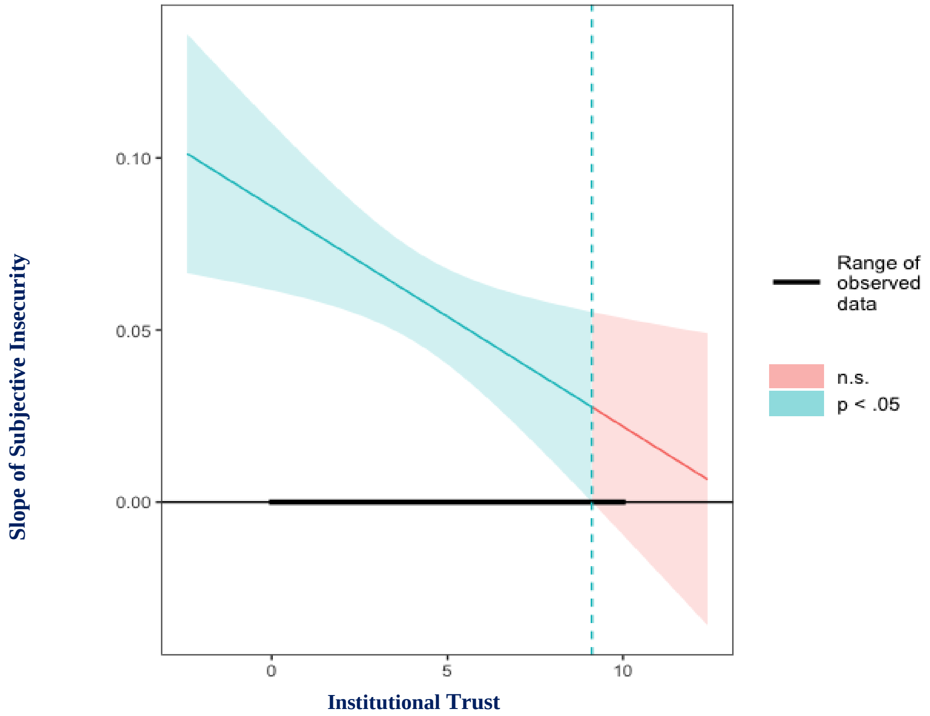
Graph 1: Estimate coefficients for different levels of Institutional Trust (Mean, +1SD, -1SD)

Source: R Software

The negative interaction effect indicates that the positive effect of subjective insecurity on welfare solidarity support is smaller when institutional trust increases. Equivalently, institutional trust's positive effect on support for welfare solidarity is smaller when subjective socioeconomic insecurity increases. This relationship is in Graph 1, which shows the slope analysis of the effect of subjective insecurity for the different levels of trust (low trust =1.97, medium trust= 4.38, high trust= 6.79). The three slopes show that support for welfare increases as subjective insecurity increases for the different levels of trust. From analyses, institutional trust positively affects the relationship between subjective insecurity and welfare solidarity, but this positive effect is different for various levels of trust. The unexpected interaction effect results in Model 3 attributed to the ceiling effect (Salkind, 2010), which

[11] The disordinal interaction is shown in Graph 1B in Appendix C.

implies that the dependent variable: support for welfare solidarity, is not sensitive to values above the level that is already predicted by high levels of subjective insecurity and trust.



Graph 2: Slope Analysis of the effect of Subjective Insecurity on Welfare solidarity for different values of Trust in Institutions.

Source: R Software

Since the moderator is a continuous variable, the Johnson-Neyman technique[12], is performed to identify the range at which the moderator and the slope of the predictor variables is significantly different from zero (see Appendix D). Graph 2 shows the slope analysis of subjective insecurity for the different values of trust (0=no trust to 10= complete trust). The plot shows where the conditional slope of subjective insecurity differs significantly from zero. From the point where the moderator is smaller than the value of nine, the slope of subjective insecurity is positive and significantly different from zero. The lower bound for this interval is smaller than zero and it is far outside the observed data. When the value of trust is at the threshold (trust level of 9= high trust), the slope of subjective insecurity is positive. Therefore, the positive effect of subjective insecurity on support for welfare solidarity depends on trust. Generally, citizens have low levels of trust in the EU institutions. Nevertheless, individuals with high subjective insecurity, who demonstrate a degree of political trust, show positive attitudes towards welfare solidarity in Europe. These results align with the empirical findings of Baute et al. (2019b) and Muñoz et al. (2011) who argue that high levels of institutional trust influence positive welfare attitudes.

[12] According to Hayes & Mathes, (2009), the Johnson Newman plot displays the change in the slope of a focal predictor for different values of a moderator. The plot includes the 95% confidence intervals that indicate what the range of the moderators the simple slopes of the predictors are significantly different from 0.

5.2.2 Country Level Moderation Analysis

Income Inequality

Model 1 in Table 5 shows the positive effect of subjective socioeconomic insecurity on welfare solidarity after including income inequality. Moreover, the negative effect of income class on support for welfare solidarity decreases but remains significant. Thus, indicating that households with higher income levels have fewer positive attitudes towards welfare solidarity than households with lower income levels. This study identifies income as an individual level structural characteristic for the formation of structural cleavages, which drive individual preferences for social welfare in indifferent income groups, as suggested by Gerhards et al. (2016, 2019) and Rehm et al. (2012).

Income inequality on its own has a positive and significant effect on support for welfare solidarity. Consequently, income inequality is identified as a country-level structural characteristic for forming structural cleavages that drive citizens' preference for social welfare (Gerhards et al., 2019). In this case, individuals from countries with high-income inequality have positive attitudes towards welfare solidarity. When income inequality interacts with subjective socioeconomic insecurity, the interaction effect turns negative. Thus, indicating a difference in the positive effect of subjective socioeconomic insecurity on welfare solidarity in countries with low and high-income inequality. Since this interaction effect is insignificant, the difference in the positive effect of subjective insecurity on support for welfare solidarity does not vary systematically across countries. However, the positive effect of subjective insecurity on support for welfare solidarity is higher in countries with high-income inequality.

Welfare Expenditure

In Model 2, welfare expenditure decreases the effect of subjective socioeconomic insecurity on support for welfare solidarity. Moreover, the significant positive effect of subjective insecurity on support for welfare solidarity disappears. However, the negative effect of income class on support for welfare solidarity in Europe remains significant. Welfare expenditure on its own has a negative and significant effect on support for welfare solidarity in Europe. Thus, indicating that individuals from countries with high welfare spending have fewer positive attitudes towards an EU-wide social benefit scheme. These findings are in line with empirical evidence from Gerhards et al. (2016) that individuals from countries with high welfare expenditure are more likely to reject the idea of a uniform welfare benefit scheme in Europe. Therefore, this study supplements Gerhard et al. (2016) that welfare expenditure is a structural characteristic at the country level for forming a structural cleavage that drives individual preference for welfare solidarity in Europe.

Table 5: Linear Regression with Interaction effect for Country Level Analysis

	Model (1)	Model (2)	Model (3)
Subjective socioeconomic Insecurity	0.125**	0.052	0.044***
	(0.057)	(0.040)	(0.007)
Middle Income class	-0.047***	-0.048***	-0.052***
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)
High income class	-0.091***	-0.095***	-0.104***
	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.016)
Control variables			
Female	0.035**	0.034**	0.034**
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Age	-0.0003	-0.0005	-0.0003
	(0.0004)	(0.0004)	(0.0004)
Middle level education	-0.004	-0.017	-0.005
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)
High level education	-0.0008	-0.005	0.006
	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.016)
Temporary contract	0.098***	0.106***	0.096***
	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.018)
No contract	0.012	0.027	0.049*
	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)
Moderating variables			
Income Inequality	0.029***		
	(0.004)		
Welfare expenditure		-0.012***	
		(0.004)	
Immigration rates			-0.005
			(0.004)
Interaction with: Income Inequality	-0.003		
	(0.002)		
Interaction with: Welfare expenditure		-0.0003	
		(0.002)	
Interaction with: Immigration rates			0.001
			(0.002)
Constant	1.749***	2.881***	2.611***
	(0.122)	(0.089)	(0.041)
Observations	15802	15802	15802
R^2	0.024	0.018	0.013

Standard errors in parentheses, * denotes significant at 10% level, ** at 5% level and *** at 1% level

However, the interaction effect is statistically insignificant. Therefore, the effect of welfare expenditure on the positive effect of subjective insecurity on support for welfare solidarity does not vary systematically across countries. Since the positive effect of subjective insecurity on support for welfare solidarity disappears, it is evident that welfare spending of a country does not affect the relationship between subjective insecurity and support for welfare solidarity.

Immigration rates

Model 3 shows the effect of including immigrations on the main effect. Consequently, the main effect becomes smaller but remains positive and significant. The effect of income class on support for welfare solidarity in Europe decreases slightly but also remains significant. Generally, migration appears to have no significant effect on support for welfare solidarity in Europe. Similarly, the interaction term is insignificant. These findings are contrary to the arguments that migration negatively influences welfare attitudes (van Oorschot, 2008; De Giorgi & Pellizzari, 2009). Instead, the findings supplement Mau and Burkhardt (2009), that immigration rates do not affect welfare support the state. Therefore, this study shows that individuals who have high subjective socioeconomic insecurity have positive attitudes towards support for welfare solidarity and this relationship is not influenced by a country's immigration rates.

6. Conclusion

This study has investigated the effect of subjective insecurity on support for welfare solidarity in Europe. First off, this study identifies that most EU citizens favor an EU wide social benefits scheme. These results are explained by spillover of positive attitudes towards welfare solidarity in Europe contextualizes exercising universal human rights across European territorial spaces (Baute et al., 2019a; Gerhards et al., 2019). Principally, the extension of support for welfare solidarity in Europe is strengthened by a transnational process that emerges from the integration of institutions and social processes across member state borders (Munch, 2010, p.67). Gerhards & Lengfeld (2015) suggest the path-dependent consequence of expanding civil, political and economic rights through the European integration process may trigger welfare solidarity preferences.

This study tests the effect of subjective insecurity on attitudes towards support for an EU-wide social benefit scheme to identify the individuals who manifest positive attitudes towards welfare solidarity in Europe. For the first hypothesis, this study investigates the effect of subjective insecurity on the individual level, regardless of the individual's nationality. This study finds that individuals who have high subjective insecurity show positive attitudes towards European welfare solidarity. These findings demonstrate that subjective insecurity is equally a valid measure for welfare attitudes. Future studies can test both objective and subjective job insecurity measures to understand welfare attitudes. On another note, this study identifies that income class has a negative effect on support for welfare solidarity. Thus, demonstrating that individuals from middle-and-high income households express fewer positive attitudes towards welfare solidarity than individuals from low-income households. These findings suggest that income class is an individual characteristic for forming structural cleavages, that drive welfare solidarity preferences. However, for an in-depth analysis for cleavage formation, it would be more insightful to include other individual characteristics such as human values, political orientation and labor union preference to explain the differences in support for welfare solidarity across various groups.

Since this study employs a large N research design, a conditioning strategy is performed, which allows for the adjusting of control variables. As Toshkov (2019) suggested, the adjusting technique was valuable for this study since the effect of subjective insecurity on support for welfare solidarity was revealed. Control variables like gender and the type of contract contributed significantly to the study. Women showed slightly more positive towards an EU-wide social benefit scheme than men. Also, citizens with temporary and no contracts showed more positive attitudes towards a uniform welfare scheme in Europe than individuals with permanent contracts.

For the second hypothesis, this study used a moderation technique. Due to the centering of trust responses around the mean, the dependent variable was not sensitive to higher trust responses. This phenomenon could point out limitations in the dependent variables' measurement instrument and the explanatory variable: institutional trust. Therefore this study investigates the ceiling effect (Salkind, 2010), by performing the Johnson Newman technique to identify the range at which the moderator and the predictor variable's slope is significantly different from zero. The slope analysis of the effect of subjective insecurity on support for welfare solidarity indicates that trust significantly affects the positive effect of subjective insecurity on support for welfare solidarity. However, the positive effect of subjective insecurity on support for welfare solidarity is lower for individuals with low trust (-1SD of the mean of trust) than for individuals with higher trust levels (+1SD of the mean of trust). Although previous studies have suggested that the effect of institutional trust on welfare attitudes is unknown, this study provides some level of proof that institutional trust affects welfare attitudes as a moderating variable.

On the other hand, the country level moderation analysis revealed that the positive effect of subjective insecurity on welfare solidarity does not necessarily vary systematically across countries. Firstly, this study found that income inequality positively affects support for welfare solidarity in Europe for the socioeconomic contextual factor. However, the positive effect of subjective insecurity on welfare solidarity does not differ significantly across countries with low and high-income inequality. Possibly because the subjective insecurity as an individual predisposition is homogenous and experienced in both low- and high-income inequality countries. Notably, individuals from countries with high-income equality: Southern and Eastern region EU member states, have positive attitudes towards welfare solidarity in Europe. Therefore, solidifying the economic self-interest argument (Weber, 1968) that individuals behave rationally in favor of welfare solidarity based on the likelihood of receiving welfare benefits. Moreover, job insecurity and risk exposure influence welfare and redistribution (Rehm et al., 2009). Individuals from countries with high-income inequality are exposed mainly to job insecurity and risk exposure (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009), thus explaining more positive attitudes towards an EU wide social benefits scheme in such countries.

Secondly, for the institutional factor, this study found that welfare spending negatively affects support for welfare solidarity, thus suggesting that countries with high welfare spending have a low preference for a uniform welfare scheme in Europe. Western region EU member states with high social spending levels have more robust welfare systems thus, low support for an EU wide social benefits scheme arises from the perceived the costs of financing a European welfare scheme (Gerhards et al., 2016). This study also found that the effect of subjective insecurity on support for welfare solidarity turned statistically insignificant. These findings may indicate that welfare spending is somewhat stronger than subjective insecurity in explaining individuals' support for welfare solidarity. This study suggests that citizens' satisfaction with the national welfare state's performance can explain the fewer positive attitudes for welfare solidarity from individuals in countries with the generous welfare state.

Generally, individuals from generous welfare states are more satisfied with their country's welfare state's performance and are likely to show less support for an EU wide social benefits scheme because welfare solidarity could affect the performance of their country's welfare state. The interaction effect of subjective socioeconomic insecurity and welfare spending was also insignificant, thus indicating that welfare spending on the main effect does not vary across countries. Even as a mediating variable, Baute & Meuleman, (2020) find welfare spending to dampen citizens' support for EU universal income. From this evidence, it would be more insightful to include different institutional factors such as the efficiency and effectiveness of welfare regimes other than welfare spending to test the effect of subjective insecurity on welfare solidarity attitudes in Europe.

Thirdly for the factor of internationalization, this study found that migration decreases the positive effect of subjective insecurity and support for welfare solidarity. However, this effect is insignificant. The interaction of subjective socioeconomic insecurity and immigration rates was also positive but insignificant, implying that a high preference for welfare solidarity does not differ significantly in countries with high immigration rates than countries with low immigration rates.

Although the results do not support the study's hypothesis, the results align with empirical findings that suggest immigration rates do not affect welfare attitudes (Auspurg et al 2019; Eger & Breznau, 2017; Kwon & Curran, 2016; Eger 2010; Mau & Burkhardt, 2009). As highlighted by Mau & Burkhardt (2009), public attitudes towards welfare and redistribution not only materialize from the influx of migrants in a country. The authors suggest that institutional factors on the organization of social benefits and whether social benefits generate conflicts between the natives and ethnic communities are vital in explaining welfare attitudes. In addition, Eger & Breznau (2017) point out that objective measures of migration do not affect welfare attitudes and welfare chauvinism (opposition to immigrants' social rights). Nevertheless, in the most recent research, Burgoon & Rooduijn (2021) test the moderating effect of immigrant sentiments on welfare attitudes. The authors find that immigration has a negative effect on welfare attitudes; however, the authors emphasize that migration's moderating effect remains unclear in understanding welfare attitudes.

A limitation of this study is the use of single items to measure constructs. This limitation is of European Social Survey, mainly because, welfare solidarity is a new social policy and research phenomenon. Future ESS waves on welfare attitudes can include questions on support for redistributions from high-income countries to low-income countries. The survey should also include questions that measure citizens' attitudes on the welfare state's various components (cash benefits and benefits in kind). Further research on this topic should either extend the ESS dataset or use the Transnational European Social Survey (TESS) that contains more questions on welfare solidarity attitudes. Hopefully, with the collection of new survey data, upcoming studies can test the effect of insecurity on welfare solidarity over time, using more robust research methods.

Given the economic, social and political pressures affecting the European Union, this study aimed to investigate whether EU citizens support the notion of welfare solidarity. This study has identified that subjective job insecurity has a positive effect on support for welfare solidarity. Moreover, the effect of subjective insecurity on support for welfare solidarity somewhat depends on trust in EU institutions. As EU policymakers develop Social Europe policies, attention should be towards the effect of individual predispositions and income class as a vital structural cleavage in support for welfare solidarity.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Variables used in the European Social Survey, Round 8, 2016

Variable	Question in the ESS Round 8	Answer categories
Support for Welfare Solidarity in Europe	E37 It has been proposed that there should be a European Union-wide social benefit scheme for all poor people. In a moment I will ask you to tell me whether you are against or in favour of this scheme. First, look at the highlighted box at the top of this card, which shows the main features of the scheme. A European Union-wide social benefit scheme includes all of the following: ...READ OUT...- The purpose is to guarantee a minimum standard of living for all poor people in the European Union. - The level of social benefit people receive will be adjusted to reflect the cost of living in their country. - The scheme would require richer European Union countries to pay more into such a scheme than poorer European Union countries. INTERVIEWER: PAUSE TO GIVE THE RESPONDENT TIME TO READ CARD. Overall, would you be against or in favour of having such a European Union-wide social benefit scheme?	Please choose your answer from the options at the bottom of the card. Values Categories 1 Strongly against 2 Against 3 In favor 4 Strongly in favor 7 Refusal 8 Don't know 9 No answer
Subjective Socioeconomic Insecurity	E39 Using this card, please tell me how likely it is that during the next 12 months you will be unemployed and looking for work for at least four consecutive weeks?	*Values Categories* 1 Not at all likely 2 Not very likely 3 Likely 4 Very likely

		55 Not working/not looking for work/never worked 77 Refusal 88 Don't know 99 No answer
Income class	F41 Using this card, please tell me which letter describes your household's total income, after tax and compulsory deductions, from all sources? If you don't know the exact figure, please give an estimate. Use the part of the card that you know best: weekly, monthly or annual income.	*Values* *Categories* 1 J - 1st decile 2 R - 2nd decile 3 C - 3rd decile 4 M - 4th decile 5 F - 5th decile 6 S - 6th decile 7 K - 7th decile 8 P - 8th decile 9 D - 9th decile 10 H - 10th decile 77 Refusal 88 Don't know 99 No answer
Gender	F21 CODE SEX, respondent	*Values* *Categories* 1 Male 2 Female 9 No answer
Age	F31b Age of respondent, calculated	*Values* *Categories* 999 Not available
Level of Education	F15 Generated variable: Highest level of education, ES - ISCED	*Values* *Categories* 0 Not possible to harmonize into ES-ISCED 1 ES-ISCED I , less than lower secondary 2 ES-ISCED II, lower secondary 3 ES-ISCED IIIb, lower tier upper secondary

		4 ES-ISCED IIIa, upper tier upper secondary 5 ES-ISCED IV, advanced vocational, sub-degree 6 ES-ISCED V1, lower tertiary education, BA level 7 ES-ISCED V2, higher tertiary education, >= MA level 55 Other 77 Refusal 88 Don't know 99 No answer
Type of contract	F23 Do/did you have a work contract of ...	*Values* *Categories* 1 Unlimited 2 Limited 3 No contract 6 Not applicable 7 Refusal 8 Don't know 9 No answer
Trust in EU institutions	B6-12 Using this card, please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much you personally trust each of the institutions I read out. 0 means you do not trust an institution at all, and 10 means you have complete trust. Firstly... ...the European Parliament?	*Values* *Categories* 0 No trust at all 1 1 2 2 3 3 4 4 5 5 6 6 7 7 8 8 9 9 10 Complete trust 77 Refusal 88 Don't know 99 No answer

Appendix B

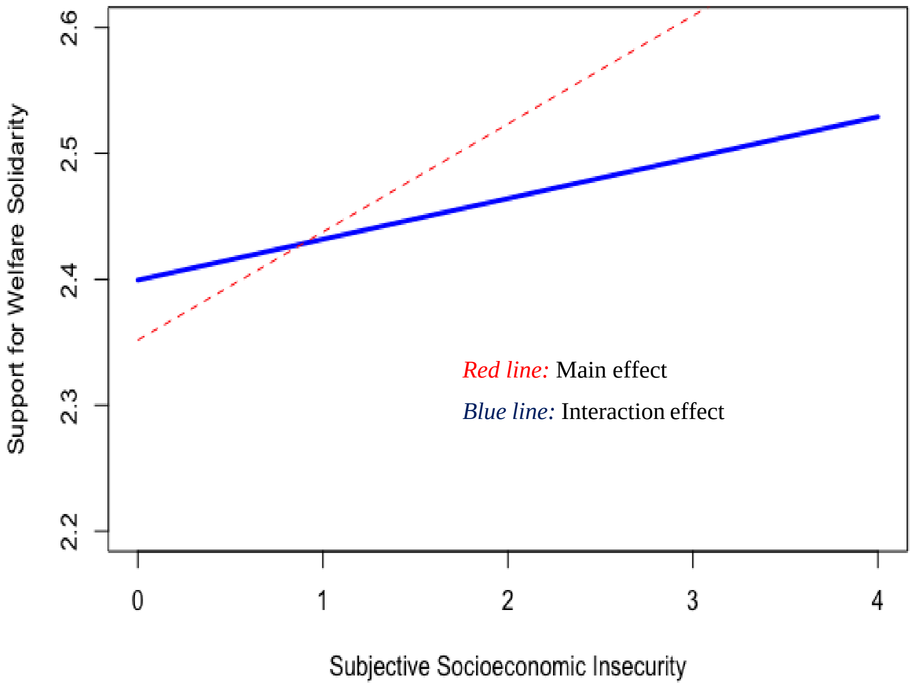
% Means of the contextual factors for EU member states (from 2005-2015)

	Income Inequality% (Average Gini coefficient %)	Welfare Expenditure% (Average Welfare expenditure as a % of GDP)	Migration rates% (Average Population born abroad as a %of the population)
Western Region EU member states			
Austria	27.1	26.8	10.9
Belgium	26.7	27.6	9.9
Finland	25.8	26.7	2.9
France	29.2	30.1	6.0
Germany	29.1	25.1	8.5
Ireland	30.2	23.3	11.7
Netherlands	26.4	21.5	4.0
Sweden	24.4	26.6	6.2
United Kingdom	32.5	21.3	6.9
Eastern Region EU member states			
Czech Republic	25.1	19.2	3.6
Hungary	27.2	22.2	1.6
Estonia	32.9	15.7	14.6
Poland	31.8	20.0	0.2
Slovenia	23.8	22.2	3.7
Southern Region EU member states			
Spain	33.3	24.1	10.4
Portugal	35.4	23.7	3.6

(N=16 countries, percentage of average measures for the period 2005-2015)

Appendices C

Estimate coefficients for the Interaction effect of Trust in Institutions



Graph 1: Interaction between Subjective Insecurity and Trust in Institutions

Source: R Software

The red graph line shows the effect of slope of subjective socioeconomic insecurity on support for welfare solidarity without the interaction term. The graph line shows that support for welfare solidarity in Europe increases as subjective socioeconomic insecurity. Conversely, when people trust in institutions, the positive effect of subjective socioeconomic insecurity on support for welfare solidarity also increases but the positive effect of subjective insecurity is lower when trust is included. This relationship is indicated by the blue graph line. The red slope which shows the main effect appears steeper than the blue slope.

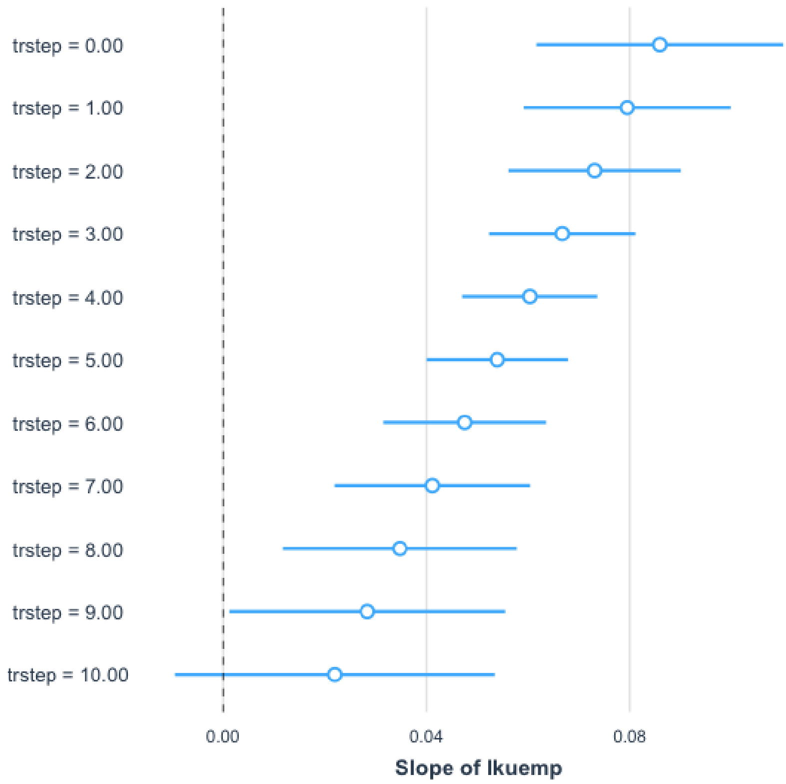
Appendices D

Table with Estimates coefficients and Significance Levels for the slope of subjective insecurity on every level of Trust

Value of Trust	*Slope of Subjective Insecurity*	*Conditional Intercept*
0	0.09 (0.01)***	2.54 (0.02)
1	0.08 (0.01)***	2.57 (0.01
2	0.07 (0.01)***	2.61 (0.01)
3	0.07 (0.01)***	2.65 (0.01)
4	0.06 (0.01)***	2.68 (0.01)
5	0.05 (0.01)***	2.72 (0.01)
6	0.05 (0.01)***	2.75 (0.01)
7	0.04 (0.01)***	2.79 (0.01)
8	0.03 (0.01)**	2.83 (0.02)
9	0.03 (0.01)*	2.86 (0.02)
10	0.02 (0.02)	2.90 (0.02)

Source: R software

Graph showing Estimates coefficients for the slope of subjective insecurity on every level of Trust



Source: R software