

The effect of welfare state preferences and evaluations on political support in Europe

**BIGSSS International Conference,
24-25 September, 2015**

Research question

- Stability of political system dependent on its people's support as well (Weber 1980, Pickel & Pickel 2006)
 - Similar reasoning regarding welfare state orientations (e.g. Mau & Veghte 2007, Svallfors 2012)
 - Unclear, if and how welfare state orientations affect general political support
- *In what ways and to what extent is people's political support dependent on their welfare state orientations?*

Political support

- Different understandings of political support dependent on research interest and theoretical perspective
- “an attitude by which a person orients himself to an object either favorably or unfavorably, positively or negatively” (Easton 1975:436)

Table 2.4: *Types of political support*

Type	Source	Object		
		<i>Community</i>	<i>Regime</i>	<i>Authorities</i>
<i>Diffuse</i>	Norms/Values	Identification	Legitimacy	Legitimacy
	Long-term benefit	—	Trust	Trust
<i>Specific</i>	Short-term benefit	—	—	Satisfaction

Source: Fuchs (1989:18)

Political support

Table 2.5: *Modes of political support*

Mode	Object		
	<i>Community</i>	<i>Regime</i>	<i>Authorities</i>
<i>Expressive</i>	Identification	Identification	Identification
<i>Moral</i>	Legitimacy	Legitimacy	Legitimacy
<i>Instrumental</i>	Effectiveness	Effectiveness	Effectiveness

Source: Fuchs (1989:26)

Review

Studies taking into account non-democratic/ non-political factors mainly focus on:

- Economic performance and evaluations of the economy (Armingeon & Guthmann 2014, Erlingsson et al. 2014, Kotzian 2011, Yap 2013)
- Income inequality (Anderson & Singer 2008, Krieckhaus 2014, Pollack 2004)

Some consider effects related to the welfare state:

- Personal gains from cash benefits in Uruguay (Manacorda et al. 2011)
- Personal experiences with the welfare state in Sweden (Kumlin 2002)
- Welfare state policies; unemployment generosity in Europe (Kumlin 2014)
- Welfare state evaluations in Sweden (Huseby 2000), East Germany (Finkel et al. 2001), Europe (Lühiste 2014)

Welfare state orientations

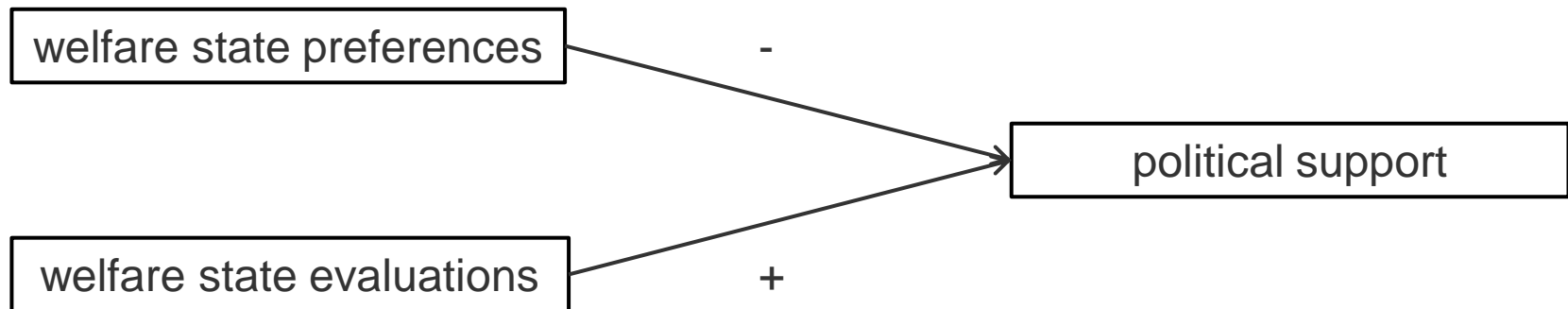
- Welfare state orientations are not evaluative only, but multidimensional (e.g. van Oorschot & Meuleman 2012, Roosma et al. 2013)
- Analytical distinctions of welfare state orientations driven by *objects* of orientations, e.g. goals, range, outcomes
- But less systematically in terms of *modes* of orientations, e.g. perceptions, preferences, evaluations (c.f. Jasso & Wegener 1997)



Source: Roosma et al. (2013:238)

Welfare state orientations and political support

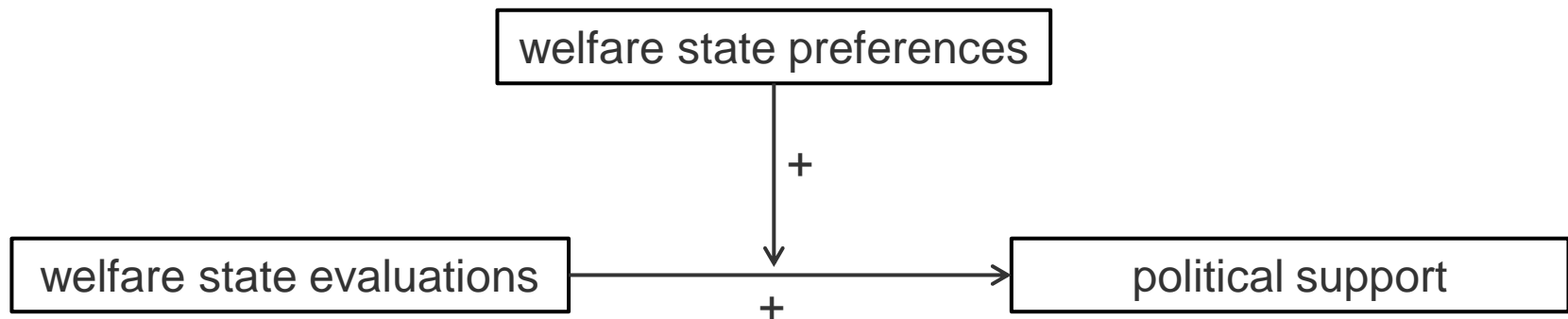
- Preferences and evaluations as main dimensions of welfare state orientations (Roosma et al. 2014)



- *The higher the preference for welfare state engagement, the lower political support.*
- *The better the evaluation of welfare state engagement, the higher political support.*

Welfare state orientations and political support

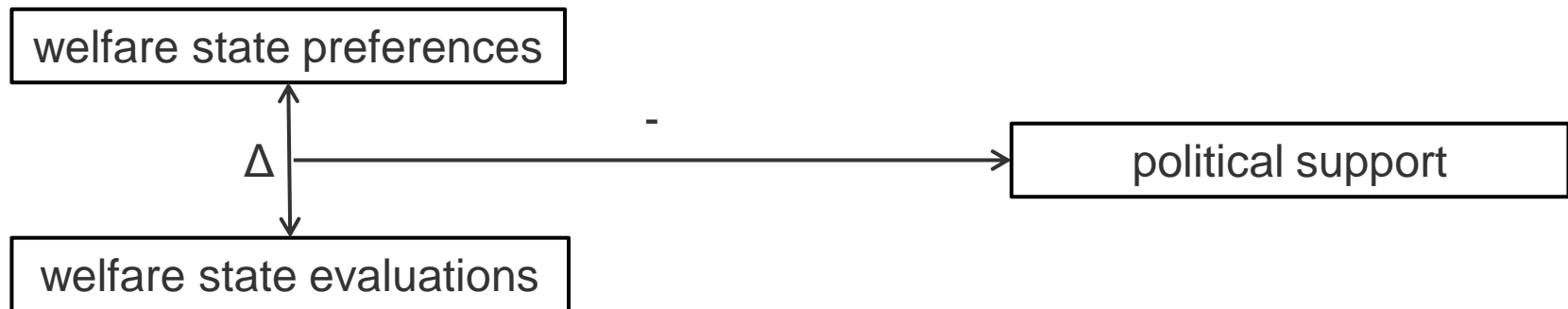
- Preferences as “normative benchmark” or “yardstick” towards which the actual welfare state is compared
- Preferences are assumed to moderate the effect of people’s evaluations



- *The effect of welfare state evaluations on political support is more pronounced, if preferences for welfare state engagement are high.*

Welfare state orientations and political support

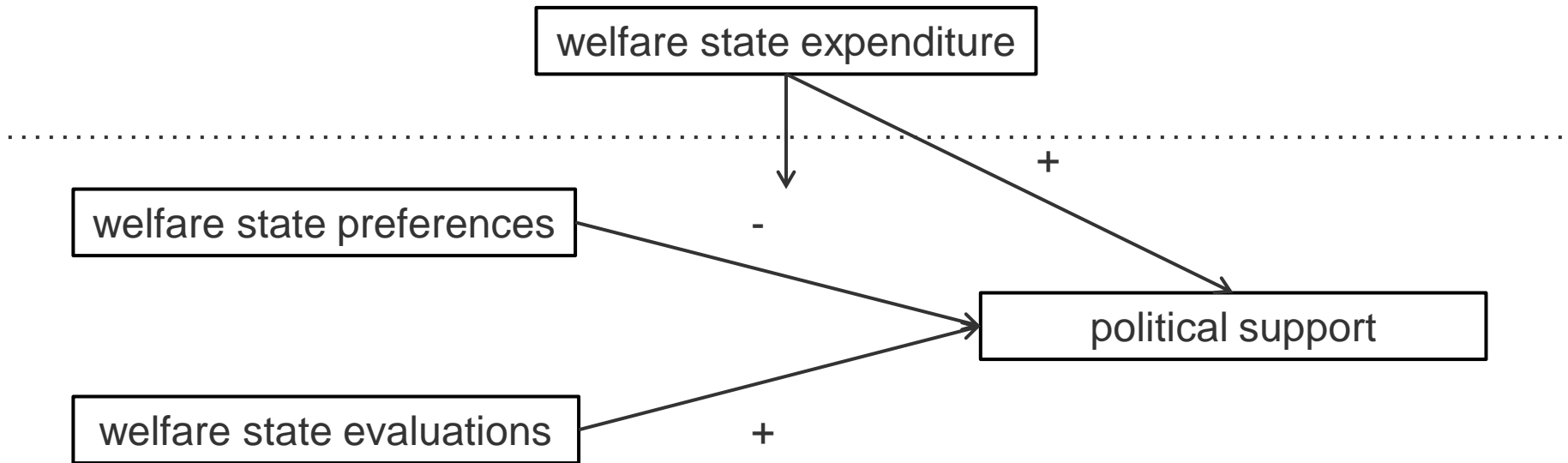
- Discrepancy or distance (Δ) between evaluations of the welfare state and the preferred ideal degree of welfare state engagement is expected to decrease political support



- *The higher the discrepancy between welfare state preferences and evaluations, the lower political support.*

Welfare state orientations and political support

- Taking into account the actual welfare state context



- *The more encompassing the welfare state, the higher political support.*
- *The effect of welfare state preferences on political support is less pronounced in countries with a more encompassing welfare state.*
- *The effect of welfare state evaluations on political support is less pronounced in countries with a more encompassing welfare state.*

Empirical approach

- ESS Round 4 (2008)
- Eurostat country level data
- $N = 28.795$
- 21 clusters (countries) with an average cluster size of $n_j = 1371.2$
- Principal component analysis for construction of attitudinal index variables (political support, welfare state preferences, welfare state evaluations)
- Hierarchical linear regression analysis (mle) to test hypotheses and construct a parsimonious model of political support

Construction of indexes

Table 3.2: *Analytical differentiation of attitudinal items*

Theoretical concept	Item	Question wording	Scale
Support for institutions	stfdem	<i>How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in [country]?</i>	0-10
Support for authorities	stfgov	<i>How satisfied are you with the way the [country] government is doing its job?</i>	0-10
Support for economic system	stfeco	<i>How satisfied are you with the present state of the economy in [country]?</i>	0-10
Preference for welfare state	gincdif	<i>The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels. It should be entirely governments' responsibility to ...</i>	1-5 0-10
	gvjbevn	<i>ensure a job for everyone who wants one.</i>	
	gvhlthc	<i>ensure adequate health care for the sick.</i>	
	gvslvol	<i>ensure a reasonable standard of living for the old.</i>	
	gvslvue	<i>ensure a reasonable standard of living for the unemployed.</i>	
	gvclcr	<i>ensure sufficient child care services for working parents.</i>	
	gvpdlnk	<i>provide paid leave from work for people who temporarily have to care for sick family members.</i>	
Evaluation of welfare state		<i>What do you think overall about the ...</i>	0-10
	yngfnjb	<i>opportunities for young people to find their first full-time job in [country]?</i>	
	stfhlth	<i>state of health services nowadays in [country]?</i>	
	slvpens	<i>standard of living of pensioners?</i>	
	slvuemp	<i>standard of living of people who are unemployed?</i>	
	cldcrsv	<i>provision of affordable child care services for working parents?</i>	
	stfedu	<i>state of education in [country] nowadays?</i>	

Construction of indexes

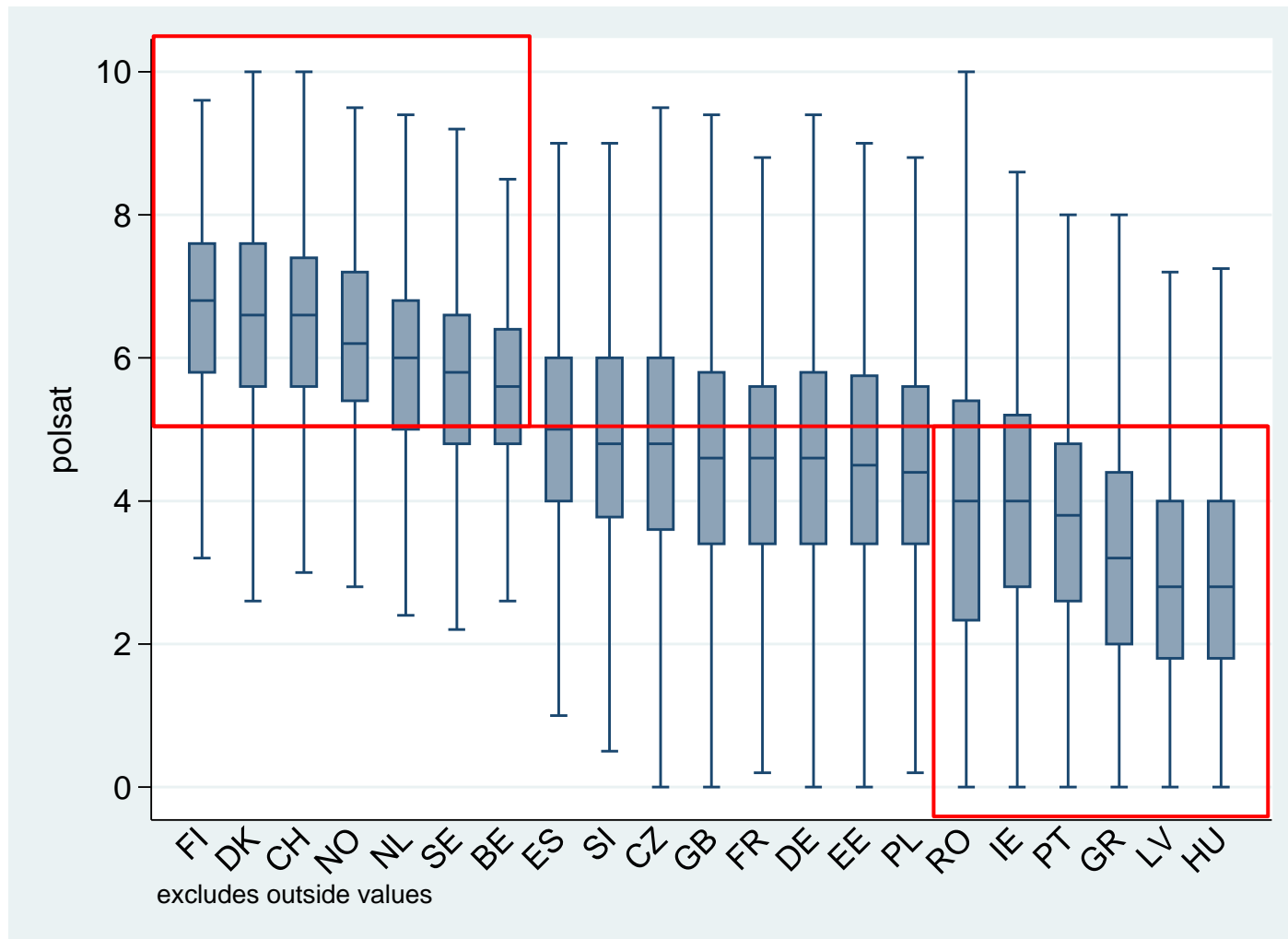
Table 3.3: *Rotated factor matrix (PCA)*

Variable	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Uniqueness	
stfdem	-0.0426	0.8109	0.1445	0.3198	polsat
stfgov	-0.1142	0.8336	0.1078	0.2805	
stfeco	-0.1098	0.7728	0.2044	0.3489	
stfedu	0.0484	0.6419	0.2445	0.5258	
stfhlth	-0.0392	0.6451	0.2674	0.5108	
yngfnjb	-0.0931	0.3853	0.6011	0.4816	weleval
slvpens	-0.1177	0.3345	0.6318	0.4750	
slvuemp	-0.1691	0.2319	0.7214	0.3972	
cldcrsv	0.0940	0.2177	0.5989	0.5851	
gvjbevn	0.6657	-0.1289	-0.1820	0.5071	welpref
gvhlthc	0.7796	-0.0912	0.0646	0.3797	
gvslvol	0.8011	-0.1225	-0.0172	0.3429	
gvslvue	0.7079	0.0333	-0.2114	0.4531	
gvclcr	0.7453	-0.0199	-0.0997	0.4342	
gvpdlwk	0.7261	-0.0374	-0.0449	0.4694	
redpref	0.3086	-0.1142	-0.3696	0.7552	redpref

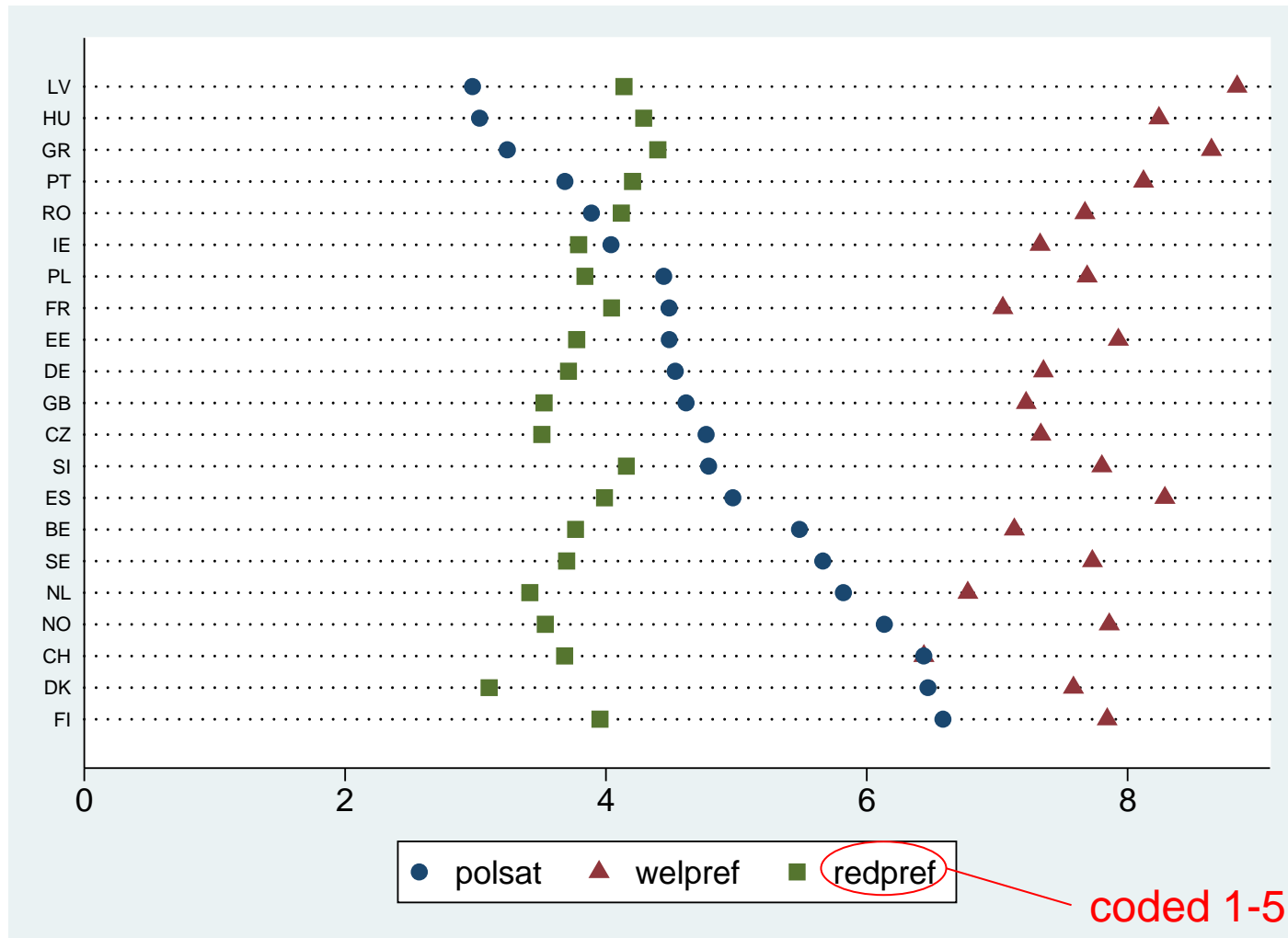
contrary to
expectations

Source: ESS 2008

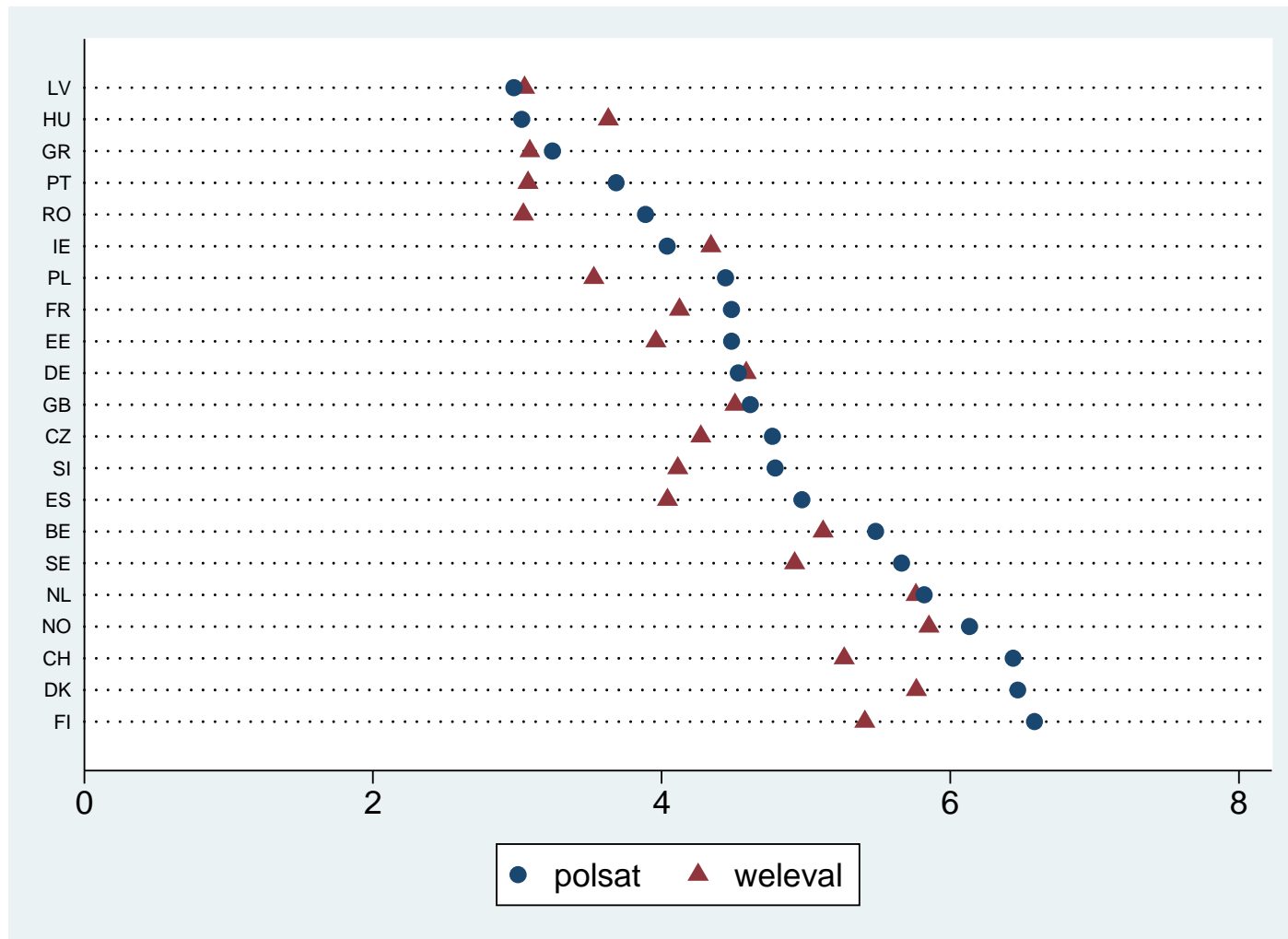
Are Europeans satisfied with their system?



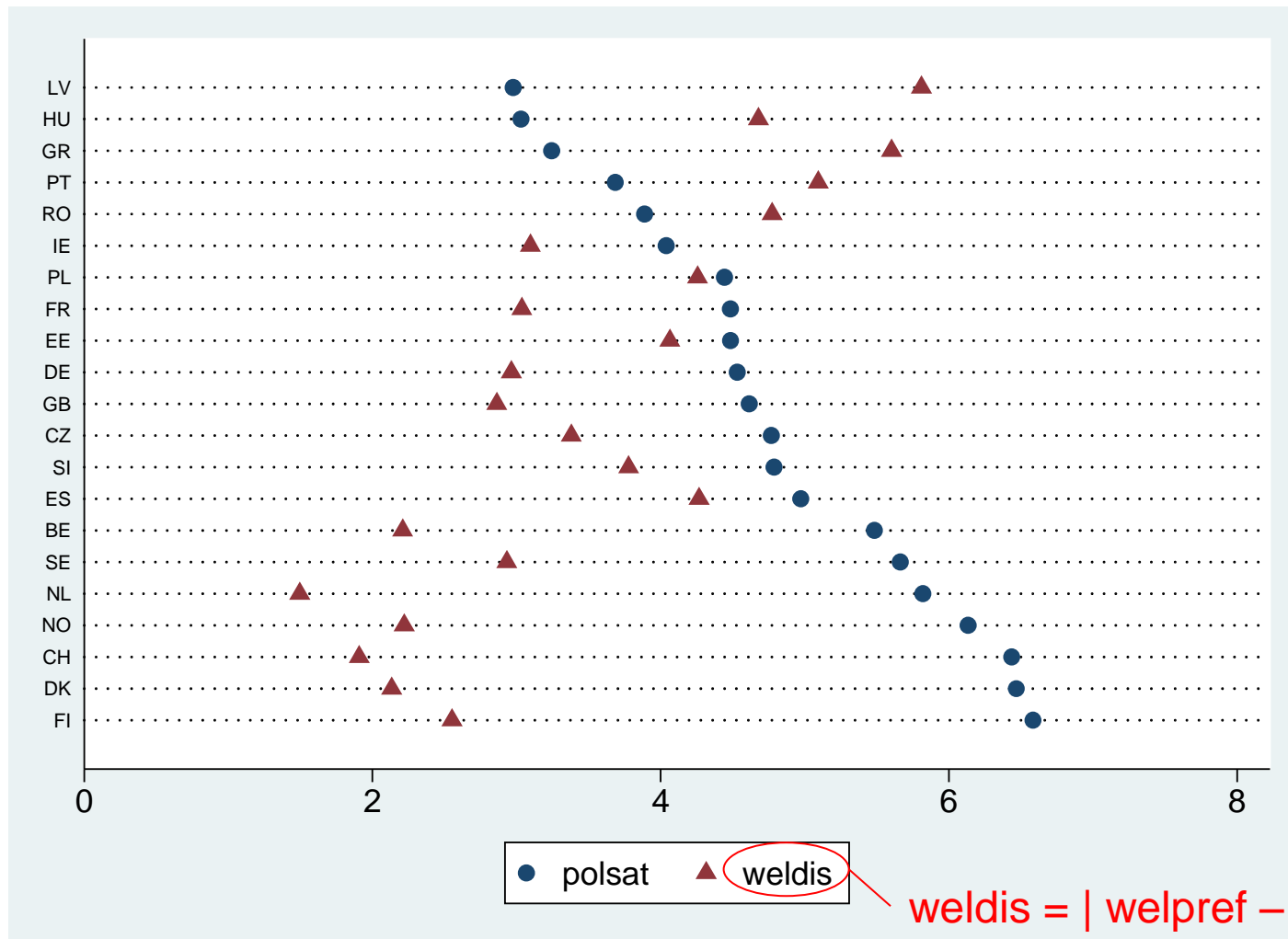
Europeans' welfare state preferences



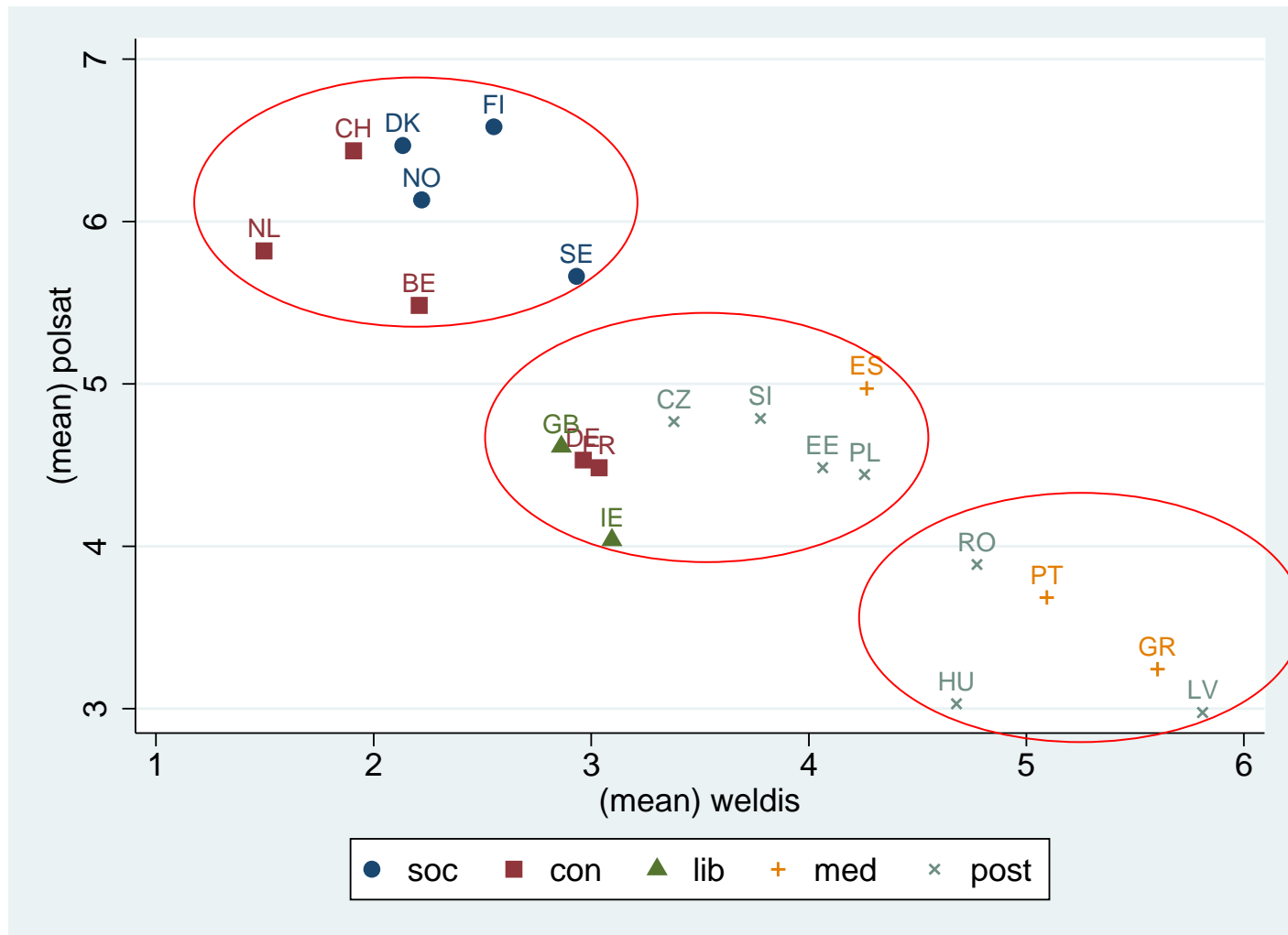
Europeans' welfare state evaluations



Europeans' welfare state discrepancies



Welfare state discrepancy and political support



Pooled linear regression (OLS)

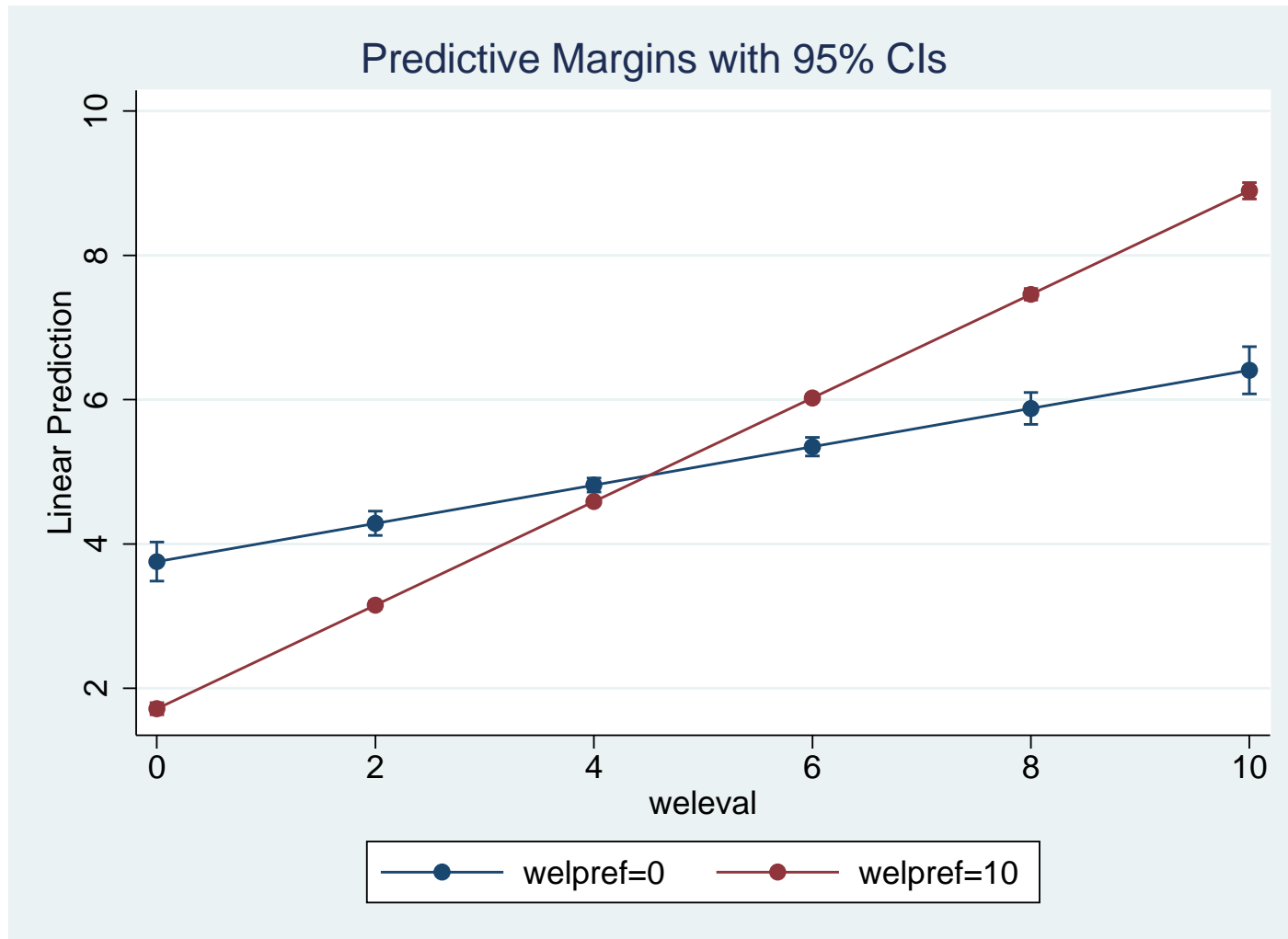
Table 4.3: *OLS regression of political support in Europe*

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
hh income	0.08***	0.04***	0.04***	0.04***
< lower sec	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
lower sec	0.01	-0.08*	-0.08*	-0.08*
upper sec	0.04	-0.10**	-0.10**	-0.10**
post-sec non-tert	-0.07	-0.22***	-0.21***	-0.22***
tert	0.23***	-0.07*	-0.07*	-0.07*
age	-0.05***	-0.02***	-0.02***	-0.02***
age×age	0.00***	0.00***	0.00***	0.00***
female	-0.20***	-0.08***	-0.09***	-0.09***
unemp_3m	-0.28***	-0.06**	-0.07**	-0.06**
depben	-0.14***	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04
lrscale	0.09***	0.04***	0.04***	0.04***
redpref		-0.12***	-0.12***	-0.12***
welpref		-0.01	-0.20***	0.14***
weleval		0.62***	0.27***	0.46***
welpref×weleval			0.05***	
weldis				-0.18***
Constant	5.12***	2.81***	4.40***	3.04***
R^2	0.05	0.35	0.35	0.35
Adjusted R^2	0.05	0.35	0.35	0.35
F	146.82	1091.06	1034.73	1041.30
Observations	28795	28795	28795	28795

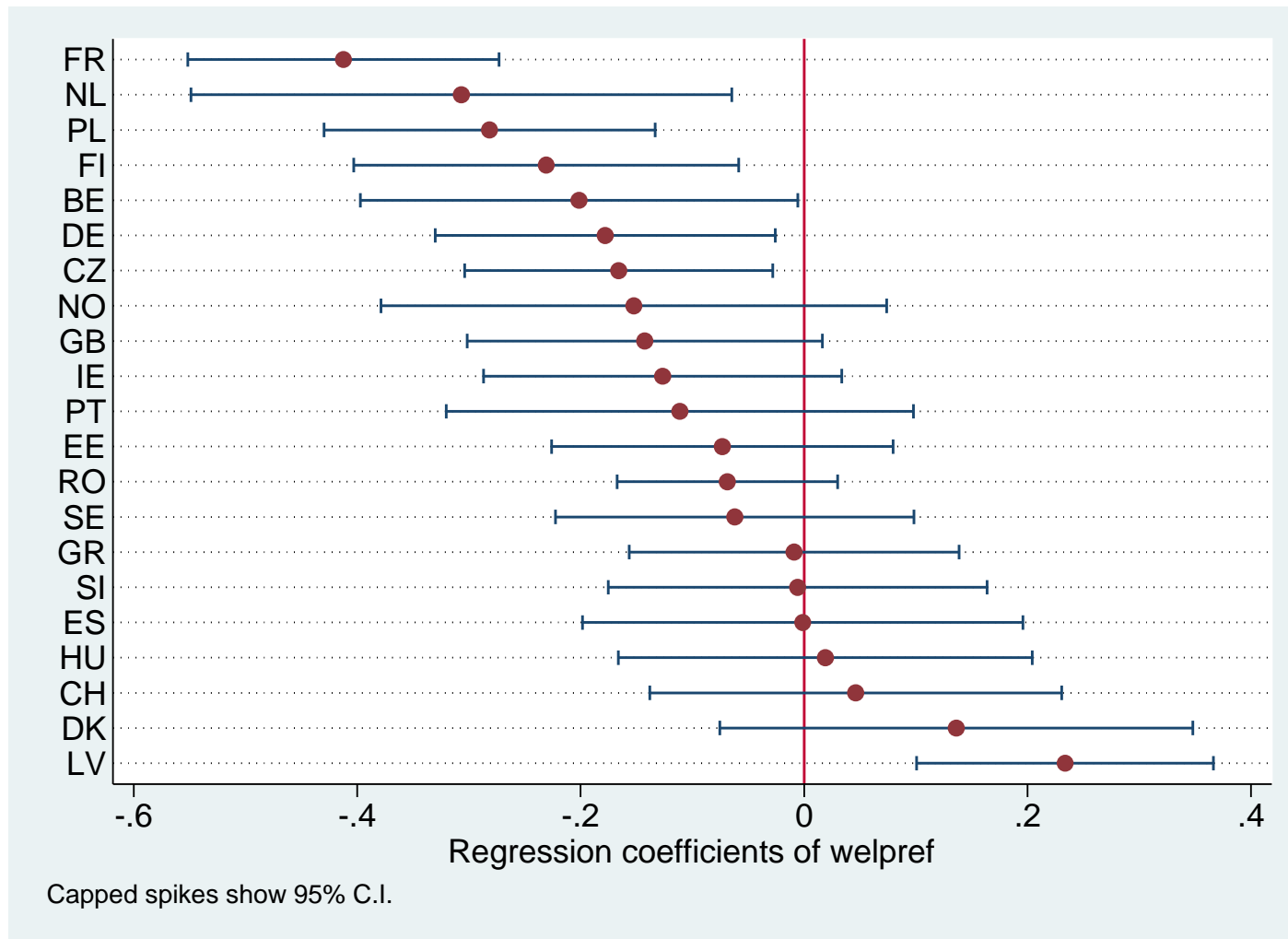
Source: ESS 2008

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Interaction effect



Effect of preferences across countries



Effect of evaluations across countries

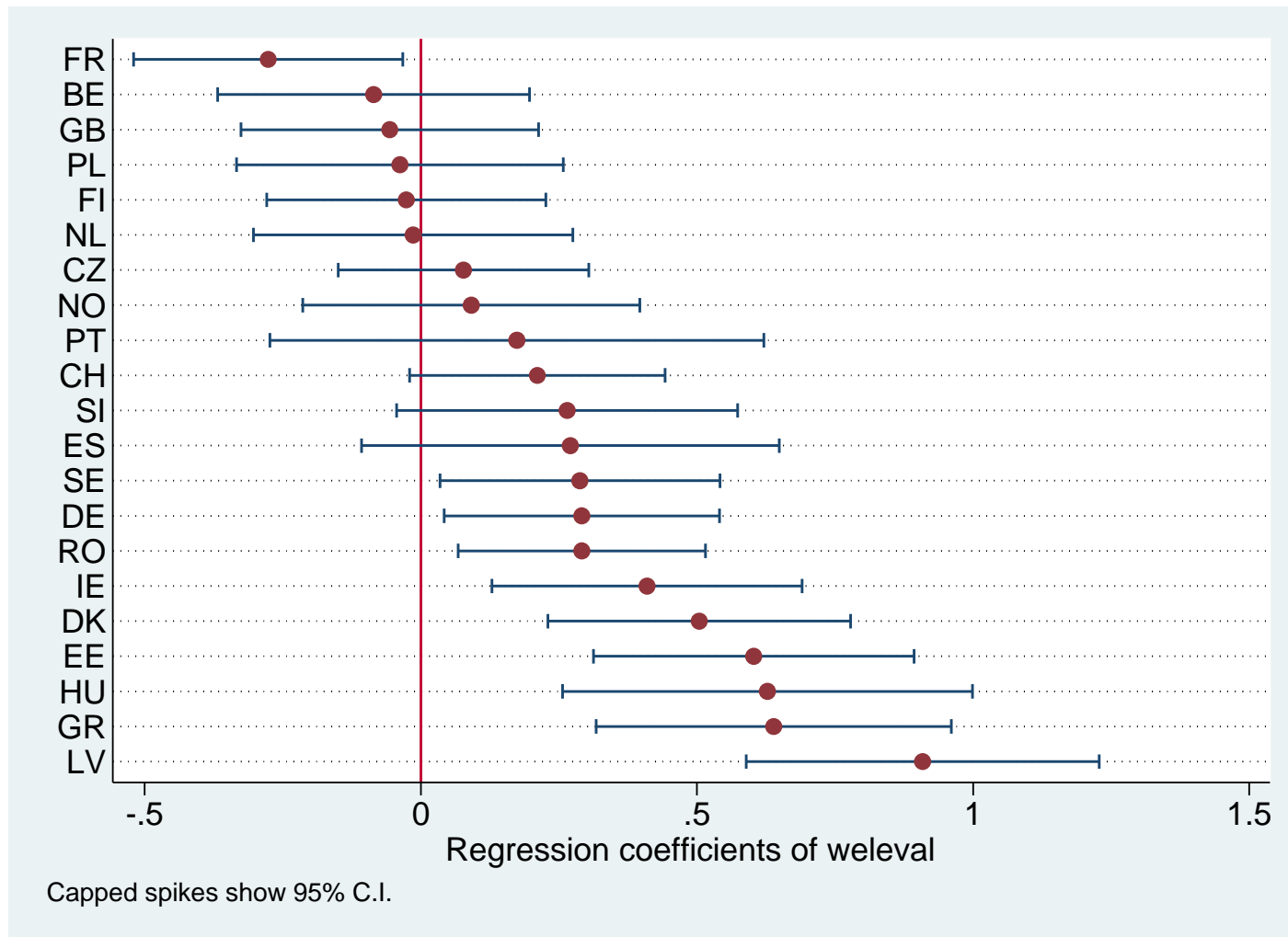


Table 4.6: *Random slope models*

	(1)	(2)	(3)
hh income	0.0196***	0.0195***	0.0202***
< lower sec	0	0	0
lower sec	-0.0423	-0.0428	-0.0434
upper sec	-0.100**	-0.101**	-0.101**
post-sec non-tert	-0.194***	-0.195***	-0.195***
tert	-0.00178	-0.00248	-0.00193
age	-0.0278***	-0.0278***	-0.0274***
age×age	0.000290***	0.000290***	0.000284***
female	-0.0876***	-0.0876***	-0.0876***
unemp_3m	-0.0795***	-0.0799***	-0.0800***
depben	-0.0174	-0.0176	
lrscale	0.0598***	0.0597***	0.0598***
redpref	-0.104***	-0.104***	-0.104***
welpref	-0.107***	-0.107***	-0.110***
weleval	0.228***	0.228***	0.223***
welpref×weleval	0.0290***	0.0290***	0.0296***
c_gdppc_eu_m	0.0000755	0.000144	
c_gdppc_eu_m×c_gdppc_eu_m	-8.34e - 10	-2.14e - 09	
c_ginidisp_m	-0.0242		
c_spr_exp_m	0.00666		
c_spr_exp_unemp_m	-0.112		
c_spr_exp_family_m	0.0546		
soc		0	0
con		-0.501	-0.136
lib		-1.368***	-1.725***
med		-0.936*	-1.232**
post		-0.476	-0.917*
Constant	3.639*	2.789*	5.069***
var(welpref)	0.00646***	0.00642***	0.00604***
var(weleval)	0.00495***	0.00492***	0.00460***
var(_cons)	0.549	0.349*	0.299**
corr(welpref,weleval)	-0.459	-0.457	
corr(welpref,_cons)	-0.352	-0.368	
corr(weleval,_cons)	-0.423	-0.418	
var(residual)	1.837***	1.837***	1.837***
Observations	28795	28795	28795

Source: ESS 2008

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Hier

GDP
Gini
Social exp.

Welfare state
regime types

Conclusions

1. The welfare state enhances people's support for the political system – both objectively and subjectively
2. The better people evaluate the welfare state, the more inclined they are to support the system in general
3. But this depends on their expectations of the welfare state: the higher their preferences, the more difficult it becomes to get their support
4. However, it won't work to “give the people what they want” and expect them to get their support in return: People seem to stick to their “welfare ideology” no matter what the actual welfare state context

Limitations

- Perceptions of the welfare state
- Eligibility criteria, welfare state effectiveness
- Multilevel-SEM
- Missing values, number of countries

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION