

Living apart, losing sympathy? Neighbourhood context and welfare attitudes

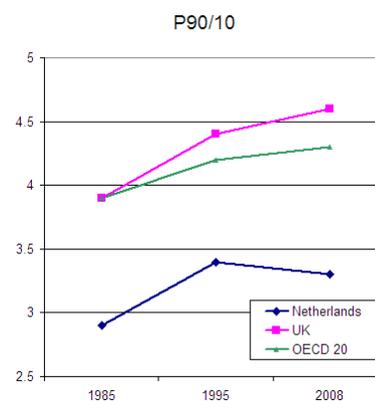
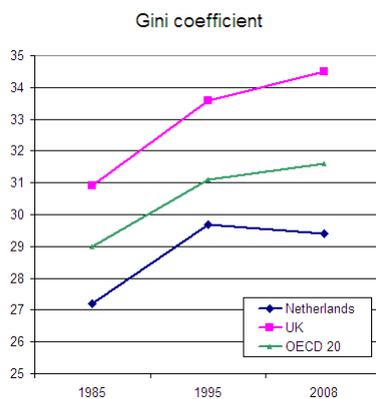
Lecture for Centre for Urban Studies,
University of Amsterdam – 9 October 2013

Nick Bailey, Maria Gannon, Ade Kearns,
Mark Livingston & Alastair Leyland

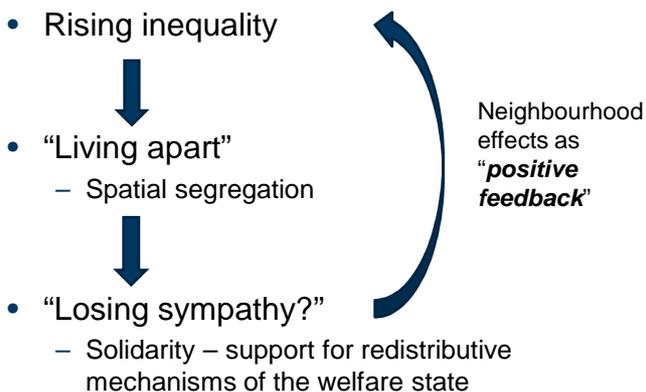
Urban Studies & MRC SPHU



Rising inequality across the EU



OECD (2011) *Divided we stand: why inequality keeps rising*



How does neighbourhood context shape welfare attitudes?

Welfare attitudes – two distinct areas

Attitudes to inequality and redistribution	Change over 20 years
The gap between those on high and low incomes is too large	-5%
Govt should do more to redistribute income	-10%

Attitudes to welfare recipients	
Govt should spend more on welfare benefits	-30%
Unemployment benefits are too high and discourage work	+25%
Most people on the ‘dole’ [unemployment benefits] are fiddling [cheating the system]	+15

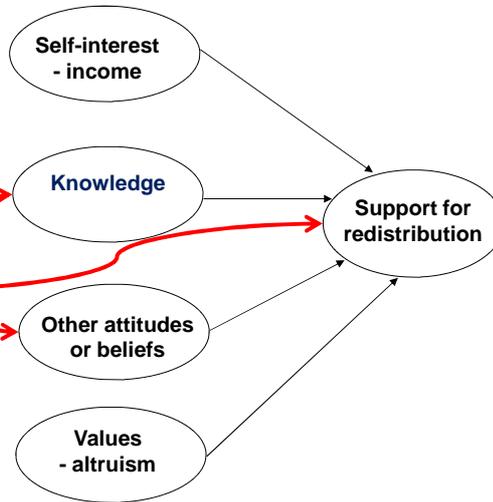
Clerly (2012) http://www.cumberlandlodge.ac.uk/programme/Reports/Squeezed_Britain

Support for redistribution - theory

Knowledge about levels of inequality and relative affluence

Neighbourhood context

Beliefs about causes or consequences of inequality

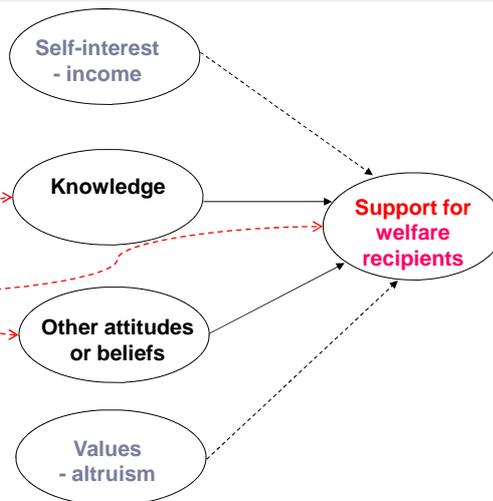


Support for welfare recipients - theory

Knowledge about welfare recipients behaviour

Neighbourhood context

Reciprocity or beliefs about 'deservingness' of recipients



Summary - hypotheses

1. Preconditions: as neighbourhood deprivation rises:
 - Levels of welfare recipients rise [obviously]
 - Support for redistribution rises
 - Support for welfare recipients stable or declining
2. Attitude transmission: as nhd deprivation rises:
 - Support for redistribution rises (after others controls)
 - Support for welfare recipients stable or declining (...)
3. Knowledge transmission: as nhd deprivation rises:
 - Support for redistribution – income interaction (...)
 - Support for welfare recipients – unclear (...)

Data – Individual level

- **British Social Attitudes Survey 2009**
 - Weakly clustered (PSU = postcode sector)
- Dependent variables – two indices each based on 4 questions
 - Support for redistribution (N=1162)
 - Support for welfare recipients (N=591)
- Independent variables
 - Demographic and socio-economic (income etc.)
 - Altruism – one question
 - Other attitudes & beliefs – two indices

Dependent variables

Support for redistribution	Differences in income in Britain are too large. [IncDiffs]
	Ordinary working people do not get their fair share of the nation's wealth. [Wealth]
	Government should redistribute income from the better-off to those who are less well off. [Redistrb]
	It is the responsibility of Government to reduce differences in income between people with high incomes and those with low incomes. [IncDiff]
Support for welfare recipients [inverted]	Around here, most unemployed could find job if really wanted [UnempJob]
	Many who get social security don't really deserve help [SocHelp]
	Most people on dole fiddling [DoleFidl]
	If benefits not so generous, people would stand on own two feet [WelfFeet]

Altruism

- **Altruism:** "Some people think it is important to put yourself first whilst other people think it is more important to think about others" [SelfFrst]
 - Put yourself first and leave others to do the same
 - Put yourself first but also consider other people's needs and interests **[Lower = 36%]**
 - Consider everyone's needs and interests equally, including your own
 - Put other people's needs and interests above your own **[Higher = 64%]**

Inequality beliefs: index for “necessary or inevitable”

Question	% agree or agree strongly
Large differences in people’s incomes:	
... are inevitable whether we like them or not. [IncInev]	77%
... give people an incentive to work hard. [IncWrk]	61%
... are necessary for Britain’s prosperity. [IncNec]	28%

Welfare beliefs – question on causes

Variable	Question	%
	“Why do you think there are people who live in need ? Of the four views on this card, which one comes closest to your own?” [WhyNeed]	
Need – luck [default category]	Because they have been unlucky	12%
Need - effort	Because of laziness or lack of willpower	28%
Need - injustice	Because of injustice in our society	20%
Need - inevitable	It's an inevitable part of modern life	40%

Data – Neighbourhood level

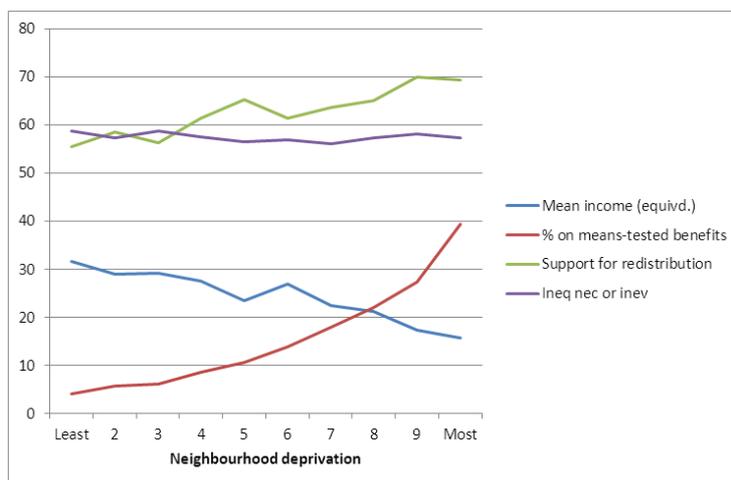
- Neighbourhood units
 - Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) – c.1500 population
- Neighbourhood characteristics (many indicators combined through factor analysis)
 - Deprivation
 - Density

Analysis

- Analysis – multilevel modelling to account for sample clustering
 - Level 3 – PSU (postcode sector)
 - Level 2 – Neighbourhood (LSOA) [deprvn/density]
 - Level 1 – Individual
- Three stages:
 1. Individual
 - Socio-demographic characteristics + altruism
 2. Neighbourhood characteristics
 - Deprivation and density
 3. Other attitudes or beliefs
 - Causes/consequences of inequality/need

Preconditions – neighbourhood context

Figure 1: Variations in low income and in attitudes by neighbourhood context



Redistribution: Neighbourhood characteristics (Model 2)

	Support for redistribution (R ² = 16.0%)	
Positive	Social renting Altruistic Nhd depvn x high income Nhd density x low altruism	
Negative	Income Car access	

Figure 2: Support for redistribution by neighbourhood deprivation and income

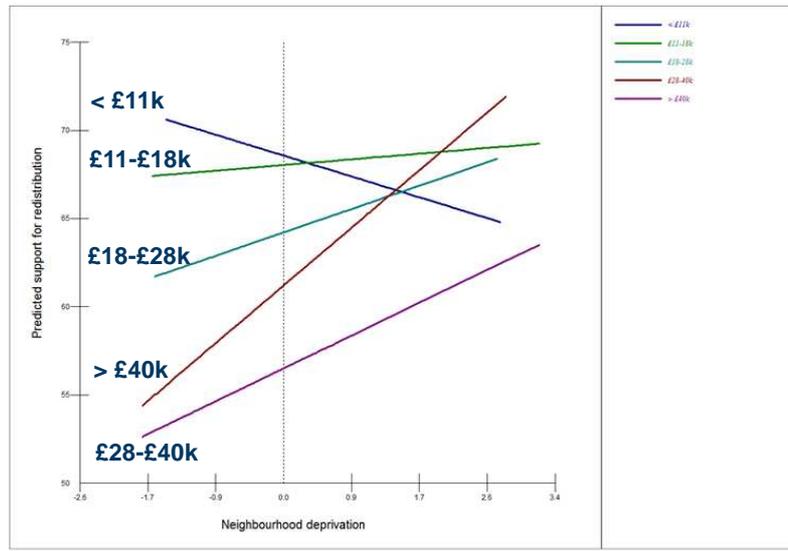
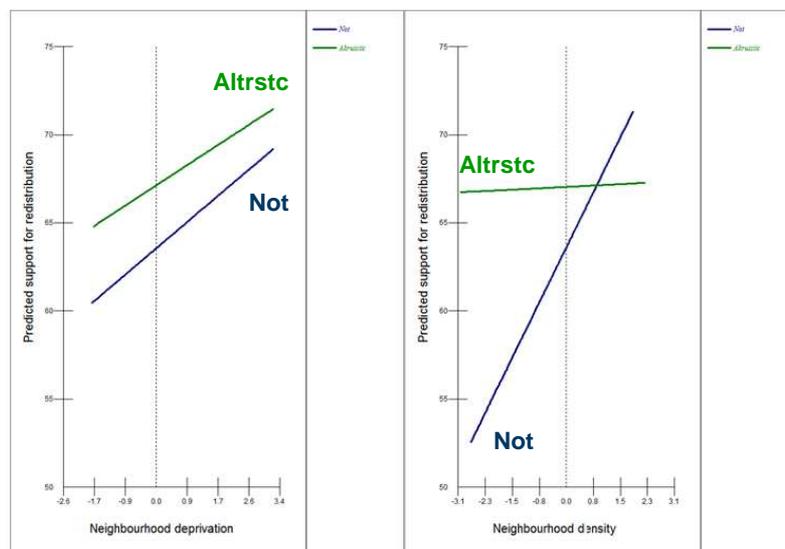


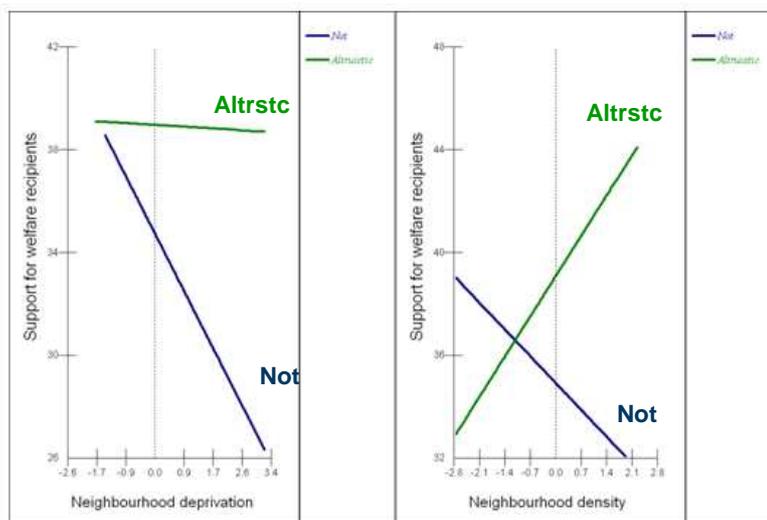
Figure 3: Support for redistribution by neighbourhood context and altruism



Welfare: Neighbourhood characteristics (Model 2)

	Support for redistribution (R ² = 16.0%)	Support for welfare recipients (R ² = 9.4%)
Positive	Social renting Altruistic Nhd depvn x high income Nhd density x low altruism	Educational attainment Social renting Altruistic
Negative	Income Car access	Main income from employment Nhd density x low alt'm [Nhd depvn x low altruism]

Support for welf. recipients. – nhd x altruism



Summary

- Individual determinants very different
 - Income vs education
 - Altruism present in both
- More deprived neighbourhoods have greater support for redistribution BUT not for welfare recipients
- Deprivation and density **increase** support for **redistribution** and produce **convergence**
 - Consistent with knowledge transmission mechanism
- Deprivation and density **reduce** support for **welfare recipients** and produce **divergence**
 - Consistent with ideas of ‘framing’ from attitudes studies

Discussion

- Caveats – unobserved variables
 - Selection effects - longitudinal research required
 - Nhd deprivation could be (in part) unobserved income or wealth
- Policies for “mixed communities” and for “urban compaction” may have political consequences but complex
 - May increase support for redistribution
 - May undermine support for welfare expenditures - **at least in context of strong anti-welfare rhetoric**

Acknowledgements

The research on which this paper was based was funded by an ESRC grant, "The impact of neighbourhood context on attitudes to inequality and redistribution" (RES-000-22-4192)

Dank u