

# Contextualizing Anti-Immigrant Voting

How the impact of interethnic contact on PVV voting depends on the economic opportunities and cultural atmosphere in Dutch cities

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Presented at RC21 Conference, July 7-9, Amsterdam

Session 13: Urban Politics between Contention and Control

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## *Keywords*

Anti-immigrant voting, interethnic contact, ethnic competition, urban culture, bohemian index, gay-scenes index

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## **Contextualizing Anti-Immigrant Voting**

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#### **Abstract**

Some studies find that interethnic contact leads to ethnic tolerance, while others conclude that it underlies ethnic conflict. Using data on all 50 Dutch cities in 2006 and 2010, this article assesses whether the consequences of interethnic contact for votes for Wilders's PVV – the Dutch anti-immigrant party par excellence – are moderated by the economic and cultural urban contexts in which these contacts take place. In line with the 'conflict hypothesis' it is found that a higher level of interethnic propinquity leads to more support for the PVV in cities with a high level of unemployment and an intolerant cultural climate (as measured by the bohemian index and the gay-scene index), whereas the relationship is reverse in cities with a tolerant cultural climate (corroborating the 'contact hypothesis').

#### **Introduction**

Issues concerning immigration and the integration of ethnic minorities gained a central role on the political stage in most European countries in recent decades (Achterberg 2006; Ignazi 2003), but the Dutch case leaps to the eye because of the extremity of the "moral panic" concerning these issues (Vasta 2007). The heated debate on the alleged "destruction of Dutch culture" due to immigration (Penninx 2006; cf. Vasta 2007), was accompanied by substantial electoral support for Geert Wilders's PVV in the national parliamentary elections of 2006 and 2010. This right-wing populist party can be considered the Dutch anti-immigrant party par excellence, as it "has been particularly vocal in proposing controversial policies and in resorting to racist or xenophobic

discourse” (ECRI 2008: 35). Studies on party choice in the Netherlands and other western European countries point in the same direction: support for right-wing populist parties is largely driven by discontents concerning immigration and ethnic diversity (Ivarsflaten 2008; Oesch 2008; Rydgren 2008; Van der Brug 2003). Unsurprisingly, such parties have therefore been frequently labeled as ‘anti-immigration parties’ (see e.g. Rink et al. 2009; Van der Brug & Fennema 2007; Van der Brug et al. 2000, 2005) and ‘movements of exclusion’ (Rydgren 2005).

It is, however, still an open question how resistance towards immigrants and the electoral support for such anti-immigration parties that stems from it are related to interethnic propinquity. Studies assessing the impact of the share of ethnic minorities in a neighborhood on the ethnocentrism of natives living there have yielded scattered results (Stein et al. 2000; Oliver & Wong 2003; Pettigrew & Tropp 2006).<sup>1</sup> Some of these so-called ‘context studies’ have corroborated the conflict hypothesis, which basically claims that high interethnic propinquity leads to more ethnocentrism and support for anti-immigrant parties among natives. Other context studies, however, corroborated the contact hypothesis, which basically claims that such propinquity breeds more mutual understanding, and hence leads to less ethnocentrism and support for anti-immigrant parties among natives. Clearly, then, natives living in neighborhoods with high shares of ethnic minorities are not necessarily most ethnocentric or most likely to support anti-immigrant parties (cf. Rydgren 2007, 250-1). This suggests that under some local conditions interethnic propinquity leads to more mutual understanding and hence to less support for anti-immigrant parties, while under other local conditions it leads to less mutual understanding, resulting in more support for such parties. If so, this would be in line with the widely recognized importance of local contexts for voting decisions (Johnston and Pattie 2006), as the above suggests that the relationship between interethnic propinquity and anti-immigrant voting is shaped by other contextual factors.

This article builds on this idea by discussing two lines of research which suggest that local economic and cultural conditions moderate the impact of interethnic propinquity on support

for anti-immigrant parties. The substantial yet locally strongly diverging electoral support for Wilders's PVV in the Dutch national parliamentary elections of 2006 and 2010 provides an excellent opportunity for assessing these suggestions. In what follows, we will outline the central theoretical notions that might account for these local differences, and subsequently we will put these to the test by assessing whether the impact of interethnic propinquity in Dutch cities on support for the PVV is moderated by urban economic and cultural conditions indeed.

The Dutch case provides an excellent opportunity for assessing whether interethnic propinquity's impact on support for an anti-immigrant party varies with local economic and cultural conditions. More specifically, it allows for a strict test for two reasons. Firstly, in comparison to many other western countries, Dutch cities show moderate ethnic segregation levels, and thus relatively weak differences in interethnic propinquity. Secondly, due to the small size of the Netherlands, the economic and cultural differences between Dutch cities are relatively small in comparison to differences between cities in most other western countries, like Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. If interethnic propinquity's impact on support for an anti-immigrant party proves to depend on the local economic and /or cultural conditions in the Netherlands, the foregoing implies that such conditionality will be even more salient in many other western countries.

### **Urban context matters: economic opportunities and cultural atmosphere**

One reason why context studies that empirically assess merits of the conflict and contact hypotheses for explaining ethnocentrism or anti-immigrant voting result in inconclusive findings might be that local economic conditions are not taken into account. Some regions or cities fare less well in an economic sense than others, and this has been found to be an important determinant for voting behavior (Johnston & Pattie 2001). This might moderate the effect of interethnic propinquity on support for an anti-immigrant party because of 'social closure' (Weber, [1922] 2006; cf. Roscigno et al. 2007). More specifically, it is the contemporary adaptation of this

Weberian concept, the ‘ethnic competition theory’, that suggests that the effect of interethnic propinquity on support for an anti-immigrant party is stronger under weaker local economic conditions.

The ethnic competition theory asserts that ‘competition for resources leads to attempts at exclusion of one group by another’ (Olzak 1992, 163, cf. Blalock 1956, 1967). This would mean that people support an anti-immigrant party because they want to exclude immigrants from scarce resources such as jobs. If so, it can be expected that interethnic propinquity breeds less hostility towards immigrants among natives in cities with plenty of labor market opportunities than in cities with scarce labor market opportunities.

In fact, two studies point in this direction. Firstly, studying Sweden, Hjerm (2009) recently found that ‘the economic context matters in that anti-immigrant attitudes of people are strongest in poor municipalities with a large share of immigrants’. Secondly, Branton and Jones (2005) found in a study on the United States that ‘*high* socioeconomic context and highly diverse contexts are related to *higher* levels of support for racial social issues; however, contexts characterized by *low* socioeconomic contexts and high racial and ethnic diversity are associated with *lower* levels of support for such issues’ (2005, 359, emphasis added). Both studies on racial attitudes suggest that the impact of interethnic propinquity on support for anti-immigrant parties – a real life consequence of such attitudes – depends on the economic fortunes of those living near ethnic minorities. More specifically, for those who actually experience competition from immigrants, living near these competitors is likely to bring about anti-immigrant sentiments. Since ethnic competition in the Netherlands is most fierce in cities with the highest unemployment levels (Van der Waal 2010), we therefore expect that a high level of interethnic propinquity is more likely to result in a high level of support for the PVV in cities with higher unemployment levels (*hypothesis 1*).

A second reason why context studies have thus far yielded scattered results might be that cities do not only differ in an economic sense, but also in a cultural sense. Various scholars have

claimed that some cities have a far more culturally tolerant atmosphere than others (Brown et al. 2005; Florida 2004, 2005; Clark 1996; Clark & Rempel 1997; Sharp 1996, 2002), and recent research on American (Sharp & Joslyn 2008) and Dutch (Van der Waal 2010) cities demonstrates that this urban cultural atmosphere affects the racial tolerance (anti-immigrant sentiments) of whites (natives). In Dutch cities with the most culturally tolerant atmosphere – as measured by Florida’s bohemian index – ethnocentrism is substantially lower among both less and higher-educated natives than in cities with the least culturally tolerant atmosphere. What is important to note, is that this is not a compositional effect, but a contextual effect. In other words, it is not the sum of individual characteristics, but a certain milieu or atmosphere that affects the ideological outlook of the urban population (cf. Clark & Harvey 2010; Deleon & Naff 2004; Sharp 2007).

This finding, combined with the argument of Allport (1954 [1979]) and findings of, among others, Dixon (2006) that interethnic propinquity merely breeds less ethnocentrism among natives who are already receptive towards ethnic minorities, suggests that living among a high share of immigrants does not in itself fuel more or less ethnocentrism among natives. Instead, these studies together suggest that natives living among many immigrants are least ethnocentric in cities with the most culturally tolerant atmosphere, while these natives are most ethnocentric in cities with the least culturally tolerant atmosphere. Strikingly, the scattered results of context studies in the United States point in the same direction: studies that find empirical support for the conflict hypothesis primarily assessed ethnocentrism or support for racially conservative candidates among whites in the South (Giles & Buckner 1993; Stein et al. 2000; Oliver & Wong 2003), which is renowned for its culturally intolerant atmosphere (Kuklinski et al. 1997).

The above suggests that the impact of interethnic propinquity on support for anti-immigrant parties might not only be moderated by urban economic conditions, but also by the cultural atmosphere of cities. More specifically, it can be expected that a high level of interethnic propinquity is more likely to result in a high level of support for the PVV in cities with a less tolerant cultural atmosphere (*hypothesis 2*).

## Data and operationalization

To test our two hypotheses, we have constructed our own dataset by combining data retrieved from two different sources. The first one is the atlas for municipalities (*Atlas voor Gemeenten*; <http://www.atlasvoorgemeenten.nl>), which contains an abundance of city-level data for all fifty Dutch cities in 2004 and 2008, including all the independent variables needed for the analyses that follow. The second source is the elections data base (*atabank verkiezingsuitslagen*; <http://www.verkiezingsuitslagen.nl>), from which we retrieved data on the share of votes for the PVV in the national parliamentary elections of 2006 and 2010 in all fifty Dutch cities. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of all unstandardized variables discussed below. These have been standardized in the analyses that follow.

*Votes for PVV* – measures the share of the population in each municipality that voted for the PVV in the national parliamentary elections of 2006 and 2010. Although the PVV received substantially more support in 2010 than in 2006, the geographical pattern of this support is very stable: the correlation between PVV support in 2006 and 2010 is 0.904 ( $N = 50$ ;  $p < 0.0005$ ). In the analyses that follow, we will test our hypotheses on these elections separately.

*Ethnic segregation* – summarizes the deviations of the non-western immigrant share of each neighborhood from the municipal share of non-western immigrants (i.e., non-western immigrants and their direct descendants, the standard definition in the Netherlands). Only the atlas for municipalities of 2004 contains this data, and it is as such the most recent ethnic segregation measure available for the fifty Dutch cities. *Ethnic segregation* ranges from 0 to 1. A score of 0 means that the non-western immigrant share in each neighborhood is equal, while the score 1 means that all non-western immigrants are concentrated in one or a limited number of neighborhoods. A high score on *ethnic segregation* stands for a low level of interethnic propinquity in a municipality, but only if controlled for the total immigrant share in the municipality (cf. Rocha & Espino 2009).

*Immigrant share* – is a control variable which measures the share of non-western immigrants and their descendents in the population of each municipality in 2004 – the same year as *ethnic segregation*.

*Unemployment 2004* and *2008* – are two indicators for assessing whether the impact of ethnic segregation on support for the PVV in 2006 and 2010 respectively is moderated by the urban economic opportunity structure. They measure the share of the working population in a municipality that is looking for a job – the standard unemployment indicator in the Netherlands. Although the unemployment level in 2008 is substantially higher than in 2004 – clearly representing the economic decline in the Netherlands in that period – the correlation between the two is substantial: 0.733 ( $N = 50$ ;  $p < 0.0005$ ). This means that the economic opportunity structure was generally much better prior to the elections of 2006 than prior to the elections of 2010, but that the differences between cities roughly remained intact. Clearly, irrespective of the general economic climate, some cities yield more economic opportunities than others.

*Bohemian index* – is the first measure for a culturally tolerant atmosphere of cities, for, according to Florida, a high concentration of bohemians in a city ‘indicate[s] an underlying openness to diversity’ (2002, 64 2005, 113-28). It measures the share of the urban population involved in the production of culture and the arts, such as writers, designers, architects, composers, painters, sculptors, photographers, dancers, artists and actors. According to Florida’s reasoning it is not the sheer number of bohemians that makes a city’s atmosphere culturally tolerant; instead, bohemians are drawn towards cities with the most culturally tolerant atmosphere, and therefore their presence is considered a valid indicator for an urban context of cultural tolerance.

Only the atlas for municipalities of 2004 contains the *bohemian index*. Contrary to the one of Florida, it has not been measured by means of census data on occupations. For many Dutch cities, the small share of urbanites employed in culture and in the arts does not allow to make reliable estimates on the basis of such data. Therefore, in the atlas for municipalities the

*bohemian index* has been measured by means of data on members of the federation of artist associations (*Federatie van Kunstenaarsverenigingen*), which results in more reliable estimates. Due to outlier Amsterdam, this index is very unequally distributed. That is why the analyses will be conducted both with and without this outlier, as to make sure that our findings are not outlier-driven. Higher scores on *bohemian index* indicate a more culturally tolerant atmosphere.

*Gay-scene index* – is the second measure for a culturally tolerant atmosphere of cities borrowed from Florida (2002, 2005), but it should be noted that it is measured differently than Florida does, because there are no data on the exact size of the gay-scene in Dutch cities. Therefore, in the atlas of municipalities of 2004 – the 2008 edition does not contain this index – the *gay-scene index* is measured by combining two indicators. The first one is the number of *COC* members per city – the *COC* is the Dutch national association for the integration of homosexuality in Dutch society. The second one is the number of people in a municipality who are subscribed to the Dutch national gay magazine (*Gay-krant*). The average score on these two indicators is divided by the total municipal population, and is subsequently rescaled from 0 through 100. A high score on the *gay-scene index* indicates a more culturally tolerant atmosphere.

*Share higher educated* – is a control variable and measures the share of the urban population that is highly educated (over level 4 in the United Nations ISCED code). This control is included as to make sure that the *bohemian index* and the *gay-scene index* measure city-level phenomena, instead of a compositional effect driven by the well-documented higher level of cultural tolerance of the higher educated (Achterberg 2006; Van der Waal 2010). It is therefore measured in the same year as the *bohemian index* and the *gay-scene index*: 2004.

[Table 1 about here]

## Results

We start our empirical analyses by focusing on the Dutch national parliamentary elections of 2006. Before turning to the empirical assessment of our hypotheses on the effect of urban contexts on the impact of interethnic propinquity on anti-immigrant voting, we assess the latter relationship irrespective of these contextual factors. Model 1 of table 2 shows a negative and significant effect of *ethnic segregation* on *votes for PVV 2006* when controlled for *share higher educated* and *immigrant share*. This means that in cities with higher ethnic segregation, and thus less interethnic propinquity, there are fewer votes for the PVV. This outcome is in line with the conflict hypothesis, as it shows that the electorate in Dutch cities translates high interethnic propinquity into support for the anti-immigrant party par excellence: Wilders's PVV. The control variables in model 1 simply reproduce previous findings: in cities with a high immigrant share there is high support for the PVV, while in cities with a high share of higher educated citizens there is low support for the PVV.

Model 2 adds the contextual factors *unemployment* and *bohemian index*. *Unemployment* does not have any effect, which is contrary to what would be expected according to the ethnic competition theory. *Bohemian index* has a negative and significant effect, which hardly surprises as it means that there are fewer votes for the PVV in cities with a more culturally tolerant atmosphere. In itself, that relationship does of course not have any meaning, or can even be considered tautological. However, in the following models we will assess whether the extent of tolerance of an urban cultural atmosphere moderates the impact of interethnic propinquity on support for the PVV, and that is why the main effect of *bohemian index* has been modeled here.

Model 3a tests our two central hypotheses: a high level of interethnic propinquity is more likely to result in a high level of support for the PVV in cities with higher unemployment levels (*hypothesis 1*), and a high level of interethnic propinquity is more likely to result in a high level of support for the PVV in cities with a less tolerant cultural atmosphere (*hypothesis 2*). To do so, it models the interaction effects of *ethnic segregation* with *unemployment* and of *ethnic*

*segregation* with *bohemian index*. Both are significant and in the expected directions: negative for the former and positive for the latter. Because the *bohemian index* is very unequally distributed due to outlier Amsterdam, model 3b replicates model 3a without this outlier. This practically yields the same results.

[Table 2 about here]

The interaction effects in model 3b of *ethnic segregation* with both *unemployment* and *bohemian index* are visualized as straight lines in figure 1 and 2 respectively, which also include the standard error lines. Figure 1 shows that in cities with high unemployment levels, higher ethnic segregation, and thus less interethnic propinquity, results in fewer votes for the PVV. This is in accordance with the conflict hypothesis, which basically claims that interethnic propinquity breeds interethnic hostility. More importantly, the slope of the line indicates that this effect is weaker in cities with lower levels of unemployment, which indicates that a stronger urban economic opportunity structure indeed mitigates the impact of interethnic propinquity on anti-immigrant voting. Although the straight line in figure 1 crosses the x-axis, this does not mean that in cities with the lowest unemployment levels the effect of ethnic segregation is positive and in accordance with the contact hypothesis. For that effect to be significant, the lowest standard-error line should also cross that axis. It does not however, which means that the positive effect of ethnic segregation in cities with the lowest unemployment levels is not significant.

[Figure 1 about here]

These findings demonstrate that urban economic contexts are important in explaining the relationship between interethnic propinquity and anti-immigrant voting. The same holds for cultural urban contexts, as is indicated by figure 2. It shows that in accordance with the conflict

hypothesis higher ethnic segregation, and thus less interethnic propinquity, leads to fewer votes for the PVV in cities with the least culturally tolerant atmosphere. This effect is, however, weaker in cities that have a more tolerant cultural atmosphere, and strikingly, it is even reversed in cities with the most tolerant atmosphere. There, higher ethnic segregation, and thus less interethnic propinquity, results in more votes for the PVV, which is in accordance with the contact hypothesis.

[Figure 2 about here]

Model 4 and 5 in table 2 replicate model 2 and 3a respectively, using the other indicator for an urban atmosphere of cultural tolerance, the *gay-scene index*. Model 4 shows that this index functions similarly as the *bohemian index*: support for the PVV is lowest in cities that score high on *gay-scene index*. In model 5 the impact of interethnic propinquity on support for the PVV proves not to depend on the economic situation if the *gay-scene index* instead of the *bohemian index* is used as an indicator for a culturally tolerant atmosphere: the interaction effect of *ethnic segregation* with *unemployment* is insignificant. The interaction effect of *ethnic segregation* with *gay-scene index* is significant, however, and in the expected direction.

The straight line in figure 3 depicts this finding. It roughly shows the same pattern as found using the *bohemian index* (figure 2). In accordance with the conflict hypothesis, higher ethnic segregation, and thus less interethnic propinquity, yields fewer votes for the PVV in cities with the least tolerant cultural atmosphere. Yet, this effect is weaker in cities that have a more tolerant cultural atmosphere. Contrary to the one in figure 2, the lower standard-error line does not cross the x-axis. This means that if the level of tolerance of the urban cultural atmosphere is measured with the *gay-scene index* instead of with *the bohemian index*, the effect of interethnic propinquity is not reversed in cities with the most tolerant atmosphere.

[Figure 3 about here]

Having established these findings for the national parliamentary elections of 2006, we turn to the national parliamentary elections of 2010 to see if these are robust. As can be seen in table 3, these analyses basically yield the same results for the two indicators for a culturally tolerant atmosphere in cities. The straight lines in figures 4 and 5 visualize these results, which mirror those for the 2006 elections: the conflict hypothesis most strongly applies in cities with the least culturally tolerant atmosphere. In cities with the most culturally tolerant atmosphere, interethnic propinquity does not lead to electoral support for the PVV. Instead, in accordance to the contact hypothesis, interethnic propinquity in these cities leads to less support for that party if the *bohemian index* is used as an indicator. If the level of tolerance of the cultural atmosphere is measured with the *gay-scene index*, the pattern is comparable: the relationship between interethnic propinquity and support for the PVV is stronger in cities with a less tolerant cultural atmosphere.

In contrast to the analyses on the elections of 2006, the impact of interethnic propinquity on support for the PVV in 2010 proves not to be conditional on the economic circumstances in cities. Although the interaction effect of *ethnic segregation* with *unemployment* is in the direction predicted by the ethnic competition theory, it is not statistically significant in model 3a, 3b or 5.

[Table 3 about here]

[Figure 4 about here]

[Figure 5 about here]

All in all, the analyses reported above demonstrate that the effect of interethnic propinquity in Dutch cities on support for an anti-immigrant party depends on urban contexts. Especially an urban atmosphere of cultural tolerance proved to be important: hypothesis 2 was

corroborated in all relevant analyses – for the elections of 2006 as well as those of 2010, and using two different indicators. The theory predicting that the effect of interethnic propinquity on anti-immigrant voting depends on the urban economic opportunity structure received less empirical support: hypothesis 1 was only corroborated once – when it was tested for the elections of 2006 – and rejected in all other relevant analyses.

## **Conclusions**

This article is a first step towards understanding the scattered results reported by studies on the effect of interethnic propinquity on ethnocentrism or support for anti-immigrant parties or racially conservative candidates. Intriguingly, some context studies lend empirical support to the conflict hypothesis, while others are in line with the contact hypothesis. Our study suggests that such contradictory findings result from economic and cultural differences between cities. A municipal-level assessment demonstrates that the impact of interethnic propinquity on support for Wilders' PVV is moderated by the economic opportunity structure, and especially by the cultural atmosphere of cities.

In line with the ethnic competition theory, most votes for the PVV in 2006 can be found in cities where interethnic propinquity goes together with scant labor market opportunities. In cities with low unemployment levels, on the other hand, interethnic propinquity hardly inspires PVV voting. Yet, for the 2010 elections we did not find such a pattern, which is at odds with the ethnic competition theory. Due to the 2008 financial crisis, the unemployment levels in the analyses on 2010 were substantially higher than those in the analyses on 2006. As a result, one would expect that the economic situation in cities after that crisis would affect the impact of interethnic propinquity on support for the PVV more instead of less than before that crisis. As a result, the question of whether competition over scarce resources such as jobs really increases the chance that interethnic contact negatively affects natives' attitudes towards immigrants, like the

ethnic competition theory predicts, cannot unequivocally be answered in the positive on the basis of our analyses.

What our analyses do show is that the cultural situation of cities plays a more important role than the economic one. On the basis of literature demonstrating that cultural urban contexts matter for ethnic tolerance in the United States and the Netherlands alike (Sharp & Joslyn 2008; Van der Waal 2010), we expected that a high level of interethnic propinquity is more likely to result in high support for the PVV in cities with a less tolerant cultural atmosphere. This expectation is corroborated by our analyses on the Dutch parliamentary elections for 2006 and 2010 alike: in cities with the least tolerant cultural atmosphere – as measured with the bohemian index *and* the gay-scene index – interethnic propinquity results in PVV voting, whereas interethnic propinquity leads to less support for the PVV in cities with the most tolerant cultural atmosphere when measured with the bohemian index. Thus, the conflict hypothesis holds for cities with an intolerant cultural atmosphere, while the contact hypothesis holds for cities with a tolerant cultural atmosphere.

The findings in this article furthermore show that economic and cultural features of cities cannot only be analytically distinguished (cf. De Koster et al. 2008), but also function independently from one another in explaining ethnocentrism (Van der Waal 2010), and support for an anti-immigrant party. We would argue this is a valuable insight for the field of urban politics where most attention is usually paid to institutions and economics when it comes to explaining voting behavior and ethnocentrism (cf. Sharp 2007, 55). All the more so as cultural phenomena are rising in salience for electoral behavior in western countries (Achterberg 2006; Morrill et al. 2007; Van der Waal & Achterberg 2006; Van der Waal et al. 2007). Yet, one should keep in mind that this and prior research on the impact of an urban atmosphere of cultural tolerance on the ideological outlook of citizens (Sharp & Joslyn 2008; Van der Waal 2010), is conducted with newly developed indicators – the bohemian index and the gay-scene index – that might entail more than what is accounted for here.

One could, for instance, argue that the effects of these indices do not so much stand for contextual effects, but for compositional effects. Although this study controlled for compositional effects by including a measure of the share of the urban population that is highly educated, future research might shed more light on this issue, especially when it is conducted with data on individuals nested in cities (see below). Furthermore, the bohemian index and the gay-scene index might measure something different or something more than an atmosphere of cultural tolerance. One explanation for our findings might be that the consumption patterns of bohemians and gays creates more job openings for lower-educated service workers, and therefore less ethnic competition at the bottom of the urban labor market. If so, our findings would 1) be in line with the ethnic competition theory, instead of with the cultural one, and 2) point in the direction that it is a compositional instead of a contextual effect. Yet, this seems unlikely considering that 1) we modeled an economic explanation by including the urban unemployment level, and 2) the share of bohemians in the urban population seems way too small to be responsible for a compositional effect (0.07 through 2 percent, or 0.07 through 1.04 percent without outlier Amsterdam). Further research is needed, though, to disentangle the potentially economic aspects of the bohemian index and the gay-scene index from the cultural phenomena they are supposed to measure.

Furthermore, by lack of suitable individual-level data on PVV voting we had to rely on aggregate level data, while voting in the end is an individual-level phenomenon. Data on the voting behavior of individuals that are nested within neighborhoods that differ in immigrant share, which are nested in cities that differ in an economic and cultural sense would have been the best way to tackle the research problem at hand (cf. Johnston et al. 2004). Using such data would also make it possible to measure anti-immigrant voting more validly. For although the PVV is without doubt the Dutch anti-immigrant party par excellence, other sentiments among the electorate, such as political cynicism or general feelings of discontent (Ivarsflaten 2008), might also partially account for PVV support. In short, if better data become available these should be used to perform stricter tests of our hypotheses. Yet, all our findings point in the same direction:

the impact of interethnic propinquity on support for the PVV depends on the economic and especially the cultural conditions of cities.

All that being said, the findings presented in this article seem promising for understanding the scattered results of context studies on the impact of interethnic propinquity on ethnocentrism and support for anti-immigrant parties/racially conservative candidates. All the more so if one takes into account that, for three interrelated reasons, the findings for the Dutch case are likely to be more manifest in most other western countries. Firstly, they are the result of a comparison of cities with relatively small differences, since the Netherlands is one of the smallest western countries. This suggests that a comparison of cities in vast countries like the United States will result in even stronger findings. All the more so if one, secondly, takes into account that the level of ethnic segregation in Dutch cities is relatively low, and does not strongly differ between cities (Van der Laan Bouma-Doff 2007). Thirdly, the Dutch welfare state and labor market policies are quite centralistic, and therefore yield relatively small differences in economic fortunes among Dutch cities (Burgers & Musterd 2001). This makes the suggestion that comparisons of cities in most other western countries will result in more outspoken findings even more plausible. Whether they do, and if so, whether they do account for the scattered results of context studies on the contact and conflict hypothesis thus far is an empirical question which calls for further research.

In addition to the relevance of our findings for theoretical scholarly debates, they suggest it is important to critically reflect on social mixing policies. In the Netherlands, both the political left and right assume that, in accordance with the contact hypothesis, neighborhoods with a mixed ethnic composition support interethnic propinquity and consequently breed interethnic understanding (cf. Uitermark & Duyvendak 2008). As a consequence, the Netherlands has 'probably the most ambitious and well-funded social mixing policy' (Uitermark 2003, 531). The results of this study, however, point in the direction that such general policies wrongly neglect the importance of local economic and cultural contexts that are important in shaping their outcomes:

in cities that have high levels of unemployment or intolerant cultural atmospheres, social mixing is likely to result in ethnic tensions rather than ethnic understanding.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The terms ‘immigrants’ and ‘ethnic minorities’ are both used in this article as it builds on insights of studies in the United States, which primarily revolve around resistance towards blacks among whites, and European studies which primarily address resistance towards immigrants among natives. In the case addressed in this article, the Netherlands, anti-immigrant sentiments coincide with resistance towards ethnic minorities, as these boil down to resistance to non-western immigrants.

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## Tables and figures

Table 1: Descriptive statistics (N=50)

	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. dev.</i>
Votes for PVV 2006	2.50	17.80	6.570	2.659
Votes for PVV 2010	7.40	30.20	16.684	5.188
Ethnic segregation	0.15	0.47	0.339	0.077
Immigrant share	3.50	33.90	12.828	6.324
Unemployment 2004	1.30	7.60	4.164	1.298
Unemployment 2008	4.50	10.80	7.124	1.577
Bohemian index	0.07	2.00	0.398	0.318
Bohemian index (Amsterdam excluded)	0.07	1.04	0.365	0.221
Gay-scene index	8.60	100.00	29.822	18.974
Share higher educated	1.50	29.70	10.418	6.266

Source: *Atlas voor Gemeenten* and *datbank verkiezingsuitslagen*.

Table 2: Share of the municipal population that voted PVV in the parliamentary elections of 2006, explained by ethnic segregation (regression analysis; entries are standardized coefficients (standard errors between brackets); estimation: ordinary least squares).

	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3a</i>	<i>Model 3b</i>	<i>Model 4</i>	<i>Model 5</i>
				<i>Outlier Amsterdam</i>		
<i>Independents</i>				<i>excluded</i>		
Constant	0.000 (0.120)	0.000 (0.115)	0.000 (0.120)	0.000 (0.124)	0.000 (0.118)	0.000 (0.121)
Ethnic segregation	-0.360**** (0.125)	-0.328*** (0.124)	-0.227* (0.142)	-0.245** (0.136)	-0.342*** (0.126)	-0.342*** (0.140)
Unemployment 2004		0.064 (0.129)	0.125 (0.128)	0.166 (0.133)	0.028 (0.129)	0.006 (0.129)
Bohemian index		-0.413*** (0.174)	-0.610**** (0.184)	-0.568**** (0.186)		
Gay scene					-0.357** (0.183)	-0.372** (0.185)
<i>Interactions</i>						
Ethnic segregation *unemployment 2004			-0.208** (0.100)	-0.203* (0.121)		-0.135 (0.101)
Ethnic segregation *bohemian index			0.350*** (0.221)	0.317** (0.133)		
Ethnic segregation *gay-scene index						0.196* (0.121)
<i>Controls</i>						
Share higher educated	-0.490**** (0.129)	-0.256* (0.159)	-0.169 (0.158)	-0.071 (0.176)	-0.232 (0.184)	-0.205 (0.190)
Immigrant share	0.332** (0.133)	0.428*** (0.138)	0.359*** (0.142)	0.274** (0.133)	0.351*** (0.135)	0.309** (0.145)
N	50	50	50	49	50	50
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.282	0.335	0.409	0.414	0.309	0.329

Source: *Atlas voor Gemeenten* and *databank verkiezingsuitslagen*.

\*p < 0.10; \*\* p < 0.05; \*\*\* p < 0.01; \*\*\*\*p < 0.001 (one-sided tests as directions are predicted)

Table 3: Share of the municipal population that voted PVV in the parliamentary elections of 2010, explained by ethnic segregation (regression analysis; entries are standardized coefficients (standard errors between brackets); estimation: ordinary least squares).

	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3a</i>	<i>Model 3b</i>	<i>Model 4</i>	<i>Model 5</i>
				<i>Outlier Amsterdam excluded</i>		
<i>Independents</i>						
Constant	0.000 (0.117)	0.000 (0.111)	0.000 (0.116)	0.000 (0.117)	0.000 (0.109)	0.000 (0.110)
Ethnic segregation	-0.266** (0.122)	-0.227** (0.117)	-0.089 (0.140)	-0.089 (0.130)	-0.238** (0.114)	-0.192* (0.123)
Unemployment 2008		0.191* (0.120)	0.262** (0.121)	0.268** (0.120)	0.246** (0.119)	0.267** (0.120)
Bohemian index		-0.354** (0.161)	-0.513*** (0.170)	-0.534**** (0.164)		
Gay scene					-0.435*** (0.170)	-0.471*** (0.173)
<i>Interactions</i>						
Ethnic segregation *unemployment 2008			-0.126 (0.113)	-0.138 (0.114)		-0.076 (0.113)
Ethnic segregation *bohemian index			0.287** (0.140)	0.251** (0.129)		
Ethnic segregation *gay-scene index						0.170* (0.122)
<i>Controls</i>						
Share higher educated	-0.582**** (0.126)	-0.344**** (0.151)	-0.265** (0.152)	-0.153 (0.162)	-0.215 (0.174)	-0.168 (0.183)
Immigrant share	0.201* (0.130)	0.229* (0.138)	0.160 (0.152)	0.098 (0.136)	0.145 (0.128)	0.095 (0.142)
N	50	50	50	49	50	50
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.317	0.388	0.433	0.450	0.409	0.415

Source: *Atlas voor Gemeenten* and *databank verkiezingsuitslagen*.

\*p< 0.10; \*\* p< 0.05; \*\*\* p< 0.01; \*\*\*\*p<0.001 (one-sided tests as directions are predicted)

Figure 1: the effect of ethnic segregation on votes for the PVV (straight line) in the national parliamentary elections of 2006, by unemployment level (curved lines indicate standard errors)

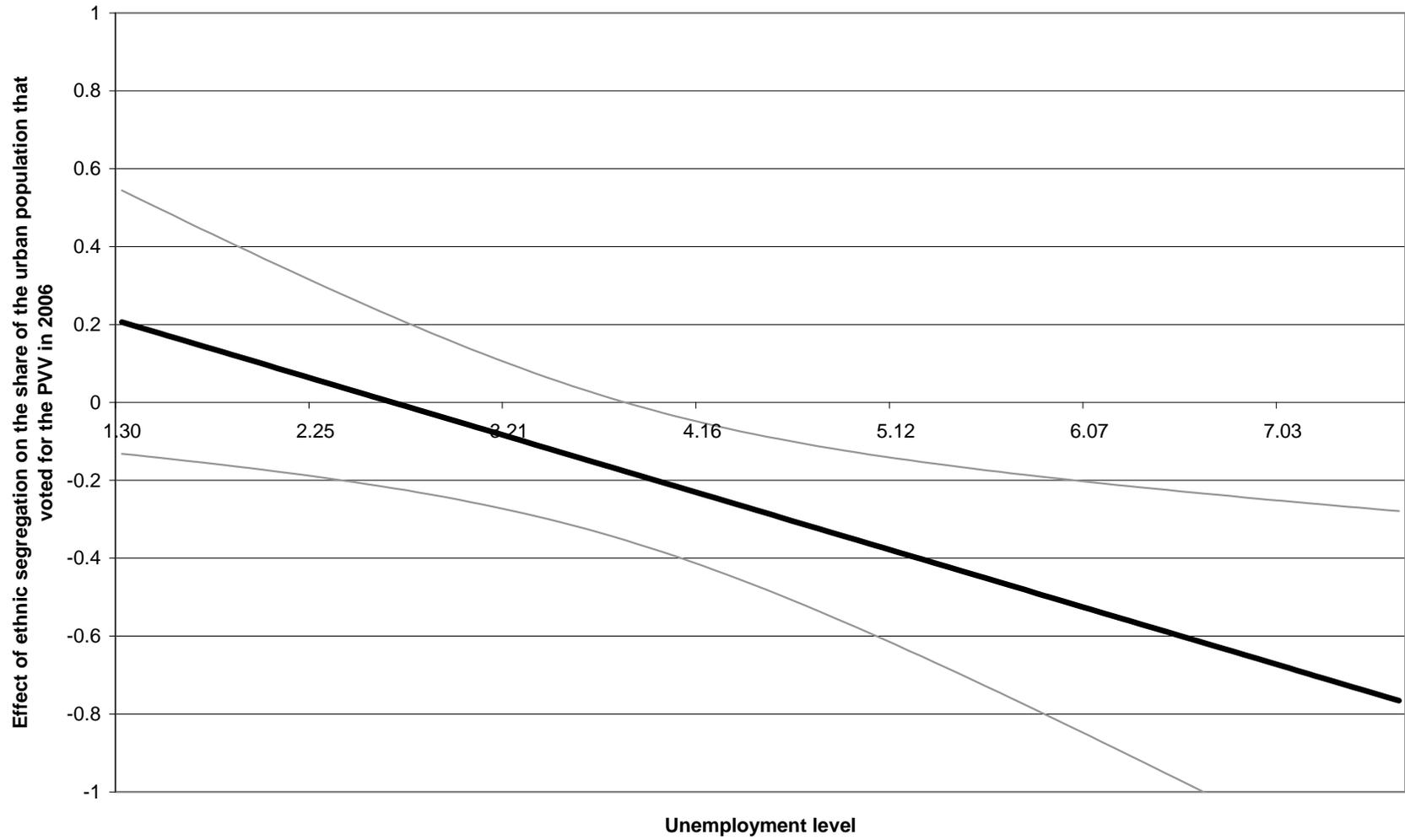


Figure 2: the effect of ethnic segregation on votes for the PVV in the national parliamentary elections of 2006 (straight line) by the atmosphere of cultural tolerance of cities as measured with the bohemian index (outlier Amsterdam excluded) (curved lines indicate standard errors)

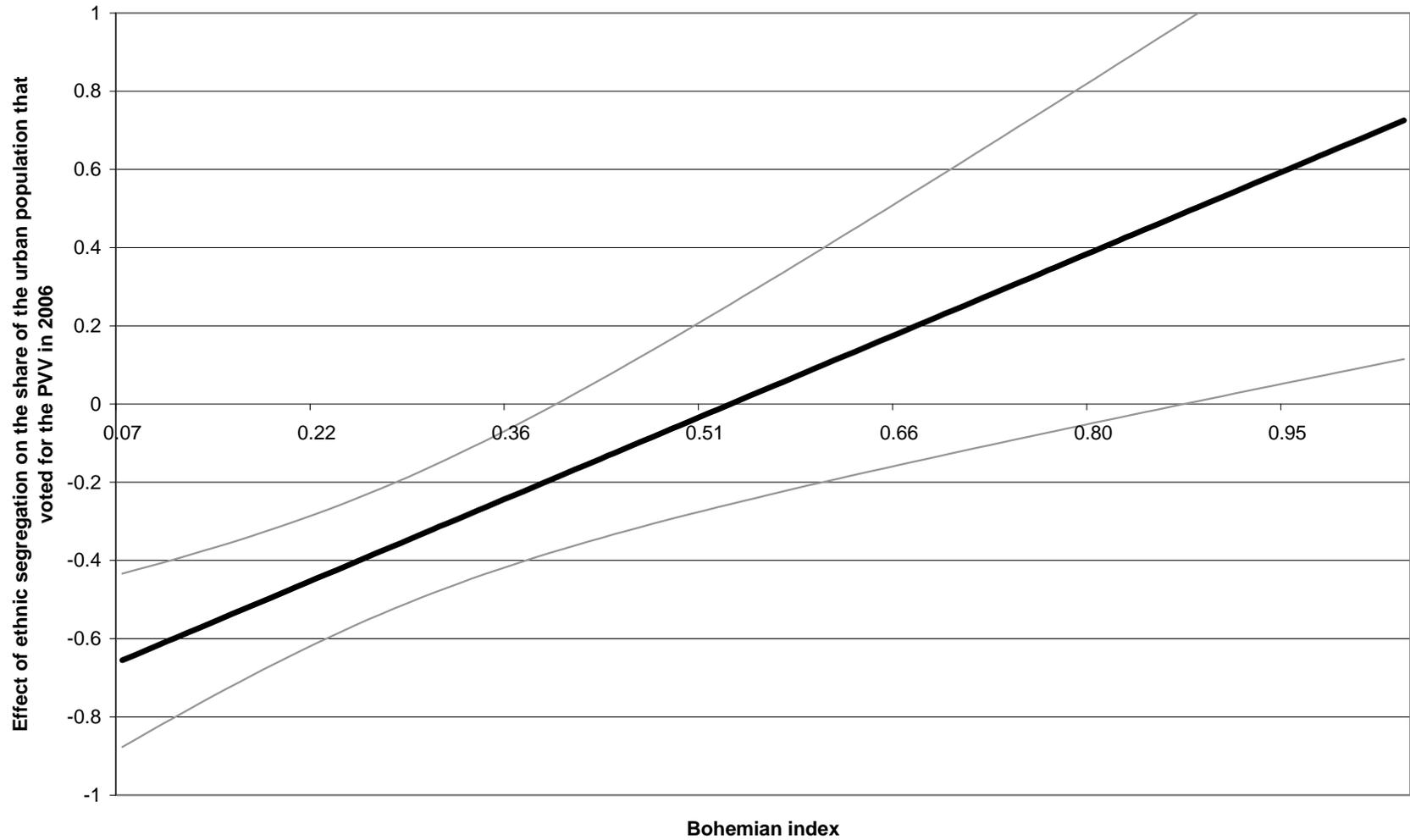


Figure 3: the effect of ethnic segregation on votes for the PVV in the national parliamentary elections of 2006 (straight line) by the atmosphere of cultural tolerance of cities as measured with the gay-scene index (curved lines indicate standard errors)

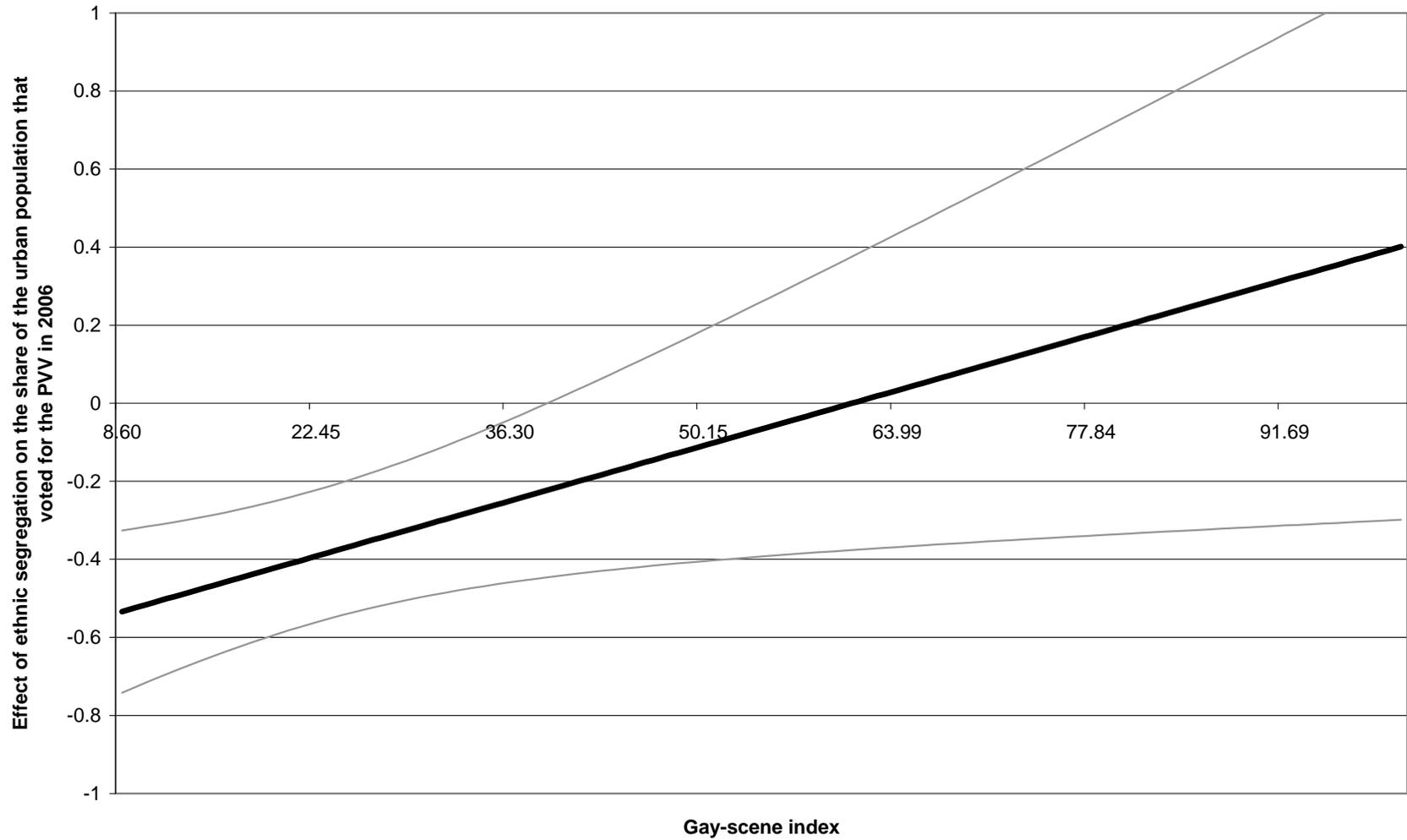


Figure 4: the effect of ethnic segregation on votes for the PVV in the national parliamentary elections of 2010 (straight line) by the atmosphere of cultural tolerance of cities as measured with the bohemian index (outlier Amsterdam excluded) (curved lines indicate standard errors)

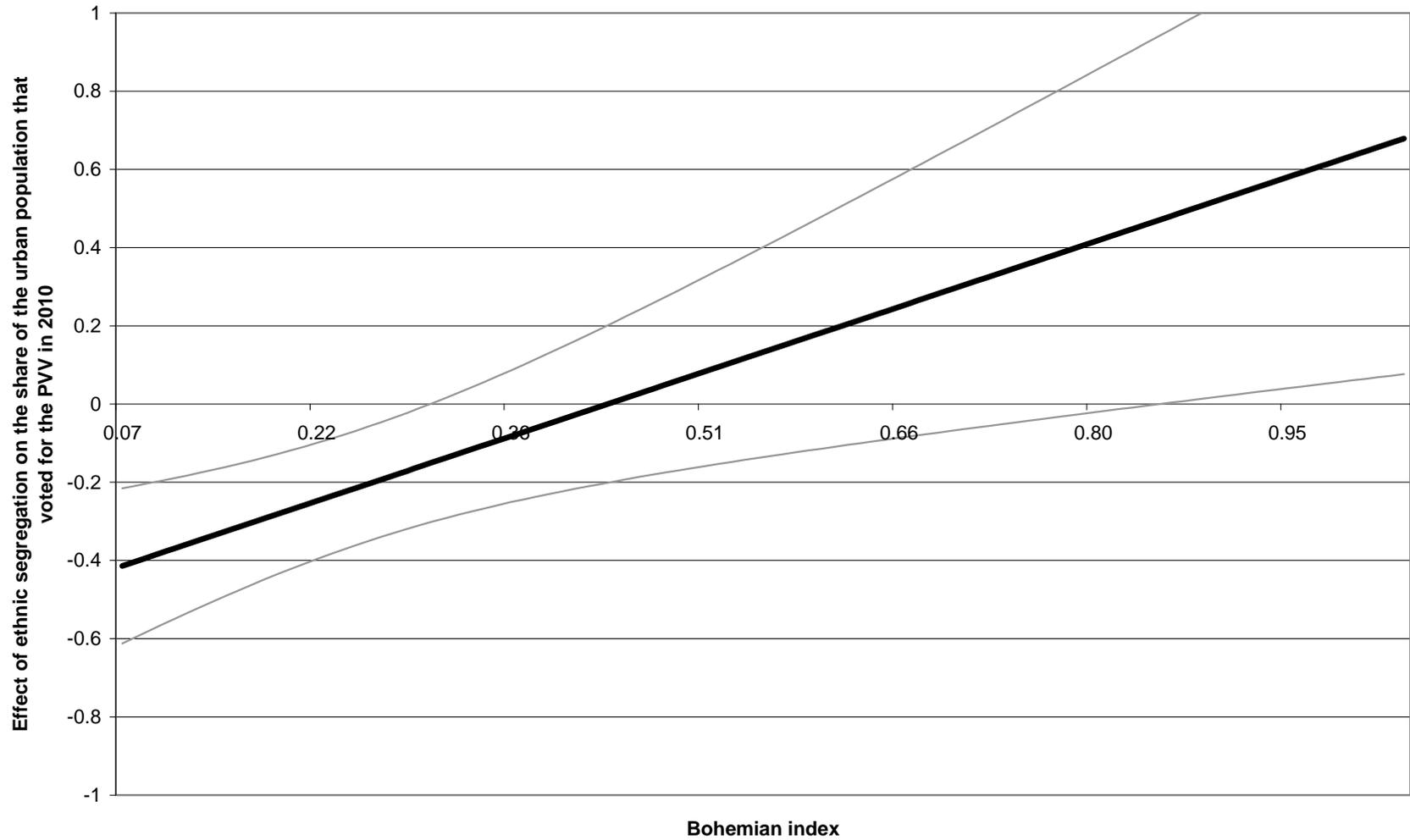


Figure 5: the effect of ethnic segregation on votes for the PVV in the national parliamentary elections of 2010 (straight line) by the atmosphere of cultural tolerance of cities as measured with the gay-scene index (curved lines indicate standard errors)

