

Public opinion, immigration and welfare in the context of uncertainty

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Summary

European citizens are largely unfavourable to immigration. These restrictive attitudes are linked to such factors as the unemployment rate and risk of poverty, as well as to competition for employment and welfare resources. Refuting insider/outsider theories, this article shows, via an analysis of recent European Social Surveys, that national social protection policies can reduce hostility towards immigration, insofar as they moderate social inequality and the risk of poverty. Ethnic and racial differences are problematic for the 'egalitarian compromise' underpinning the welfare state. Nonetheless, strong trade unions and social protection policies are associated with greater integration of immigrants. Over time, the future sustainability of welfare systems may depend on the participation of immigrants as a political force, making their integration even more important.

Résumé

Les attitudes des citoyens européens vis-à-vis de l'immigration sont largement restrictives, c'est-à-dire défavorables à l'immigration. Ces attitudes restrictives sont liées à des facteurs tels que le taux de chômage et le risque de pauvreté, ainsi qu'à la concurrence pour l'emploi et les ressources de la protection sociale. En réfutant les théories basées sur l'insider/outsider, l'article montre, via une analyse des récents *European Social Surveys*, que les politiques nationales de protection sociale peuvent réduire l'hostilité à l'encontre de l'immigration, dans la mesure où elles atténuent les inégalités sociales et le risque de pauvreté. Les différences ethniques et raciales sont problématiques pour le « compromis égalitaire » sous-tendant l'État-providence. Néanmoins, la force des syndicats et celle des politiques de protection sociale vont de pair avec une plus grande intégration des immigrants. À terme, la pérennité des systèmes de protection sociale peut dépendre de la participation des immigrants comme force politique, ce qui rend encore plus importante leur intégration.

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Zusammenfassung

Die europäischen Bürger nehmen in der Frage der Einwanderung eine überwiegend restriktive bzw. ablehnende Haltung ein, die durch Faktoren wie Arbeitslosenraten und Armutsgefährdung sowie Konkurrenz um Arbeitsplätze und Wohlfahrtsleistungen beeinflusst wird. Dieser Beitrag widerlegt Insider-/Outsider-Theorien und zeigt anhand der Analyse aktueller europäischer Sozialerhebungen, dass nationale Politiken im Bereich des Sozialschutzes insofern dazu beitragen können, die Ablehnung von Immigration zu verringern, als sie soziale Ungleichheiten und Armutsgefährdung mildern. Ethnische und „rassische“ Unterschiede stellen den *egalitären Kompromiss*, der dem Wohlfahrtsstaat zugrunde liegt, vor Probleme. Es gibt jedoch einen Zusammenhang zwischen starken Gewerkschaften und Sozialschutzpolitiken und der stärkeren Integration von Einwanderern. Die künftige Nachhaltigkeit der Wohlfahrtssysteme wird möglicherweise von der Teilnahme der Einwanderer als politischer Kraft abhängen, und dadurch wird ihre Integration noch weiter an Bedeutung gewinnen.

Keywords

Attitudes, opinion, equality, solidarity, immigration, welfare

Introduction¹

Within the European Union there is a certain degree of political consensus regarding the need for workers from non-European countries to enter EU labour markets. The reasons stated in support of this opinion generally refer to falling birth rates and population ageing (European Commission, 2007, 2008), with some analysts even speaking of a ‘demographic crisis’ (Schierup et al., 2006). This situation was acknowledged at the Tampere Council, where it was stated that ‘... a sustained flow of immigrants over the next decades (...) can help in filling current and future needs of the EU labour markets’ (European Commission, 2003: 3). The Tampere Council explicitly called for ‘a more vigorous integration policy’ which ‘should aim at granting legally resident third-country nationals rights and obligations comparable to those of EU citizens’ (European Commission 2003: 5, see Directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC, both of which deal with equal treatment of persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, and Regulation EC 859/2003 on equal treatment in the field of social security). Another compulsory reference are the Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU adopted by the Justice and Home Affairs Council in November 2004, one of which states that ‘Access for immigrants to institutions, as well as to public and private goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way is a critical foundation for better integration’. These decisions are in line with the so-called ‘values of universalism’ (Schwartz, 2007), which include such ideas as equity, social justice and solidarity.

Meanwhile, however, immigration has also been interpreted as a ‘problem’ and a ‘burden’ insofar as it dilutes the cohesion of the ‘citizenship/state/nation triangle’ and the solidarity required to underpin the welfare state (Habermas, 1998; Schierup et al., 2006; Mau and Burkhardt, 2009). The crisis of solidarity is associated, from this angle, with ethnic, racial and cultural heterogeneity and with the very limited extent to which immigrants become involved in trade unions and national

¹ This article draws on A Martín and G Meardi, 2013: Actitudes hacia la inmigración y compromiso igualitario en Europa. *Política y sociedad* 50(2): 629–654.

politics. The recent rise of an extreme-right party in Greece shows the risk that a sudden increase in economic uncertainty and poverty can create tensions unseen by European democracies since the Second World War.

This article sets out to analyse the contextual factors that affect public opinion and attitudes to immigrants. Certain contextual factors, such as unemployment and immigration rates or the risk of poverty, would seem to be associated with competition for employment and welfare resources. Other contextual factors, such as unemployment benefits, spending on combating social exclusion, per capita social protection expenditure and integration policies appear to reduce the degree of social inequality, thereby helping to foster attitudes of tolerance and solidarity towards immigration. A recent debate in the specialist literature focused on the importance of values relating to the 'egalitarian compromise' as an expression of solidarity in the context of European political culture (Schwartz, 2007). At the same time, researchers have been discussing the dualization of labour markets and the risks of increasing gaps emerging between insiders and outsiders (Rueda, 2006).

This article is divided into two sections. In the first we examine the current state of the theoretical debate concerning the variables associated with attitudes. In the second we describe attitudes to the entry of immigrants into labour markets and opinions concerning immigrants' attitudes to social rights. Our analysis is based on the findings of the European Social Surveys (ESS) for 2002, 2008 and 2010, looking at correlations between welfare models, attitudes and context.

State of the question

The study of citizen attitudes towards immigrants' access to social rights may be conducted with reference to two sets of explanatory factors. The first regards competition for finite state resources (health care, education and social services) and the balance between immigrants' demands for services and their contribution to their financing. The second involves the potential loss of legitimacy incurred by the social protection system as a result of the growing heterogeneity of the population (Moreno, 2007).

Competition for state resources

The first area studied looks at competition for finite state resources. In the view of some analysts (Schierup et al., 2006; Moreno, 2007), the 'magnet', or 'pull factor' constituted by the existence of a strong welfare state attracts increasing numbers of illegal immigrants, in turn fuelling applications for family reunification and the concomitant claims for assistance and benefits, all of which tend to encourage the spread of negative opinions among the native population concerning immigrants' access to social rights.

Some studies have argued that an immigration 'pull effect' occurs because societies with highly developed welfare provisions offer opportunities through their social services, resulting in a situation where immigration tends to become concentrated in those countries offering the best services in this respect (Borjas, 1999). The particular nature and features of local social policies are important because they affect potential immigrants' perceptions of income opportunities and tend to maximize their expectations of immigration benefits. The discussion of whether immigrants receive more than they contribute to the national economy, including the claim they are the prime beneficiaries of welfare assistance, has already been explored in the literature (Moreno, 2007; Banting and Kymilka, 2004), but has received renewed attention with the European economic crisis. A recent assessment by the OECD (2013) estimates that, on average, immigrants have a positive fiscal effect on the host country, i.e. they contribute more than they receive from the welfare

state. Within the EU, the effect is negative in only five countries (Germany, France, Poland, Ireland and Slovakia). If pensions (and therefore the cohort effect of old immigrants in France and Germany) are excluded, the effect is not negative in any EU country (OECD, 2013). Other studies confirm that the effect of welfare magnet effects on recent migration flows is statistically insignificant, and that past immigration actually increases welfare generosity, rather than undermining it (Giulietti et al., 2013). Even in countries where immigrant unemployment has boomed, such as in Spain and Ireland, immigrant access to welfare is still limited by formal and informal barriers (Barrett et al., 2013).

In this context, one of the aspects that interests us here is to ascertain opinions held by European citizens on the question of immigrants' access to social services and rights. Negative attitudes of the European general public towards immigration are widely reported and linked to exclusionary policies and practices in welfare access (Kahanec et al., 2013). However, attitudes in this respect may vary depending on national welfare contexts and rates of unemployment, on levels of unemployment benefits, on the risk of poverty, levels of expenditure on combating social exclusion, and the level of social expenditure in general. Social inequality, competition for welfare resources and demand for unemployment benefits and welfare services constitute another group of factors explaining why citizens are opposed to immigration. The economic crisis, unemployment, conditions resulting from illegal residence or the labour market situation, and the low levels of entitlement to social benefits generated by precarious jobs have propelled large numbers of immigrants into poverty and social exclusion, particularly in southern Europe.

On the other hand, redressing social inequality by means of distributive welfare policies seems to have contributed to mitigating the forms of social asymmetry and inequality generated by the labour market. Research in this area has considered how unemployment allowances, insofar as they constitute a reduction of the risk of poverty and social exclusion, have helped to defuse tensions deriving from competition for welfare resources between natives and immigrants (Mayda, 2006; Morissen, 2008; Mau and Burkhardt, 2009).

Migration and the legitimacy of the welfare system

The second explanatory field is to be found in the relationship between the legitimacy of a country's social protection system and the growing heterogeneity of its population. The argument developed in this context is that immigration reduces the support shown by the native population for the welfare state. On the one hand, the middle classes 'take flight' from public services because, in places where immigration is highly concentrated, the quality of social services deteriorates, generating a growing disaffection towards the social protection system and stimulating a preference for the market as service provider (Moreno, 2007).

Other sociological studies (Banting and Kymilka, 2004) have, meanwhile, analysed conflicts deriving from racial and ethnic diversity, discrimination against minorities, the erosion of interpersonal relations and trust, the fragmentation of social solidarity and the crisis of the political coalitions supporting the welfare state. In this context, the notion has been explored that countries characterized by greater multiculturalism have lowered the quality of their welfare state provision more than have those displaying a lesser degree of multiculturalism, the argument thus being that racial and ethnic homogeneity within the nation state is a contributory factor in sustaining identity and solidarity (Habermas, 1998). Ethnic and racial minorities make it more difficult to form political coalitions for the defence of welfare provision. In recent decades, as immigration has increased in Europe, this has become a growing problem. In numerous European countries we are faced, to varying degrees, with the dilemma of a 'racialization' of social relations. This 'racialization' is

akin to the so-called American dilemma of 'race, class and democracy' (Schierup et al., 2006: 3–5). Whereas ethnic and racial diversity have always made it very difficult to construct a robust welfare state in the United States, countries characterized by racial homogeneity or a low level of immigration have, through recent history, found it easier to construct welfare states and, by the same token, to form strong trade unions (Ferrera, 2005; Menz, 2005; Magnusson et al., 2008).

In recent decades, as pointed out by Ferrera (2005), the accelerating pace of European economic integration and increasing immigration have led to growing ethnic and racial tensions on the labour market, reflecting the difficulty to maintain cohesion among the political forces supporting the 'egalitarian compromise' in many European countries. In the opinion of some analysts (Banting and Kymilka, 2004), the adoption of open immigration policies facilitates labour force mobility and the adjustment capacity of the labour market (Schierup et al., 2006). But the countervailing outcome has been a fragmentation of the working class. This fragmentation, together with labour market segmentation, makes it more difficult for workers to be represented in the trade unions and political parties traditionally upholding the welfare state. Back in the 1970s (Castles and Kosack, 1973), Marxist observers were already pointing to the use of immigration as a way of weakening the trade unions (something that Marx himself had mentioned with regard to Irish immigrants to England).

By contrast, other authors claim that immigration can represent a genuine opportunity for social integration (Ferrera, 2005; Schierup et al., 2006). Some analysts argue that the cultural values of the host country go a long way towards explaining why immigrants meet with acceptance or rejection (Schwartz, 2007). The countries of Europe accord more importance than North America to the 'egalitarian compromise', with this expressed in terms of such social norms as equality, social justice, the well-being of others and tolerance. These are values eminently associated with opinions in favour of universalism and attitudes that are rather more favourable, tolerant and predisposed to recognizing the social rights of immigrants.

In summary, views on the relations between immigration and labour market insecurity vary between two opposite poles, each of them including diverging political orientations. The structural approach – whether Marxist or rooted in neoclassical economics – tends to focus on the increased competition for resources and stresses the risk of tension, whereby views on how to deal with such tension differ radically according to ideological standpoints. By contrast, political sociological approaches tend to underline the potential for egalitarian compromises, associational integration and policies that can reduce the feeling of insecurity. In order to assess the validity of this second orientation, this article will analyse public attitudes towards immigration in correlation with national social policies. To do so, we operationalize the research question on the link between immigration and the social regulations governing the labour market through two hypotheses:

First hypothesis (H1): The contextual variables associated with competition for welfare and employment resources contribute to the emergence of attitudes hostile to immigration.

Second hypothesis (H2): The variables associated with redressing social inequality contribute to reducing hostility to immigration.

As a way of analysing these two hypotheses, we posit two dependent variables. These are the answers given by the population to two questions: 1) when should immigrants gain entitlement to social rights and services? (scale ranging from a tolerant attitude to a restrictive one: 1 = Immediately on arrival; 5 = never); 2) how many immigrants would you allow to enter from poor countries? (scale ranging from a tolerant attitude to a restrictive one: 1 = allow many immigrants; 2 = some; 3 = few; 4 = none). Both variables enable us to explore attitudes towards immigration in the context of the uncertainty prevailing in the period under study (2008–2010). The contextual variables are divided into two groups. The first is associated with competition and the risk of

uncertainty (unemployment rate, risk of poverty, rate of immigration and inequality index), while the second is indicative of welfare policies (unemployment protection, spending on social protection, and per capita GDP).

Descriptive analysis of opinions and attitudes

In general, attitudes displayed by European citizens towards the entry of immigrants are restrictive, i.e. unwelcoming, reflecting a growing trend in the 17 countries considered between 2002 and 2010. One variable on European attitudes towards the entry of immigrants is supplied by the ESS. Featuring in the different rounds of the survey and using a scale of 1–4 (1 = a high volume of immigration and 4 = no immigration), this variable reveals the increase in unfavourable opinions: whereas the average for 2002 was 2.24, it had increased to 2.65 by 2010 (see Table 1). Restrictive attitudes towards the entry of immigrants increased in all countries except Sweden.

The restrictive attitude towards the entry of immigrants has a certain amount of similarity with the trend towards a restrictive opinion on the concept of an ‘egalitarian compromise’, a question included in the 2008 ESS, and which can be considered to imply attitudes of tolerance towards immigrants. Scores on tolerance (measured on a scale of 1 to 5 in which 1 = immediately and 5 = never) present an average tending towards restrictive opinions (3.26) in 2008 (see Table 1). The countries appearing above this average are basically the above-mentioned ones with restrictive attitudes towards immigration in general: Greece, the Czech Republic, the United Kingdom, Finland and the Netherlands, though some eastern European countries are now also included: Hungary, Poland and Bulgaria. Across all countries, 40 per cent declare that access of immigrants to social rights should be granted ‘once the immigrants have obtained citizenship’, and 35 per cent only after ‘having worked and paid taxes for at least a year’. Opinions on access to social rights are most unfavourable with regard to immigrants from outside Europe, and least so with regard to immigrants of the same race.

An examination of the extreme categories lends greater clarity to the analysis. The extremely restrictive opinions are best represented by the opinion that immigrants should never gain access to social rights (7 per cent of all respondents). We carried out a logistic regression analysis on these respondents, taking as reference the intermediate category (access to rights after working and paying taxes for a year). As such, the variables carrying the greatest explanatory weight are (H1): low level of studies, low income, age (particularly persons over 55), type of employment contract, unemployment and political position. Looking at all extreme opinions together, it seems that individual socio-economic variables carry greater weight than contextual ones.

Welfare models and egalitarian compromise

The average rates of the contextual variables grouped by welfare model (Table 2) allow an approximation to the hypotheses on the association between the context and the attitudes to the entry of immigrants. First and foremost, the rate of immigration is a good indicator of the degree of competition for resources, although the ESS data may not be the most accurate indicators. The Nordic and eastern European countries are the states with below-average immigration rates. Looking at the other contextual variables, the unemployment rate is well above average in the Mediterranean countries, while the risk of poverty is highest in Mediterranean countries and the UK. Wage replacement for unemployed workers is notably low in the UK and in the Mediterranean models. Social inequality (measured by the Gini index) is above average in the Mediterranean, liberal and eastern European countries. Spending on social protection is below average in the countries of eastern Europe, the Mediterranean and the liberal countries. This is consistent with our hypothesis

Table 1. Attitudes towards immigration.

	Attitude of solidarity Access to social rights (1 = immediately; 5 = never) Average		Opinion: Do immigrants receive more or less than they contribute? (0 = more; 10 = less) Average		Attitude towards immigration: Volume of immigrants from poor countries (1 = many; 4 = none) Average		Is immigration good or bad for the economy? (1 = bad; 10 = good) Average
	Country	2008	2008	2008	2008	2010	2010
Welfare model							
Continental (conservative-corporatist) model	Belgium	3.18	3.82	2.25	2.4	2.53	4.53
	Germany	3.12	3.95	2.12	2.32	2.4	5.11
Scandinavian (social democratic) model	The Netherlands	3.26	4.2	2.35	2.42	2.5	5.23
	Norway	3.02	4.38	2.11	2.27	2.29	5.65
	Sweden	2.78	4.57	1.82	1.82	1.81	5.95
	Denmark	2.97	4.39	2.05	2.53	2.5	5.21
Anglo-Saxon (liberal) model	Finland	3.26	4.27	2.31	2.64	2.82	5.21
	UK	3.32	3.9	2.34	2.59	2.73	4.49
	Ireland	n.d.	n.d.	2.03	–	2.61	4.38
Mediterranean (familistic) model	France	3	4.45	2.33	2.52	2.57	4.69
	Spain	3.03	4.32	2.31	2.62	2.49	4.95
	Portugal	2.9	4.65	2.67	2.84	2.81	4.72
	Greece	3.51	4.06	2.76	3.16	3.26	3.1
East Europe	Poland	3.32	4.49	2.23	2.09	2.13	5.4
	Czech Republic	3.6	3.78	2.43	2.81	2.89	3.92
	Hungary	3.73	3.42	2.38	3.23	3.19	3.93
	Bulgaria	3.62	4.49	2.3	2.51	2.5	5.17
Total		3.26	4.23	2.24	2.59	2.65	4.73
	N	34470	30293	32805	34470	39723	39723

Source: Own elaboration (ESS, 2008–2010). Mean.

Table 2. Contextual variables.

Geographic clusters	Country	Immigration rate	Unemployment rate	Risk of poverty	Unemployment replacement Long (euros/inhabitant)	Inequality (Gini)	Social benefits (% GDP)		MIPEX Index (2010)
							Expenditure	GDP.PPS	
Nordic (social democratic)	Denmark	6	7.6	13.3	489.8	0.278	33	127	53
	Norway	1	3.3	11.2	420.9	0.258	26	181	66
	Sweden	8.4	7.7	12.9	353.3	0.244	32	123	83
	Finland	2.9	7.8	13.1	677.8	0.341	29	115	69
	Mean	4.6	6.6	12.6	485.45	0.280	30	136	
Continental (conservative-corporatist)	Belgium	9.7	7.1	14.6	1,014.80	0.263	29	119	67
	Germany	8.7	6	15.6	175.2	0.33	28	112	57
	Netherlands	6.8	4.2	10.3	420.9	0.258	30	133	68
	Mean	8.4	5.8	13.5	537.0	0.3	29.0	121.3	
	UK	7	7.9	17.1	175.2	0.33	28	112	57
Anglo-Saxon (liberal)	Ireland	3.9	14.2	16.1	892.8	0.332	26	128	49
	Mean	5.45	11.05	16.6	534.0	0.331	27	120	
	France	5.8	9.6	13.5	484.4	0.308	32	108	51
Mediterranean (familistic)	Spain	12.3	20.9	20.7	647.1	0.341	24	100	63
	Portugal	6.3	12.7	17.9	176.6	0.342	26	80	79
	Greece	8.8	16.9	20.1	265	0.336	27	90	49
	Mean	8.3	15.0	18.1	393.3	0.3	27.3	94.5	
	Bulgaria	1	11.2	20.7	16.2	0.351	17	44	41
East Europe	Czech Republic	4	6.9	9	118	0.252	20	80	46
	Hungary	8.6	10.9	12.3	55.3	0.269	23	65	45
	Poland	4.3	9.6	17.6	25.7	0.311	19	63	45
	Mean	4.5	9.7	14.9	53.8	0.3	19.8	63.0	
Overall mean		6.2	9.7	15.1	405.5	0.3	26.5	105.1	

Sources: Eurostat 2008–09; Migration Integration Index (MIPEX Index 2010). The MIPEX Index is a synthetic index used for measuring integration policies in Europe. There are 148 indicators on migrant integration in the MIPEX.

(H1 above) that where there is competition for welfare and employment resources – because these are scarce – there will be attitudes hostile to immigration. The below-average clusters will have restrictive attitudes on access of immigrants to social rights, as this situation increases competition for welfare resources. On the contrary, it is to be expected that the above-average countries will have more favourable attitudes, as is the case with the Nordic countries.

In the literature there is a certain amount of consensus on identification of the countries that form the Nordic model and the liberal welfare model (Esping-Andersen, 1999; Menz, 2005), though the allocation of the remaining countries to the other welfare models is subject to discussion. Grouping countries by welfare models appears to contribute to a certain insight into the associations between socio-economic contextual variables and attitudes, such as the long-term unemployment benefits, risk of poverty, level of wealth (GDP), spending on social protection and level of inequality (Gini index), i.e. attitudes towards immigrants correlate with variables linked to wealth and its redistribution (H2) (see Table 3).

Nordic model

The Nordic welfare model promotes universalism (see Sarasa, 1995; Menz, 2005; Ferrera, 2005; Magnusson et al., 2008; among others), characterized by a low risk of poverty, generous social protection, high unemployment benefits, high expenditure on social inclusion and high per capita GDP compared to other countries (see Table 2). This model has a neocorporatist system of social partnership and high-level institutional participation by trade unions (they are involved in the management of the pension and unemployment insurance systems). These countries have the highest trade union membership levels in Europe, including among immigrants, although there are differences between the Nordic countries. In this connection, it is to be stressed that the trade union membership of immigrants is an important factor influencing their integration, their social acceptability and their socialization in diversity.

The Nordic countries today constitute the primary example of ‘egalitarian compromise’. In Table 1 we see that Sweden records the most favourable attitude towards immigrants’ access to social rights, followed by Denmark, while Norway occupies an average position. Looking at the admission of new immigrants, only Sweden is in favour, with Finland recording unfavourable and restrictive attitudes.

In the Nordic countries the variables associated with favourable attitudes to immigration are social protection, the low risk of poverty and the level of wealth (GDP). These correlate strongly and significantly with the recognition of social rights for immigrants (H2). They also correlate, albeit moderately, with inequality and unemployment and, weakly, with the degree of wage replacement by unemployment benefits. It can also be assumed that the generous Nordic welfare state helps ease social tensions deriving from competition for welfare and employment resources. However, public opinion in these countries sees immigrants receiving more than they contribute.

In this group of countries Sweden is the one that stands out, offering the best example of the social democratic model. It operates a wide-ranging social integration policy aimed at integrating immigrants into society and trade unions and offering access to social services and rights. This country has the best ranking (83 points) in the MIPEX comparative index of social integration policies (2010). However, several doubts have been raised about the effective degree of migrant integration in Sweden, and the threats to labour market regulation stemming from more recent forms of movement of labour (Woolfson et al., 2012). Looking at the other Nordic countries, Norway and Finland score virtually the same as Belgium and the Netherlands, while Denmark ranks lower than Germany.

Table 3. 'When should immigrants obtain social rights' correlation.

	Categories of dependent variable					
	Immediately on arrival	After a year	After a year and paid taxes	Once become citizen	Nordic (SE, NO, DK, FI)	Czech Republic, Poland
Unemployment rate	.109***	.110***	.112***	.114***	.349***	.397***
Immigration rate	.085***	.085***	.083***	.081***	-.358***	-.368***
Inequality Gini index	.285***	.285***	.282***	.279***	-.424***	-.537***
Risk of poverty	.440***	.441***	.443***	.443***	.666***	.640***
Wage replacement rate of unemployment benefit	.652***	.653***	.657***	.659***	.193***	.477***
Per capita GDP, Power Parity Purchase	.453***	.454***	.454***	.454***	-.575***	-.549***
Social protection expenditure	.305***	.304***	.302***	.301***	-.808***	-.772***
'When should immigrants obtain social rights' correlation						
Dependent variable	Nordic (SE, NO, DK, FI)					
Categories (reference: they never should get the same rights)	Continental (BE, DE, NL)		British (UK, IE)	Mediterranean (FR, ES, PT, GR)	CZ, PL	
Immediately	-.076***		.165***	-.025***	.390***	
After a year	-.076***		.166***	-.024***	.390***	
After having worked and paid taxes	-.075***		.168***	-.023***	.391***	
Once they have citizenship	-.077***		.169***	-.023***	.390***	

* < pq = .050; ** < pq = 0.10; *** < pq = 0.01.

Source: Own elaboration (ESS, 2008).

Continental model

The Continental, Bismarckian and neocorporatist model (Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium – no ESS data are available for Austria) has a welfare system based on contributions linked to employment (Ferrera, 2005: 59–65). In this group of countries, the rate of unionization of immigrants is relatively close to that of natives, mainly because immigration has been directed to sectors with strong unions.

Attitudes towards immigrants' access to social rights are slightly restrictive, this being a difference between these countries and the Nordic ones. Similarly, attitudes towards the entry of immigrants are also restrictive, with all three countries having a long tradition of immigration. The variables most closely associated with the hostile and restrictive attitudes are the following: risk of poverty, rate of unemployment (H1) and long-term unemployment benefits, which can be interpreted in the light of the theory of competition for employment and social protection resources. By contrast, the variables associated with equitable attitudes in keeping with the egalitarian compromise are the following: a low level of inequality, spending on social protection and level of wealth (per capita GDP). It is to be noted that in all the welfare models the level of per capita wealth has a moderate/high correlation with the attitude towards immigration.

Within this model the most significant case is that of Germany with its historical conception of immigration practised in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s to accept 'Gastarbeiter' 'for a set period of time'. This conception has led to immigrants experiencing difficulties in obtaining German citizenship. Immigration policy has led to a significant ethnical-national stance (Schierup et al., 2006: 109). But in recent years foreigners' labour supply alongside non-documented immigration has increased in Germany. This, alongside new forms of employment contracts, is considerably increasing the overall flexibility of the labour market and low-wage informal jobs. This has become a source of tension between the uncertainty of informal labour and the benefits of regular employment entailing contributions to the welfare system. The tension between immigration and welfare is related to the low contribution level of immigrants to the social protection system, insofar as their situation is characterized by low wages, precarious and/or temporary jobs, periods of unemployment, or even work in the informal economy. With regard to integration policies, (MIPEX Index, 2010), Continental countries are clearly behind Sweden, but on a par with the other Nordic countries.

Liberal model

The United Kingdom represents the most genuine liberal model. (The other 'liberal' case, Ireland, shows certain exceptions to the theoretical model.) In this country the welfare system, albeit universal, is based on a system of minimum entitlements supplemented by private pension systems. The industrial relations system is characterized by 'voluntarism' in terms of mutual recognition between the two sides of industry, an arrangement with few legal guarantees and with an extremely decentralized collective bargaining system. The unionization rate has been in decline for decades. The immigration rate is slightly above average, but this is a country with a long history of immigration and a strong 'racialization' of the labour market (Schierup et al., 2006).

The general tendency in attitudes is restrictive in relation to both admission of immigrants and their access to social rights. Even public opinion believes (to a greater extent than in other countries) that immigration is bad for the economy and that immigrants receive more than they contribute to society (Table 1). The negative attitudes correlate substantially and significantly with the level of unemployment benefits and the unemployment rate, in which respect they are distinct from

the other welfare models. To this it is necessary to add the substantial correlation with the risk of poverty. By contrast, attitudes with regard to immigrants' access to welfare display a moderate to high negative correlation with social protection spending. They also correlate negatively with social inequalities (Gini index).

In sum, the British model, where immigration policy is concerned, represents a neoliberal and post-Fordist orientation. This is functional with the flexibilization of the labour market. Yet at the same time the United Kingdom has the most well-developed anti-discrimination policy in Europe, as reflected in its labour law (MIPEX, 2010). The anti-discriminatory policies and law are attributable to a tradition of immigration dating back a long way, to the descendants of the original immigrants and to the settled consolidation of ethnic minorities (Schierup et al., 2006).

Mediterranean model

The countries grouped together in the Mediterranean model present a somewhat diverse picture. France has a contributory welfare system, with high unemployment benefits and social protection, as well as high per capita GDP, and is in many regards a stand-alone case – in terms of the overall link between integration and social policies it is much closer to the Continental one (see below). Spain, Portugal and Greece, on the other hand, are countries without an immigration tradition and with high levels of unemployment, a high risk of poverty and low unemployment benefits, as well as low social protection expenditure. These countries have a contributory welfare system, complemented by a high degree of support attributable to family solidarity and private insurance systems and pensions (Moreno, 2007).

The industrial relations system is characterized by a high degree of informality and very low levels of unionization. The low trade union membership among both natives and immigrants represented a handicap for integration policy, while also weakening the trade unions' capacity for collective action.

In France, Spain and Portugal attitudes towards recognizing the immigrants' rights to social services are about average of the 17 countries studied, meaning that we can regard them as equitable to the extent that there is a link between rights and duties ('entitlement after working and paying taxes'). In relation to admitting immigrants, however, the dominant attitude is restrictive. The case of Greece deserves separate consideration as the attitude is highly restrictive both concerning access to social rights and admission to the country. In all four countries the opinion concerning immigrants' contribution to the economy is poor (Table 1).

The variables with which there is a substantial and significant correlation with attitudes are risk of poverty (H1), long-term unemployment benefits and unemployment. Those on the other hand contributing to shaping more positive attitudes are social protection expenditure and the inequality index (H2). The inequality index and the unemployment rate act in a manner more resembling the liberal model than the other models.

In Spain, Greece and Portugal a large proportion of immigrants work in small businesses with temporary contracts, as bogus self-employed, in the informal economy or in some other form of irregular situation, giving rise to a situation in which many immigrants find themselves in a legal limbo without full access to social rights. According to Schierup et al. (2006: 250), both the conservative-corporatist and the Mediterranean welfare state are, compared with the Nordic countries, relatively tolerant of the social exclusion of non-nationals and ethnic minorities. For these southern European countries the synthetic MIPEX Index is high for Portugal and even for Spain, but low for France and Greece. However, this synthetic index overlaps different models and does not really allow any grouping.

Table 4. When should immigrants obtain rights? Scale 1–5 (reference category 5 = never).

Ordinal regression		Estimation	Std.Error
Scale	Immediately on arrival = 1	6.436***	0.895***
	After a year = 2	7.304***	0.895***
	After a year and having paid taxes = 3	9.245***	0.896***
	Once become a citizen = 4	11.54***	0.896***
Location	Unemployment rate	0.114***	0.019***
	Immigration rate	−0.07***	0.017***
	Social protection	0.067***	0.011***
	GINI index	0.035***	0.009***
	Risk of poverty	0.056***	0.008***
	Unemployment benefit long term	0.087***	0.006***
	GDP.PPS	0.017***	0.003***
	Scandinavian countries (SE, NO, DK, FI)	−3.008***	0.278***
	Continental countries (BE, DE, NL)	−2.129***	0.225***
	Anglo-Saxon (UK, IE)	1.046***	0.151***
	Mediterranean countries (FR, ES, GR, PT)	−1.108***	0.187***
	CEE countries CZ, PL	−0.108***	0.126 (ns)
	Other CEE countries (LV, RO)	0***	.
N		30.930	
R square Nagelkerke		0.055	
−2 LL		2.37	

* $p < .050$; ** $p < .010$; *** $p < .001$, ns=no significance.

Source: Own elaboration (ESS 2008).

Conclusions

Ordinal logistic regression analysis (Table 4) allows us to read the dependent variable on public opinion as a continuous variable, similar to linear regression. This variable shows a scale of more favourable to less favourable opinion towards immigrants' access to social rights, ranging from a very favourable opinion (1 = immediately) to a very unfavourable opinion (5 = never should get rights).

The most restrictive opinions are particularly influenced by the unemployment rate, but also by the coverage rate of unemployment benefits, social protection expenditure and the risk of poverty. These three variables provide an indication of the negative effect that competition on the labour market and social protection have on public opinion. By contrast, favourable opinion is influenced by the immigration rate, possibly reflecting the composition of the population variables.

By group of countries, attitudes towards immigration appear relatively favourable in the Nordic and Continental countries, apparently confirming the positive effect of their more generous welfare provisions and their higher level of per capita GDP, as these reduce competition for resources. The most unfavourable opinions appear in the Mediterranean countries and Britain. In eastern European countries the estimation is insignificant, so no conclusions can be drawn.

Our first hypothesis (H1) stated that: The contextual variables associated with competition for welfare and employment resources contribute to the emergence of attitudes hostile to immigration. Consistent with this, we found that the contextual variables concerned (such as unemployment rate, risk of poverty, social inequality and rate of immigration) were associated with restrictive attitudes unfavourable to immigration. Alongside these contextual variables,

however, factors pertaining to personal characteristics – such as age, level of studies, right/left-wing political beliefs and subjective perception of income insecurity – also exert an influence. Given that previous studies (Boeri, 2010; Jean and Jiménez, 2011; Schierup et al., 2006) have provided no evidence for any significant negative effect of immigration on employment levels or welfare financing, the policy implication is that, rather than closing their borders, European countries should ensure that immigration is associated with social policies aimed at reducing the perceived competition for resources and in particular unemployment and risk of poverty.

Our second hypothesis (H2) stated that: The variables associated with redressing social inequality contribute to reducing hostility to immigration. We have found that associating welfare models with attitudes highlights the greater ‘egalitarian compromise’ characterizing the Nordic countries (including the Ghent system) and ostensibly fostering more tolerant attitudes towards immigration in that it reduces the degree of competition for resources. We must however point out that, as significant differences are to be found within the same model, as has been shown in relation to the Nordic or to the Mediterranean countries. For this reason, it is more appropriate to speak of a connection between welfare policies and attitudes: social protection expenditure and unemployment benefits are correlated with a reduction in social inequality and the risk of poverty, ultimately contributing to the formation of attitudes favourable to immigration. Nevertheless, this influence is only clear-cut in the cases of Sweden and Norway. By contrast, in Denmark and Finland, the influence of welfare is less clear, suggesting that the association of these variables is of greater importance in some countries than in others, depending on their history, the history of immigration, their social institutions and their immigration and asylum policies. The riots in Sweden in 2013 also confirm the limitations of our findings: even in Sweden, immigrants may face negative attitudes and discrimination, and more research will be needed to detect whether this is due to higher expectations or to actual discrimination.

The case of the United Kingdom confirms the importance of history: while attitudes to immigration are restrictive and social protection is weak, this country nonetheless has very advanced anti-discrimination policies due to the fact that its immigration tradition dates back a long time. Another extreme in unfavourable and restrictive attitudes to immigration is represented by Greece and Hungary, countries with no tradition of immigration and characterized by a greater influence of far-right parties, low social protection, low unemployment benefits and a low level of wealth. Per capita wealth is a relatively important variable in explaining attitudes in all models.

Thirdly, unfavourable attitudes to the access of immigrants to social rights points to the weakness of the ‘egalitarian compromise’. This too is reflected in access to political participation rights, citizenship rights and training and education services. Racial and ethnic fragmentation meanwhile fosters envy, lack of solidarity and the rise of exclusive nationalist movements. The growing heterogeneity of the labour force contributes to the segmentation and flexibilization of the labour market, with third-country immigrants displaying a high degree of circular mobility in and among labour markets within the EU, a development that is in keeping with the encouragement of free movement of workers, development of neoliberal policies and reorientation of welfare policies in the direction of workfare.

More longitudinal research may shed more light on the causal linkages between the welfare state and immigration. Competition and immigration in a situation of uncertainty are bound to raise questions on welfare state sustainability that may find expression in politics. In any case, social policies have an important moderating function that needs to be recognized in periods when economic crisis is becoming associated with risks of xenophobic tension.

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