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# Disentangling the ‘New Liberal Dilemma’: On the relation between general welfare redistribution preferences and welfare chauvinism

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## Abstract

In the present ‘Age of Migration’, public policy as well as social scientists are puzzled by the ‘New Liberal Dilemma’ (Newton, 2007) of finding popular support for welfare programs that have been installed in times of cultural homogeneity. In this article, we are interested in the question of whether opinions about immigrants’ access to welfare provisions originate from general preferences towards welfare redistribution, and whether this association is moderated by the national context. Using the 2008 wave of the European Social Survey, we show that particularly those who favor that welfare benefits should in the first place target the neediest, place the highest restrictions on welfare provisions for immigrants. In addition, the relationship between preferences for welfare redistribution and opinions about immigrants’ access to social welfare is moderated by a national context of cultural heterogeneity. We conclude the article by drawing implications for public policy.

## Keywords

Deservingness theory, ethnic-cultural diversity, European Social Survey, multilevel analysis, redistributive justice principles, welfare chauvinism

## 1. Introduction

For some time now, politicians of European welfare states have envisaged the ‘New Liberal Dilemma’ (Newton, 2007).<sup>1</sup> That is, in the present ‘Age of Migration’ (Castles and Miller, 2003) it is difficult to reconcile the integration of immigrants with finding popular support for welfare state

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programs that came into effect in times of cultural homogeneity. In particular, in the aftermath of the worldwide financial crisis, public opinion further polarized on the issue of immigration, with rising success for right-wing populist parties that fuelled debates on restricted welfare access to immigrants. Polarization of public opinion over immigration occurred not only in countries with established anti-immigration parties, such as Belgium, France and Denmark (Kitschelt, 1997), but also in established welfare states where populist parties received widespread electoral support, including the Netherlands (Aarts and Thomassen, 2008), Sweden (Rydgren and Ruth, 2011), and Finland (Arter, 2010).

Social scientists, too, have taken notice of this dilemma, though to date empirical findings are lacking. Although immigrant flows to European countries seem to be unrelated to welfare state generosity (Hooghe et al., 2008; Mau and Burckhardt, 2009; Stichnot and van der Straeten, 2011), in most countries immigrants rely relatively more upon welfare provisions and are also perceived as more dependent than other risk groups (Boeri et al., 2002; Muenz and Fassmann, 2004). Moreover, despite the fact that citizens of foreign descent are more in need, they are nonetheless deemed by mass publics to be far less deserving of benefits than the native born. Bommers and Geddes (2000) conclude their seminal volume on the relationship between immigration and welfare state with the insight that immigrants as a group have become the 'new undeserving poor' of Western societies. This is corroborated by van Oorschot (2006), who shows that Europeans perceive immigrants in a far less deserving light than other needy groups like the elderly, disabled persons, and unemployed.

However, immigrants' low level of perceived deservingness does not necessarily mean that the general public is against granting any welfare rights to immigrants. Welfare chauvinism in the *soft sense*, referring to lower deservingness of immigrants compared to natives (Van der Waal et al., 2010), does not equal welfare chauvinism in the *strict sense*, referring to a desire to exclude immigrants from any welfare provision (Koning, 2011). Studies of European opinions on social rights for immigrants showed that only a minority would prefer not to grant any social rights to immigrants at all, while a majority would agree to giving immigrants equal access to welfare provisions only after they have acquired formal citizenship and/or have worked and paid taxes (Gorodzeisky and Semyonov, 2009; Mewes and Mau, 2012).

In this study, we aim at deepening insights on welfare chauvinism by analyzing whether the conditioning criteria that people might apply to immigrants' access to social welfare provisions are rooted in more general ideas about how welfare should be redistributed. In a long tradition, with theoretical (Deutsch, 1975; Miller, 1999; Rawls, 1971) and empirical analyses (Aalberg, 2003; Arts and Gelissen, 2001), students of social solidarity identified three main principles of welfare redistribution: 1) merit (or equity): citizens who contribute most to the welfare state should be entitled to higher levels of provision; 2) need: welfare provision should (only or especially) be directed to citizens in highest need; 3) equality: all citizens should be entitled to the same level of provision, irrespective of their contributions and status. From a theoretical perspective, it is plausible to assume a direct link between preferences for principles of welfare redistribution and conditioning criteria associated with immigrants' social rights.<sup>2</sup> Empirically, however, this link has not yet been identified.

In this article we will extend theoretical ideas about the relationship between general preferences for welfare redistribution and welfare chauvinism, and test them empirically using data from the 2008/2009 wave of the European Social Survey, controlling for a number of relevant variables at individual and context level. As for the latter, we assume that people's ideas about welfare redistribution and immigrants' welfare rights are embedded in and affected by country-specific cultural contexts. We begin with a review of the relevant literature and propose specific hypotheses that

will guide the analysis. Then we present our data and methodology, followed by a presentation and discussion of our results. We conclude with a reflection on the implications of our findings for the future of social insurance schemes in the face of increasing immigrant diversity.

## **2. Welfare chauvinism and principles of redistributive justice**

The relationship between diversity and the welfare state is rather tense (Alesina and Glaezer, 2004; Banting et al., 2006). Identifying the state – likewise the ‘welfare state’ – inherently requires delineating who is ‘in’ (citizens of the state) and ‘out’ (non-citizens). Social theorists frequently discuss the linkages between welfare redistribution and citizenship (Miller, 1999), as redistribution in modern welfare states requires making sacrifices with ‘anonymous others whom we do not know, will probably never meet, and whose ethnic descent, religion and way of life differs from our own’ (Kymlicka, 2001: 225). The symbolic boundaries that delineated the ‘anonymous others’ present within national boundaries, once included social class and ideological discrepancies (Dalton, 2002; Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). These days, however, immigration – with its encompassing distinction of the insider and the outsider – dominates as a social cleavage that polarizes not only public opinion but also cuts across former social cleavages (Kriesi et al., 2006; Van der Brug and van Spanje, 2009).

While the degree to which Europeans generally perceive immigrants as equal citizens of their country fills many research agendas (Bail, 2008; Wright, 2011), from a welfare studies perspective they are seen as a least deserving group (van Oorschot, 2006). In general, people are more willing to provide support to people they can identify with, to people who helped them in the past, and to people who cannot be blamed for their neediness or have no personal control over their economic situation (Coughlin, 1980; De Swaan, 1988; Raijman et al., 2003; van Oorschot, 2006). For immigrants in particular, low perceived deservingness is further compounded by concerns regarding: 1) identity, as there is a cultural distance between native and foreign-born residents; 2) reciprocity, as immigrants are new residents of their host country and have not contributed much yet, if at all; and 3) control, as immigrants’ choice to emigrate from their origin country is often well-considered.<sup>3</sup>

However, one’s perception of immigrants as less deserving does not necessarily imply a desire to categorically exclude them from social welfare provisions. Recent studies (Mewes and Mau, 2012; van der Waal et al., 2010, 2011) on European opinions about the timing of and the conditions under which newcomers can make appeal to welfare state provisions find that only a small proportion of Europeans wants to take this step. A larger proportion of Europeans favors granting immigrants social welfare rights, but only after they acquire citizenship or after they made significant tax contributions. Here, we are interested in the question of how these welfare access opinions are related to more general principles of redistributive justice, and thus in showing empirically how and to what degree such opinions about immigrants’ social rights originate from a broader perspective on social justice.

In the context of the welfare state, social justice concerns principles that ‘provide a way of assigning rights and duties in the basic institutions of society and [they] define the appropriate distribution of the benefits and burdens of social cooperation’ (Rawls, 1971: 4; see also Konow, 2003). There is a continuing debate on the extent and meaning of social justice principles (Deutsch, 1975; Konow, 2003), and a distinction is usually made between redistributive and procedural justice (Rothstein, 1998). In matters of welfare redistribution, three principles are seen as central: merit (also referred to as ‘equity’ or ‘desert’), need, and equality (see Konow, 2003; Miller, 1999).

The principle of merit says that making significant contributions to the welfare state, for example, through taxed incomes, or having a long labor-market trajectory, should be rewarded accordingly in

case of an occurring social risk, that is, higher benefits. The merit principle is practically applied by organizing social protection through social insurances (Clasen and Van Oorschot, 2002), and as such it is the central principle directing redistribution in conservative welfare states where the reproduction of social hierarchies and statuses through welfare is valued (Arts and Gelissen, 2001; Esping-Andersen, 1990). Applied to social rights for immigrants, this principle requires that access be earned by way of contribution to the welfare state. Our first hypothesis therefore is that a preference for the merit principle is positively associated with granting immigrants access to social rights after they have worked and paid taxes for a certain period (H1).

The principle of equality says that all members of a group should be entitled to the same level and quality of welfare, irrespective of how much one has contributed or how needy one is. In practice, this principle is mostly realized by providing citizenship-based flat-rate benefits (or earnings-related benefits with a small bandwidth between benefit floor and ceiling). As such, it is central to the universalistic Nordic social-democratic welfare states, which guarantee a high and largely equal standard of living to all citizens (Arts and Gelissen, 2001; Esping-Andersen, 1990).

However, as emphasized by Scandinavian scholars, this model of welfare state redistribution also draws legitimacy from a legal perspective that defines it in terms of citizenship status (Korpi, 2003; Korpi and Palme, 1998). This implies that welfare universalism does not automatically extend to any person living in the country,<sup>4</sup> and raises questions about the distinction between those who are 'in' (have citizenship), and those who are 'out' (do not have this status).<sup>5</sup> Although, from a sociological perspective, perceiving people as being as 'in' or 'out' of one's group is a reflection of shared symbolic boundaries (Lamont and Molnar, 2002), which may not always overlap with legally defined boundaries, we assume that upon their arrival immigrants are not defined by most Europeans as belonging to the in-group of formal citizens and that they also are not included in their socially defined in-group either. However, for those who are in favor of applying the equality principle to the redistribution of welfare rights, the acquisition of citizenship status by migrants may signal a turning point leading to accepting them as new members of their perceived in-group. Our second hypothesis then is that a preference for the principle of equality is positively associated with granting immigrants access to social rights after they acquire citizenship (H2).

The need principle posits that only those who are in real need should be provided with state welfare. It relates to the understanding that the neediest (e.g. low income groups or those with an inconsistent labor market trajectory) should be entitled to higher social benefits to prevent an accumulation of social risks, while those who are better off are seen as being able to provide for themselves. Means-tested benefits are the core instrument for the practical application of this principle in welfare provision, and it is central to the liberal type of welfare state (Arts and Gelissen, 2001; Esping-Andersen, 1990).

There may be two contradictory ways in which a preference for a redistribution based on need is related to conditions for granting welfare rights to immigrants. According to one strand in the literature, favoring a redistribution that supports the neediest relates to a perspective of enlightenment, altruism and civic responsibility (d'Anjou et al., 1995; Tyran and Sausgruber, 2006), which could prevail among all classes. This enlightenment perspective on need suggests that immigrants' social rights be granted immediately upon arrival, as immigrant groups are high on the hierarchy of groups with social needs (H3a). A contrasting view on the need principle is that it represents self-interest by the have-nots who are the main target group for needs-based welfare provision. Empirical research suggests that this self-interest perspective on need might actually be true, since in a sample of European people the socioeconomically 'have-nots' are especially prone to endorse the need criterion (Reeskens and van Oorschot, 2011). In addition, we also know from empirical research that lower class citizens, who are often in competition with immigrants, are most chauvinist when it

comes to immigrants' access to social rights, even though they might perceive immigrants as in need (Gorodzeisky and Semyonov, 2009; Kitschelt, 1997). Our alternative hypothesis is, then, that a preference for the principle of need is positively associated with a preference for high or insurmountable barriers for welfare provision to immigrants (H3b).

As we explained in the introduction, we assume that people's ideas about immigrants' welfare rights originate from general ideas about welfare redistribution and that this is embedded in and affected by country context. This is based on considerations stemming from realistic group conflict theory, which argues that intergroup hostility is the result of the salience of resource stress in the presence of a 'potentially competitive out-group' (Esses et al., 2001: 394). Applied to welfare chauvinism, this would mean that people are less willing to grant immigrants access to welfare provisions in contexts with a sizeable immigrant population, as this situation implies a larger 'potentially competitive out-group'.<sup>6</sup> These claims have been tested on European data, but with inconclusive results (Gorodzeisky and Semyonov, 2009; Koning, 2011; Mewes and Mau, 2012). Despite previous findings that welfare chauvinism is not more common in diverse societies, we will nevertheless reanalyze this hypothesis, with the additional question of whether cultural diversity moderates the association between preferences for principles of welfare redistribution and attitudes about social rights for immigrants.

Proposing hypotheses, then, our first expectation is that the relation between the principle of merit and opinions about immigrants' access to welfare provisions are resistant to the influence of diversity, because merit's underlying importance of economic duties towards society make no appeal to in-out group conflict. We nevertheless do expect moderating effects of diversity on the relationships that involve the principles of need and equality. As our assumption is that the principle of equality reflects ideas about citizenship boundaries, it may be expected that in situations with higher cultural diversity, distinctions between the in- and out-group become more salient and polarized. Hypothesis 4, then, posits that in diverse societies, the association between preference for the equality principle and the preference for citizenship based social rights for immigrants is stronger (H4).

The moderating effect on the relationship between preference for the need principle and granting social rights for immigrants is not straightforward. If the general preference for a redistribution based on need is an expression of 'enlightenment' or general altruistic stances, then we expect that diversity strengthens the association between need and granting immigrants an unconditional access to welfare provisions (H5a). However, if a preference for the need principle reflects self-interest of the have-nots and correlates with an exclusionary stance, then the expectation is that, in the light of a diverse context, individuals become more concerned about their personal interests and are less likely to share their welfare with immigrants. This leads to an alternative hypothesis that the relation between the preference for the redistributive need principle and the preference for high or even insurmountable barriers to social rights for immigrants is positively affected by national-level diversity (H5b).

### **3. Data and methods**

For testing our hypotheses we analyzed the fourth (2008/2009) wave of the European Social Survey (ESS). This comparative biennial survey project was carried out in 27 European countries, of which we can include 24 due to limitations regarding the availability of contextual data.<sup>7</sup>

#### *Dependent variable*

Our dependent variable, 'welfare chauvinism', is measured by the ESS question: 'When should immigrants obtain rights to social benefits/services?' with answer categories: 1) 'immediately on



arrival', 2) 'after living in [country] for a year, whether or not they have worked', 3) 'Only after they have worked and paid taxes for at least a year', 4) 'once they have become a [country] citizen', and 5) 'they should never get the same rights.' We combined the first two response categories as they reflect an unconditional stance towards immigrant access to welfare benefits. The third category reflects conditionality on the basis of welfare contributions, which we refer to as 'conditional upon reciprocity'. The fourth category refers to 'conditionality based upon citizenship', and we label it as such. The fifth category excludes immigrants from social rights; we label it 'exclusion'.

### *Independent variables*

We measure individual preferences for principles of welfare redistribution with the ESS survey question: 'Some people say that higher earners should get more benefit when they are temporarily unemployed because they have paid more. Others say that lower earners should get more benefits because they are more in greater need. Which of the three statements on this card comes closest to your view?' The answering categories were: 1) 'higher earners should get more', 2) 'high and low earners should get the same amount', and 3) 'lower earners should get more'. The first response category refers to the merit principle, the second to the equality-principle, and the third to need. In our analysis, the equality category ('higher and low earners should get the same amount') will serve as reference.<sup>8</sup>

At context level, the concept of diversity is measured as the proportion of foreign-born persons, estimated for the year 2008 by a linear interpolation of the 2005 and 2010 foreign-born statistics of the United Nations Population Division. Other studies on the societal consequences of immigrant diversity often use OECD measures (Gesthuizen et al., 2009; Hooghe et al., 2009), but as not all countries in our sample are OECD member states, relying on this data source would limit the number of countries in present study. Nevertheless, as UN estimates on foreign-born residents are highly correlated with OECD figures among common countries<sup>9</sup> and other studies fruitfully employ the UN figures we use here (Kesler and Bloemraad, 2010; Reeskens and Wright, forthcoming; Wright, 2011), we will continue with the UN data.

### *Control variables*

To assess the unique association between general welfare redistribution preferences and specific attitudes about immigrant access to welfare provisions, we control for a number of variables previously shown to be related to welfare chauvinism and to attitudes towards immigrants (Gorodzeisky and Semyonov, 2009; Mewes and Mau, 2012; van der Waal et al., 2010). The first is age, with the expectation that elderly place higher barriers against immigrants' access to welfare provisions. For gender, we expect that women are less chauvinist than men. Self-evidently, we expect that people of foreign origin (having been born abroad or having at least one parent that is born abroad) are more in defense of immigrant social rights,<sup>10</sup> and we also expect that people living in metropolitan areas will be less chauvinist. For socioeconomic status, we expect that people with a higher SES are less chauvinist and more in favor of welfare provisions for immigrants. As indicators for socioeconomic status we include: 1) educational level, operationalized by having a diploma from lower (reference), lower secondary, higher secondary, and tertiary level education; 2) work status, operationalized by having paid work (reference), being unemployed, being a student, being retired and having another status; 3) whether one has been unemployed in the past or not (reference); 4) one's current financial situation, operationalized with one's subjective financial satisfaction (we opted

for this subjective measurement in order to cope with the high nonresponse on the objective income question); 5) whether one is dependent on welfare or not (reference). As other studies show that welfare chauvinism is a reflection of related political and cultural ideologies, we also include authoritarianism (ranging from 1 to 5),<sup>11</sup> and religiosity, operationalized by attending religious services (ranging from 0 to 6) in the model, with the expectation that authoritarian respondents and non-churchgoers are most chauvinist. For more information about the control variables, see the Appendix.

At the national level, we control for expenditure on social protection adjusted for purchasing power standards (in 1000 euros), as obtained from Eurostat (2011). In line with previous research (van der Waal et al., 2011), we expect that welfare chauvinism is less prevalent in more generous welfare states.

## Methodology

The assumption that people's preferences about immigrants' access to welfare provisions can be explained by individual features and contextual factors, as well as their cross-level interaction, requires the use of multilevel regression modeling (Gelman and Hill, 2006). This technique accounts for the clustered nature of the ESS data source – individuals within countries – and enables us to estimate national-level effects on individual outcomes. Furthermore, since our dependent variable is measured at the nominal level, multilevel multinomial analysis is applied using the SAS Glimmix-procedure (Schabenberger, 2005). The reference category of the multinomial model will be the most chauvinist position saying that immigrants 'should never get the same rights'.

## 4. Results

### Bivariate results

We start by presenting the distribution of our dependent variable. As Table 1 shows, there is a considerable variation in peoples' preferences for granting social security rights to newly arrived citizens, with a small faction preferring full exclusion of immigrants from social welfare (7.47%). The second least preferred response is the opposite, namely an unconditional access to social rights

**Table 1.** Cross-tabulation between general preferences of welfare redistribution and specific preferences for redistribution towards immigrants

Immigrants' access to welfare benefits	Welfare redistribution principle			
	Merit	Equality	Need	Total
Unconditional access to social welfare	17.20	16.10	16.19	16.48
Conditional upon reciprocity	44.54	40.65	35.22	41.36
Conditional upon citizenship	31.58	36.24	36.52	34.69
Exclusion from social welfare	6.68	7.01	12.07	7.47
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
N	13,401	21,571	4441	39,413

Note: Entries represent column percentages of general preferences of welfare redistribution and specific preferences towards "immigrants' access to social welfare"



(16.48%). Most Europeans, however, agree with social rights for immigrants, but only under certain conditions. About a third of the European population (34.69%) prefers the requirement of citizenship, while a small majority (41.36%) prefers the condition of reciprocity, that is, granting rights after a period of working and paying taxes. While Konow (2003) found that reciprocity is the main driving mechanism for solidarity generally, we confirm that this also counts for solidarity towards immigrants.

The focus of our research is, however, the relationship between peoples' attitudes regarding principles of redistributive justice and their preferences for granting social rights to immigrants. In this respect, Table 1 shows a statistically significant but rather weak association (chi sq. = 281.90; d.f. = 6;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $\phi = 0.08$ ), indicating that people who endorse the principle of merit tend to favor the opinion that immigrants have to earn their social rights by working and paying taxes. By contrast, they are somewhat less of the opinion that immigrants should first acquire citizenship. Among those who endorse the equality principle, we find the opposite pattern. Among those who prefer the need principle, not granting rights to immigrants at all – the thick description of chauvinism – is more popular than average. However, differences are rather small.

To cope with the country-clustered nature of the data, we tested the bivariate association between the two variables in a multinomial multilevel model. The results are presented in Table 2, which shows a similar pattern to Table 1. The negative regression coefficients of the 'need'-principle indicate that people who think that welfare should be primarily directed to the neediest in society lean in favor of excluding immigrants from social welfare provisions (reference category). The largest discrepancy between those who prefer need over equality is present on the preference of a conditional access based on reciprocity ( $b = -0.65$ ;  $t = -10.99$ ), indicating that respondents who prefer need over equality are 50 percent less likely to grant immigrants access to social rights after they have worked/paid taxes compared to granting them no social security rights at all. Compared to a preference for equality, the willingness to redistribute welfare on the basis of merit leads to a slightly higher willingness to grant immigrants social rights conditional upon reciprocity ( $b = 0.10$ ;  $t = 1.98$ ), which translates in a 10 percent higher likelihood of granting immigrants access to welfare provisions after they

**Table 2.** Bivariate multinomial analysis of opinions of immigrants' access to welfare provisions regressed on general preferences of welfare redistribution

	Immigrants' access to welfare benefits					
	Unconditional		Conditional upon reciprocity		Conditional upon citizenship	
	Param	t-value	Param	t-value	Param	t-value
Fixed Effects						
Intercept	0.94***	3.67	1.96***	10.41	1.85***	11.36
Welfare redistribution						
- Merit (higher earners)	0.09	-1.64	0.10*	1.98	-0.01	-0.28
- Need (lower earners) (Ref: equality)	-0.48***	-7.04	-0.65***	-10.99	-0.50***	-8.58
Random Effects						
Country variance	1.54***	3.33	0.83***	3.32	0.61**	3.27
Intraclass correlation	31.93%		20.08%		15.68%	

\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

Note: Entries represent the results of a multilevel multinomial regression model with 'they should never get the same rights' as reference category.

have made financial contributions. In contrast to our expectations, there is no significant difference in the willingness to grant immigrant social rights on the condition of citizenship between those that endorse the equality principle and those who are in favor of merit.

In sum, the bivariate exploration reveals that individuals endorsing the merit and equality redistribution principles are rather similar in their opinions of immigrants' access to social rights, which contradicts our hypotheses H1 and H2. The bivariate findings do seem to support our hypothesis H3b, which said that those in favor of the need principle would favor high or even insurmountable barriers for immigrant access to social rights. Our findings do not support the alternative hypothesis H3a that endorsing an enlightenment perspective on need would imply a stronger preference for unconditional access.

However, before we can draw strong conclusions on the basis of these bivariate relations, we first need to figure out whether these patterns are spurious due to related covariates.

### *Individual-level effects*

Table 3 summarizes the results of a multinomial multilevel analysis with the addition of structural and ideational respondent controls. The effect parameters of welfare redistribution preferences on welfare chauvinism are slightly reduced in size and significance when controlling for related respondent characteristics, which implies that the effects of general welfare redistribution preferences on welfare chauvinism are partially spurious. Nevertheless, the pattern between a preference for a redistribution based on need and opinions about welfare provisions for immigrants remain robust in the sense that they are more in favor of excluding immigrants from social benefits and services, which confirms Hypothesis 3b. For people preferring redistribution on the basis of merit, we do not find large differences compared with those who prefer redistribution on the basis of equality. This also implies that respondents who endorse the equality principle are not more in favor of granting immigrants equal access to welfare after they have acquired citizenship, which means that Hypothesis 2 finds little support. Additionally, also Hypothesis 1, namely that merit is strongly associated with granting immigrants access to welfare when they have worked in the country, is unsupported as any differentiation from the 'equality' group disappears.

Before discussing the influence of national context, we confirm briefly that the effects of almost all individual determinants are in line with findings of other studies (Mewes and Mau, 2012; van der Waal et al., 2010), with the exception that preferences towards immigrants' social rights are hardly related to age and gender. However, as expected, people of foreign origin and people living in urban areas are more in favor of an unconditional access of immigrants to social rights. Socioeconomic status shows mixed patterns: whereas those with a lower level of education are more restrictive towards immigrants' welfare rights, as for employment status, only students, who are more inclusively oriented towards immigrants, differ from the employed. Being satisfied with one's financial situation is associated with more inclusive views on immigrant social rights, while being welfare dependent corresponds with more chauvinist opinions. Our two ideational stances show theoretically relevant patterns: on the one hand, those with a cultural authoritarian opinion are most chauvinist; on the other hand, frequent attendees of religious services are more in favor of immigrant rights.

### *Context effects and cross-level interactions*

In a next step, we bring in aspects of national context to determine how they moderate the relationship between general welfare attitudes and welfare chauvinism. In the first step (Model 1 in

**Table 3.** Multivariate multinomial analysis of opinions of immigrants' access to welfare provisions regressed on general preferences of welfare redistribution

Fixed effects	Immigrants' access to welfare benefits					
	Unconditional		Conditional upon reciprocity		Conditional upon citizenship	
	Param	t-value	Param	t-value	Param	t-value
Intercept	0.37***	1.50	1.53***	8.01	1.48***	9.07
Welfare redistribution						
- Merit (higher earners)	-0.01	-0.19	0.01	0.16	-0.09	-1.72
- Need (lower earners) (Ref: equality)	-0.40***	-5.71	-0.59***	-9.72	-0.45***	-7.53
Age	-0.00	-0.38	0.00	1.38	0.00	0.89
Woman (Ref: Man)	0.01	0.29	-0.01	-0.29	-0.10*	-2.30
Foreign origin (Ref: native)	1.33***	15.74	0.94***	11.74	0.51***	6.30
Level of urbanization	0.07***	3.44	0.06**	3.13	0.02	1.11
Education (Ref: Lower)						
- Lower secondary	0.21*	2.45	0.23**	3.18	0.28***	3.78
- Higher secondary	0.38***	4.52	0.49***	6.71	0.52***	7.07
- Tertiary	0.99***	10.46	0.92***	11.04	0.92***	10.85
Work (Ref: Employed)						
- Unemployed	0.02	0.18	0.01	0.08	-0.03	-0.30
- Student	0.47***	3.79	0.33**	2.86	0.47***	4.09
- Retired	0.05	0.55	0.10	1.16	0.16	1.79
- Other	-0.01	-0.11	0.03	0.40	0.04	0.53
Been I-term unemployed (Ref: No)	0.08	1.41	0.06	1.21	-0.00	-0.04
Subjective income	0.19***	5.78	0.18***	6.53	0.18***	6.51
Welfare dependent (Ref: No)	-0.17*	-2.12	-0.25***	-3.51	-0.24***	-3.36
Authoritarianism	-0.88***	-24.05	-0.42***	-12.39	-0.33***	-9.66
Religiosity	0.10***	5.75	0.07***	4.06	0.09***	5.43
Random effects	Param	z-value	Param	z-value	Param	z-value
Country variance	1.24***	3.31	0.72***	3.30	0.49***	3.23
Intraclass correlation	27.41%		18.11%		12.97%	

\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Note: Entries represent the results of a multilevel multinomial regression model with 'they should never get the same rights' as reference category.

Table 4), the direct impact of the share of foreign-born residents and social welfare expenditure per capita on welfare chauvinism (all else equal) is analyzed. The results confirm previous studies, namely that the direct impact of immigrant group size on welfare chauvinism is rather limited (Koning, 2011; Mewes and Mau, 2012). With negative (but mostly nonsignificant) parameters of foreign-born stock on the immigrant access to welfare items, there is a tendency leaning towards chauvinism. Yet, we can only observe that people who live in more diverse societies prefer slightly less that immigrants should be entitled to social rights after having acquired citizenship over the reference that they should never have the same rights. As it does appear that conditionality based on citizenship is affected by the share of immigrants, one interpretation might be that in those contexts people become more concerned about their national identity and the social boundaries of

**Table 4.** Multivariate multinomial analysis of contextual effects on opinions about immigrants' access to social welfare

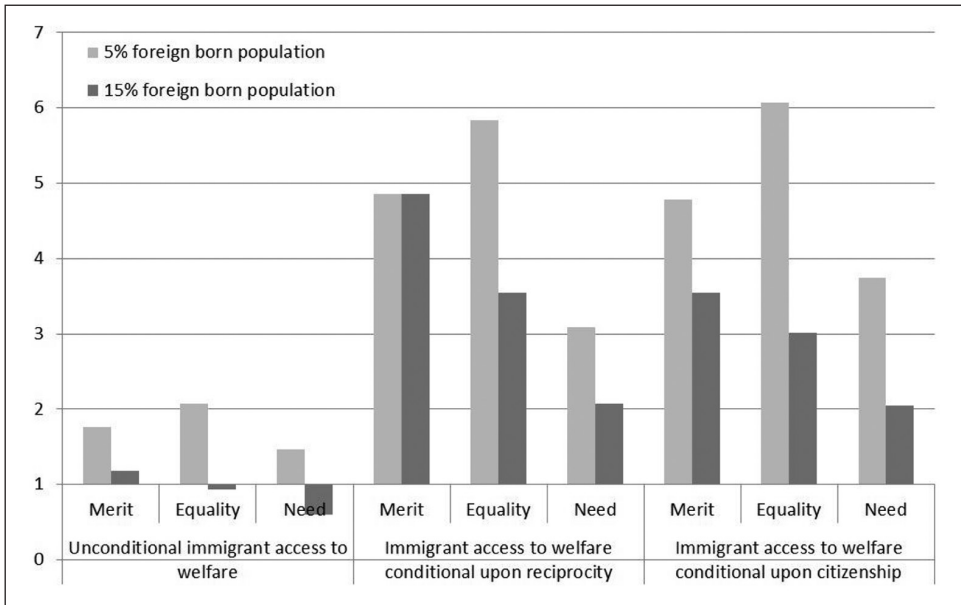
	Immigrants' access to welfare benefits					
	Unconditional		Conditional upon reciprocity		Conditional upon citizenship	
	Param	t-value	Param	t-value	Param	t-value
Model 1: Direct effect						
Intercept	0.37	1.78	1.53***	8.77	1.48***	9.78
Welfare redistribution						
- Merit (higher earners)	-0.01	-0.10	0.01	0.25	-0.08	-1.63
- Need (lower earners) (Ref: equality)	-0.40***	-5.74	-0.59***	-9.75	-0.45***	-7.57
Share of foreigners	-0.06	-1.65	-0.04	-1.13	-0.05*	-2.00
Social expenditure	0.28***	3.71	0.18**	2.79	0.13*	2.55
Model 2: Moderating effect						
Intercept	0.37	1.78	1.53***	8.77	1.48***	9.80
Welfare redistribution						
- Merit (higher earners)	0.02	0.41	0.04	0.78	-0.06	-1.14
- Need (lower earners) (Ref: equality)	-0.39***	-5.62	-0.59***	-9.76	-0.44***	-7.46
Share of foreigners	-0.07	-1.96	-0.05	-1.62	-0.07*	-2.49
Social expenditure	0.28***	3.70	0.18***	2.77	0.13***	2.54
Share of foreigners*Merit	0.04***	4.29	0.05***	5.46	0.04***	3.96
Share of foreigners*Need	-0.01	-0.94	0.01	0.47	0.02*	1.97

\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Note: Entries represent the results of two multilevel multinomial regression models with 'they should never get the same rights' as reference category.

citizenship that describe them, an interpretation that is in line with recent evidence of symbolic threats as culprit for out-group hostility (Sides and Citrin, 2007). As for our control variable of social expenditure per capita, we corroborate the finding of an earlier study that welfare chauvinism is less prevalent in more encompassing welfare states (van der Waal et al., 2011).

Furthermore, we assumed that the association between general preferences for welfare redistribution and welfare chauvinism is moderated by the share of foreign-born residents in the national territory. Model 2 shows a positive moderating effect of diversity on the association between a general preference for a redistribution of merit and opinions about immigrants' access to welfare rights. While on the pooled data (Table 3), no differentiation exists between preferences for merit and equality and preferences towards barriers for immigrants, Table 4 indicates that there are country-differences caused by diversity: in diverse societies, respondents who prefer merit are more likely to grant immigrants (conditional) access to welfare provisions than respondents who prefer redistribution based on equality. This means that diversity negatively affects the association between preferences for respectively equality and need and opinions about redistribution with immigrants: in confrontation with a salient out-group, individuals who endorse the view that welfare should be redistributed equally or to those in need raise more symbolic boundaries between in- and out-siders, as they are less willing to (conditionally) redistribute their national wealth with immigrants and are more chauvinist, confirming Hypotheses H4 and H5b.



**Figure 1.** The moderating effect of national-level diversity on the association between general welfare redistribution preferences and opinions about immigrants’ access to social welfare.

Note: Predicted probabilities, converted to odds ratios, of the preference for immigrant access to welfare provisions contrasted with the reference category of ‘never giving them the same rights’. Entries are based on estimates from Model 2 of Table 4.

Using estimates from Model 2 of Table 4, we graphically represent the interaction between diversity and general welfare preferences in predicting our outcome variable. The graph represents, for residents of countries with a share of 5 and 15 percent immigrants, the predicted probabilities (odds ratios) of the likelihood of preferring immigrants’ access to welfare provisions (compared to the exclusionist reference category) along with the three general preferences for welfare redistribution (merit, equality and need). As Figure 1 shows, Europeans are, all else being equal, most in favor of a conditional immigrant access to welfare provisions. Nevertheless, people residing in diverse societies are slightly more chauvinist (in Model 2 of Table 4, this pattern was exemplified by negative yet nonsignificant main effects of the share of foreigners). The graph displays the positive interaction between diversity and the preference for merit in explaining preferences towards immigrant access towards social welfare provisions: while for all three categories of general welfare redistribution, diversity weakens the likelihood that an unrestricted or conditional access of immigrants to welfare is preferred over a chauvinist exclusion of immigrants from welfare provisions, people who are of the opinion that welfare should go to those who made the highest contributions are less affected by diversity than respondents who think that welfare should be redistributed equally or should target the needy underclass.

### 5. Conclusion

In the face of the ‘New Liberal Dilemma’ (Newton, 2007), in which governments maneuver between the challenge of managing substantial immigrant inflows and sustaining social solidarity, the question of what defines individual preferences towards social rights for immigrants becomes

an important topic among social scientists and policy-makers. In this article, we associate the conditions that individuals might impose on immigrants before they can be entitled to welfare benefits with general preferences for principles that are applied to the redistribution of welfare (merit, equality, need). Our specific questions were whether specific attitudes towards conditions for welfare rights for immigrants are rooted in more general redistribution principles, and whether this relation can be explained by the context of cultural diversity.

The results of this study add to the literature on the boundaries of social solidarity. We found that most Europeans prefer a conditional access of immigrants to welfare provisions: about 40 percent feel that immigrants should have access to social rights on the basis of reciprocity (after having worked and paid taxes), while about 35 percent would give them access to welfare on the basis of achieving citizenship. A minority of approximately 15 percent is in favor of an unconditional access, while an even smaller minority of 7 percent is against access of immigrants to social rights under any condition. Second, despite strong theoretical arguments why preferring redistribution based on equity and equality should result in different opinions about conditions of immigrant access to welfare provisions, across Europe, we observed no notable differences. Europeans who prefer merit and equality as principles for redistribution do not, *ceteris paribus*, differ significantly, as they are in general quite outward-reaching towards immigrants. Of equal importance, however, those who are more in favor of needs-based redistribution are more chauvinist and most likely to exclude immigrants from welfare access.

A first major implication of our findings disconfirms the idea that the altruistic and enlightened idea of 'need' travels towards everybody on the country's territory, and lends weight to the idea that preferences for redistribution according to need are an expression of self-interest of the 'have-nots' (Reeskens and van Oorschot, 2011). Symbolic boundaries between 'us' and 'them' are more outspoken when a scarce pool of welfare resources is at stake among those who are the most vulnerable. Interestingly, this exclusionary tendency becomes even more outspoken in the face of a sizeable immigrant population. The negative association between preferring welfare redistribution based on need and sharing with immigrants operates more firmly in more diverse societies. On the other hand, the 'merit'-principle is most resistant against the influence of diversity, confirming that the idea of reciprocity – that one should first make contributions to the welfare state before having entitlements – is less affected by immigration.

A second contribution of this article is to shed additional light on contentious debates on what is required from immigrants in order to have access to welfare benefits in diverse societies. Our study shows that only a small faction wants to exclude immigrants for social welfare altogether, whereas the share of respondents who favors an unconditional access of immigrants to social welfare is also rather small. Residents are willing to share their welfare, but mostly on a *quid pro quo* basis. Reciprocity above altruism drives positive orientations towards immigrants' social rights. The underlying causal mechanism still needs to be disentangled in future research: it may be that reciprocity in itself is a strong and fundamental deservingness criterion leading to a positive evaluation of immigrants who contribute to society by working and paying taxes, or it might be that respondents praising reciprocity-based conditionality regard it as an obstacle for the productivity of society if immigrants are excluded from social welfare.

Mechanisms aside, the policy implications of our work are not straightforward. At the very least, public policy should better appreciate the reciprocal nature of preferences towards welfare access of immigrants. As many people are quite willing to provide immigrants with welfare rights on the condition that they have worked here and have paid their taxes, policy-makers could approach this finding from two angles. They could work to remove the barriers that immigrants are still confronted with when they want to enter the labor market, including their lack of language proficiency and adequate training from the supply side, and discrimination from the demand side of the market (see Heath et al., 2008). In addition, public policy could reconsider universal and selective social policies and bring in more elements of social insurance, with its built in logic of



equivalence between contribution and benefit. In that way, immigrants would be more able to more visibly 'earn' their entitlements. The general claim therefore seems to recommend programs that have a strong reciprocity element in them. As suggested by Bowles and Gintis (2000: 51): 'An egalitarian society can be built on the basis of ( . . . ) policies consistent with strong reciprocity, along with a guarantee of an acceptable minimal living standard consistent with the widely documented motives of basic needs generosity.' This program mix should in the end foster what Alesina et al. (2001: 227) refer to as 'reciprocal altruism', that is, it should be in line with the fact that 'people will vehemently oppose welfare if they believe that welfare recipients are taking advantage of the system'. The most important challenge for politicians faced with the 'New Liberal Dilemma' is thus finding support for altruism and solidarity based on reciprocity, and bringing this challenge in harmony with the new diverse face of advanced industrialized societies.

### Acknowledgements

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### Appendix

**Appendix Table A1.** Descriptives of the categorical individual-level variables

Variable	Category	N	%
When should immigrants obtain rights to social benefits/services	Immediately or after one year	6496	16.48
	After worked and paid taxes at least a year	16,302	41.36
	Once they have become a citizen	13,671	34.69
	They should never get the same rights	2944	7.47
Principles of welfare redistribution	Higher earners should get more (merit)	13,401	34.00
	High and low same amount (equality)	21,571	54.73
	Lower earners should get more (need)	4441	11.27
Gender	Male	18,560	47.09
	Female	20,853	52.91
Foreign origin	Native	33,714	85.54
	Of foreign origin	5699	14.46
Education	Primary	4843	12.29
	Lower secondary	7736	19.63
	Higher secondary	16,270	41.28
	Tertiary	10,564	26.80
Work status	Employed	20,689	52.49
	Unemployed	2049	5.20
	Student	2816	7.14
	Retired	9157	23.23
	Other	4702	11.93
Been unemployed for more than three months	No	29,107	73.85
	Yes	10,306	26.15
Welfare dependent	No	27,773	70.47
	Yes	11,640	29.53

**Appendix Table A2.** Descriptives of the continuous individual-level variables

Variable	Mean	SD
Age (15–98)	47.73	18.06
Level of urbanization (1–5)	3.13	1.25
Subjective income (1–4)	2.94	0.87
Authoritarianism (1–5)	3.99	0.78
Religious attendance (0–6)	1.57	1.50

Note: Variables are grand-mean centered for the multivariate analyses.

**Appendix Table A3.** Per-country descriptives of the individual level variables of interest

Cntry	Opinions about immigrant access to welfare provisions				Preferences of welfare redistribution		
	Unconditional	Condit reciproc	Condit cit'ship	Exclusion	Merit	Equality	Need
BE	16.50	47.89	29.50	6.11	25.04	61.96	13.00
BG	9.60	37.48	39.25	13.67	40.77	53.52	5.71
CH	24.77	56.96	15.63	2.64	40.22	51.01	8.77
CY	5.17	16.13	58.32	20.39	25.76	57.40	16.84
CZ	7.97	35.91	41.27	14.84	46.45	47.03	6.52
DE	20.31	43.04	30.09	6.56	60.98	33.02	5.99
DK	29.25	32.07	36.68	2.00	13.56	79.15	7.30
EE	10.30	40.53	45.57	3.60	22.25	69.47	8.28
ES	19.32	52.98	20.80	6.90	54.91	36.13	8.96
FI	17.22	37.49	42.71	2.58	31.42	53.80	14.78
FR	22.27	46.60	26.13	4.99	40.28	46.45	13.27
GB	11.05	48.57	31.29	9.10	13.51	72.62	13.87
GR	13.24	33.53	33.90	19.33	9.98	69.94	20.07
HU	4.72	29.89	52.28	13.11	22.15	55.62	22.23
IE	14.94	56.47	22.53	6.06	13.71	72.35	13.94
LV	7.96	36.13	39.55	16.36	48.94	43.47	7.59
NL	17.55	36.46	44.09	2.90	32.75	56.15	11.10
NO	25.93	34.68	37.44	1.95	31.11	58.92	9.97
PL	12.78	39.09	46.00	2.13	26.97	66.79	6.25
PT	22.08	61.43	14.02	2.47	61.97	27.74	10.29
RO	14.63	29.97	47.69	7.71	29.49	55.17	15.34
SE	35.79	31.67	31.73	0.80	29.40	60.39	10.21
SI	9.34	30.95	52.93	6.78	20.42	59.34	20.24
SK	11.05	50.75	27.51	10.69	47.26	46.40	6.34

Note: For country labels, check Appendix Table A4.

**Appendix Table A4.** Descriptives of the country-level variables

Country	Share of foreigners	Social expenditure per capita (in 1000 EUR, PPS adjusted)
Belgium (BE)	8.86	8.12
Bulgaria (BG)	1.36	1.68
Switzerland	22.84	9.45
Cyprus (CY)	16.06	4.47
Czech Republic (CZ)	4.40	3.80
Germany (DE)	13.02	9.13
Denmark (DK)	8.4	10.85
Estonia (EE)	14.16	2.56
Spain (ES)	12.74	5.73
Finland (FI)	3.84	7.76
France (FR)	10.66	8.21
United Kingdom (GB)	10.12	7.49
Greece (GR)	9.58	6.06
Hungary (HU)	3.54	3.67
Ireland (IE)	17.68	7.36
Latvia (LV)	15.64	1.78
Netherlands (NL)	10.54	9.50
Norway (NO)	9.20	10.61
Poland (PL)	2.20	2.61
Portugal (PT)	8.04	4.74
Romania (RO)	0.60	1.66
Sweden (SE)	13.38	9.09
Slovenia (SI)	8.22	4.87
Slovakia (SK)	2.36	2.91

Note: Variables are grand-mean centered for the multivariate analyses.

## Notes

1. 'Liberal' in this respect refers to the term widely used in normative theory, particularly as addressed by the theory of liberal multiculturalism (Kymlicka, 2010), which defends the idea that in just societies nation-states should reconcile minority group rights with liberal democratic values.
2. A different theoretical angle to this puzzle is conceiving welfare chauvinism as an example of the bi-dimensional values structure as proposed by Lipset (1959), that is, an economic dimension (whether or not one favors egalitarianism) that cuts across a cultural dimension (the authoritarian perspective whether one preserves the welfare state to ones' 'own' people) (van der Waal et al., 2010). From an attitudinal perspective, the cultural libertarian-authoritarian dimension is frequently investigated (Mewes and Mau, 2012; van der Waal et al., 2010), while the economic equality-*laissez faire* dimension gets much less attention. By bringing in general preferences about welfare redistribution, we hope to fill this gap in the literature.
3. Typically, tolerance is higher towards political or humanitarian refugees, who fled their country to prevent prosecution or life threatening conditions, than towards economic immigrants (O'Rourke and Sinnott, 2006). In terms of deservingness criteria, refugees have less control over their choice to emigrate, than economic migrants, and thus are accepted more readily.
4. We may also refer here to the fact that the Danish universal welfare state, under pressure of the nationalistic populist *Folke Parti* (People's Party), introduced a dual social assistance system, which

grants only half of the national minimum income to immigrant families in the first seven years after their arrival.

5. Defining 'otherness' is a difficult endeavor, as in the sociological perspective being an outsider is a reflection of shared symbolic boundaries (Lamont and Molnar, 2002), whereas in the legal perspective, otherness reflects social boundaries of having citizenship or not. However, in cross-national perspective, these assumptions are additionally complicated, as symbolic boundaries differ across countries and also the rationale behind citizenship differs across countries, as some countries grant citizenship as a starting point for social integration, while other countries see it as a reward for a successful integration (Favell, 2003). Despite this conceptual complexity, we nevertheless attempt to relate equality with citizenship.
6. As realistic group conflict scholars predict, out-group hostility is also a function of resource stress, often operationalized in terms of unemployment rates (Meuleman, 2009; Quillian, 1995). Since we tested these direct and moderating effect of unemployment rates on our dependent variable (results can be obtained upon request), we decided not to include them in the remainder of our study due to null-findings, and because the stability of a multilevel multinomial model on 24 countries with cross-level interactions increases if the contextual variables are chosen in a parsimonious manner.
7. The countries studied are: Belgium (BE), Bulgaria (BG), Cyprus (CY), Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DK), Estonia (EE), Finland (FI), France (FR), Germany (DE), Greece (GR), Hungary (HU), Ireland (IE), Latvia (LV), Netherlands (NL), Norway (NO), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), Slovakia (SK), Slovenia (SI), Spain (ES), Sweden (SE), Switzerland (CH), and United Kingdom (GB). After listwise deletion of respondents with missing information, we retain 39,413 respondents. For detailed information on methodological features of the survey, see their website: <http://www.european-socialsurvey.org>.
8. We note that the European Social Surveys asks a similar question on preferences regarding the redistribution of old-age pensions. From a conceptual point of view, we prefer here to report on the results of analyses of the relation between unemployment benefits preferences and welfare chauvinism instead of a similar analysis using the old-age pension question. This is because contemporary debates about the pressures of immigration on the welfare state are often framed in terms of threats to the active population, that is, that immigrants take away (low-skilled) jobs but on the other hand also have too easy access to unemployment benefits and programs or alternatively social assistance. This being said, we have also done our analyses using the old-age pension variable. These results, which are available upon request, are less significant (mainly because there is less variation in preferences), but on the whole in line with the results we present in this article.
9. The correlation between the UN share of foreign-born residents and the OECD foreign-born residents, among common countries, is .97, while the correlation is .87 with the OECD share of foreigners.
10. Some might question whether the inclusion of respondents of foreign origin in this article is evidently legitimate. Prejudice research often excludes these respondents from the analysis since they are interested only in the opinions of the native citizens. In this article, however, we decided to include them in the analyses. But multivariate analyses on the native-only sample did not reveal major discrepancies.
11. Authoritarianism is measured with a scale comprising the questions 'Schools must teach children to obey authority' and 'People who break the law should be given much harsher sentences than they are these days', which are offered with response scales ranging from 1 (disagree strongly) to 5 (agree strongly).

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