Who is allowed to stay? Settlement deservingness preferences towards migrants in four European countries

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Abstract: Following the refugee crisis, European countries have tried to stimulate the integration of migrants into local society. However, the public, influenced by negative framing of migrants by media and political actors, may feel that not all migrants are equally deserving of settlement. In this study, we obtain greater insight into the public's attitudes towards migrants by applying the deservingness framework to migrant settlement in four European countries: Belgium, France, the Netherlands, and Sweden, using the CARIN typology (*control, attitude, reciprocity, identity, need*). We use data from the European Social Survey Round 1 (2002) and Round 7 (2014), and online survey data from 2017. We can draw four main conclusions: 1) (at least) three out of five CARIN-criteria (*attitude, reciprocity,* and *identity*) apply to settlement deservingness, 2) the *identity* criterion is considered the 'least' important criterion, while *attitude* is considered most important, but 3) *identity* has become increasingly important over time, and 4) there is significant variation in deservingness preferences between countries and over time. Findings indicate that older respondents, men, and Christians are more restrictive towards accepting migrants than younger respondents, women, and Muslims. The role of education is twofold: lower educated individuals value *identity* more, highly educated individuals value *attitude* and *(future) reciprocity*.

Keywords: public opinion; deservingness; refugee crisis; Europe; group threat theory; refugees; migration attitudes

Introduction

In recent years, European integration efforts have come under increased scrutiny following the entry of large numbers of migrants in 2014-2016 (d'Haenens, Joris, & Heinderyckx, 2019). Dealing with this diverse group of economic migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and transmigrants, is one of the major issues facing Europe in 2020 and beyond. If the sheer number of migrants is challenging, their integration into (local) society is even more so. Several European politicians and media have used the terminology of 'economic migrants' to cast doubt on the legitimacy of migrants' claims to protection (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018). Thus, public opinion may today be more restrictive in terms of which migrants should be allowed to settle in their country than in the past. Given the impact of such (negative) claims on individuals' attitudes towards migrants (De Cock et al., 2018; Kovar, 2019), the recent emphasis in news media on the legitimacy of migrants may in turn stimulate feelings of (un)deservingness among the public towards migrant settlement in the destination country. In the field of social policy, important contributions have been made on deservingness, which mostly focus on the differential support among the public for welfare provisions for different groups based on the so-called CARIN criteria: *control, attitude, reciprocity, identity,* and *need* (Jeene, van Oorschot, & Uunk, 2011; Jensen & Pedersen, 2016; Petersen, 2011; van Oorschot, 2000, 2006). We argue that this model can be usefully extended to the investigation of the public's support towards the settlement of migrants in their country.

Our goal is obtaining greater insight into the public's attitudes towards migrants, using the CARIN criteria and the deservingness framework as a point of departure. We combine data from the European Social Survey (ESS) from 2002 and 2014, with online survey data from 2017 (n = 21,161), and explore deservingness based on three CARIN criteria: *attitude*, *reciprocity*, and *identity*. The role of *control* and *need* cannot be investigated in this study due to data limitations of the ESS (European Social Survey, 2014). The combination of these data

sources is motivated by our specific interest in the pivotal role of the refugee crisis in shifts in deservingness preferences across time and across countries. Limiting the scope to ESS data would have prevented us from investigating this evolution because ESS measurements of deservingness stem from 2014 – prior to the refugee crisis. As a result, we collected new data in 2017 using measures from the ESS to ensure comparability.

We are interested in finding out by which of the CARIN criteria the public determines if migrants deserve to settle in their country. A second question deals with a temporal perspective: did the public's deservingness preferences change between 2002 and 2017? This is closely related to the third question, which asks about country variation: are there any country differences with regards to the evolution of deservingness preferences? Finally, we investigate which individual characteristics of respondents (e.g., age, educational attainment, threat perceptions) are associated with deservingness preferences.

Applying the deservingness framework to migrant settlement

Scholars of welfare deservingness have investigated the differential support among the public for welfare provisions for different groups (e.g., the elderly, the sick and disabled) (Jensen & Pedersen, 2016; Manza, Cook, & Page, 2002; Petersen, 2011). The deservingness framework highlights how the population uses specific principles or criteria to distinguish the deserving from the non-deserving. It allows for an elaboration of arguments that people may use to challenge principles of equality, for example by targeting solidarity towards groups or individuals with specific characteristics (Meuleman, Roosma, & Abts, 2020). Van Oorschot (2000, 2006) developed a framework which contains five basic deservingness criteria: *control, attitude, reciprocity, identity* and *need* (De Swaan, 1988; Cook & Barrett, 1992; van Oorschot, Roosma, Meuleman, & Reeskens, 2017). *Control* predicts that those who are perceived to be in control of (or responsible for) their situation, will be considered less deserving. According to the *attitude* criterion, individuals who are thankful for the support they receive will also be

4

perceived as more deserving. The *reciprocity* criterion states that deservingness depends on the extent to which the support has been 'earned', for example by contributing to a country's welfare by their labor market participation (Meuleman et al., 2020; Reeskens & van der Meer, 2019). The *identity* condition implies that deservingness increases as the cultural distance between those in need and the native population decreases. Those who are considered 'one of us', will be perceived as more deserving. Finally, *need* postulates that those with higher needs are considered more deserving,

Although this framework has been widely used in the evaluation of the deservingness of welfare recipiency, it is clearly relevant to understanding attitudes towards migrants. Refugees or asylum seekers in need of protection have been dismissed as 'economic migrants' by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and former Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico, amongst others (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018). One purpose of this social construct is to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate migrants, and to demarcate 'the population' from 'the other' (Foucault, Senellart, Ewald, & Fontana, 2007; Lee & Nerghes, 2018). The use of such categorizations may be related to specific discriminatory actions because "language, thought, and actions are inextricably linked" (Hardy, 2003, p. 19).

Studies have shown that the way in which refugees are represented in media and politics is related to attitudes about how they should be treated (Lynn & Lea, 2003). The emphasis on the (il)legitimacy of particular 'types' of migrants based on criteria such as religion and ethnicity may result in feelings of (un)deservingness towards them. Currently, no approach exists that provides a satisfactory answer to the question: do migrants deserve to settle in a country? We hypothesize that the mechanisms shaping perceptions of welfare deservingness also apply to this question – albeit with some modification. In this sense we are positing a framework of *settlement deservingness.* Following the recent use of these deservingness frames to demarcate 'the native population' from 'the other', and to stimulate

feelings of threat (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018), *we expect that deservingness has decreased over time (hypothesis 1).*

Re-interpreting the CARIN criteria

How do the CARIN criteria apply to settlement deservingness perceptions towards different 'types' of migrants? When we consider the *control* criterion, studies indicate that certain migrants, like refugees, tend to receive more sympathy than others (e.g., economic migrants), as refugees' motives to migrate are largely outside of their control (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018). This directly ties into the *need* criterion because refugees are also perceived as in greater need of the protection they receive than other migrants groups (De Coninck, 2020). If migrants who receive protection are then grateful and show a willingness to integrate into local society, they will be more likely to receive sympathy from the local population – in line with the *attitude* criterion (Reeskens & van der Meer, 2019). Migrants with less perceived cultural distance from the majority population are more likely to be considered as deserving than others (Reeskens & van der Meer, 2019). *Reciprocity* is the final criterion, and perhaps the most difficult to apply to this context. In the context of settlement deservingness, it is difficult to argue that those in need have previously contributed to society, given that they are recent arrivals from a different country or region. However, rather than considering past contributions to society, it may be more appropriate to gauge the extent to which people believe migrants will contribute to society in the future. There are some factors which may increase the perception that one can contribute to society in the future: learning the native language, having an education, or having (useful) labor skills (Helbling & Kriesi, 2014). For example, Reeskens and van Oorschot (2012) found that people's welfare deservingness preferences towards migrants are 'conditional upon reciprocity', indicating that individuals believe migrants should have access to social rights if they work and pay taxes in the country first. This means that rather than reflecting on people's deservingness preferences based on past reciprocity, the perception of *future reciprocity* may

be more relevant in this regard. Their current situation sometimes prevents them from doing so upon arrival, but certain characteristics or skills could affect the public's perception of how this reciprocity may evolve in the future. For example, learning the official language is a vital step for employment, educational enrolment, and successful everyday interaction in the public sphere. This requisite is also related to the attitude criterion. Not learning (or not wanting to learn) the official language of the destination country can easily be taken as a sign that someone is unwilling to integrate or assimilate. The presence of educational attainment and relevant work skills will also affect the perceived degree of (potential) reciprocity. These have not been an integral part in the study of deservingness so far, which is somewhat surprising as both are – particularly in North America and Western Europe – key aspects in determining whether or not an individual can contribute to society in a meaningful way (Amit & Chachashvili-Bolotin, 2018).

Cross-country differences in attitudes and migrant reception

Although attitudes towards migrants have recently become more negative, there is considerable country variation across Europe (Heath & Richards, 2019). Citizens of Nordic countries still hold the most positive attitudes towards migrants, despite these attitudes becoming increasingly negative following 9/11. Citizens of Eastern European countries tend to be the most negative, and citizens of countries like France, the UK, and Germany hold moderate attitudes (Heath & Richards, 2019). Such variation is also reflected at the policy level: integration policies in Nordic countries are most favourable for migrants, and much less so in Eastern European countries and France. Countries such as Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands hold slightly favourable policies (MIPEX, 2015; De Coninck, 2020). Sweden is somewhat of an outlier when it comes to integration policies in Europe: more than any other country in our study – and in the rest of Europe –, it emphasizes a 'multicultural' integration model (Borevi, 2014). Its integration policies are oriented towards "affirming and supporting immigrants' ethnic

identities" (Borevi, 2014, p. 711), rather than attempting to 'Swedify' them. Based on this literature, *we expect the requisite conditions for deservingness to be lowest among Swedes (when compared to Belgian, Dutch, and French residents) (hypothesis 2).*

Heath and Richards (2019) found a marked shift in attitudes towards migration and integration policies after the refugee crisis. Citizens of countries like Sweden, which welcomed many refugees, showed particularly large declines in public support for generous government policy with respect to asylum requests. In only a handful of countries, like Belgium, attitudes did not change significantly. This shift in attitudes can be explained by the arrival of large numbers of newcomers in a short period of time, because "a sizeable minority population more directly challenges the economic and political interests of natives and spurs increased competition for resources" (Ceobanu & Escandell, 2010, p. 322; Schneider, 2008). However, it is no surprise that Heath and Richards (2019) find country differences with regards to attitudes towards migrants, given that some studies have found that immigrant group size is of minor importance in some countries (Hjerm, 2007). However, there is little research that investigates whether a rapid increase of migrants (such as in the refugee crisis) plays a role in attitude shifts. *We expect the decline in deservingness to be stronger among residents of countries who accepted a larger share of refugees during the refugee crisis (hypothesis 3).* In Appendix A, additional information about integration policies and migrant reception in the context of the refugee crisis in the four countries under study can be found. These data show that Sweden has, relatively speaking, carried a heavier burden than the other countries: they accepted 23 refugees per 1,000 citizens, while the other countries accepted 6 refugees per 1,000 citizens or less. In absolute numbers, France accepted just over 300,000 refugees, Sweden

230,164, the Netherlands 101,744, and Belgium 42,168. MIPEX-scores[1] indicate that France has the least favourable integration policies of the four countries with a score of 54 (out of a possible 100), whereas Sweden has the most favourable policies with a score of 78. The Netherlands and Belgium occupy a moderate position (MIPEX, 2015).

Individual determinants of deservingness preferences

Threat perceptions play a major role in intergroup attitude formation. In the context of group threat theory, two types of threat perceptions are emphasized: symbolic and realistic (Stephan, Ybarra, & Rios Morrison, 2009). Symbolic threat refers to the fear that migrants will challenge the cultural identity of the native population. This threat is defined as the perceived harm by immigrants or refugees with distinct values, norms, and beliefs, and is a major source of prejudice (Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006; Stephan et al., 2009; Zárate et al., 2004). The emphasis on symbolic threat in Europe is considerable and can be illustrated by looking at widespread discussions of identity, integration, and religion in the European media. These discussions focus on the negative media portrayal of Muslims and Islam as a threat to Western civilizations, which is currently dominating the political debate and feeding the populist narrative (Diez, 2019). Media frames which emphasize the threat of Islam and Muslims to Western societies have also become increasingly common since the start of the refugee crisis,

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[1] The MIPEX (Migrant Integration Policy Index) is a tool created to measure 167 policy indicators related to migrant integration in all European Union countries. It covers eight policy areas, which make up a migrant's trajectory towards full citizenship. These policies cover labour market mobility, family reunion, education, health, political participation, permanent residence, access to nationality, and anti-discrimination. Scores range from 0% (indicating critically unfavorable policies) to 100% (indicating the best possible integration policies) (MIPEX, 2015).

serving both as a catalyst and consequence of this widespread debate on identity in Europe (d'Haenens et al., 2019; Kovar, 2019). Realistic threat relates to the competition for scarce, mainly economic, resources in society. As groups compete for these resources (e.g., jobs, welfare arrangements), they view the out-group as a competitor, which also feeds prejudice (Riek et al., 2006; Stephan et al., 2009; Zárate et al., 2004). The use of media frames that emphasize the economic cost of migrants to destination societies has grown less exponentially since the start of the refugee crisis, as it was already commonly used prior to the refugee crisis (d'Haenens et al., 2019; Kovar, 2019). Since the use of media frames that emphasize value differences between the native population and refugees (i.e. symbolic threat) has dramatically increased during the refugee crisis, and these media frames have been found to significantly impact ideas of the public about how migrants should be treated (Lynn & Lea, 2003). Based on this, we *expect that symbolic threat will be more strongly related to settlement deservingness than realistic threat, particularly with regards to the identity-criterion (hypothesis 4).*

Additionally, there is a large body of literature citing older and lower educated individuals as holding more negative attitudes towards migrants (Chandler & Tsai, 2001; De Coninck et al., 2018). It is possible that age is a "proxy variable for general liberalisation, or that age measures changes in an individual's psychological make-up over the life course" (Hjerm, 2007, p. 1263). Ceobanu and Escandell (2010, p. 319) hypothesize that more highly educated individuals hold more positive attitudes because of "education's liberalizing effect, namely broader knowledge, increased reflexivity, a more critical stance, greater personal and familial security, substantial exposure to foreign cultures, higher acceptance of diversity, or the generation of cosmopolitan social networks among the young adults living in urban settings." We therefore *expect the requisite conditions for deservingness to be higher among older people than younger people (hypothesis 5),* and *the requisite conditions for deservingness to be higher among lower educated than the higher educated (hypothesis 6).* We

also consider the role of religious denomination. Christians are found to be supportive towards needy people – potentially due to the Christian values of solidarity and 'loving thy neighbour' (Bekkers, 2003). Most recent migrants originate from outside of Europe (Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq), regions with a large Muslim population and different values on gender, sexuality, the relationship between religion and the state, etc. (Wieviorka, 2018). We therefore expect that Muslims are highly supportive towards recent migrants, as many Muslims have personal experience (or have acquaintances who do) with the sometimes-difficult path towards integration in Western Europe. Based on this, we *expect the requisite conditions for deservingness to be lower among Muslims than non-Muslims (hypothesis 7)*. As for the role of gender, no clear effects emerge from the literature (Chandler & Tsai, 2001).

To summarize, we were interested in answering the following research questions and hypotheses:

RQ1: By which criteria does the public decide if migrants deserve to settle in their country of residence?

RQ2: Did the public's deservingness preferences evolve between 2002 and 2017?

H1: Settlement deservingness has decreased over time, particularly following the refugee crisis.

RQ3: Are there country differences with regards to settlement deservingness?

H2: The requisite conditions for deservingness are lowest among Swedes when compared to Belgians, Dutch, and the French.

H3: The decline in deservingness is stronger among residents of countries who accepted a larger share of refugees.

RQ4: How do individual characteristics of respondents relate to deservingness preferences?

H4: Symbolic threat is more strongly related to deservingness preferences than realistic threat, particularly with regards to *identity*.

H5: The requisite conditions for deservingness are higher among older people than younger people.

H6: The requisite conditions for deservingness are higher among the lower educated than the higher educated.

H7: The requisite conditions for deservingness are lower among Muslims than non-Muslims.

Data and methodology

We combined three datasets: European Social Survey (ESS) Round 1 (2002, n = 7,765), Round 7 (2014, n = 7,396), and a cross-national online survey from 2017 (n = 6,000). The pooled dataset from ESS and online survey data contained 21,161 cases. Because the 2017 survey data was limited to respondents from Belgium, France, the Netherlands, and Sweden, we only used ESS data from these countries. Only in Round 1 (2002) and Round 7 (2014) of the ESS, attitudes towards migration and immigrants were measured (European Social Survey, 2014). The ESS strives for samples that adequately reflect the target population. The socio-demographic sample composition in ESS countries was assessed by comparing ESS variable distributions with external benchmark data from the European Union Labour Force Survey (LFS). When analyzing ESS data estimates, the likelihood of each respondent to be part of the sample should also be taken into account – which means that the most accurate estimates will be obtained only after weighting the data. Response rates for these rounds in the different countries varied between 50% and 60% (European Social Survey, 2014).

The 2017 online survey[2] was conducted to investigate dynamics of intergroup formation following the refugee crisis. We opted for an online questionnaire because of its

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[2] For more information on the 2017 data, please consult De Coninck, d'Haenens, & Joris (2019).

(cost) efficiency, and country selection was based on convenience: the Belgian polling agency we worked with has a strong presence in the four countries under study. This agency drew a quota sample from its available panels. The response rate was about 35 per cent and responses were weighted by gender and age to ensure that the data were representative for these characteristics. Respondents were contacted through e-mail with the request to participate in a study. No specific subject was specified in the e-mail to respondents to avoid priming. The survey itself was distributed via the polling agency's own survey tool, and in the official language of the country or region (either Dutch, French, or Swedish) that respondents resided in. Translations of the survey were carried out by professional translators, ensuring that the terminology used in the questions is considered 'everyday language' by the respondents. Respondents were unable to skip questions. Each question in the survey was presented on a different page, and respondents did not have the option to return to previous questions and change their answer (De Coninck et al., 2019).

Dependent variables: Settlement deservingness

To measure deservingness preferences, we used items from a rotating module of the ESS in Round 1 (2002) and Round 7 (2014). These items were also presented in the 2017 survey, with the same wording. The main question was: 'Please tell me how important you think each of these things should be in deciding whether someone born, brought up and living outside of [country] should be able to come and live here. Firstly, how important should it be for them to …'. Six items were listed: 1) 'to have good educational qualifications?' (Education); 2) 'to be able to speak the country's official language(s)?' (Language); 3) 'to come from a Christian background?' (Religion); 4) 'to be white?' (Ethnicity); 5) 'to have work skills that the country needs?' (Work skills); and 6) 'to be committed to the way of life of the country?' (Way of life). Answer categories for each item ranged from 1 (not important at all) to 5 (very important). We

conducted a principal component analysis with Varimax rotation to investigate which components can be found within these items (see Table 2). The factor scores from the three components were then saved and used in the subsequent analyses.

Independent variables: Realistic and symbolic threat

Realistic threat was measured by calculating the mean of the following items: 1) 'Would you say that refugees who come to live here generally take jobs away from workers in [country], or generally help to create new jobs?'; 2) 'Most refugees who come to live here work and pay taxes. They also use health and welfare services. On balance, do you think refugees who come here take out more than they put in or put in more than they take out?'; and 3) 'Would you say it is generally bad or good for [country]'s economy that refugees from other countries come to live here?' Answer options ranged from 0 (negative perception) to 10 (positive). To measure cultural threat, we used the following item: 'Would you say that [country]'s cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by refugees coming to live here from other countries?'. Answer options ranged from 0 (negative perception) to 10 (positive).

Independent variables: Sociodemographic characteristics

Respondents were asked to indicate gender (0 = male, 1 = female), religious denomination (1 = Christian, 2 = Muslim, 3 = other denomination, 4 = not religious), and educational attainment (1 = uneducated, no diploma or certificate, 2 = primary education, 3 = lower secondary education, 4 = higher secondary education, 5 = higher non-university education, 6 = university education). Some of these categories were merged (Table 1), but the original indicator was used in the later analyses. Age is measured by asking for the birth year and calculating the respondent's age at the time of the data collection.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents in Belgium, France, the Netherlands, and Sweden in 2002, 2014, and 2017 (in %)

	2002	2014	2017
Age			
14-35	32.0	29.5	33.3
36-50	29.5	26.2	30.7
50+	38.5	44.3	36.0
Gender			
Male	48.7	48.3	49.6
Female	51.3	51.7	50.4
Educational attainment			
No education/Primary education	15.0	10.7	4.9
Secondary education	60.9	65.1	51.6
Tertiary education	24.1	24.2	43.5
Religious denomination			
Christian	33.7	33.3	44.1
Muslim	1.6	4.3	2.8
Other denomination	0.9	1.0	7.6
Not religious	63.8	61.4	45.5
N	7,765	7,396	6,000

Note: Indicators on educational attainment and age were recoded for this table.

Analytic strategy

The analyses were conducted in SPSS Version 26 and consisted of three parts[3]. First, we conducted a principal component analysis with varimax rotation on the six deservingness items to investigate which components underlie these data. Subsequently, a two-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed to investigate which criteria of deservingness

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[3] Parametric assumptions concerning normality, homogeneity, and multicollinearity were checked prior to analyzing the data, and no violations were encountered. Additional information is available from the first author on request.

are considered most important by the population, and whether and how these scores differ across countries and over time. Finally, we conducted multiple linear regressions with deservingness criteria in 2017 – the most recent data – as outcome variables to get more insight into how individual indicators relate to deservingness preferences. The limited number of countries in this study did not permit us to use multilevel analysis, but we include country fixed effects to control for country differences in individual preferences. We did this using dummy variables. We used three dummies with Belgium as the reference category. We chose Belgium because a recent overview of attitudes of Europeans towards migrants by Heath and Richards (2019) suggested that it is one of the few countries (and the only one in this study) in which the public has not become more negative towards refugees following the refugee crisis, and it has somewhat favourable integration policies, making it a 'stable' point of reference. As for the other countries under study, literature indicates that variation in attitudes towards refugees between 2002/03 and 2016/17 is more pronounced (Heath & Richards, 2019). Following the literature on both welfare deservingness and attitudes towards migration, it seems reasonable to assume that some individual characteristics interact in meaningful ways when explaining perceptions. Studies highlight age and educational attainment as important factors by which deservingness preferences and threat perceptions differ (Chandler & Tsai, 2001; De Coninck et al., 2018; van Oorschot, 2000; Stephan et al., 2009), and we will therefore add an interaction between these factors in a second step of each regression.

Results

The principal component analysis (Table 2) indicated that three of the five CARIN criteria emerged among the six items: perceptions regarding religion (.91) and ethnicity (.92) can be classified under *identity*, adapting to the way of life of the country (.93) and language acquisition (.70) fit into the concept of *attitude*, and educational attainment (.92) and work

skills (.70) align with *future reciprocity*. The cut-off for the number of components was based on the scree plot and the proportion of variance accounted for: components that appeared before the break in the scree plot were assumed to be meaningful and are retained for rotation, and components that explained 10% or more of the total variance were also retained (Cattell, 1966; Kim & Mueller, 1978). The scree plot can be found in Appendix B and the proportion of explained variance can be found at the bottom of Table 2. The Cronbach's alpha for each component indicated moderate to high internal consistency (.86 for *identity*, .76 for *future reciprocity*, and .75 for *attitude*), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Test (.72) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < .05$) indicated that the data are adequate for principal component analysis. Following this analysis, we saved the factor scores of the three components.

Table 2. Rotated component matrix of varimax-rotated deservingness criteria

Deservingness criteria	Identity	Future reciprocity	Attitude
1. Education	.16	**.92**	.15
2. Language	.02	.52	**.70**
3. Religion	**.91**	.15	.12
4. Ethnicity	**.92**	.15	.04
5. Work skills	.26	**.70**	.42
6. Way of life	.11	.15	**.93**
Cronbach's alpha	*.86*	*.76*	*.75*
Explained variance (in %)	*50*	*23*	*11*

In the MANOVA, the coefficients for the three deservingness components were used as dependent variables (DVs). Country of residence and year of assessment were included as independent variables (IVs) to investigate the extent to which scores varied by these characteristics. An interaction between country and year was also included. Significant multivariate effects were found for all IVs: results (Table 3) indicated that deservingness scores

differed significantly by country of residence ($F(9,50400)=291.07$, $p<0.001$) and by year ($F(6,41418)=188.46$, $p<0.001$). Additionally, the interaction between country of residence and year was also significant ($F(18,58574)=84.18$, $p<0.001$), indicating that the effect of country of residence on deservingness scores varied over time.

Table 3. Multivariate effects for country of residence and year on *identity*, *attitude*, and *reciprocity* scores

Independent variables	Wilks' Lambda	F	Sig.	df	df Errors
Country	.89	287.90	.00	9	50400
Year	.95	188.46	.00	6	41418
Interaction Country and Year	.93	84.18	.00	18	58574

When we examined the univariate effects of country of residence on the DVs, we found that the scores for all criteria were significantly different across countries (Table 4). We observed that *attitude* had the highest score (when compared to *identity* and *future reciprocity*) in all countries, with the highest mean score in Belgium (4.2) and the lowest in Sweden (3.5). The lowest overall score was given to *identity*. *Future reciprocity* held a middle position in this regard, as Belgians, French, and Dutch residents considered it equally important, whereas Swedes found it to be less important. Tukey's post-hoc testing indicated that the scores of Swedish respondents for *future reciprocity* differed significantly from those of the other countries, but there were no differences between French, Belgian, and Dutch respondents. As for *identity*, scores varied significantly between respondents from all countries, except between Swedish and Dutch respondents. A more detailed breakdown of the Tukey's post-hoc test for country of residence can be found in Appendix C (Table A2). These results confirm that

deservingness is highest among Swedes, as they consistently consider the (included) CARIN criteria to be less important than respondents from other countries (Hypothesis 2).

Table 4. Univariate effects for country of residence on *identity*, *attitude*, and *reciprocity* scores

Dependent variables	df	df Errors	F	Sig.	Country	Means
Future Reciprocity	3	20711	596.98	.00	Belgium	3.5
					Sweden	2.9
					France	3.5
					Netherlands	3.5
Identity	3	20711	112.51	.00	Belgium	2.0
					Sweden	1.8
					France	2.2
					Netherlands	1.9
Attitude	3	20711	162.61	.00	Belgium	4.2
					Sweden	3.5
					France	4.0
					Netherlands	4.1

The univariate effects of year on deservingness scores indicated that scores for *identity* and *attitude* were higher in 2017 than they were in previous years. This indicated that people believed it to be 'very important' that migrants adhere to these criteria, if they want to settle in one of the countries under study. Scores on *future reciprocity* remained stable throughout. We observed that *attitude* was considered the most important criterion at every time, and *identity* the 'least' important. Again, *future reciprocity* occupied an intermediate position (Table 5).

Although scores for *identity* were lower than those for *future reciprocity* and *attitude*, this criterion became increasingly important in 2017 as opposed to previous years. This may be an indication that deservingness for recent migrants from the Middle East and Africa – with a large cultural distance from the 'native' European population – was decreasing, perhaps due

to the negative framing of the refugee crisis. The Tukey's post-hoc test (Appendix C, Table A3) indicated that respondents in 2017 scored significantly higher on *identity* than those in 2014 (indicating lower deservingness because a higher score means respondents are more 'restrictive'), but this was not the case for *future reciprocity* and *attitude*, where no significant differences were found. When comparing the scores of 2017 to those of 2002, we noted a higher score on *identity* and *future reciprocity* in 2017, but *attitude* was considered more important in 2002 than in 2017. These results indicate that deservingness has decreased over time (Hypothesis 1).

Table 5. Univariate effects for year on *identity*, *attitude*, and *reciprocity* scores

Dependent variables	df	df Errors	F	Sig.	Year	Means
Future Reciprocity	2	20711	17.75	.00	2002	3.4
					2014	3.3
					2017	3.4
Identity	2	20711	500.62	.00	2002	1.9
					2014	1.7
					2017	2.2
Attitude	2	20711	49.91	.00	2002	3.9
					2014	3.8
					2017	4.1

The interaction between country and year indicated that country differences in preferences towards *future reciprocity* ($F(6,20711)=153.75$, $p<0.001$), *identity* ($F(6,20711)=22.96$, $p<0.001$), and *attitude* ($F(6,20711)=51.70$, $p<0.001$) varied by year. Mean scores (see Appendix C, Table A4) indicated that in terms of *future reciprocity*, respondents

from Belgium, Sweden, and the Netherlands became more conditional[4] over time, while the French became less conditional. As for *identity*, respondents from all countries gave higher scores to this criterion in 2017 than they did in 2014, indicating higher conditionality. For *attitude*, we found that Belgians were particularly more conditional in this regard in 2017 than in 2014, while scores decreased between 2014 and 2017 among respondents of the other countries. These results indicated that citizens of countries that accepted more refugees (relatively speaking, e.g. Sweden) did not necessarily have lower deservingness preferences than those who accepted fewer refugees (Hypothesis 3).

Individual determinants of deservingness preferences in 2017

To investigate the role of individual determinants, we focused the regression analysis on the data of the 2017 survey, following the 2014-2016 refugee crisis. Associations of threat perceptions with deservingness criteria were (in most cases) stronger than with demographic characteristics (Table 6). Realistic threat was related to greater conditionality in terms of *attitude* and *future reciprocity*, but with decreased conditionality in terms of *identity*. Symbolic threat was strongly related to deservingness preferences, with increased conditionality across all criteria – particularly *identity*. This finding is in line with our expectations, as we believed symbolic threat would be more strongly related to deservingness preferences than realistic threat (H4).

Women were less conditional than men in terms of *identity* and *future reciprocity*. The role of educational attainment was twofold: lower educated individuals were more conditional

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[4] Conditionality refers to conditions attached to preferences regarding migrants. In this study, lower conditionality indicates that respondents consider one or more criteria to be less important, while higher conditionality indicates that they consider one or more criteria to be (very) important.

on aspects of *identity* (religion and ethnicity), whereas higher educated individuals were more conditional on aspects of *future reciprocity* and *attitude*. This meant that the higher educated are not less conditional than the lower educated on all aspects of deservingness (Hypothesis 6). Older respondents were found to be more conditional in terms of *attitude* and *future reciprocity*, while no relationship emerged with *identity*: old respondents were therefore more conditional than younger respondents, but not for all criteria (H5)**.** Regarding the role of religious denomination, we found that Muslims were less conditional in terms of *identity* and *attitude* than Christians, but more so in terms of *future reciprocity*, suggesting lack of support for H7. People from other denominations, and non-religious people, were less conditional than Christians in terms of *identity* and *future reciprocity*.

Interactions of educational attainment with threat perceptions indicated that symbolic threat plays a prominent role: conditionality for all criteria based on symbolic threat increased as individuals were more highly educated. As for interactions between age and threat perceptions, findings for the *identity* criterion indicated that the negative association with realistic threat became stronger as individuals grow older, whereas the positive association with symbolic threat became weaker as individuals grow older. In terms of *attitude*, we found that the positive association with realistic threat declined as individuals age.

Table 6. Multiple linear regressions with deservingness preferences as outcome variables and standardized betas of predictors, 2017 (N = 6,000)

	Identity		Future Reciprocity		Attitude	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Age	ns	ns	.08***	.08***	.14***	.13**
Gender						
Male (ref.)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Female	-.05***	-.05***	-.04**	-.04**	.02+	.02+
Educational attainment	-.10***	-.09***	.07***	.07***	.06***	.06***
Religious denomination						
Christian (ref.)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Muslim	-.05***	-.06***	.04**	.04**	-.09***	-.09***
Other	-.10***	-.10***	-.03**	-.04**	ns	ns
Not religious	-.22***	-.22***	-.03*	-.03+	ns	ns
Threat perceptions						
Realistic threat	-.07***	-.08***	.08***	.08***	.28***	.28***
Symbolic threat	.33***	.34***	.14***	.14***	.07**	.07***
Country fixed effects						
Belgium (ref.)	-	-	-	-	-	-
France	.19***	.19***	-.06***	-.07***	-.16***	-.16***
Netherlands	ns	ns	.21***	.21***	-.15***	-.15***
Sweden	.13***	.12***	.12***	.12***	-.25***	-.25***
Interactions						
Education and realistic threat		ns		ns		ns
Education and symbolic threat		.04*		.04+		.05*
Age and realistic threat		.11***		ns		-.07**
Age and symbolic threat		-.04*		ns		ns
Adjusted R²	*.18*	*.19*	*.09*	*.10*	*.21*	*.22*

Notes: *** p < .001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05; + p < 0.10; ns = not significant.

Discussion

In this article, we argue that the welfare deservingness framework developed by van Oorschot (2002, 2006) is directly applicable to *settlement deservingness* and that this approach can provide new insights into the conditional attitudes of the population towards the settlement of migrants. In the field of social policy, literature on deservingness focuses on the differential support among the general population for welfare provisions for different groups based on five criteria: *control, attitude, reciprocity, identity,* and *need* (Jeene et al., 2011; Jensen & Pedersen, 2016; Petersen, 2011; van Oorschot, 2000, 2006). The current study is the first to explore the applicability the CARIN criteria on conditional settlement preferences towards migrants. An additional contribution is that this framework is tested with data collected after the refugee crisis (2014-2016), whereas most studies have been conducted before the European refugee crisis. There is still little systematic and experimental evidence to inform ongoing political debates over asylum policies. In particular, we lack a comprehensive assessment that captures which particular types of migrants the European public is willing to accept in the context of the current crisis (Bansak, Hainmueller, & Hangartner, 2016).

Based on data from the ESS from 2002 and 2014, and a 2017 cross-country online survey, we can draw four conclusions: 1) (at least) three (*attitude*, *reciprocity*, and *identity*) out of the five CARIN criteria apply to settlement deservingness, 2) *identity* is considered the 'least' important criterion whereas *attitude* is considered the 'most' important criterion (based on mean scores), but 3) *identity* has become increasingly important over time, and 4) there is significant variation in deservingness preferences between countries and over time.

There are several explanations for these findings. *Identity*, which focuses on the perceived cultural distance between the 'native' population and migrants in terms of religion and ethnicity, proves to be an important criterion (Table 2). Although its scores are low, they have increased the most – particularly between 2014 and 2017 – in all countries under study.

When we consider that European media and political discourse increasingly focus on the negative aspects of Muslims and Islam as a threat to Western civilizations, and the large impact such coverage has on attitudes of individuals (d'Haenens et al., 2019), it is no surprise that such characteristics (*identity, attitude*) become or remain important criteria to the public, as well as to governments, when determining whether a migrant is allowed to stay and settle in a country. In line with the exponential growth of media frames that emphasize these symbolic threats of migrants to Western (European) societies (d'Haenens et al., 2019; Kovar, 2019), measures to restrict the arrival of migrants in the wake of the refugee crisis have called national identity, European culture, and (religious) value orientations in European societies into question (Diez, 2019; Wieviorka, 2018).

Frames that highlight the economic burden of migrants on the destination country (e.g., disproportional use of welfare benefits) are also commonly utilized by media. However, this was a commonly used frame prior to the refugee crisis as well, and its use grew less exponentially than frames emphasizing the symbolic threat of Islam and Muslims (Kovar, 2019), which may explain why there is little variation in deservingness over time based on *reciprocity*.

When we consider country differences over time, we note that Swedish and Dutch residents have become more conditional between 2014 and 2017, while Belgian and French residents have become less conditional. The relative number of refugees accepted by these countries may play a role: Sweden and the Netherlands have, relatively speaking, accepted a greater share of refugees than Belgium and France have. This large(r) presence of refugees may increase fears among the public that they will take disproportional advantage of welfare benefits, which may in turn stimulate the public to call for more restrictive migration policies (Heath & Richards, 2019).

The public also believes it is important for migrants to be thankful for the help they are receiving, and that they try to integrate in society and learn the native language (*attitude*). The fact that scores for this criterion are – and have consistently been – high, emphasize this point. This is not surprising, as language acquisition (one of the characteristics of *attitude*) is traditionally perceived as an important driver of migrant integration, which is reflected in public attitudes and in recent changes in integration policies (Bansak et al., 2016). Over the past years, a growing number of European countries enacted policies to stimulate language acquisition among migrants (De Coninck, 2020). In this regard, settlement deservingness proves to be different from welfare deservingness, where *identity* and *reciprocity* consistently played a greater role than *attitude* (van Oorschot, 2006).

The countries under study differ not only in terms of refugee reception over the past years, but also in their immigration histories and policies. Although the effects of these country characteristics on individual attitudes are very difficult to disentangle (van Oorschot, 2008), the finding that Swedish residents report the lowest scores for all criteria – and therefore hold the 'highest' deservingness perceptions – cannot be interpreted as independent from this history. Having favourable integration policies and traditionally positive individual attitudes towards migration (Heath & Richards, 2019; MIPEX, 2015) might stimulate greater deservingness for migrants following the refugee crisis, with the caveat that even Swedish respondents are becoming more conditional towards migrants who are less 'like them' – which is the same for all countries under study. None-the-less, Sweden's 'multicultural' integration model (Borevi, 2014), which has been in place for several decades, has contributed to a clear divergence in attitudes between Swedes and citizens of several other European countries. In that regard, it may be interesting for future research to focus on the role of policy as a determinant of deservingness attitudes towards migrants.

We have been unable to highlight the potential importance of *control* and *need* due to data limitations, which does not mean that these criteria do not apply to the current migrant situation. De Coninck (2020) investigated public opinion preferences of the public between and within 'immigrant' and 'refugee' groups, and findings indicated that attitudes towards refugees were more positive than attitudes towards immigrants. This supports our earlier assumption that people perceive refugees as more deserving than immigrants due to their lack of *control* over their situation. When attitudes towards 'subcategories' of immigrants and refugees are compared, findings indicate that those from rich regions (versus poor regions) and those from European countries (versus non-European countries) were preferred to their counterparts (De Coninck, 2020). This indicates the presence of *need* – if originating from a poor country can be perceived as having a higher need of protection – as a criterion in these preferences. Bansak et al. (2016) also find similar distinctions in European adults' attitudes towards asylum seekers in 2016.

Limitations

Aside from the absence of two CARIN criteria, there are some additional limitations to this study. Our research is limited to four (similar) Western European countries, which provides us with a rather limited European perspective. Both ours and other studies indicate there are considerable country differences in terms of preferences towards migration and deservingness (Bansak et al., 2016; van Oorschot, 2006). Investigating countries with different types of welfare arrangements and migration patterns (from Eastern or Southern Europe, for example) is important for future research (Diamant & Gardner, 2018). Including more countries would also prove beneficial when investigating the association of regional or country indicators with individual deservingness preferences (van Oorschot, 2006).

Several studies also highlight the importance of political preference in the process of attitude formation (see Bansak et al., 2016). However, due to data limitations of the 2017 online

survey, we were not able to control for this characteristic, which means that part of the deservingness picture may have been lost. We encourage future investigations into settlement deservingness to consider this aspect, given the results of previous studies which indicate that political affiliation affects preferences towards migrants (Bansak et al., 2016).

On a final note, we must be aware that some of the statistically significant findings in this study may also be due to the large dataset. As stated by Kaplan, Chambers, and Glasgow (2014, p. 342), "it is necessary to exercise greater caution to be sure that big sample size does not lead to big inferential errors. Despite the advantages of big studies, large sample size can magnify the bias associated with error resulting from sampling or study design". However, given the representative nature of the different data sets used in this study, we are confident that our results can be replicated in the future.

Conclusion

This study adds to the ongoing debate over how to improve the integration of migrants in European countries. In particular, it illuminates challenges and opportunities for policymakers who struggle to meet their legal and moral responsibilities to protect refugees, while simultaneously respecting public attitudes on this wedge issue. The public's growing anti-Muslim bias and preference for migrants who can speak the language of the destination country, points to a mounting challenge for solving the current crisis and successfully integrating migrants, given that most of them currently originate from Muslim-majority countries and may lack the desired language skills. Because asylum cannot be granted based on (a lack of) religion or ethnicity, policy makers must find alternative ways to harmonize these conflicting obligations. If the goal is to alleviate the social tensions of the current refugee crisis and generate more public acceptance of migrants, European policymakers have an opportunity to highlight migrants' deservingness and vulnerability as well as their economic contributions to their destination societies (Bansak et al., 2016).

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Appendices

Appendix A.

Table A1. Overview of refugee reception and integration policies by country

	Belgium	France	Netherlands	Sweden
Total number of refugees	42,168	304,546	101,744	230,164
Refugees per 1000 inhabitants	3.7	4.6	6.0	23.0
MIPEX-score	67	54	60	78

Note: The MIPEX-score is a measure which compares six integration indices. Scores range from 0% (indicating critically unfavorable policies) to 100% (indicating the best possible integration policies).

Appendix B.

Scree Plot

Analysis weighted by Weight
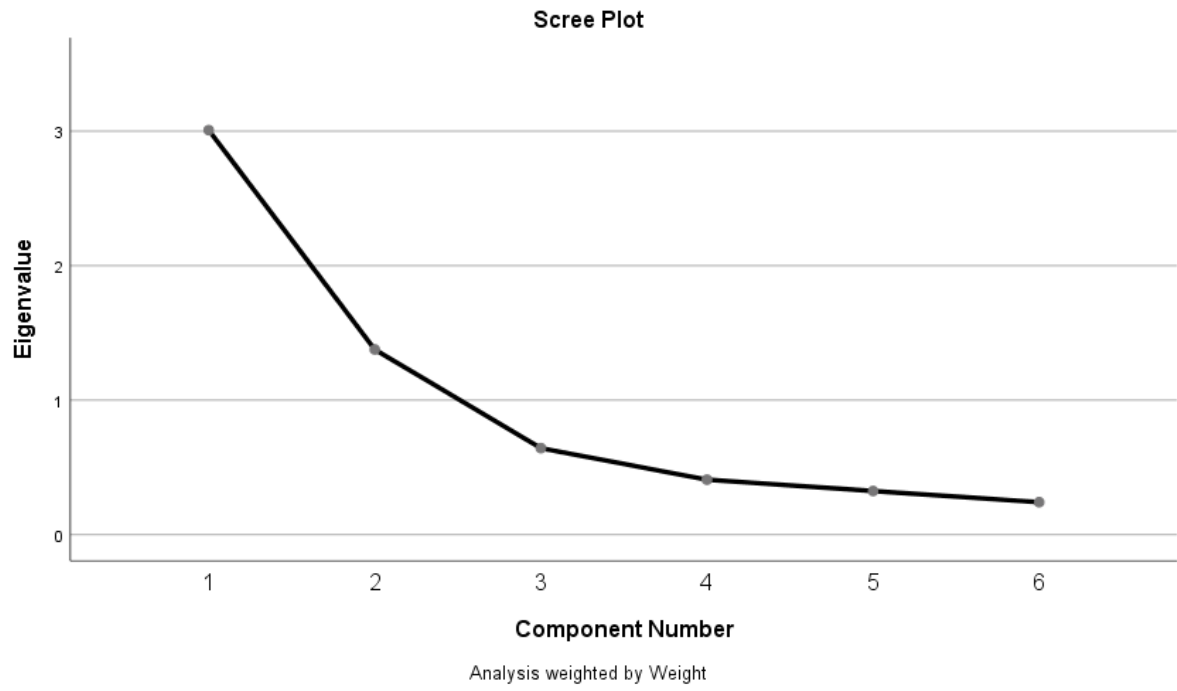
Appendix C.

Table A2. Tukey's post-hoc tests for country of residence

	Country		Mean difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Reciprocity	Belgium	Sweden	.66	.02	.00
		France	.01	.02	.98
		Netherlands	-.02	.02	.83
	Sweden	Belgium	-.66	.02	.00
		France	-.66	.02	.00
		Netherlands	-.68	.02	.00
	France	Belgium	-.07	.02	.98
		Sweden	.66	.02	.00
		Netherlands	-.02	.02	.59
	Netherlands	Belgium	.02	.02	.83
		Sweden	.68	.02	.00
		France	.02	.02	.59
Identity	Belgium	Sweden	.06	.02	.02
		France	-.22	.02	.00
		Netherlands	.10	.02	.00
	Sweden	Belgium	-.06	.02	.02
		France	-.27	.02	.00
		Netherlands	.05	.02	.07
	France	Belgium	.22	.02	.00
		Sweden	.27	.02	.00
		Netherlands	.32	.02	.00
	Netherlands	Belgium	-.10	.02	.00
		Sweden	-.05	.02	.07
		France	-.32	.02	.00
Attitude	Belgium	Sweden	.34	.02	.00
		France	.39	.02	.00
		Netherlands	.20	.02	.00
	Sweden	Belgium	-.34	.02	.00
		France	.05	.02	.04
		Netherlands	-.14	.02	.00
	France	Belgium	-.39	.02	.00
		Sweden	-.05	.02	.04
		Netherlands	-.19	.02	.00
	Netherlands	Belgium	-.20	.02	.00
		Sweden	.14	.02	.00
		France	.19	.02	.00

Table A3. Tukey's post-hoc tests for year

	Year		Mean difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Reciprocity	2002	2014	-.07	.02	.00
		2017	-.10	.02	.00
	2014	2002	.07	.02	.00
		2017	-.03	.02	.09
	2017	2002	.10	.02	.00
		2014	.03	.02	.09
Identity	2002	2014	.19	.02	.00
		2017	-.34	.02	.00
	2014	2002	-.19	.02	.00
		2017	-.53	.02	.00
	2017	2002	.34	.02	.00
		2014	.53	.02	.00
Attitude	2002	2014	.17	.02	.00
		2017	.14	.02	.00
	2014	2002	-.17	.02	.00
		2017	-.04	.02	.10
	2017	2002	-.14	.02	.00
		2014	.04	.02	.10

Table A4. Estimated marginal means for interaction between country of residence and year

	Country		Mean	Std. Error
Reciprocity	Belgium	2002	.10	.02
		2014	.32	.02
		2017	.05	.02
	Sweden	2002	-.63	.02
		2014	-.82	.02
		2017	.02	.02
	France	2002	.24	.02
		2014	.35	.02
		2017	-.18	.02
	Netherlands	2002	.10	.02
		2014	.16	.02
		2017	.31	.02
Identity	Belgium	2002	.01	.02
		2014	-.14	.02
		2017	.12	.02
	Sweden	2002	-.12	.02
		2014	-.33	.02
		2017	.31	.02
	France	2002	.12	.02
		2014	-.09	.02
		2017	.67	.02
	Netherlands	2002	-.10	.02
		2014	-.33	.02
		2017	.14	.02
Attitude	Belgium	2002	.20	.02
		2014	.16	.02
		2017	.35	.02
	Sweden	2002	.16	.02
		2014	-.14	.02
		2017	-.41	.02
	France	2002	-.16	.02
		2014	-.28	.02
		2017	-.01	.02
	Netherlands	2002	.14	.02
		2014	-.01	.02
		2017	-.08	.02