

**Immigrants, Welfare and Deservingness  
Opinions in European Welfare States**

Wim van Oorschot

Centre for Comparative Welfare Studies  
Aalborg University  
Denmark



## 1. Introduction

The relationship between immigration and welfare has become a much-debated issue in recent years. Although from a demographic perspective some point to the positive effects of the influx of larger numbers of immigrants into European countries, there seems to be a rather dominant concern that, in the longer run, immigration seriously threatens the sustainability of the European Social Model and its national varieties. American scholars who draw a parallel with the American situation particularly articulate strong warnings in this respect. Their arguments differ somewhat, but the main thrust is that cultural diversity has a negative effect on the comprehensiveness and generosity of welfare, especially if welfare use is associated with a subordinate minority. If in European countries immigrants will form the largest part of welfare users, and immigrants as a group are subjected to negative images and related perceptions of undeservingness - conditions which are both met regarding African-American and Hispanic people in America - the societal legitimacy of welfare arrangements as a whole may diminish quickly (Freeman, 1986; Alesina & Glaeser, 2004).

Although it would be difficult to say at what point exactly European welfare states would be definitely at peril, the American warning is intriguing, and a reason here to have a closer look at the relation between immigration and welfare. The main focus is on popular images of immigrants in the context of European welfare states. More specifically, the perceptions Europeans have of the deservingness of immigrants relative to other vulnerable groups in society will be described and analysed. It is a well-established fact that negative, ethnic prejudices are quite strong among native Europeans (see e.g., Ben Brika et al., 1997; Thalhammer et al., 2001; Bruecker et al., 2002). However, it is known that also other vulnerable groups, like e.g. unemployed people, are the subject of negative popular images (see e.g., Fridberg & Ploug, 2000; Furaker & Blomsterberg, 2002; Larsen, 2002). Therefore, the American warning would have to be taken more seriously if it would show that, especially in comparison with other groups of needy people, immigrants are seen as most undeserving. This kind of information has been lacking thus far, and will be presented in this paper.

With regard to the relative deservingness of immigrants it will be analysed what common patterns there are in a number of European countries. Firstly, the position of immigrants on a rank order of deservingness will be described, compared to the position of elderly people, disabled and sick people, and unemployed people. Questions are what the typical rank order is, and whether there are differences between countries and social categories. Are immigrants the new 'undeserving poor', as Bommers and Geddes (2000) suggest in the conclusion of their book on *Immigration and Welfare*? Secondly, the focus is on the degree to which people make a difference between the deservingness of immigrants and the other groups. In the deservingness perceptions of Europeans, how far off are immigrants from the other groups? Do Europeans only make marginal differences here, or are they substantial? And thirdly, the question will be whether European welfare states differ in their national levels of relative deservingness of immigrants. If so, what kinds of country and welfare state characteristics are related to such levels?

The data used are from the European Values Study 1999/2000, to which aggregate data from various sources are added. Eighteen European countries are included in the analysis, which is as much as the number of EVS countries adequate added data could be attained for.

First, however, the more general debate on the relation between immigration and welfare will be briefly discussed. This will put the analyses into a wider perspective and it will help to develop a number of hypotheses regarding the factors influencing national levels of perceptions of immigrants' relative deservingness.

## 2. Immigration and the welfare state

There seems to be only one perspective in which immigration is seen as contributing positively to the longer-term sustainability of European welfare states. It is based on the argument that in many European countries the demographic situation within the next decades will lead to a serious mismatch between a larger population of elderly people and a too small segment of people of working age. In order to deal with the growing demand for welfare induced by population ageing, and to maintain present coverage and levels of welfare for all citizens, the number of working age people should increase substantially to have a sufficient base for the required production of welfare. Influx of migrants into European welfare states is seen as a solution to this demographic problem (e.g., Brochmann & Hammar, 1999). The United Nations have calculated the number of migrants that would be necessary to maintain present ratios of working age versus elderly people in European countries, and conclude that such numbers are vast (several millions per year on a European basis, for many years to come), and much higher than immigration numbers thus far have been (UN, 2000). The demographic need for immigration in itself is rarely questioned, which leads to a view that European governments should be preoccupied more with the management of immigration, in stead of with its prevention. Holzmann and Muenz (2004) discuss some measures that could be taken in this respect, but suggest that political and public support might fall short.

They may be right in this, because negative perspectives on the relation between migration and welfare tend to dominate the discourse. Basically, there are two types of argument why immigration would pose a threat to the sustainability of European welfare states, one is economic, the other sociological in nature. Economic arguments warn against the social expenditure costs related to immigration, which might undermine the fiscal viability of the welfare system in the longer run. Immigrants may form an extra fiscal burden if they are disproportionately dependent upon welfare, and especially if they choose to come to countries with high welfare levels. There is ample evidence that the first is true, especially regarding non-EU immigrants<sup>1</sup>, who, in many European countries, are over represented among users of unemployment, social assistance and family benefits. This is related to the fact that immigrants tend to have lower labour participation, lower wages, higher unemployment rates, higher poverty rates, and larger families compared to native born people (e.g., Boeri et al., 2002; EUMC, 2003; Morissens, 2003). Their higher unemployment stems from a variety of factors, among which lower educational levels, language barriers, limited networks, and not least, discrimination on the labour market (Boeri et al., 2002; Muenz & Fassmann, 2004; Van Tubergen, 2005). Even in a comprehensive and integrative welfare state as Sweden, immigrants are worst off regarding labour market participation and poverty (Hjerm, 2004). The evidence regarding the question whether, and to what degree, immigrants choose for countries with better welfare arrangements, i.e. whether such countries function as 'welfare magnets', is scarce. There is some evidence in the United States of America that states with higher social transfers attract more immigrants (Borjas, 1999), but in Europe the little evidence there is, is contradictory. One longitudinal study, comparing the percentage increase of immigrants between 15 European countries over the period 1970-2000, does not show any particular relation with type of welfare regime. Nor is there a relation with social spending (Menz, 2004). The study suggests that other factors, like cultural, linguistic, and colonial-historic ties, ethnic networks and geographical proximity, play a more important role, than type and size of welfare state. Another study, using the 1999 data of the European Community Household Panel, concludes that countries with a more generous welfare state

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<sup>1</sup> Because migrants from within the EU on average have higher levels of skills and education than native-born people, their welfare dependency tends to be lower (Muenz & Fassmann, 2004).

have relatively more migrants. In addition, immigrant's numbers are more strongly associated with the character of a country's social assistance scheme, than with its unemployment benefits (De Giorgi & Pellizzari, 2003). The authors interpret their findings as proof of a welfare magnet mechanism, but it should be noted that cross-sectional studies of this type do not allow any conclusions about the causality involved. Whether in the long run extra welfare costs for migrants would outweigh their contribution to the production of welfare or not, is of course a pivotal question, but one that is very difficult to answer with any empirical certainty, because of the many assumptions involved. Freeman (1986), who reviews some studies, is very sceptical. He concludes that 'one is free to believe more or less what one wishes about the *economic impact* of migration because the facts are so much in dispute' (p. 60).

Sociological arguments for a problematic relation between immigration and welfare sustainability vary, but have in common that immigration would undermine the societal legitimacy base for a comprehensive and solidaristic welfare state. A central argument is that immigration implies ethnic, linguistic, and/or racial diversity, which would break down the homogeneous identity and broad sense of solidarity that laid the ground for national, encompassing welfare arrangements. Freeman (1986) is very explicit in his view that welfare states are closed systems of individuals sharing social goods on the basis of experiencing fellow feeling. It is not without reason, he contends, that historically, welfare states developed hand in hand with the nation state. Immigration, according to Freeman, threatens European welfare state communities for several reasons. One is that it would divide the 'natural' constituency of the welfare state, which is formed by the working class, unions and social democracy more generally. Secondly, it would erode the normative consensus about welfare redistribution by increasing the awareness of identity differences in terms of 'us' versus 'them'. Both types of factor have prevented the development of the American welfare state (racial diversity and prejudice preventing the formation of a unified labour movement, as well as support for welfare), and by analogy they would form a threat for Europe's present day welfare states. In addition, Freeman asserts, immigration in Europe has stimulated reactionary and nationalist politics, at the same time helping shifting the ideological centre of European politics to a more neo-liberal and anti-welfare direction. All this, Freeman interprets as an Americanisation of European welfare states. Others mirror several of Freeman's arguments. Wolfe and Klausen, for instance, stress that welfare state building has been a process of nation state building (see also Halfmann, 2000), and that it is dangerous to see a society simply as a 'community of communities'. Some things, as for example the values and forms of resource distribution associated with the welfare state, are universal in character and require a degree of consensus around citizenship and the common good, in as much as they require a national solidarity. The solidarity necessary to sustain a welfare system in a multicultural society requires people to identify with strangers and share resources with them, but it is questionable whether this condition is met in present day European countries, according to Wolfe and Klausen (1997; 2000) (see also, Miller, 1995). As for the problematic labour base constituency of welfare states, Ryner (2000) sees a link with the recent shift from a Keynesian Welfare State to a neo-liberal welfare regime, with a greater emphasis on need and self-reliance. This shift had a negative effect on the social protection of all vulnerable groups, including immigrants, but in the present day multicultural welfare state alliances among such groups are inhibited seriously, because they are divided by internal competition, discrimination and xenophobia.

In short, as Banting (1998) summarizes, immigration and the diversity that goes with it, would endanger the legitimacy of welfare in Europe, and therefore its sustainability in the longer run, because it might fragment the sense of a common community, divide coalitions within an economic class that traditionally sustained the welfare state, and it might complicate the formation of new alliances. To a large extent these arguments boil down to the idea that

diversity negatively affects the larger public's support for welfare, which, through a median-voter mechanism, would translate into a general retrenchment of welfare rights. According to some, this process would be catalysed by radical right-wing politicians who exploit ethnic divisions by magnifying 'us' versus 'them' resentments regarding social transfers (Kitschelt, 1995).

The question is, however, whether it is true that diversity is related to lesser welfare support and spending? Are there empirical studies on these supposed relationships, and what do they find? We found that there are only a few studies, offering fragmented evidence, since they relate social spending to indicators of diversity as diverse as the number of immigrants in a country, and measures of racial, ethnic, religious and/or linguistic fractionalisation. But what is more, the evidence with regard to the situation in Europe is not convincing.

On a global scale, as well as in the United States of America, it seems to be the case that especially racial fractionalisation is related to lower levels of (support for) social spending. In their study where they try to explain why the American welfare state is much less developed compared to European welfare states, Alesina and Glaeser (2004) present evidence that in a sample of 56 countries from various parts of the world, racial fractionalisation is negatively correlated with social spending ( $r=-.66$ ). There is also a negative relation with linguistic fractionalisation, with Belgium (a high spending welfare state, linguistically divided between Dutch speaking Flemish and French speaking Walloons) being an outlier. Controlling for countries' GDP, however, the correlation diminishes substantially, but remains significant. They also show that in America AFDC levels, as well as popular support levels, are lower in states with a higher percentage of black population (see also, Hero & Tolbert, 1996). However, whether this global and American evidence has any significance for the European situation remains to be seen. Their global evidence shows that, at present, all European countries in their sample differ relatively very little in racial fractionalisation (between 0.02 and 0.11 on the index scale, which runs from 0.0 to 0.7), but quite substantially in welfare spending as a share of GDP (between 10 and over 20 per cent on a scale from just a few percentages to over 20 per cent), suggesting that within Europe there is no correlation between the two. This is precisely what is found by Taylor-Gooby in a study where he repeats Alesina and Glaeser's analysis for 22 OECD countries, while introducing other political, economic and demographic control variables (Taylor-Gooby, 2005). Racial fractionalisation negatively affects social spending only in a model that includes the USA. In this model an additional major role is played by the percentage of people over 65 and by the proportion of cabinet seats held by left parties. That is, in an OECD context, social spending is higher in countries with an older population, and with a stronger influence on politics of the left. In a model excluding the USA, the impact of racial fractionalisation disappears completely, while the demographic and political effects remain. In a model with seventeen European countries only, the only effect that remains stems from the proportion of left seats. Taylor-Gooby concludes that, in Europe, the left substantially counteracts the impact of greater diversity on the European social model. Whether the causality is as Taylor Gooby suggests (left politics defending the welfare state against legitimacy loss due to increased diversity), rests unclear for the moment. This is because Swank and Betz (2003) suggest an opposite causality. They argue that it is the comprehensive welfare state itself that forms a barrier against diversity-based retrenchment. In empirical analysis of national elections in 16 European nations from 1981 to 1995, they find that more universal welfare states in Europe directly depress the vote for far right parties and thus weaken a possible attack of welfare chauvinism on the universal welfare state. In their view it is not left politics defending the welfare state, but the welfare state defending against (far) right politics. Whatever the underlying mechanism, in Europe politics matter, resulting in a mitigation of the relation between diversity and welfare spending. That politics matters is also the outcome of two other studies. Soroka et al. (2004)

analyse the relation between changes in migrant stock and changes in welfare spending as a share of gdp for 18 OECD countries. They compare figures of 1998 to those of 1970. Their conclusion is that, although no country actually decreased spending levels, spending growth was less in countries with a stronger increase in migrant numbers, while it was less hampered in countries with more left seats in the governing coalition. (Note, however, that the overall results are heavily influenced by two outliers, being the USA and the Netherlands, which both are countries that combine a relatively high increase in migrant stock with a low change in spending. Would these two be expelled from the analysis, no overall relation would be found.) In his study on the effects of ethno-linguistic diversity on government transfers to households in fifteen Western democracies over the period 1965-1980, Banting (1998) finds an overall negative correlation. However, additional analyses of different groupings of countries lead to the conclusion that the consociational democracies of Europe, with their tradition of consensual policy making, have been able to accommodate ethno-linguistic diversity and welfare redistribution, while in other countries, like the US, the combination of such diversity and political fragmentation has constrained redistributive efforts. Actually, Alesina and Glaeser also argue that the difference between the American and European style of welfare state has an important background in differences in their political system. The EU system of proportional representation leaves room for the influence of smaller new and left wing parties, while this is prevented in the American majoritarian system. However, their warning regarding the impact of ethnic divisions on the European social model has not reckoned with this difference in political systems.

In short, there is few and fragmented evidence about the relation between racial, or ethno-linguistic diversity on welfare spending, and it seems that certain political features of European welfare states thus far have prevented the negative effects that some would expect when drawing a parallel with American experience. It is true, migrants from non-EU countries are over-represented among the European welfare beneficiaries, but there is no proof that their presence has to led an actual backlash in general welfare spending over the last two or three decades. The new cultural diversity has not eroded the European Social Model, as yet. This is not to say that the American warning should be ignored totally. In our view an important aspect of the issue is whether Europeans see immigrants as undeserving. More importantly, are immigrants actually seen as a least deserving category, compared to other vulnerable groups in society, and how is this relative deservingness related to welfare state characteristics?

### **3. The relative deservingness of immigrants**

#### *A rank order of deservingness*

In line with the above, Bommers and Geddes (2000) conclude in *Immigration and Welfare* that saying that migration is a threat to welfare is much too abstract and general a statement. All depends on histories and institutions that differ between countries. They nevertheless have an eye for the fact that exclusion of migrants is not only a factual matter. It is also a moral issue, which makes them suggest that it might well be that border-crossing migrants may be the new 'undeserving poor' of our time (p. 251). In our view, there are good grounds why one can expect them to be, since theory on deservingness criteria would predict that migrants, compared to other vulnerable groups like elderly people, sick and disabled people, and unemployed people, would be seen as least deserving. This is because one can assume that migrants will tend to 'score' less positively, or more negatively, on all criteria people usually apply when assessing a person's or a group's deservingness. Van Oorschot (2000) concluded

to the existence of five central deservingness criteria based on the findings of several studies on the issue (Cook, 1979; De Swaan, 1988; Cook & Barrett, 1992; Will, 1993). A first criterion is 'control over neediness', that is, people who are seen as being personally responsible for their neediness are seen as less deserving (if at all). A second criterion is 'level of need', that is, people with greater need are seen as more deserving. Third, there is 'identity': needy people who are more closer to 'us' are seen as more deserving. A fourth criterion is 'attitude': more deserving are those needy people who are likeable, grateful, compliant and conforming to our standards. And finally, there is the criterion of 'reciprocity': more deserving are those needy people who have contributed to our group before (who have 'earned' our support), or who may be expected to be able to contribute in future. Migrants may be expected to score particularly badly on the criteria of identity and reciprocity, while in the public's eye most migrants may also be accused of having put themselves in a situation of welfare dependency. Although the public usually has some doubts about whether unemployed people are themselves to blame for their unemployment or not (e.g., Furnham, 1982; Maassen & De Goede, 1989; Halvorsen, 2002), unemployed people as a group will score better on the criteria of identity and reciprocity (the latter especially in countries with contributive unemployment insurance schemes). Compared to unemployed people, sick and disabled people will usually be seen as more deserving, because in their case there will be much less doubt about the involuntariness of their neediness. The most deserving group, however, will be the elderly. They cannot be blamed for their age, they are close to 'us' (they are our parents and grandparents, we ourselves hope to be old in future), they have extra age related needs, they have earned their share in their productive life stage, and they are not seen as an ungrateful and demanding group. So, regarding the rank-order of deservingness, our hypothesis is that the declining order will be: elderly people, sick and disabled people, unemployed people, immigrants. We assume that this order will be the same in all countries of our sample, and we will analyse whether it will be the same over social categories.

Notwithstanding that, on the whole, migrants are seen as a least deserving category, some people might place them far off all other categories, while others may not make such a big difference between the deservingness of various categories, including immigrants. It is this relative deservingness of migrants we are specifically interested in here. We especially want to see whether there are national differences between European countries, and to what kind of country and welfare state characteristics such differences are related. We know of no other studies, which have looked into the distributions and determinants of the relative deservingness of immigrants, which is why our analyses will be mostly exploratory. This is not to say that they will be totally unguided by theoretically and empirically based expectations.

### *Relative deservingness of immigrants and country characteristics*

We are interested in the relation between deservingness perceptions and features of the welfare state people live in. Thus far studies have analysed the relationships that welfare state regime type and/or degree of welfare spending may have with social rights of immigrants, or with their socio-economic position in terms of welfare dependency, poverty rates and (un)employment (e.g., Bommers & Geddes, 2000; Boeri et al., 2002; Morissens, 2003). However, none of them contains relevant information on the relation with people's attitudes regarding immigrants. We only know of Banting's study where mass support for welfare is related to the issue of immigrant influx in welfare states. However, this is only done in an indirect sense: mass support is seen as reflected in the degree to which welfare states in recent years have been able to incorporate immigrants in their social rights systems (Banting, 2000). Banting's conclusion is that countries that established a strong social regime, whether of



social-democratic or corporatist complexion, have been more successful in incorporating new immigrants without eroding mass support for the welfare state. Strong welfare states did, however, establish more restrictive immigration policies. It is in countries where the welfare state traditionally has a weaker base and relies more heavily on means-tested benefits ‘...that new forms of cultural diversity have tended to weaken support for redistribution generally or for inclusive definitions of social programmes’ (p. 25). From this one may deduce the hypothesis that the relative deservingness of immigrants is at about an equal level in corporatist and social-democratic welfare states, and that this level is higher than it is in liberal welfare states. However, nothing is specified for the Southern-European, so-called Latin-Rim welfare states, or for the Eastern European welfare states. If we take Banting’s findings regarding the effects of a stronger social regime and the degree of means-testing a step further, than one could hypothesise that the relative deservingness of immigrants in Southern European countries would be lower than in those of the social-democratic and other corporatist European countries in our sample, and perhaps higher than in Europe’s liberal welfare states. Given the non-comprehensive or ‘residual’ character of the Eastern-European welfare states (Standing, 1996; GVG, 2002; Kovacs, 2003; Lendvai, 2003), one could assume that here the relative deservingness of immigrants comes close to, or is even less than, that of the liberal welfare states in our sample. Since, in a European context, a welfare state’s social spending as a share of GDP is closely related to its place in a regime type category, we will not specify separate hypothesis for the relation between spending and the relative deservingness of immigrants, other than that we expect this relation to be positive, that is, more spending goes with higher relative deservingness.

As for other country characteristics, we will explore the influence of a series of cultural, political and structural indicators.<sup>2</sup> The review of the debate on the relation between immigration and welfare in the previous section points to the possible relevance of a country’s cultural diversity, its opinion climate regarding migrants, and political factors. In line with the main thrust of the literature one could assume that cultural diversity is associated with a lower relative deservingness of immigrants. This then, could be the result of a situation in which diversity would be associated with stronger negative images of immigrants. Alternatively, it is not that difficult to imagine that diversity is associated with a less negative climate. Because, for instance, in a way it might teach people to understand ‘others’, to deal and live with them without feeling threatened culturally or economically. Some proof in favour of this perspective is provided by of this is provided by Scheepers et al. (2002), who found that European people who live in urban areas, where there are much higher concentrations of immigrants, are less negative about civil rights for immigrants, than Europeans living in rural areas. Another cultural variable is a country’s level of interpersonal and institutional trust, which in Canada was found to mediate the (weak) negative relation between ‘visibility of minorities’ and welfare support (Soroka et al., 2003). We will explore the possible influence of trust on the relative deservingness of immigrants, assuming that higher trust relates to higher deservingness. The underlying mechanism could be that in countries with more trust people on the whole may feel less threatened by immigrants, people may have higher

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<sup>2</sup> In the literature it is sometimes suggested that types of immigration histories of countries may play a role when it comes to immigrants’ social rights and social outcomes (e.g., Boeri et al., 2002), or to public perceptions of immigrants (e.g., Vala et al., 2004). We have checked whether such histories relate to the relative deservingness of immigrants, using the typology suggested by EUMC (2003): 1) colonial immigration: France, Netherlands, UK, 2) guest-worker immigration: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Sweden, 3) new immigration countries: Greece, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Finland, Ireland. To this we added: 4) Eastern European countries: Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia. We found that between these types there are no significant differences in means of relative deservingness of immigrants ( $p = .092$ ), and within group variation is larger than between group variation.

confidence in the real neediness of immigrants, they might have larger confidence in immigrants' efforts to be self-sufficient, they may rely more on government's ability to cope with migration related problems, etc.

Regarding political factors the review suggests that left wing influence, as well as a consociational character of policy making, mitigates the possible negative effect of migration on welfare support. However, these insights were the results of studies comparing European with other (OECD) countries, notably the USA. It is not known whether such factors play a role within the group of European countries, nor is it certain that they would influence popular deservingness thinking. We will explore this with the help of some indicators at hand. One could, for instance, assume that a greater dominance of left wing egalitarianism results in higher relative deservingness of immigrants generally. Regarding left wing influence we can avail of an index of the left-right character of successive cabinets (however, for the non-Eastern European countries only). We have no direct measure of consociationalism, but a proxy might be the degree to which a country's population is politically engaged and active. One could assume that in a more politically engaged and active society, the formation of strong negative attitudes towards minority groups may be more difficult, because of a wider and more open social debate on salient issues. This may result in a higher relative deservingness of immigrants.

To these factors we add some structural variables, which indicate the degree to which a country might afford to treat immigrants as an equally deserving category. The idea is that people may be more relaxed on immigrant's deservingness if they live in a richer country, if unemployment is lower, and if there is less poverty. In such circumstances immigration may be less associated with economic threat.

#### **4. Data and methods**

Our data source is the European Values Study (EVS) survey that provides unique data from national representative samples of almost all European societies. The EVS questionnaire contains standardized cross-national measures of people's attitudes and beliefs in a broad range of important societal domains. It was fielded in 1981, 1990 and 1999/2000. The items we use for the construction of our main dependent variable were only included in 1999/2000, which is why we only use data from this third wave. The survey was fielded in 33 countries throughout Europe ([www.europeanvalues.nl](http://www.europeanvalues.nl)). We confine our analysis to those countries we have adequate additional, aggregate data for at the time of analysis: France, United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Ireland, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary. This means that at the aggregate level we have 18 units of analysis. The country samples consisted of at least one thousand and at most two thousand respondents each. Our pooled dataset contains 23.852 individual cases.

*Dependent variable: the relative deservingness of immigrants*

Our central dependent variable measures people's perception of the deservingness of four groups of needy people, operationalized by the EVS survey question:

*To what extent do you feel concerned about the living conditions of:*

- elderly people in your country
- unemployed people in your country
- immigrants in your country

*- sick and disabled people in your country'*  
(1=not at all, 2= not so much, 3= to a certain extent, 4=much, 5=very much)

Our assumption is that respondents' felt concern reflects their perception of the deservingness of the four groups involved.<sup>3</sup> The rank order of felt concern thus reflects the rank order of deservingness.<sup>4</sup> The relative deservingness of immigrants is measured as the difference between people's concern with immigrants<sup>5</sup> (which was consistently found to be the least deserving category) and people's concern with elderly people (which was consistently found to be the most deserving category). The higher the score, the higher the relative deservingness of immigrants compared to the most deserving category of elderly. The variable thus constructed has a range of -4 to +4, a mean of -1.1 and a standard deviation of 1.1. A score of '0' means that immigrants and elderly are seen as equally deserving, regardless of the level of deservingness. Table 1 shows the frequency distribution of relative deservingness in the total sample. The scores of 0, -1 and -2 or lower each attract about a third of all respondents, while a minority of about 5% has positive scores, which means that they see immigrants as more deserving as elderly people.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Elsewhere we have interpreted people's answer to this survey question as reflecting their feelings of solidarity towards the various groups. In our view such feelings are very closely related to deservingness perceptions people have towards groups. In fact, one could argue that the difference between both concepts is more a matter of disciplinary origin and context, with 'solidarity' having a tradition in sociology, and 'deservingness' having its roots in social-psychology.

<sup>4</sup> An alternative interpretation is that expressed concern reflects the degree to which people perceive the living conditions of group A as problematic, which problem awareness may be related to the perceived or actual level of social protection for group A offered by the state. This 'problem awareness' interpretation assumes that, if in a country the social protection of group A is lesser than that for other groups, more people will say to be (more) concerned with the living conditions of group A relative to the other groups, and group A will get a higher score on the variable. However, what this study will show is that this is not the case: deservingness is consistently highest of elderly people and sick and disabled people, which are the groups all European welfare states offer better protection to, than to the groups of unemployed and immigrants

<sup>5</sup> 'Immigrants' is an unspecified category. It may be associated with very diverse groups, like migrant workers of different generations, asylumseekers, refugees, non-Europeans, foreign borns, etc. The survey gave no further specification of the type of immigrants referred to in the question.

<sup>6</sup> The group of respondents who see immigrants as more deserving than elderly people does not stand out extremely on any of our independent, individual level variables. Bivariate analyses show that, on the whole, they are somewhat younger, higher educated, more politically active, less proud of being a citizen of the country they live in, and there are a bit more non-nationals among them. Not surprisingly, they also tend to have more positive attitudes regarding our immigrant items.

**Table 1 Relative deservingness of immigrants in total sample**

<b>Relative deservingness</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>-4</b>	633	2,7
<b>-3</b>	2119	8,9
<b>-2</b>	5439	22,8
<b>-1</b>	7393	31,0
<b>0</b>	6859	28,8
<b>1</b>	791	3,3
<b>2</b>	161	,7
<b>3</b>	33	,1
<b>4</b>	6	,0
<b>Missing</b>	418	1,8
<b>Total</b>	23852	100,0

*Independent variables: country characteristics*

Welfare regime type is measured with a modified Esping-Andersen typology that includes the four ideal types of the social-democratic Scandinavian, the liberal Anglo-Saxon, the conservative-corporatist Continental and the budding Mediterranean welfare regimes (Arts & Gelissen, 2002). To this we add a group of former communist Eastern and Central European countries.<sup>7</sup>

Welfare effort is measured by a country's total social spending as a percentage of GDP. Social spending includes expenditure on old age cash benefits, disability, sickness, occupational injury and disease benefits, unemployment cash benefits and active labour market programs, and health. To average out some of the difference in GDP development between countries, which has a direct effect on the welfare effort percentage, we took the arithmetic means of welfare effort over a certain period. For the Western European countries this period ranges from 1990 to 1998, and data are from the OECD Social Expenditure Database 2001. For the Eastern and Central European countries data are less available, which is why we had to confine ourselves to the averaging out of the figures for 1996 and 1998, which we obtained from GVG (2002). The OECD data and the GVG data have been calculated in different ways, which is why they are not directly comparable. However, they still reflect that social spending is much less in the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, than in Western European countries.

Cultural diversity is measured with several indicators, each having a specific character. First, there the fractionalisation indexes of Alesina et al. (2003) (see also Alesina & Glaeser

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<sup>7</sup> With regard to the ideal types, we must note that not all of the European countries classified in the literature as close approximations of a particular ideal type are included in our data set (e.g., Norway, Switzerland), and that some included cases are usually classified as hybrids (e.g., Italy, Netherlands). Regarding the Eastern and Central European countries we do not assume that as a group they form a specific welfare regime type. Although they face similar challenges, differences in institutional design and in social structure are quite large. Nevertheless, compared to Western European countries they can presently be characterized as relatively centralistic, non-comprehensive or 'residual' welfare states, with mainly work-related social rights and relatively low levels of social spending (Standing, 1996; GVG, 2002; Kovacs, 2003; Lendvai, 2003).

(2004). These are indexes of ethnic fractionalisation, language fractionalisation and religious fractionalisation. The latter two indexes are based on data from mid to end of the 1990s as presented in the Encyclopedia Britannica 2001, the first index is based on a mix of data from this same source and a variety of other sources (see Alesina et al. (2003) for details.). In all cases a country's fractionalisation index is computed as 1 minus the sum of squared group shares, where group share is the proportion of a certain (ethnic, language or religious) group in a country's population. The index reflects the probability that two randomly selected individuals from a population belong to different groups. Alesina et al. note that the index of ethnic fractionalisation is a combination of racial and linguistic characteristics of countries. This means that there will be a correlation with the language index. In our sample this correlation is .705 at the aggregate level ( $p < .001$ ). In addition, we have two alternative indicators of the degree of ethnic diversity. One is immigration rate, i.e. the number of non-national immigrants per 1000 inhabitants of a country, and another the number of foreign born citizens as a percentage of all citizens of a country. The immigration rates are taken from the European System of Social Indicators of ZUMA, Mannheim ([www.gesis.org/ZUMA/](http://www.gesis.org/ZUMA/)). They are based on various sources and consist of country averages over the period 1985-1998 for the Western European countries in our sample, and for the period of 1988-1999 for the Eastern European countries. The rate of foreign born citizens are from an OECD-publication, which critically discusses the validity and reliability of European migration rates for use in international comparison (Dumont & Lemaitre, 2004). National statistics of 'immigrants', on which such rates are based, vary rather widely in definition of an 'immigrant'. The report suggests a better comparable measure of foreign born nationals, which can be calculated from the year 2000 OECD-countries' censuses, which asked for people's country of birth, as well as their nationality.

Aspects of the opinion climate regarding immigrants are measured as national averages of respondents' answers to the following questions: 'On this list are various groups of people. Could you please sort out any that you would not like to have as neighbours? [...immigrants/foreign workers...] [mentioned, not mentioned]', 'When jobs are scarce, employers should give priority to [e.g. British] people over immigrants [agree, neither, disagree]', 'How about people from less developed countries coming here to work. Which one of the following do you think the government should do? [Let anyone come who wants to, Let people come as long as there are jobs available, Put strict limits on the number of foreigners who can come here, Prohibit people coming here from other countries]'. We will analyze each of these questions separately.

Two indicators measure trust, the national average of interpersonal trust, and the national average of institutional trust. Interpersonal trust is measured as respondents' answers to the question: 'Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you cannot be too careful in dealing with people?' [no-yes]. Institutional trust is measured by a summative scale measuring people's confidence in the (welfare) state institutions of 'the police', 'the social security system', 'the health care system', 'parliament', 'the civil service' 'the justice system' (alpha reliability=.80).

Left wing influence is measured by the so-called Schmidt-index of cabinet composition as presented in Armingeon et al. (2004). The index averages the left-right compositions of cabinets over periods of several years. We use the index for the period 1991-1999. The index's categories are: 1) hegemony of right-wing parties, 2) dominance of right-wing (and center) parties, 3) patt between left and right, 4) dominance of social-democratic and other left parties, 5) hegemony of social-democratic and other left parties. Please note that these index figures are not available for the Eastern European countries in our sample.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> For 'left influence' we have considered including also the national average of people's self-placement on a 1 - 10 left to right political stance dimension. However, since people's framework for assessing their left-right

Political activity is measured by national averages on two composite measures. One measure, about active political engagement, detracts people's score on a number of a list of activities they would certainly not do, from their score on the number of the activities from the same list they once did. The list includes: signing a petition, joining in boycotts, attending lawful demonstrations, joining unofficial strikes, occupying buildings or factories. The second measure, about passive political engagement, adds people's score on two relevant questions. One asks about how often they discuss politics with friends [never, sometimes, often], and the other about the frequency with which they follow politics in media [never, less often, once or twice a week, several times a week, every day].

We measure a country's level of wealth by its 1994-1999 average GDP per capita relative to the yearly EU15 index in PPS (Purchasing Power Standards) (source: Eurostat website, 12-09-2003).

Poverty rates are measured as the % population below 60% of the national median equivalised income for 2001 (sources: Western EU countries, Eurostat Statistics in Focus 2004/16; Eastern EU countries, Eurostat Statistics in Focus 2004/12).

Unemployment rates are for 1998 (source: Human Development Report 2000, p. 241). The countries' scores on these variables are presented in table 2.

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position will be their national situation, a particular score in one country cannot be directly compared with a similar score in another country. For the same reason country averages will tend to be close to one another. Additional analysis learned that the averages of the countries in our sample are all in between 4.7 and 5.9. At the aggregate level these averages had a highly insignificant correlation of .066 with relative deservingness of immigrants.

**Table 2 Country averages**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
<b>France</b>	,10	,12	,40	10,0	1,3	,88	1,83	2,34	1,21	14,96	-,40	5,76	2,9	100	15	11,7
<b>United Kingdom</b>	,12	,05	,69	8,3	2,4	,85	1,73	2,30	1,29	14,82	-1,05	4,55	2,1	100	17	6,2
<b>Germany</b>	,17	,16	,66	12,5	9,2	,90	1,59	2,33	1,38	15,08	-1,49	6,53	3,0	107	11	9,4
<b>Austria</b>	,11	,15	,42	12,5	7,2	,87	1,44	2,55	1,33	16,49	-2,04	6,12	3,0	110	12	4,7
<b>Italy</b>	,12	,12	,30	7,0	1,0	,84	1,59	2,62	1,33	14,19	-1,17	5,62	2,5	102	19	12,2
<b>Spain</b>	,42	,41	,45	5,3	,4	,91	1,55	2,92	1,39	15,16	-1,84	5,08	3,2	79	19	18,8
<b>Portugal</b>	,05	,02	,14	6,3	,7	,97	1,60	2,833	1,12	14,90	-2,27	5,27	2,3	71	20	4,9
<b>Greece</b>	,16	,03	,15	10,3	2,1	,86	1,34	2,50	1,24	12,15	-,70	6,15	5,5	64	20	9,6
<b>Netherlands</b>	,11	,51	,72	10,1	4,6	,95	2,38	2,41	1,60	15,50	-,93	5,90	3,0	110	11	4,0
<b>Belgium</b>	,56	,54	,21	10,7	4,8	,84	1,93	2,40	1,29	14,95	-,85	5,52	3,0	110	13	8,8
<b>Denmark</b>	,08	,11	,23	6,8	4,6	,89	2,20	2,36	1,66	16,70	-,79	6,29	2,9	118	10	5,1
<b>Sweden</b>	,06	,20	,23	12,0	5,0	,97	2,67	2,86	1,66	15,72	,15	6,52	3,8	105	9	8,2
<b>Finland</b>	,13	,14	,25	2,5	1,4	,87	1,64	2,53	1,57	16,56	-1,38	5,33	2,3	97	11	11,4
<b>Ireland</b>	,12	,03	,16	10,4	4,5	,88	1,46	2,61	1,36	16,63	-1,46	5,21	1,9	99	21	7,8
<b>Poland</b>	,12	,05	,17	2,1	,1	,75	1,13	2,17	1,18	15,04	-3,05	6,08	-	35	15	10,6
<b>Czechia</b>	,32	,32	,66	4,5	1,0	,81	1,27	2,29	1,25	13,29	-1,33	6,41	-	61	8	6,5
<b>Slovakia</b>	,25	,26	,57	2,5	1,0	,77	1,17	2,13	1,16	14,19	-1,66	6,05	-	47	21	15,6
<b>Hungary</b>	,15	,03	,52	2,0	1,9	,38	1,16	1,93	1,22	14,13	-3,37	5,64	-	46	10	8,0
<b>Total</b>	,17	,19	,39	7,5	2,9	,84	1,65	2,45	1,35	15,03	-1,42	5,79	3,0	87	15	9,1

- 1=Ethnic fractionalization
- 2=Language fractionalization
- 3=Religious fractionalization
- 4=Rate of foreign born citizens
- 5=Immigration rate
- 6=Immigrants not as neighbour (not – no problem)
- 7=Nationals priority over immigrants when jobs are scarce (yes - in between – no)
- 8=Immigrant numbers in (prohibit...anyone)
- 9=Interpersonal trust (low ... high)
- 10=Institutional trust (low ... high)
- 11=Active political engagement (low...high)
- 12=Passive political engagement (ow ... high)
- 13=Cabinet compositions (right .. left)
- 14=Wealth (GDP per capita)
- 15=Poverty rate
- 16=Unemployment rate

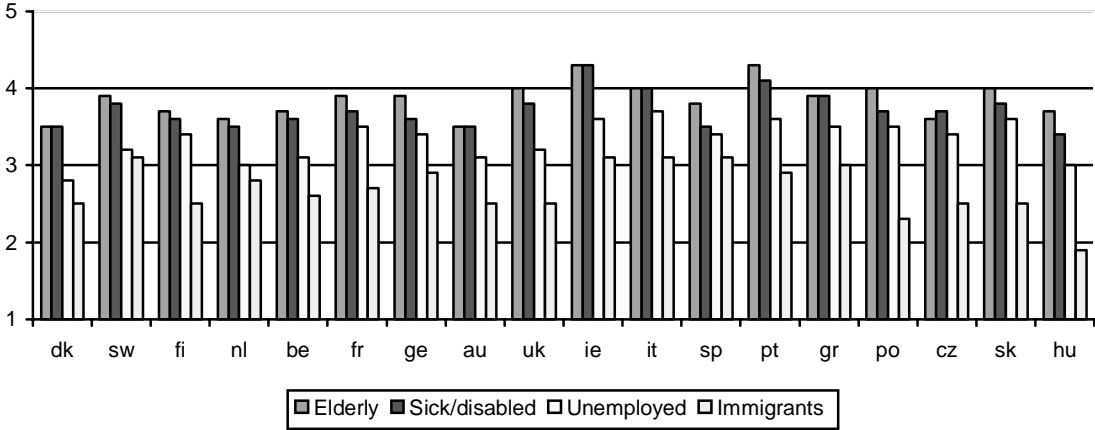
## 5. Results

### *The rank order of deservingness*

Our hypothesis was that the public would be most solidaristic towards elderly people, closely followed by sick and disabled people, next there would be the solidarity towards unemployed people, and solidarity towards immigrants would be lowest. As figure 1 shows, this is exactly what is found in thirteen of our eighteen European countries. In all five other countries

(Denmark, Austria, Ireland, Italy, and Greece) the difference with the universal rank order is that the solidarity towards elderly and sick and disabled people is at equally high level. This is not a substantial, but a marginal deviance from the general pattern.

**Figure 1: Deservingness rank order by country**  
(national averages)

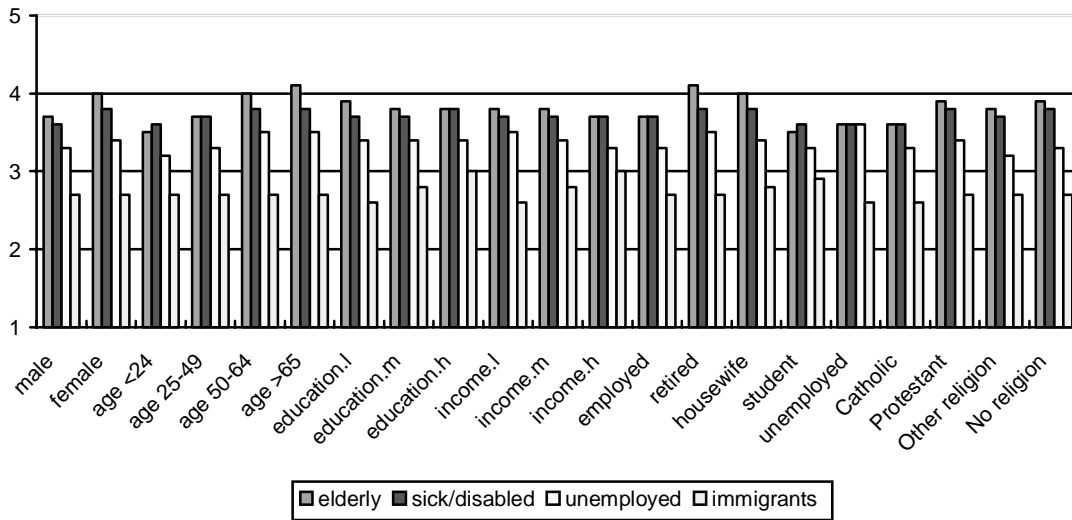


Between the countries there is quite some variation in the relative positions of the groups of needy people. In some countries, especially in the highly developed welfare states of Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands deservingness mainly seems to be differentiated along two groups: elderly, sick and disabled people on the one hand, and unemployed people and immigrants on the other. In most other Western and Southern European countries elderly, sick and disabled still score quite close, but there are larger differences between the solidarity towards unemployed people and immigrants. A typical pattern for the Eastern European countries seems to be that the scale distance between immigrants and the other groups is relatively large, while the distances among the other three needy groups are relatively small. How these differences can be explained is uncertain. One could speculate that where national resources for social protection are low, as is the case in the Eastern European countries, people tend to differentiate more strongly along the criterion of identity in terms of 'us' versus 'them' (in order to preserve the little there is for 'ourselves'), while in a context of affluence people tend to differentiate more along lines of incapacity, i.e. the control criterion.

The fact that the deservingness rank order is basically the same for all European countries indicates that the underlying logic of deservingness has deep roots. This is supported by our findings regarding the rank ordering by different social categories. Figure 2 shows that the deservingness rank order is the same among men and women, among different categories of age, educational level and income, among people with different social positions, and among people from different religious denominations. These findings are in line with Taylor-Gooby's (1985), who found no differences between the opinions of various categories of UK citizens on how they favoured benefits for pensioners, disabled people, widows, unemployed people and lone parents. However, in our data there are two exceptions. Unemployed people's deservingness is equal to that of disabled people among unemployed respondents, and young people, or students, rank disabled people a little bit higher than elderly people.



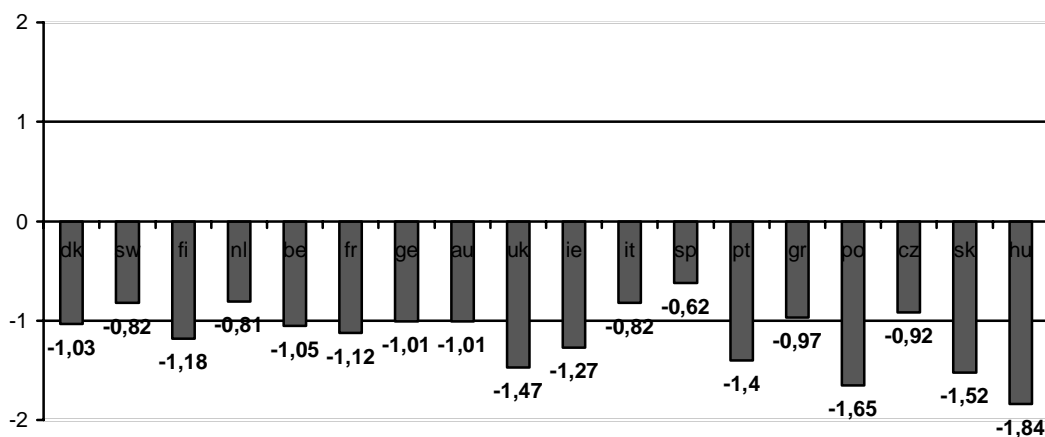
**Figure 2: Deservingness rank order by social categories**  
(average scores)



*Relative deservingness of immigrants: country level*

Between countries, the degree to which people make a difference between the deservingness of immigrants and elderly varies more than the deservingness rank order. Figure 3 shows that national averages in relative deservingness vary between -.62 in Spain and -1.85 in Hungary. The figure does not show clear interpretable patterns, but it seems that the relative deservingness of immigrants is on average somewhat higher in the Western European continental countries (with the exception of Portugal), and somewhat lower in the European Anglo-Saxon and Eastern European countries (with the exception of the Czech Republic).

**Figure 3: Relative deservingness of immigrants by country**  
(national averages, df 17, F=95.893, p <.001)



How national differences in relative deservingness can be explained is a question to which there are no answers yet to be found in the literature. To explore possible factors we analysed the bi-variate correlations between relative deservingness and welfare state characteristics, as

well as national averages of our independent variables. Note that due to the small number of countries multi-variate analyses are not meaningful.

As for welfare state characteristics, our findings point to little differences in national levels of relative deservingness. Regarding welfare spending we find a positive correlation at the aggregate level of .342, with a significance level of .165. At the most, this can only be interpreted as a very weak relation. Decomposed by regime type, our findings in table 3 also show that differences in levels of relative deservingness are very small.

**Table 3 Relative deservingness of immigrants by regime type**

<b>Welfare regime type</b>	<b>Mean relative deservingness</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Scandinavian	-1.001	3	.178
Continental	-1.001	5	.116
Anglo-Saxon	-1.365	2	.141
Southern European	-.952	4	.328
Central and Eastern European	-1.483	4	.395
Total	-1.139	18	.325

Between groups sum of squares: .861

Within groups : .940

F: 2.976, Sign:.06

The findings partly support our hypothesis, where it assumes that the relative deservingness is about equal between the social-democratic and corporatist welfare state, and that deservingness will be lower in the liberal welfare states and the non-comprehensive, residual welfare states of Eastern European countries. However, differences are only significant at  $p = .06$ , and there is nearly as much within type variation, as there is variation between types. But, what is really disturbing the general picture, is the fact that the group of Southern European countries shows the highest average. This does not fit with their less comprehensive nature and their lesser spending compared to the central Western and Nordic European countries. Apparently, there is more to explaining national levels of relative deservingness of immigrants, than welfare state characteristics. Would one only have looked at the case of Portugal, with its low level of relative deservingness, the overall hypothesis would have seem to hold. However, Portugal is an outlier in its group. Additional analyses, in which we compared the national means of our independent variables between group members, revealed that Portugal had exceptional scores on some of them. Typically, as we shall see later, these are variables that are related significantly to deservingness opinions: The Portuguese people have more negative opinions on immigrants generally, less of them are politically active, and they have less trust in others. Note that also in the group of Eastern European countries an outlier is present, which is the Czech Republic, with a higher level of relative deservingness. Here, compared to the other Eastern European countries, people are less negative on immigrants generally, and they are more politically active.

All in all, our conclusion is that national differences in the relative deservingness of immigrants is hardly related to welfare spending, and might at best be related to a distinction into the comprehensive welfare states of Nordic and Central Western European countries on the one hand, and the non-comprehensive, residual welfare states of the Anglo-Saxon and

Eastern European countries (with the exception of the Czech Republic). However, on the basis of welfare state characteristics the position of the group of Southern European countries is hard to understand. It could be that on a global, instead of only on a European scale, the degree and character of countries' 'welfare stateness' are important factors, but testing this would require data from many more countries than are available to us here.

As for other country characteristics, the results of our exploratory analyses are presented in table 4. It shows, firstly, that national averages of relative deservingness of immigrants are associated with cultural factors, like countries' cultural diversity, their opinion climate regarding immigrants, and their trust levels. With regard to cultural diversity it strikes that all correlations are positive (although not all are statistically significant). This means that, on the whole, cultural diversity tends to go together with a higher relative deservingness of immigrants. In other words, people who live in countries with a more diverse population, put immigrants as a group less far off from other needy groups on a scale of deservingness. This seems to refute the general idea that cultural diversity puts a pressure on the recognition of immigrants as a category deserving of welfare.

**Table 4 Bivariate Pearson Correlations with relative deservingness of immigrants**  
(Aggregate level, N=18)

<b>Culture</b>	
<i>Cultural diversity</i>	
Ethnic fractionalization	,221
Language fractionalization	,531(*)
Religious fractionalization	,034
Rate of foreign born citizens	,521(*)
Immigration rate	,275
<i>Opinion climate</i>	
Immigrants not as neighbour (not – no problem)	,663(**)
Nationals priority over immigrants when jobs are scarce (yes - in between – no)	,516(*)
Immigrant numbers in (prohibit...anyone)	,644(**)
<i>Trust</i>	
Interpersonal trust (low ... high)	,525(*)
Institutional trust (low ... high)	,069
<b>Politics</b>	
<i>Political engagement</i>	
Active political engagement (low...high)	,646(**)
Passive political engagement (ow ... high)	,240
<i>Left-wing influence</i>	
Cabinet compositions (right .. left)1	,484
<b>Structure</b>	
Wealth (GDP per capita)	,584(*)
Poverty rate	-.140
Unemployment rate	,105

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

1: Exclusive of Eastern-European countries

How this can be explained is left open for discussion. We speculate that cultural diversity might, in a way, teach a population to understand ‘others’, to deal and live with them without feeling threatened culturally or economically. A closer look at the table 4 learns that it is especially the degree to which in a country different languages are spoken that is strongly associated with relative deservingness. Language differences within European countries are not recent phenomena stemming from modern migration. In stead, they go way back in history, like in Spain, Switzerland and Belgium. Our data suggest that traditional experiences with language differences form a basis for making a smaller distinction between the deservingness of traditional vulnerable groups in society and that of immigrants. Cultural diversity in terms of religious differences, or of ethnic differences as a combination of racial and language fractionalisation, is of no particular influence among the European countries of our sample. This also counts for our measure of immigration rate, which is based on rather diverse (national) statistical sources, which differ quite a lot in their definition of a migrant. A more comparable measure of the proportion of foreign-born national citizens shows a strong positive relation.

As for opinion climate regarding immigrants, the table 4 shows, as expected, that the relative deservingness of immigrants is higher in countries with a more positive, or should we say, a less negative set of opinions, regarding whether one would rather not have migrants as a neighbour, whether one feels that, in case of vacancies, nationals should get priority over migrants, and whether the influx of migrants should be limited.

Our trust indicators show that the relative deservingness of immigrants is higher in countries with a higher level of interpersonal trust. The underlying mechanisms could be that in such countries people on the whole may feel less threatened by immigrants, people may have higher confidence in the real neediness of immigrants, they might have larger confidence in immigrants’ efforts to be self-sufficient, etc. The degree of institutional trust does not make a difference.

Political factors seem to be relevant, especially the degree to which a country’s population is actively engaged in political behaviour, like striking, signing petitions, taking part in boycotts and in demonstrations, and occupying buildings and factories. These kinds of activities, on the whole, seem to create a context in which people make less difference in the deservingness of immigrants as compared to other needy groups. The exact causal mechanism is not clear, but it might be that active political engagement is a manifestation of a more consociational political system in which there is more room for an open social debate on salient issues, like immigration related problems. Such debate may contribute to a better understanding of the position of migrant’s, and thus to a higher deservingness. Passive political engagement does not have a strong effect, although there is a positive relation as in the case of active engagement. Although the relation of the influence of left politics in successive cabinets with the relative deservingness of immigrants is positive, in our sample it is not statistically significant.

Our structural variables, which indicate the degree to which a country might afford to treat immigrants as an equally deserving category, do not relate to deservingness as a group. Higher poverty rates, or higher unemployment rates, which might induce a stronger (perceived) pressure of migration on resources for the needy, do not matter for a country’s relative deservingness level. This is in line with the finding of Breucker et al. (2002), that at the aggregate level prejudice against immigrants, as measured in Eurostat surveys, is hardly related to a country’s economic characteristics, such as its unemployment level. What does play a role, though, is a country’s level of wealth. People in richer countries are, on the whole, more relaxed about immigrant’s deservingness, relative to those of other needy groups.

In short, our data show that countries differ in the degree to which immigrants on the whole are seen as deserving, relative to other categories of needy people. Such differences are

associated with specific differences in cultural diversity (migrants are seen as relatively more deserving in countries with a higher degree of language fractionalisation, and a higher rate of foreign born citizens), and they are associated with the opinion climate on immigrants (more deserving if this climate is less negative). It is also the case that the relative deservingness of migrants is higher in countries where the public is more politically active, as well as in richer countries. Of course, one would be interested in analysing whether observed relations still hold when controlling for the other variables, but the small number of cases in our sample does not allow for this kind of multi-variate analyses.

## **6. Conclusions and discussion**

Some American scholars have warned Europe for an Americanisation of its welfare states. What they have in mind specifically, based on American experiences, is the negative effect increased cultural diversity, stemming from the increased influx of migrants in Europe, might have on welfare support and spending. If in Europe welfare recipients would be mostly from a migrant background, and if the public would perceive migrants largely as undeserving, a strong anti-welfare sentiment could arise, as it is traditionally present in the USA. Here, such a sentiment is related to negative images of African-Americans and Hispanics, combined with their major share in welfare receipt. For Europe, it is true that migrants are over-represented in the populations of welfare dependents, which is mainly due to their worse labour market chances and larger families. It is also true that migrants are the objects of rather strong prejudice among European native people. As our findings here showed, it is also consistently true that in the eyes of Europeans from all countries and social categories migrants are least deserving, when compared to other vulnerable groups. However, there is no proof that thus far an American type of process has taken place in Europe. Empirical evidence shows that up till now the European Social Model has been able to ward off the possible consequences of increased cultural diversity. It seems that especially politics have mattered in this. The exact mechanism is not clear, though. Some claim that left parties have been able to mitigate the effects of cultural diversity on welfare spending, others argue that it is the comprehensiveness of European welfare states proper, which has been able to take the wind out of right parties sails.

However, the future is not certain. The American warning cannot be ignored totally. Migration and cultural diversity may lead to welfare adaptations in future, depending on the future development of certain factors. From what we learned here, important seem to be the degree to which rightist parties will dominate European country's policy making, the degree to which the migrant proportion among welfare recipients will increase further, and the degree to which people's views on the relative deservingness of migrants will worsen.

As for the latter, our analyses showed that in itself there is little relation between deservingness thinking and welfare state characteristics. On the whole it seems that people in the Southern welfare states are somewhat more relaxed about migrants' deservingness, but Portugal is a strong outlier in this group. Least relaxed seem to be people in the liberal welfare states of the UK and Ireland, as well as in the residual welfare states of Eastern Europe (although the Czech Republic is an outlier here). We did not find a clear relation with welfare spending either. Therefore, as the situation is now, higher spending welfare states in Europe do not have to fear stronger sentiments of migrant undeservingness among their populations. What is more, if immigration would increase in future its effects on the deservingness gap may not necessarily be negative, as one would be tempted to assume. Our cross-sectional data show that differences in immigration rates have no influence on deservingness thinking, and that a higher rate of foreign born citizens goes together with higher relative deservingness.

We did find that a more hostile opinion climate is associated with lower levels of deservingness, but it is not certain that increased migration in itself will lead to a more hostile climate in future. This is because, based on Eurobarometer data, Bruecker et al. (2002) did not find a relation between a country's migration rate and the degree of prejudice among its population.

It might nevertheless be that future governments feel pressed to adapt their welfare state in relation to migration and cultural diversity. Events may occur, which in itself are not related to welfare, but which may impact ideas on any issue related to migration and cultural diversity. Terrorist attacks by fundamental Muslims is, of course, an example that springs to mind easily. Furthermore, it cannot be denied that a strong rhetoric about the negative impact of migration on the sustainability of European welfare systems is present already. An interesting question then is, which form future adaptations of welfare would take. Would European governments opt for bringing down the social protection of all citizens? Banting (1998) thinks not, and he may be right in his view that the social expectations embedded in the European welfare state will condition the response of Western democracies. He questions whether and why modern electorates would easily surrender social benefits in the face of increasing cultural diversity. Native Europeans may act as welfare chauvinists, and ask their governments why they should give up 'their' rights for 'them'? If Banting is right, one can imagine two possible alternatives for governments who are confronted with such chauvinism: to limit the influx of migrants in order to prevent them having access to comprehensive welfare, and/or to reduce social rights for migrants only. Both alternatives are already put into practice by European welfare states, especially the first (see e.g., Bommers & Geddes, 2000; Boeri et al., 2002). As for the latter, it is known that several countries reduced the social rights for refugees and asylum seekers who do not (yet) have the official status of citizen, but a major policy step would be to differentiate between welfare for migrant citizens and welfare for non-migrant citizens. Thus far, there are no examples of countries, which have seriously taken this route. But there is discussion of it in some countries. One example is the Netherlands, where some advocate the establishment of a 'migration proof' welfare state as a way out of the 'devilish dilemma' of strongly restricting migrant access and preserve present welfare levels on the one hand, and a more relaxed access with lower welfare for all on the other. A 'migration proof' welfare state would be one in which access is not limited too much (for demographic and humanitarian reasons), at the cost of creating two worlds of welfare: a limited one for migrant citizens and an extended one for non-migrant citizens (De Beer, 2004; Entzinger & Van der Meer, 2004). Although there would be several problems with such a dual welfare system (administrative, ethical, sociological), maybe the political viability of it may not be as problematic, as is possibly thought by those who assume that the idea stems from the (extreme) political right. The fact is that the idea is advocated most strongly in circles of the Dutch left. In addition, our findings reported here learn that the public at large would not immediately be against a system that differentiates between the rights of migrants and non-migrants. After all, as we have seen, in European welfare states migrants are consistently at the bottom of the public's deservingness scale.

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