

Towards a nuanced understanding of anti-immigration sentiment in the welfare state – a program specific analysis of welfare preferences

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Abstract

The literature on immigration and the welfare state describes a trade-off between immigration and welfare support. We argue for a more nuanced view of welfare chauvinism that accounts for different motivational channels, specific welfare programs and particular population subgroups. First, we identify two separate characteristics of hostility towards immigrants that trigger welfare chauvinism: affective anti-migration sentiment that combines economic and cultural motives; and a 'putative rational anti-migration sentiment' that is driven by the fear that immigration could overburden the welfare state although immigrants themselves are not disliked or even appreciated. Second, running a program-specific analysis, we find that affective and 'putative rational' opposition to migration lower redistributive preferences towards the unemployed. On the contrary, affective anti-immigration sentiment even increases welfare affinity towards the elderly. We interpret this finding not as preferences for or against a specific welfare program but as implicit sympathy or antipathy for its recipients. Third, investigating the role of Populist Radical Right Parties (PRRPs) as the main source of welfare chauvinism, we find that PRRP supporters strongly prefer more redistribution towards a perceived native in-group: the elderly.

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Keywords

political economy; welfare state; redistribution; welfare chauvinism; populist radical right parties; immigration

Introduction

The ongoing discussion about the relationship between large welfare states and immigration has recently been revived by the increasing immigration numbers in Europe. Labelled the ‘New Liberal Dilemma’ (NLD) (Newton, 2007), the question of how European welfare states secure the support of natives during a period of increasing immigration has become politically relevant in large part due to the rise of Populist Radical Right Parties (PRRPs). Already in 2010 PRRPs such as the Dutch PVV explicitly spelled out the conflict between ‘either a welfare state or a country of immigration’ (PVV, 2010: 21). In more recent years the increasing pressure on welfare states by imagined or actual conflicts between natives and immigrants has been stressed (Alesina et al., 2019; Kulin et al., 2016; Schmidt-Catran and Spies, 2016; Schumacher and van Kersbergen, 2016).¹

‘Welfare for us but not them’ (Alesina and Glaesner, 2004: 134) has become the battle cry of a range of successful European parties that form the PRRP party family through their common nativist core ideology (Mudde, 2007). Although very few similarities regarding PRRPs’ welfare state positioning and the socio-economic background of their electorates have been found (Otjes et al., 2018; Rooduijn, 2018), most right-wing parties propose a comparable interpretation of *economic nativism* (Otjes et al., 2018), *exclusive solidarity* (Lefkofridi and Michel, 2017), *welfare nativism* (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2018) or *welfare chauvinism* (Fenger, 2018; Schumacher and van Kersbergen, 2016). Originally, Andersen and Bjørklund (1990) framed ‘welfare state chauvinism – the welfare services should be restricted to ‘our own’ (p. 112), describing preferences to exclusively reserve welfare benefits for a deserving in-group while excluding an undeserving outgroup. The populist radical right employs welfare chauvinist narratives either in favour of discrimination against immigrants in their eligibility for welfare state benefits, for cuts in welfare spending that fall disproportionately on immigrants or for a deportation of foreigners in combination with more restrictive immigration laws. For example, the German PRRP Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) recently discussed an exclusive pension boost for natives, framed as a ‘citizens pension’ (AfD Fraktion im Thüringer Landtag, 2018). On the same lines, the French Front National (today: Rassemblement National) argues for conditioning minimum pension on 20 years of residence (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2018). And the Danish People’s Party successfully slashed social assistance

that would presumably target immigrants disproportionately (Careja et al., 2016) bolstering the importance of labour market participation in a former universal welfare system (Kvist and Greve, 2011).

In general, racial concerns spill over into various areas such as general support for law and order policies regarding juvenile offenders (Pickett et al., 2014). As far as the welfare state is concerned, among people holding anti-migration attitudes a lower *deservingness* of immigrants has been uncovered (Alesina et al., 2019; Mewes and Mau, 2012). However, the extent to which welfare state acceptance is influenced by anti-immigrant views depends on the recipient group of a particular welfare program (Spies, 2018). With regards to the German welfare state, Goldschmidt (2015) shows how anti-immigration attitudes amplify solidarity with the old and cushion solidarity with the unemployed. Building up on this line of literature, we are interested in the nuanced effects of anti-immigration sentiment on support for specific welfare programs. This contribution asks the following research question:

How does anti-immigration sentiment and support for the populist radical right affect program specific welfare support?

We add to the existing literature, first by identifying a form of ‘putative rational anti-migration sentiment’, a support for discrimination against immigrants in the welfare state beyond general anti-immigration attitudes. People who follow ‘putative rational anti-migration sentiment’ might find that immigration enriches the country’s cultural life but still prefer to chauvinistically condition access to welfare for immigrants due to the limited capacity of a potentially overburdened welfare state. Second, we replicate the effects of anti-immigration sentiment on program-specific welfare state preferences (Spies, 2018) for the post Euro crisis period and provide more specific control variables such as the individual perception of justice. Third, we link the welfare chauvinism debate to an analysis of PRRP supporters and examine the impact of anti-immigration sentiment on program-specific redistributive preferences captured by PRRP supporters. We explore whether the spill-over of anti-immigration sentiment on welfare state preferences is a phenomenon present exclusively within PRRP supporters.

The remainder of this contribution is structured as follows. Section 2 provides a literature overview of the impact of immigration attitudes on welfare state preferences, the European deservingness hierarchy and the role of PRRPs in shaping European welfare states. Section 3 discusses data sources and the identification strategy. In section 4, the empirical results are presented. Section 5 provides a discussion. Section 6 concludes.

Literature review and hypothesis

Welfare chauvinism: between group threat and 'welfare magnet'

Indisputably, immigrants are ranked at the bottom of the European deservingness hierarchy (van Oorschot, 2006).² The history of their discrimination in Western European welfare states by natives has long since been labelled 'welfare chauvinism' (Andersen and Bjørklund, 1990). It is well understood that such discrimination is amplified by the combination of supposedly 'unfavourable' characteristics – e.g. different ethnicity and religion or a low level of qualifications and limited skill set – (Alesina et al., 2019; Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2010; Helbling and Kriesi, 2014) and that immigrants have very little chance to overcome their low deservingness position (Reeskens and van der Meer, 2019).³

In general, the low deservingness of a (perceived) out-group can but does not need to be based on xenophobic prejudices. Experiments from social-psychology revealed that even in a setting of randomly assigned group-membership, people are willing to punish out-group members in terms of lower pay-offs – even if this means that also the in-group receives lower profits (Tajfel, 1970; Tajfel et al., 1971). In other words, what people seek in such experiments is a 'maximization of difference' rather than 'maximum in-group profits' (Tajfel, 1970: 101–102).

Gradually, group-based competition models have been refined as Stephan and Stephan (1993, 1996) distinguished between a realistic (tangible socio-economic) and a symbolic (intangible cultural) threat in an integrated threat theory. Inter-group dividing lines are understood to be largely driven 'by group identification and by the struggle between groups over power, resources, rewards, and collective identity' (Semyonov and Rajjman, 2006: 428). At the same time, group threat is moderated by institutional features such as immigration policy (Green et al., 2020; Schlueter et al., 2013) as well as by natives' individual human basic values (Davidov et al., 2020) and can either result from socio-economic competition for scarce resources or questions of collective identity – supposedly endangered by the out-group (Quillian, 1995; Semyonov and Rajjman, 2006). In line with the latter, Banting et al. (2020) discusses that even in immigration-friendly countries 'a sense of shared membership or community [...] seems critical to sustaining a commitment to diverse others' (p.205). A credible and visible commitment of immigrants to national membership, they argue, is inevitable in order to sustain welfare state solidarity. Hence, if the out-group is perceived as a cultural threat, this can affect social trust and thus welfare state preferences (Finseraas, 2008). If trust erodes exclusively with regards to the out-group, then immigration results in

selective in-group solidarity and welfare chauvinism; if, however, social trust decreases within the in-group as well, then general redistributive preferences become affected (Kolbe and Crepaz, 2016).

By and large, people who are prejudiced against immigration or doubt immigrants' ability to culturally integrate hold lower general redistributive preferences (Finseraas, 2008; Ford, 2006). Prejudices, however, can also be economically motivated and trigger perceived group threat. Alesina et al. (2018) show that natives are biased regarding immigrants' socio-economic background and their economic status. Also Larsen (2011) stresses the impact of natives' prejudices towards immigrants' work-ethic on lower redistributive preferences. Immigrants can represent a perceived economic threat if they are expected to profit from the welfare state without having contributed beforehand and presumably without contributing sufficiently in the future (Campbell, 1965; Esses et al., 2001). In theory, this channel could lead to higher redistributive preferences through additional demands for protection by the low-skilled natives who compete the most with immigrants (Finseraas, 2008). Indeed, working in an occupation with a high share of immigrants increases perceived economic insecurity and raises redistributive preferences (Burgoon et al., 2012). In order to profit from redistribution, particularly people with a lower socio-economic status discriminate non-natives in the welfare state (Meuleman et al., 2020b). However, Hainmueller and Hiscox (2010) find that economic self-interest does not fully explain immigration attitudes and low-skilled immigration is opposed generally – not just by low-skilled natives. Alternatively, scholars turn to the importance of relative in contrast to actual deprivation as a motive for anti-immigration sentiment. Spruyt et al. (2018) develop a scale of social and ethnic conflict and show how the similar perception of societal conflicts unites groups that share diverse feelings of vulnerability. They interpret that feelings of vulnerability could be understood as a protection of how people would like to see themselves: as victims of a large societal threat. Testing the group relative deprivation theory pioneered by Vanneman and Pettigrew (1972) in a European cross-country setting, Meuleman et al. (2020a) show a strong correlation between group relative deprivation and ethnic threat.⁴ Hence, the perception of relation deprivation of one's in-group is closely associated to anti-migration attitudes.

The discussed findings expose the difficulties in disentangling an economic and a cultural channel to explain the incidence of welfare chauvinism. In fact, Larsen (2008) as well as Mewes and Mau (2012) show that a cultural and an economic channel both matter, and both influence welfare chauvinistic attitudes. Nevertheless, an abstract economic fear of welfare state sustainability can be identified in the face of large immigration numbers. This fear can be closely related to the 'welfare magnet'⁵ discussion kicked-off by Borjas

(1999) that addresses the concern of attracting foreigners by allowing immigrants' access to a large welfare state.⁶ The fact that an impressive 90 percent of the European Social Survey respondents would prefer to somehow condition welfare access for immigrants⁷ and even among supporters of universal basic income this share is only slightly smaller (Diermeier et al., 2020) reveals that welfare chauvinism might contain more than 'only' cultural and economic resentments.⁸ By and large, Kitschelt supports this line of argumentation when he finds that "welfare chauvinism" [...] is not necessarily rooted in cultural patterns of xenophobia and racism, but in a 'rational' consideration of alternative options to preserve social club goods in efficient ways' (1995: 262). Corresponding to these 'putative rational' considerations, immigrants experience a lower deservingness than respective natives; however, they are perceived as 'undeserving' by natives not because of their ethnic background but because they display 'unfavourable', mostly labour market-related, characteristics (Kootstra, 2016).

Welfare chauvinism and deservingness hierarchy: the need for a program specific perspective

Country-specific and individual differences in the perception of immigration matter significantly to explain differences in welfare chauvinism (Banting et al., 2020). Therefore, there is disagreement how the extent to which actual immigration numbers influence immigration deservingness ranks: Schlueter and Scheepers (2010) and Senik et al. (2009) find that anti-immigration sentiment is triggered by perceived rather than by actual immigration. Also, the effects of actual immigration on welfare state preferences are mixed. Alesina et al. (2019), Spies (2018), and Reeskens and van Oorschot (2012) argue in favour and Auspurg et al. (2019), Kulin et al. (2016), Brady and Finnigan (2014) and Mau and Burkhardt (2009) argue against the effect of lower general redistributive preferences through actual immigration.

In contrast to the large cross-country differences in the state of the economy, the design of welfare states and the history of anti-migration sentiment, Europeans broadly agree on a program-specific hierarchy of deservingness: elderly people are commonly considered as the most deserving, followed by sick people (van Oorschot, 2006). Being sick or old is generally considered a 'life course-related risk' that could hit anyone equally and therefore strongly legitimizes a public insurance (Jensen, 2012). In contrast, the unemployed are seen as less worthy of being supported, and immigrants are considered the least deserving (van Oorschot, 2006). The difficulties in identifying unambiguous effects regarding immigration sentiment and general welfare

state preferences could be largely driven by a lack of accounting for program-specific deservingness differences. Spies (2018) and Goldschmidt (2015) pick up on this critique and provide a program-specific analysis of welfare chauvinism. In line with the idea that within universally-designed welfare programs it is 'difficult to stigmatize receivers of government support' (Crepaz and Damron, 2009: 449), Goldschmidt (2015) rejects an effect of anti-immigration attitudes on general redistributive preferences or solidarity with the old and the sick in Germany. However, a negative effect of anti-immigration sentiment on the support for the targeted German social assistance (Hartz IV) is revealed. Spies (2018) finds a negative impact of economic and cultural anti-immigration sentiment on redistributive preferences for the unemployed in a European cross-country setting. With regards to the support for pensioners, he finds a positive effect of economic anti-immigration sentiment and the reverse effect for cultural anti-immigration sentiment. What is more, cultural and economic anti-immigration attitudes are identified as equal drivers of explicitly welfare chauvinistic attitudes. Soroka et al. (2016) complements this finding by showing that actual immigration into a country is related to lower spending for unemployment benefits and active labour market policies. For reasons of data availability, these studies refer to data from 2008 and prior.

The refugee influx into Western Europe during the years 2015 and 2016 significantly triggered the discussion on unemployment and the cost of low-skilled immigration for the welfare state. Because unemployment of immigrants is higher than that of natives (Spies, 2018) and strongly overestimated (Alesina et al., 2018) this program seems particularly vulnerable to welfare chauvinism. In line with the pioneering work by Tajfel (1970) that revealed the strong reluctance for redistribution to an out-group and the group threat theory (Semyonov and Rajzman, 2006) outlined above, we expect anti-immigration attitudes to reduce solidarity with the unemployed beyond peoples' preferences for justice, such as support for meritocracy or opposition to egalitarianism. On the other hand, the empirical finding that 90 percent of Europeans would prefer to condition immigrants' welfare access shows that welfare chauvinism is present all across European societies and not just among a small xenophobic group. In fact, even people with positive general attitudes towards immigration oppose the immediate access of immigrants to welfare state programs. Explaining the effect on natives' redistributive preferences, Alesina et al. (2018) show that the perceived work ethic of immigrants matters more than pure anti-immigration sentiment. Burgoon (2014) concludes that the economic non-integration – approximated by the gap between natives and immigrants in unemployment and the gap in social-benefit dependency – rather drives the lower welfare support than cultural

non-integration. If these findings are interpreted as a manifestation of the fear that natives have for the sustainability of their welfare state – with the rich opposing immigration for the expected fiscal burden and the poor for the expected competition (Degen et al., 2018) –, then welfare chauvinism could be triggered by ‘putative rationality’.⁹ People supporting such a form of ‘putative rational anti-migration sentiment’ would then – independent of their affective perception of immigrants – be expected to support cuts to unemployment benefits, the welfare state program that immigrants are perceived to rely upon the most, in order to reduce the reach of the ‘welfare magnet’ (Alesina et al., 2018). Furthermore, and in line with Burgoon’s (2014) similar findings for general welfare preferences, the effect of ‘putative rational’ welfare chauvinism on support for unemployment assistance is expected to be dependent on the potential share of redistribution that could go to non-natives.

In contrast, the elderly are considered a group of *native welfare recipients* that is perceived as especially deserving (van Oorschot, 2006), making elderly care particularly popular among migration-hostile supporters of welfare chauvinism (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2018; Goubin and Hooghe, 2021). Since immigration is largely perceived to be dominated by young males (Ward, 2019), larger redistribution to the elderly is unlikely to be related to the perceived reach of ‘welfare magnets’. Hence, the sustainability of the welfare state is expected to be unrelated to the combination of immigration and elderly care.

Hypothesis 1: People with stronger affective anti-immigration attitudes hold lower welfare state preferences for unemployment assistance and higher welfare state preferences for elderly care.

Hypothesis 2: People supporting a ‘putative rational anti-migration sentiment’ hold lower welfare state preferences for unemployment assistance. ‘Putative rational anti-migration sentiment’ is unrelated to welfare state preferences for elderly care.

Welfare chauvinism and the populist radical right: the role of nativism in welfare state preferences

In contrast to the very few socio-economic similarities between the electorates of different Western European PRRPs, the attraction of the radical political right through a combination of anti-immigration attitudes and welfare chauvinistic redistribution schemes is well-researched (Mudde, 2007; Otjes et al., 2018; Rooduijn, 2018). Lefkofridi and Michel (2017) stress the role of PRRPs in supporting the welfare state by backing an exclusionary

form of solidarity. Schmidt and Spies (2014) even find that societies' redistributive preferences decrease only once parties echo welfare chauvinistic narratives.

In general, PRRPs are characterised by authoritarianism, populism and nativism (Mudde, 2007). PRRPs' nativist core ideology describes the preferences for a homogeneous, native nation state and thus paves the way for welfare chauvinist economic policy positions. Regarding PRRPs' economic agenda, Fenger concludes that – in contrast to all inter-party differences – 'as long as reforms safeguard the position of deserving groups and or undermine the rights of non-deserving groups, there may be support for these measures' (2018: 193). Hence, welfare chauvinism as proposed by the populist radical right is unlikely to alter redistributive preferences per se, but is rather directed against specific programs that immigrants' rely upon the most and thereby contradict PRRPs' nativist core (welfare) ideology (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2018).

A comprehensive program-specific analysis of welfare chauvinistic economic policy preferences among PRRP supporters is thus expected to reveal the nativist character of their welfare state preferences. More specifically, PRRP supporters are expected to show particularly pronounced effects of anti-immigration sentiment on program specific redistributive preferences. What is more, trying to account for the differences between European PRRPs' welfare chauvinism, in line with Ennser-Jedenastik (2018) we expect PRRP-related program-specific affective anti-migration effects to depend on the share of program-specific redistribution that is perceived to go to non-natives. On the contrary, as the motivation behind preferences for a large welfare state in combination with free immigration goes beyond PRRPs' core ideology, we hypothesise that a 'putative rational anti-migration sentiment' is independent of nativist PRRP support and rather present in a much broader share of the population. PRRP supporters' redistributive preferences are expected to be shaped by affective anti-migration sentiment and less by their 'putative rational' fear for the sustainability of the welfare state.

Hypothesis 3: The effect of affective anti-immigration sentiment on program specific redistributive preferences is particularly present within the support groups of PRRPs.

Data and measurement

The European Social Survey (ESS) 2016 contains special questions concerning program specific welfare state preferences and thus constitutes the most comprehensive database available for our analysis. The ESS enables

us to exploit the wide range of 14 Western European and 6 Eastern European countries including 17 populist radical right parties. The final sample consists of 29,445 observations of which 1,900 respondents report to support a populist radical right party. Although this country selection does not contain all recently significant European PRRPs, it provides a reasonable representation of the heterogeneous right-wing party family.¹⁰

On the individual-level as dependent variables we are interested in respondents' general and program-specific welfare state preferences. The ESS8 2016 wave¹¹ contains questions regarding the general support for governments to reduce income differences and regarding the significance of governments' responsibility to ensure the standard of living of the old and the unemployed.¹² By similarly referring to the government's role in securing the standard of living of the two groups, our choice of dependent variables does not allow to analyse the institutional differences between the respective targeted welfare programs. We rather interpret the preferences for the state to secure the standard of living of a specific group as a proxy for redistribution affinity towards this group – e.g. independent of whether it is based on a rather contribution-based or universal system.

As one main independent variable of interest, we include support for a populist radical right party, in order to investigate the differences between the immigration-related welfare effects of PRRP supporters and the rest of the electorate. Furthermore, we also need to control for respondents' attitudes towards immigration.¹³ The ESS contains a specific question whether the 'country's cultural life [is] undermined or enriched by immigrants' and a general question about whether respondents believe immigrants 'make the country a better place to live'. While the former question clearly addresses the cultural aspect of immigration attitudes, the latter variable also taps into the economic dimension. Economic concerns regarding immigrants are specifically tested by asking whether 'immigration [is] bad or good for country's economy'. Finally, welfare state conditioning of immigrants is evaluated by asking 'when should immigrants obtain rights to social benefit/services'.¹⁴

Although the majority of respondents agrees that immigration is rather good and enriching for the country, the economy and the culture, only 10 percent of the respondents would prefer to grant immigrants access to social welfare immediately on arrival.¹⁵ We address these presumably contradictory attitudes towards immigration by running a principal component analysis¹⁶ of all four standardized immigration attitude variables.¹⁷ The factor analysis reinforces that immigration-related variables are highly inter-related.¹⁸ All variables load positively on the first component. Nevertheless, the factor loading of the immigrants' welfare state conditioning variable is much lower than those of the three immigration attitude variables. The first principal component explains nearly two-thirds of the total variance.

We conclude that this principal component captures entangled *affective economic and cultural anti-immigration attitudes*. The second principal component is characterised by the difference between the conditioning variable and all other immigration attitude variables. Hence, it reflects a set of *positive* economic, cultural and general attitudes towards immigrants without support for granting them the same access to social welfare as for natives. The clear division between affective anti-immigration sentiment and further conditioning of immigrants' welfare state access confirms our expectations and enables an operationalization of two independent channels. We conclude that the second principal component reveals what Kitschelt labelled welfare chauvinism based on economically-motivated "rational' consideration' (1995: 162). We call this principal component '*putative rational anti-migration sentiment*'.¹⁹ Hence, for the subsequent regression analyses, we employ the two first principal components discussed above.

Due to the cross-sectional structure of the data, we are unable to identify how respondents' perception of justice has changed through variations of immigration attitudes over time. If the individual justice preferences are interrelated with the type of welfare state (Larsen, 2008), however, variation due to short-run immigration is expected to be rather low. By including the individuals' preferences for certain concepts of social justice as control variables in our model, we intend to isolate welfare chauvinism *ceteris paribus* and prevent results from being purely driven by differences in the perception of justice between supporters and opponents of immigration. Hence, we extract variables on support for income differences and equality of outcomes, the effect of social benefits on peoples' work ethic and their willingness to 'care for one another'.²⁰ Running a principal component analysis including these four standardized variables reveals a first principal component that captures 44 percent of the total variance.²¹ All four variables load positively (reflecting opposition to redistribution) on this first principal component with the variables regarding work ethic and solidarity loading much stronger. We conclude that this component captures different shades of welfare sceptic views. We call this variable '*welfare scepticism*'. The second principal component accounts for 29 percent of the total variance and loads positively on the variables that capture support for income differences, opposition to equality of outcomes and negatively on the two other variables. Whereas some respondents might have in mind that income differences are a favourable outcome *per se*, this justice preference rather expresses support for welfare being earned through talent and effort. We name this component support for '*meritocracy*'.²² Again, for the subsequent analysis, we employ the two first principal components discussed above.

As control variables on the individual-level, we extract respondents' socio-economic characteristics such as gender, age, income, education and occupation. We control for whether the respondents' parents were born abroad. What is more, we include the basic human values dimension tradition and universalism based on Schwartz (1992),²³ a superideology scale from left to right, how respondents evaluate their economic situation subjectively and the subjective likelihood of becoming unemployed during the coming twelve months.²⁴

European countries, their socio-demographics, as well as their welfare states differ significantly. Hence, as a first robustness check, we consecutively add macro-level variables into our contextual model to control for the most important of the vast country differences. First, we add the unemployment rate and the old age poverty rate to include program specific measures of welfare neediness. Second we add the country specific share of foreigners, the perceived share of foreigners, as well as the share of non-natives among the population older than 65 years to control for the (perceived) potential welfare eligibility of non-natives.

The populist radical right constitutes one of the most heterogeneous party families. Eastern European PRRPs propose considerably different and more left leaning economic policy platforms than their Western counterparts (Buštková, 2018) and their 'specific contextual framework' (Pytlas, 2018: 11) needs to be accounted for. Due to the heterogeneity of populist radical right parties' economic policy agenda, we refrain to the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) to distinguish between economically rather 'left' and rather 'right' PRRPs.²⁵ In order to pin down more specifically the interaction between perceived immigration and anti-immigration sentiment, we specify the respective interaction effects. What is more, we test the importance of PRRPs' economic nature and its interaction with the perceived share of non-natives.²⁶ All macro-level variables except the perceived share of foreigners, that was gathered from ESS7²⁷, are extracted from Eurostat.²⁸

Empirical analysis and results

In order to test our hypotheses, we run hierarchical multi-level models with random intercepts and two-levels – the individual-level and the country specific contextual level. We apply the ESS post-stratification weights including design weights to best reduce sampling and non-response errors. All countries are weighted equally to ensure an assessment of the country specific institutional settings on an equal footing.

Individual-level effects

Table 1 shows multi-level random-intercept ordered logit regression outputs with redistributive preferences regarding the governments' obligation to secure the standard of living of the unemployed (column 1-3) and the old (column 4-6) as dependent variables.²⁹ As a reference, column 7 adds another regression with preferences for general government redistribution as the dependent variable. Standard errors in brackets are robust and clustered on the level of the available twenty European countries.

Columns 1-3 reveal that respondents with affective anti-immigration attitudes and support for 'putative rational anti-migration sentiment' have lower redistributive preferences regarding the standard of living of the unemployed. The effects are stable even when including respondents' perception of justice. The introduction of the welfare scepticism variable reduces the effect size of 'putative rational anti-migration sentiment' and affective anti-migration sentiment but does not alter the statistical significance. Individual-level control variables have the expected signs: respondents who express difficulties to 'get along' with their income, ideologically more 'left' leaning respondents and those with lower education levels prefer stronger government intervention for the unemployed. The same holds for unemployed respondents, those who perceive themselves at a higher risk of becoming unemployed and respondents who hold either more traditional or more universal values.³⁰ In comparison with the effect of the labour market status, the welfare chauvinism coefficients are medium-sized. A 2.4 (7.3) standard deviation increase in affective anti-immigration sentiment ('putative rational welfare chauvinism') is comparable to the effect of becoming unemployed. In contrast to H3 and the expectation that PRRP support mimics the effect of 'affective anti-immigration sentiment', the impact of PRRP support remains insignificant.

As people who hold welfare sceptic views prefer lower redistribution to the unemployed much more than those with meritocratic views, our findings stress the importance of the belief that the welfare state makes the unemployed contribute less as they become lazy and isolated recipients of benefits. Furthermore, the fact that affective anti-migration attitudes and 'putative rational anti-migration sentiment' are not dominated by respondents' perception of justice provides first evidence for H1 and H2. Welfare chauvinism might lower solidarity with the unemployed through two different channels. First, affective anti-migration sentiment could reduce redistribution preferences for the unemployed supposedly due to natives' intentional attempt to cut benefits for the non-native out-group that they believe to disproportionately profit (Alesina et al., 2018). Second, 'putative rational anti-migration sentiment' might bring support for unemployment assistance down supposedly due to fear for welfare sustainability through the 'welfare magnet' in

Western Europe (Borjas, 1999).³¹ Finally, the anti-immigration and ‘rational anti-migration sentiment’ effects are not driven by PRRP supporters, but rather prevail in the entire society – providing evidence against H3.

These findings are contrasted with the regression outputs regarding government interventions for the standard of living of the old (column 4–6). In these specifications, the effects of affective anti-immigration sentiment remains statistically significant, however, with an opposite effect sign, providing evidence for H1. What is more, as hypothesised ‘putative rational anti-migration sentiment’ is unrelated to redistributive preferences towards the elderly (H2). Both support for welfare scepticism and meritocracy are negatively related to state support for the standard of living of the old. Since, the former’s effect size is less than half and latter’s effect size is more than three times larger than in the unemployment model specifications, our results indicate that transfers focused on the standard of living of the elderly are much less prone to stigmatization than transfers to the unemployed and much more dependent on peoples’ support for meritocracy. This finding could reflect that preferences for redistribution towards the old could be related to preferences for higher payoffs for people with higher contributions (see Duru-Bellat and Tenrat, 2012).

Also, the socio-demographic controls reveal some interesting differences. First, the unemployed (who favour large unemployment benefits) oppose stronger welfare support for the old. What is more, the demographic coefficients reveal a bell curve shaped effect of age on redistribution support for the old. Hence, the strongest support for the elderly prevails among the middle-aged and not among the old-aged themselves that might actually profit from a stronger state intervention. These puzzling results can be interpreted in line with van Oorschot and Meuleman (2012: 42): ‘Welfare policies that favour the unemployed are primarily dependent on purely individual perceptions of welfare performance, while support for policies targeting the elderly is more strongly affected by a nationally shared image of the standard of living of the elderly’. Possibly, the often negatively biased view on the elderlies’ welfare neediness affects the middle-aged group the strongest, whereas the old themselves have more accurate information over their own cohort’s economic situation.

In line with H3 the affective anti-immigration effect is accompanied by a similar effect of PRRP support. The PRRP coefficient size is remarkably high and larger than a maximum decrease in education (tertiary education). This finding is striking because PRRP supporters strongly support meritocracy – a justice preference that lowers redistributive preferences also towards the standard of living of the old. Thus, PRRP electorates support stronger redistribution to the old against their perception of justice and in contrast to non-PRRP supporters. Controlling for support for traditional values, we make sure that this effect is not driven by affective preferences for the old rather than by a welfare chauvinistic motive. The results provide

Table 1. Multi-level ordered logit analysis on redistributive preferences for the unemployed and the old, random intercept on country-level.

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
	Unem	Unem	Unem	old	old	old	General
pc Aff. Anti-migration	-0.126*** (0.032)	-0.072*** (0.028)	-0.071** (0.028)	0.085*** (0.023)	0.107*** (0.024)	0.096*** (0.025)	0.029** (0.014)
pc Rational anti-migration	-0.067*** (0.019)	-0.043** (0.018)	-0.043** (0.018)	-0.016 (0.025)	-0.004 (0.024)	-0.002 (0.024)	-0.005 (0.017)
pc Welfare scepticism	—	-0.418*** (0.017)	-0.418*** (0.017)	—	-0.188*** (0.021)	-0.186*** (0.021)	-0.427*** (0.017)
pc Meritocracy	—	-0.038** (0.017)	-0.038** (0.017)	—	-0.132*** (0.017)	-0.130*** (0.016)	-0.667*** (0.024)
PRRP supporter	—	—	-0.050 (0.070)	—	—	0.421*** (0.122)	0.233*** (0.077)
Superideology	-0.082*** (0.015)	-0.040*** (0.011)	-0.039*** (0.011)	-0.056*** (0.005)	-0.030*** (0.005)	-0.039*** (0.005)	-0.113*** (0.015)
Traditional values	0.025 (0.016)	0.070*** (0.014)	0.070*** (0.014)	0.053*** (0.017)	0.067*** (0.018)	0.066*** (0.018)	0.065*** (0.022)
Universalism	0.294*** (0.036)	0.229*** (0.036)	0.229*** (0.036)	0.405*** (0.029)	0.365*** (0.031)	0.366*** (0.030)	0.243*** (0.027)
Age	0.001 (0.005)	-0.003 (0.005)	-0.003 (0.005)	0.017** (0.007)	0.016** (0.006)	0.015** (0.006)	0.007 (0.007)
Age squared	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Occupation = 1, unemployed	0.386*** (0.052)	0.276*** (0.049)	0.276*** (0.049)	-0.114* (0.066)	-0.150** (0.065)	-0.149** (0.064)	0.147** (0.064)
Occupation = 2, retired	0.106** (0.053)	0.100* (0.058)	0.100* (0.058)	0.072 (0.072)	0.061 (0.074)	0.056 (0.073)	0.134*** (0.043)

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued)

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
	Unem	Unem	Unem	old	old	old	General
Occupation = 3, in training	0.037 (0.052)	-0.013 (0.050)	-0.013 (0.050)	-0.218*** (0.063)	-0.231*** (0.065)	-0.222*** (0.065)	-0.262*** (0.076)
Occupation = 4, else	0.192*** (0.052)	0.178*** (0.057)	0.178*** (0.057)	0.134** (0.056)	0.134** (0.057)	0.133** (0.056)	0.134** (0.059)
Education = 1, secondary education	0.162*** (0.040)	0.162*** (0.040)	0.162*** (0.040)	-0.063 (0.045)	-0.063 (0.041)	-0.067 (0.041)	-0.017 (0.049)
Education = 2, post-secondary education	-0.222*** (0.055)	-0.221*** (0.055)	-0.222*** (0.055)	-0.206*** (0.053)	-0.193*** (0.051)	-0.192*** (0.051)	-0.170*** (0.057)
Education = 3, tertiary education	-0.278*** (0.052)	-0.278*** (0.052)	-0.278*** (0.052)	-0.331*** (0.061)	-0.327*** (0.060)	-0.324*** (0.060)	-0.296*** (0.050)
Female = 2, female	-0.026 (0.042)	-0.025 (0.042)	-0.026 (0.042)	0.036 (0.028)	0.021 (0.029)	0.029 (0.029)	0.068** (0.031)
Parents non-native	0.027 (0.053)	0.028 (0.052)	0.027 (0.053)	0.055 (0.061)	0.089 (0.061)	0.093 (0.062)	-0.042 (0.046)
Feeling HH income = 1, get along	0.008 (0.031)	0.008 (0.031)	0.008 (0.031)	0.111*** (0.043)	0.074* (0.043)	0.073* (0.043)	0.198*** (0.031)
Feeling HH income = 2, get along difficult/very difficult	0.243*** (0.073)	0.243*** (0.073)	0.243*** (0.073)	0.462*** (0.083)	0.392*** (0.082)	0.392*** (0.081)	0.376*** (0.046)
Unemployment likely	0.149*** (0.042)	0.133*** (0.041)	0.133*** (0.041)	0.014 (0.040)	-0.002 (0.039)	-0.003 (0.040)	0.092** (0.046)
Random intercept	0.231*** (0.055)	0.177*** (0.038)	0.175*** (0.038)	0.220*** (0.084)	0.204*** (0.074)	0.218*** (0.078)	0.118*** (0.040)
Observations	29,445	29,445	29,445	29,445	29,445	29,445	29,445
Number of groups	20	20	20	20	20	20	20

Robust standard errors clustered at country-level in parentheses, *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$. Note: All countries are equally weighted.

strong evidence for H3: Anti-migration sentiment specifically among PRRP supporters drives welfare chauvinism through higher redistribution towards a putative in-group, the old.

Finally, Table 1 column 7 confirms the importance of zooming-in on program-specific redistribution effects. First and foremost, several of the program-specific divergent effects such as the impact of 'putative rational anti-migration sentiment' vanish in the general welfare specification. Second, the contrasting program-specific effects of affective anti-migration sentiment (negative towards the unemployed and positive towards the old) remains only weakly positive regarding the general welfare preferences. Third, the specific importance of PRRP support for the elderly's standard of living and also regarding general redistribution preferences remains statistically significant. Support for the populist radical right is unrelated to preferences to support the unemployed's standard of living.

Contextual-level effects

The discussion on the 'New Liberal Dilemma' addresses the question of whether actual or perceived immigration reduces redistributive preferences and the support for the welfare state. Having uncovered significant differences between general and program specific effects, in Table 2 and 3 we rerun our preferred individual-level model and include the actual and perceived share of non-natives in the population (column 1-2). In order to identify the interplay between affective or 'putative rational anti-immigration sentiment' and the perceived share of non-natives we specify the respective interaction effects (columns 3-4).

It is well understood that the effect of actual immigration is not necessarily linear across countries, but is rather dependent on attitudinal variables (Reeskens and van Oorschot, 2012). Ennser-Jedenastik (2018) claim that particularly nativist-driven chauvinism brought forward by PRRPs depends on the share of program specific beneficiaries that is viewed as an undeserving out-group. Nevertheless, the heterogeneity of economic policy platforms brought forward by PRRPs hinders a clear identification of this effect as supporters of economically left leaning PRRPs most likely share more sympathy with the unemployed. To better account for cross-country heterogeneity, we split PRRPs between economically left and right leaning and specify an interaction effect between the perceived share of non-natives and support for a economic right populist radical right (column 5). Also, we control for the unemployment rate in Table 2 and for the old age poverty ratio in Table 3 to address the large cross-country economic differences in program specific potential eligibility. Furthermore, in Table 3 we add the share of non-natives older than 65 years as a proxy of potential eligibility of

Table 2. Multi-level ordered logit analysis on redistributive preferences for the unemployed including contextual variables, random intercept on country-level.

Variables	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)		(5)	
	Unemp		Unemp		Unemp		Unemp		Unemp	
perc_Share_nnative#Aff. Anti-mig	—		—		-0.002		—		—	
perc_Share_nnative # rat. Anti-mig	—		—		(0.004)		—		—	
perc_Share_nnative # right PRRP	—		—		—		-0.001		—	
	—		—		—		(0.003)		—	
Perceived share of non-natives	—		—		—		—		-0.026**	
	—		—		—		—		(0.011)	
Economic right PRRP	—		-0.021		-0.021		-0.021		-0.021	
	—		(0.015)		(0.015)		(0.015)		(0.015)	
Economic left PRRP	-0.100		-0.099		-0.087		-0.099		0.574**	
	(0.092)		(0.092)		(0.096)		(0.092)		(0.264)	
Unemployment ratio	-0.036		-0.038		-0.053		-0.039		-0.038	
	(0.117)		(0.117)		(0.106)		(0.118)		(0.117)	
Share non-natives	0.051***		0.060***		0.061***		0.060***		0.061***	
	(0.018)		(0.017)		(0.017)		(0.016)		(0.017)	
pc Aff. Anti-migration	-0.012		0.006		0.006		0.006		0.007	
	(0.013)		(0.013)		(0.015)		(0.015)		(0.015)	
pc Rational anti-migration	-0.070**		-0.070**		-0.023		-0.070**		-0.070**	
	(0.028)		(0.028)		(0.077)		(0.028)		(0.028)	
pc Welfare scepticism	-0.043**		-0.043**		-0.043**		-0.043**		-0.043**	
	(0.018)		(0.018)		(0.018)		(0.073)		(0.018)	
pc Meritocracy	-0.418***		-0.418***		-0.417***		-0.418***		-0.418***	
	(0.017)		(0.017)		(0.017)		(0.017)		(0.017)	
Individual-level controls	-0.038**		-0.038**		-0.038**		-0.038**		-0.038**	
	(0.017)		(0.017)		(0.017)		(0.017)		(0.017)	
Random intercept	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	
	0.135***		0.123***		0.125***		0.124**		0.122**	
	(0.043)		(0.035)		(0.036)		(0.035)		(0.036)	
Observations	29,445		29,445		29,445		29,445		29,445	
Number of groups	20		20		20		20		20	

Robust standard errors clustered at country-level in parentheses, *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.
 Note: All countries are equally weighted.

non-natives. As we run hierarchical models for only twenty countries, we are particularly careful in interpreting our results. The regressions constitute a first robustness check for our individual-level results.

Table 2 thus reruns the regressions on redistributive preferences regarding the standard of living of the unemployed. The individual-level results from Table 1 are robust to the inclusion of contextual variables. Interestingly, neither the actual nor the perceived share of non-native population in a country has a statistically significant effect within our model. And also, the interactions between affective or 'putative rational anti-migration sentiment' and the perceived share of non-native population remain statistically insignificant. Of the macro-level variables, we can only find that stronger redistribution preferences towards the standard of living of the unemployed prevails in countries with a higher unemployment rate. This finding complements the statistically significant individual-level effects of being (at risk of becoming) unemployed on more preferred redistribution towards this group.

The insignificance of the effects around the perceived share of foreigners are surprising in the light of the literature. In line with Alesina et al. (2018) as well as Gorodzeisky and Semyonov (2020) it could have been expected that particularly the overestimation of non-natives has implications for the respective welfare preferences.³² However, such a relationship is difficult to establish on the macro-level and since ESS 8 does not provide perceived immigration numbers on the individual level, significant effects on the micro-level cannot be ruled out.

In line with our micro-level regressions, support for PRRPs – economically 'left' or 'right' – seems to be unrelated to redistribution preferences towards the unemployed. This non-finding is questioned, however, once we zoom in on the interaction between the economically 'right' radical populist right and the perceived share of non-natives: Supporters of economically 'right' PRRPs become more critical with government support for the standard of living of the unemployed once the perceived share of non-natives passes a certain threshold. It seems reasonable to attribute this finding to the fear of redistribution being directed to an undeserving out-group. We conclude that welfare chauvinist policies such as cuts in the social assistance successfully advocated for example by the DPP (Careja et al., 2016) fall on particularly favourable breeding grounds in countries where the electorate perceives high migration numbers.

Table 3 summarizes the equivalent multi-level regressions for the dependent variable of redistributive preferences for the standard of living of the old – in contrast to the unemployment ratio, we control for old age poverty and the share of the population older than 65 that is non-native. Also in this specification, the size of the group affected by the welfare

Table 3. Multi-level ordered logit analysis on redistributive preferences for the old including contextual variables, random intercept on country-level.

Variables	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)		(5)	
	old	old	old	old	old	old	old	old	old	old
perc_share_nnative# aff. Anti-mig	—	—	-0.001 (0.004)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
perc_Share_nnative #rat. Anti-mig	—	—	—	-0.000 (0.004)	—	—	—	—	—	—
perc_Share_nnative # right PRRP	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	-0.047** (0.013)
Perceived share of non-natives	—	—	—	-0.024** (0.012)	-0.024** (0.012)	-0.024** (0.012)	-0.024** (0.012)	-0.024** (0.012)	-0.023** (0.013)	-0.023** (0.013)
Economic right PRRP	0.337** (0.170)	0.339** (0.170)	0.343** (0.172)	0.339** (0.170)	0.343** (0.172)	0.339** (0.170)	0.339** (0.172)	0.339** (0.170)	1.545*** (0.418)	1.545*** (0.418)
Economic left PRRP	0.518*** (0.169)	0.513*** (0.170)	0.508*** (0.171)	0.513*** (0.170)	0.508*** (0.171)	0.513*** (0.170)	0.513*** (0.170)	0.513*** (0.170)	0.513*** (0.170)	0.513*** (0.170)
Old age poverty	0.034*** (0.011)	0.031*** (0.009)	0.031*** (0.009)	0.031*** (0.009)	0.031*** (0.009)	0.031*** (0.009)	0.031*** (0.009)	0.031*** (0.009)	0.031*** (0.009)	0.031*** (0.009)
Share of + 65 non-natives	-0.051** (0.025)	-0.034* (0.019)	-0.034* (0.019)	-0.034* (0.019)	-0.034* (0.019)	-0.034* (0.019)	-0.034* (0.019)	-0.034* (0.019)	-0.034* (0.019)	-0.034* (0.019)
pc Aff. Anti-migration	0.097*** (0.025)	0.097*** (0.025)	0.113 (0.025)	0.097*** (0.025)	0.113 (0.025)	0.097*** (0.025)	0.097*** (0.025)	0.097*** (0.025)	0.097*** (0.025)	0.097*** (0.025)
pc Rational anti-migration	-0.003 (0.024)	-0.003 (0.024)	-0.003 (0.024)	-0.003 (0.024)	-0.003 (0.024)	-0.003 (0.024)	-0.003 (0.024)	-0.003 (0.024)	-0.002 (0.024)	-0.002 (0.024)
pc Welfare scepticism	-0.185*** (0.021)	-0.185*** (0.021)	-0.185*** (0.021)	-0.185*** (0.021)	-0.185*** (0.021)	-0.185*** (0.021)	-0.185*** (0.021)	-0.185*** (0.021)	-0.185*** (0.021)	-0.185*** (0.021)
pc Meritocracy	-0.130*** (0.016)	-0.130*** (0.016)	-0.130*** (0.016)	-0.130*** (0.016)	-0.130*** (0.016)	-0.130*** (0.016)	-0.130*** (0.016)	-0.130*** (0.016)	-0.130*** (0.016)	-0.130*** (0.016)
Individual-level controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Random intercept	0.159*** (0.046)	0.135*** (0.039)	0.135*** (0.040)	0.135*** (0.039)	0.135*** (0.040)	0.135*** (0.039)	0.135*** (0.040)	0.135*** (0.039)	0.132*** (0.037)	0.132*** (0.037)
Observations	29,445	29,445	29,445	29,445	29,445	29,445	29,445	29,445	29,445	29,445
Number of groups	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$. Note: All countries are equally weighted.

program – the old-age poverty rate – correlates with program support. More old people in need are accompanied by larger redistribution sympathies within the population. What is more, supporters of both economically ‘left’ and ‘right’ PRRPs favour stronger redistribution towards this presumable in-group. As expected, a larger share of non-native elderly reduces the respective redistribution sympathies. However, this effect is dominated by the perceived share of non-natives reducing redistribution preferences towards the elderly. In particular, this is the case for supporters of economically ‘right’ PRRPs once the perceived share of non-natives has passed a (rather high) threshold. Hence, in line with Ennsner-Jedenastik’s (2018) understanding of a nativist-motivated welfare chauvinism, a larger share of non-natives in a country and non-natives potentially eligible for elderly care weakens PRRP supporters’ strong solidarity with the old. Presumably, PRRP supporters do not target the elderly due to a romanticisation of ‘*the old*’ but rather due to their characteristics as natives and therefore their membership of the deserving in-group.

As in the individual-level regressions, affective anti-immigration principal components show a statistically significant positive effect on redistribution towards the old. We conclude that we must qualify H3: Supporting PRRPs does not reinforce the effect of affective anti-immigration sentiment on welfare preferences, but is rather associated with preferences to a very specific in-group: the elderly.

Discussion

The average effects of multi-level models regarding redistributive preferences mask a considerable cross-country heterogeneity (Senik et al., 2009). Mau and Burkhardt (2009) stress the importance of country-specific mediating macro-level factors that influence how immigration affects the support for the welfare state. To address this issue, we have interacted our variables of interest with immigration-related contextual variables. As a further step, we test whether our results hold on the country-level by running subgroup estimations for each country including their country specific principal components.

Appendix Tables 4 to 6 summarize the statistically significant effects ($p < 0.05$) on the country level. Indeed, we must qualify our results regarding the impact of ‘putative rational anti-migration sentiment’ on redistributive preferences for the standard of living of the unemployed. Only in Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Great Britain, Norway, Poland and Portugal do we find the expected impact of ‘putative rational anti-migration sentiment’. The effects of affective anti-immigration attitudes and the preferences for justice dubbed welfare scepticism are much more robust.

In general, in very few cases the previously observed multi-level effects display statistically significant unexpected signs at the country-level. The effect of PRRP support for stronger redistributive preferences towards the old can be replicated for Germany, Finland, France, Hungary, the Netherlands and Sweden. Given the vast heterogeneity within the party family of populist radical right parties and the corresponding difficulties in identifying PRRPs' common ground, we want to particularly flag out the special relationship between PRRP support and redistributive preferences towards the old for future research.

While most of the multi-level results can be reproduced on the national-level, our variable of interest 'putative rational anti-migration sentiment' is statistically less significant in several countries on the national-level. This could either be due to missing country-level variance or be masked by unobserved cross-country heterogeneity in the multi-level setting. What is more, our cross-sectional research set-up does not allow for controlling (potentially heterogeneous) time trends.

Conclusion

The highly topical discussion around the 'New Liberal Dilemma' addresses the question whether immigration diminishes support for the welfare state in Europe. Governments seem to face the decision to either close borders and limit immigration to very few high-skilled people, accept lower redistributive preferences eventually leading to cuts in welfare spending, or introduce a two-tiered welfare state that favours natives over immigrants. Particularly people who oppose immigration seem to favour conditional access of immigrants to welfare state benefits (Mewes and Mau, 2012).

Comparable to Senik et al. (2009) we engage this debate by taking a more nuanced view of the discussion about why support for the welfare state could decrease. First, we identify an affective anti-immigration sentiment channel that reflects a strongly interrelated cultural and economic opposition to immigration and a 'putative rational anti-migration sentiment' channel beyond 'traditional' anti-immigration attitudes. We interpret the latter reflecting peoples' fears of a 'welfare magnet' (Borjas, 1999) – namely, that a large welfare state incentivizes an unsupportable scale of immigration which would overburden a countries' financial capacities.

Second – and to address the multilayered character of welfare chauvinism building up on Goldschmidt (2015) and Spies (2018) we favour a differentiated program-specific approach that considers preferences for the government to provide a certain standard of living for the old and the unemployed, respectively. Regarding unemployment assistance we find the 'typical' NLD welfare chauvinism of decreasing support for redistribution. In fact, both

affective and 'putative rational' anti-migration motivation collectively trigger welfare chauvinism and undermine support for unemployment assistance. In contrast, solidarity with the elderly is independent of 'putative rational anti-migration sentiment' and affective anti-immigration attitudes even increase these redistributive preferences, pointing to the fact that the NLD mechanism of decreasing welfare support cannot be applied for every welfare program. In fact, natives' welfare support varies depending on peoples' implicit program specific perception of immigrants' welfare dependency. If people become afraid about the sustainability of their welfare state, this might result in lower redistributive preferences towards the unemployed. However, if people become more critical of migration in general this might result in preferences for a more exclusive welfare state: lower solidarity with the unemployed *and* higher solidarity with the old. Nevertheless, this interpretation might only hold as long as migration skeptics assume a higher share of non-natives among the unemployed than among the elderly in need for welfare. In a world where only old people migrate, our results are expected to flip vice versa.

Third, we relate these results to the debate on the European populist radical right and their role as anti-immigration parties. In general, the impact of anti-immigration attitudes and 'putative rational anti-migration sentiment' on lower solidarity with the unemployed is present throughout European societies and not limited to a 'small' group of the radical right. In contrast, PRRP supporters of the economic 'left' and 'right' strongly favour redistribution towards the elderly. We argue that this effect does not reflect a generally higher deservingness of the old or traditional values but rather constitutes a different form of welfare chauvinism: reshuffling redistribution towards a potentially native in-group. This argument is strengthened by the finding that the redistribution affinity of (economically 'right') PRRP supporters towards the old is dependent on the perceived share of non-natives. In the end, our results do not reveal preference for a specific welfare scheme, but rather for native versus non-native recipients. Given the difficulties in identifying similarities in the welfare state preferences of PRRP supporters (Rooduijn, 2018), we consider this finding an important starting point for further research. Nevertheless, these interpretations need to be qualified as we are unable to replicate some of our results in all separate country regressions.

We conclude that particularly among supporters of the rather Western European economically 'right' leaning PRRPs cross-program welfare affinity is undermined by larger perceived shares of non-natives. Hence, even if their in-group solidarity is unaltered by increasing immigration numbers, PRRP supporters might still decide to revolt against the welfare state for too much redistribution being targeted at non-natives. In general, however, welfare chauvinism does not simply undermine welfare support per se, but rather incentivises a rebalancing of the welfare state. On the one hand, support for redistribution

to the elderly is particularly strong among the immigration-critical PRRP supporters. On the other hand, support for redistribution towards the unemployed declines due to affective and ‘putative rational’ welfare chauvinism within broad segments of the population. In the context of decreasing support for the welfare state, scholars like Reeskens and van Oorschot (2012) have argued in favour of strengthening the reciprocal character of the welfare state, especially for immigrants. Whereas such a scheme might counteract welfare chauvinism triggered by ‘putative rational anti-migration sentiment’, in line with Mewes and Mau (2012) and Banting et al. (2020) addressing affective anti-immigration attitudes or preventing the populist radical right from targeting native in-groups remains much more difficult.

Finally, advancing research could follow two fruitful routes: Heath and Richards (2020) as well as Meuleman et al. (2019) disentangle the impact of cultural distinctiveness of different immigrant groups. Meuleman et al. (2020a) point to the importance of group relative threat as a mediator between social structural positions and perceived threat as well as contextual economic indicators and ethnic threat. Both streams of literature could strengthen the present analysis when applied to a program specific investigation of welfare preferences.

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Supplemental material

Supplemental material – Towards a nuanced understanding of anti-immigration sentiment in the welfare state – A program specific analysis of welfare preferences
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Notes

1. See Freeman (1986) for an early remark on this dilemma: ‘national welfare states cannot coexist with the free movement of labor’ (p.51).
2. Despite significant critique, the original finding has been corroborated amongst others employing the welfare state specific ESS waves 4 and 8 (Meuleman et al. (2018); van Oorschot et al. (2017); van Oorschot and Meuleman (2012)).

3. See Heath et al. (2020) for an excellent literature review on the origins and differences of anti-migration attitudes in Europe.
4. See Pettigrew (2015) for a contemporary evaluation of relative deprivation and a tribute to its pioneer Samuel Stoffer.
5. Note that even if immigrants are actually net fiscal contributors (Boeri (2010); Dustmann and Frattini (2014)) the biased perception of natives can trigger them to be perceived as undeserving recipients.
6. Agersnap et al. (2019) and Boeri (2010) provide recent evidence for the ‘welfare magnet’ hypothesis.
7. <https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/data/round-index.html>
8. Welfare conditioning ranges from allowing access to welfare programs after a year of residency to generally opposing immigrants’ entitlement to welfare benefits. Even among the 90 percent of respondents who support welfare conditioning towards immigrants, 46 percent state that ‘cultural life is enriched by immigrants’ (versus 35 percent who disagree), 39 percent respond that ‘immigration is good for the economy’ (versus 38 percent who disagree) and 34 percent believe that ‘immigrants make the country a better place to live’ (versus 38 percent who disagree).
9. See Senik et al. (2009) for a comparable differentiation between a preference-based ‘differential altruism’ and a perception-based economic consideration channel on redistributive preferences.
10. Our PRRP selection contains the countries main populist radical right parties in line with Goubin and Hooghe (2021): Austria (Freedom Party), Belgium (Vlaams Belang), Switzerland (Swiss People’s Party), Czech Republic (Dawn – National Coalition), Germany (Alternative for Germany), Finland (True Finns), France (Front National), Great Britain (UKIP), Hungary (Fidesz and Jobbik), Italy (Lega Nord), Lithuania (Party Order and Justice), Netherlands (Party for Freedom), Norway (Progress Party), Poland (Law and Justice), Sweden (Sweden Democrats), Slovenia (Democratic Party). No PRRPs were coded for Estonia, Spain, Portugal, Ireland.
11. Roosma et al. (2013) test the ESS welfare module for cross-country comparability and reliability. Our independent variables are covered by the welfare dimensions ‘welfare range’ and ‘welfare goal’. Since our analysis intends to disentangle redistribution preferences towards the old vs. towards the unemployed, we need to analyze the two items separately as dependent variables. Unfortunately, single items cannot be tested for comparability and reliability as it is impossible to control for non-random measurement error (see Bollen (1989) for further details). Nevertheless, our variable selection builds up on van Oorschot and Meuleman (2012) who employ similar single items for redistribution preferences towards the old and the unemployed. We append country specific regression outcomes to the supplemental material.
12. Governments’ obligations to reduce income differences is measured on a 5-point scale from 1 (agree strongly) to 5 (disagree strongly). Governments’ responsibility to ensure the standard of living of the old and the unemployed is measured on a 11-point scale from 0 (Not government’s responsibility at all) to 10 (Entirely

- government's responsibility). We rescale them from low to high support for government interventions. Note that less than eight percent of the respondents in our sample prefer redistribution towards the unemployed over redistribution towards the old strengthening the evidence for the long established deservingness hierarchy. See Appendix Table 3 for detailed summary statistics.
13. Unfortunately the ESS wave 8 contains very specific welfare items but not the wide range of questions that allow to construct different migration threat variables according to Meuleman and Billiet (2012) and Meuleman et al. (2020a) from ESS wave 1 and 7. In order to isolate the different traits of anti-immigration sentiment that are hidden behind the standard anti-immigration questions, the following section employs a factor analysis.
 14. Cultural, general and economic immigration attitudes are measured on a 11-point scale from 0 (cultural life undermined / worse place to live / bad for the economy) to 10 (cultural life enriched / better place to live / good for the economy). We recode these variables by flipping the scale around. Welfare state discrimination of immigrants is ordinaly scaled and split into the following five answer categories: 'immediately on arrival', 'after a year, whether or not have worked', 'after worked and paid taxes at least a year', 'once they have become a citizen', 'they should never get the same rights'. We recode this variable from 0 'immediately same rights' to 5 'never the same rights'.
 15. This finding is in line with Mewes and Mau (2012) and Reeskens and van Oorschot (2012).
 16. A principal component analysis represents a commonly applied factor analysis employed to pursue dimensionality reduction. It constructs new uncorrelated variables (principal components) as a linear combination of the original inputs. By feeding as much information as possible in the first (and then second, third, etc.) principal component, the original variation is condensed in orthogonal components. In the present paper, we stick to the first two principal components for further analysis.
 17. See Appendix Table 1 for the principal component analysis' output on immigration attitudes.
 18. In fact, general, economic and cultural immigration attitudes as measured in the ESS show high bivariate correlation coefficients of around 0.7.
 19. Cross-country comparisons are only meaningful if the measurements of a variable are equivalent in the different countries of interest. Since the ESS constitutes a dataset that is tailored for international comparison, most scales have been tested for cross-country equivalence. This also holds for the items employed in principal component analysis: Davidov et al. (2018) confirm the equivalence cross-countries of the ESS immigration items. Roosma et al. (2013) provide the tests for cross-country comparability of the items in ESS welfare module.
 20. Equality of outcomes ('For fair society, differences in standard of living should be small') consequentialism ('Large differences in income acceptable to reward talents and efforts') and whether social benefits 'make people lazy' or 'less caring for another' are measured on a 5-point scale from 0 ('agree strongly') to 5

- (‘disagree strongly’). In order to scale all variables from support to opposition to redistribution, we recode the latter three variables by flipping around their scale.
21. See Appendix Table 2 for the principal component analysis’ output on perception of justice.
 22. See Duru-Bellat and Tenrat (2012) for a discussion of high support for meritocracy in ‘Western’ countries.
 23. See Davidov (2008) for evidence of the cross-country comparability of the basic human values dimensions constructed from ESS items.
 24. In order to run our regression with an equal number of observations in each specification, our sample contains only responses with no missings in any of the included variables (without this restriction the highest number of observations would be 30.474 and the results remain qualitatively similar). What is more, in our baseline results we refrain from controlling for the objective income quintile because this variable reduces observation numbers from 29.445 to 25.771. However, also including the objective income measure does not qualitatively alter the results.
 25. The CHES polls experts to place parties in their ideological stance on economic issues between extreme left and extreme right. Dividing PRRPs by the median of 5.5 on a 0 to 10 scale renders nine ‘right’ PRRPs and eight ‘left’ PRRPs.
 26. See Appendix Table 3 for the summary statistics of all variables included.
 27. Unfortunately, ESS7 is not carried out in Italy. In order to keep this important European economy in our sample, the perceived share of foreigners refers to the 2014 perils of perception poll by Ipsos (<https://www.ipsos.com/en-uk/perceptions-are-not-reality-things-world-gets-wrong>).
 28. Analysing Western European PRRPs’ party manifestos, Ennser-Jedenastik (2018) finds that insurance based in contrast to universal welfare programs are less affected by welfare chauvinism. Unfortunately, the impact of this nativist economic policy characteristic cannot be tested due to a lack of comprehensive data on program specific tax or contribution funding.
 29. The random intercepts capture general differences in redistributive preferences across countries. The regression output shows that a statistically significant share of the variance is explained on the country-level in all specifications.
 30. Note that Davidov et al. (2020) finds that individuals who hold universalist values perceive less threat from immigration.
 31. See the discussion section for further country-level analyses.
 32. Alesina et al. (2018) conclude that ‘much of the political debate about immigration takes place in a world of misinformation’ (p.36).

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