

THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL POLICY MODEL AND PERCEPTIONS OF IMMIGRATION

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Introduction

The first decade of the twenty-first century, particularly since 9/11, has been marked by popular demands for more and more restrictive immigration policies across the globe. Recent events such as the deportation of undocumented migrants in France, the new 2010 Arizona immigration law, as well as swelling popular support for draconian immigration policies proposed by diverse political constituencies such as the Tea Partiers in the U.S. are all emblematic of this conservative turn. While multiple concerns may be fueling the rising ambivalence toward immigration, one important source of anxiety across these different contexts is the perception that migrants pose a financial burden to the state. Concerns about the type, extent, and timing of state-provided social services for immigrants—if any—reflect deep ideological divides in many countries. On the one hand, opponents of welfare programs that include immigrants as beneficiaries claim that these programs not only attract immigrants (the “magnet hypothesis”), but also create a “culture of dependency” and are an unsustainable strain on the state (Bauer and Zimmerman 2002; Borjas 2002; Brucker et al. 2001). In contrast, others recognize the importance migrants have on host societies’ economies and the future sustainability of the welfare system (Cornelius, Tsuda, Martin, et al. 2004; Facchini and Mayda 2007). This variation among institutional environments calls for the investigation of the relationship between the welfare state and practices associated with entitlement, exclusion, and overall political and social membership (Geddes 2003, 152).

In this article, I engage with the scholarly debates concerning the problematic relationship between the state and democratic institutions, as well as international migration through the lens of welfare state regimes (see Bloemraad 2006; Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul 2008; Bommess and Morawska 2005; Brettell and Hollifield 2000; Castles 2007; Castles and Miller 2003; Cornelius et al. 2004; Cornelius and Rosenblum 2005; Freeman 2007; Geddes 2003; Givens 2007; Hollifield 2000 and 2007; Messina 2002 and 2007; Messina and Lahav 2005). In particular, I examine whether individuals’ perceptions of the sustainability and viability of the welfare state system can be predicted by the impact immigrants are perceived to have on the economy and welfare system: what has been com-

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monly referred to as “welfare chauvinism” (Freeman 2009). Welfare chauvinism is defined as resentment of immigrants who are perceived to take natives’ jobs, cause unemployment, and are overall seen to benefit from more than contribute toward the welfare state system (Crepaz and Damron 2009). If indeed there is a relationship, this raises the question of whether the welfare state can intervene and reduce protectionism, anti-immigrant sentiment, and overall levels of prejudice. Do extensive, universal versus targeted means-tested welfare provisions schemes have the capacity to reduce protectionism? The investigation of whether countries with highly developed corporatist welfare state programs (such as Sweden and the Netherlands) are more, less, or just as likely to express protectionism than countries with more restricted welfare policies, where an ethos of individual responsibility prevails (such as Britain), can shed light on the relationship between immigration and the future of the European social policy model. Central to my analysis is the exploration of whether rich institutional environments (e.g., the policies, programs, and legislation enacted by the welfare state) are key contextual predictors in assessing the relationship between different forms of threats to and perceptions of the welfare state. If so, institutional and political environments set the stage for specific inter-group relationships to take place, and, as such, variability across institutional environments will necessarily produce differences in public opinion about immigration. At the same time, within countries, it is not clear whether groups who benefit differently from welfare state programs (such as the unemployed, the disabled, the elderly, etc.) are more or less likely to express approval of protectionism. Thus, building upon the work of Freeman (2009) and Crepaz and Damron (2009), the analysis herein provides empirical evidence for whether countries with more advanced and universal social protection systems not only avoid stigmatization and social categorization, but are also more likely to foster social cohesiveness and actually help socially integrate immigrants into host societies. The findings are particularly relevant in light of a recent study by Koopmans that suggests a very different picture: one in which labor market participation of migrants is lower in countries with more robust welfare state systems. In the Netherlands and Sweden, countries that have embraced multicultural integration policies, migrants’ participation in the labor market is lower compared to Austria, Germany and Switzerland which traditionally “chose to retain high barriers to migrants becoming full citizens and made residency right dependent on performance in the labor market and the absence of a criminal record” (2010, 20). Koopmans further shows that in countries with a limited welfare state such as the UK, immigrants are better off in terms of labor participation (2010, 21).

This article approaches these questions from two angles. First, the relationship between people’s perceptions of the welfare state and threats to it is assessed at the individual level. Thus, classic individual-level theories and controls are evaluated as they are tied to different forms of prejudice and protectionism (Quillian 1995). For example, I examine whether individuals’ socioeconomic characteristics shape their perceptions of the welfare state. What are the public responses to the coverage, sustainability, and future of the social protection system as host societies become more multiethnic?

Secondly, institutional factors are tested *vis-à-vis* other contextual effects (such as a country's economic conditions) that may be associated with processes regarding the development of welfare state policies and their relationship to perceptions of immigrants. Welfare states are defined as "powerful institutional forces embodying ideas and practices associated with inclusion, exclusion, membership, belonging, entitlement, and identity" (Geddes 2003, 152). The approach used assumes that individuals' public perceptions are expected to vary across countries depending on institutional characteristics, more specifically the type of welfare state regimes each country has. Esping-Andersen (1990) argues that institutional structures have historically resulted from class- and ethnic-based social movements leading to forms of collective action and solidarity whose outcome is specific institutional welfare regimes. Institutional arrangements that arise from these class-based social movements will lead to solidarity (and social capital) and ultimately affect the ways migrants become incorporated into the host society.

By introducing the institutional dimension, the relationship between perceptions of economic and political threats posed by immigrants and perceptions of the welfare state can be better captured as a result of the existence or lack of a robust welfare state system. From this perspective, types of welfare regimes (and the policies aimed at regulating social inequalities) may intervene in shaping public attitudes toward immigration. Thus, expenditure levels for social protection systems will help explain the interaction between perceptions of welfare state policies and the emergence of new forms of immigrant threat. Overall, the question guiding this analysis focuses on whether a relationship between micro-level predictors of protectionism and perceptions of the future of the welfare state are mediated or not by the development of welfare state policies.

Immigration and Welfare State Regimes

There is growing literature in the United States and Europe that examines the use of welfare benefits by migrants (see, for example, Bauer and Zimmerman 2002; Bean and Van Hook 1998; Borjas 2002; Freeman 2009). In this literature, one of the key tenets is that as host societies become more ethnically heterogeneous, both levels of support for welfare programs (Freeman 2009) and levels of generalized social trust/social capital decrease (Putnam 2007). Since liberal democracies have the responsibility to provide social rights and benefits to their populations, including immigrants (Soysal 1994), the available institutional framework shapes the relationship between immigration and trust in institutions (Crepaz 2008; Crepaz and Damron 2009). The existing literature thus demonstrates that immigration and ethnic heterogeneity often become an obstacle for the development of robust welfare systems (Alesina and La Ferrara 2002; Alesina and Glaeser 2004; Bay and Pedersen 2006).

Empirical research in the European context has been limited to Northern European countries and has focused mainly on addressing migrants' total partici-

pation in the system and the assessment of the overall economic burden immigration poses on specific welfare programs (Pedersen 2000). Bay and Pedersen, for example, examined the relationship between views on unconditional income redistribution policies and ethnic heterogeneity in Norway. They found that many initial supporters of an unconditional basic income policy changed positions when told it would include non-citizens living in Norway (2006, 432). Along these lines, Koopmans (2010, 8) argues that immigrants' incentives for developing language proficiency and improving human capital are lower in these societies and as such they are characterized by a culture of dependency. From this perspective, robust welfare state systems supposedly become a magnet (pull factor) as immigrants tend to gravitate to countries with relatively good protection systems (Borjas 2002). Over time, concerns also arise that continued immigration flows will endanger the very financial existence of the welfare state system (Borjas 2002). Overall, this economic argument can be summarized as follows: countries with higher social inequality are more attractive to skilled immigrants, whereas countries with generous welfare states are more attractive to unskilled immigrants resulting in what Koopmans would characterize as a "negative selection" process (2010).

With the exception of a few studies (Alesina and Glaeser 2004; Crepaz and Damron 2009; Facchini and Mayda 2007; Koopmans 2010), cross-national empirical research examining perceptions of welfare state systems and immigration is scarce. Some work has focused on examining differences between the perceptions of the poor in European countries and the United States (Alesina and Glaeser 2004). In a study examining the relationship between welfare determinants and individual attitudes in Europe, Facchini and Mayda (2007) show that attitudes among high income individuals toward unskilled immigrants are more negatively affected by unskilled immigration only if taxes are raised to maintain per capita accessibility to benefits. In contrast, individuals at the bottom of the income distribution suffer more with unskilled immigration if taxes are kept constant and the adjustment is carried out through a reduction in per capita transfers. Based on this evidence, I expect differences between perceptions of immigration (unskilled and/or skilled) among individuals at the lower versus higher brackets of the income distribution.

In a recent comparative study, Crepaz and Damron further confirm that extensive welfare states *vis-à-vis* residual welfare states are in a better position to absorb immigrants and reduce overall levels of welfare chauvinism (2009, 456). Implicit in these findings is the assumption that an understanding of individuals' opinions about welfare warrants an understanding of their perceptions of those more likely to become welfare recipients. Building upon this past work, I argue that bridging the gap in the social science scholarship focused on immigration and welfare states requires a comparative framework to study cross-country differences in the institutional determinants that explain individual attitudes about immigration and immigration policies. Before setting out several hypotheses, a characterization of the different types of welfare state regimes is in order.

TYPES OF WELFARE STATE REGIMES

Across Europe, different institutional and organizational structures reflect the array of social policy models regarding migrants' social rights (Cornelius et al. 2004; Soysal 1994; Esping-Andersen 1990; Sainsbury 2006). Within the social sciences, numerous scholars have proposed different typologies of welfare state regimes (see Arts and Gelissen [2002] for an extensive literature review on this topic). Although not addressing how different regimes deal with immigration *per se* and notwithstanding some negative criticism, Esping-Andersen's 1990 seminal work has provided a useful typology, identifying three types of welfare state regimes: liberal, conservative-corporatist, and social democratic. Castles and Mitchell identified four types: liberal, conservative, non-right hegemony, and radical (1993). Other scholars have further clustered countries by different types based on entitlements (Arts and Gelissen 2002).

With regard to immigration and welfare state regimes, Sainsbury (2006) establishes a three-pronged classification: 1) the liberal *inclusive* model (e.g., the United States) characterized by bestowing citizenship on the basis of birthplace criteria (*ius solis*); 2) the conservative model based on *exclusionary* rights (e.g., Germany) derived from lineage (*ius sanguinis*); and 3) a social democratic *inclusive* model, based on residence rights (*ius domicile*). Another classification of welfare state regimes is specifically tied to international migration. Soysal (1994) provides a classification of European countries based on incorporation regimes. She distinguishes between corporatist, liberal, and statist. Examples of these models are Sweden and the Netherlands for the centralized collectivist corporatist model, Britain and Switzerland for the individualist liberal-decentralized model, France for the state-centered incorporation regimen, and Germany representing a model between the statist and corporatist. A central tenet in Soysal's classification is the variation across countries in terms of migrants' capacity to formally create advocacy groups that seek formal political representation in the host society. Swedish civil society, for example, directly supports numerous ethnic migrant organizations coupled with a comprehensive funding scheme aimed at strengthening "migrant's self-organization and increasing contact and cooperation between migrants and Swedish institutions" (1994, 91). While a similar institutional environment is found in the Netherlands, a more limited funding scheme is provided in Britain and Switzerland. In contrast, France does not directly support collective ethnic identity and organizing, while in Germany, funding for organizations is available, but is channeled through the local government (as opposed to the national centralized scheme in Sweden and the Netherlands). Also worth noting is the fact that funds oriented to the preservation of a migrant's original culture, political activities, and representation, as well as political adaptation (such as services to migrants), are more abundant in social democratic regimes compared to the other models.

Soysal also notes that the corporatist model is characterized by the function of corporate groups, such as faith-based organizations and occupational associations, which play key roles in incorporating new immigrants. Under this model, immigrants obtain their social rights through these corporate groups. Hence, it is

centrally organized and collectively oriented (1994). The liberal model does not have a centralized administration or formal collective groups that play a role in incorporation. Rather, the labor market is the main instrument of incorporation. Even though a central authority determines the basic rules and process of incorporation, that authority does not play a significant role; instead, individual action is the main source of incorporation, with help from private associations or local groups. The statist model is opposed to the liberal model, as the state is seen as the administrative unit that organizes incorporation, and the model does not have an intermediary structure (and so, it is distanced from the corporatist model). As these classifications are helpful for examining the relationship between immigration and institutions, some scholars have questioned their theoretical and construct applicability (Freeman 2006). In the analysis proposed here, I use public social benefit expenditures as a percentage of GDP as an approximation of programmatic preferences of different welfare states and move away from case-specific analysis in attempting to validate these typologies. Before I undertake the empirical analysis, I discuss the main theoretical influences informing the hypotheses.

From Threat to Perceptions of the Welfare State

One key proposition informing this study is that perceptions of the welfare state are tied to dynamics of ethnic competition and conflict (Freeman 2009). I conceptualize *perceived immigrant threat* as the belief that immigrants negatively affect the well-being of the dominant group and this belief has an impact on individuals' attitudes toward redistribution and the welfare state. The threat dimension is also conceptualized as being strongly correlated to anti-foreign exclusionism and discriminatory policy attitudes (Escandell and Ceobanu 2009; Pettigrew 2000). Thus, perceived threat as well as cultural and symbolic threats shape host society members' attitudes toward immigrants' modes of incorporation and their access to benefits (Fetzer 2000a, 2000b; Quillian 1995). Multi-ethnic societies are thus more likely to exhibit a lack of altruism toward others, especially if the welfare beneficiaries are perceived as physically and socially different and are ultimately seen as threatening collective well-being.

A second theoretical influence comes from studies examining how more or less expansive and universal welfare state regimes influence the relationship between perceptions of threat and perceptions of the welfare state system (Crepaz 2008). The scholars argue that protectionism, chauvinism, and pessimistic views of the future of the welfare state develop as a result of strong in-group identification. The lack of trust and inter-group solidarity toward other groups (perceived as being less worthy and "undeserving" of state benefits) may also influence exclusionary attitudes toward redistribution (see also Van Oorschot 2008). Crepaz and Damron, for example, frame this process in terms of prejudice and reliance on social categorizations that starkly differentiates "us" from "them" (2009, 445). These social categorizations foster psychological processes such that "real" threat, conflict, economic competition, or even

prior contact/experience with that particular group is not necessary to spark prejudice (Sears et al. 2000). Thus, limited welfare state regimes characterized by means-tested policies, unintentionally single out “the needy,” ultimately creating stigmatization that can lead to exclusionism. In contrast, more universal expansive and inclusive welfare states foster solidarity across different racial, social, and class groups who participate and benefit from the same state benefits. While social categorization stresses the important role that threats play in creating feelings of protectionism and chauvinism with regard to social policies, the benefits of universal welfare states is framed as fostering trust and solidarity across groups.

A third theoretical influence emanates from the public opinion literature on immigration that puts the embedded nature of micro-level predictors in larger contextual frameworks center stage. Contextual factors may include the effects of ethnic composition (e.g., minority group size) and economic infrastructure (e.g., economic inequality), as well as their roles in shaping the relationships between classic individual predictors and anti-immigrant sentiment (Ceobanu and Escandell 2008; Escandell and Ceobanu 2009; Quillian 1995; Kunovich 2002; Semyonov, Rebecca, and Gorodzeisky 2006). In such scholarship, the inclusion of macro-structural factors makes possible new ways of explaining variations in attitudes. Researchers were able to test an array of propositions about the embedded nature of public responses toward immigrants and immigration policies while controlling for individual-level attributes. Studies have shown, for example, that liberal-democratic traditions constitute a key contextual predictor for the emergence of new forms of anti-immigrant sentiment (Ceobanu and Escandell 2008; Coenders and Scheepers 2003; Hello, Scheepers, and Gijssberts 2002), permissiveness of immigration policies (Hjerm 2007), or the degree of religious heterogeneity (Hello, Scheepers, and Gijssberts 2002). I add to this contextual approach the ways micro-level predictors are embedded within perceptions of welfare state regimes.

With the above theoretical trajectories in mind, I argue that more empirical attention has to be given to group threat perceptions and their effect on perceptions of welfare systems (as mechanisms of redistribution). This is especially relevant since contextual measures, such as ethnic diversity, may be playing a key role in the development of these views. Building upon this, two very distinct propositions can be formulated: 1) group threat is a powerful mechanism to explain individuals' views about the future of the welfare state, and, 2) contextual measures such as ethnic diversity, economic conditions, and size of the welfare state are mediating factors explaining the relationship between group threat and perceptions of the welfare state. Thus, I hypothesize the following:

- H1: Immigrant group threat explains increased pessimistic views about the future, extent of coverage, and sustainability of the welfare system.
- H2: Pessimism about the future of the welfare state is lower in countries with less ethnic heterogeneity.
- H3: Pessimism about the future of the welfare state is lower in countries with more robust welfare state systems.

Data and Measurements

Data for this study come from the 2009 Eurobarometer 71.3 (European Commission 2009). The pooled dataset is comprised of 30 333 individuals. For the analysis, I use 24 European Union member states: Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Sweden, Great Britain, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Cyprus.

The analysis uses one dependent variable, tapping an index of perceptions of welfare (0-1), combining five questions: “At the moment, when you think of the future of your pension, would you say that you are...? Very confident, somewhat confident, not very confident, and not at all confident”; “For each of the following, please tell me whether you think it applies to the social welfare system of your country: *a*) provides enough coverage; *b*) could serve as a model for other countries.” These same questions were asked about the future: “Let’s think now about what the [insert NATIONALITY] social welfare system will be in 2030” (see Table 1). Results yielded a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.67 for the dependent variable.

Two key independent variables are operationalized to measure perceptions of group threat: 1) a dichotomous measure based on respondents’ agreement with the statement, “We need immigrants to work in certain sectors of the economy,” where 1 refers to disagreement and 0 agreement (see Table 1). The key independent variable measuring group perceptions is operationalized as a dichotomous variable based on each respondent’s opinion of the statement, “The presence of people from other ethnic groups increases unemployment in [our country].” For this second measure, to ensure that both variables are coded in the same direction, 1 refers to agreement and 0 refers to disagreement. Moreover, the former measure captures the individual’s attitudes toward immigrants in Europe, and the latter taps an overall measure of prejudice toward ethnic groups. The analysis uses three additional individual-level variables regarding labor force status (“employed,” “unemployed” (reference category), “students,” “retired” and “never in the labor force”). Control variables were used, such as “political stance” (1-7 scale), whether the respondent lives in a rural area, and several socio-demographic variables such as “age” and “sex”; respondent age upon completion of education was also transformed as a dummy measure where 1 was “college educated,” and 0, “no college education.”

Aside from the individual-level variables, the analysis uses a series of macro-level measures to assess countries’ institutional environment, based on the official national statistics offered by the Eurostat. The direct measure for the welfare state regime is the total “social protection benefits” expenditure (as a percentage of the GDP). This measure includes health care, pensions, unemployment, and other social transfers. Regardless of whether migrants have access to these benefits or not, which varies across countries, the goal is to assess the overall size of the welfare state regimes in European Union countries. Two additional macro-level measures are included in the analysis: the first seeks to tap ethnic heterogeneity and immigrant composition of EU countries by using a proxy, the percentage of citizens from

TABLE 1
QUESTION WORDING AND DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS
FOR THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL VARIABLES

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
Welfare state confidence	Mean index of the following four items: ^a For the following please tell me whether you think it applies to the (NATIONALITY): Provides enough coverage Could serve as a model for other countries Let's now think about what the (NATIONALITY) social welfare system will be in 2030. In your opinion: Provides enough coverage Could serve as a model for other countries At the moment, when you think of the future of your pension, would you say that you are...? (1) Very confident, somewhat confident, not very confident, (0) not at all confident	.57	.23
Perceived group size	We need immigrants to work in certain sectors of the economy ^a The presence of people from ethnic groups increases unemployment in (OUR COUNTRY) ^a	.48 .58	— —
Political stance	In political matters, people talk of "the left" and "the right." How would you place your views scale on this scale (1-7)?	5.43	2.29
Unemployed	Labor force status: unemployed ^b	.09	
Students	Labor force status: students ^b	.08	
Retired	Labor force status: retired ^b	.28	
Never in work force	Labor force status: never in labor force ^b	.07	
Employed	Labor force status: employed ^b	.47	
Rural	Would you say you live in a rural area?	.37	
Education	How old were you when you stopped full-time education? ^b (=1)	.27	
Gender	Respondent's sex is male ^b	.45	—
Age	Respondent's age (years)	47.42	18.22
Marital status	Could you give me the letter which corresponds best to your own current situation?	.54	

NOTES: ^a Measured as follows: Agreement to disagreement. ^b Dichotomous variable (yes or no).

SOURCE: Eurobarometer 2009.

non-EU countries; the second is the aggregate-level control to capture disparities among countries and reflect economic circumstances measured through the per capital gross domestic product (“economic condition”).

MODEL

Using hierarchical modeling, the analysis estimates several models of perceptions about the future of the welfare state as being determined by micro- and macro-level variables. Table 2 reports the results of these models for the dependent variable used. In Table 2, Model 1 and 5, I test for the random intercept effects without any predictors at the macro level. This can be written mathematically as

$$Y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \sum_{q=1}^{13} \beta_{qj} * X_{qij} + r_{ij}, \tag{1}$$

where Y_{ij} is the response of an individual i ($i = 1, 2, \dots, n_j$) in the j th ($j = 1, 2, \dots, J$) country on the dependent variable perceptions of the welfare state; X_{qij} ($q = 1, 2, \dots, 13$) is a level-1 predicting variable q for case i in unit j ; betas are level-1 coefficients (β_{0j} the intercept and β_{qj} is a vector of slopes); and r_{ij} is a level-1 residual.

In Table 2, Models 4 and 5 include several parameters at the macro level, and enable a testing of hypothesis 2 and 3. Mathematically, the model can be written as follows:

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \sum_{s=1}^3 \gamma_{0s} * W_{0sj} + u_{0j}, \tag{2}$$

where β_{0j} is the intercept estimated in equation (1); W_{0sj} ($s = 1, 2, \dots, 5$) is a level-2 predicting variable or interaction term; γ_{00} is a level-2 intercept; γ_{0s} is the vector of slopes for the estimated level-2 predicting variables; and u_{0j} is a level-2 random effect. Table 3 introduces hypothesis 3 and tests for the cross-level interactions, expressed mathematically as

$$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + \sum_{m=1}^3 \gamma_{1m} * W_{1mj} + u_{1j}, \tag{3}$$

where β_{1j} is a vector of slopes estimated in equation (1) corresponding to the three level-1 variables measuring perceptions of the welfare state; W_{1mj} is a level-2 predicting variable (the direct and indirect measure for the institutional environment and other macro level controls); γ_{10} is a level-2 intercept; γ_{1m} is a vector of

TABLE 2
HLM STATISTICS FROM THE MODELS PREDICTING THE EFFECTS OF CONFIDENCE TOWARD
THE WELFARE STATE IN 24 EUROPEAN UNION COUNTRIES

	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>	<i>Model 5</i>	<i>Model 6</i>
Fixed Effects						
Constant	0.344*** (0.022)	0.356*** (0.027)	0.368*** (0.027)	0.368*** (0.027)	0.368*** (0.027)	0.366*** (0.026)
<i>Individual level</i>						
Group threat perceptions:						
Need for the economy (yes=1)			0.044*** (0.004)	0.044*** (0.004)	0.044*** (0.004)	0.043*** (0.007)
Cause unemployment (yes=1)			-0.044*** (0.006)	-0.044*** (0.006)	-0.044*** (0.006)	-0.043*** (0.008)
Rural	0.007(0.005)	0.007(0.005)	-0.009(0.005)	-0.010(0.005)	-0.010(0.005)	0.009(0.006)
Age	0.010*** (0.003)	0.009*** (0.003)	0.009*** (0.003)	0.001*** (0.003)	0.001*** (0.003)	0.001*** (0.000)
Male (yes = 1)	0.030*** (0.007)	0.023*** (0.007)	0.023*** (0.007)	0.023*** (0.007)	0.023*** (0.007)	0.024*** (0.008)
Education (=1)	0.013*** (0.003)	0.012** (0.003)	0.008** (0.003)	0.008** (0.003)	0.007** (0.003)	0.008* (0.003)
Married (yes=1)	0.007(0.005)	0.008(0.005)	0.007(0.005)	0.010(0.005)	0.007(0.005)	0.007(0.005)
Labor force status:						
Unemployed ^b (ref.)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Employed (yes = 1)	0.044*** (0.011)	0.043*** (0.011)	0.038*** (0.011)	0.038*** (0.011)	0.038*** (0.011)	0.038** (0.011)
Students (yes = 1)	0.089*** (0.013)	0.088*** (0.013)	0.085*** (0.013)	0.085*** (0.013)	0.122*** (0.013)	0.086*** (0.014)
Retired (yes = 1)	0.041*** (0.013)	0.040*** (0.013)	0.037*** (0.013)	0.036*** (0.013)	0.036*** (0.013)	0.036** (0.013)
Never in labor force (yes = 1)	0.024(0.018)	0.022(0.018)	0.022(0.018)	0.084(0.018)	0.024*** (0.018)	0.024(0.018)
Political stance (1-7)		-0.002(0.002)	0.001(0.002)	-0.001(0.002)	-0.001(0.002)	-0.001(0.001)
<i>Contextual Measures</i>						
Economic Conditions (A)				0.003*** (0.000)	0.003*** (0.000)	0.003*** (0.000)
Immigrant group size (B)				-0.005* (0.002)	-0.003* (0.002)	-0.004(0.003)
Social Protection Benefits (C)					0.003(0.002)	0.003(0.003)
C* unemployment						-0.003*** (0.002)
Random effects^a						
Macro-level, u_{0j}	0.009	0.013	0.014	0.014	0.14	
Individual-level, r_{ij}	0.040	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.041	

NOTE: Fixed-effect entries are unweighted ML coefficients (robust standard errors in parentheses). All macro-level variables are grand-mean centered. ^aThe random effects for the intercept-only (unrestricted) model are $u_{0j} = 0.0291$ and $r_{ij} = 0.0581$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.
SOURCE: European Commission (2009).

level-2 slopes; and u_{1j} is a level-2 random effect. The overall equation for all the cross-level interactions can be expressed as follows:

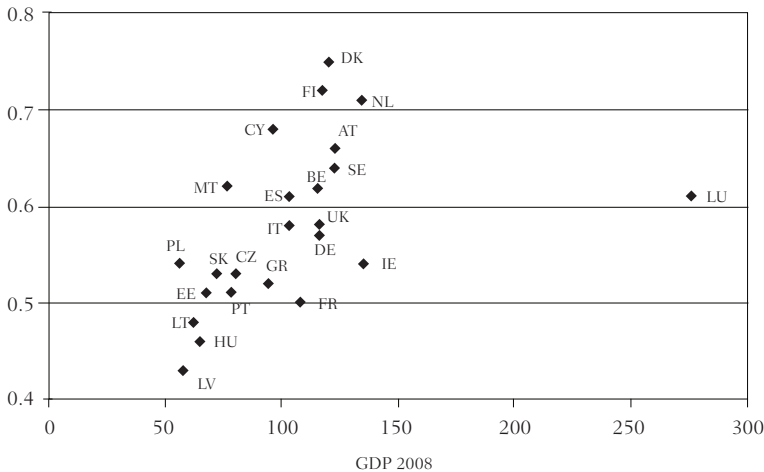
$$\beta_{qj} = \gamma_{q0} + \sum_{q=2}^{13} \gamma_{q1} * W_{1j} + u_{qj}, \tag{4}$$

where β_{qj} ($q = 2, \dots, 10$) is a vector of slopes estimated in equation (1) corresponding to the level-1 control variables; W_{1j} is the level-2 predicting variable; γ_{q0} is a vector of level-2 intercepts; γ_{q1} is a vector of level-2 slopes; and u_{qj} is a level-2 random effect.

Results

Prior to estimating the multilevel models, bivariate analyses in Charts 1 to 3 assess the association between the mean attitudinal confidence level about the future of the welfare state and the three key macro-level measures in the 24 EU countries analyzed. Some clear patterns emerge in these charts. For example, Chart 1 represents the bivariate relationship between per capita GDP and the mean level of confidence about sustainability and coverage and the future of the welfare state.

CHART 1
CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE OF THE WELFARE STATE BY GDP PER CAPITA



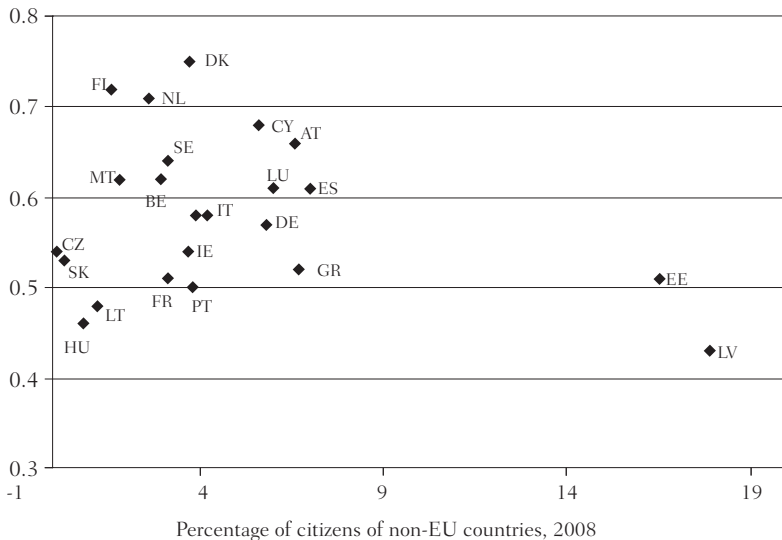
KEY: Belgium (BE), France (FR), Austria (AT), Italy (IT), Poland (PL), Czech Republic (CZ), Cyprus (CY), Portugal (PT), Denmark (DK), Latvia (LV), Germany (GE), Lithuania (LT), Estonia (EE), Luxembourg (LU), Slovakia (SK), Ireland (IE), Hungary (HU), Finland (FI), Greece (GR), Sweden (SE), Spain (ES), Netherlands (NL), United Kingdom (UK)

SOURCE: European Commission (2009).

First, the dependent measure shows great variability when it comes to assessing confidence in the future of the system. As expected, there is a positive association between per capita GDP and confidence in the future of the system. Especially relevant is the confirmation that Northern European countries such as Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, and Austria are clustered together with the highest mean confidence levels about the system. Also relevant in Chart 1 is the fact that Eastern European countries, for the most part, are clustered together at the bottom in terms of confidence levels. Luxemburg stands alone as it has the highest per capita GDP, but remains close to the median level of confidence toward the welfare state. Interestingly, France and Ireland show relatively low levels of confidence in the future of the welfare system as compared to other countries with higher GDP levels.

A less clear pattern of association is presented in Chart 2, which displays the relationship between the percentage of non-EU citizens and mean confidence levels concerning the future of the welfare state. As the measure is just a proxy of ethnic heterogeneity, it is hard to discern a specific trend; however, three Northern European countries (Finland, Denmark, and the Netherlands) show a relatively high level of ethnic homogeneity and high confidence levels regarding the future

CHART 2
CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE OF THE WELFARE STATE
BY PERCENTAGE OF CITIZENS FROM NON-EU COUNTRIES



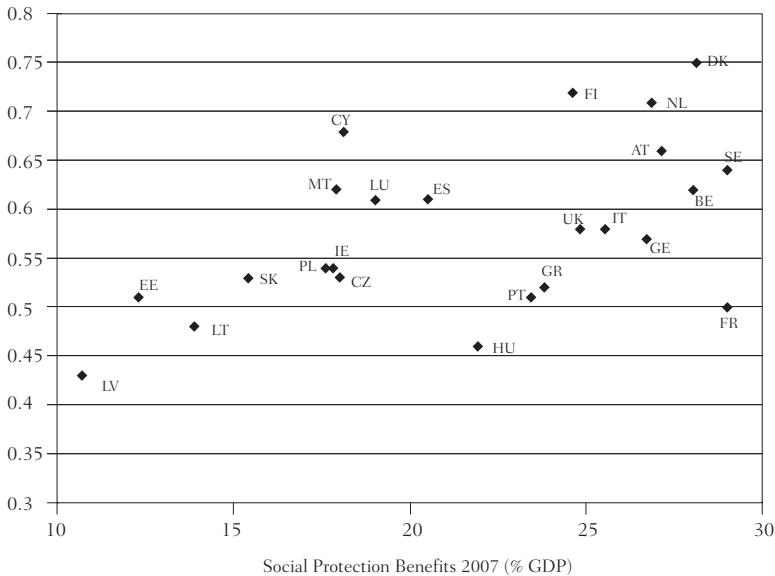
KEY: Belgium (BE), France (FR), Austria (AT), Italy (IT), Poland (PL), Czech Republic (CZ), Cyprus (CY), Portugal (PT), Denmark (DK), Latvia (LV), Germany (GE), Lithuania (LT), Estonia (EE), Luxembourg (LU), Slovakia (SK), Ireland (IE), Hungary (HU), Finland (FI), Greece (GR), Sweden (SE), Spain (ES), Netherlands (NL), United Kingdom (UK)

SOURCE: European Commission (2009).

of the welfare state. Along opposite lines, the UK, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Spain, and Greece show relatively higher levels of ethnic heterogeneity coupled with more skepticism about the future of the welfare system. The Eastern European countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, and Slovakia) contradict the formal expectation, as these countries show the lowest levels of ethnic heterogeneity and among the lowest in confidence in the future of the welfare system. Two outliers are Estonia and Latvia, with high levels of non-EU-member citizens, particularly a large Russian minority, residing there. Overall, ethnic heterogeneity seems to be associated with lower confidence levels about the future sustainability of the welfare state.

Chart 3 further illustrates the privileged position of northern European countries, as it displays the association between social protection benefit expenditures as a percentage of GDP and overall levels of confidence in the welfare state system. Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland, and Austria are clustered together in the top left corner of the graph since they score high on both measures. There is a positive linear association between these two measures. Overall, investments in social protection benefits seem to translate into higher mean levels of confidence in the future of the welfare system. Such findings, however, need to be put to addi-

CHART 3
 CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE OF THE WELFARE STATE
 BY SOCIAL PROTECTION BENEFITS (AS % OF GDP)



KEY: Belgium (BE), France (FR), Austria (AT), Italy (IT), Poland (PL), Czech Republic (CZ), Cyprus (CY), Portugal (PT), Denmark (DK), Latvia (LV), Germany (GE), Lithuania (LT), Estonia (EE), Luxembourg (LU), Slovakia (SK), Ireland (IE), Hungary (HU), Finland (FI), Greece (GR), Sweden (SE), Spain (ES), Netherlands (NL), United Kingdom (UK)

SOURCE: Eurostat (n. d.).

tional tests to assess the direction of the causal relationship. To accomplish this and determine whether these contextual measures are predictors of perceptions of the welfare state, a series of hierarchical models are presented below.

I tested hypotheses 1 to 3 for the effects of key independent variables at the micro and macro level on mean confidence levels regarding the future of the welfare state. Model 1 in Table 2 shows the random intercept model of key controls—all the predictors at level 1 are allowed to vary at the intercept level. The effects show that older, highly educated, married people as well as males are more confident about the future of the welfare system than other social groups. Especially relevant is the fact that compared to the unemployed, all the groups measuring different objective economic positions in the labor market reported higher mean levels of the dependent variable. In Model 2, I introduced a key control, political stance, which interestingly did not yield statistically significant results. Thus, political conservatism does not seem to play a key role in predicting confidence levels regarding the system.

In Model 3, I introduced the two key predictors of group threat. The results are revealing, since both variables are statistically significant in predicting a change in the dependent variable ($p < .000$). The first predictor has a positive effect, as those who agree with the statement “we need migrants for certain sectors of our economy” express higher confidence levels about the future of the system. The effect is negative (as expected) when respondents agree with the statement “the presence of people from other ethnic groups increases unemployment.” This variable further demonstrates the robust effects of the group threat measures. Higher perceptions of immigrant threat seem to lower the confidence in the overall future of the system. These findings confirm hypothesis 1. Model 3 shows that with all the micro-level variables introduced in the model, the amount of explainable variance in the dependent variable between countries is 13 percent.

In Models 4 and 5, I introduce the three contextual measures at the random intercept level. In Model 4, results show that countries with higher GDP levels display statistically significant higher mean levels of confidence in the system and reiterate the findings of the bivariate analysis in Chart 1. Similarly, the ethnic heterogeneity effect is also statistically significant in predicting lower mean confidence levels regarding the future of the welfare state. These findings confirm hypothesis 2, which supports the literature exploring the embedded nature of attitudinal models. Model 5 adds the contextual institutional measure of expenditures on social protection benefits (as a percentage of GDP) which did not yield significant results in explaining the dependent variable (hypothesis 3). This effect, however, is key for estimating the cross-level interaction effects approximated in Model 6. This final model also assesses hypothesis 3 regarding whether group threat perceptions are more or less salient in more or less robust welfare state regimes. In Model 6, the random slope model displays the effects of group threat. These effects are measured as interacting with the size of the welfare state (the contextual measure of social protection benefits expenditure). The results show that group threat (in terms of ethnic minorities affecting unemployment) is a stronger

effect in reducing welfare state confidence levels in countries with robust welfare state systems. The overall estimated levels of confidence seem to be higher for individuals who do not experience group threat (especially in countries with robust welfare systems). In contrast, the effects of group threat in reducing confidence in the welfare state are also stronger among people living in a country with a robust welfare system. After introducing the macro-level variables, the overall amount of explainable variance in the dependent variable between countries is 60 percent.

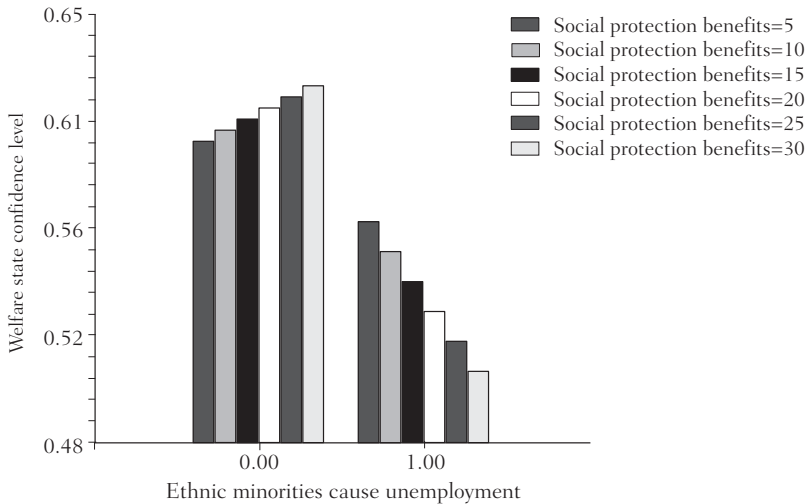
Conclusion and Discussion

This article examines the hypothesis that confidence in the welfare system is affected by individuals' perceptions of the economic threat immigrants pose. The results confirm that both measures used to assess perceptions of threat (immigrants are needed in certain economic sectors and the perception that ethnic minorities cause unemployment) are strong predictors of confidence levels in the future of the welfare state. The data show that as societies become more multiethnic and plural, individuals become more ambivalent about the future of the welfare state. Is welfare chauvinism behind these perceptions? The conclusion of these findings seems to corroborate that welfare chauvinism underlies these perceptions since pessimism about the future of the system is greatly explained by the group threat factor. The conclusion of these findings is important theoretically because it confirms that perceptions of the welfare state and ethnic competition and conflict are interrelated. From this analysis, I infer that protectionism is associated with pessimism about the future in terms of coverage, pensions, and expenditures levels, while openness is associated with optimism about these dimensions of the system.

In addition to the group threat effect, the findings are theoretically relevant, as they demonstrate the embedded nature of public opinion processes. Chart 4, shows the effects of the cross-level interactions analysis reported in Model 6 in Table 3. As societies become more ethnically diverse, the trend suggests more skepticism about the future of the system. This not only confirms the group threat hypothesis but also how the visibility of minorities triggers not necessarily "realistic" perceptions of their impact on the host society. More alarmingly, the findings suggest that as societies develop more robust welfare systems, perceptions of threat seem to play a greater role in decreasing confidence in the system. This finding partially confirms the conservative turn in Finland's recent elections. Since the results support the idea that predicted mean confidence levels toward the system are higher in countries with robust welfare state systems, a reverse pattern occurs among those who are more intolerant. In other words, intolerant individuals, or those who perceive immigrants as posing a threat, are more likely to live in a country with a robust welfare system.

The results further confirm an additional model (not reported in Table 2 due to space constraints) that shows that the unemployed (compared to other occupational groups), and thus those who are more vulnerable, exhibit lower confidence

CHART 4
WELFARE STATE CONFIDENCE LEVELS BY GROUP THREAT ACROSS
DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENTS



SOURCE: European Commission (2009).

levels about the future of the system in countries with robust welfare state systems. These results seem to contradict Crepaz and Damron's 2009 findings regarding the leveling effects of expansive welfare systems. Rather, the results explained here suggest that threat, one of the key predictors of the dependent variable, is more salient in countries with robust welfare systems.

Overall, these results go in the direction of previous research by Bay and Pedersen (2006) in Norway based on inter-group solidarity. Ethnic competition changes views about redistribution and confidence in the system. Moreover, the results partially confirm that the unemployed are more vulnerable and express more uncertainty in countries with a strong welfare state system, compared to employed individuals in a country with low levels of social benefits expenditure. The results thus seem to corroborate that in social democratic and corporatist countries, while the predicted level of confidence in the welfare state is higher, among vulnerable populations (e.g. the unemployed), the effects of individuals' perceptions of threat are more salient.

The existence of generous state and local resources and networks of support for migrants may trigger negative feelings among the most economically vulnerable in host societies. Investing in strong local and national services not only for immigrant populations (such as universal programs to help settlement, language classes, access to health care, etc.), but also for the native born through multicultural campaigns produces the outcome of a more integrated polity. By reaching out

to the multiple constituencies within the nation-state, the implementation of governmental programs can lay the groundwork for greater social adaptation. From the perspective of public opinion, the findings in this article corroborate that anti-immigrant sentiment is lower in Western European countries compared to the former Soviet bloc. Investing in strong social protection systems seems to be a good way to reduce this gap.

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