Migration and Welfare: Political Discourses and Public Attitudes in European States

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Conference Abstracts
Session 1: Citizenship, Rights and Solidarity in the European Union
10.15-11.45, AG07
Social Citizenship Reframed- Fusing Obligations with Rights in European Welfare States

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Social citizenship as conceptualized by T.H. Marshall has been at the core of discussions that focus on social rights in Europe. These rights are enshrined in the welfare structures of most states as seen in the provision of health services, education, housing and in some cases allowances to citizens. Rising waves of immigration over the years has consequently seen the extension of these rights to immigrants. The current rising popularity of new right ideologies has however resulted in a shift of public discourse with the identification of certain immigrant groups as disproportionally favoured by social provision. This has lead to pressure from the public to restrict immigration. On a scholarly level, Marshall's Social Citizenship model has been criticized for ignoring responsibilities that constitute active citizenship. This has resulted in new right models that stress on obligations at the expense of social rights. Through a theoretical discussion of Marshall's Social citizenship, Mead's New Right model and drawing examples from different immigrant groups and welfare states in Europe, I argue that it is possible to fuse labour market participation to Social Citizenship without infringing on the rights this kind of citizenship purposes to uphold. I further argue that there is need to open up the labour market and narrow down obligations to the immediate community as a national community is too large and remote to command reciprocity. I conclude that respect, recognition and positive selectivism combined with guaranteed social rights could be a step towards a balanced model of social citizenship.
Welfare and migration: the “fragmentation” of the juridical status of migrants

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The aim of the research is to explore the relationship between welfare and immigration through the analysis of the conditions of enjoyment of social rights to foreigners (work, health, social care, education, housing). This research dealt with the “complexity” of the governance of immigration (from international and European Union level to EU Member States level), focusing on the provisions stated by EU law in the directives on the status of third country nationals (long term residents, high skilled migrants, single work permit, asylum seekers, etc.). The research will investigate the “fragmentation” of the juridical status of non-citizen, depending on the type of resident permit held and depending on his/her personal condition. This study will be supported by an analysis of the case law of the European Court of Human Rights and the European Court of Justice. The research will also highlight the interdependence between social rights and political rights, in order to point out the scope and objectives of modern welfare states before a permanent immigration. In this context, the legal status of foreigners also offers a different perspective from which the research will analyze the fundamentality of certain rights and benefits, that are essential even in times of economic crisis. Moreover, the analysis would point out the link between the enjoyment of social rights and the status of a person, towards a new concept of “citizenship”, based on the exchange between rights and duties.
Is there a case for supra-national solidarity?

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The specific field of cross-border movement of patients within the EU has played a considerable role in the more recent history of European integration and it can, to some extent, be identified as a focal point for commentaries about welfare in general. In recent months, this has become a highly contentious topic, prompting the question: how much supranational solidarity does (and ought there to) exist among EU Member States and their citizens? In this paper I discuss two important components which, I argue, are central to addressing this question.

First, I consider the consequences of linking cross-border health care with human rights, instead of free movement principles, from the perspective of solidarity. I suggest that this shift would not only increase national solidarity demands but would also require growing supranational solidarity. It goes without saying that such an observation is rather controversial.

As a consequence, I secondly examine normative arguments which can be made in order to justify increased supranational solidarity. Central to my argument is that it is the integrating market and its forces which provide the normative basis for supranational solidarity. This claim differs from the general approach which seems to understand ‘market’ and ‘solidarity’ as mutually exclusive entities.
The UK’s approach to ‘genuine worker’ test: illegal under the EU law rules of free movement?

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On 1 March 2014 the UK introduced new rules on how the authorities should assess whether EU citizen workers perform a ‘genuine economic activity’, before allowing them to claim social benefits. These rules, codified in Memo DMG 1/14, set a two-tier assessment based on the minimum income of £149 a week; a failure to meet this financial income threshold would mean that a migrant EU citizen worker will be further investigated whether s/he performs an economic activity (i.e. work) that is not ‘marginal or ancillary’. As the BBC reports, this is ‘the latest in a series of measures to restrict access to benefits for migrants from other EU countries’, which have been planned before the lifting of work restrictions on Bulgarians and Romanians on 1 January 2014. In the words of the Guardian, the new law is only one of the series of measures aimed ‘to reduce the attractiveness of the UK for EU migrants unlikely to find full-time work here.’ The EU Employment Commissioner Laszlo Andor and migrants’ rights NGOs have warned the UK government about the possible contradiction of these national rules to EU law. Do these claims have any merit? To answer this question, the paper will assess the legality and the potential implication on EU migration of the Memo DMG 1/14 in light of EU law, including the Court of Justice’s case law, Treaties and the Citizenship Directive.

Session 2: Welfare, Racialisation and Class
12.00-13.15, AG07
In July 2012 the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition government introduced a new set of family migration rules. These rules set a sharp increase in the minimum income threshold for people wishing to sponsor partners and children to join them in the UK. Ostensibly this is, in part, designed to minimise the ‘burden’ on the state by ensuring that applicants have the means to support their dependents financially in the UK. Consequently, there has been a significant reduction in the numbers of visas granted through the family migration route since the new rules were introduced. This paper explores the role of class in the formulation of the new family migration rules, in the justifications that have been made for the rules and in the impact of the rules on families (including people who are British citizens). It is argued that in the context of international migration and transnational relationships, class-based moralism has been entwined with exclusionary discourses on ethnicity, national belonging and citizenship and has been extended towards the governing of particular kinds of international family.
After the welfare state: the racial politics of austerity

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This paper considers discourses of the welfare state as expressive of the changing politics of race in Britain. With the shift in recent decades from ‘welfare’ to ‘workfare’ and the ‘austerity’ response to the post-2008 economic crisis, the paper explores how conditions have become attached the principles of universal welfare, and how a range of political actors have looked to notions of cultural citizenship to express a politics of welfare entitlement. Taking debates around social housing as a case study, it explores how frequently racialized factors – including the length of residency and family and social networks – have been used to buttress claims to priority and preference in an under-resourced social housing sector.

This paper considers the introduction in 2013 of ‘benefit caps’ to limit the total amount of benefit that work-aged people can receive. It considers in particular the possible impacts of benefit caps on immigrant and minority communities in a ‘superdiverse’ city like London, which has both longstanding histories of cultural diversity and an exorbitantly expensive rental sector. Faced with the prospect of driving some minority communities out of London entirely (like the Ashkenazi Hasidic Jews), this paper considers the racial impacts of austerity politics. It contemplates the role of the welfare states in the protection of social goods (like cultural diversity) that have been the product of unplanned patterns of migration, settlement and community, and thinks about the complex racial politics of the new economic regime of borrowing and indebtedness.
Crisis and Austerity in Naples: Market Banter and the Neapolitan Art of Getting By

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The Southern Italian city of Naples has a long history of cultural and economic marginalisation. Clinging to the edge of Europe, it is marked by seemingly unresolvable power struggles and grinding unemployment. Proficiency in the Art of Getting By – known locally as *arrangiarsi* – is crucial for material and symbolic survival, given the partial welfare structure of the Italian south. Setting up a market stall is one of the most ancient ways in which this has been practiced by the Neapolitan poor and the informal characteristics of street markets also mark them as an important site of entry into the labour market for documented and undocumented migrants. Transcultural market banter in Naples generates racialised conflicts about scarcity and access to resources; as well as new compositions of everyday resistance to a neoliberal logic that is determined to impose austerity and cuts whilst stamping out the informal economy. In this paper I use data from a year of ethnographic fieldwork in Neapolitan markets to explore how socio-economic anxieties to do with deservingness and bare survival are being worked out in Naples at this time.
Session 3: Policies, Regimes and Exclusions
14.15-15.45, AG07
Explaining Immigrants Restricted Access to Social Assistance Benefits. A Comparative Analysis

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Immigrants’ use of welfare benefits has become a highly politicized topic in the public debate recently. The dominant claim is that immigration is threatening the welfare state for at least two reasons: firstly, because immigrants tend to be overrepresented among welfare recipients, and second because immigration increases heterogeneity, thereby threatening solidarity which is the basis for a functioning welfare state. While empirical tests of both claims have produced mixed results, they continue to be made across the party spectrum, and have also influenced policy making in that states have employed measures to exclude immigrants from accessing welfare benefits. I am using new data from the IMPIC project for 18 OECD countries for the years 1980-2010 which allows taking into account both countries with low as well as high levels of welfare chauvinism. The IMPIC data allows to distinguish access to welfare benefits for different types of immigrants (labor, family, asylum seekers, and refugees), as well as direct and indirect welfare chauvinist policies. In addition, I use data from the Comparative Welfare States Dataset. Three hypotheses are tested, using descriptive methods for the first and pooled time series for the second and third: (I.) Immigrants access to welfare benefits has been increasingly restricted over the course of the last 30 years. (II.) The composition of government has an influence on the degree of welfare chauvinism towards immigrants. When left parties are in power, restrictions are less severe. (III). The welfare state regime as intermediary variable: In cases where decommodification is high, the negative influence of left parties on welfare chauvinism is smaller than in cases where decommodification is low.
Work migration and welfare state regimes

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Work migration is a common trait in Europe today, and both the 2004 EU enlargement and the financial crisis has initiated increased mobility. In this paper we aim to explore relations between integration policies for work migrants in Norway and Poland, using the welfare state typologies as developed by Esping-Andersen. In the last 10 years Norway has experienced a high degree of work migration, whilst Poland is starting to experience a rising curve. Different social, economic, political and institutional arrangements of the two welfare states lead to differences in integration policies. What are the dynamics between work migrants, their families, public sector and the labour market in the receiving country? Public social service institutions and local policies for migrants are directed at three heterogeneous groups of migrants; refugees and asylum seekers, family migrants and work migrants. Compared to refugees and asylum seekers, and family migrants, work migrants relations to their country of origin and the receiving country differs, as do their needs for public services in the initial phases of migration. How do policies develop in a traditionally social-democratic welfare state compared to the policies in a welfare state labeled as conservative? Does increased work migration challenge the established welfare models?
Immigrants’ access to social protection mechanisms in times of crisis: Portuguese recent experience

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Within the last few years, EU labour markets have suffered major transformations. One of its biggest impacts is the massive increase in unemployment and changing forms of employment, which affects some peripheral countries in a more intense way. This is the case of Portugal, where unemployment reached its highest level and socioeconomic inequalities are rising. Immigrants are one of the social groups in a more vulnerable situation to the effects of this epoch of austerity and crisis. The fact that immigrants are concentrated in a narrow geographical space, work primarily in activity sectors particularly affected by the crisis, simultaneously in the formal and in the informal labour market, reinforce their risks of becoming unemployed and of being excluded from social protection schemes. Until now this has been an under analysed social, political and economic problem. Our aim is to fill the gap by characterizing and discussing immigrants’ unemployment in Portugal, focusing on their difficulties of re-integration into the labour market, their specific problems regarding the access to social protection mechanisms, the strategies they pursue to overcome these difficulties, and how their unemployment situation affects their migratory projects. Our hypothesis is that immigrants’ precarious forms of integration into the labour market restrain their access to social protection. Based on a set of complementary methodologies (focus-groups interviews, an online survey and documentary and statistical analysis) we develop a typology that help us visualize immigrants’ different unemployment experiences related, namely, to their integration within formal and/or informal systems of social protection.
Migrant workers in Spain on temporary migration programmes: legal and without access to welfare – the European Union’s perfect combination

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The early years of 2000 were characterised by protests in the agricultural sector of Andalusia, Southern Spain, where the workforce, predominantly Moroccan male undocumented migrants, demanded the regularisation of their legal status and equal rights to Spanish workers. Since then, Spain has attempted to by-pass the undocumented workforce by introducing temporary migration programmes. The profile of the ideal migrant recruited from abroad is defined by strict selection criteria leading to the creation of a feminised workforce, conforming to stereotypes of female docility without agency. Women are recruited from poor, rural areas in Morocco with high levels of illiteracy and only those with dependent children under the age of 14 may apply. The European Union (EU) sees this programme as an example of good practice in circular migration whereby Spain gets the labour it needs without having to worry about integration issues – women will return to their families after the season. Recent academic writing suggests that migrants benefit from the ‘trade off’ which circular migration programmes offer, that is, less access to rights and more access to European labour markets (Ruhs 2013). However, the women are not even made aware of their limited entitlements, for example, that they can import their Spanish social security contributions back home (Triandafyllidou 2011). This paper explores how Spain, funded by the EU, creates a workforce without access to welfare and with little scope for organising or demanding rights and it will evaluate whether Spain has succeeded in curtailing migrant agency through its temporary migration programmes.
Session 4: Political parties and welfare chauvinism in policy and discourse
16.05-17.35, AG07
Why are political actors in richer EU member states acting as they do when it comes to the phenomenon that has pejoratively been referred to as ‘welfare tourism’? At first sight, the theoretical answer to this question seems rather straightforward: as there is no pan-European solidarity, cross-national distributional effects will trigger conflict along national lines. Hence, nationals from richer member states would not want parts of their wealth being redistributed to nationals from poorer member states via domestic welfare systems, and hence they would want to restrict free movement accordingly. In practice, however, it is far from certain, whether free movement, even if extended to the comparatively very poor new members Romania and Bulgaria, will have this effect. By reconfiguring and extending existing theoretical approaches on European political conflict, I argue that under conditions of uncertainty, policy preferences of political actors in richer member states will depend on their ideological background. Moreover, welfare state traditions will impact on policy preferences, yet contrary to a distributional logic, i.e. actors from stronger welfare states will be less sceptical towards ‘welfare tourism’ – in spite of their potentially higher losses. Variation will further be found depending on the institutional contexts within which these actors find themselves, as institutions influence the way actors handle uncertainty. In order to test these hypotheses, I will conduct a textual analysis of press releases of national delegations to the European Parliament from six EU member states.
Nationalist reframing of the Finnish and Swedish welfare state: the role of immigration in the social policy narratives of far-right populist parties

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The rise of right wing populist parties in the Nordic countries is slowly redefining the Nordic social democratic discourse of the universal and egalitarian welfare state. The nexus of nationalism and social policy has been explored in regions and countries such as Quebec, Scotland, Belgium and the United Kingdom but the change of discourse in the Nordic countries has received less attention. Taking the cases of Sweden and Finland, this paper argues that Nordic populism does not question the redistributive welfare state per se as many other European neo-liberal far-right parties have done. Instead it reframes welfare state as being linked to a sovereign and exclusive Swedish and Finnish political community with distinct national boundaries. Immigration in general and immigrants in particular are at the centre of this repackaged narrative of 21st century welfare chauvinism. Through the welfare discourses of two populist parties, the Sweden Democrats and the True Finns, the paper aims to analyse this far-right populist discourse as it exists in the Nordic context, the shift from universal and egalitarian design of social services towards one based on ethnicity.
Public and political discourses on migration in Greece have been notably hostile and exclusionary over the last two decades. They have been largely dominated by frames of illegality and criminality, while frames of welfare state abuse have not been dominant until the end of the 2000s. However, welfare chauvinist frames are prominent in the discourse of two far right parties, radical populist LAOS (Laikos Orthodoxos Synagermos – Popular Orthodox Rally) and extreme right Golden Dawn, first elected to parliament in 2007 and 2012 respectively. Drawing on the critical discourse analysis of texts containing political discourse between 2008 and 2013, it demonstrates how these two parties have constructed migrants as a burden on welfare provision and resources. Migrants and Greek ‘natives’ are competing over scarce welfare resources to which only Greek nationals should have access. Migrants are excluded on the basis of not belonging to the ethnically Greek in-group, but also because they are argued not to have contributed to the Greek welfare state. Given the weakness of the Greek welfare state and the limited access of immigrants to welfare provision, it is argued that the emergence of a welfare chauvinist frame is part of the intensification of anti-immigrant discourses in the context of the Greek austerity crisis, and reflect the strategies of LAOS and Golden Dawn to position themselves as anti-establishment parties defending a narrowly defined national community.