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IMMIGRATION AND THE WELFARE STATE: A EUROPEAN CHALLENGE TO AMERICAN MYTHOLOGY

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Immigration and the Welfare State: A European Challenge to American Mythology

Martin Baldwin-Edwards

Conventional accounts of migrants and European welfare states have reached no conclusion about the relationship, but are generally one of two extreme types: either that states will try to exclude immigrants from access to citizen-based socio-economic privileges, or that states will tend to be inclusive of immigrants through recognition of internationalised human rights. This paper challenges various over-strong assumptions underlying such accounts. In this framework, two sets of variables are posited: the precise functioning of each welfare system [funding level; activities; benefit types; redistributive effect] and type of immigration [asylum seekers; workers; family members; illegal migrants, etc]. From existing empirical data and secondary analyses, a paradoxical relationship is observed: that generous redistributive welfare states tend to attract the lowest skilled and most welfare dependent migrants, whilst non-redistributive welfare states tend to exclude legal migration and attract illegal migrants. It is argued here, that the same institutional factors which shaped welfare systems also shape immigration policy, thus leading to this perverse effect. Ideal type welfare/migration regimes are characterised, following this analytic framework. It is suggested here, that rather than create additional and more complex welfare dependencies, countries from all regime types need radically different approaches to immigration which aim at labour market and social integration appropriate for each individual country. This can only be achieved through closer European collaboration and institutional reform.

Migration and the 'welfare state' are separately two very controversial areas: unsurprisingly, their nexus attracts polemics of all camps, with relatively little serious analysis. In this paper, I attempt an exploration of the relationship, focusing exclusively on European Union countries. There are several compelling reasons for so doing. First, it is important to challenge the hegemony of the USA in this area, considering that the welfare system of the USA is highly distinct, non-federal and in no way comparable with European approaches. Secondly, the countries of the EU have the most developed welfare systems in the world, which may be expected to have strong interactions with immigrants and migration processes. Thirdly, despite a paucity of data, there are some general European datasets (such as the European Community Household Panel survey – ECHP; the Labour Force Survey – LFS) which allow insights not available in other country comparisons.

The organisation of this paper is as follows:

- 1) a review of the existing theoretical and empirical literature on immigration and European welfare states;
- 2) a brief discussion of European welfare state structures and their outcomes;
- 3) patterns of immigration into Europe;
- 4) immigration and welfare regimes: their relevance to policy discussion

1) THE EXISTING LITERATURE

(a) Theoretical Contributions

The political science/public policy and political sociology literature on this topic is almost non-existent. A conventional approach is adopted by Freeman (1986) who argues that welfare states are inevitably exclusive, in order to protect the privileged citizens. The other extreme is represented by Soysal (1994) and Jacobson (1996), both arguing from a legal sociology perspective, who claim that European states are obliged to grant extensive social rights to resident immigrants through the impact of human rights law and that these rights are tantamount to citizenship. In neither case is any empirical evidence adduced. A more variegated approach is adopted by Baldwin-Edwards (1991), with very limited empirical data, suggesting that the social rights of immigrants and also immigration policy fall into clusters across the European continent.

Of the more recent literature, two articles stand out as making progress. Wenzel and Bos (1997)

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contend that specific welfare programmes and categories of immigrants must be examined in order to evaluate the impact of migration on welfare states. Unfortunately, they confine themselves to a 2-country comparison (Germany/USA) which is not particularly illuminating. Gran and Clifford (2000) take as their starting point the two extremes noted above, of exclusive versus inclusive welfare states. Examining 9 OECD countries over the period 1960-85, they test the relationship between social rights and immigration levels. Positing the two extreme positions, they hypothesise that if exclusion is the rule, then states with generous welfare rights for immigrants will try to restrict immigration while those with restricted access will be more inclined not to restrict immigration flows. If, on the other hand, the rights-based approach of Soysal and others is correct, we might expect immigration into the generous welfare countries either to remain constant or actually to increase. Their general finding is that neither case is supported, except that child migration is linked with states with generous family allowances, whilst states with generous non-contributory pension allowances have tended to limit immigration of older migrants.

The theoretical models of economists seem to fare no better. Razin and Sadka (1998) model the relationship between migration and pensions, using an intertemporal framework derived from Samuelson. They conclude that despite the fact that migrants are “net beneficiaries of the welfare state through their low earnings”, in this model the political economy equilibrium will be pro-migration. Another approach is taken by Klander and Viren (2001) who view immigration as an exogenous shock to labour markets across 22 OECD countries, and calculate their speeds of adjustment, concluding that only Anglophone labour markets respond well.

Underlying all of these analytic frameworks are assumptions and axioms to which most authors seem happily oblivious. Below, I list the main problematic assumptions used.

Assumptions used in migration/welfare linkages

- 1) that national welfare states and immigration policies are independent variables
- 2) that different welfare states have similar *modus operandi*
- 3) that immigrants are an homogenous group
- 4) that the *raison d'être* or actuality of welfare states is socio-economic redistribution

Thus, the existing theoretical literature is largely based on false premises: it is no surprise that the models contradict each other and appear to reach no solid conclusions. Below, in Section 4, an alternative framework is proposed which tries to take account of these difficulties.

(b) Empirical Research

Very little empirical research has been conducted in Europe on immigration and the welfare state. The principal country of research has been Germany, where various economic studies have been carried out. Those which look at the welfare system itself address the issue of total immigrant participation, and conclude that immigrants contributed more than they received in welfare (e.g. Barabas *et al.* 1992; Ruland, 1994). More recent studies have examined the high welfare dependency [social assistance] of immigrants: Brücker *et al.* note that the 9% foreign population had a representation of 24% of welfare recipients in 1996 (Brücker *et al.* 2001: 57). The German literature based on household panel survey (e.g. Bird *et al.*, 1999; Frick *et al.*, 1996; Sinn *et al.*, 2001; Riphahn, 1998: all cited in Brücker *et al.* 2001) generally concludes that the higher welfare dependency is wholly attributable to immigrants' socio-economic characteristics – such as educational level, younger heads of household, larger number of children. The only study based on the microcensus data (Fertig and Schmidt, 2001) reaches even stronger conclusions: that welfare dependence is much lower than for Germans, especially for young first generation migrants. Furthermore, they note declining welfare dependency with duration of residence, which they attribute to initial prohibition of work for refugees and asylum seekers (p 20); also, second generation migrants are considerably less likely than Germans to claim welfare benefits. The main

explanatory variable, they find, is the educational level of the immigrant population.

Recently, research has also been conducted in Sweden and Denmark, where different conclusions pertain than in Germany. Pedersen (2000) notes very low participation rates, even after extended sojourn in Denmark (28% employment rate after 10 years), along with serious structural welfare traps such as a marginal tax rate of 90% for an immigrant family with children which receives welfare benefits. Official data for 1995 show 137,000 non-OECD immigrants as substantial net beneficiaries from the welfare state, through low employment and receipt of welfare, child and housing benefits. He concludes that the main problem is employment of refugees, whilst second generation immigrants more nearly resemble native employment patterns (p 24). In Sweden, Hansen and Lofstrom (2001), using panel data for 1990-96, find a particular problem with refugees as opposed to other immigrants. Noting that an immigrant population of 11% constituted some 50% of social assistance receipts by 1996, they conclude that there is a “welfare trap” which affects only refugees. Another comparative study of panel data from Sweden and Denmark 1985-95 (Rosholm *et al.*, 2001) comes to a quite different conclusion, looking at migrants from Norway, Poland, Turkey and Iran. They suggest that changing organisational employment practices have diminished the attractiveness of immigrant workers through emphasising country-specific skills and informal human capital.

Looking across the whole of Europe, Brücker *et al.* (2001) construct an empirical comparison of welfare dependency of migrants compared with natives, using the ECHP data 1994-1996. They define ‘immigrant’ as a non-EU citizen, which is the only useful criterion but reduces sample size to very low levels in some countries (p 63). Further, they note that generally non-citizens seem to be undersampled, but this is true in particular of non-EU citizens (Fn 11, p 64).

Adjusting for migrants’ characteristics, they examine the difference between predicted welfare dependency and actual takeup under different welfare schemes. (The data cover unemployment benefits, family benefits and pensions, but pensions are excluded because of very small sample sizes.) This difference is known as residual dependency, and its sign and extent will indicate that factors other than the migrants’ socio-economic characteristics are operating. Table 1 gives their results for unemployment benefits. Family benefits are not shown here, as they have a small effect and only in two countries – France and Spain. The evidence for unemployment benefits suggests that there is residual dependency in Finland, Denmark, Austria, Netherlands, France and Belgium. There are various possible causes for residual dependency, which can be related to the migrants themselves, structural difficulties in adjustment to the host country, or discrimination in employment possibilities. However, a clear pattern of strong residual effects is noted in countries with generous welfare systems, which they suggest indicates a “welfare magnet” attraction for migrants (p 82).

Table 1
Econometric determinants of residual migrant unemployment benefit dependency

Country	RESIDUAL MIGRANT UB DEPENDENCY		
	coefficient	Z-statistic	Excess probability (%)
Germany	0.07	0.48	0.97
Denmark	0.61	3.55	15.6
Netherlands	0.41	1.80	6.6
Belgium	0.20	2.10	3.6
France	0.36	3.30	5.6
UK	0.08	0.24	0.4
Greece	-0.19	-0.47	-0.6
Spain	-0.09	-0.28	-0.8
Portugal	NA		
Austria	0.48	3.79	7.1
Finland	0.88	4.97	27.4

SOURCE : Brücker *et al.* (2001, Table 3.10, p 79)

(c) *Commentary*

There is a serious gap between theoretical models and the empirical literature, which ideally should be able to test the validity of theory. Almost all of the empirical research is focused upon cash benefits [social assistance, unemployment, family benefits and pensions), whilst ignoring the relationship of immigrants to other parts of the state welfare system, such as education and healthcare. Furthermore, immigrant contributions through taxation are generally not part of the empirical investigation.

Although some detailed empirical work, such as that by Brücker *at al.*, avoids most of the erroneous assumptions as noted in point (a) above, they all fall victim to the assumption that welfare systems and immigration policy are unconnected. This occurs, despite the fact that all of the recent research comments – almost as an aside – that welfare receipts by refugees are automatically higher through prohibition of work by asylum seekers, or in Scandinavia through compulsory language training course accompanied by state benefits. However, the residual dependency of migrants on unemployment benefits noted in Table 1 above, cannot be explained in this way. In this case, all the recipients must by definition have had recent employment histories in order to claim the benefit: even so, unstable employment and labour market discrimination can easily explain this. Given the lack of residual dependency on other state benefits, this alternative explanation seems scientifically preferable to that of “welfare magnets”.

The strong relationship between migrants’ residual dependency and advanced welfare states is most likely a reflection of another strong relationship, with labour market regulation. Migrant employment in such countries, whilst marginal and unstable, is actually in the formal economy: the countries without the residual dependency [Spain, Greece, and to a lesser extent UK and Germany] are those countries where the informal immigrant economy is thought to be flourishing. Thus, migrants’ unemployment spells are frequently not eligible for welfare compensation in those latter countries.

Overall, both the theoretical and empirical work on Europe contradict the analyses of US researchers, who claim that migrants are attracted to generous welfare systems and also tend to assimilate *into* welfare assistance. The European research shows a clear tendency for all immigrants in Germany to assimilate out of welfare assistance, and likewise for non-humanitarian migrants in Sweden. Whether or not migrants choose their destination country for its welfare system – the so-called “welfare magnet” hypothesis – remains an open question on the basis of the existing literature.

2) EUROPEAN WELFARE STATES

It is well beyond the scope of this paper to attempt anything more than a crude overview of European welfare systems and their functioning. The main purpose here, is to demonstrate the relevance of different approaches and structures of welfare activity insofar as they might be relevant for immigration and immigrants.

The emergence of European welfare states has been a matter of considerable comparative research over the last few decades, in attempts to identify common patterns and exceptionalisms (see for example, Flora and Heidenheimer, 1987; Castles, 1989; Esping Andersen, 1990). We can identify three functions of the welfare state in modern capitalism, although represented differently in different countries:

- **Social investment**, for efficient functioning of the economy: this includes education, healthcare, arguably welfare assistance and pensions, *et al.*
- **Income redistribution**, on the grounds that highly unequal distribution of wealth or income is not only socially inequitable, but politically destabilising: this is particularly focused on the

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poor, and includes social assistance and healthcare without insurance, sometimes housing and family benefits, sometimes pension rights, etc.

- **Horizontal redistribution**, is concerned with managing lifetime incomes, e.g. by taxing the middle-aged and funding pension schemes which return that money later in life. Unemployment benefits also come into this category, which in a 'pure' form is social insurance without redistributive consequences.

The cost of welfare

On the face of it, macroeconomic indicators suggest rather different extents and natures of various welfare states. Table 2 gives GDP shares at factor prices of expenditure by the state for total social spending, unemployment benefits, pensions and healthcare.

Table 2
Public social expenditure, % GDP, 1997

Country	Healthcare	Pensions	Unemployment	Gross social expenditure	Net social expenditure
Austria	5.8	13.0	0.9	25.4	20.9
Belgium	7.7	10.0	2.7	27.2	23.5
Denmark	6.8	7.0	3.8	30.7	22.9
Finland	?	8.5	3.1	28.7	21.4
Germany	8.2	10.9	1.5	26.4	24.6
Ireland	5.1	3.8	2.2	17.6	15.4
Italy	5.6	15.8	0.8	26.4	21.6
Netherlands	6.0	7.3	3.2	24.2	18.2
Norway	6.7	5.9	0.7	26.1	21.1
Sweden	6.8	8.4	2.1	31.8	25.4
UK	5.6	7.0	0.6	21.2	19.2

SOURCE: OECD data, in Adema (2001): cols. 1-4, from Table 2; col. 5 from Table A2

Looking at the raw data in the first four columns, it seems that the Scandinavian countries are the big social spenders, followed by Germany and Belgium. Net public social expenditure, as calculated by Adema (2001), takes into account the taxation system. There are two main taxation effects: general taxation levels, and specific taxes on welfare payments in some countries. When these are taken into account, social expenditure is lowered considerably in all European countries except Germany. Thus, the top welfare spenders in Europe are Sweden and Germany. When private expenditures on pensions are taken into account, the social spending of UK and Netherlands is raised: this is not true of any other country in Table 2, however.

European social policy regimes

Following Esping Andersen (1990), we can identify four welfare regimes in Europe: the social democratic [Scandinavia]; conservative [continental Europe]; liberal/social democratic [UK]; and the southern European.

The social democratic model of welfare has as its linchpin the concept of social citizenship, that is to say a universalist approach, tax-financed, residence-based and delivering high levels of benefits with top-up schemes maintaining some differentiation. Necessarily, this system is expensive, and requires high levels of employment and taxation.

The UK system is a mix of liberal/social democratic, with the former predominating in the last two decades. Rights to social benefits in law are weak; financing is a mix of contribution and taxation; only medical services via a distinct National Health Service are universal, otherwise benefits tend to be means-tested; occupational and status differentiation are low. The private sector is extensive and runs

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alongside a centralized state sector.

The conservative regime exhibits law-based rights to a wide range of benefits, with social insurance as the principal mode of organization and delivery of services, with occupationally differentiated benefits delivered by para-state institutions. There exists also a set of means-tested benefits for those who fall outside of the insurance system.

The southern European model resembles an under-developed version of the conservative regime. However, there exist some distinct differences which encourage a separate categorization. First, the coverage of the population is low, with very low or no benefits means-tested for those who fall outside. Secondly, the differentiation of benefits is very high - far greater than would reflect occupational earnings differentials, with privileged groups obviously benefiting. Thirdly, a massive asymmetry of pensions expenditure alongside underdeveloped unemployment benefits and inadequate universalistic national health systems. Finally, the management of the para-state funds is non-transparent and in certain cases heavily subsidized by taxation in clientelistic fashion (Ferrera, 1996).

More recently, Ian Gough in his work on social assistance in the OECD, has reclassified Spain as being clearly in the Continental category. This evaluation is made on the basis of cluster analysis, using a collection of variables (Gough, 2001). Figure 1 shows the clusters and country groupings.

Figure 1
Clusters and Groupings of Social Assistance Regimes

	Cluster characteristics	Countries in cluster
1	Extensive, inclusive, above-average benefits	Australia, Ireland, UK
2	Low extent, exclusive, above-average benefits	Austria, Norway, Switzerland
3	Below-average extent, average inclusion/exclusion, average benefits	Belgium, France, Germany, Japan, Luxemburg, Spain
4	Extensive, moderately inclusive, below-average benefits	Canada, USA
5	Minimal extent, exclusive, very low benefits	Greece, Portugal
6	Average extent, average inclusion/exclusion, generous benefits	Denmark, Finland, Sweden
7	Very extensive, inclusive, average benefits	New Zealand

SOURCE: Gough (2001): Table 5

The important change here, for the European countries, consists of a challenge to the idea of a southern European model. Spain is located clearly in cluster 3, and Gough suggests (in the absence of sufficient data) that Italy might be there too. The Netherlands too is missing, and is hypothesised as belonging to cluster 6. As social assistance is one of two main benefits to be available to recent immigrants, this categorisation is of relevance.

Welfare Outcomes

Very little research has been undertaken on this topic, owing to its complexity and the cost of such serious comparative research. However, given the very different extents of coverage, benefit generosity, targeting, and redistributional effect, it might be expected that very different welfare outcomes are possible across the European continent.

Using the ECHP, a team of researchers has undertaken such an analysis (Heady *et al.*, 2001). Owing to limitations of the ECHP database, this analysis cannot distinguish between different pension schemes (public, occupational, private etc) and is not able to take account of different taxation or social insurance systems. However, it constitutes the only real data available at this time.

Table 3 shows total social transfers as a proportion of household disposable income. What is noticeable here, is how diverse the picture is, total social transfers ranging from 19.9% for Greece

Table 3: Social transfers as a percentage of household disposable income in thirteen EU member-states (1994)

Country	All social transfers	Pensions	All social transfers excluding pensions	Sickness and invalidity benefits	Family benefits	Unemployment benefits	Other benefits
Austria	29.3	19.5	9.8	1.3	6.2	1.4	0.8
Belgium	32.7	18.9	13.8	3.0	6.6	3.8	0.4
Denmark	27.2	10.9	16.3	2.8	4.4	5.3	3.7
France	28.2	18.4	9.8	1.7	4.0	2.1	2.0
Germany*	26.2	19.0	7.2	na	na	2.4	4.8
Greece	19.9	18.3	1.6	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.3
Ireland	26.8	14.9	12.0	1.9	3.2	5.9	1.0
Italy	26.5	23.4	3.1	1.8	0.4	0.7	0.3
Luxembourg	25.2	16.7	8.5	1.8	5.1	0.4	1.2
Portugal	20.5	15.3	5.2	1.8	1.7	1.5	0.3
Netherlands	27.8	14.9	12.9	4.4	3.0	3.0	2.4
Spain	25.8	17.5	8.3	3.9	0.2	3.7	0.5
United Kingdom	23.9	11.7	12.2	3.0	3.6	0.5	5.0

SOURCE: Heady et al. (2001: Table 1)

Table 4: Impact of particular social transfers on aggregate poverty in thirteen EU member-states (1994, Foster-Greer-Thorbecke index, a=2)

Country	Pensions		Sickness and invalidity benefits		Family benefits		Unemployment benefits		Other benefits	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Austria	83.0	4.0	14.5	0.2	44.4	4.4	17.7	0.9	5.2	0.2
Belgium	85.0	5.9	37.9	1.4	46.0	4.8	48.0	3.3	8.5	0.7
Denmark	91.2	11.8	64.2	2.7	32.6	1.5	66.4	3.8	57.9	6.1
France	88.0	6.4	27.2	1.1	44.9	4.1	31.6	1.7	43.2	4.7
Germany*	83.7	4.4	na	na	na	na	31.8	1.7	46.5	3.8
Greece	81.0	9.7	13.5	0.8	7.6	0.6	1.7	0.3	1.9	0.0
Ireland	80.9	5.0	44.1	1.9	55.1	6.0	77.8	12.3	14.1	0.8
Italy	82.6	5.1	20.7	0.6	1.8	0.0	8.5	0.6	2.1	0.0
Luxembourg	86.3	3.2	33.3	0.6	46.5	5.7	8.1	0.6	24.0	1.1
Netherlands	86.9	2.3	62.3	1.7	25.0	2.3	50.0	1.7	51.0	3.4
Portugal	74.5	8.0	20.7	1.2	10.3	0.9	11.6	0.4	3.0	0.2
Spain	84.0	5.2	52.1	3.2	6.0	0.4	48.6	4.4	9.1	0.8
United Kingdom	80.5	7.1	38.1	1.1	49.6	4.8	12.3	0.7	71.0	9.0

SOURCE: Heady et al. (2001: Table 7)

A: Proportional decline in aggregate poverty due to the benefit (% , ceteris paribus)

B: Increase in poverty due to a 10% cut in the benefit (%)

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to 32.7% for Belgium, with pensions ranging from 10.9% in Denmark to 23.4% in Italy, and non-pension social transfers ranging from 1.6% in Greece to 16.3% in Denmark. Non-pension expenditure is extremely low in Greece, Italy and Portugal; family benefits are extraordinarily low in all four southern European countries, whilst Spain takes second highest place after the Netherlands for expenditure on sickness and invalidity.

Looking at the social transfer per income decile, some astonishing differences are visible: whereas in almost all countries, the top decile receives the highest mean social transfers, in three countries (Austria, Italy and Greece) transfers rise as income rises, whereas in Denmark, Ireland and the UK the opposite occurs. This occurs because of the dominant role of pensions in the first group, which benefit is hardly redistributive. Heady *et al.* also examine the effect of social transfers in reducing inequality: they conclude that Denmark, Belgium and the Netherlands have the most impact, with the least in Portugal, Greece and Italy. The determinant of this is largely how much expenditure is on non-pension transfers. Looking at the effect of transfers on poverty, the greatest effectiveness is shown overall by the Netherlands and Denmark, the least by Portugal and Greece; for non-pension transfers, these latter two are joined by Italy whilst Denmark is the clear leader. Spain is close to Germany, France and Belgium in these indicators. Table 4 below shows the role of specific welfare programmes. With the exception of family benefits, this confirms Gough's view that Spain belongs in the continental social policy category. Italy, on the other hand, shows little activity other than pensions expenditure.

Clearly, these results are suitable material for cluster analysis, of the type adumbrated by Gough (2001). In the absence of this, we can provisionally conclude that the redistributive aspects of cash transfers in the EU appear to be clustered similarly to social assistance regimes, as shown below:

Denmark, Netherlands
France, Belgium, Germany, Spain
Ireland, UK
Austria
Portugal, Greece, [Italy]

3) PATTERNS OF IMMIGRATION INTO EUROPE

What have been the experiences of Western European countries with regard to immigration flows over the last quarter century? There has been a tendency in the political science literature to describe the post-1974 period as the "stop to immigration"; however, this is what Papademetriou more accurately calls "an official if fictive 'end' to its temporary labor program" (Papademetriou and Hamilton, 1996:10) in his account of France. The massive shocks of oil price increases did, of course, lead to immediate responses – and not only in terms of immigration policy. The crucial points to be made are the following:

- ❑ Immigration has never been 'stopped' into Western Europe – not even labour migration
- ❑ With higher unemployment and increased participation rates of the indigenous populations, there is no longer a *perceived* need for unskilled immigrant labour to cope with surplus demand
- ❑ Skilled workers are increasingly being recruited, for which there is increasing demand
- ❑ Family reunion has been the major type of immigration post-1974
- ❑ Spontaneous asylum-seeking has been the other major type
- ❑ Illegal migration has continued to increase, and the illegal migrants appear to find low skilled work in European labour markets
- ❑ Southern European countries have turned into immigration countries in the last 15 years

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ICMPD gives an estimate of total factual immigration to the EU + EFTA for the period 1985-1993. Table 5 re-presents their data.

Table 5

Total factual immigration into Western Europe, 1985-1993 [000s]

	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Registered immign	650	720	760	910	1,080	980	1,020	1,240	1,380
Asylum-seekers	165	195	173	221	314	434	554	690	551
Displaced [Yug]							42	370	70
Ethnic immign rights	50	53	101	217	392	417	239	252	242
Illegal immign [est]	50	65	55	90	150	210	280	370	350
TOTAL	915	1,033	1,089	1,438	1,936	2,041	2,135	2,922	2,593

SOURCE: ICMPD (1994): Table 1, p 19

These data show very clearly that all forms of immigration increased massively from 1985 to 1993, not just asylum seekers as is often claimed. Salt (1995:443) calculates an increase in immigrant stocks in Western Europe from 14.9m in 1988 to 18.7m in 1992, an increase of about 26% over 4 years. His calculation is based on recorded data, however, and does not estimate the impact of illegal migration.

Table 6 gives more recent data of foreign migrant flows into some European countries. It shows very clearly that for most countries, the inflows peaked in the early 1990s; and that the biggest receiver of immigrants was Germany. Two countries, UK and Denmark, show increasing immigration over the 1990s, in contrast with the rest of northern Europe.

Looking at Table 7, inflows of asylum seekers, it can be seen that for most countries the figures peaked in the early 1990s, with a few exceptions such as the UK and Netherlands. In the case of Germany, the country which bore the brunt of spontaneous asylum seeking in Europe, the asylum reforms appear to have brought the phenomenon under control. There is some limited evidence to suggest that asylum seekers are attracted to labour market conditions, as well as to more receptive regimes, and this might explain the upturn in numbers going to the UK, Belgium and Netherlands.

Table 7

Inflows of asylum seekers, 1990-2000 [000s]

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Austria	23	27	16	5	5	6	7	7	14	20	18
Belgium	13	15	18	27	15	12	12	12	22	36	43
Denmark	5	5	14	14	7	5	6	5	6	7	10
Finland	3	2	4	2	1	1	1	1	1	3	3
France	55	47	29	28	26	20	17	21	22	31	39
Germany	193	256	438	323	127	128	116	104	99	95	79
Greece	4	3	2	1	1	1	2	4	3	2	3
Italy	5	32	3	1	2	2	1	1	11	33	18
Nethlds	21	22	20	35	53	29	23	34	45	43	44
Spain	9	8	12	13	12	6	5	4	7	8	7
Sweden	30	27	84	38	19	9	6	10	13	11	16
UK	38	73	32	28	42	55	37	42	58	91	98

SOURCE: OECD (2001): Table A.1.3

Table 6 *Inflows of foreign population into selected OECD countries*

Thousands

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
<i>Inflow data based on population registers:</i>										
Belgium	50.5	54.1	55.1	53.0	56.0	53.1	51.9	49.2	50.7	57.8
Denmark	15.1	17.5	16.9	15.4	15.6	33.0	24.7	20.4	21.3	..
Finland	6.5	12.4	10.4	10.9	7.6	7.3	7.5	8.1	8.3	7.9
Germany	842.4	920.5	1 207.6	986.9	774.0	788.3	708.0	615.3	605.5	673.9
Hungary	37.2	23.0	15.1	16.4	12.8	13.2	12.8	12.2	12.3	15.0
Japan	223.8	258.4	267.0	234.5	237.5	209.9	225.4	274.8	265.5	281.9
Luxembourg	9.3	10.0	9.8	9.2	9.2	9.6	9.2	9.4	10.6	11.8
Netherlands	81.3	84.3	83.0	87.6	68.4	67.0	77.2	76.7	81.7	78.4
Norway	15.7	16.1	17.2	22.3	17.9	16.5	17.2	22.0	26.7	32.2
Sweden	53.2	43.9	39.5	54.8	74.7	36.1	29.3	33.4	35.7	34.6
Switzerland	101.4	109.8	112.1	104.0	91.7	87.9	74.3	72.8	74.9	85.8
<i>Inflow data based on residence permits or on other sources:</i>										
Australia	121.2	121.7	107.4	76.3	69.8	87.4	99.1	85.8	77.3	84.1
Canada	214.2	230.8	252.8	255.8	223.9	212.9	226.1	216.0	174.1	189.8
France	102.4	109.9	116.6	99.2	91.5	77.0	75.5	102.4	138.1	104.4
Greece	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	38.2	..
Ireland	..	..	..	..	13.3	13.6	21.5	23.5	20.8	21.6
Italy	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	111.0	268.0
New Zealand	27.4	27.2	25.5	28.9	36.5	46.7	58.6	52.0	38.7	36.2
Portugal	..	..	13.7	9.9	5.7	5.0	3.6	3.3	6.5	10.5
United Kingdom	..	..	203.9	190.3	193.6	206.3	216.4	236.9	258.0	276.9
United States	1 536.5	1 827.2	974.0	904.3	804.4	720.5	915.9	798.4	660.5	646.6

Note: Data from population registers are not fully comparable because the criteria governing who gets registered differ from country to country. Counts for the Netherlands, Norway and especially Germany include substantial numbers of asylum seekers.

SOURCE: OECD (2001): Table A.1.1

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Aggregated data for the decade of the 1990s shows some interesting patterns across the EU. Table 8 below summarises some detailed UNHCR data. Several features stand out almost immediately as being of interest: some states grant almost no recognitions other than Geneva Convention; the range of full Convention recognitions is 1-25%, and the range of all statuses is even wider at 8-74%; there are some very different dominant nationalities applying across the EU. Categorising countries into three groups helps to make sense of all this: they are

- 1) Low Convention recognitions, very low or zero other statuses
- 2) High Convention recognitions, very low or zero other statuses
- 3) Average Convention recognitions, with very high total recognitions

Using this framework, countries are distributed as follows:

[Group 1] Austria, Germany, Greece, Spain ,Portugal

[Group 2] Belgium, France, Ireland, Italy

[Group 3] Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Sweden, UK

Although there is some indication that the high-recognition countries are actually receiving refugees from war-torn zones, whereas Group 1 countries have a high proportion of questionable nationalities such as Romanian, there is not such a clear-cut picture of differential asylum seekers. For example, Austria and Belgium do not look so different in their receipt of asylum seekers, yet Belgium has double the recognition rate. There may be a pattern of asylum seekers choosing destinations for specific reasons, but it is unclear that networking provides such accurate information for this.

Table 8
Asylum Applications, Recognitions and Principal Nationalities in the EU, 1990-99

country	Asylum applications 1990-99 [000s]	Geneva Convn. recognition [%]	Total recog- nitions [%]	Principal nationalities			
Austria	129.7	12	13	Yugoslavia	Romania	Iraq	Iran
Belgium	180.4	25	25	Yugoslavia	Romania	Congo	India
Denmark	112.5	18	74	Afghanistan	Bosnia-H.	Iraq	Somalia
Finland	18.3	1	51	Yugoslavia	Somalia	Russia	
France	296.9	20	20	Turkey	Romania	Iran	Sri Lanka
Germany	1879.6	9	10	Yugoslavia	Romania	Turkey	
Greece	24.6	9	12	Iraq	Turkey	Albania	Iran
Ireland	18.4	15	18	Romania	Nigeria	Congo	Algeria
Italy	89.5	13	16	Albania	Yugoslavia	Iraq	Romania
Netherlands	321.5	15	39	Iraq	Somalia	Yugoslavia	Afghanistan
Portugal	5.6	5	12	Romania	[insignif]	[insignif]	[insignif]
Spain	83.6	6	8	Romania	Poland	Algeria	Liberia
Sweden	245.5	3	50	Yugoslavia	Bosnia-H.	Iraq	Somalia
UK	374.1	12	43	Yugoslavia	Somalia	Sri Lanka	
EU	3746.4	11	21	Yugoslavia	Romania	Turkey	Iraq

SOURCE: UNHCR (2000)

Immigration by type

Aggregated data tell us relatively little about the immigration practices of each country. The most important distinction – that of type of immigration – is rarely examined in comparative discussions of immigration into Western Europe. Although it is probably true that most immigrants end up in the labour force anyway, even if illegally so, such data tell us something of the behaviour of the state. The state apparatus gives very specific legal statuses to immigrants, some of which are determined freely [labour and organised refugees], some constitutionally set [ethnic grounds], and others which are determined specifically through the bureaucratic implementation of national rules [family reunion and asylum]. The relative weights of these, although complex to analyse, should be able to tell us something of the nature and priorities of each country's immigration system.

Table 9 – the most complete data I have been able to locate – shows immigration by type in most European countries in 1991.

Table 9
Immigration in 1991 according to grounds for residence, by %

	labour	family reunion	ethnic grounds	organised refugees	asylum-seekers
Austria	43*	12		0,5	45
Denmark	12	32		3	52
Finland	19	21	35	6	19
France	47	19	15	5	14
Germany	20	14	20	2	44
Netherlands	33	17	8	2	40
Norway	29	36		7	28
Sweden	7	49		4	40
Switzerland	27	31		1	42
UK	29	40	4	5	23

SOURCE: ICMPD (1994): Table 5, p. 55

Several outstanding features emerge from these data: the high proportion of family reunion in two countries, UK and Sweden; the very low proportion of asylum seekers admitted to the territory in France, Finland and UK; very few workers in Sweden, very high numbers in France and Austria. In comparison with USA, Canada and Australia, the European countries show much lower rates of family reunion, much higher proportions of spontaneous asylum seekers, and almost negligible rates of organised refugee transfer. The proportions of labour migration are comparable, with the exceptions of Sweden and Denmark.

Looking to another data source, OECD, I have compiled Table 10 which shows data for the UK, Switzerland, France, Denmark and Sweden for the years 1990, 1996 and 1997. These data differ from Table 9 in that they include only those persons granted residence permits of more than one year, i.e. specifically excluding asylum seekers. Even so, there are major inconsistencies with the data in Table 9, which are not easily explicable. In particular, the very high labour immigration into France is not apparent here. Data presented by Papademetriou (1996:13) tend to confirm the ICMPD proportions for France, i.e. very high figures for both permanent and seasonal workers in 1991, even though these declined throughout the 1990s. A close reading of the OECD footnotes reveals that the French family reunion figures contain *estimates* of the number of EU family members, which data are excluded by both ICMPD and Papademetriou. Given that EU nationals constitute one third of all foreigners in France, and also have the automatic right of family reunion, this makes the figures for France in Table 10 almost meaningless.

Table 10

New immigrants granted residence rights, by category [%]

country	year	workers	Family reunion	Refugees
UK	1992	48	43	9
	1996	54	41	5
	1997	51	44	5
	1999	46	46	8
Switzerland	1990	47	51	2
	1996	47	47	6
	1997	49	45	6
	1999	50	47	3
France	1990	27	57	16
	1996	23	69	8
	1997	22	68	10
	1999	18	59	23
Denmark	1990	20	58	22
	1996	15	44	41
	1997	nd	nd	nd
	1999	17	74	9
Sweden	1990	2	62	36
	1996	3	77	20
	1997	3	50	47
	1999	2	78	20

SOURCE: derived from OECD (1998): Chart 1.2, p 18; OECD (2000): Graphique 1.2, p 20, OECD (2001): Chart 1.2, p 21

Looking at these data of state acceptance of immigrants, we can see two predominant approaches: a labour migrant importing type [UK and Switzerland] and a refugee-accepting type [Denmark and Sweden]. All have substantial family reunion, although slightly lower than USA, Canada and Australia.

Trying to put together the data from all three Tables, we can reasonably conclude that all European countries have had massive increases in immigration over the period 1985-1998, that the increases have been of all types of immigration, and that there are vastly different responses to asylum applications and labour immigration. Given the extraordinarily poor quality of OECD comparative data capable of differentiating types of immigration, it is difficult to draw conclusions much more concrete than this. Further, the absence of Germany from these data – the most important immigration country in Europe – is a massive impediment to serious analysis. A further problem with the data is that they aggregate EU nationals and other aliens: this too is extraordinary given the existence of Citizenship of the Union and accompanying rights.

Immigration by country of origin

As well as the categories of migrants admitted, it may be helpful to look at the major countries of origin. These may provide some evidence pertaining to either immigration pressures faced by the country [e.g. through geographical location] or alternatively immigrant choices made by the state.

Table 11
Immigration by principal countries of origin, 1997

Belgium	France 14% Neth. 12% Morocco 8%	France	Algeria 15% Morocco 13% Turkey 6% Tunisia 4% Zaire 3%	Sweden	Frm Yug 12% Iraq 11% Finland 8% Bosnia 6% Iran 5%
Denmark	Somalia 10% Turkey 5% Iceland 5% Germany 5%	Germany	Poland 12% Turkey 9% Italy 7% Form Yug. 5%	Switzerland	Frmr Yug 17% Germany 12% Italy 7% France 7% Portugal 6%
Finland	USSR 30% Sweden 8% Estonia 7% Iraq 7% Somalia 6%	Netherlands	Turkey 8% Germany 7% Morocco 6% UK 6%	UK	USA 18% Australia 12% India 7% S Africa 6%

SOURCE: OECD (2000), Graphique 1.3

Although there are dangers in making inferences about immigration types from countries of origin, there are some certainties here: that EU nationals do not include refugees or asylum seekers, but are usually skilled or semi-skilled workers; that certain countries are clearly sources of refugees [e.g. Bosnia, Somalia, Iraq]. These data tend to confirm the previous analyses of very high refugee acceptances by Sweden, Denmark and Finland; predominantly skilled labour immigration into UK, Switzerland and Belgium; and family reunion, whilst high in all countries, dominating in France and the Netherlands. The situation in Germany is ambiguous, and in the absence of comparative data on the composition of migrant flows, looks rather like a mix of family members, Aussiedler, asylum seekers and various types of worker. Over the period 1996-2000, immigration into Germany has been 600-600,000 with asylum seekers at around 100,000 a year – slightly lower than Aussiedler (OECD, 2001: 170).

Clusters of policy?

Attempting to make sense of this complexity and partial data, I suggest three variables which can be used to evaluate immigration policy. These are:

generosity and extent of family reunification;
refugee acceptance; and
extent of labour immigration.

Putting each country on a scale of 1 [least generous] to 3, the following chart can be estimated:

Table 12
Three variables for immigration policy evaluation

country	<i>Family reunif.</i>	<i>refugees</i>	<i>Labour import</i>
A	1	1	2
B	3	2	3
Dk	3	3	2
Fi	3	3	?
F	3	2	2
G	3	1	2
Gr	1	1	3*
Irl	1	2	1
I	2	2	2*
N	3	3	2
P	?	1	2*
Sp	1	1	2*
Sw	3	3	1
UK	3	3	3

Note: * represents predominantly illegal flows

With these three variables, it is possible to categorise countries into groups, which display significant common features. There are some substantial overlaps, e.g. between 4 and 5, as well as 5 and 6, and these have been put adjacent to show their nearness. Although this is a preliminary exercise, it appears to be very close to categorisations of welfare regimes. The only odd grouping, is in fact Group 1; however, the data seem to support the existence of such a group.

Table 13
European countries in cluster groups

Group type	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Austria	Portugal	Ireland	Belgium	UK	Sweden
	Greece	Spain		France		Denmark
		Italy		Germany		Netherlands
						Finland

4) IMMIGRATION AND WELFARE REGIMES: do they matter?

The above material has demonstrated the congruity, largely, of immigration regimes and welfare regimes. Why should this congruity matter? If we return for a moment to the existing theoretical literature, we find no recognition of this linkage. The nearest is the rights-based argument, as expressed by Gran and Clifford – that ‘generous’ welfare countries will exhibit increased immigration. This claim they did not find to be substantiated empirically. The other argument offered, in the USA literature and also in Brücker *et al.*, is that of “welfare magnets” – that migrants are attracted to generous welfare states. However, if it is precisely those generous welfare states which are also more likely to admit asylum seekers, that analysis crumbles. This essentially is the major claim being made here: that structural patterns of state behaviour are actually shaping migrants’ behaviour, often in ways which are suboptimal for both the migrants and the receiving countries. A further blow to the welfare magnets hypothesis must be that those “magnetic” countries are not attracting disproportionate shares of asylum seekers, as shown in Table 7 above.

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The country which has suffered the largest increased inflows is the UK, despite increasingly repressive measure to discourage such migration. Rather than welfare, it seems to be employment prospects coupled with minimal welfare support which are attractive. Further evidence for this latter claim comes from the empirical research showing that all migrants in Denmark, Sweden and Germany actually assimilate *out of* welfare dependence, despite rather more generous welfare systems than could ever be envisaged by refugees in the USA.

Thus, the coinciding of welfare and immigration regimes is a matter of concern, if it does either or both of two things: attract more unskilled refugees and migrants to countries which cannot provide suitable employment; or if the system fails to accommodate the immigrants in an appropriate way. The evidence suggests that the latter is really the issue. If we turn to Table 14 below, there are clear problems of low participation in the labour market in some countries. This is especially the case in Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands and perhaps the UK; for female immigrants, it is the case in all northern European countries. In southern Europe, the participation rates are either similar or higher than the native population (except in Portugal). Examining patterns of unemployment, a similar picture emerges with much higher levels of unemployment than natives, except in southern Europe (again, Portugal excepted). Chart 1 shows the data graphically – also showing, in this regard, how different northern Europe is from USA, Australia and Canada.

How do these data fit into our framework of analysis? Considering the countries with very high levels of unemployment, these are all immigration Type 6 countries, followed by Type 4. Given the advanced levels of economic development in those countries, it is unclear how unskilled refugees will fit into the labour market. Precarious employment, with long periods of unemployment, are known to pertain for such migrants. High marginal tax rates, interacting badly with the welfare system, are also thought to be deterrents to labour force participation there. In southern Europe, on the contrary, we observe low rates of unemployment. Is this because immigrants are so well-integrated, that they have already assimilated into the labour market like natives? Clearly not: it is, rather, a combination of factors which leads to this result. First, that access to the formal labour market is highly restricted, with relatively few work permits being given. Secondly, that the thriving informal economy is periodically diminished with legalisation programmes, but these seem to have only short term effects. Thirdly, that access to the welfare system is also highly restricted, and (with the exception of Spain) benefit levels are very low. Thus, for our two extreme cases – Types 6 and 2 – the structural reception of migrants looks inappropriate.

The question arises, is any of the European countries dealing well with immigration? It is not clear that this question can be answered without detailed empirical work. However, the key to management of immigration into Europe seems to lie in escaping hard-fought national structures of policy management – the ‘persistence of institutional variations’, as Flora puts it (Flora, 1986: 19). The continuing fiasco of non-co-ordination of migration into Europe (e.g. the Dublin Convention, Schengen, etc.) has done nothing for labour resource allocation across the continent. Skilled migrants are working in unskilled, often illegal work, whilst unskilled migrants face precarious living unless they are fortunate enough to have found their way into advanced welfare systems. The challenge of immigration for Europe is a dual one: a challenge to national idiosyncratic traditions, and a challenge to labour market structures. Both look seriously in need of reform: perhaps mass immigration will be the catalyst for change that can re-invigorate slumbering European economies.

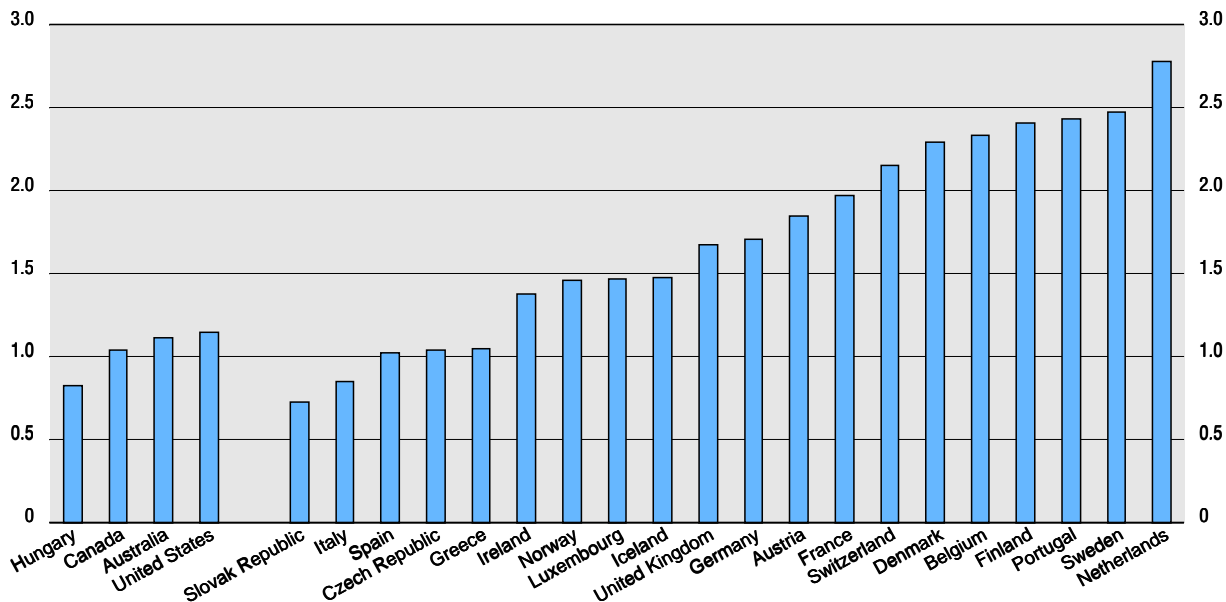
Table 14. Participation rate and unemployment rate of nationals and foreigners by sex in selected OECD countries, 1999-2000 average

	Participation rate				Unemployment rate			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	Nationals	Foreigners	Nationals	Foreigners	Nationals	Foreigners	Nationals	Foreigners
Austria	80.5	86.1	63.1	63.4	4.3	8.3	4.2	9.2
Belgium	74.1	73.0	58.2	40.7	5.3	16.6	8.5	20.1
Czech Republic	80.4	88.6	64.4	61.6	7.2	8.2	10.3	10.1
Denmark	85.6	73.2	77.2	53.8	4.0	13.0	5.4	8.5
Finland	79.8	81.1	74.4	58.0	10.4	27.0	12.1	28.0
France	75.6	76.4	63.5	48.5	8.7	19.7	12.5	25.7
Germany	80.1	77.9	64.8	49.9	7.3	14.9	8.4	13.2
Greece	78.9	89.3	50.3	57.6	7.4	7.6	17.2	18.5
Ireland	81.1	76.1	55.7	54.4	5.0	6.3	4.7	7.7
Italy	74.8	89.0	46.3	52.1	8.6	5.3	15.5	16.9
Luxembourg	75.5	77.9	47.3	56.7	1.2	2.8	2.3	4.3
Netherlands	84.8	67.2	66.4	44.6	2.2	7.7	3.9	10.5
Norway	86.0	84.5	77.7	70.7	3.4	5.9	3.2	3.6
Portugal	83.7	81.3	66.7	68.5	3.5	9.6	4.9	11.2
Slovak Republic	76.6	79.5	62.6	63.9	17.7	24.4	17.3	8.5
Spain	77.2	83.8	49.8	57.3	10.3	13.2	21.7	17.7
Sweden	80.5	65.1	75.3	59.4	6.6	17.5	5.5	14.9
Switzerland	93.0	89.6	74.8	68.4	1.6	5.6	2.5	7.0
United Kingdom	84.9	76.2	69.2	56.0	6.3	10.9	4.9	8.3
Australia (August 2000) ¹	75.3	67.3	58.9	49.1	6.6	6.4	5.6	6.7
Canada (1996) ¹	73.8	68.4	60.2	52.9	10.3	9.9	9.5	11.6
Hungary ¹	67.9	73.0	52.5	53.2	7.4	5.5	6.0	5.6
United States (March 2000) ¹	73.4	79.6	61.6	53.7	4.4	4.5	4.2	5.5

1. The data refer to the native and foreign-born populations.

SOURCE: OECD (2001): Table I.14

Chart 1. **Proportion of foreigners in total unemployment relative to their share in the labour force**
1999-2000 average



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