

When and How Does Solidarity Become Selective? The Political Translation of Immigrants' Welfare Use in the Netherlands, Canada, and Sweden

EDWARD A. KONING *Queen's University / University of Guelph*

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You need to make it as unattractive as possible to take advantage of the system. Because that, in my mind, is the worst category: [...] People who detest Dutch society [...] but at the same time want to make use of our benefits and get a subsidy for everything.

C. van Nieuwenhuizen
(VVD, Netherlands)

Our emphasis isn't on placing restrictions once people are here. Our emphasis is on setting policy in place where those restrictions are unnecessary. [It is much better to make] a decision at the front end versus having to regulate at the back end.

R. Dykstra
(CPC, Canada)

The difficulties to integrate into society are work and language. So you have to strengthen that up. You have to get them in contact with a company, you have to give them some skills so they can work [...], you have to give them the language, and they need a social network.

M. Cederbratt
(*Moderaterna*, Sweden)

(interviews NET01, CAN01, SWE02)¹

While events in the 1980s led a number of scholars to conclude that welfare systems are becoming more inclusive of non-citizens (Hammar, 1990; Soysal, 1994; Sassen, 1996), the subsequent two decades have, in some countries at least, shown an opposite development. From Austria to the United Kingdom, and from Denmark to the United States, policy-makers have recently implemented reforms that make the welfare state *less* inclusive of immigrants. These reforms come in many guises and entail different types of exclusion. Some disentitle (a subgroup of) immigrants altogether, such as the exclusion of non-citizens from food stamps and Supplemental Security Income in the United States (Fragomen, 1997). Others exclude immigrants temporarily by introducing

or extending residence requirements. Denmark, for example, has decided to couple the level of a social assistance benefit to the time the applicant has spent on Danish territory (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003). Yet other reforms make access to benefits more onerous for immigrants than for other residents, such as the decision in Germany to only extend unemployment and social assistance benefits to immigrants who successfully follow integration courses (SOPEMI, 2004, p. 107).

Unfortunately, we know little about the origins of these policy reforms. Even though a number of scholars have recently directed their attention to these developments, few have attempted to develop a systematic explanation of the conditions under which they are most likely to arise. This is a serious omission.

Political proponents tend to publicly justify these exclusions as a response to ‘incontrovertible facts’ about immigrants’ use of social benefits. Immigrants make so much use of social programs, so the explanation goes, that unlimited access will surely make a redistributive welfare state an unsustainable project. Indeed, in the last few years immigration sceptics in various countries have called for economic estimates of immigrants’ ‘price tag’ to illustrate the need for exclusion (Halvorsen, 2007; House of Lords, 2008; Van der Geest & Dietvorst, 2010; Grubel & Grady, 2011).

This line of reasoning enjoys much currency among scholars and public commentators as well. Commonly labelled the ‘Progressive’s Dilemma’, virtually all observers agree that there is an inherent tension between liberal immigration policy and generous social policy (Bommes & Geddes, 2000; Alesina & Glaeser, 2004). Many take this argument one step further and suggest that this tension necessitates the differentiation in social rights or the downright exclusion of (groups of) migrants from certain benefits, even though some (Engelen, 2003; Goodhart, 2004) are more explicit about this than others (Freeman, 1986; 2009; Koopmans, 2010). Without having been verified in any systematic empirical research, then, the suggestion that limiting immigrants’ access to social benefits is primarily a response to economic imperatives is pervasive in political, public, and academic debate.

This paper offers a different explanation. In brief, I argue that more important than the actual level of immigrant welfare use is the way the economics of immigrant integration are translated in political discourse. After all, policy-makers who are eager to avoid a large immigrant welfare clientele can consider at least three other strategies than decreasing immigrants’ social rights: (1) making admission policies more selective so as to admit fewer and/or more highly skilled immigrants; (2) investing in integration policies and immigrant-targeted active labour market policies to enhance immigrants’ chances on the labour market; and (3) implementing across-the-board welfare reforms to achieve an overall reduction in social spending. In other words, the key puzzle here is why in some settings politicians take the Progressive’s Dilemma as a reason to disentitle immigrants while their counterparts elsewhere prefer one of the three alternative strategies.

Political, institutional, and cultural factors offer an answer to this puzzle. More specifically, it is where a sizeable and well-organized anti-immigrant party actively politicizes the costs of immigration, where the structure of the welfare state is likely to

Abstract. While a growing body of scholarly literature notes that some Western welfare states have recently reduced immigrants' access to social benefits and programs, few have attempted to explain when and how we can expect such exclusionary reforms to take place. In the absence of systematic research on this subject, one intuitive explanation enjoys much currency: disentanglement is a response to the 'burden' immigrants place on the welfare system, and therefore, exclusionary reforms are most likely to be implemented where immigrants are most overrepresented among welfare recipients. This paper posits, instead, that rather than the actual patterns of immigrants' welfare dependence, it is the political translation of those patterns that is key to understanding when policy-makers decide to reduce newcomers' social rights. More specifically, it is in a context of a vocal anti-immigrant party, an exclusionary national identity, and a non-universal welfare regime that politicians are most likely to respond to the tension between open borders and national welfare benefits by making it more difficult for immigrants to access social programs. This paper demonstrates the merit of this theory in a brief qualitative comparison of Canada, the Netherlands, and Sweden that draws on evidence from policy documents, parliamentary debates, and qualitative interviews with civil servants and politicians.

trigger questions about the 'deservingness' of benefit recipients, and where national identity is conceptualized in exclusionary terms that we are most likely to see pleas for a reduction of immigrants' access to social benefits and programs.

Through a qualitative comparison of the Netherlands, Canada, and Sweden drawing on evidence from policy documents, parliamentary debates, and qualitative interviews I have conducted with civil servants and Members of Parliament, I aim to illustrate the merit of this explanation. As the opening quotes show, policy-makers in these three countries have very different ideas about the best strategy to avoid the overreliance of immigrants on social programs and benefits.² Whereas Dutch politicians tend to favour excluding newcomers from welfare benefits as a way to decrease the immigrant 'burden' on the welfare state, politicians in Canada and Sweden predominately favour a selective admission policy and a formidable set of integration policies, respectively.

This paper is structured as follows. The next section describes my theory of immigrant-excluding welfare reforms in some more detail. I then discuss why the Netherlands, Canada, and Sweden constitute a good set of cases to explore the merit of this theory. The subsequent section gives a brief overview of relevant policy developments in these three countries, after which the final section shows how the differences in these developments can be understood by the very different ways that the economics of immigration have been translated politically.

A theory of immigrant-excluding welfare reforms

As mentioned above, while a number of scholars have observed that immigrants are increasingly barred from benefits in some countries but not in others, little effort has

been undertaken to offer a theoretical account of these differences. This is unfortunate not only because of the obvious social relevance of these policy changes, but also because close inspection reveals that the most intuitive and often-heard explanation for these reforms falls short. As tempting as the assumption might be that pleas for exclusion have been loudest where immigrants are most overrepresented among welfare recipients, it is a misleading one.

Of course, economic factors are not irrelevant. Many politicians refer to the actual overrepresentation of immigrants among long-term recipients of social assistance benefits in advocating restrictive measures. Moreover, when available, politicians happily use such economic facts to argue that immigrants have a welfare penchant. Such an apparently evidence-based argument³, in turn, is likely to convince especially those voters with a nativist sense of entitlement that immigrants are less deserving of benefits than native-born citizens, and should therefore be excluded from, or have limited access to, the system of social programs (Bommes & Geddes, 2000). This is even more likely where deservingness perceptions become racialized (Wright, 1977; Gilens, 1999; Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001).

However, economic facts are not automatically translated into political discourse. In some political contexts, the costs of immigration are carefully kept off the table (Messina, 2007, p. 86). In others, the economic facts are violently exaggerated. Moreover, as mentioned above, even when immigrant use of welfare benefits is prominently on the political agenda, it is not self-evident that this leads the public and the political elite to conclude that immigrants should be barred from those programs. In some political contexts, a high reliance on welfare among immigrants is taken as a sign that the state should do *more* for immigrants, for example investing in integration assistance. In order to better understand how immigrants' reliance on welfare programs becomes politically translated, then, we need to look at three country characteristics: anti-immigrant parties, the welfare regime, and national identity.

*Anti-immigrant parties.*⁴ First, the presence of a well-organized anti-immigrant party (AIP) makes (economic) concerns about immigration a more prominent part of political discourse, and as such, increases the likelihood that restrictions in immigrants' access to the welfare state are being debated.⁵ The effects of AIPs are twofold. First, by frequently bringing up problems associated with immigration, and in particular, the overrepresentation of immigrants among welfare dependents, anti-immigrant elites are able to *prime* the issue, bringing it to the forefront of everyone's mind (Rydgren, 2003; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). Moreover, AIPs do not only frequently bring up immigration, but also *frame* it in a way that is more conducive to spreading anti-immigrant sentiment. By presenting the immigration issue consistently in a frame that emphasizes negative considerations over positive ones, AIPs increase the chance that the public will associate immigration with societal problems. In fact, many commentators are convinced that these parties deliberately foster anti-immigrant sentiment out of electoral considerations (Messina, 2007, pp. 73-96).⁶ Second, AIPs do not only affect public attitudes, but they also influence the strategic behaviour of other political parties. Faced with the electoral success of AIPs, mainstream parties in some countries have adopted a more restrictive

tone and agenda on immigration issues as well (Norris, 2005; Van Spanje, 2010; Bale, Green-Pedersen, Krouwel, Luther, & Sitter, 2010)..

Welfare regime. Second, differentiating between newcomers and native-born citizens seems a more feasible strategy in non-universal welfare regimes that pay close attention to the ‘deservingness’ of benefit recipients. Walter Korpi (1980) was one of the first to assert that the chance that welfare recipients are seen as undeserving is low in universal welfare states, because the number of people that are simultaneously contributing to and benefiting from the system is high. In subsequent years, many elaborations on and verifications of this argument followed (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Evans, 1996; Rothstein, 1998; Matthews & Erickson, 2008; Larsen, 2008).⁷ Building on this insight, a number of authors have therefore theorized that universal settings are likely to mute suggestions to exclude immigrants from the welfare state (Banting, 2000). In line with this expectation, Mau and Burkhardt find that (after controlling for many relevant variables) in social democratic welfare states respondents are much more likely to say that immigrants should be given the same rights than in the Christian democratic welfare regime (Mau & Burkhardt, 2009, p. 226). Similarly, Crepaz and Damron (2009) find that the more comprehensive a welfare state is, the more tolerant its inhabitants tend to be towards immigrants.

National identity. A final country characteristic that is of relevance here is the nature of national identity. Since anti-immigrant elites tend to infuse their exclusionary discourse with appeals to nationalism (Fennema, 1997; Messina, 2007, pp. 54-72), they will have greater difficulty in selling the message that immigration is a danger to the country if the protection of minorities or a history of immigration is a crucial component of the national identity. Eoin O’Malley (2008) maintains that this is the reason why an anti-immigrant party has never been successful in Ireland. Nationalists tend to vote for Sinn Féin, which is a decidedly pro-minority party because Irish identity is tightly linked to the history of being a political minority struggling for equal rights. Similarly, Danielle Every and Martha Augoustinos (2008, p. 577) show that Australian politicians often invoke the “inclusive, open, and civic” character of their national identity to explain a positive stance on refugees and immigrants.

In sum, then, in which terms the economics of immigrant integration are discussed in the political arena depends not only on raw objective numbers, but also on the political, institutional, and cultural context. It is in non-universal welfare states with a strong AIP and an exclusionary national identity that it is most likely that restrictions on immigrants’ access to social benefits and programs are proposed, and, for that reason, implemented.⁸

Case selection

The Netherlands, Canada, and Sweden constitute a good set of cases to test the value of this theory. While a three-case comparison obviously does not allow us to analyze the isolated effect of each of the factors hypothesized to be of relevance, it at any rate makes

it possible to explore whether the political discourse on the welfare costs of immigrants differs among countries that vary considerably on these factors.

Indeed, on all the variables described in the previous section there are large differences between the Netherlands, Canada, and Sweden. To start with the objective economics, the degree to which immigrants are overrepresented among welfare recipients is much higher in the Netherlands and Sweden than in Canada. Whereas from 1999 to 2007 immigrants in Canada were about 23 percent more likely to be making use of social assistance than native-born citizens, these percentages were as high as 478 in the Netherlands and 482 in Sweden (see Table 1 below).

Second, there is a great deal of variation in the success AIPs have had in these three countries. AIPs have remained virtually absent in the Canadian party system.⁹ In the Netherlands, on the other hand, they have slowly gained appeal since the 1980s. Anti-immigrant sentiment was initially voiced mostly by the politically marginalized Center Democrats, but the appearance of Pim Fortuyn on the political stage in 2001 signified the definite entry of immigration as a salient political issue in the Netherlands. And even though Fortuyn was murdered before he could enter parliament and his unorganized List Pim Fortuyn (LPF) dissolved as a result of internal strife, the electoral potential of organized xenophobia was quickly taken advantage of by Geert Wilders and his Freedom Party (PVV). The Swedish case, finally, has a yet different history with AIPs. In the elections of 1991, the xenophobic message of New Democracy appealed to enough voters to win the newly formed party 25 seats in parliament (out of a total of 349). After party leader Ian Wachtmeister stepped down, however, the party quickly lost electoral appeal and disappeared from the political scene (Rydgren 2002, 33-4). AIPs did not secure any representation in the national parliament again until the most recent election of 2010, when the Swedish Democrats (SD) managed to surpass the electoral threshold and win 5.7 percent of the seats in the *Riksdag*. In sum, then, this sample includes a case where AIPs have had no success, one case where their success has been steadily increasing, and one where the organized anti-immigrant movement has managed to achieve representation in parliament on two separate short-lived occasions.

Third, this sample includes one example of each of Esping-Andersen's 'three worlds of welfare capitalism' (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Even though the Netherlands is sometimes classified as a social democratic regime because of its relatively high levels of social spending and de commodification (Vis, Van Kersbergen, & Becker, 2008; Crepaz & Damron, 2009), the structure of its welfare state, for example in preferring passive government transfers over active labour market policies, is decidedly Christian democratic (Binnema, 2004, p. 113; Pontusson, 2005, pp. 146-7).

Finally, as an indicator of the inclusiveness of national identity in these three countries, we can look at the nature of integration and citizenship policies. Whereas until the late 1990s Canada, Sweden, and the Netherlands had some of the most inclusive integration and naturalization policies of the Western world, the Netherlands has made a significant U-turn in this policy area. Indeed, many observers have noted that this country has undergone a remarkable restrictive transformation over the last

decade or so by, among other things, limiting the possibilities for dual citizenship, scaling back the number of immigrant-targeted public services, repealing affirmative action programs, and introducing compulsory integration courses (Entzinger, 2006; Joppke, 2010, pp. 34-72). The current difference between the Netherlands and the other two cases can be captured by looking at recent policy indices (see Table 1).

TABLE 1

Relevant differences and similarities between the Netherlands, Canada, and Sweden

	Netherlands	Canada	Sweden
(a) Average immigrant overrepresentation in welfare, 1999-2007	478.1	22.9	482.7
(b) Average % seats for anti-immigrant party, 1991-2010	4.3	0.0	1.4
(c) Welfare regime	Corporatist	Residual	Universal
(d) Inclusiveness of integration policies (0-100 scale)	25	94	88
(e) Inclusiveness of citizenship policies (0-100 scale)	60	87	93
(f) Average annual inflow per 1,000 citizens, 1991-2009	5.1	7.5	6.7
(g) Troughs in business cycle, 1991-2010 (real GDP growth)	1993 (1.3) 2002 (0.1) 2009 (-3.9)	1991 (-2.1) 1996 (1.6) 2001 (1.8) 2009 (-2.5)	1993 (-2.1) 1996 (1.6) 2001 (1.3) 2009 (-5.3)

(a) Data before 1999 and after 2007 are not available for all countries. The score is calculated as the percentage of immigrants receiving social assistance minus the percentage of native-born citizens receiving social assistance, divided by the percentage for native-born, multiplied by 100. This produces a readily interpretable figure: for example, in Canada, over the period 1999-2007 immigrants were about 23 percent more likely to receive social assistance than native-born citizens. The data are drawn from CBS (2012), Statistics Canada (2011), and SCB (2011); (b) For the Netherlands, this score is based on the Second Chamber of parliament only, and represents the seats occupied by CD, LPF, PVV, and independents Geert Wilders and Rita Verdonk. For Sweden, this score represents the seats occupied by ND, SD, and independent Sten Andersson; (d) Source: Multiculturalism Policy Index (2011). Scores have been rescaled; (e) Source: Koning (2011). Scores have been rescaled; (f), (g) Source: OECD (2012).

While these differences on the crucial independent variables are useful to ensure variation on the dependent variable, at the same time there are two important similarities between these cases that facilitate the comparison. First, these three countries have admitted a comparable number of immigrants in proportion to their population during the period under study. Even though Canada has historically admitted a much more sizeable per capita annual inflow than the Netherlands and Sweden, this difference has become much smaller since the 1990s (and in fact, in 2006 Sweden actually surpassed Canada in this regard). This suggests that any difference we might observe between these countries in their exclusion of immigrants from benefits

cannot be convincingly attributed to differences in the sheer size of the newly arrived immigrant population.¹⁰

For similar reasons, it is methodologically convenient that these three countries have experienced similar economic fortunes over the period of study. Even though there are differences in timing and severity, all three countries experienced recessions in the early 1990s, early 2000s, and late 2000s. In other words, these three countries have faced similar economic pressures at roughly the same points in time. For that reason, if we see more immigrant-excluding welfare reforms in one of these countries than in others, we cannot simply attribute that difference to budgetary pressures.

In sum, the three countries under study display sufficient similarity to allow for meaningful comparison (in having similar admission levels and economic trajectories) and sufficient variation on the independent variables of interest to ensure variation on the dependent variable. These differences and similarities are summarized in Table 1.

Overview of recent policy developments

In virtually every immigrant-receiving welfare state, there are four areas of contention that are particularly acute in discussions about immigrants' place in the welfare regime: (1) the social rights of undocumented migrants; (2) the position of immigrants in pension programs that are funded from general tax revenues; (3) recent immigrants' access to other non-contributory programs such as social assistance and child benefits; and (4) social programs that are specifically designed for immigrants, such as integration assistance and immigrant-targeted active labour market policies. Over the last twenty years the Netherlands have moved in a more restrictive direction in all four of these areas, Canada has experienced little change, and in Sweden the trend has been an inclusionary one.

Undocumented migrants. In 1996 the Dutch parliament passed, with an overwhelming majority (95 percent), the so-called Linking Act (*Koppelingswet*). This bill, which went into effect on July 1, 1998, effectively barred immigrants without a legal residence status from all social benefits and provisions with the exception of education for under-aged children, legal counselling, and emergency health care. Significantly, after 1998 MPs frequently pressed the government to strictly enforce the bill and to not make exceptions under any circumstances.

The situation in Canada is very similar. Undocumented migrants only have access to emergency medical care, and especially in the early 1990s, both federal MPs and Ontarian MPPs often brought up individual cases of 'illegals on welfare' as a way to accuse the government of mismanagement. Partly in response to this political pressure, in 1994 the Liberal government implemented bill C-44, which increased identification controls and expanded the possibility for deportation so as to reduce the likelihood that undocumented migrants would end up in the refugee system and rely on social assistance.

In Sweden, conversely, the recent trend has been in the direction of inclusion. While the country used to be one of the most restrictive of the world in its treatment of

undocumented migrants (Socialstyrelsen, 2010, p. 276), a March 2011 reform both made children of undocumented migrants eligible for public education and expanded the availability of health care services.

Pensions. Pension programs that are paid out of general tax revenues usually have long residence requirements. As a result, elderly immigrants tend to have lower pension incomes than their native-born counterparts. In the Netherlands, one needs to have resided uninterruptedly from age 15 to 65 to qualify for the pension benefit AOW (*Algemene Ouderdomswet*), and every missing year results in a 2 percent decrease. Those immigrants who for that reason fall below a certain income threshold are eligible for a specific type of social assistance called Supplemental Income Provision Elderly. In the last few years, MPs have increasingly expressed opposition to this top-up benefit, and in 2011 parliament decided to reduce the level altogether for all elderly citizens with a pension gap.

The extent to which immigrants to Canada have access to Old Age Security (OAS) is slightly more complicated, and will for reasons of space be presented in simplified terms: one must live in the country for 40 years to receive OAS, and at least 10 years in order to receive a partial benefit in proportion to the number of years of residence. As in the Netherlands, low income elderly can receive a top-up benefit (the so-called Guaranteed Income Supplement). Overall, this policy constellation enjoys almost unanimous support. There have been occasional calls on the right to increase the residence requirement to 20 years and somewhat more frequent calls on the left to lower it to 3 years, but all those proposals have been made by individual MPs and have never become the official position of any Canadian party.

Sweden, finally, in preparation of joining the European Union, had to streamline its pension system with other EU member states in order to facilitate the free movement of people. As a result, the access to pensions for newcomers decreased significantly: whereas before 1993 immigrants could have access to a full *folkpension* after 10 years of residence, after Sweden's accession to the EU 40 years were required for a complete pension benefit. As a result, many elderly immigrants had to rely on municipal social assistance benefits to receive a minimum income. Already before the pension reform (in April 1991), Ragnhild Pohanka of environmentalist party MP argued that immigrants should receive a pension to spare them the monthly visit to the welfare office, and after the reform she was quickly joined in her plea by MPs from the Left Party. Gradually, more and more parties started to echo Pohanka's concerns, and in November 2000, parliament introduced an Income Support for Elderly, a tax-free, income-tested benefit, at a slightly higher level than social assistance, specifically designed for people over retirement age who do not qualify for a *folkpension*.

Other non-contributory programs. Immigrants to the Netherlands can only receive a permanent residence permit after a prolonged period of time within the borders. In the interim, they have no access to non-contributory programs such as social assistance and child benefits, unless the applicant can demonstrate a 'durable link to the Netherlands'.¹¹ For economic migrants, this residence requirement is five years.¹² People who arrive through the family reunification stream have an even more

vulnerable status in their first years in the Netherlands: their right of residence is dependent on the partner that sponsors them - which means not only that the migrant has no access to any benefits, but also that if the relationship breaks down the newly arrived migrant is forced to leave the country. This period of 'partner-dependent right of residence' used to be three years, but has in 2012 been increased to 5 years. The only category of immigrants that is exempted from this restriction are recognized refugees: even though they also have to wait five years before they can acquire a permanent residence permit, they are eligible for social provisions in the meantime.

In Canada, there have been few changes in this regard. Immigrants have almost the exact same access to the benefits of the welfare state as native-born citizens once they secure permanent residence status, and, in sharp contrast to the Dutch case, Canada places no residence requirement on a permanent residence permit. The only areas of contention are the social rights of family migrants and of temporary migrants. To start with the former, family migrants are admitted to the country on the condition that a relative would sponsor them, signing a formal undertaking with the state to support them economically. For the duration of the sponsorship period (between 3 and 10 years, depending on the nature of the relationship), these migrants are therefore expected not to make use of social assistance or supplementary health care (and if they do, their sponsors are required to repay the costs to the province). Recently, provincial governments have exerted greater effort to prevent sponsored immigrants from using SA. In a widely publicized court case that went all the way up to the Supreme Court, eight sponsors who were forced to repay a SA debt appealed to have their debt waived, but a unanimous Supreme Court rejected their appeal (*Mavi v. Canada*, 2009). Temporary migrants are in a much more vulnerable position than immigrants with a permanent status. Most of them are excluded from social assistance, they only have access to child benefits after having spent 18 months in the country, and they frequently experience practical problems in accessing health care services (Hennebry & Preibisch, 2012). While the left-wing New Democratic Party (NDP) has in recent years frequently advocated more inclusion for temporary migrants, they have found little support for their plans from the centrist Liberal Party of Canada (LPC) and the right-wing Conservative Party of Canada (CPC).

The policy development in Sweden can be unequivocally characterized as one of increasing inclusion. Whereas access to non-contributory benefits was initially based on citizenship, this principle has been gradually replaced by a *ius domicilii* that allows immediate and complete access to everyone with a legal residence permit (Sainsbury, 2006, pp. 237-39). This even applies to temporary migrants, as long as they have a permit to stay for more than a year. The example of family migrants is equally telling. As in the Netherlands and Canada, concerns have recently risen among some Swedish politicians about the welfare use of family migrants. But the strategy to alleviate this concern has been decidedly less restrictive than in the other two cases. In November 2009, the center-right Reinfeldt-I cabinet (2006-2010) introduced a so-called 'Support requirement', which requires people who want to bring family members over to have the housing space to accommodate them and to make at least a minimum wage. Importantly, this requirement

only applies to about 25 percent of all family migrants, since the immigration of children and of family members of refugees is not affected by this law.

Immigrant-targeted programs. In addition to the developments in the previous three areas, the Netherlands has also become more restrictive in its immigrant-targeted programs. For one thing, for some categories of immigrants, access to social assistance, unemployment, and disability benefits has since 2006 become conditional on successful participation in integration and language classes. Moreover, the number of immigrant-targeted services the state is willing to pay for has been scaled down. Virtually all active labour market programs have been abolished, as well as other immigrant-targeted programs such as state-funded interpretation services in health care. The government has even become increasingly unwilling to pay for the integration classes immigrants are required to take. The center-left Balkenende-IV (2007-2010) cabinet started to ask immigrants a 'contribution' to cover parts of the expenses, after which the center-right Rutte (2010-2012) cabinet suggested to simply ask immigrants to pay the entire bill. Refugees can take a state loan if they do not have sufficient resources.

In sharp contrast, integration assistance is one of the cornerstones of the Canadian model of immigration. Once immigrants are admitted as permanent residents, they can make use of a wide range of federal and provincial settlement programs, most importantly language training, employment assistance, and skills development (Wong, 2008; Biles, 2008). Over the last decade or so, the funding for integration has increased significantly. A senior civil servant in the Department of Citizenship and Immigration characterized the recent developments in integration as follows:

Our budgets have been growing quite dramatically [...] The most recent motions in the House have just been to spend more money. The exceptional thing about settlement and integration is that while in many files [...] different parties take different approaches, there seems to be a party-wide consensus on settlement and integration. The Liberals, Conservatives, and NDP all have been keen on doing more, doing it better, and doing it faster. (interview CAN12)

Similarly, immigrants to Sweden can make use of a wide range of generous integration programs (Olwig, 2011). Whereas the Netherlands use a 'stick' to incite participation in these programs, Sweden has opted for a 'carrot' approach. Since 1992, newly arrived migrants receive a so-called 'introduction benefit' (at a somewhat higher level than a social assistance benefit) if they participate in language and employment programs. Moreover, the first Reinfeldt government (2006-2010) started to offer a financial bonus for those immigrants who complete their introductory language class in one year. Moreover, the center-right government has also introduced two immigrant-targeted labour market programs. First, immigrants in the first three years after their arrival (as well as Swedes who have been unemployed for more than 12 months) can make use of so-called 'new start jobs': these jobs are partly subsidized by the state as a way to incite employers to hire immigrants. The similarly subsidized 'entry jobs' are available for

newly arrived immigrants only and require participants to follow Swedish language classes in addition to working in their new employment.

In sum, then, in these four key areas of contention, the Netherlands, Canada, and Sweden have travelled very different roads over the last twenty years or so. These differences are summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Direction of recent policy developments in social rights of immigrants

	Netherlands	Canada	Sweden
Social rights of undocumented immigrants	Restriction	Restriction	Expansion
Access to general tax-funded pension benefits	Restriction	Stable	Stable
Access to non-contributory programs	Restriction	Stable	Expansion
Immigrant-targeted programs	Restriction	Expansion	Expansion

The political translation of immigrants' welfare use

As the brief overview in the previous section illustrates, it is wrong to characterize immigrant-excluding welfare reforms as a calculated response to a strong overrepresentation of immigrants in the welfare system. If that were the case, we should see the same kind of restrictive turn in Sweden as is visible in the Netherlands. Instead, we can better understand the divergent trajectories of the Netherlands, Canada, and Sweden as a reflection of different understandings of the best way to manage the economic integration of immigrants.

This becomes apparent when we look at each of the major parties' stance on this issue. In interviews with the relevant spokespeople of the largest parties in these three countries,¹³ I asked about the desirability of each of the four abovementioned strategies to avoid or decrease a large immigrant welfare clientele (restrict access to benefits, employ more selective admission policy, invest in integration, and retrench the welfare state across-the-board). Their answers are summarized in Table 3.

The most important observation is that the differences between countries are larger than those between parties. While it is true that there seem to be some common characteristics among ideologically similar parties (for example, social democratic and socialist parties are more likely to favour integration assistance; conservative parties are more likely to believe overall retrenchment of the welfare state will help the integration of immigrants), Table 3 shows that in each of these countries there is an almost party-wide consensus on the best approach to handling the position of immigrants in the welfare state.

In the Netherlands, the preferred approach is a combination of disentanglement and more selective admission policies. Restricting immigrants' access to social benefits is popular across the ideological spectrum. The most ardent supporters of this strategy are

undoubtedly the VVD and the PVV, but the CDA has also been instrumental in many of the immigrant-excluding reforms discussed above. The other three parties are more reluctant to advocate differential treatment between newcomers and native-born citizens (and indeed, have criticized some of the restrictive policy changes that have been proposed and/or implemented), but nevertheless all advocate some restrictions. For example, all three parties support the principles that undocumented migrants should not have access to any other benefits than the most basic ones, that migrants should be barred from benefits in the first five years, and that immigrants who do not participate in integration and language classes should receive no or lower benefits. The second option, employing a more selective admission policy, enjoys even more support in the current Dutch parliament. Among the interviewed parties, only D66 does not propose restrictions in admission policy (and interestingly, its spokesperson Koşer Kaya refused to share the conclusion that her party's plans would result in an increase of immigration; interview NET06). In sharp contrast to these two restrictive policy options, few parties (only the PvdA and SP) endorse attempts to stimulate the economic integration through targeted labour market programs. The positions on the appropriate size of the welfare state split predictably along party lines.

TABLE 3

Political parties' views on four different responses to Progressive's Dilemma

	Party	Ideology	Current % of seats	Restrict access to benefits?	Make intake restrictive/ selective?	Offer (more) integration assistance?	Retrench welfare state generally?
Netherlands	VVD	Conservative	21	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
	PvdA	Social dem.	20	Some	Yes	Yes	No
	PVV	Anti-immigrant	15	Yes	Yes	No	No
	CDA	Christian dem.	14	Yes	Yes	No	Some
	SP	Socialist	10	Some	Yes	Yes	No
	D66	Liberal	7	Some	No	No	Yes
Canada	CPC	Conservative	54	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
	NDP	Social dem.	33	No	No	Yes	No
	LPC	Liberal	11	No	Yes	Yes	Some
Sweden	S	Social dem.	32	No	No	Yes	No
	M	Conservative	31	No	No	Yes	Yes
	FP	Liberal	7	No	No	Yes	Yes
	C	Left-liberal	7	No	No	Yes	Yes
	SD	Anti-immigrant	6	Some	Yes	No	No
	V	Socialist	5	No	No	Yes	No
	KD	Christian dem.	5	No	No	Yes	Some

Canadian political parties, on the other hand, favour a combination of selective admission policies and extensive integration assistance. In the 1990s, the liberal

Chrétien governments (1994-2002) increased the percentual intake of economic migrants from just under 50 to well over 60 percent, with the explicit aim to decrease the pressure on social programs. Immigration minister Sergio Marchi put it as follows: "Consultations reveal that Canadians are concerned about the sustainability of Canada's social benefit system. [...] For our part we will contribute to the solution by focusing more on those immigrants less likely to require public assistance" (House of Commons debate/November 1, 1994). The relative reliance on economic migration has continued to rise under the conservative Harper governments (2006-present), and seems likely to increase even more in the next few years - Rick Dykstra, the parliamentary secretary on immigration, told me: "60/40 isn't quite the split I think we will need over the upcoming years for Canada to continue to grow its economy. It's obviously going to have to be higher on the economic side" (interview CAN01). The NDP, on the other hand, has always been an advocate of a larger intake of refugee and, in particular, family migrants, and thus seems to take exception to the Canadian preference for selective admission policy. What all parties do agree on is that immigrants need to be assisted with a formidable set of integration policies and that restrictions on immigrants' access to welfare benefits are undesirable. Indeed, all three MPs I spoke to rejected differentiating in social rights between immigrants and native-born citizens (even though all three parties do support the principle of the sponsorship mechanism for family migration). As their Dutch counterparts, the three Canadian parties differ predictably in their views on welfare retrenchment.

In Sweden, finally, neither of the restrictive options enjoys much support. With the exception of the SD (which proposes a reduction in family and asylum migration of 90 percent), all political parties favour an increase in immigration levels. And while these parties differ somewhat in the type of migration they most adamantly try to attract, they all favour an increase in refugee migration and do not propose restrictions in family migration (other than the previously mentioned 'support requirement', favoured by M, FP, C and KD). The difference with the Netherlands is even more striking when it concerns the option of restricting immigrants' access to welfare benefits. Even Erik Almqvist, the SD immigration spokesperson, expressed his dislike of this strategy when I described the restrictions that are taking place in the Netherlands:

To be honest, we have almost never talked about immigrants in that way. [We do think] that immigration is too high. [...] But we very seldom talk about that too much subsidies, or too much pensions, are going to immigrants. [...] We think that everyone who has a permit to be here should of course have the same rights. (interview SWE05)¹⁴

Rather than restrictions, then, mainstream political parties in Sweden favour immigrant-targeted policies to reduce immigrants' welfare dependence. The left-wing parties in parliament (S, V) believe that a combination of language training, employment assistance, and anti-discrimination programs is the most effective strategy, while their right-wing counterparts believe that such policies should be complemented by an overall flexibilization of the labour market.

In sum, then, we can understand the differences between Dutch, Canadian, and Swedish parties as one of divergent responses to the Progressive's Dilemma. In the remainder of this section, I will briefly describe the role of political, institutional, and cultural factors in shaping these responses.

First, the larger presence of AIPs helps to explain why the Netherlands has opted for a more restrictive strategy than the other two countries. The LPF and especially the PVV have actively politicized the costs of immigration and the overreliance of immigrants in the welfare system, and have therefore been able to give this subject a prominent place in political discourse. For example, in July 2009 MP Sietse Fritsma asked a wide range of departments how much money they spent on non-Western immigrants. When the government ultimately did not provide the calculations Fritsma asked for, the PVV started a website entitled 'what does the mass immigration cost?', inviting citizens to share any worries they might have about the costs of immigration,¹⁵ and paid an independent research agency to make the calculations it was interested in (Van der Geest & Dietvorst, 2010). The PVV has also managed to heighten attention to the costs of immigration by bringing it up even when it is not directly related to the discussion at hand. In a debate on an increase of the retirement age, for example, PVV MP Tony van Dijck quickly changed the subject to the costs of immigration:

This debate is not about the affordability of the AOW or about ageing [...] This government puts a very small finger in the AOW hole in the dike. It is deaf and blind, however, to the financial dike breach that is occurring behind its back: the costs of mass migration. [...] That is the essence of this debate: do we choose the Netherlands or do we choose even more immigration? (Second Chamber debate/November 12, 2009)

Besides increasing public attention to immigrants' welfare use, the success of the PVV has also had the effect of creating an incentive for mainstream parties to move in a more restrictive direction on issues of immigration. Both Van Nieuwenhuizen (VVD) and Van Hijum (CDA) indicated that their proposals are inspired by increased public dissatisfaction about immigration (interviews NET01, NET04). The SP's Paul Ulenbelt was even clearer on this point: "The parliament represents the people. That thus means that you have to voice public opinion in politics. If you don't do that, you will not be elected and someone else will. It's as simple as that" (interview NET05).

Conversely, anti-immigrant voices have not enjoyed the same prominence or political leverage in Canadian and Swedish parliaments. The closest thing Canada has ever had to an AIP, the Reform Party, was similar to the PVV in some respects but differed quite dramatically in carefully pointing its arrows at 'bogus refugee claimants' and 'queue jumpers' rather than at immigrants who had already been admitted to the country. Art Hanger, certainly one of the most adamant champions of reducing the annual intake of immigrants, repeatedly stated he was "proud to be a citizen of a country that has gained an international reputation for its fairness, compassion and its acceptance of immigrants of all kinds" (House of Commons debate/February 2, 1994). Accusing immigrants in Canada for overburdening the welfare system, then, was just not a viable political strategy (see below).

In Sweden, two AIPs have so far achieved short-lived parliamentary representation, but they have not been able to steer the political debate in the same way the PVV has. Indeed, Swedish mainstream parties have responded very differently to the success of AIPs than their Dutch counterparts. All mainstream MPs I spoke to denounced the strategy of taking a harsher line on immigration to decrease the SD's electoral niche. In fact, they all believed such a strategy would have a counterproductive effect - and both Streijffert (S) and Cederbratt (M) even referred to a recent study they base this belief on (Dahlström & Esaiasson, 2011).¹⁶

Second, the nature of the welfare regime shapes politicians' views on the best response to the Progressive's Dilemma. This is most obvious in the case of Sweden. For one thing, restricting immigrants' social rights is not an apparent option in a universalist institutional context. As a senior civil servant in the Department of Health and Social Welfare explained:

The Swedish welfare system is a general system and it is universal. Since immigrants in Sweden as soon as they receive a permit to stay will be covered by the same system as everyone else in society, the likelihood of exclusionary reforms is smaller. (interview SWE12)

Instead, the Swedish welfare model has always emphasized the importance of the so-called 'work principle' (*arbetslinjen*), a commitment to full employment that has led to a much larger emphasis on active labour market policies than on passive unemployment benefits (Esping-Andersen, 1992; Bergmark & Palme, 2003; Huo, 2009). That Swedish political parties respond to large-scale immigrant welfare dependence by immigrant-targeted labour market programs, then, can be understood as little more than an institutionalized reaction to unemployment. This is exactly what a senior civil servant at the Department of Employment told me: "Labour market policies in Sweden are targeted at so many different groups. When the ship industry was breaking down, we had targeted labour market policies for ship employees. [...] So it's really part of the package" (interview SWE11).

In the Netherlands and Canada, conversely, the nature of the welfare regime is more amenable to differentiation. A large series of reforms in sickness, disability, unemployment, and social assistance benefits in the 1980s and 1990s "gradually infused [the Dutch welfare state] with liberal characteristics" (Van der Veen & Trommel, 1998, p. 23), thereby heightening the attention for recipients' 'deservingness'. It can be no surprise, then, that the entitlements of immigrants have also come under scrutiny. Similarly, the largely residual nature of the Canadian welfare state seems a fertile context for discussions about immigrants' access to transfer benefits.¹⁷ To understand why such discussions have never taken place the same way as in the Netherlands, we need to look at the last factor of relevance.

Third, and finally, the national identity of Canada and Sweden has proven a powerful bulwark against calls for immigrant exclusion. Canada's national identity is intimately tied up with its history of immigration and its comparatively generous

naturalization and integration regime (Kymlicka, 2003). MPs of all political stripes often refer to immigration as a cornerstone of Canada (see, for example, prime minister Harper's comment in a recent throne speech that "we are a country of immigrants. Our identities are bound up in the stories of ancestors from hundreds of lands"; House of Commons debate/March 3, 2010), and many Canadian respondents mention their country's stance on immigration and multiculturalism as a source of pride in national surveys (Adams, 2007, pp. 86-7). Richard Johnston and his colleagues find support for immigration to be such a formative component of Canadian national identity that nationalist respondents actually tend to be *more* favourable to immigration and immigrants than their less nationalist counterparts (Johnston, Banting, Kymlicka, & Soroka, 2010). Clearly, then, efforts to make a nationalist appeal for immigrant exclusion would be in vain in the Canadian context. In the Swedish case, is not so much the protection of immigrants as such but rather the more general near-sanctity of egalitarianism that makes Swedish nationalism so inimical to differentiation in social rights. When Sweden proclaimed itself a multicultural society in 1975, it immediately emphasized that immigration policy would be guided by the principle of 'equality' (*jämlikhet*). This norm meant, so Charles Westin (1996, p. 214) explains, that "immigrant workers were to enjoy the same social and economic rights as Swedes [...] This right has never seriously been questioned". In line with this stance, Sweden has developed some of the most generous integration and naturalization policies of Europe.

The Netherlands, conversely, has recently seen restrictions in admission, naturalization, and integration policies (Meyers, 2004; Minderhoud, 2004; De Hart, 2007; Entzinger, 2006). These policy changes embody a view government officials have repeatedly voiced (Vink, 2007): the Netherlands should not strive to become multicultural, but instead should reassert its traditional characteristics. This understanding of national identity can be used to justify differentiation in social policies between native-born and newcomers. For example, in a debate on child benefits, by then independent MP Rita Verdonk exclaimed: "the youth is our future. But we are talking about Dutch youth, youth that grows up here, and is raised in accordance with Dutch norms and values and according to our culture" (Second Chamber debate/March 31, 2009). The role of this view as a driver of immigrant-excluding welfare reforms can be inferred in a different way as well. Even when I specifically asked about social policies or immigrants' welfare dependence, some of the politicians I interviewed changed the subject to more general concerns regarding immigration's threat to Dutch identity.¹⁸ That politicians explicitly invoke cultural concerns when asked to comment on immigrants' position in the welfare state illustrates the importance of the more general backlash against immigration for the push to exclude immigrants from social programs and benefits.

Conclusion

Immigrant-excluding welfare reforms warrant more systematic scholarly attention. Where they occur, they change the nature and function of national welfare states quite

considerably. Whereas the welfare state was initially designed to offer a social safety net to those people within its territory that ran into economic trouble and to mitigate the negative externalities of unfettered capitalism, reforms such as the ones that are taking place in the Netherlands move it in the direction of becoming a set of privileges for those who are lucky enough to be born in the country, or to have lived long enough on its territory and acquired the necessary documentation. Regardless of how one evaluates this development, the empirical change in itself is significant.

So far, the literature has lacked a comprehensive theory to explain under which conditions these changes in social policy are most likely to occur. At any rate, the explanation that is commonly suggested in political debates is, at best, incomplete. As the comparison of the Netherlands and Sweden shows, it is simply *not* the case that these reforms are more likely where immigrants are most overrepresented among welfare recipients.

This paper suggests an alternative explanation, one that looks more at the way immigrants' position in the welfare state is framed by politicians than at objective economic numbers. In Sweden, relying on welfare is seen as a lamentable position. The large overrepresentation of immigrants among social assistance recipients, therefore, is taken as a sign that the Swedish state has failed to integrate them properly, and should do its best to remedy that by targeted programs. In the Netherlands, on the other hand, immigrant welfare dependence is more commonly explained as a reflection of laziness and fraud. For that reason, politicians are more likely to favour negative incentives. As Fritsma (PVV) put it: "the best solution for this group of people is to restrict social provisions, because there just has to be some sort of incentive to learn the language, and to put in some effort here" (interview NET03). In Canada, finally, immigrants' reliance on social assistance is much smaller than in these two European countries, but the fact that it is larger today than a generation ago (Akbari, 1989) has led to very few suggestions for welfare exclusion. Instead, politicians continue to believe in the Canadian model of selective admission policies and encompassing integration services.

These different responses can best be understood by looking at the role of AIPs, the larger structure of the welfare regime, and the nature of national identity. Whereas all three of those factors favour exclusion in the Netherlands, the Swedish welfare regime and the Canadian national identity have made divisive thinking in the formation of social policy improbable.

Certainly, we know little about the external validity of this theory on the basis of this tripartite comparison. Nevertheless, it offers a plausible explanation for divergent developments in three very different immigrant-receiving welfare states. It seems worthwhile to further explore the political translation of immigrants' welfare use in studies of immigrant-excluding welfare reforms.

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List of acronyms

AIP	Anti-immigrant party
AOW	<i>Algemene Ouderdomswet</i> (public pension benefit)
C	<i>Centerpartiet</i> (Center party)
CDA	<i>Christen Democratisch Appel</i> (Christian Democratic Appeal)
CPC	Conservative Party of Canada
D66	<i>Democraten '66</i> (Democrats '66)
FP	<i>Folkpartiet Liberalerna</i> (Liberal People's Party)
KD	<i>Kristdemokraterna</i> (Christian Democrats)
LPC	Liberal Party of Canada
LPF	<i>Lijst Pim Fortuyn</i> (List Pim Fortuyn)
M	<i>Moderata Samlingspartiet</i> (Moderate Rally Party)
MP	<i>Miljöpartiet</i> (Environment Party)
NDP	New Democratic Party
OAS	Old Age Security
PvdA	<i>Partij van de Arbeid</i> (Labour Party)
PVV	<i>Partij voor de Vrijheid</i> (Freedom Party)
Ref	Reform Party of Canada
S	<i>Socialdemokratiska Arbetarepartiet</i> (Social Democratic Workers' Party)
SD	<i>Sverigedemokraterna</i> (Swedish Democrats)
SP	<i>Socialistische Partij</i> (Socialist Party)
V	<i>Vänsterpartiet</i> (Left Party)
VVD	<i>Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie</i> (Popular party for Freedom and Democracy)

Notes

¹ All translations from Dutch and Swedish are mine.

² The comparison of these three MPs is particularly instructive because they all represent the largest conservative party in their country, and in each case their party was in power at the time of the interview.

³ In fact, there is no evidence I am aware of that immigrants have a penchant for drawing state benefits. Empirical studies tend to find that once one controls for eligibility, immigrants are equally or, more often, less likely than native-born citizens to make use of social programs (Tienda & Jensen, 1986; Reitz, 1995; Castronova, Kayser, Frick, & Wagner, 2001; Boeri, 2009).

⁴ In the sizeable body of literature on these parties, there is much variation in nomenclature. Most commonly, parties with an anti-immigrant agenda are labelled as the radical, populist or extreme right.

Because many of these parties actually defend a left-wing or centrist position on socio-economic issues, however, I follow authors such as Meindert Fennema (1997) and Rachel Gibson (2002) and exclusively use the term 'anti-immigrant party', straightforwardly defined as a party that both advocates restrictions in immigration policy and demonstrates hostility towards the immigrant population.

⁵ Positing the presence of an AIP as an instigator of anti-immigrant sentiment of course raises the question how we can explain that the success of those parties in the first place. To address this question in depth is beyond the scope of this paper. The factors that have been most consistently found to contribute to electoral success of AIPs are: a proportional electoral system with a low threshold, a party system with a niche for an AIP, good organization and a charismatic leader, and large cohorts of voters with xenophobic and anti-establishment attitudes (Lubbers, Gijsberts, & Scheepers, 2002; Messina, 2007, pp. 73-96; O'Malley, 2008). On this last point, see also note 6.

⁶ Not all authors agree. Some argue that the arrival on the political scene of AIPs should first and foremost be seen as the *effect*, not the *cause* of public anti-immigrant sentiment (Lubbers, Gijsberts, & Scheepers, 2002). The relationship is probably best understood as a deeply endogenous one. While it seems almost obvious that a political party with a xenophobic agenda will have little electoral success if the public has an overall favourable attitude towards immigration, there is also much reason to suggest that anti-immigrant elites are able to foster and even reinforce anti-immigrant sentiment (Rydgren, 2003).

⁷ While there is some research that questions the validity of this argument (Bean & Papadakis, 1998; Gelissen, 2000; Arts & Gelissen, 2001), these dissenting studies are certainly in the minority

⁸ This is not to say that there is a straightforward one-on-one relationship between the preferences of the political elite and the implementation of immigrant-excluding welfare reforms. Indeed, champions of such reforms often stumble upon national and international legal obstacles, such as the principles of non-discrimination and the right to a family life (Gortázar Rotaecche, 1998; Zorlu, Hartog, & Beentjes, 2010). Moreover, party-political factors obviously affect whether governments and individual MPs manage to implement the policies they desire. It is beyond the scope of this paper to elaborate on the dynamics of the implementation of immigrant-excluding reforms. I will limit myself here to the obvious observation that reforms are only implemented after they are formulated by political elites, and focus on why they are more likely to be formulated in some countries than in others.

⁹ While some might see the former Reform Party of Canada (in parliament 1993-2000) as an AIP, placing it on a par with parties such as the Dutch PVV or Swedish SD would be a mischaracterization. The restrictions in admission and integration policy it advocated were at best only of secondary importance to its platform, and Reform MPs hardly ever expressed the type of hostility towards immigrants that had already been admitted to the country that is typical of their PVV or SD counterparts.

¹⁰ It is worth noting, however, that the composition of these countries' immigrant populations in terms of the country of origin is quite different. Whereas from 1998 to 2007 63 percent of immigrants to Canada were Asian, these percentages were only 25 and 42 for the Netherlands and Sweden, respectively. Conversely, 48 percent of migrants to the Netherlands and 50 percent of those to Sweden were European in these ten years, while only 15 percent of the migrants to Canada were from the European continent. (Data from OECD, 2012.)

¹¹ While the exact content of this term is unclear and in fact judges enjoy quite some interpretative leeway in practical cases, this connection is measured along three dimensions: a legal dimension (measured by applicants' residence status), a social dimension (measured by the scope of their network of Dutch family members and friends), and a financial dimension (measured by employment history in the Netherlands).

¹² This is slightly more complicated in the case of migrants from within the European Union. In accordance with EU directive 2004/38, no EU citizen has the right to claim benefits in another EU member state in the first three months of residence. After that period, EU citizens can technically apply for social assistance, but until they have a permanent residence status (so at a minimum, for the first five years after arrival), they can be removed from the Netherlands if they pose an 'unreasonable burden' on social assistance. In practice, then, this means that even for EU migrants there is a 5 year residence requirement for access to social assistance.

¹³ Some parliamentary parties preferred me to speak with the spokesperson on social affairs, while others referred me to the spokesperson on immigration. The politicians I interviewed were, in the Netherlands, Cora van Nieuwenhuizen (VVD), Hans Spekman (PvdA), Sietse Fritsma (PVV), Eddy van Hijum (CDA), Paul Ulenbelt (SP), and Fatma Koşer Kaya (D66); in Canada, Rick Dykstra (CPC), Don Davies (NDP), and Kevin Lamoureux (LPC); in Sweden, Magdalena Streijffert (S), Mikael Cederbratt (M), Ulf Nilsson (FP), Fredrick Federley (C), Erik Almquist (SD), Christina Høj Larsen (V), and Emma Henriksson (KD). Unfortunately, Dutch environmentalist party *GroenLinks* and the ideologically similar Swedish *Miljöparti* refused to be interviewed for this study. Considering the high party discipline in all three of these countries (Andeweg, 2004; Godbout & Høyland, 2011; Hagevi, 2000), the politicians I spoke can be assumed to represent 87 percent of the Second Chamber of Dutch parliament, 98 percent of the Canadian House of Commons, and 93 percent of the Swedish *Riksdag*.

¹⁴ One could question the truthfulness of this statement. After all, the SD 2010 campaign video showed a group of women in burqa jumping the queue at a welfare office, leaving an elderly Swedish-looking woman without a pension. Regardless of whether the SD in fact supports reductions in immigrants' social rights or not, however, the very fact that it does not want to state this explicitly is of course informative by itself.

¹⁵ Interestingly, the website - which is still online (www.watkostdemassaimmigratie.nl) - never offered an answer to its name-giving question.

¹⁶ It seems worth noting that not all political scientists agree. Karl Loxbo (2010), for example, finds in his analysis of local elections that the mainstream strategy of isolating and ignoring SD has actually facilitated its ascendance.

¹⁷ Occasionally, however, MPs have invoked the universality of Canada's health care system to explain their commitment to the equal treatment of immigrants and native-born Canadians. When Art Hanger (Ref) criticized the health care costs incurred by HIV positive refugee claimants, Mary Clancy (LPC) declared: "This government believes in health care for all Canadians. We believe in health care for people who come to this country" (House of Commons debate, May 5, 1995).

¹⁸ Fritsma (PVV) repeatedly emphasized that his party's proposals aim to "stop the islamisation of the Netherlands" (interview NET03), Ulenbelt (SP) elaborated on cultural differences that cause neighborhood disturbances (interview NET05), while Van Nieuwenhuizen (VVD) talked about crime, alcoholism, and homophobia among immigrants, as well as the 'uncomfortable feeling' she has when sitting in a train where people are speaking in a foreign language (interview NET01).

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