Welfare, Migration and the Life Course: Welfare Regimes and Migration Patterns of EU-citizens in the Netherlands

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Abstract

Migration is often understood as a rational decision of individuals or households, to maximize (family) income and minimize risks. Welfare systems may reduce risks in migration, offer direct and indirect forms of (family) income, and provide insurance. Therefore, differences in welfare state arrangements across countries can be expected to influence migration decisions and patterns. Yet empirical evidence on the relation between migration and welfare is rather mixed, and knowledge on how welfare states shape intra-European migration is limited. In this study, we aim to advance our understanding on the relationship between migration and welfare. We analyze both immigration and emigration of EU-citizens in the Netherlands, using full population register data for three observation years: 2003, 2008 and 2013 covering different stages in European migration and developments in welfare states across Europe. Rather than isolating one indicator of the welfare state, welfare states are approached as the set of welfare institutions and arrangements in a country. By means of cluster analyses, we empirically test whether the established welfare regime typology can also be identified based on sizes of migration flows and migrants' duration of stay. In addition, we investigate the relative importance of welfare state arrangements for different migrant profiles, by including life course related characteristics of migrants in the clustering. The results reveal differences in the clusters over the years under study. Therefore, our findings are discussed in the light of changes of welfare arrangements in the studied countries.

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Introduction

Migration is often understood as a rational decision of individuals or households to maximize (family) income and minimize risks (see Palmer & Pytlikova, 2015; Stark & Taylor, 1989, 1991). Indicators related to the labour market in both the sending and the receiving country, such as wage differentials and unemployment rates, are therefore typically employed to explain migration flows. However, the welfare state can also be expected to play a role, as welfare benefits can affect the situation of an individual or household. Welfare systems can offer direct and indirect forms of income, affect quality of life, widen the range of choices and provide insurance in the case of risk (Kurekova, 2013). The idea that the way welfare is organized in different countries can affect migration is not new to the scientific and societal debate. Some scholars (e.g., Greve, 2014) have warned that people from poorer countries are likely to migrate to rich ones and claim welfare benefits there. This would pose a heavy economic burden on rich-country tax payers, and could undermine political support for the welfare state. Others (e.g., Legrain, 2008) however have been more optimistic, arguing that as long as migrants remain in the work force they will be net contributors to public finances. Important to this debate is the question to what extent migration decisions really are influenced by the welfare state. The European Union provides a suitable context to study this question, as with the removal of many legal barriers it has become easier for migrants to make use of welfare arrangements while living abroad.

In the current study we will investigate the link between welfare and migration for the Dutch context, using register data of Statistics Netherlands for the years 2003, 2008 and 2013. In the welfare state literature, countries are typically grouped based on systematic differences in their welfare state arrangements. In this study, we aim to investigate whether these different regime types translate into specific patterns in intra-European migration. We test whether the established welfare state typology is replicated when clustering countries based on characteristics of their migration flows and life course related characteristics of migrants. Although we do not include separate indicators of welfare generosity in our analyses, we will reflect on recent changes of the welfare states under study in relation to our findings.

The relationship between welfare and migration has been studied before, initially especially for the American context, but more recently also for Europe. Although these studies have provided valuable information, they are characterized by certain limitations. First, most studies investigating the relation between welfare and migration have measured the generosity of the welfare state as the percentage of the gross domestic product spent by the government on social benefits. Hereby some studies have grouped all social expenditure (Josifidis, Supic, Pucar, & Srdic, 2014; Palmer & Pytlikova, 2015; Razin & Wahba, 2015), whereas others have distinguished expenditure by the main domains, e.g., family, unemployment, education, health and retirement (Geis, Uebelmesser, & Werding, 2013; Giulietti, Guzi, Kahanec, & Zimmermann, 2013; Jackson, Ortmeyer, & Quinn, 2013; Kureková, 2013). However, it seems likely that if welfare affects migration decisions, rather than mere government spending, diverse aspects of the welfare state are of importance. Here one can for instance think of access to benefits and the type of arrangements provided. In this paper we aim to adress this issue. Rather than using indicators of the welfare state, we will group countries based on characteristics of migration flows and migrants. In a next step we will compare the clusters that are formed this way with a classification of countries derived from the welfare state literature.

Second, the influence of welfare benefits on migration processes is often compared to that of a magnet: a generous welfare state would attract migrants from other countries. This seems a rather one-sided view. Whether a country is attractive to migrants due to its welfare state likely does not

only depend on welfare benefits in this particular country, but also on the generosity of the welfare state in the country of origin. Furthermore, one could expect welfare to affect not just immigration flows, but also decisions to stay or to re-migrate. Whereas most of the current literature has focused on welfare provisions in the receiving country, in our study we will relate characteristics of migration and migrants to the way welfare is arranged in the country of origin. In addition, we will investigate how welfare relates to immigration, emigration and length of stay.   Finally, one could expect that welfare benefits are particularly important for migrants who are most likely to make use of them. So far, the few studies that acknowledged this have only considered migrants' characteristics related to the labour market (e.g., (Jackson et al., 2013; Schulzek, 2012). Yet apart from employment status, life course related characteristics such as age and family size are important indicators of welfare usage (Legrain, 2008). With this study we aim to bring the life course to the debate on the relation between welfare and migration.

Although most EU member states nowadays produce annual statistics on immigration and emigration, information is not yet comparable across countries. Data on immigration and emigration are not always fully available, and are not consistently measured across countries and time (see, e.g., EMN, 2013). By focusing on the inflows and outflows of migrants for a single country, consistent, detailed and recent data on migration can be used. The Netherlands hereby forms a suitable case, as for many years the country has been characterized by considerable immigration as well as emigration flows. Next to migration between the Netherlands and traditional migration countries such as Belgium, Germany and the UK, the subsequent enlargements of the European Union increased migration flows between the Netherlands and the new member states. In addition, the Netherlands provides a relevant context due to its welfare arrangements. In the classical typology of Esping-Andersen (1990), the Netherlands is characterized as a 'hybrid' welfare state, roughly half-way between the social-democratic and the corporatist type (de Beer, Wildeboer Schut, & Vrooman, 2001). It is on the one hand characterized by the universal target group, generous benefit conditions and high costs of funding typical for the social-democratic system, and on the other hand by the low 'employment incentives', limitations on the labour supply of women and less productive workers typical for the corporatist countries.

Our paper focuses on migration flows in 2003, 2008 and 2013. The first time point, 2003, illustrates the situation prior to the enlargement of the European Union in 2004, whereby the number of EU member states increased from 15 to 25. The second time point, 2008, is one year after a subsequent enlargement of the European Union, whereby Bulgaria and Romania gained access. In addition, 2008 was the year the global economic crisis set in. Finally, measurements in 2013 are used to gain insight in the recent situation.

Theoretical framework and hypotheses

A Typology of Welfare States
The welfare state can be described as the total sum of social insurance, welfare benefits, social investment and public services provided by governments to citizens (Legrain, 2008). As a result of economic, demographic and political developments, considerable variation exists in the way countries structure their welfare arrangements (de Beer et al., 2001). In an attempt to summarize the main differences, Esping-Andersen (1990) developed a typology of welfare states based on the allocation of welfare production between state, market and households. Hereby three welfare regimes are distinguished: the liberal, the corporatist and the social democratic type.

The *liberal regime* is characterized by needs-based social assistance, only covering the basic

needs. Collective provisions are limited, and have as main target group the poor. Rather than collective risk-pooling the system responds to changes on the labour market, and uses individual market solutions in pensions, health and services. Entry conditions are strict; benefits are means-tested and only provided to those who are incapable of work. Benefits are funded by means of general taxation, but as the arrangements are meagre the levies usually are low. An example of a European country approximating the liberal welfare regime is the UK. The *corporatist regime* is quite comprehensive, with social insurance being linked to employment. Collective provisions are selective and organized by professional groups, with entry conditions being fairly strict, and dependent on individuals' employment history and paid premiums. The level of the benefits is wage related, with benefits mainly funded through contributions. The family is placed at the center of welfare provision, and new social problems are delegated to the family. France, Belgium and Germany approximate the corporatist welfare regime. In the *social-democratic regime*, significant social benefits are provided for all social classes. The state has a key role in welfare production, with most welfare solutions being delivered by the public sector. The market on the other hand plays a limited role, as do family-provided welfare services. Entry to welfare arrangements is obtained by residency in the country for a given number of years. Limitation of the duration of benefits is not strict, and there is a high guaranteed minimum level. The generous benefits are paid for by means of high general taxation. Sweden approximates the social-democratic welfare state.

Since typologies are to some extent ideal types, there will always be ambiguous cases (van Kersbergen & Vis, 2015). The Dutch case in particular has been somewhat puzzling and confusing. On the one hand, the country is characterized by generous redistributive benefits typical for the socio-democratic regime. On the other hand, however, these benefits are largely financed by social insurance contributions as in the conservative regime (Kammer, Niehues, & Peichl, 2012). The Netherlands is therefore regularly classified as either conservative or socio-democratic. Yet welfare state types should be understood as idealized constructions that nearly never meet reality (van Hooren & Becker, 2012). The Netherlands can therefore be identified as a 'hybrid' welfare state, positioned somewhere between the social-democratic and the corporatist type (de Beer et al., 2001).

According to Esping-Andersen, differences among welfare states are not simply indicated by different scores on separate, one-dimensional aspects. Rather, there is a qualitative difference among them, with matching political ideologies (Emmenegger, Kvist, Marx, & Petersen, 2015). As Esping-Andersen argued that welfare state types have systematically different economic, political and social consequences, the welfare state in his analysis moved from a dependent to an independent variable, that can be used to explain other outcomes (Emmenegger et al., 2015; van Kersbergen & Vis, 2015). The study by Kammer, Niehues and Peichl (2012) supports this idea, as the findings reveal that the welfare state typology can be replicated when grouping countries based on redistributive outcomes of welfare states' tax and transfer policies.

Although the work of Esping-Andersen quickly became one of the dominant heuristics for classifying and understanding modern welfare states, the typology has also received criticism. First, some scholars put the techniques used by Esping-Andersen in his empirical evaluation into question (source). Esping-Andersen's methodology can be described as a two-stage process of qualitative grouping followed by multiple regression. The disadvantage of such an approach is that the number of clusters generated is determined by theoretical considerations rather than the data. Subsequent studies have tried to validate the typology, clustering countries using variables that capture central characteristics of welfare states. In the study by De Beer and colleagues (2001), for example, 58 system

characteristics of the labour market, tax system and social security system are included for 11 countries, based on the situation at the start of 1990. Their findings confirm that empirical differences between countries are sufficiently large to speak of divergent types of welfare state, and validate the classification into three welfare state types. Also the three welfare regimes derived by Powell and Barrientos (2004) conform very closely with the expectations from Esping-Andersen's model. However, not all studies have replicated the typology. Danford (2014), for example, does not detect the liberal, conservative and social democratic regime when using indicators of de-commodification and stratification alone. However, the study ultimately validates Esping-Andersen's typology when supplementing the two dimensions by four additional indicators. 'Public provision of social services' and 'defamilialization' appeared essential factors for differentiating between the conservative and social democratic regimes. 'Post-tax/transfer poverty' and 'activation' were crucial for discriminating between the conservative and liberal worlds. With these findings, Danford supports critics stating that the original typology discards some crucial welfare state dimensions.   Second, the three welfare regimes would have limited relevance outside of a few economically advanced regions. Subsequent studies therefore have tried to identify additional regime types, especially for welfare states in Southern Europe and Eastern Europe. Hereby some authors classified the Southern countries as a sub-group under the conservative cluster (e.g. Powell & Barrientos, 2004), whereas others distinguished the Southern countries as a fourth type of welfare state, that is characterized by the rudimentary nature of many social provisions, while simultaneously other benefits and provisions (e.g. old age pensions) are rather generous (Fenger, 2007; Gal, 2010). According to the clustering of Fenger (2007), the post-communist countries cannot be reduced to any of Esping-Andersen's types of welfare states. The empirical analysis does not show a distinct, specific type of post-communist welfare state either.

Welfare and Migration
Central to the literature on migration and the welfare state is the welfare magnet hypothesis, the expectation that migrants will move to the more generous welfare states (e.g. Borjas, 1999). The welfare magnet hypothesis has been tested in different studies and for diverse contexts, yet most of the empirical evidence comes from studies that examine the relationship between welfare programs and movements between the states of America (Giulietti, 2014). Results found for interstate migration in the United States however do not necessarily generalize to the European context. Numbers of interstate mobility are relatively higher in the US compared to mobility within the European Union (Giulietti & Wahba, 2012). Furthermore, internal migration within the US takes place within one larger nation state, whereas intra-European migration involves crossing national borders. Europe thus can be understood to form an alternative set of circumstances in which to study the welfare magnet hypothesis.

The empirical analysis of De Giorgi & Pellizzari (2009) showed that migrants into the pre-enlargement EU choose their destination – among other considerations – on the basis of the generosity of welfare. Migrants were more likely to move into countries with more generous welfare benefits. Giulietti (2014) on the other hand concludes that when focusing on particular programs such as unemployment benefits, the evidence of a welfare magnet in European countries is weak or non-existent. Instead, factors such as income, unemployment rates and the presence of previous migrants in the receiving country appear to be the major determinants of immigration flows. These studies illustrate the conflicting empirical evidence on the relation between intra-European migration and welfare benefits. Several studies have found no evidence that welfare attracts immigrants (e.g., (Giulietti et al., 2013; Josifidis et al., 2014), whereas others document the existence of a welfare

magnet effect – albeit the economic impact is often moderate (e.g., (De Giorgi & Pellizzari, 2009; Pedersen, Pytlikova, & Smith, 2008).

As most of the previous studies have measured the generosity of the welfare state as percentage of the gross domestic product spent by the government on welfare benefits, their understanding of the relation between migration and welfare is rather narrow. In this study we therefore employ a typology of welfare states, borrowed from the welfare state literature, instead. If welfare plays a role in migration decisions, we would expect migration flows to and from the Netherlands to be comparable in size for countries with a similar welfare regime.

Welfare benefits likely are not equally relevant to everyone. Therefore, one can expect these benefits to influence migration decisions only as far as individuals or families anticipate to make use of them. Previous studies hypothesized that generous welfare benefits will attract welfare migrants (Josifidis et al., 2014) or asylum seekers (Schulzek, 2012), whereas they would not have the same effect on labour migrants. Welfare benefits would further be of greater importance to lower educated migrants compared to the higher educated (e.g, Razin & Wahba, 2015). Yet these studies have overlooked an important aspect. Welfare usage likely depends on employment status, but also on the stage of the life course. Age and family size after all are vital factors influencing welfare usage (Legrain, 2008). Studies investigating the relation between welfare benefits and migration so far mainly focused on characteristics of migrants related to the labour market. In this study, we therefore add to the current literature by including migrants' characteristics related the life course. We would expect migrants to and from the Netherlands originating from similar welfare regimes to be comparable in terms of their characteristics related to the life course.

Context

Traditionally, the Dutch welfare system was characterized by strong paternalist features with a Christian democratic background (Vis, van Kersbergen, & Becker, 2008). 'The strong' had to care for 'the weak', and for the sake of social harmony benefits had to be generous. Due to this ideology, the Dutch welfare state is called a 'caring state' (*verzorgingsstaat)* (van Hooren & Becker, 2012). In the 1960s and 1970s, some 'social democratization' took place. With the recession of the late 1970s the system went into financial problems that initiated a process of reformation that is still going on. Despite the austerity measures established by successive governments after 1982, the Dutch welfare system still belongs to the most generous ones in the world.

Between 2003 and 2013, the total immigration flow to the Netherlands increased from 104,514 to 164,772. Within this time frame, immigrants born in European countries made up the majority of the total inflow. The share of immigrants born in one of the EU member states on total European immigration increased from 33% in 2003 to 65% in 2013. This increase is likely the result of the EU enlargements in 2004 and 2007, whereby the number of EU member states increased from 15 to 27. Increases are in particular observed for the flows of migrants from Eastern European countries to the Netherlands after their accession to the European Union. From that moment onwards, Bulgarian and Polish migrants approached or exceeded the number of migrants from Germany and the UK, which were traditionally the main immigrant groups in the Netherlands. A small decrease in the total immigration number is observed in 2009, shortly after the start of the economic crisis. The same pattern is observed for the number of immigrants born in the EU member states. However, in the following years, the immigration number again increased.

The total number of emigrants to the Netherlands fluctuated over the years under study, with

peaks in 2006 and 2012 and lows in 2003 and 2009. Overall, the emigration number increased from 104,831 in 2003 to 145,669 in 2013. Emigrants born in a European country made up the largest share of the total outflow: around 70% in 2013. The share of emigrants born in a European Union country on the total European emigration increased from 23% to 48% between 2003 and 2013. This relative increase might reflect subsequent EU enlargements, as well as an effect of the economic crisis, inducing increasing migration from EU citizens to other destinations (including their country of origin). Once again, the most noticeable growth was observed for the Eastern European countries after accessing the EU, with the emigration numbers of Polish or Bulgarian migrants approaching or exceeding those of migrants born in Germany and the UK.

Data & Methods

Data

For this paper we make use of data from Statistics Netherlands (2014). In the Netherlands, residents are obliged to register with the municipality in which they live. Registration takes place on the basis of either a Dutch birth certificate or a declaration of stay or residence (Van der Erf, Heering, & Spaan, 2006). The data used for this study are based on these population registers, that include information on date of birth, country of birth, gender, address, household composition, immigration and emigration. As characteristics of migration flows and migrants might have changed over the years, in this paper these factors are investigated for three years: 2003, 2008 and 2013. For each of the investigated years we selected the top 10 EU countries with the largest numbers of migrants. Together this resulted in a selection of 13 countries of birth, for which migrant flows as well as characteristics of migrants are investigated: Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

Measurements

In this paper, we aim to group countries by the (relative) size of their migration flows to and from the Netherlands, as well as characteristics of these migrants. Hereby the relative size of immigration and emigration flows, and the share of migrants still residing in the Netherlands after one, five and ten years are used as main indicators of migration. Indicators related to the life course of migrants are average age, the shares of migrants in different age categories, the shares of migrants moving with family members, and the shares of migrants in different household types, all at the time of migration. In addition, we include the socio-economic category of immigrants one year after migration, and of emigrants 90 day prior to migration.

Migration flows

Immigration is defined as the settlement of persons from a foreign country in the Netherlands. To be included in Dutch register data, immigrants need to be enrolled in the municipal registers; this happens when their expected stay in the Netherlands surpasses a minimum of four months. *Emigration* is defined as the departure of persons (Dutch nationals as well as foreigners) from the Netherlands to a foreign country. Emigrants are unsubscribed from the municipal registers when they expect to stay abroad for at least eight months. It has to be noted that individuals have to inform the municipality on settlement and departure themselves. Consequently, unregistered migration, as well as short term or circular migration, are not included in these definitions, although such forms might be increasingly important in the European context (e.g. short-term seasonal workers, international students, retirement migrants). The figures do correct for unreported migration by administrative

corrections that take into account registration or deregistration from the municipal registers for other reasons than birth, death, settlement, departure or changes in municipal boundaries, as such changes are likely the result from international migration. The immigration and emigration rates are divided by the population size of the countries of origin to adjust for variation due to differences in size. To compute the *share of still residing migrants after n years*, information on the duration of stay of immigrants is used. Immigrants' duration of stay is calculated as the total number of years that have passed since the date of settlement at January 1st of a respective year.

Migrant characteristics

As indicators of the age distribution of migrants, the shares of migrants in five different *age categories* at the time of migration are included. Hereby ages are grouped as stages of the life course: 'children under 15 years old', who likely migrate accompanied by family members; 'young adolescents aged 15-25' in the phase of study or early career; 'migrants in the ages 25-40' who are most likely to have or start a young family; 'migrants in the ages 40-60', for whom work and family life are expected to have stabilized; 'migrants above 60 years' who are close to or above the legal retirement age. The *total share moving with family members* is measured as the share of migrants moving simultaneously with members belonging to the same family from the same address. Next to this variable, the share of migrants in different *household types* at the time of migration are included. A person migrates as 'single' if no other member of the same family moves simultaneously from the same address. Persons in a 'married couple household' are migrants who move with their husband or wife, or children with their married parents. Persons in a 'single parent household with the father' are males who migrate with their children, or children migrating with their father; persons in a 'single parent household with the mother' are females migrating with their children, or children migrating with their mother. Finally, persons in a 'cohabiting couple household' are migrants who move with their unmarried partner and at least one common child, migrants who move in a registered partnership, possibly with children, and children moving with their unmarried but cohabiting parents. Cohabiting but not registered couples without a common child cannot be distinguished; they are treated as singles in the data. To compute the share of migrants in the different *socio-economic categories*, individuals are grouped by their main source of income at the time of measurement. For immigrants the socio-economic category is determined one year after migration. For emigrants, the socio-economic category is established based on their main source of income 90 days before departure. Four socio-economic categories are distinguished. 'Paid labour' represents the share of migrants whose main source of income is a paid job or enterprise. 'Social benefits' indicates the share of migrants who rely on social services (benefits related to unemployment or incapacity of work, social assistance or other social services) or old age pensions. The category '(pre-)education' represents the share of migrants of 0-4 years old who do not go to school yet, and migrants who are enrolled in fulltime education. 'Other without income' indicates the share of migrants who do not have a personal income and are not enrolled in fulltime education. Emigrants who did not live in the Netherlands 90 days prior to departure are also included in this category. For immigrants, an additional category, 'not applicable', represents the share of migrants who no longer reside in the Netherlands one year after migration.

Method

To investigate whether the typology of welfare regimes can be confirmed when focusing on migration flows and migrant characteristics, we conduct a hierarchical cluster analysis. In this type of analysis, countries with similar characteristics across a set of variables are grouped. Our method of grouping is

the Ward's linkage, which joins countries into a cluster such that the variance within a cluster is minimized. In a first model, only indicators of the migration flows are included. In subsequent models, we investigate how the clustering alters when adding migrants' characteristics related to the life course to the model. This way we aim to investigate the relative importance of welfare state arrangements for different migrant profiles.

Preliminary findings

Between 2003 and 2013, most migrants to and from the Netherlands are young, single migrants in their working ages. The shares of migrants under 15 years old and above 40 are overall much smaller. The gender distribution is generally rather balanced. The share of children is relatively large among immigrants born in Belgium and the UK, and emigrants born in Belgium; the share of migrants in the ages above 40 is relatively large among immigrants and emigrants born in Belgium, Bulgaria and the UK. However, it should be noted here that for some countries of birth the age distributions of both immigrants and emigrants has changed over the years under study. For several countries, the share of young adolescents migrating to the Netherlands increased, whereas the share of workers aged 25-40 decreased. This trend is observed most clearly for Germany, the UK, France, Belgium and Sweden. For Bulgaria and Poland, the share of young adolescents on the other hand decreased, while the share of immigrants aged 25-40 increased. Also for emigrants the age distribution has changed over the years, mostly due to an increasing share of emigrants aged 15-25. Such increases have been most noticeable for Germany, France, Belgium, the UK and Spain. For Germany, furthermore, the share of emigrants aged 40-60 decreased over the years, and for Spain the share aged above 60. One should thus be aware that migration flows of mostly young adolescents to and from the Netherlands are a rather recent phenomena for certain countries of birth.

Overall, smaller and less consistent changes over time are observed for the family type of migrants at migration. The share of migrants moving together with family members however appears to decrease rather than to increase over time. Only small shares of immigrants entered the Netherlands simultaneously with other family members. Of the immigrants who did so, most moved in a married couple family or single parent family migrating with the mother. Interestingly, compared to immigrants, the share of emigrants migrating with family members is usually substantially larger. Of these emigrants clearly the largest share moved in a married couple family. Still, emigrants migrating without family members make up the largest share. The shares of single immigrants are smallest for Belgium, France, the UK and Poland, and largest for Bulgaria, Greece and Hungary. For emigrants, these shares are smallest for Belgium, the UK and France, and the largest for Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Greece.

As we observe that the characteristics of migrants changed over time for the different countries of birth, it seems problematic that we try to explain these changing characteristics by a static factor like welfare regime. It could be the case that welfare states within a cluster developed in similar ways, thereby inducing similar changes in migrants' characteristics. However, changes in migrants' characteristics might also follow from country specific changes in welfare arrangements. In this paper we will therefore discuss developments in welfare provisions in the selected countries between 2003 and 2013 that could explain shifts in migrants' characteristics. Testing the impact of these developments empirically is beyond the scope of the current study.

From the welfare magnet hypothesis, one could expect relatively large flows from less generous welfare states to the Netherlands, and relatively small flows the other way around. In line with this expectation, we find the net migration rate to increase for migrants born in the poorer

Central and Eastern European countries after they entered the EU. However, only for Poland the net migration rate remained high over the complete studied period. For Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania, after some years of growth the net migration declined again, to approach zero in recent years. Further, in line with our hypothesis, the net migration rate is relatively low for migrants born in Sweden, a country which is known for its generous welfare state. Less obvious to explain are the low net migration rate for the UK and high net migration rate for Germany prior to 2013. The UK is usually classified as a liberal welfare regime, characterized by modest welfare benefits. From this, one would expect a high net migration from the UK to the Netherlands. Germany on the other hand is often classified as a conservative welfare regime. Although the Dutch welfare system might in certain respects be somewhat more generous, these differences do not seem large enough to account for the high net migration from Germany to the Netherlands.

Second, one could expect migrants from less generous welfare states to stay longer in the Netherlands than migrants from the more generous welfare states. Interestingly, we observe that migrants born in Bulgaria and Romania tended to stay longer in the Netherlands than any other group before these countries entered the European Union, but that after EU accession the duration of stay decreased greatly. This is not what one would expect comparing the welfare regimes of these counties to that of the Netherlands. Although EU membership likely has facilitated the welfare usage of Bulgarians and Romanians in the Netherlands, access to the EU for these countries resulted in more short-term migration. The relatively long duration of stay for Polish migrants in the Netherlands on the other hand does support the idea that generous welfare benefits have an influence on the remigration decision, as does the short stay of Swedish migrants. The relatively long stay of Belgian migrants in the Netherlands is less easily explained from differences in welfare benefits between Belgium and the Netherlands.

Finally, welfare benefits can be expected to attract especially migrants who migrate with family members, or outside the working ages. We observe that over the years, the share of young migrants in the working ages increased for several countries. These migrants are expected to benefit less from a generous welfare state. The countries for which we observed this trend are all traditional EU member states, with comparatively the most developed welfare states. For the less developed welfare states a similar development was not observed. For these countries most migrants are in the working ages as well, although overall they are slightly older.

For the Northern EU member states, the share of immigrants migrating with family members is generally somewhat larger than for the Mediterranean and new Eastern European member states, Poland and Portugal excepted. Overall, we see that the share of emigrants migrating with family members is much larger than the share of immigrants doing so. Most of these emigrants moved together with their husband/wife or married parents. The largest share of emigrants moving with family members was observed for the Northern countries, followed by the Mediterranean countries. The Eastern European countries has the smallest shares of emigrants moving accompanied by family. This could indicate that for all countries most migrants migrate to the Netherlands without family members, but that migrants from the less generous welfare states are less likely to re-migrate from the Netherlands when living with family members. However, this finding might also result from a lower number of migrants from these countries living in the Netherlands with family members.

Discussion

In analyses of Danford (Danforth, 2014), the three types of welfare regimes began emerging around 1975 and were relatively stable by 1985. However, by the end of the century, the conservative and social-democratic types had merged and the liberal type had split. These findings indicate that the welfare typology itself is not immune to change, and might be most useful for examining welfare states prior to the turn of the century. Recent developments, such as economic recession and rapid population aging, might pressure welfare states to reform. In addition, international mechanisms such as the European Union's Open Method of Coordination are strongly altering the ways in which net social policies are generated. Changes in the welfare state landscape can therefore be expected.

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