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Welfare chauvinism and social policy: how politicians justify migrants' exclusion from social programs in Western Europe

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Introduction

1. Migrants, social benefits and welfare chauvinism in European host countries

Migrants' exclusion from social benefits and programs in European host countries¹ represents a major challenge to the achievement of migrants' social rights, i.e., access to social services and material resources to fulfill the basic needs for survival (Sainsbury, 2012). This topic has been extensively studied by political and social scientists. The present thesis looks at it from the angle of political science and specifically the strand of literature on “welfare chauvinism” (Andersen and Bjørklund 1990, p. 212).

Welfare chauvinism is a political view claiming that national welfare benefits should be reserved exclusively (or mostly) to the members of the native in-group (usually citizens), whereas the non-native outgroup (migrants and refugees) should be excluded or receive limited access only (Andersen and Bjørklund, 1990). To be clear, the topic of welfare chauvinism is not embedded in a single literature, but it encompasses three different fields of research: party politics, individual-level attitudes, and policy reforms (Careja and Harris, 2021). While using similar definitions, scholars in each of these fields adopt diverse operationalization and measurement strategies and pursue different research scopes (Ibid).

The party politics literature highlights that welfare chauvinism is an important feature in party policy platforms in Europe, especially party manifestos and policy programs of the so-called populist radical right parties (henceforth PRRPs) and, to a certain extent, mainstream right parties as well. Studies on individual attitudes point out a number of potential determinants of citizens' restrictive views towards migrants and welfare (Careja and Harris, 2021). Finally, literature on policy reforms shows that several politicians and political parties (PRRPs but not only) have started to translate their chauvinist preferences into

¹ In this thesis, I speak about “European host countries” to refer to the countries classified as Western, Northern and Southern Europe by the UN geoscheme classification of the United Nations. In the thesis, I also generically refer to them as “Western countries”. To be fair, migrants' exclusion from national welfare also takes place in Eastern European countries, in many different forms (legal exclusion embedded in laws and social policies, party manifestos, politicians' rhetoric and public narratives, ext. While this is certainly of high relevance, the present doctoral thesis is focused only on Western, Northern and Southern European countries (“Western”).

exclusionary social policies targeting (different groups of) migrants. The present thesis is situated exactly within this latter field of research.

Studies dealing with welfare chauvinism define these types of exclusionary policies as “welfare chauvinist policies” (Chueri 2019, p.3), “chauvinist policy reforms” and “outputs” (Careja and Harris 2021, p.21) and “chauvinistic policies” (Ennsner-Jedenastik 2020, p. 4). To be sure, political scientists also define them in different ways, e.g., “policies of disenfranchisement” and “migrants disenfranchisement” (Sainsbury 2012, p.) as well as welfare State’s “generosity”, “access” or “exclusion” (Römer, 2017). In the present thesis, I define these policies as *welfare chauvinist policies* and *chauvinist policy reforms*. These terms are conceptually more coherent to the studies dealing with the welfare chauvinism phenomenon in its different facets, in the political science field. Moreover, they are more immediately recognizable as well.

2. Research question(s)

Welfare chauvinism has attracted scholarly interest since the mid-1990s (to name a few comprehensive studies: Akkerman and de Lange 2021; Ennsner-Jedenastik 2016, 2018, 2020; Chueri 2019; Careja et al. 2016; Lange 2007; Kriesi 2016; Schumacher and van Kersbergen 2016; Lefkofridi and Michel 2014; Sainsbury 2012; Mudde 2000, 2007; Michel, 2017). While most of these studies have been focusing on the first two fields of literatures mentioned above, namely those on party politics and individual-level attitudes, still few contributions exist regarding welfare chauvinist policies and policy reforms (Careja and Harris, 2021).

The existing contributions in this field have focused on the potential determinants of chauvinist policies, especially in terms of political parties promoting them (Careja and Harris, 2021). However, the literature has not exhausted research interests. In particular, we still know very little about the ways in which politicians promote welfare chauvinist policies and reforms – i.e., the *arguments* they use to justify and legitimize migrants’ exclusion or limited access to national welfare and the *explanatory factors* behind these arguments.

The most notable exceptions are the recent studies on welfare chauvinism in the Scandinavian countries by Jørgensen and Thomsen (2016), Keskinen (2016) and Norocel (2016). They point out a number of different types of “welfare chauvinist arguments” (Keskinen, 2016, p. 354) used by politicians for

legitimately restricting access to welfare programs, differentiating between economic-based and cultural-rooted arguments (Jørgensen and Thomsen, 2016; Keskinen, 2016; Norocel, 2016). Nevertheless, these studies are mainly centered on Scandinavian countries, largely ignoring the broader Western European political context. Moreover, they do not examine the potential factors that may shape the different chauvinist arguments.

The present thesis originates exactly from this research gap and asks the following question(s):

RQ: How do politicians promote welfare chauvinist policies and reforms, in the Western European political context?

This research question needs to be further specified by some constitutive sub-research questions:

SRQ1: What arguments do politicians exploit to exclude migrants from social benefits?

SRQ2: Which are the factors that shape the different types of welfare chauvinist arguments?

When using the term “justificatory arguments”, “welfare chauvinist arguments” or simply “arguments”, I refer to the set of reasons and criteria used by politicians to promote and justify the exclusion or limited access to national welfare for migrants. I use these terms since all of them are used as synonyms by scholars in the field (notably Jørgensen and Thomsen 2016; Keskinen 2016; Noricel 2016, cfr. chapter 1) and they can therefore be easily understood.

To explore the chauvinist arguments in national policy frameworks and the factors shaping them, the thesis does not focus on exclusionary laws and policies themselves but rather on the policy discussion and debates (especially politicians’ parliamentary speeches) surrounding them. In parliamentary debates, the logic and arguments underpinning welfare chauvinism emerge far more clearly than in social policies. This point is further developed in the methodological section (cfr. chapter 3).

Moreover, I use the term “politicians” (or also “chauvinist/nativist politicians”) to refer generically to the politicians who promote and/or support policy reforms retrenching welfare programs for migrants. As chapter 1 illustrates in detail, this type of policies is usually promoted by politicians of PRRPs and, sometimes, mainstream right parties as well (“populist contagion”, Careja and

Harris 2021, p.6). The thesis' main focus is on chauvinist-oriented social policies, rather than (and regardless of) the specific party/ies promoting them. Accordingly, I select the country-cases and specific policies to analyze based on the presence of some chauvinist elements, assuming that both PRRPs and mainstream right parties can put such policies forward. Indications on politicians' party affiliations are provided in each of the cases under analysis. Nevertheless, the parties promoting and/or supporting them are irrelevant to the thesis' purposes², as it rather looks at other types of explanatory factors (independent variables) behind the chauvinist turns.

3. Research perspective and methodological approach

This doctoral thesis aims at making a *causal* type of scientific *inference* (King, Keohane and Verba 1994, p.34) from the data. Namely, it scientifically extracts information from a set of selected policy debates which – through theoretical standards and practical procedures – contribute to explaining the causal mechanisms shaping welfare chauvinist policy outputs and notably the different types of welfare chauvinist arguments behind them.

In the social science, we may have two different approaches to identify causal relations and mechanisms: the variance-theory and the process-theory approaches to causality (Maxwell 2004; Bennet and McWhorter 2016). The former deals with correlations among different factors or “variables” (Maxwell 2004, p.248). This approach is based on an analysis of the contribution of differences in values of particular independent variables (or explanatory factor) to differences in the dependent variables (or outcome) (Maxwell 2004; Bennet and McWhorter 2016). The latter, instead, deals with “events” (Maxwell 2004, p.249) and the processes that connect them; it is based on an analysis of the causal processes by which some events influence others (Maxwell 2004; Bennet and McWhorter 2016).

This thesis adopts the variance-theory approach to causality. The fundamental factors at play are the type of social programs and the type of welfare chauvinist arguments. The former is the main explanatory factor or

² The government's and government coalitions' internal dynamics are also not relevant for the thesis, for example the influence of one coalition member (or parliamentary support party) on the other, in the field of social policies.

predictor³ (independent variable); the latter is the outcome under observation (dependent variable). The different types of programs vary in their underpinning architecture and core characteristics, distinguishing between universal, means-tested and insurance-run social programs. The justificatory arguments vary according to whether they are based on economic or rather cultural considerations, that is economic-based and culturally-rooted arguments respectively (cfr. Chapter 1).

I first explore the existence of an association between the hypothesized explanatory factor and the (expected) outcome in politicians' speeches and parliamentary debates.⁴ More precisely, I question whether politicians use different arguments for means-tested, insurance-based and universal programs in their speeches. Thereafter, I argue and investigate whether a causal connection is also at play, i.e., the variation in the type of program could work as an explanatory mechanism to highlight variation in the chauvinist arguments used by politicians to exclude migrants⁵. In simple terms, the thesis' main claim is that the types of chauvinist arguments exploited by politicians are shaped by the different types of social programs observed. By contrast, I am not interested in analyzing the causal process by which a series of events have led to the presence of some welfare chauvinist arguments. This is left to future research in the field.

This piece of work differs from the prevailing methodological literature. Traditionally, the variance-theory approach to causality tends to be associated to quantitative methods of inquiry, especially statics-based studies, whereas the process-theory approach is considered more akin to qualitative ones. By contrast, I adopt the variance-theory approach, but I associate it to an essentially qualitative methodological design.

It is certainly true that a quantitative design offers several advantages, such as the precise measurement of differences and associations (quantitatively speaking, *correlations*) through statistical and mathematical tools. That being taken into account, in the methodological chapter I will show in detail that the qualitative design can be very useful in identifying and “empirically

³ Along the thesis, I will use these terms in the same way, to refer to the types of social programs.

⁴ I prefer to use terms such as *association*, *connections* and *links* rather than *correlations*. This latter is less than ideal in this context, as the thesis does not document any statistical correlation (quantitative methodology) but it rather relies on a qualitative approach to identify existing connections between the fundamental factors at play.

⁵ More precisely, I argue that politicians use different arguments for means-tested and universal programs whilst they do not apply any chauvinist argument to the insurance-based ones, being these generally less vulnerable to welfare chauvinism (cfr. Ennsner-Jedenastik, 2020 and Chapters 1-2 of the present thesis).

corroborating” (Corbetta 2003, p.90) the underpinning causal mechanisms behind welfare chauvinism and the chauvinist arguments too.

I am aware that, while several strategies exist to empirically corroborate the causal mechanisms, uncertainty about causal inference can never be eliminated in the social sciences, as it lays at the very core of them (King, Keohane and Verba 1994; Corbetta 2003). In other words, one can never empirically “prove” (Corbetta 2003, p.89) the existence of a causal law since it would imply the “production” process by which a cause produces an effect. Indeed, such a process is by definition unobservable (Bunge 1959; Blalock cited by Corbetta 2003, p.89).

In this regard, an additional consideration is needed. Social science is likewise defined by the characteristic of being multi-factorial. That means complex sociopolitical phenomena, such as welfare chauvinism, are hardly explicable by a single factor (King, Keohane and Verba, 1994). Several factors may contribute to explaining them, and it is impossible to capture all of them in a single work (Ibid). The present thesis aims primarily at assessing the causal effects of a specific factor, i.e., the type of social program. While it acknowledges the potential effects of other factors too, it is not interested in exploring them. Accordingly, it acknowledges the impossibility of providing a fully comprehensive explanation for the different types of welfare chauvinist argument politicians exploit

4. Overall objectives of the research

By exploring the welfare chauvinist arguments behind exclusionary social policies, and notably the explanatory factors shaping these arguments, the thesis contributes to increasing the attention and expanding the literature on welfare chauvinism at the *policy* level, which is still somewhat underexplored. Already in the 1950s, Marshall claimed that this side of research deserves more attention by the academic community (Marshall, 1950). Several scholars (e.g., Sainsbury, 2012) today further stress Marshall’s point. In particular, he warned that limiting or even denying migrants’ social rights, especially by formally/legally restricting their access to national welfare, can lead to major negative consequences for both migrants and European host countries.

Restrictive and/or exclusionary social policies hamper migrants’

individual development and the satisfaction of the basic needs for survival (Marshall 1950; Sainsbury 2012). All this can in turn lead to several negative consequences, like political and geographical segregations, migrants' feelings of revanche and resentment. These may, in the long-term, undermine the host country social and political stability⁶ (Sainsbury, 2012).

Several years later, this call remains fundamentally unheard (Sainsbury, 2012). In fact, some significant welfare chauvinist-oriented turns in social policies have taken place in most recent times in Europe. This occurred, for example, in Denmark (Careja et al., 2016; Jørgensen and Thomsen 2016), and most recently, Austria (Pelinka 2002; Kriesi et al., 2006; Ennser-Jedenastik 2020) and the UK. Some of these policies are still in force today; others have been struck down by national and EU Courts. However, this may not necessarily prevent national governments from promoting chauvinist policies again. Overall, we observe an increasingly contentious debate over access to social resources by native citizens and/or residents on the one hand, and migrants and refugees on the other hand, in most European host countries (Sainsbury 2012; Jørgensen and Thomsen, 2016).

In the following chapters and in the conclusion, I illustrate in depth the research's specific objectives as well as its theoretical and empirical relevance. Before presenting that, the key concepts used in the thesis need a preliminary clarification.

5. Key concepts

5.1. The welfare State

The origin and transformations of the welfare State

It is not possible to talk about welfare chauvinism without a clearer understanding of what welfare systems and welfare States are. This concept is put forward for the first time in the early 1940s. However, most scholars agree that the modern welfare State comes into maturity from the 1950s to the 1970s thanks to the economic boom which last until the end of the 1960s (Nullmeier and Kaufmann, 2010).

The conceptualization of welfare State and the classification into different

⁶ This point is mentioned here and it is further developed in the Conclusions of the thesis.

types have been subject to a never-ending debate since its introduction. This thesis builds on the definition by Esping-Andersen (1990), it being the most authoritative and widespread one still today. Following Esping-Andersen (1990) welfare State is “the institutional arrangements, rules and understandings that guide and shape current social policy decisions, expenditure developments, problem definitions, and even the respond-and-demand structure of citizens and welfare consumers.” (Esping-Andersen, 1990). However, I consider this definition in light of the most recent evolution of European welfare States (Mau and Burkhardt 2009; Nordensvarda and Ketola 2015).

The development of the Western welfare State introduces a novel form of citizenship, i.e., social citizenship (Marshall 1973, 1992). This is based on social rights, namely the rights to material resources, social services, and social protection which enable individuals to satisfy the basic need for survival (Ibid). Social citizenship complements and reinforces the civil and political citizenship, won in Western Europe and North America in the 18th and 19th centuries (Marshall 1973, 1992).

By granting social protection, the State aims at preventing, reducing, and overcoming adverse circumstances which affect wellbeing. Social rights are best translated, in empirical terms, in State’ policies and programs which structure economic relations so to reduce vulnerabilities, manage risks and support individuals, households and communities affected by hardship. These policies are primarily formulated and implemented at the national level. However, they can also involve sub national structures and policymaking (Marshall 1973, 1992).

Despite the link between social protection and citizenship, non-citizens can obtain welfare State’s protection too – at least, to a certain extent. The aforementioned definition by Esping-Andersen refers not only to citizens, but also more broadly to “welfare consumers” (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Building on Esping-Andersen’s classification of welfare regime types, we can see that the meaning of “welfare consumers” essentially depends on the different types of regimes and specific entitlement and disentanglement criteria used.

Still, the age of first establishment and development of European welfare States was characterized by a moderate degree of social and ethnic homogeneity (Sainsbury 2006, 2012). In addition, migrants coming to the European host countries from both inside and outside Europe were mainly temporary workers.

As they spent only temporary working periods in the host countries, most of them were not interested in acquiring (and did not apply for) citizenship or national social benefits (Castles 2003; Sainsbury 2006, 2012). In such a context, “welfare consumers” almost everywhere ended up corresponding to State’s citizens, in empirical terms. Given that, the debate around who is entitled or disentitled to social benefits was not a subject of public debate (Sainsbury 2006, 2012).

Since the mid of the 1960s, the traditional overlapping between citizens and welfare consumers is being challenged, both from a formal and an empirical perspective (Sainsbury 2006; Nordensvarda and Ketola 2015). Formally speaking, a process of “de-nationalization of solidarity practices” has progressively taken place, although with some differences across different types of welfare regimes (Sainsbury 2012; Mau and Burkhardt 2009; Nordensvarda and Ketola 2015). Namely, residence has become a central criterion for entitlement or disentitlement to several social benefits and programs (Nordensvarda and Ketola 2015). Soysal (1994) defines residence-centered welfare systems as “post-national welfare States”.

From an empirical point of view, de-nationalization has been particularly evident in those welfare regimes where entitlement was traditionally based on citizenship (Social Democratic regimes). Here, people with permanent residency have increasingly obtained access to universal programs, usually conceived as part of citizenship rights (Sainsbury 2012; Mau and Burkhardt 2009).

Conversely, the process of de-nationalization has been less evident in welfare regimes where entitlement was traditionally based on work, contributions, or social need status (Conservative and Liberal regimes). Here, non-citizens could already formally access (in some cases and with some limitation) several social programs if they fulfilled the above criteria. However, as a matter of fact, citizens were the main welfare consumers since the immigration inflows and the number of non-citizens were lower (Sainsbury 2012; Mau and Burkhardt 2009). By contrast, since the mid-1960s, the substantial overlapping between welfare consumers and citizens has become less and less frequent. Accordingly, the number of non-citizens among those asking for and obtaining social protection has increased (Ibid).

De-nationalization has been the results of both social phenomena and institutional changes (Castles 2003; Mau and Burkhardt 2009). From the social

perspective, the main triggers have been the changing features of migration flows to European countries. As already mentioned, people coming to the European host countries in the previous phase were mainly temporary migrant workers, not interested in applying for citizenship or national social benefits (Castles 1986, 2003). Following the 1973 oil crisis and the most recent war crisis around the world in the 2000s, migrants started to seek a permanent settlement in Europe. Consequentially, their access to and demand of welfare provisions changed as many of them started to ask for social protection (Castles 2003; Mau and Burkhardt 2009).

From the institutional side, de-nationalization was among the outcomes of the European integration process. Such a process has progressively eroded nation States' sovereignty in favor of a more federal system of decision making in several policy areas. This has led to a loss of sovereignty on numerous policy issues. Among others, those concerning social rights, where EU law has set down new principles allowing non-citizens to access a wide range of national social rights (Mau and Burkhardt, 2009).

Types of welfare regimes in Europe

For the purpose of this thesis, it is important to know the main differences and evolution of welfare regimes in Europe – also known as consolidated welfare regimes (Esping- Andersen 1990). According to Esping-Andersen, the two main properties that make a classification of the different welfare State regimes possible are decommodification and social stratification.

In his words, decommodification “occurs when a service is rendered as a matter of right, and when a person can maintain a livelihood without reliance on the market” (Esping- Andersen 1990, pp. 21-22). It implies the introduction of a number of social rights, which provide basic survival to people even when they are unemployed, and they cannot immediately re-enter the labor market (Ibid). Conversely, in a highly commodified social system, people are properly commodities in that their survival is dependent on the sale of their labor-power (Esping-Andersen 1990).

Focusing on social stratification, it is promoted by public social policies and leads to a certain level of universality of solidarity. A welfare State granting the same social rights to all citizens (and eventually non-citizens) has a low level of

social stratification and a broad understanding of solidarity (Esping-Andersen 1990). By contrast, a welfare State differentiating social rights according to income, taxes or other criteria, has a high level of social stratification and a narrow understanding of solidarity (Ibid). Based on these two dimensions, Esping-Andersen (1990) distinguishes three types of welfare State: the Liberal, the Conservative (Conservative-corporatist) or Continental and the Social Democratic welfare State.

The Liberal welfare State characterizes the US, the UK and most Anglo-Saxon countries. Its core characteristics are a low level of decommodification and a medium-high level of social stratification (Esping- Andersen 1990; Castles 2010). Decommodification is low since this model is centered on the primacy of markets. Thus, the welfare system must be liberated from social institutions and become dependent wholly on the market. Accordingly, the State tends to foster the market's action and does not intervene in the process (Esping- Andersen 1990; Castles 2010). It rather encourages market solutions to social problems and making one's basic survival strongly dependent on the market (commodification process). It does that either passively, by guaranteeing only a minimum, or actively, by directly subsidizing private welfare schemes such as private pension plans (Ibid).

Despite significant differences across Liberal welfare regimes, all put forward individual social need status as the main formal criterion for entitlement or disentanglement to social benefits and services, mainly shaped in the means-tested schemes (Esping-Andersen 1990; Castles 2010). These ask applicants to provide evidence of their social need status through their income and capital (their "means"). Applicants' income has to be under certain limits in order to be entitled to welfare services and benefits. By perpetrating this logic over time, the Liberal regime supports social stratification to a certain extent (Ibid).

The Conservative-corporatist welfare regime includes countries such as Austria, France, Germany (Esping- Andersen 1990; Palier 2010a). The name of this type of regime refers to their socio- economic corporatist structure, i.e., the organization of the countries' society and economy into major interest groups, also called corporations. Representatives of corporations settle any problems through negotiation, joint agreements, and collective bargaining, in contrast to the free competition logic governing market- centered economies (Palier, 2010a).

These regimes usually envisage a higher level of decommodification than the Liberal ones. This is due to the historically consolidated tradition of granting social benefits and services which ensure basic survival also to unemployed people. Still, social benefits are provided largely by social institutions as the family and the Catholic Church (Esping- Andersen, 1990). In most countries, State's assistance is typically subordinated to social institutions' assistance. Namely, it only steps in when the family and the church's capacity to support its members is exhausted (Esping- Andersen 1990; Palier 2010a).

Furthermore, the word "Conservative" also refers to these regimes' high levels of social stratification. This reflects a conservative type of society, based on traditional status differences and family values (Esping- Andersen 1990; Palier 2010a). In the effort to preserve such differences, Conservative welfare arrangements are generally founded on social insurance funds mechanisms of welfare provisions. These entails measures such as old age pension, health, unemployment, accident insurance (Ibid).

Insurance mechanisms were initially established by policymakers like Otto von Bismarck (Germany) and Eduard von Taaffe (Austria), following an authoritarian and conservative socio-political view. To this day, they are often referred to as "Bismarckian schemes" or "Bismarckian tradition" (Palier, 2010a). Insurance-run benefits depend on the individual's former employment and tax contributions. Accordingly, the underpinning logic of this mechanism is to reward work performance and socio-economic status. To the relevance of this thesis, labor market activity and contributions are the key entitlement and disentanglement criteria to social benefits (Esping- Andersen 1990; Palier 2010a).

The third type of welfare State is known as the Social Democratic type (Esping- Andersen 1990; Kautto 2010). It is typical of Scandinavian and Northern European countries, and it is characterized by a high level of decommodification and a low level of social stratification. The basic idea is that all citizens enjoy the same rights, and all social strata are incorporated under the same universal insurance system (Ibid).

In contrast to the former model, the Social Democratic regime aims at making people emancipated from both the market and the traditional social institutions, like the Church and the family (decommodification process). Accordingly, social policies' goal is to maximize the capacities for individual

independence, rather than the dependence on the family or on the charity sector (Esping- Andersen 1990; Kautto 2010). What is particularly relevant to the present thesis is that the main entitlement and disentanglement rationale to social benefits has traditionally been formal citizenship (Kautto, 2010).

Transformations of welfare regimes in contemporary times

Despite the scholarly importance of Esping-Andersen's classification, several scholars challenge it today. They claim that all welfare regimes have gone through several challenges, leading to a transformation of their fundamental social institutions. A fundamental change has been the de-nationalization process (cfr. the previous paragraph), changing the concept and/or reality of "welfare consumers" almost everywhere. In addition, a number of other key transformations have characterized each of the regimes.

Conservative regimes have undergone a real "paradigmatic change" (Palier 2010b, p. 15). They have experienced a remarkable wave of institutional reforms since the early 1990s (Bonoli and Palier 1996, Palier 2010b). These reforms have been important to address new social problems the traditional Conservative regimes were not able to deal with anymore e.g., growing amount of jobless, young, long-term unemployed and lone parents in that period (Ibid).

The result has been the formation of a veritable "second world" of welfare within the very same countries (Palier, 2010b). On the one hand, the non-contributory tier of welfare has been enlarged, including universal family benefits and means-tested poverty alleviation program. Thus, Conservative regimes have somewhat converged to the Social Democratic ones. On the other hand, benefits such as pensions and unemployment services have been in most cases retained in the social insurance world (Bonoli and Palier 1996, Palier 2010b).

Likewise, Social Democratic welfare States have experienced some changes already since the 1970s (Kautto 2010; Sainsbury 2012). Thereafter, in the wake of the 2008 economic slowdown, the gross national product of several of these States significantly has significantly fallen. As a response, some national governments have started implementing several economic reforms aimed at reducing public costs by lowering public expenses, also including the universal welfare provision. In such a context, new work-related benefits have been gradually introduced to safeguard against the loss of earnings. Moreover, means-

tested schemes have been reinforced, at the expense of purely universalistic programs. For this reason, Social Democratic regimes have been deemed to converge into both the Liberal and the Conservative ones (Ibid).

However, other scholars outline that not all institutional transformations have led to a real departure from the original welfare State models (Obinger and Talò, 2010). While some of these key changes have undoubtedly weakened the key components of the welfare models, some other changes have rather consolidated the core redistributive logic of each of them. As a result, key differences in terms of welfare redistribution and types of social programs provided are still present across types of regimes, despite structural transformations (Ibid).

Furthermore, the literature has conceptualized a fourth welfare regime, i.e., the Mediterranean or the Southern welfare State regime (Ferrera 1996, 2010). This is deemed to characterize Southern European countries that have developed their welfare States later than the previous ones, in the 1970s and 1980s, namely Italy, Spain, Greece, Spain and Portugal. This type of regime shares some characteristics with the Conservative-corporatist one. Given that, several scholars classify it as a further sub-specification of the Conservative-corporatist welfare regime. Esping-Andersen would classify these States as “immature Conservative welfare regimes” (Esping-Andersen 1990, pp. 25). Nevertheless, Ferrera (1996, 2010) considers it a distinct type of welfare regime, since some of its features mark a departure from the Conservative-corporatist one.

To be more precise, there are four main characterizing features of the Southern welfare State regime (Ferrera 1996, 2010). The first one is the establishment of national publicly run health services for all citizens and, in most recent time, residents as well. This characteristic marks a significant departure from the Conservative-corporatist regime. Secondly, these regimes envisage a low degree of State penetration of the welfare sphere, reflected in low levels of welfare spending in these countries, except for Italy (Ibid).

Thirdly, a mixture of actors actively take part in the process of welfare provision and redistribution, namely the State itself and its various sub-national ramifications: families, the Church, and the charity sector (often operating under the Church’s supervision). Finally, an extensive clientelism system is present, distributing cash subsidies to political client groups (Ferrera, 2010).

This thesis relies on the new classification of welfare regimes, including the Mediterranean regime as well. Indeed, it has acquired increasing authority among scholars, enjoying a high level of recognition today.

5.2. *Welfare chauvinism*

This section focuses on the concept of welfare chauvinism, identifying the most enduring definitions of this term and clarifying to which of them the thesis refers to. Considerations on the empirical application of the concepts and an illustration of the main relevant contributions are provided in the following chapter.

The concept of welfare chauvinism is usually used to denote slightly different, although connected, phenomena. It is introduced for the first time by Andersen and Bjørklund in 1990, in the context of studies of voters' political preference explaining the success of PRRPs) in Western Europe. In their article *Structural Changes and New Cleavages: the Progress Parties in Denmark and Norway*, they use the term to denote a mix of two voters' simultaneous attitude's: preference for welfare State expansion but opposition to the entitlement to benefits for migrants.

A few years later, Kitschelt and McGann (1995) clarify the link between these two different but complementary attitudes, characterizing both individual/voters' preferences and party strategies. Namely, they define welfare chauvinism as a position in the two-dimensional policy space that combines neoliberal views on economic issues – free trade and minimal State intervention in the economy – and authoritarian views on socio-cultural issues – law and order, morality and authority, national way of life and opposition to immigration (Kitschelt and McGann, 1995). This conceptualization of welfare chauvinism has taken root and many following studies have started from it to examine the determinants and causes of welfare chauvinism (Careja and Harris, 2021).

However, welfare chauvinism can also be defined in slightly different terms (Ennsner-Jedenastik 2016; 2018; 2020). That is, the concept refers to a political view that promotes nativism as the main organizing principle in the design of social policy (Ennsner-Jedenastik, 2018). Nativism relies on a group-based logic, pitting the native in-group against the non-native out-group, in the competition for national social benefits and protection. The in-group is typically delineated by formal citizenship, and, in its stricter interpretation, ethnicity, race,

or religion. These ethnic-cultural traits are deemed to define the (alleged) ethno-cultural majority that corresponds to formal citizens too. This interpretation of nativism perfectly conforms to citizenship rules and laws that tend to restrict access to foreigners.

These two conceptualizations of welfare chauvinism are indeed strictly linked. The ideological position described by Kitschelt and McGann (1995) is certainly consistent and even necessary to apply nativist principles to the design of social policy. Nevertheless, they are not exactly the same thing. This thesis adopts the second conceptualization of welfare chauvinism, it being more relevant to its ends.

Finally, some scholars have broken down the concept of welfare chauvinism by distinguishing several different forms of it, observable in party manifestos, public attitudes, and policy reforms/frameworks too. Namely, two main conceptual (and also analytical) typologies exist, based on different criteria (Reeskens and Van Oorschot 2012; Careja et al., 2016). The first one distinguishes the forms of welfare chauvinism based on the *extent of disenfranchisement* for migrants and refugees (Reeskens and Van Oorschot, 2012). Based on that, we can have:

- *strong* welfare chauvinism: individual attitudes, policy proposals and/or policies which exclude or limit migrants' access all together, without any form of conditionality;
- *soft* welfare chauvinism: individual attitudes, policy proposals and/or policies that allows migrants conditional access, by making entitlement conditional upon the fulfillment of one or several requirements (Reeskens and Van Oorschot, 2012).

To be sure, this theoretical typology has been primarily applied to individual attitudes. Here I apply it to policy reforms and policy frameworks too.

The second typology distinguishes the forms of welfare chauvinism based on the *target group* they address (Careja et al., 2016). This typology refers specifically to chauvinist policy proposals and/or policy reforms/frameworks. We can have:

- *direct* welfare chauvinism: chauvinist proposals and/or policies (or reforms) that explicitly target migrants and refugees;
- *indirect* welfare chauvinism: chauvinist proposals and/or policies (or reforms) that target a larger group, where migrants and

refugees are *de facto* overrepresented.

With regard to the first typology, the present thesis explores both strong and soft forms of welfare chauvinism. As for the second, it only focuses on *direct* forms of exclusion, voluntarily neglecting indirect ones (more details in Chapter 3). Moreover, the thesis also puts forward an additional typology of different forms of welfare chauvinism (cfr. paragraph 2). The proposed typology is different from the already existing ones (above), since it distinguishes the different forms of welfare chauvinism based on the justificatory arguments behind them rather than on the target group or the extent of disenfranchisement. It therefore complements the previous typologies and further specifies the concept of welfare chauvinism itself.

5.3. Migrants and types of migration flows

The concept of “migrant” is fairly generic, and it is typically considered an “umbrella term” (Koser, 2007). It refers to “someone who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons” (Koser 2007, p.16). The main targets of the welfare chauvinist appeals and restrictive social policies in European host countries are the so-called “first generations” (Koser 2007, p.23) of migrants (Ennsner-Jedenastik, 2018). Namely, people who were born outside the host country and whose parents were not nationals of that host country (Koser, 2007).

These appeals often target non-Western migrants (Careja et al., 2016; Ennsner-Jedenastik, 2018). This term refers to people coming from Africa, South America, and/or Asia (Koser, 2007). In European countries which are part of the European Union (EU), they can sometimes be referred as third-country nationals, TCNs (Koser, 2007).⁷ Moreover, the welfare chauvinist rhetoric and laws sometimes target migrants from Eastern European countries too, although they are protected by the EU social security coordination framework – if their home countries are members of the EU (Barbulescu et al., 2015; Ennsner-Jedenastik 2020; Lafleur and Vintila 2020). This legal framework is the primary mechanism at the EU level to guarantee that citizens of any EU MS who work and reside in

⁷ According to the definition of “citizen of the European Union”, within the meaning of Art. 20(1) of TFEU, nationals of the UK, Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway are not considered to be TCNs. This is also consistent with Art. 2(6) of Regulation (EU) 2016/399 (Schengen Borders Code).

another EU country have the same access rights to social benefits as the nationals of the host country (Lafleur and Vintila, 2020).

In addition to differentiations based on the geographical provenance, migrants are also conceptually differentiated according to variety of different legal and empirical statuses, summarized in a few formal categories. The main categories are those distinguishing between migrant workers (coming to the host State for the purpose of employment), refugees (seeking protection as being persecuted) and asylum seekers (someone who claims to be a refugee but whose claim has not been evaluated); low skilled and highly skilled migrants, regular and irregular (or undocumented) migrants and forced and voluntary migrants.

As a matter of fact, the different categories are not static, but often they often overlap and are difficult to be disentangled in empirical reality (Koser, 2007). Welfare chauvinism typically targets asylum seekers since they are not protected by the international refugee law as refugees are⁸ (Ibid). The chauvinist appeals and policy reforms only rarely target refugees as well, as it occurred in Austria and Denmark (the following chapters illustrate these cases in depth).

In this thesis, I use two strategies to deal with the fairly generic concept of “migrants”. When I speak in general terms about welfare chauvinism, I use the term “migrants” in a broader sense, to refer to 1. Migrant people from both inside and outside the EU and, at the same time, 2. migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees (and beneficiaries of other forms of international protection, e.g., subsidiary protection holders). While acknowledging that welfare chauvinism may empirically differ across different groups of migrants, I assume that nativism, as a principle, considers all the different groups of migrants together in an “a homogeneous and inferiorising way” (Keskinen 2016, p.365), as opposed to national citizens (i.e., the “natives”).

When I analyze the specific instances of welfare chauvinist policies (and the discussions and speeches surrounding them) in the cases-study, instead, I point out the main targets of restrictions (whether TCNs, refugees or others, ext.). If necessary, I also highlight differences in treatment across diverse categories of migrants. However, this is not the main focus of the thesis. I am not interested in exploring whether and how welfare chauvinism varies across (and eventually depends on) different categories of migrants, but I leave to future research to

⁸ granting the same treatment and access to welfare in the host country on equal basis that nationals.

examine this point further.

Having explained the key concepts of the thesis enables to better present the state of the art and the research methodological approach and hypotheses. This is what the following chapters do.

Chapter 1

State of the art

1. Introduction

This chapter presents the state of the art and the most relevant contributions to the ends of this doctoral thesis. The present research is situated within the policy literature dealing with welfare chauvinist policies and policy outputs, a still minoritarian strand of research (Careja and Harris, 2021). Moreover, I also illustrate some findings from the other two strands of literatures dealing with welfare chauvinism, namely those on party politics and individual-level attitudes (Ibid).

For each of them, I focus specifically on the studies and findings that are of some relevance for the present thesis. Finally, I borrow some relevant insights from a different, but still related, field of literature, that on international migration and the welfare State in Western Europe (Agersnap et al., 2019). This way, I engage in building a bridge between these different fields of literature, as the following chapter illustrates better.

2. Welfare chauvinism and individual attitudes

2.1. The determinants of welfare chauvinist attitudes

As mentioned in the Introduction, the notion of welfare chauvinism, as defined by Andersen and Bjørklund (1990) and then refined by Kitschelt (1995), implies the interaction of two different attitudes: neoliberal views on economic issues and authoritarian views on socio-cultural issues, while also including opposition to immigration.

Scholars believe that these types of attitudes are triggered by the combination of different social and political circumstances (Kriesi et al., 2006, Mewes and Mau, 2012; Van Oorschot and Uunk, 2007). First of all, the changing features of migration flows to European countries and migrants' increasing demand for accessing the host countries' national welfare benefits, already described in the Introduction. Secondly, the openings (in terms of legal entitlement) of several national welfare programs to permanent resident migrants, i.e., process of de-nationalization of welfare (Nordensvarda and Ketola 2015, cfr.

the Introduction). Thirdly, citizens' growing materialistic fear of losing their welfare benefits because of migrants' competition. This last point needs a more detailed explanation.

Materialist fears arise in the wake of the broader economic and social globalization process and are thought to be more prevalent in the blue collar working class than in the higher classes (Mewes and Mau, 2012; Van Oorschot and Uunk, 2007). As a matter of facts, blue collar workers have been the part of population mostly affected by the negative consequences of globalization on both the economic and the cultural side. From the economic perspective, being blue-collar workers mostly manual workers, they are much more likely to experience in first person negative economic phenomena in Western European countries, such as the crisis of increasing job insecurity and the depression of workers' wages (Wood, 2017). Overall, they are more severely affected by the contraction of the unskilled-labor-intensive manufacturing sector striking most skill-abundant Northern countries, opposed to its expansion in the skill-scarce Southern parts of the world (Ibid).

Moreover, from the cultural perspective, blue collar workers perceive globalization in terms of a cultural threat to their own national identity and way of life. In particular, the greatest threat is driven by the arrival of migrants and asylum seekers who put a pressure upon a country's tradition and cultural heritage. As way of illustration, consider the dispute around Muslim migrants in several European countries and the fear of an "Islamization" of Western societies (Allievi, 2010, 2018). Moreover, migrants are seen as negatively impacting on law and order by rising the crime rates (Allievi and Dalla Zuanna, 2016).

As a reaction against the drawbacks of globalization, blue collar workers are thought to have strengthened⁹ what Lipset (1960) defined as "authoritarian attitudes". These are made up of two main components, referring to both socio-cultural and the economic issues (Kriesi et al., 2006). From the socio-cultural perspective, they increasingly ask for more law and order and for the defense of national culture and identity against exogenous threats (mostly migrants'

⁹ I say "strengthen", since these attitudes are not truly a novelty. Already in 1960, Lipset points out the picture of the "average authoritarian worker" (Lipset, 1960). Namely, the scholar outlines that, on average, people belonging to the blue-collar working class are likely to have left-wing positions on the economic dimension and right-wing, authoritarian positions on the socio-cultural dimension of the political conflict in Western Europe. In other words, economically speaking, they are in favor of more welfare state measures, higher wages, graduated income taxes, support of trade-unions, while they are more hostile towards the recognition of civil liberties, internationalism on the socio-cultural sphere (Lipset, 1960).

presence). Looking at the economic dimension, blue collar workers renew their demands for stronger State's intervention in economic matters and as well as in welfare-related matters. Namely, they make pressure to obtain greater welfare expansion and redistribution policies. It is precisely in this context that welfare chauvinist attitudes arise (Ibid).

Being more strongly affected by the negative effect of the globalization and asking for economic and social protection to the State, scholars expect blue collar workers to be more prone to see migrants as potential competitors in the access to welfare benefits and resources (Kriesi et al., 2006). Empirical findings support this theoretical expectation. Namely, survey research points out that it exists a solid class bias against foreigners amongst the working classes (negatively affected by globalization), leading to unwillingness to include new arrivals into the welfare benefit system (Van Oorschot and Uunk 2007; Mewes and Mau 2012). This anti-immigration bias is significantly lower among the higher classes (*Ibid*). Furthermore, survey research also highlights that most respondents among national citizens (independently from their working class) justify their chauvinist claims by relying to the so-called deservingness logic/deservingness discourse (van Oorschot 2006, 2008).

2.2. Welfare chauvinist attitudes and the deservingness logic

According to the definition of deservingness, individuals deem different population subgroups worthy or unworthy of receiving help from the welfare State to different extents (van Oorschot 2000). To be sure, the definitions and criteria of deservingness apply to all individuals or groups in society who ask for social and economic support, not only to migrants (Ibid). Still, these concepts are particularly useful to understand how and why citizens from most European countries oppose to welfare enlargement to migrants.

As previously mentioned, most individuals (independently from their working class) perceive migrants as the least deserving group in society. This pattern is consistent across almost all European countries, but it is particularly pronounced in countries with Liberal and Conservative welfare regimes (Oorschot 2000; van der Waal et al. 2013). Studies have also shown that perceptions of migrants' deservingness (and undeservingness) are different across national or ethnic groups. For example, Hjorth (2016) shows that Swedish

citizens tend to be more favorable to expand access to national welfare programs to migrants perceived as culturally closer (in particular, Dutch) than those seen as culturally distant (Bulgarians).

A more recent survey study (Nielsen et al., 2019) has also focused on exploring how European citizens justify the perceived lower deservingness of migrants – i.e., on which specific criteria they base their chauvinist attitudes. This research focuses on 4 countries, Slovenia, Denmark, the UK, and Norway, in 2016. It builds on van Oorschot's criteria for deservingness, also known as CARIN (van Oorschot, 2000): control, attitude, reciprocity, identity, and control.

The first deservingness criterion is control. It looks at whether and to what extent the situation of need of benefit claimants is beyond their control and/or to what extent they can be held responsible for such a situation. The guiding logic is that the less control, the more they are deserving. The second criterion is attitude. It is intended as people's docility and gratefulness towards the received welfare support: the more they are compliant, the more they are deserving.

The third criterion, reciprocity, looks instead at the degree of reciprocation by the benefit claimants. This is generally intended in *economic* and *monetary* terms. It primarily looks at the extent to which welfare claimants have contributed to the host society group *in the past*, i.e., before making their claims for social benefits. Past contributions are typically measured by looking at one's previous working activity and/or taxes paid and/or insurance contributions into the system (the "earned" support). Besides, reciprocity also looks at the extent to which they are able to contribute *in the future*. For example, it looks at whether unemployed persons asking for welfare benefits are also actively seeking for a job and are willing to participate in publicly-funded re-insertion programs (van Oorschot 2000, 2006). Accordingly, the more reciprocation, the more deserving.

The fourth criterion is identity, addressing the (extent of) proximity and distance of benefit claimants to the perceived ethno-majoritarian group in the society. From survey research, it emerges that this criterion is usually conceived in terms of ethnic-based identity. The closer to "us" in ethno-cultural terms, the more deserving. Finally, the need criterion simply looks at claimants' actual condition of need, generally measured through low income and earnings. The greater the level of need, the more they are deserving.

When it comes to migrants, the most used criteria are identity and

reciprocity, across all the four countries analyzed (Nielsen et al., 2019). Accordingly, citizens perceive migrants as less deserving since they are culturally different (or perceived like that) from the alleged ethno-cultural majority. This view is embedded in the chauvinist discourse itself, as it simply applies the nativist principle *strictu sensu* to social redistribution preferences.

In addition, migrants are likewise considered less deserving of welfare benefits in that they violate the reciprocity principle. First, as they have necessarily joined the welfare system programs later than national citizens in the host country, they have shorter employment histories, and have therefore contributed less in terms of insurance contributions and/or taxes (Nielsen et al., 2019). Furthermore, individual respondents to surveys sometimes blame migrants for not sufficiently looking for an occupation and wage to be able to economically contribute in the future (Ibid).

3. Welfare chauvinism and party politics

3.1. Populist radical right parties (PRRPs)

While the parties promoting the chauvinist policies are irrelevant to the thesis' purposes, it is yet useful to provide an overview of party politics on welfare chauvinism, so to better contextualize the thesis' analysis. Welfare chauvinism is considered to be a plank in the platforms of the so-called populist radical right parties (Careja and Harris 2021; Careja et al. 2016; Ennsner-Jedenastik 2016, 2018; Michel 2017; Kriesi 2016; Lefkofridi and Michel 2014; Mudde 2000, 2007; Schumacher and van Kersbergen 2016; Lange 2007;).

Historically, radical right parties have tended to promote a specific type of “winning formula” (Kitschelt and McGann, 1995), made up by the combination of neoliberal views on economic issues – free trade and minimal State's intervention in economy – and authoritarian views on socio-cultural issues – law and order, morality and authority, national way of life and opposition to immigration, with special attention to Muslim immigration (*Ibid*). Kitschelt and McGann (1995) illustrate that by saying that these parties tackled almost exclusively the negative consequences of cultural globalization while, on the contrary, promoting a more positive view about an economically globalized world. Think about parties such as the Austrian FPÖ or the French Front National

of Jean-Marie Le Pen.

Nonetheless, since the mid-1990s, several PRRPs have been started revising their electoral agendas and to make a real “programmatic shift” (Michel 2017, p.115), as they spot a strategic electoral opportunity in the electoral market given by the “authoritarian niche” (Michel 2017, p.114), i.e., the authoritarian workers¹⁰ who asked for more welfare protection against the negative spillovers of globalization (cfr. 1.1.). Namely, they have started to deal also with the negative consequences of economic globalization and to pay an increased attention to welfare State issues and policies for welfare redistribution, getting to positions very close to these of left-wing socio-democratic parties, traditionally owning this issue (Michel 2017; Lefkofridi and Michel 2014; Derks 2006). Hence, for some of them, the new winning formula is a combination of conservative and authoritarian stances on cultural and relatively left-wing positions on economic issues (Ibid).

Recent investigations by Lefkofridi and Michel (2014, 2017) point out that this programmatic shift occurred for several radical rights in Western Europe but not for all PRRPs. More specifically, some of them have moved to the left on the economic dimension and welfare preferences. A very good example is the 2018 *Rassemblement National* of Marie Le Pen which, also considering its name, has taken some distance from the position of the Jean-Marie Le Pen’s *Front National* (Michel 2017; Lefkofridi and Michel 2014).

Conversely, for some other parties, this shift has occurred in a more blurred way, in that, economically speaking, they have preserved some elements of the neo-liberal rhetoric while at the same time engaging in the building or preservation of a strong welfare State. Take, for example, the case of the Austrian FPÖ: taking liberal positions in the 1980s and 1990s, in 2014 this party still argues in favor of a minimal State whose only tasks are to reduce administration costs and taxes. Yet, on the other hand, it also promises to maintain the existing

¹⁰ They have usually been part of the traditional socialist and social democratic parties’ constituency in Western Europe. However, following migrations flows’ changing dynamics since the 1970s and the embourgeoisement of a large part of socialist and social democratic parties’ constituency (Inglehart and Rabier, 2018; Kitschelt 1994; Häusermann 2010). Accordingly, most scholars (cfr. Michel, 2017) agree that social democratic parties have, in many cases, updated their programs to the preference of the middle class, being that their new prevailing constituency (Kriesi et al., 2006; Michel, 2017). Accordingly, these parties are less concerned about welfare expansion that they were before and frame immigration in culturally positive terms. Therefore, they are no longer able to provide an adequate programmatic answer the authoritarian requests by many citizens, especially blue-collar workers (Michel 2017, p.114). This strategically electoral opportunity (“authoritarian niche”) is dealt with by several studies of party politics, yet this is not the main focus of the thesis.

social security and pension systems (Michel, 2017).

In spite of these differences, a common feature encompassing all PRRPs is that most of them adopt an “exclusive solidarity” (Lefkofridi and Michel 2014, p. 23) approach. Namely they frame welfare policies in exclusive terms. On the one hand, they are in favor of expansionary social policies to redistribute welfare and wealth among the poorest groups in society. On the other hand, they argue that some outgroups, and notably migrants, must be excluded from welfare benefits and redistribution policies because they do not deserve that – i.e., the welfare chauvinist view (Michel 2017; Lefkofridi and Michel 2014).

3.2. Mainstream parties

Most of the research about party politics deal with welfare chauvinism by PRRPs. Some studies (rather few) explore the conditions under which welfare chauvinism diffuses from PRRPs to mainstream parties as well. The fundamental theoretical claim is that mainstream parties may be subject to the “populist contagion” (Careja and Harris 2021, p.6). Namely, they may start to adopt welfare chauvinist positions, similar to those of PRRPs, into their electoral manifestos, as they are worried of losing votes and popular support. This is deemed to occur especially in those countries where PRRPs are very popular and welfare chauvinist attitudes are widespread among the public (Careja and Harris 2021; Lefkofridi and Michel 2017; Schumacher and van Kersbergen 2016). Empirical studies on this topic show a nuanced picture.

Examples of welfare chauvinism diffusion to radical to mainstream right parties are observed, for example, in Denmark (Schumacher and van Kersbergen, 2016) and Austria (Ennser-Jedenastick, 2020) in recent times. The research by Schumacher and van Kersbergen highlights that there has been over time a tendency by mainstream-right parties in Denmark and The Netherlands to adapt to radical right parties on welfare chauvinism during national elections. The scholars rely on a quantitative analysis of Danish and Dutch party manifestos (by mainstream and PRRPs) in the period 1980-2012 (Schumacher and van Kersbergen, 2016).

Likewise, Ennser-Jedenastick (2020) observes welfare chauvinism diffusion in Austria as well. In a recent work (2020), he points out that the mainstream right party, the Austrian People’s Party *Österreichische Volkspartei*

(ÖVP hereafter), has started adopting several welfare chauvinistic stances since 2015. By doing that, it has got closer to the chauvinist positions of the Austrian PRRP, the Austrian Freedom Party, *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* (FPÖ).

For instance, in its 2019 manifesto, the ÖVP proposes to review social benefits for migrants and identify potential abuse (Ennser-Jedenastick, 2020), citing health insurance fraud and family benefits as examples. The party also proposes cuts to family allowances for parents – and primarily those of migrant background – who allow their children to skip school. Following the 2017 parliamentary election, the new ÖVP-FPÖ government implemented some of these chauvinist proposals. This topic is specifically dealt with in chapter 3 of the thesis, as Austria is one of the selected cases-study.

On the other hand, additional studies point out that this “populist contagion” (Careja and Harris 2021, p.6) does not always take place, even when PRRPs are popular. In addition, when it takes place, it does not affect all mainstream parties in the same way. Koning (2017) shows that, in the Netherlands, the Centre right conservative liberals welfare chauvinism refers to chauvinist-oriented proposals only very marginally during the 2012 election. Moreover, the aforementioned study by Schumacher and Van Kersbergen (2016) show that mainstream left and mainstream right political parties respond differently to the welfare chauvinist positions of PRRPs. The formers tend to incorporate welfare chauvinist positions, whilst the latter does the contrary, adopting more generous positions on welfare politics, particularly when in opposition or pursuant electoral loss (Schumacher and van Kersbergen, 2016).

3.3. The strength of the welfare chauvinist appeals

Irrespective of the party promoting the welfare chauvinist claims (whether PRRPs or mainstream ones), the strength of these claims is, in several cases, conditioned by the architecture of social benefits and the principles of redistributive justice that underlie them – i.e., be the equity, equality, and need principle (Ennser-Jedenastick 2016, 2018, 2020). Through a qualitative content analysis of PRRPs’ election manifestos in four West European democracies (Sweden, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom), Ennser-Jedenastick (2016, 2018, 2020) points out a double variation. He takes into consideration the period in time between 2000 and 2015.

First, equity-based social benefits (insurance-based benefits) are less likely to attract welfare chauvinism, whereas need and equality-based ones (universal and means-tested benefits) are more vulnerable to such chauvinist disentanglement discourse (Ennsner-Jedenastick, 2016, 2018, 2020). Secondly, the (generally very few) welfare chauvinist claims in relation to insurance-based programs tend to be weaker than the ones made in relation to universal and need-based programs.

The assumed explanation for such a double variation is that the strength of welfare chauvinistic appeals should be a function of the degree to which the underlying principles or the real-world redistributive outcomes of a social program are in conflict with the chauvinist/nativist logic. The equality principle is in contradiction with the nativist logic, since it implies that all legal residents in a country should receive equal benefits, including migrants. Besides, this principle implies a considerable level of redistribution from national citizens to migrants (especially non-Western ones), given the significant income disparity at the expense of the latter (Ennsner-Jedenastick, 2016, 2018, 2020). The need principle is not necessarily in contrast to the chauvinist logic, but it also produces high level of redistribution from citizens to migrants (especially non-Western ones), for the same reasons illustrated for the equality principle (Ibid). Such characteristics explicitly violate the nativist logic which rather holds that welfare benefits should be reserved to nationals. This enables politicians to appeal to the in-out group conflict for social resources characterizing the chauvinist logic (Ibid).

On the contrary, the equity principle does not violate the chauvinist/nativist logic (or to a significantly lower extent). Namely, it breaks with the group logic and focuses on everyone's contributions and economic performances. In line with that, almost everyone can earn the right to support by other members of society, simply by contributing – also migrants (Ennsner-Jedenastick 2016, 2018, 2020). Moreover, social insurance schemes with earnings-related contributions and benefits tend to produce lower benefits for migrants, since most of them have lower average incomes and have worked for shorter periods of time in their home countries (Ibid). Following that, redistribution from citizens to migrants tends to be limited. All these characteristics make it more difficult for nativist politicians to appeal to the in-out

group conflict for social resources underpinning the chauvinist discourse.

A most recent work from the same scholar highlights that this same theoretical and analytical framework can explain the strength of welfare chauvinism by mainstream parties too, at least in the case of the Austrian ÖVP. The stances of welfare chauvinism adopted by the party during the last national elections (mentioned in the paragraph 1.2) are mostly targeted at means-tested (social assistance) and universal (family allowances) benefits. Conversely, they do not target insurance-run programs (Ennser-Jedenastick, 2020). These findings are particularly important to the thesis' ends, since they support the thesis' claim that the types of programs' design can help explaining how the welfare chauvinist discourse is shaped.

4. Welfare chauvinism and policy changes

4.1. Determinants of welfare chauvinist policy changes

The *policy* side of welfare chauvinism is instead a fairly recent subject of academic interest (Careja and Harris, 2021). The main contributions have focused on the potential determinants of chauvinist policy reforms, especially in terms of political parties promoting it. As for the literature on party politics, most of the existing studies deal with PRRPs and touches mainstream parties aside.

In recent times, some of these PRRPs have progressively moved from the fringe to the core of several political systems in Western Europe, thanks to unprecedented electoral gains (Careja et al., 2016). In some cases, they entered the government coalitions or turned into the main parliamentary support party for them. This occurred, for example, in Denmark (Agersnap et al., 2019; Careja et al., 2016; Jørgensen and Thomsen 2016), Austria (Pelinka 2002; Kriesi et al., 2014; Ennser-Jedenastik 2020) and the Netherlands (Chueri, 2019). In light of that, several scholars have started investigating whether and how PRRPs' increased bargaining power in the policy-making process (Afonso, 2015) is also leading to alterations of social policies in a welfare chauvinistic direction.

This is a thorny question, since we know that, when in government, PRRPs (like their mainstream counterparts) are subject to the so-called "responsibility constraints" (Mair, 2014). Responsibility requires parties to act "from a sense of duty and moral responsibility" (Mair 2014, p.587), i.e., within

the bounds of accepted practices and following known legal and procedural rules and conventions. These can be, for example, those laid down in the Constitution, or in treaties of international organizations to which a country belongs (Mair 2014). Accordingly, restrictive social reforms excluding or limiting migrants' access to national welfare are clearly at odds with PRRPs' responsibility function. Namely, they explicitly challenge fundamental Western democratic rules, and notably the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of nationality and ethnicity. Indeed, this is embedded in both national Constitutions and Article 21 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Despite that, the empirical assessment made by scholars about PRRPs' government performances so far seems to provide a different answer. In a 2012 study, Akkerman and De Lange argues that participation of PRRPs in the winning government coalition further increases the likelihood of a reduction in migrants' social benefits. Namely, government participation is the more effective channel of communication whereby these parties can persuade ally parties to adopt restrictive social policies towards migrants (Akkerman and De Lange, 2012). In their view, PRRPs manage to achieve such a goal thanks to either the bargaining strategy or the blackmail one (Akkerman and De Lange, 2012). According to bargaining strategy, the requirement to build majorities gives PRRPs bargaining power to assert their policy preferences. Following the blackmail strategy, they exploit the possibility to blackmail other parties of the coalition to assert their policy preferences (Ibid).

Most recently, the work by Chueri (2019) supports this view, but only to a limited extent. She measures the impact of PRRPs' share in coalition government and government participation upon changes of migrants' social rights (access to higher or minor number of social benefits) in several European countries, from 1980 to 2014. She relies on statistical study based on a random effect logistic regression and on various datasets providing information about legislation changes that affect migrants.

On the one hand, the findings highlight that the role of PRRPs in the adoption of restrictive social policies affecting migrants cannot be ignored. The participation into the coalition is indeed the predominant mechanism for these parties to impact on migrants' rights (Chueri, 2019). On the other hand, she also finds out that, regardless of PRRPs' electoral success and participation in

government coalitions, mainstreams right-wing governments are often very likely to reduce migrants' entitlement to social benefits, differently from Akkerman and De Lange's view (2012).

Finally, Careja further investigates the strategies through which PRRPs manage to turn their chauvinist preferences into actual law, taking as example the Danish People's Party (DPP), one of the most successful PRRP in Europe (Careja et al. 2016). In the period between 2001-2011 the DPP acted as parliamentary support party for the right-wing government, and it managed to transpose some of its chauvinist preferences into Danish social and labor market-related policies (Ibid). Referring to the distinction between direct and indirect forms of welfare chauvinism (cfr. Introduction), Careja shows that most of the chauvinist laws promoted by the DPP contained measures which indirectly target some migrants' groups (at least in the Danish case). In addition, the party promoted several instances of direct welfare chauvinist policy reforms, although these are still a minority compared to the indirect ones (Careja, 2016).

4.2. Welfare chauvinist arguments behind restrictive social policies

While several studies have investigated how the general public discusses migrant entitlement and disentanglement to social benefits¹¹, significant less research exists on discussion of welfare entitlement/disentanglement at party and (most important for us) policy level. The policy literature has only recently started to investigate the different types of "welfare chauvinist arguments" (Keskinen 2016, p.354), i.e., the set of reasons and criteria used by politicians to justify restrictive social laws and policy reforms targeting migrants. These arguments are also defined as "legitimizing explanations" (Jørgensen and Thomsen, 2016, p. 331) and/or "justificatory arguments" (p. 334) for the exclusion or limited access to national welfare for migrants. These studies focus primarily on the Scandinavian countries, and notably Denmark, Sweden, and Finland (Jørgensen and Thomsen 2016; Keskinen 2016; Noricel 2016).

A clarification is needed at this point. In the present thesis, I have classified these studies under the paragraph on welfare chauvinist policies. To be sure, the research I mention here are interested in a variety of data: chauvinist

¹¹ studies on individual attitudes, cfr. Oorschot 2000; van der Waal et al. 2013; Nielsen et al., 2019

policies, party manifestos and chauvinist claims in TV. In spite of that, I have chosen to mention them here because they also deal with social policies and introduce some concepts that are key for the analysis of welfare chauvinist policies in the following chapters.

Building on these studies, it emerges that politicians rely on three main types of “legitimizing explanations” (Jørgensen and Thomsen 2016, p.331) to promote and legitimize exclusionary social policies and reforms towards migrants. Each of them differs in the way migrants are framed and in the outcomes pursued. Two of these arguments rely on economic-based considerations and concerns, whilst the third one is based upon cultural considerations. Most important for this thesis, these studies have examined the chauvinist arguments by focusing on parliamentary debates and discussions surrounding and linked to the approval of welfare chauvinist reforms, rather than laws and policies’ texts directly. The thesis follows the same approach. The reasons for doing that are better illustrated in chapter 3.

Finally, these studies point out that welfare chauvinist policies and the underpinning justificatory arguments are not only and not necessarily promoted by PRRPs. They are sometimes promoted also by mainstream parties, especially the mainstream-right ones, even if this is due presumably to the influence of strong PRRPs, like in the case of Denmark (Jørgensen and Thomsen 2016; Keskinen 2016).

4.3. The benefit tourism argument

The first welfare chauvinist argument is of an economic sort, primarily concerned about a country’s economic policy outcomes. Accordingly, politicians frame migrants as “benefit tourists” (Jørgensen and Thomsen 2016, p.341; Keskinen 2016, p.364; Noricel 2016, p.383). They explicitly blame migrants¹² for taking benefit from national welfare programs without adequately contributing to fund most of these programs, especially through tax payments. In their view, inadequate contributions are due to the fact that migrants have lower levels of labor market integration, meaning that they also pay less taxes than nationals (Jørgensen and Thomsen, 2016).

¹² especially, but not exclusively those coming from extra-EU, non-Western countries.

It must not be forgotten that this is the portrait provided by politicians who oppose immigration and welfare enlargement to migrant. This portrait does not entirely match the taxation and labor market integration trends empirically observed across European host countries. It goes without saying that the political rhetoric does not always and everywhere correspond to the real situation depicted in statistics, as internal and even intra-countries differences exist¹³.

One of the main (alleged) consequence of this “taking-without-contributing trend” (Jørgensen and Thomsen 2016, p.342) is that migrants do not receive incentives to be better integrated into the national labor market since they can enjoy welfare benefits “for free” (Ibid), using national social programs as primary source of income (Jørgensen and Thomsen 2016; Keskinen 2016). This argument usually underpins chauvinist proposals that make benefits’ access for (especially extra-EU, non-Western) migrants conditional to work performances and tax payments. It is promoted by several politicians of both the PRRP, the Danish People Party, and the mainstream Liberal Party, especially during the parliamentary debates and speeches surrounding and leading to the approval of some restrictive measures targeting extra-EU migrants, in the 2013 Social Security reform in Denmark (Jørgensen and Thomsen, 2016).

Accordingly, politicians legitimize these chauvinist proposals as necessary to stop abuses at the expense of national workers and taxpayers. These measures would rather create incentives for migrants to integrate into the national labor market and to actively contribute to national economy with their work activities. Likewise, chauvinist measures are meant to make migrants able to economically support themselves rather than relying on national welfare benefits merely.

Having in mind the studies about citizens’ attitudes (cfr. van Oorschot 2000; Nielsen et al. 2019), one can see that the benefit tourism argument points back to the reciprocity principle observed at citizens’ level. Since they do not pay enough taxes and do not contribute through their active employment (according to the chauvinist rhetoric), migrants do not adequately return the social support received by the host country (in terms of in kind or in cash benefits).

¹³ More details are provided in the next chapter.

4.4. Migrants and the economic burden

Keskinen (2016) points out a second economic-based argument observed in parliamentary discussions surrounding the approval of several restrictive changes in the asylum law in 2009–2011 in Finland. That is, the argument portraying migrants as an “economic burden” for the host society and economy (Keskinen 2016, p.366). Accordingly, migrants should be excluded or receive limited access because they impose a heavy burden upon the public finances that may in the long-term lead to the collapse of the economic system of the country (Ibid).

Thus, politicians legitimize the introduction of welfare chauvinist measures as necessary to ease the pressure upon national public finances (Keskinen, 2016). This type of argument emerged in the national policy debates especially in the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis, when several national governments had to address a thorny question: “can we afford the expensive welfare State?” (Kantola 2006, p. 173, cited by Keskinen 2016).

In a context of cuts of the social expenditure, the fact that some groups in the society may bring about additional expenditures (economic burden) is seen by most politicians and governments as unacceptable (Keskinen, 2006). The evolution of such debate in the Scandinavian countries has shown that these arguments were central in the policy debate for many years after the 2008 crisis as well. Overall, it seems that, starting from the 2008 crisis, politicians paid increased attention to the economic costs of welfare State, in general, and of migrants’ dependency on welfare specifically (Ibid).

4.5. Cultural distance of migrants

The third and last argument focuses instead on the cultural differences between citizens and migrants, linking these to welfare considerations (Jørgensen and Thomsen 2016; Norocel 2016). Most migrants are therefore excluded – or given limited access only – from social programs since they are deemed to be culturally deviant from the (alleged) ethnic majority in the host country. Namely, they have different cultural and religious habits that are sometimes seen also a threat to the preservation of national cultural heritage and traditions (Jørgensen and Thomsen 2016; Norocel 2016). This type of rhetoric is exploited especially by politicians of The Sweden Democrats (the main Swedish PRRP) in several parliamentary speeches as well as speeches in TV, when they are asked to illustrate their view

on the topic of migrants' access to national welfare benefits (Norocel, 2016). The cultural argument is also observed in some parliamentary speeches the Danish context, especially by politicians of the Liberal Party, although to a minor extent (Jørgensen and Thomsen, 2016).

Differently from the other arguments, the cultural one simply applies the nativist principle underpinning the welfare chauvinism discourse *strictu sensu*. This in turn leads to the conceptualization of the in-group of natives as those defined not only by the formal citizenship status but also by ethnic, cultural and religious habits. Accordingly, social rights are reframed as exclusive rights of cultural and/or ethnic members of the narrowly defined nation state and native community (Mudde 2007; Norocel 2016). All those outside of such community are a threat and necessarily excluded. Entitlement to social rights is therefore a sort of reward for successful integration and limitation/exclusion is justified in order to protect national cultural heritage and tradition threatened by the negative effect of immigration and “ethnic contamination” (Norocel, 2016).

This argument clearly corresponds to the identity principle of deservingness observed at individual attitudes' level. It is automatically embedded in the chauvinist discourse, especially when such a discourse applies a stricter interpretation of *natives* and *nativism*. Still, politicians do not always exploit it (Norocel, 2016). They sometimes make it explicit and stress the cultural distance and between citizens and migrants, as in the case of some Danish and Swedish politicians. In other cases, they leave this argument implicit and stress instead migrants' economic deviances compared to citizens (i.e., the economic arguments illustrated above).

4.6. Welfare chauvinist arguments from the perspective of international migration and the welfare State: the “welfare magnet” argument

While the welfare chauvinism literature does not provide us with any additional clue about other plausible justificatory arguments, the literature on international migration and the welfare State can shed some light on that. I specifically refer to the studies focusing on the effects of welfare policies and benefits on immigration (Borjas 1999; Dodson 2001; De Giorgi and Pellizzari 2010; Agersnap et al., 2019). In such a field, an open debate on whether more generous social policies and welfare provisions tend to attract potential migrants, i.e., the so-called

“welfare magnet” argument or hypothesis.

The empirical validity of the welfare magnet theory is still a controversial issue (Borjas 1999; De Giorgi and Pellizzari 2010). The existing literature has pointed out several correlational evidence that are consistent with it. More recently, Agersnap also provided the first causal evidence of the welfare magnet effect, in the Danish case (Agersnap et al., 2019). By means of a quasi-experimental research design, they show that a Danish welfare scheme that cut benefits by up to 50% for non-EU immigrants had large and sharp effects on immigration flows, significantly reducing them from 2002 to 2019 (Ibid).

However, this is not the primary focus of the present thesis. What is interesting for the thesis is that, irrespective of actual evidence, welfare magnet concerns are often part of an exclusionary reasoning used by several politicians to promote and justify immigrant welfare schemes that sharply reduce benefits to certain foreign immigrants (Borjas 1999; Dodson 2001; De Giorgi and Pellizzari 2010; Agersnap et al., 2019). This occurs especially in the Scandinavian countries (Ibid). Specifically, they claim that welfare benefits for migrants should be limited in order to reduce the incoming immigration flows and keep them under control. That being established, I consider the welfare magnet hypothesis as an additional welfare chauvinist argument, although it is not specifically conceptualized like that in the relevant literature.

4.7. The links between the welfare magnet argument and the other chauvinist arguments

I argue that the welfare magnet argument is linked to the other arguments and especially to that of benefit tourism. From a conceptual point of view, the two are not the same argument but they rather pursue two different sets of policy outcomes. The benefit tourism argument is primarily concerned about a country’s social and economic policy outcomes and notably, socio-economic sustainability of the system and fairness against welfare abuses. Instead, the welfare magnet argument is primarily concerned about a country’s migration rather than social policy outcomes. That is, the patterns and the overall development of immigration inflows and its management by national authorities. Hence, the social dimension is subordinated and functional to the migration outcomes (Agersnap et al., 2019).

However, I argue that the two arguments are connected when looking at them through the lens of the chauvinist-oriented political rhetoric. By portraying migrants as abusers, taking national welfare programs for free, it becomes easier for politicians to claim that these favorable welfare redistribution patterns incentivize further migration. Accordingly, the chauvinist measures are necessary to stop welfare abuses and access to welfare benefits “for free” and therefore decrease incentives to migrate as well. Given this logical link, I expect politicians to use both arguments simultaneously, as part of the same rhetorical strategy to support welfare chauvinism. Of course, it may also be the case that politicians sometimes use only one of these arguments; yet I expect that, when they use both of them, they are likely to rhetorically bind them together.

Therefore, while being aware of the differences between these two arguments in the respective literatures, I rely on a common conceptualization in this thesis. Namely, I refer to the two arguments by using a single label defined as “benefit tourism/welfare magnet” argument. This is done to heuristically develop the thesis’ theoretical and analytical framework about the presence and variation of the chauvinist arguments. Since I expect the political rhetoric to exploit them simultaneously (at least, in some cases), using a common label helps me to speed up the process of analysis. In the cases where politicians exploit only one of these arguments, I rely on the common conceptualization, yet specifying that only one side of the argument is exploited.

5. Summary: welfare chauvinism and the welfare chauvinist arguments

For simplification purposes, I systematize and summarize into a single table the main welfare chauvinist arguments on which I rely to explore welfare chauvinism (Table 1). It is important to specify that all these arguments correspond to the existing concepts of justificatory arguments, formulated in the contributions about welfare chauvinism specifically and migration and the welfare State more broadly (illustrated above). On the other hand, the division presented in Table 1 in the next page is the result of my elaboration based on literature review and heuristic considerations (cfr. previous paragraphs) which helps me to speed up the process of analysis.

Tables-Chapter 1

Table 1: Welfare chauvinist arguments.

Type of argument	Welfare chauvinist argument	Framing of migrants	Desirable outcomes
Economic-based arguments	1. Benefit tourism/welfare magnet	Taking free welfare benefits, without contributing.	Putting an end to welfare abuses.
	2. Economic burden	Unwilling to integrate into the national labor market, living on welfare benefits.	Promoting incentives to integrate into the national labor market and enhancing economic self-support/self-reliance.
	Coming to the host country in order to take benefit of the generous welfare programs and schemes.	Decreasing immigration inflows by reducing welfare incentives.	
Cultural argument	Cultural distance	Culturally distant from the country' ethnocultural majority	Protecting national ethno-cultural heritage and traditions. Accessing to welfare is a reward for successful integration.

Source: own elaboration based on literature review and heuristic considerations.

Chapter 2

Research hypotheses and thesis' contributions

1. Introduction

The overall objective of the present thesis is to increase the attention and expand the literature on welfare chauvinism at the policy level, a still somewhat underexplored field of research. Within this broader objective, I specifically aim at investigating the welfare chauvinist arguments, or justificatory arguments, that lay behind exclusionary social policies and notably the main features, patterns and explanatory mechanisms characterizing them.

In this thesis, I put my research into dialogue with previous studies on welfare chauvinism. The thesis undoubtedly draws on some of these contributions and especially those by Jørgensen and Thomsen; Keskinen and Norocel (2016, cfr. chapter 1). However, it also distances itself from them in several respects. Namely, it is intended to address some questions that have remained largely unanswered in the current scholarly debate about welfare chauvinist arguments and, more broadly, welfare chauvinist policy changes.

2. Shortcomings in the literature and thesis' intended contributions

2.1. From descriptive to causal inference: developing a new theoretical and analytical framework

The idea that different chauvinist arguments may exist in policy frameworks and policy debates is not completely new, but it is already present in the literature (cfr. chapter 1). Most of the existing research on this topic has carried out a primarily descriptive type of inquiry, that commonly known as “descriptive inference” (King, Keohane and Verba 1994, p. 14). Namely, studies have analyzed policy debates to point out information about the justificatory arguments used by politicians (of both PRRPs and mainstream ones) to limit migrants' access to national welfare, i.e., the main characteristics, similarities, and divergences among these arguments (cfr. chapter 1).

However, no studies have examined the chauvinist arguments more comprehensively. More specifically, they have not explored the potential explanatory mechanisms that shape these arguments and generate expectations

about how politicians use the different types of arguments. Do politicians use the economic and the cultural justifications invariantly or in different ways? Which factors lead them to apply one argument rather than the others to limit migrants' access to national welfare?

The present thesis sheds for the first time the light on that. Building on the descriptive contributions in the literature, it makes a step forward by making a causal type of inference (cfr. Introduction). Namely, it develops a novel theoretical and analytical framework to generate expectations about 1) the explanatory factors that shape the chauvinist arguments and (linked to the first point) 2) how politicians use the different types of justificatory arguments to legitimize and promote welfare chauvinism¹⁴. As mentioned in the Introduction, the fundamental proposition of this thesis is that the types of chauvinist arguments used (economic and cultural), are shaped by the different types of social programs observed (means-tested, universal and insurance-run). In the following chapters, I empirically test the thesis' theoretical framework across four western European countries. Besides, it is intended to encompass a broader number of European host countries too.

My theoretical framework builds partially on Ennser-Jedenastik' s (2016, 2018, 2020) recently developed theory (cfr. previous chapter). In particular, the most relevant point from this theory is that programs' design plays a role in shaping welfare chauvinism. However, the thesis' main claim differs from Ennser-Jedenastik' s one to a significant extent too. In Ennser-Jedenastik' s theory, the programs' design works as an explanatory factor to highlight variations in the strength and presence of the welfare chauvinist appeals.

While relying on the same explanatory factor, I explore its impact on the justifications behind welfare chauvinism, independently from its strength. Most importantly, Ennser-Jedenastik applies his theoretical argument to welfare chauvinism in party manifestos (both PRRPs and a mainstream one too, the ÖVP, in Austria). Differently from that, my theoretical and analytical framework applies to welfare chauvinist policy reforms, investigated by looking at the parliamentary policy debates and discussions surrounding and preceding the approval of these laws. My argument therefore complements and somehow

¹⁴ As illustrated in the introduction, I use this term to refer generically to all the politicians promoting the chauvinist reforms, both those from PRRPs and mainstream parties. Indications on their party affiliations are provided in each of the cases under analysis, but they are not relevant to the thesis' ends.

further specifies the previous theory (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2018, 2020).

2.2. *Creating an innovative typology of different forms of welfare chauvinism*

We have seen in the introduction that the studies about welfare chauvinist policies constitute still a still minoritarian strand of research within the broader field of literature on welfare chauvinism, compared to studies on party politics and individual-level chauvinist attitudes. In addition to that, the specific topic of the welfare chauvinist arguments has remained largely on the fringe of the theoretical discussion about welfare chauvinist policies. While scholars have started dealing with that, we still lack a broader, well-structured reflection about the theoretical implications the chauvinist arguments may have on the very concept of welfare chauvinism and our understanding of it, especially in the Western European political context.

This piece of work is innovative in this respect as well. I argue that the different chauvinist arguments (economic and/or cultural, based on the literature) may constitute the basis of different forms of welfare chauvinism. More precisely, these forms share two defining and overarching properties – based on the traditional understanding of welfare chauvinism by Andersen and Bjørklund, 1990:

- the *separation* of society into two distinct groups: national citizens (and eventually permanent residents sometimes too), i.e., the native *ingroup*, and migrants (including, depending on the case, different categories of migrants), the non-native *outgroup*, on the other side;
- the *exclusion* or *limited access* on welfare benefits and programs at the expense of the members of the outgroup.

Starting from these common properties, I argue that the different forms of welfare chauvinism differ exactly in terms of the justificatory arguments legitimizing and promoting them. Namely, politicians legitimize the exclusion (or limited access) of migrants by exploiting different justificatory arguments each time, i.e., either the economic or the culturally-rooted ones¹⁵. Accordingly, I expect to have either economic-based or culture-based welfare chauvinism (or even both). The former

¹⁵ as these are the main arguments pointed out in the literature.

should exclude migrants because they do not fulfill a set of economic performances. The latter should exclude them since they are perceived as culturally deviant (cfr. chapter 1). In other words, I break down the concept of welfare chauvinism into different manifestations (or forms) of it that may take place in policy frameworks. According to what I argued in the previous paragraph, I expect the different chauvinist arguments, and the corresponding forms of welfare chauvinism, to depend on the type of social program under observation

As mentioned in the Introduction, some scholars have already conceptualized the existence of different forms of welfare chauvinism: soft vs. strong and direct vs. indirect welfare chauvinism (Reeskens and Van Oorschot 2012; Careja et al. 2016). Nevertheless, the proposed typology is different from the already existing ones: it distinguishes the different forms of welfare chauvinism based on the justificatory arguments behind them, rather than the target groups (Careja et al. 2016) or the extent of disentanglement (Reeskens and Van Oorschot 2012). It therefore complements the previous typologies and further specifies the concept of welfare chauvinism itself. Such a conceptual differentiation has empirical implications as well – most of which are examined in the Conclusions of this thesis.

2.3. Building a bridge between different fields of literature

The majority of studies on the chauvinist arguments (Jørgensen and Thomsen, 2016; Keskinen 2016; Norocel 2016) are usually not in a dialogue with other, closely related literature, like that on international migration and the welfare State. This is a serious shortcoming, since studies on the migration-welfare nexus can provide us with interesting additional clues about other types of justificatory arguments behind welfare chauvinism.

Against this background, this thesis puts the literature on welfare chauvinism¹⁶ into dialogue with other fields of literature, especially that on the international migration-welfare State nexus and, more specifically, the studies dealing with the effects of welfare policies and benefits on immigration. It borrows some concepts from these studies, especially those of welfare magnet

¹⁶ and notably previous studies on the welfare chauvinist arguments in policy frameworks and debates.

and mutual social trust as additional justificatory arguments behind welfare chauvinism. By doing that, it engages in building a bridge between these different fields of literature. This opens the path to further research which aims at putting these fields of literature into dialogue in order to mutually complement and enrich one another.

3. The main factors at play and their relations

3.1. The outcomes: types of “welfare chauvinist arguments”

As already pointed out, the term “welfare chauvinist arguments” (Keskinen 2016, p.354) refers to the set of reasons, explanations and criteria used by politicians (both PRRPs and mainstream ones) to justify the exclusion or limited access to national welfare for migrants. Based on the literature, I have distinguished between economic-based and culturally-rooted justifications.

The formers are two distinct (but also connected) arguments, i.e., the benefit tourism and the economic burden arguments. Both look at migrants’ economic performances and stress migrants’ economic deviances compared to citizens. The latter is the cultural distance argument (Jørgensen and Thomsen 2016; Keskinen 2016; Noricel 2016). It simply applies *strictu sensu* the nativist principle implicitly embedded in the chauvinist discourse. By making this principle explicit, it highlights the cultural distance (and often incompatibility) between citizens and migrants

Moreover, the present thesis also considers an additional argument stemming from another field of literature, i.e., the welfare magnet argument. The welfare magnet argument is heuristically conceptualized and labeled together with the benefit tourism argument, thus as an economic-based argument.

3.2. The predictor(s): types of social programs

Social programs are specific types of public programs aimed at advancing the social conditions of the beneficiaries (Sainsbury, 2012). Each social program is characterized by a specific design and structure, i.e., including the following features: the funding mechanisms, the underlying redistributive logic (i.e., how social and welfare resources are allocated across society), also defined as principles of redistributive justice (Ennsner-Jedenastik, 2018), and the real-world

redistributive outcomes such a logic empirically produces. These features are mutually intertwined. According to how these features are organized, we can have three different types of social programs: universal, means-tested, or insurance-based programs.

More specifically, universal programs are based on a universalistic redistributive logic¹⁷ (Deutsch 1975; Ennser-Jedenastik 2018). In terms of real-world outcomes, this logic implies that all members of the community should be treated equally and receive the same amount of social support from the community. Since belonging to the community is usually defined by citizenship and, most recently, residence, entitlement to universal programs in most European countries is ultimately based on the residence status (Sainsbury, 2012). These programs are usually financed through taxes, raised by employed adults, in almost all European countries (Ibid).

Means-tested programs empirically embody the need principle of redistributive justice (Ennser-Jedenastik 2018). In empirical terms, this implies that social support should be extended primarily (if not exclusively) to the less fortunate, in terms of income and earnings. Accordingly, the income and wealth level are the main entitlement criteria. Similar to universal programs, means-tested ones are likewise financed through taxes.

Finally, insurance-run programs embody the equity principle, holding that the benefits one receives from the community should be proportional to his/her contribution (Deutsch 1975; Ennser-Jedenastik 2016, 2018). Accordingly, empirical redistribution within society is carried out on an individualized basis. Namely, anyone can be eligible for insurance-based social support, simply by working and contributing. It goes without saying that those who have shorter working and contributory histories in the country (like migrants recently arrived) are disadvantaged. As for the funding mechanisms, insurance schemes are typically financed through earnings-related contributions paid by the active working population (Ibid).

In fact, several social programs combine insurance elements with means-testing or universal benefits. For instance, pensions are paid out in proportion to earned income in many countries, yet a minimum subsistence pension is often guaranteed irrespective of prior contributions. Another example of such

¹⁷ i.e., the equality principle of redistributive justice.

combined systems are means-tested supplementary allowances for unemployed persons whose benefits are very low. If encountering combined types of programs along the thesis, I would look to which specific elements the chauvinistic appeals are targeted (insurance, means-tested or ones) and investigate the relevant justificatory arguments.

4. Research hypotheses

I formulate two different groups of hypotheses and relevant sub-hypotheses. I define the first as “economic hypotheses” since they are centered on the economic-based justificatory arguments. These hypotheses explore how politicians use the economic arguments across the different types of social programs to legitimize migrants’ exclusion from the programs themselves. Instead, the second is defined as “cultural hypothesis”, as it is centered on the culturally-rooted chauvinist argument and on how politicians apply it across different social programs. Besides, the hypotheses also consider the cases in which these arguments do *not* apply. That way, I can reach a more comprehensive understanding of the said welfare chauvinist arguments.

I formulate these hypotheses by relying on the design, structures and core characteristics of the different social programs, previously illustrated. In particular, I consider 1) the underlying redistributive logic *and* 2) the real-world redistributive outcomes each program tends to produce (stemming from the intersection between the relevant redistributive logic and funding mechanisms).

4.1. The economic hypotheses and sub-hypotheses

The first hypothesis deals with universal type of social programs. I develop it by looking specifically at the real-world redistributive outcomes that universal programs tend to produce. I argue that these characteristics provide the opportunity for the mobilization of an economic type of conflict between natives and migrants (i.e., the economic arguments). When saying *natives*, I refer primarily to national citizens in Western European host countries. The term *migrants* refers instead to different categories of non-citizens, including sometimes (but not always) permanent residents too.

Namely, universal programs tend to produce high level of social

redistribution from national citizens to migrants (Ennser-Jedenastik 2018; 2020). This pattern is deemed to depend on the intersection between the tax-based funding mechanisms (typical of universal services) and the programs' underlying redistributive universalist logic (equality-based). As previously mentioned, the universalistic logic implies that all legal residents in a country should receive the same amount of social support by states' welfare institutions.

In fact, recent survey research highlights that migrants (including often permanent residents too) typically have lower levels of labor market integration and thus lower levels of earnings and incomes than nationals (Nannestad 2007; Herwig et al. 2015). This is particularly true for those coming from non-Western poorest world areas¹⁸ (Ibid) and, to a minor extent and with some exceptions, several intra-EU migrants, notably those from Eastern European countries (Annual Report on Intra-EU Mobility, 2019)¹⁹. This trend should, on the whole, advantage migrants over nationals in terms of access to universal benefits. However, exactly because of their lower levels of labor market integration and below-average incomes, migrants (both intra-EU and TCNs) usually pay less taxes than nationals in European host countries (Nannestad 2007; Herwig et al. 2015; Annual Report on Intra-EU Mobility 2019).

We know that the high level of citizens-to-migrants redistribution appeals to the nativist view, pitting the in-group (national citizens) against the out-group (migrants) (Ennser-Jedenastik 2016, 2018, 2020). I go further by arguing that, in the case of universal programs, politicians specifically appeal to an *economic* type of *conflict* between migrants and citizens.

Namely, I would expect them to portray migrants as abusers who do not adequately contribute to the national tax system whilst benefiting from tax-funded universal programs on equal basis (and even more) than citizens workers regularly paying taxes. Linked to that, I would also expect politicians to claim that several migrants are incentivized to come to the host country in order to take benefit of these advantageous social redistribution outcomes (i.e., the benefit tourism/welfare magnet argument). Moreover, politicians would claim that the

¹⁸ In the EU, they are also defined as TCNs, although the two terms do not perfectly overlap, as seen in the Introduction.

¹⁹ More precisely, the 2019 Annual Report on Intra-EU Mobility points out that several migrants from Eastern European countries, have better employment rates than non-Western migrants but they are usually low-skilled and engaged in temporary underpaid jobs. Thus, they likewise tend overall to have lower incomes than nationals too (Annual Report on Intra-EU Mobility, 2019).

high levels of citizens-to-migrants redistribution will lead to an increase in the fiscal expenditure on the public finances, especially in the form of public taxes paid by citizens to finance universal social programs (i.e., the economic burden argument).

Building on these considerations, I derive my first economic-centered hypothesis (and the relevant sub-hypotheses):

H1: Politicians apply the economic-based chauvinist arguments to universal types of social programs.

H1a: benefit tourism/welfare magnet

H1b: economic burden

The second economic-centered hypothesis builds on a parallel reasoning and considers means-tested programs. I dwell, again, upon the real-world redistributive outcomes typically produced by these programs. Ennsner-Jedenastik has shown that, similar to universal ones, they tend to produce high level of social redistribution from national citizens to migrants (2018; 2020). This pattern depends on the intertwin between the tax-based funding mechanisms (common to both means-tested and universal benefits) and the programs' underlying need-based redistributive logic. This implies indeed that welfare support should be extended primarily (if not exclusively) to the less fortunate, in terms of income and earnings.

We have seen in the previous paragraph that migrants (especially those from non-Western poorest world areas) tend to have overall lower levels of labor market integration and thus lower levels of earnings and incomes than nationals (Nannestad 2007; Herwig et al. 2015). By following a similar reasoning that the one illustrated above, we can presumably argue that this trend should advantage migrants over nationals in terms of access to means-tested benefits as well. We have also seen that, exactly because of their lower levels of labor market integration and below-average incomes, migrants usually pay less taxes than nationals in European host countries (Nannestad 2007; Herwig et al. 2015; Annual Report on Intra-EU Mobility 2019). The intersection of these characteristics should provide, again, the opportunity for the mobilization of an economic type of conflict between natives and migrants.

Accordingly, I would expect politicians to portray migrants in the same way as they do with regard to universal benefits. That is, as welfare abusers who do not adequately contribute to the national tax system whilst benefiting from tax-funded means-tested programs on equal basis (and even more) than citizens workers regularly paying taxes. Moreover, I would also expect politicians to claim that the advantageous social redistribution outcomes produced by means-tested programs work as a magnet, creating incentives for many migrants to move to European countries (i.e., the benefit tourism/welfare magnet argument). Finally, I likewise expect them to claim that the high levels of citizens-to-migrants redistribution will lead to an increase in the public taxes paid by citizens to finance means-tested social programs supporting migrants (i.e., the economic burden argument).

Based on these considerations, I build my second hypothesis:

H2: Politicians apply the economic-based chauvinist arguments to means-tested types of social programs.

H2a: benefit tourism/welfare magnet

H2b: economic burden.

It has to be said that the statistical data mentioned in the previous paragraph are general trends and statistics merely. In fact, inter and even intra-countries differences exist. Namely, we observe differences between different groups of migrants in terms of taxation and labor market integration rates. Likewise, differences emerge in the levels of citizens-to-migrants redistribution of welfare resources across Western European countries (Nannestad 2007; Herwig et al. 2015). Hence, universal and means-tested programs do not necessarily favor migrants (or not all groups of migrants) over citizens everywhere in Western Europe.

Nevertheless, I hold that, irrespective of migrants' tax records and of actual levels of redistribution²⁰, politicians would still portray them as benefit tourists and/or an economic burden. This indeed would make easier for politicians to carry out their chauvinist and anti-immigration rhetoric. As

²⁰ Including differences in terms of economic patterns and contributions, between countries and between various groups of migrants within each country.

previously mentioned, the thesis is not interested in how the justificatory arguments are applied across different groups of migrants. Thus, this specific point is not included in these hypotheses. Still, based on the literature and on the general statistical trends above, I have the expectation that these arguments would apply especially to non-Western and/or Eastern European migrants (also from inside the EU).

Finally, let us consider insurance-run programs. We know from the literature that they usually produce very low levels of redistribution from nationals to migrants. This occurs because they individualize benefit claims, making benefits received proportional to individual contributions (“to each according to his/her contribution”, cfr. Ennsner-Jedenastik 2018, p.6).

Given the low level of redistribution, I argue that it is harder for nativist politicians to frame migrants as benefit tourists who take benefits from social redistribution without contributing back. Likewise, politicians cannot blame migrants for imposing an economic burden by increasing public taxes for citizens. Insurance schemes are, indeed, essentially based on a self-financing structure. In simple terms, insurance benefits’ redistributive outcomes do not appeal to the economic type of citizens-migrants conflict.

The third and last economic hypothesis therefore claims that:

H3: Politicians do not apply the economic-based chauvinist arguments to insurance-based types of social programs.

4.2. The cultural hypotheses

I move now to illustrate the second group of hypotheses, i.e., the cultural hypotheses, starting from universal programs again. I claim that the underpinning universalistic redistributive logic provides the opportunity for the mobilization of a cultural type of migrants-citizens conflict, irrespective of the real-world redistributive outcomes it produces.

We have seen that, in its traditional understanding, the universalist

redistributive logic applied to country's citizens only (Introduction)²¹. Following the process of “denationalization” of welfare (cfr. Sainsbury 2012; Nordensvarda and Ketola 2015), the prevailing idea of equality and universal redistribution has changed, with the residency principle taking the place of citizenship. As a consequence of that, a growing number of migrants with permanent residency have obtained access to universal programs.

This change is viewed negatively by nativist politicians, since many of these migrants do not have the formal citizenship and (in their view) belong to very different ethno-cultural backgrounds and religious traditions (or being perceived as different)²². On the other hand, strictly nativist politicians assert the exact contrary, i.e., that social rights are exclusive rights of the cultural and/or ethnic members of a narrowly defined nation state, historically delimited by strict citizenship rules (Mudde, 2007).

On that basis, I would expect politicians to justify their chauvinist position by simply applying *strictu sensu* the nativist principle. Namely, they would frame migrants as culturally deviant from and in contrast to the ethnocultural majority, as they have different ethnocultural backgrounds. Migrants therefore fall outside the universalist provision of benefits that should apply (following a strict nativist view) only to the members of the ethnic-defined community, who are also the citizens of the country. This corresponds to the argument of cultural distance. As before, I do not have specific hypotheses on the migrant groups the most affected by the cultural rhetoric. Yet, I would expect the main target group to be migrants from non-Western area, as they are usually perceived as more culturally distant than European ones (Koser, 2007).

The first cultural hypothesis, therefore, states as follows:

H4: Politicians apply the culturally-rooted chauvinist argument (i.e., cultural distance) to universal types of social programs.

The picture is a bit different, I argue, for both means-tested and insurance-run

²¹ Namely, equal redistribution was granted exclusively on the ground of formal citizenship. This was typical of Social Democratic welfare regimes.

²² As in the case of economic and taxation patterns, the ethno-cultural cultural differences to which politicians refer are in several cases instrumental to their chauvinist and anti-immigration rhetoric. In real terms, cultural differences are a blurred concept, difficult to define empirically in a precise manner (Koser 2007; Allievi 2010).

types of programs. As seen, the former are based on a need-based redistributive logic (Deutsch, 1975; Ennser-Jedenastik, 2018). Historically, the concept of “need” has always been defined economically and not in ethnic or racial terms (Sainsbury, 2012; Ennser-Jedenastik, 2018). Neither have means-tested programs undergone a real process of de-nationalization, as opposed to universal programs (Sainsbury, 2012; Nordensvarda and Ketola, 2015). In several countries, noncitizens could already formally access this type of programs if they fulfilled the income/earnings criteria and reside for a certain period of time in the host country (Sainsbury, 2012).

The same occurs for insurance schemes, that build on a contribution and equity-based redistributive logic. Accordingly, non-citizens migrants have always been able to formally access the national insurance funds, if they paid the employment-related contributions and resided for a certain period of time in the host country. Similarly to means-tested, the insurance-based programs had ever undergone a real process of de-nationalization over time (Sainsbury 2012; Nordensvarda and Ketola 2015).

Consequently, I argue that means-tested and insurance-run programs are less likely to come into contrast with the nativist logic – defining social rights’ entitlement on the basis of formal citizenship and strict ethnic-cultural criteria. Hence, while we cannot rule out the possibility that politicians sometimes evoke cultural otherness and racial definitions of need and contributions, we can reasonably expect that these programs are less likely to attract the argument of (real or alleged) cultural distance. In other words, the design of means-tested and insurance programs, and notably the underlying redistributive logics (need and equity respectively), do *not* provide the opportunity for the mobilization of a *cultural* type of migrants-citizens *conflict*.

Accordingly, my fifth hypothesis claims as follows:

H5: Politicians do not apply the culturally-rooted chauvinist argument (i.e., cultural distance) to means-tested types of social programs.

The sixth (and last) hypothesis claims:

H6: Politicians do not apply the culturally-rooted chauvinist argument to insurance-based types of social programs.

Table 2 at the end of the chapter summarizes the expectations regarding the link between the type of programs and the underpinning justificatory argument.

5. “Empirically corroborating” the claim of causality

As highlighted in the Introduction, uncertainty about causal hypotheses like the ones in this thesis can never be eliminated in the social sciences (King, Keohane and Verba 1994; Corbetta 2003). However, uncertainty can be reduced to a certain extent (King, Keohane and Verba, 1994). In order to “empirically corroborate” (Corbetta 2003, p. 90) my causal hypotheses three empirical elements are needed: covariation between independent and dependent variables (explanatory factors and outcomes), direction of causality, and control of other possible causes (Ibid).

The latter element needs special attentions. Namely, causation differs from statistical correlation and (as in this case) qualitative association since it requires to rule out confounding factors, i.e., other factors that might affect both predictor and outcome – in this case, the type of social program and the type of chauvinist argument – leading to a spurious association²³ (Corbetta, 2003). In this research, a potential confounding factor may be the *type of welfare State regime*. This can reasonably be considered the main explanatory factor shaping the type of social program (predictor), based on the literature on welfare State’ developments in Europe and notably the seminal work by Esping-Andersen in 1990. As seen in the Introduction, each type of social program depends on and is typical of one of the three types of welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen, 1990). That is, means-tested benefits are typical of the Liberal welfare regimes, universal benefits characterize the Social democratic ones and, finally, insurance-run programs are found in the Conservative regimes (Ibid).

Furthermore, one can reasonably argue that the types of welfare regimes might influence welfare chauvinism and the type of chauvinist arguments (outcome) politicians use as well. I rely on Esping-Andersen (1990)’s

²³ Quantitative research typically defines them as “control variables”; qualitative research does not have a precise terminology and speaks generally about “confounders”.

contribution again as well as studies dealing with contemporary post-national welfare States (Soysal 1994; Sainsbury 2012; Mau and Burkhardt 2009; Nordensvarda and Ketola). Similarly to the different types of social programs, each welfare regime is characterized by a specific redistributive logic and sources of funding. Regimes have also been affected in different ways by the de-nationalization process taking place in European welfare States in most recent times (Sainsbury 2012; Mau and Burkhardt 2009; Nordensvarda and Ketola 2015). Following a parallel reasoning than the one formulated in the hypothesis, it may be argued that the intersection between these characteristics may attract different types of chauvinist arguments.

Namely, Social Democratic and Liberal regimes may attract the economic-oriented arguments. Both rely on taxes by adult population as the main source of funding, with migrants typically paying less taxes than nationals, for the reasons explained in the paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2. At the same time, both regimes are characterized by a redistributive logic that often goes at the advantage of migrants. Liberal regimes pursue a poverty-alleviation logic, empirically favoring applicants with lower levels of income, earnings labor market integration, i.e., especially (although not exclusively) migrants (cfr. previous paragraph).

Conversely, the cultural argument should be present in Social Democratic only. We know from the literature that the process of de-nationalization has been more evident there than in the other regimes (presumably due to the traditional link welfare entitlement-citizenship). These specific features of Social Democratic regimes can come into contrast with the stricter nativist discourse, based on citizenship and ethnicity (previously described). Differently from Social Democratic ones, welfare entitlement in Liberal regimes has been traditionally linked to one's economic condition, rather than firmly citizenship. The process of de-nationalization of welfare has therefore been less evident. It gives in turn less room for the stricter nativist discourse to spread. Given that, it is less likely that welfare chauvinism in this type of welfare regime is infused with the argument of cultural distance.

Finally, if the type of welfare regime is the key explanatory factor, then one may expect that Conservative regimes should not be characterized by any nativist appeal, nor chauvinist arguments. Being largely based on social insurance schemes with earnings-related contributions (the so-called Bismarckian model),

these regimes may create unfavorable redistributive patterns for migrants who have usually a much shorter contribution story and therefore limited access to insurance schemes compared to national citizens.

While this view may be logically consistent, I argue that the spurious relation is not at play here; conversely, the type of program's design is the key explanatory mechanism that shapes the type of chauvinist arguments politicians use in policy debates. To support the view that the type of welfare regime does not affect the predictor nor the outcome, I build on the literature on welfare State' developments in Europe again. Differently from before, I consider the most recent studies which are revising Esping-Andersen's traditional tripartition (Bonoli and Palier 1996, Palier 2010b; Kautto 2010; Obinger and Talò 2010; Ferrera 1996, 2010)

As far as the predictor (type of program) is concerned, I align to the view of these studies. They argue that the Esping-Andersen's traditional tripartition is increasingly inconsistent nowadays. Namely, because of institutional transformations over time, the traditional differences among the types of welfare regimes are far more blurred than before and the type of regime does not have an impact on the prevailing types of social program anymore (cfr. Introduction).

With regard to the chauvinist arguments, I hold that these institutional changes have modified the prevalent idea of solidarity, the management of income inequalities and the redistributive logic in each of the three welfare regimes as well. Accordingly, we may observe a universalistic redistributive logic and broader understanding of solidarity in traditionally Conservative Bismarckian regimes; work-related solidarity in Social Democratic ones; ext. Given that, I argue that the links between the regimes' traditional characteristics and the type of chauvinist arguments are not logically consistent, meaning that the welfare regime's type is ultimately *irrelevant* in explaining the justifications behind welfare chauvinism. Accordingly, I expect to observe some variation in formal entitlement/disentitlement rules and the justificatory arguments behind them across different welfare regimes. However, I claim these variations depend on the prevalence of a type of social program (or more than one) over the others within each regime.

In the next paragraphs, I will illustrate how qualitative methods, i.e., multi case-comparative analysis and qualitative content analysis, can help to rule out

the possibility of a spurious relation (with welfare regime as the confounding factor). Likewise, they can also enable me to assess the other two elements needed to empirically corroborate the causal hypotheses, that is covariation, direction (Corbetta, 2003). Moreover, the qualitative perspective presents some comparative advantages compared to the quantitative one, which add further theoretical causation meaning to the thesis' findings. This view is in contrast to the prevailing literature arguing that Corbetta' s guidelines are usually thought to be more suitable to quantitative methodological procedures.

Tables-Chapter 2

Table 2: Chauvinist justificatory arguments across the different types of social programs

Hypotheses				
Welfare chauvinist arguments		Social programs		
		Universal	Means-tested	Insurance-run
Economic hypotheses	Economic arguments	✓ (H1)	✓ (H2)	Not applying (H3)
Cultural hypothesis	Cultural argument	✓ (H4)	Not applying (H5)	Not applying (H6)

Source: own elaboration

Chapter 3

Methodological design

1. Methods

1.1. The qualitative design and specific method

The present thesis relies on an essentially qualitative research design. The qualitative approach can more easily examine social phenomena (such as welfare chauvinism) in depth and “unpack” them (Ritchie 2003, p. 27). Namely, it provides a far more in-depth and detailed analysis of welfare chauvinism and the justificatory arguments behind policy frameworks.

In conformity with previous research (Jørgensen and Thomsen, 2016; Keskinen 2016), the analysis explores the chauvinist arguments in policy reforms by focusing on politicians’ speeches made during national parliamentary debates preceding and leading to the approval of such reforms. I focus on those parliamentary debates surrounding some instances of exclusionary/welfare chauvinist policies at the national level, in four Western European countries. As outlined in the Introduction, social laws and policy proposal can be defined as being welfare chauvinist when they:

- separate the society between a native ingroup (citizens and sometimes also permanent residents) and a non-native outgroup (different categories of migrants) *and*
- exclude or impose limitation on the access of the members of the non-native outgroup to welfare benefits and programs. Based on Reeskens and Van Oorschot’s definition, proposals and/or policies which exclude or limit migrants’ access all together are considered a form of *strong* welfare chauvinism. Instead, proposals and/or policies that allows migrants conditional access – by making entitlement conditional to the fulfillment of one or several requirements – promote a form of *soft* welfare chauvinism (Reeskens and Van Oorschot, 2012).

I conduct a multi-cases comparative analysis (Yin, 1984). I compare the types of justificatory arguments politicians apply to justify the adoption of welfare

chauvinist policies or specific measures, across different types of welfare programs, either universal, means-tested or insurance-run. The comparative approach enhances the findings' generalization potential (this point is addressed more specifically in 1.5).

I carry out this comparison both *between* four different countries and between different types of welfare programs *within* each country. This allows me to assess whether the justificatory arguments correspond to those hypothesized and to establish a link between the types of social programs (predictor) and the types of arguments (outcome)²⁴.

Establishing such a link is the first step to empirically strengthen the thesis' causal claim (Corbetta, 2003). The welfare chauvinist arguments are extracted from the speeches and allocated across the different policy areas/types of social programs by means of an in-depth qualitative content analysis (Schreier 2014; Kuckartz 2019) of politicians' speeches during parliamentary debates and a precise and well-defined system of codes and categories.

1.2. Selecting most-different cases

The type of comparison at play is essentially a qualitative one, in line with the thesis' overall research design. Moreover, it is an intensive comparative strategy, since I select a limited number of cases, precisely four. This allows me a much deeper investigation of each case, carefully assessing whether the justificatory arguments/chauvinist arguments correspond to those hypothesized and whether politicians apply them across the different social policy areas in the way expected (Ritchie 2003). By contrast, a purely quantitative comparison would consider a higher number of cases analyzing them with a lower level of detail. Thus, it is unable to capture (or only to a limited extent) cases' complexity and to explore in depth the nature of the link between chauvinist arguments and social programs (Ritchie 2003; Flick 2006).

I rely on the most-different approach of comparing, also known as method of similarities (Mill 1843; Gerrig 2016; Fabbrini and Molutsi 2011). Accordingly, I take cases which are vastly different from one another, but all share the same outcome, i.e., some instances of welfare chauvinism. These can be already

²⁴ Namely, we are assessing what quantitative scholars would define "covariation" (Corbetta, 2003) between the two different types of arguments, i.e., insurance, universal and means-tested (outcome/dependent variable) and types of social programs (hypothesized explanatory factor/independent variable).

implemented or about to be approved exclusionary social policies or reforms in the national policy framework. Being welfare chauvinism observed, it is logically expected to find some type of justificatory arguments to promote and justify it. The policies considered are both social policies and policies taking place in other fields, when they deal with entitlement and disentanglement from national social programs. For example, these can be policies and policy reforms in the labor-market and immigration policy fields, addressing welfare matters too.

Based on the criteria illustrated above, I select the following countries: Austria, Italy, Denmark, and United Kingdom (UK). These countries differ under several aspects, especially in terms of social policy traditions. Namely, they traditionally belong to different welfare regimes, differing in terms of underpinning logics of social redistribution. More precisely, each of the countries selected corresponds to a different regime: Conservative-Corporatist or Bismarckian regime (Austria), Social Democratic or Universalistic regime (Denmark), Southern or Mediterranean (Italy) and Liberal regime (the UK).

Despite these differences, in all these cases it is possible to find some instances of welfare chauvinism, i.e., exclusionary policies and/or reforms towards migrants, especially in most recent times. In order to detect evidence of policies with a clear chauvinist component, I have proceeded by systematically reviewing and checking all different types of policies in each case. A summary of the selected countries and policies/policy reforms is provided by table 3 at the end of the chapter.

1.3. Some important remarks about case selection

Before proceeding, a few important remarks are necessary. First, the thesis does not test *all* the hypotheses in *all* the countries. From the table it emerges that, in some of these cases, we do not have *internal* variation, i.e., we do not find instances of welfare chauvinist policy reforms targeting all different types of social programs. This occurs in Italy and Denmark, where the policy reforms selected only target the means-tested policy area (not insurance or universal ones). Nevertheless, this is not an issue for the comparison method used. The most-different approach of comparing asks for variation across all the cases considered, not necessarily *within* each case (Mill 1843; Gerrig 2016; Fabbrini and Molutsi 2011).

The second remark concerns the forms of welfare chauvinism under observation. I only focus on *direct* forms of welfare chauvinism, not considering the *indirect* ones (Careja et al., 2016). Namely, I select policies that directly and explicitly exclude migrants, either in a soft or strong manner (Reeskens and Van Oorschot, 2012). More details about the extent of disenfranchisement (soft/strong) are provided when dealing specifically with the four cases. I have made the choice to focus on direct welfare chauvinism merely due to four main reasons.

The first reason is that of consistency with previous research on the chauvinist arguments. The studies illustrated in chapter 1 (Jørgensen and Thomsen, 2016; Keskinen, 2016; Noricel, 2016) investigate the arguments politicians exploit with regard to restrictive policies and reforms explicitly targeting (different groups of) migrants (i.e., direct welfare chauvinism). As illustrated in chapter 2, the present thesis takes them as point of departure and reference. Accordingly, it aims at enriching these mainly descriptive studies, especially by adding causal meaning to their findings.

The second reason deals with the design of the welfare chauvinist arguments themselves. They explicitly point to migrants and mobilize different forms of conflicts (either economic and/or cultural) between them and native citizens. Given that, it is overall easier to observe them applied to instances of direct welfare chauvinism.

A possible counter-argument is provided by the work of Careja and her colleagues (2016). Through a detailed analysis of the communication (newspapers, media) around the indirect chauvinist reforms, they show that many politicians (notably radical right ones) claim credit for the indirect chauvinist measures and present some of them as a deliberate attempt to limit migrants' entitlement to welfare. In cases like these, it is not implausible that politicians may indeed exploit the economic or culturally-based justificatory arguments in support of such exclusionary attempts.²⁵

Nevertheless (this is my third point), it may not always be so straightforward²⁶ to establish a clear link between the indirect chauvinist measures and politicians' actual willingness to exclude migrants – not even when

²⁵ To be sure, the research by Careja does not deeply investigate whether politicians exploit some sort of chauvinist arguments to justify their intention to target migrants, as this is not its main purpose. Yet, in theory, this is not implausible.

²⁶ as in the analysis by Careja et al. (2016).

migrants are the group most affected by these measures. Namely, we may encounter trouble assessing whether politicians mean to purposefully exclude migrants or if this is instead an unintentional spillover. This uncertainty may be due, for example, to the fact that in some cases politicians and political parties may not claim credit for indirect measures in such an explicit manner as in the case shown by Careja et al. (2016). And even if they do so, they may not present these as an effort to specifically and exclusively exclude migrants but rather a larger group/target. In such (not so implausible) cases, it becomes more difficult to capture the chauvinist arguments behind migrants' exclusion, since no specific reference to migrants is ever made.

Politicians may act this way for several reasons. The simplest one is that migrants are not the real target – or not the only one – of the welfare cuts, even if they end up being the most affected group. This scenario is far from being unlikely. A recent work by Abs (2021) has shown that native citizens are not indeed automatically entitled to national welfare benefits. By contrast, many radical right politicians across several European countries are in favor of exclusionary social policies affecting both migrants and natives. Interestingly, in some cases, the justifications behind natives' exclusion turn out to be based on economic considerations, not so different from those hypothesized here with regard to migrants (Abs et al., 2021). One particularly illustrative example of that is the case of Italy. As we will see better in Chapter 6, the League (the primary anti-immigration party in Italy) justifies the exclusion of migrants from national welfare by relying on an economic-centered argument (that of “cheating”, more details in Ch.6) already exploited for Italians, especially southern Italians.

Another reason for politicians not to refer explicitly to migrants²⁷ may be that, even if they really want to target migrants, they may sometimes prefer not to say so explicitly. The literature on party politics may offer some interesting insights about this point. We know that politicians and political parties in government positions (both PRRPs and their mainstream counterparts) are subject to responsibility constraints (Mair, 2014). Social reforms with a direct chauvinism component are clearly at odds with parties' responsibility function and notably the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of nationality and

²⁷ in the communication around the implementations of indirect chauvinist measures

ethnicity. Indirect welfare chauvinist policies can work as a sort of loophole, as the restrictions affecting migrants are more masked. Nevertheless, many politicians may prefer not to present these policies as an effort to exclude migrants so to not run the risk of exposing themselves to criticisms by national and EU public opinion, Courts and institutions.

This reasoning may work for mainstream parties, but not always for PRRPs indeed. Studies about PRRPs' governmental action with regard to migrants and welfare have shown that they are usually indifferent to responsibility constraints (cfr. Chapter 1). Accordingly, they contribute to implementing reforms that cut welfare for migrants, both directly and indirectly (Careja et al, 2016). When doing it indirectly, they claim credit for that, to show their voters that they are responsive, i.e., keeping their election promises (Ibid). However, I argue, the opposite view is also possible. Since their chauvinist intentions already emerge very clearly in the political manifestos (Abs et al., 2021), national and EU public opinion and institutions are in most cases perfectly aware that PRRPs are the main (sometimes the only) political actors willing to implement exclusionary policy reforms against foreigners, whether or not they do that explicitly. Based on this, ruling PRRPs may not feel the need to claim credit for the exclusionary elements in indirect chauvinist reforms and to specify that these are an effort to exclude migrants – as it is very clear to everyone.

All these elements, I argue, make the selection of indirect welfare chauvinist instances fairly problematic. While indirect welfare chauvinism is a clear and helpful theoretical concept, it can sometimes turn out to be a fairly blurry category in empirical terms.

A final, minor, reason for not considering indirect welfare chauvinism concerns time constraints and considerations. Since including different forms of welfare chauvinism would imply a longer time span than that which I am allowed in my PhD, I had to make a decision regarding the specific form of chauvinism to include in the analysis. Overall, even by excluding indirect welfare chauvinism, the thesis' analysis is in any case able to investigate justificatory arguments for a significant part of existing welfare chauvinist policies – as several of them take a *direct* rather than *indirect* shape, as the following Chapters will show.

The third and last remark (linked to the previous one) regards the insurance-based types of social programs. From the systematic review of policies,

I have found *no* instances of welfare chauvinist policy reforms targeting the national insurance schemes, in any of the selected cases. This could lead to a number of problems. First, it makes it more difficult to provide a test of the argument-programs link, as I do not have a real diverse pool of all social programs type.

Secondly, the fact that I do not observe instances of direct welfare chauvinism targeting insurance-run programs in the four cases does not mean, however, that the hypothesized justificatory arguments could not apply to such programs as well. Politicians could indeed promote welfare chauvinism with regard to insurance schemes in *indirect* ways. As the structure of these programs makes it legally and politically more difficult to promote direct exclusion, it may make sense for policymakers to resort to indirect forms of welfare chauvinism. The choice of focusing only on instances of direct welfare chauvinism may indeed have prevented the ability to have a more diverse pool of policy types in each country.

On the whole, it is not implausible that including indirect forms of welfare chauvinism may widen the analysis so to include insurance-run types of programs too. Nevertheless, I argue that their exclusion does not significantly affect our conclusions, considering the thesis' purposes. This point is not developed further here. A more structured reflection upon that is provided instead in the general conclusions (paragraph 2.1.).

1.4. The point of the most-different type of comparison

I rely on the most-different approach of comparing since it allows for ruling out the possibility of a spurious association between the chauvinist arguments and the social programs, involving the types of welfare regimes (cfr. what explained in the previous chapter). The irrelevance of welfare regimes in explaining the prevailing type of program is empirically assessed simply by 1) selecting different types of programs across the different welfare regimes (although, as just seen, we do not have variation in each of them) and 2) selecting one or more types of social programs that are considered typical of the regime under observation. This is the case, for example, in Denmark (Social Democratic regime), where I select two means-tested programs which are rather typical of the Liberal types of welfare regimes. This ultimately shows (respectively) that 1)

these regimes are characterized today by a combination of means-tested, universal and insurance programs rather than a prevailing one and 2) new types of programs, not traditionally characterizing a type of regime, may indeed be present today within that regime (as in Denmark).

Moreover, this comparative strategy also enables me to empirically assess the irrelevance of welfare regimes in explaining the prevailing type of chauvinist argument. If this type of causal link was at play, I would observe the cultural arguments in Social Democratic regimes only and the economic ones in both Social Democratic and Liberal ones. I would instead not observe any chauvinist arguments in Conservative regimes. By selecting four countries corresponding to the four models of welfare, I empirically test this link and show its inconsistency. Finally, by selecting most-different cases, the thesis explores whether the relation between types of programs and types of arguments holds across different types of overarching welfare regimes. This would be a further confirmation of the *irrelevance* of welfare regimes in explaining the chauvinist arguments (Corbetta, 2009).

By ruling out the possibility of a spurious association, the thesis would provide empirical evidence to the main theoretical claim, i.e., that the types of social programs and the types of chauvinist arguments are not only *associated* but also *causally related*. Accordingly, the chauvinist arguments used in policy debates should depend on the prevalence of one of these programs (or more than one) over the other within each regime. Furthermore, welfare chauvinism and chauvinist arguments should be observed in Conservative regimes too, as many of them have increased their non-contributory strand of welfare – i.e., universal and means-tested programs.

1.5. Generalization strategy

As most of social research, this thesis aims at generalizing the final findings, to a certain extent, i.e., extending them to cases other than the four directly studied (Polit and Beck, 2010). Qualitative research as the one in point typically recognized two different strategies for generalizing results, i.e., analytical and statistical generalization²⁸ (Yin 2003; Polit and Beck 2010; Maxwell and Chmiel

²⁸ this latter is most commonly associated to quantitative methods, yet it is used in qualitative research too

2014; Maxwell 2021).

A remarkable difference between these two strategies is that the statistical type assesses the representativeness of a theory and/or hypotheses for some larger population, whilst the analytical one seeks to test the theory in other cases than the one observed (Yin 2003; Maxwell and Chmiel 2014; Maxwell 2021). Moreover, the analytical generalization does not need a high number of cases/larger samples (as the statistical strategy does). Conversely, it allows for testing the hypotheses by building on a restricted number of cases as well (Ibid).

I rely on the *analytical* form of generalization, as it is more suitable for the present purpose. As stated in Chapter 2, the thesis' newly developed theoretical and analytical framework is intended to encompass a broad number of European host countries – and eventually also non-European ones. Accordingly, it is designed in such a way that future research will be able to test it also beyond the four countries selected. In the words of Maxwell and Chmiel (2014, p.540), my four cases are used “to create heuristics for other studies”. By contrast, the thesis is not interested in assessing a larger statistical representativeness. Relying on this strategy, the limited number of cases (only four) is not problematic.

Furthermore, the analytical strategy allows for making sound generalizations, by tracing the results back to a set of hypotheses and/or a theory, used as a sort of “template” (Maxwell and Chmiel 2014, p.541; Yin 2003, p.32). As explained by Yin (2003, p.33), “if two or more cases are shown to support the same theory, replication may be validly claimed”. This works smoothly with my thesis. The “templates” of reference are both my newly developed theoretical argument and the hypotheses stemming from it. By means of the methods illustrated above, I trace the results in each case back to them, thus assessing and consolidating the strength of the generalization potential.

2. The data: validity and reliability of parliamentary speeches as exploratory tool

The official speeches analyzed are all taken from national parliamentary debates. I select those parliamentary debates during which politicians discuss welfare chauvinist policies and/or policy reforms. I consider both already implemented and about to be approved social laws and policies. I take politicians' speeches from official websites of the national Parliaments of the cases in point, where the

relevant transcriptions, i.e., the Stenographic Protocols are made available.

Parliamentary speeches are a more valid exploratory tool to detect the arguments behind welfare chauvinism than social policies themselves. The latter are indeed usually very vague, putting forward general rules and norms, without yet clearly specifying the logic and justifications behind them. On the contrary, chauvinist arguments are explicitly and clearly detectable within parliamentary debates and speeches. On such occasions, politicians often have to provide longer and more well-developed explanations for their policy preferences, also to answer political opposition's criticism.

By selecting the parliamentary speeches where the relevant chauvinist policies are discussed and approved, I make sure that the justificatory arguments observed refer exactly to these policies. For example, if I detect one or both of the economic arguments in the parliamentary discussion when the social assistance chauvinist reform in Austria is approved, I can then presumably affirm that Austrian politicians apply these economic arguments to legitimize such a chauvinist reform.

Nonetheless, parliamentary speeches bring some challenges for the analysis as well. In particular, parliamentary discussions are often centered around several different topics. Likewise, when politicians discuss social policy issues and reforms, digressions may take place and other subjects can emerge. Given that, it can be sometimes difficult to identify and extract the sections specifically devoted to welfare chauvinist proposals and the main chauvinist arguments used. To this end, relying on qualitative content analysis method (Schreier 2014; Kuckartz 2019) is especially useful.

3. Inside parliamentary speeches: qualitative content analysis

3.1. The point of qualitative content analysis

The qualitative content analysis method (Schreier 2014; Kuckartz 2019) enjoys a high level of recognition, and it is easily understood and replicable by other researchers too (Guetterman, Creswell and Kuckartz 2015; Kuckartz 2019; Mayring 2002; Schreier 2014). This is a sub-field of the broader content analysis method. While classical content analysis is essentially a quantitative method (Kuckartz, 2019), the qualitative approach is more suitable to my research due to

several reasons.

First, I analyze essentially qualitative data, i.e., texts (written transcripts of speeches), rather than quantitative data (numbers). Secondly, quantitative content analysis typically counts words and occurrences within the texts, and it calculates the simple proportion of all sentences in a manifesto that contain welfare chauvinist claims. This approach does not distinguish between the various justificatory argument, nor between the different areas of social policy. Thus, it cannot capture the level of detail required to examine which elements of a social program are targeted with nativist appeals, the specific chauvinist arguments used, and whether the arguments and the social programs are somewhat related.

By contrast, qualitative content analysis systematically examines themes and patterns and the overall sentiments within the selected texts (Schreier 2014; Kuckartz 2019). Thus, it is suitable to the thesis' research question since it allows for an in-depth and systematic examination of welfare chauvinism's legitimization: the specific chauvinist arguments used, the social programs targeted and the relation between these two.

Moreover, qualitative content analysis is able to capture a deeper level of detail in the text than the quantitative one (Kuckartz 2019; Ritsert 1972; Mayring 2002). Accordingly, it enables me to simultaneously capture and categorize both explicit and implicit references to the welfare chauvinist arguments. Indeed, it may sometimes be the case that politicians do not explicitly refer to any argument but develop the discourses in such a way to point back to one or more of them. Being able to outline the manifest expressions only, quantitative content analysis would fail to capture these latent meanings (Schreier 2014; Kuckartz 2019).

Finally, qualitative content analysis is more suitable than other similar methods used by previous research, like discourse analysis (Jørgensen and Thomsen, 2016; Keskinen 2016). The latter is more appropriate for building new hypotheses and theories (Schreier 2014; Willig 2014). Conversely, I aim at testing the presence of the hypothesized chauvinist argument as well as the arguments-programs links in the texts.

My qualitative content analysis is organized in four steps. First, I identify the texts and specific texts' passages I will analyze. Secondly, I operationalize the welfare chauvinist arguments in the theoretical section into more empirical concepts. I do that by identifying some empirical indicators for each argument.

This enables me to immediately recognize the arguments used and thus to extract them from the texts analyzed. Thereafter, I allocate each argument across the different policy areas/types of social programs. Finally, I examine each of the welfare chauvinist arguments in relation to the type of welfare program, i.e., to the programs' design. This last step enables me to further strengthen the claim of causality. This is the advantage of a qualitative methodology compared to a merely quantitative one.

3.2. The texts and speeches analyzed

The texts' passages under examination are those reporting the speeches where politicians discuss the newly introduced or about to be introduced chauvinist-oriented measures, affecting the different types of social programs. The specific units of analysis are the sentences spoken by politicians. More precisely, I focus on the passages and sentences where they speak in support of these chauvinist policy measures and explain their reason for doing that. These are usually the speeches by government parties or coalition/support parties, as they are the ones in favor of the new legislative measures.

By contrast, I leave uncoded the passages where politicians discuss the chauvinist-oriented measures in negative terms. These are usually the speeches by opposition parties and are not relevant to thesis's research question. Namely, since politicians criticize the chauvinist turns, one does not expect to find any welfare chauvinist arguments in their speeches. Likewise, I do not consider the speeches where 1) politicians talk about the relevant chauvinist-oriented measures but refer to them more generally, without explaining their reason for supporting them and 2) politicians do not talk about the relevant chauvinist-oriented measures but touch upon other topics.

3.3. Operationalizing the chauvinist arguments and allocating them across the different policy areas

By focusing on these passages, I investigate the specific justificatory arguments politicians use to legitimize and promote welfare chauvinism, eventually answering criticism by the political oppositions, in each country. I proceed by policy areas/types of welfare programs (universal, means-tested, insurance-run)

and I investigate the justificatory arguments for each of these. By doing that, I establish a link between the type of arguments and the types of programs, assessing whether politicians apply (or not) the different chauvinist arguments to the types of programs as hypothesized by the thesis. I repeat this same procedure for the different types of social programs affected by chauvinist retrenchment, across the four countries selected. That way, I also test whether these links hold across different countries and types of welfare regimes, in line with the thesis' expectations.

More specifically, I extract the chauvinist arguments from the texts by assigning the relevant texts' passages/sentences a number of "categories" (or "codes"), i.e., several conceptual labels that foster understanding of the data (Kuckartz 2019, p. 184). Empirically speaking, categories are "those aspects of the material about which researchers would like more information" (Schreier 2014, p.75), namely the welfare chauvinist arguments in this thesis. Categories can be created before or while analyzing content (Schreier 2014; Kuckartz 2019).

Ex ante categories are called deductive because they originate from previous knowledge of the researcher, from the research question or from existing literature. They are concepts that exist and have been formulated before reading the text and independently of it. *In vivo* categories are created from the text itself, during the analysis: they are inductive (Schreier 2014; Kuckartz 2019). This work deals mainly with deductive categories.

3.4. The thesis' coding system and coding procedure

This work deals with deductive categories that corresponds to:

- the existing concepts of welfare chauvinist arguments, formulated in the contributions by Jørgensen and Thomsen, Keskinen and Noricel on Scandinavian countries (2016);
- an additional argument observed in the literature about international migration and the welfare State in Western Europe, i.e., that of welfare magnet (Agersnap et al., 2019).
- my re-elaboration of both points above, based on heuristic considerations (cfr. Table 1 in Chapter 1) helping me to speed up the process of analysis (common conceptualization for the benefit tourism and welfare magnet arguments).

In line with the traditional qualitative content analysis, each category is marked by one or several indicators. These are words and sentences in the texts which enable me to immediately recognize the category at play (Schreier 2014; Kuckartz 2019). Namely, the first category corresponds to the benefit tourism/welfare magnet argument (Jørgensen and Thomsen 2016, p.341; Keskinen, p.364). The relevant indicators in the texts are one or more of the following:

1. specific terms, e.g., “abusers”, “benefit tourists”, “magnet”, “welfare profiteers” or similar ones (with the same meaning);
2. broader discourses emphasizing the lack of adequate contributions by migrants to the host society;
3. broader discourses portraying national welfare benefits as an incentive for further immigration;
4. discourses stressing the necessity for the chauvinist measures to stop abuses, foster economic integration and/or reduce incentives to migrate to the country.

The second category corresponds to the economic burden argument (Keskinen 2016, p.366). The relevant indicators are among the following:

1. specific terms, e.g., “burden”, “costs”, “expenditure” or other similar ones (with the same meaning);
2. broader discourses emphasizing the heavy costs raised by migrants upon national economy and welfare;
3. discourses portraying the chauvinist measures as necessary to ease the pressure upon the public finances (taxes paid by national citizens).

The third category is deducted from the cultural argument (Norocel 2016; Jørgensen and Thomsen 2016). The main indicators are:

1. specific terms such as “cultural(ly) distance”, “culturally deviant” or similar ones;
2. discourses representing migrants as a threat to the preservation of the ethno-cultural nation-state;
3. discourses describing the chauvinist measures necessary to protect national ethno-cultural heritage.

Finally, I also examine the presence of additional data-driven categories all along the relevant passages, namely other welfare chauvinist arguments that have not

been conceptualized by previous research. These are rather inductively derived from the texts themselves; thus, they should be based on different indicators than the ones described above. For clarification purposes, table 4 at the end of the chapter shows a summary of the coding frame.

For the sake of the analysis' transparency, each time a category is assigned, I report the corresponding Column and Position, as they are organized in the written transcripts. To make the reading smoother, I only quote some short sections and specific words as examples in the texts, and I present a more detailed overview of politicians' speeches for each parliamentary session in the appendixes at the end of the thesis.

Relying on well-defined indicators is useful in order to make it clear where one code ends and another one starts. In fact, each category (i.e., each chauvinist argument) is applied to one or more sentences only when words and discourses are consistent to that category's indicators, thus simultaneously excluding all the others. This in turn allows for assessing whether the hypothesized link between type of argument and type of social program is supported by empirical evidence. Besides, indicators are useful to apply the same categories to all the material in a consistent manner, i.e., always applying the same category when the same indicator is observed. The consistency of the coding frame increases in turn the reliability and replication of the analysis (Guetterman Creswell and Kuckartz 2015; Kuckartz, 2019).

3.5. Allocating the arguments across the different policy areas and relating them to the social programs' design

By assessing the presence of one or more welfare chauvinist arguments and allocating them across the different social programs²⁹, a link between types of social programs and types of chauvinist arguments is established. Having established such a link and ruled out the existence of confounding factors that may lead to a spurious association (cfr. paragraph 1.2.), I may already claim the existence of the hypothesized causal relation between arguments and social programs³⁰.

²⁹ Through the system of categories and codes assignment.

³⁰ This is what a quantitative-oriented study would do, since I have all the three empirical elements needed to empirically corroborate the causal link (King, Keohane and Verba 1994; Corbetta 2003): covariation between

However, as I rely on an essentially qualitative method, I can strengthen the claim of causality even further. By providing a much deeper analysis of politicians' speeches than a quantitative method would do, qualitative content analysis can more easily "spot" whether a logical relation exists between the characteristics of different types of social programs and the characteristics of the different types of chauvinist arguments used. In simple terms, whether politicians use one or more justificatory arguments based on considerations on the programs' design and structures.

Take, for example, the situation in which we have an association between a means-tested program and the benefit tourism argument. In order to argue that the causal relation is at play, I will have to disentangle from politicians' speeches that politicians blame migrants for being "tourists" precisely because they do not adequately contribute to funding that program through taxes and work. Conversely, the causal relation is not corroborated if politicians blame migrants for being "tourists" in more generic terms, i.e., not necessarily because they do not contribute to financing the welfare program under observation.

Moreover, this kind of deeper analysis also allows for testing if politicians ever use the justificatory arguments based on considerations on the welfare regime at play. In line with the hypotheses, I expect them to only make considerations about the specific type of program observed, independently from the welfare regime.

Tracing the relation between the logical characteristics of the programs and the logical characteristics of arguments is the qualitative comparative advantage that adds further theoretical causation meaning to the thesis' findings.

3.6. Computer-based support to the analysis

To improve the clarity and efficiency of the research, I rely on MAXQDA, an advanced software for qualitative data analysis, to carry out my content analysis. Most of contemporary qualitative researchers recognize the importance of computer-based programs in conducting qualitative analysis (Flick, 2006). They are particularly important to supporting the management and organization of data and to speed up analysis (Ibid).

independent and dependent variables (social programs and chauvinist arguments), direction of causality, and control of other possible causes (e.g., the types of welfare regimes).

MAXQDA supports me in the various steps of documents' analysis, especially in coding the data and analyzing them (Guetterman, Creswell, and Kuckartz, 2015). It can bring back to the selected texts the coding frame as it is built in the thesis' methodological section. It also assigns categories to the relevant texts' sections, following a concept-driven approach. Moreover, it allows for building *in vivo* new data-driven category too, when necessary (Ibid). I prefer MAXQDA to other similar programs as it is considered a valid and reliable tool within the academic research world (Guetterman Creswell and Kuckartz 2015; Kuckartz, 2019).

Tables-Chapter 3

Table 3: Summary of the cases selected

Country	Type of welfare regime	Instance(s) of welfare chauvinist policy reforms observed	Relevant policy area
Austria	Conservative-Coorporativist	1. New Basic Act on Social Assistance 2019 (Social assistance scheme);	Means-tested program
		2. Amendment 83/2018 to the 1967 Family Burden Equalization Act (family benefits) .	Universal program
Denmark	Social Democratic	1. Starting allowance reform 2002 (Social assistance scheme); 2. Future immigration reform 2006 (Social assistance scheme)	Means-tested programs (both)
Italy	Southern or Mediterranean	1. Citizenship Income Reforms-Law num. 26 of the 28 th of March 2019 (social assistance/minimum income scheme).	Means-tested program
United Kingdom	Liberal	1. Benefit Entitlement Restriction Bill 2013-2014 (several benefits, in particular social housing benefits and the council tax benefit);	Means-tested programs
		2. Immigration Bill 2014 (health care system).	Universal program

Source: own elaboration

Table 4: Summary of the coding frame.

Categories	Welfare chauvinist argument	Textual Indicators
1) Benefit tourism/welfare magnet	Benefit tourism//welfare magnet	<p>1) specific terms, e.g., “abusers”, “benefit tourists” or similar ones;</p> <p>2) broader discourses emphasizing the lack of adequate contributions by migrants to the host society;</p> <p>3) broader discourses portraying national welfare benefits as an incentive for further immigration;</p> <p>4) discourses stressing the necessity for the chauvinist measures to stop abuses, foster economic integration and/or reduce incentives to migrate to the country.</p>
2) Economic burden	Economic burden	<p>1) specific terms, e.g., “burden”, “costs”, “expenditure”;</p> <p>2) broader discourses emphasizing the heavy costs raised by migrants upon national economy and welfare;</p> <p>3) discourses portraying the chauvinist measures as necessary to ease the pressure upon the public finances (taxes paid by national citizens).</p>

3) Cultural and/or ethnic distance	Cultural and/or ethnic distance	1) specific terms such as “culturally threat”, “culturally deviant” or similar ones; 2) discourses representing migrants as a threat to the preservation of the ethno-cultural nation-state and 3) discourses describing the chauvinist measures necessary to protect national ethno-cultural heritage.
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Source: own elaboration

Chapter 4

The case of Austria

1. Introduction

The present Chapter explores the welfare chauvinist arguments behind some selected exclusionary social policies in Austria. The policy areas targeted by welfare chauvinism are family policies, with the Amendment 83/2018 to the 1967 Family Burden Equalization Act, and social assistance, with the 2019 Basic Act on Social Assistance. These are universal and means-tested types of programs, respectively. Both these reforms were implemented by the Kurz I Cabinet in the period between 2017 and 2019.

The chapter assesses the thesis' theoretical and analytical framework, holding that the welfare chauvinist arguments are shaped by the welfare benefit types and structures. The study builds on a qualitative content analysis of several selected parliamentary debates preceding and leading to the approval of the relevant chauvinist policies, in the relevant period. While being short in time, this is a particularly interesting period because some significant welfare chauvinist instances, i.e., chauvinist-oriented turns in social policies, have taken place.

Austria has already been object of studies about welfare chauvinism (Pelinka 2002; Kriesi et al. 2006; Ennser-Jedenastik 2020), among which those by Ennser-Jedenastik are particularly relevant for us (cfr. Chapter 1). These studies have especially examined the evolution of the FPÖ from a mainstream (Liberal conservative) to a radical populist right one, as one of the consequences of globalization on the national political space (Kriesi et al., 2006). Moreover, the work by Ennser-Jedenastik (2020) has applied the recently developed theory about the strength of the welfare chauvinist appeals across different policy area, in party manifestos, to the case of the FPÖ and, more recently, the ÖVP. It has assessed in Austria a similar pattern found in some other European countries, i.e., that welfare chauvinism affects primarily means-tested and universal programs rather than insurance-run ones (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2020).

The analysis proposed by the present thesis is different because it explores the justificatory arguments behind welfare chauvinism and how these vary in the Austrian political context. This specific topic has never been investigated with

regard to Austria. Furthermore, it focuses on welfare chauvinist policies and the surrounding policy debates. On the contrary, most of previous studies have focused on electoral campaign and manifestos, in the period before 2017. The topic of welfare chauvinist policies in Austria needs to be addressed more in detail since it represents a significant nativist-turn in the Austrian politics. Besides, the Austrian case provides a precedent that may encourage the creation of new exclusionary social policies in other countries in the future.

The Chapter is organized as follows. To better contextualize the analysis, I first briefly illustrate the Austrian welfare State system, immigration patterns and development of the welfare chauvinist discourse. Secondly, I illustrate the most recent chauvinist-oriented turns in social policies, which are object of the thesis' investigation. Thereafter, I proceed to the analysis of the selected welfare chauvinism instances. To conclude, I discuss the main findings and general implications of this case.

2. The Austrian context

2.1. Contours of the Austrian welfare State and immigration patterns

While traditionally belonging to the Conservative welfare regime, the Austrian welfare system has been reshaping its social institutions since the end of the 1970s. Namely, it has pared to the traditional social insurance tier (contributory benefits: pensions, unemployment, and health services) means-tested and universal welfare benefits too (non-contributory tier of welfare: family benefits, social assistance, universal pensions). By doing that, it has therefore broken with the Bismarckian tradition, developing a great degree of universalism (Aspalter and Wang, 2006). At the same time, it has progressively distanced itself from welfare States belonging to the same regime and similar historical background, like for example Germany (Aspalter and Wang, 2006).

The institutional reshape has primarily affected the social fields of family and long-term care welfare. More precisely, Austria has instituted a universal long-term care allowance system and massively increased its family allowance system (Aspalter and Wang, 2006). Moreover, the country has undergone revolutionary changes to its pension system, by abolishing the Bismarckian model of pension insurance, and implementing instead a universalized pension

system (Ibid). These changes are relevant to the present analysis since most recent welfare chauvinist turns in social policies have affected primarily the non-contributory tier, especially family welfare.

As for migration patterns, these have changed over time. In the 1960s and early 1970s, the Austrian government actively recruited temporary migrant workers (especially from Turkey and former Yugoslavia) for low-skilled jobs (Permoser and Rosenber, 2012). Starting from the end of the 1980s, many migrants decided to stay and in fact managed to acquire permanent status or even Austrian citizenship. Several of them also started to bring their families to Austria through family reunification (Permoser and Rosenber, 2012).

As a matter of fact, migration continued to rise, especially at the beginning of the 1990s after the Yugoslavian war and in the 2000s, following the 2011 refugee crisis (Permoser and Rosenber, 2012). The OECD statics (Herwig et al. 2015) show us that in the period 2013-2014, the total inflows of foreign nationals from Austria increased up to a 13% increase compared to the previous years. Besides, the number of migrant workers slightly decreased, whilst those of asylum seekers continued to rise, reaching roughly 10% in 2020 (Ennsner-Jedenastik, 2020).

These data are only relatively important to the thesis' ends. The analysis in this Chapter is not interested in exploring whether and how welfare chauvinism varies across (and eventually depends on) different categories of migrants. To clarification purposes, for each selected exclusionary policy I point out the main targets of restrictions and, eventually, differences in treatment across diverse categories of migrants. However, I leave to future research to investigate and further refine this specific question. In spite of that, knowing more about migration patterns is somewhat important to better contextualize the analysis.

The changing immigration patterns have led to a change in integration programs as well. When migration was still a temporary and labor-connect phenomenon, the prevailing system was that of the *Gastarbeiter* ("guestworker"). Namely, the Austrian government actively recruited temporary migrant workers (especially from Turkey and former Yugoslavia) for low-skilled jobs (Menz 2006; Permoser and Rosenber, 2012). The *Gastarbeiter* program was based on the premise that migrant workers would return to their country of origin after working abroad for a certain time (Menz, 2006). Consequently, there were no

policies aimed at fostering the integration of migrants. On the contrary, there were legal impediments to the integration of migrants into society, such as curtailed rights and obstacles to the acquisition of permanent resident status and citizenship (Menz 2006; Permoser and Rosenber, 2012).

This program ended in the 1980s, when the immigration inflows started to change. Since then, almost all governments have adopted a discourse of “zero immigration”, trying to limit it as much as possible. Right wing parties, and especially the FPÖ, have negatively politicized the topic of integration, using it within a larger discursive strategy that sought to justify restrictive immigration policies by framing resident migrant communities as a problem (Permoser and Rosenber, 2012).

2.2. Welfare chauvinism in party policy platforms in Austria

Welfare chauvinism is present in Austria, and notably in party policy platforms (manifestos, policy handbooks, and so on) already since 2005. It has been prompted especially by the Austrian Freedom Party, *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* (FPÖ), one of Europe’s most successful populist radical right parties (PRRPs). While initially torn between a more radical right-centered and a more moderate, liberal-minded political views, progressively over time the party got closer to radical anti-immigration positions, also making nativism a central feature of its social policy platform. Ennser-Jedenastick (2018) highlights that the FPÖ’s welfare chauvinism is meticulously targeted at means-tested and universal benefits, not at insurance-based programs.

Following the 2017 parliamentary election, the FPÖ, again, joined the ÖVP as the junior partner in a coalition government, taking, *inter alia*, the foreign affairs, interior, defense, and social affairs portfolios. In May 2019, the coalition was terminated as a consequence of the now infamous Ibiza gate. To be sure, that was not the first governmental experience for the party, as it entered national government for the first time already in 1983, entering a coalition with the left-wing Social Democratic party (SPÖ).

Moreover, after 2015, the mainstream right party, the Austrian People’s Party *Österreichische Volkspartei* (ÖVP hereafter), started adopting several of the FPÖ’s welfare chauvinistic stances as well (cfr. Chapter 1). Unsurprisingly, the nativist logic is at the heart of the 2017 coalition agreement between ÖVP and

FPÖ as well as of some social policies adopted during the Kurz I Cabinet. This topic is specifically dealt with in the following paragraphs.

2.3. The welfare chauvinist-oriented turn in social policy

During the Kurz I Cabinet some chauvinist-oriented turns in social policies have taken place, notably in two social policy fields: social assistance, with the 2019 Basic Act on Social Assistance (*Bundesgesetz betreffend Grundsätze für die Sozialhilfe*, also labeled *Sozialhilfe Neu*) and family policies, with the Amendment 83/2018 to the 1967 Family Burden Equalization Act.

These have been promoted by the governmental parties at that time, namely the radical right FPÖ, and the mainstream right ÖVP. Some of these chauvinist policies have violated several national (constitutional) and supra-national (EU) rules and constraints so explicitly to be invalidated by the European Court of Justice (such as in 2017, cfr. C-713/17), thus acquiring widespread resonance and capturing scholars' attention. In light of that, Austria provides me with a case in which I have very good conditions for observing how chauvinism is publicly justified.

It must be said that some politicians (especially those by the FPÖ) advanced chauvinist proposals during parliamentary debates even before 2017 (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2018). In spite of that, I deliberately chosen to focus on the Kurz I cabinet merely, especially because in the 2017-2019 period politicians discuss about some well-defined chauvinist laws (the selected instances of welfare chauvinism) rather than generic nativist proposals only. These are therefore more relevant to the thesis' ends, since I am interested in exploring the ways in which politicians promote nativist-oriented legislation. Besides, a shorter period of time allows for a deeper and more detailed analysis.

To test the thesis' hypotheses, I specifically focus on the plenary sessions of the National Council (*Nationalrat*, NC hereafter) and the Federal Council (*Bundesrat*, FC hereafter). I select those parliamentary debates and speeches during which politicians discuss on the new policy reforms and vote their approval. I take them from the official website of the Austrian Parliament (<https://www.parlament.gv.at/>), where the relevant transcriptions, i.e., the stenographic protocols are made available. The analysis proceeds by policy area. All along the analysis, I selectively quote some short sections and specific words

from politicians' speeches, to make the reading smoother. Then, I present a more detailed overview of politicians' speeches for each parliamentary session in the appendixes to the thesis.

3. Analysis: welfare chauvinist turns in the universal family allowances program

The two most important cash benefits for Austrian families are the child care allowance and the family allowance. Both are universal flat-rate benefits. Child care allowance is paid for up to three years after childbirth. Family allowance is paid to parents with children up to age 24 (25 for men who complete mandatory military or alternative civilian service) and increases with age and the number of children.

The 2018 Amendment 83/2018 to the 1967 Family Burden Equalization Act, passed in December 2018, mainly affects family allowances. It envisages an indexation of family allowances to local purchasing power for children permanently residing in another Member State of the EU/EEA or Switzerland, even if the parents are residents in Austria (Art. 8a.1 and 8a.2). This can be considered a form of welfare chauvinism, in that it reduces the financial support granted to non-Austrian families and children, who were previously entitled to the same amount as Austrian citizens. Based on Reeskens and Van Oorschot's definition (2012), I consider it a form of *strong* welfare chauvinism. Namely, it retrenches welfare benefits for migrants all together, without any form of conditionality (Reeskens and Van Oorschot, 2012).

Migrant workers from Eastern Europe are the group the most affected by such restrictions since many of them work and live in Austria but left their children in the home countries (especially those coming from Hungary, Slovakia and Poland). The EU framework of social security coordination should protect them from welfare chauvinism. Namely, this framework guarantees that citizens of any EU MS who work and reside in another EU country (e.g., Austria) have the same access rights to social benefits as the nationals of the host country (in this case, the same family benefits as Austrian citizens). Despite this legal protection, these migrants have seen a reduction in family allowances for their children living at home, after this Amendment entered into force. In May 2020, the European Commission referred Austria to the EU Court of Justice for such

measure and the Court invalidated it a few months later (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2020).

3.1. Welfare chauvinist arguments

The 43rd NC's plenary session

Following the submission of the draft legislation to the NC, the first parliamentary debate is held on the 24th of October 2018 (43rd NC plenary session). During the debate, ÖVP and FPÖ politicians illustrate the functioning and scope of indexation. They also answer the criticism advanced by the opposition parties. The main criticism is that such a measure is in contrast to the EU law and common values, following which all EU citizens working in Austria are entitled to Austrian social benefits and programs on equal bases with Austrian citizens.

Contrary to expectations, politicians do not use any of the arguments in the methodological section to promote indexation. Conversely, most of them speak in favor of this measure by generically referring to it as necessary to grant “an advancement in terms of fairness and justice” (NC Deb 24 October 2018, p.115) and to save significant amounts of money for social programs helping children in Austria.

The speech by the FPÖ deputy Schimanek makes this point clearly. She explicitly argues that the distribution of the family allowance across families in Austria is not fairly made (NC Deb, 24th of October 2018, Column 115, Pos. 1070). Namely, the EU framework of social security coordination³¹ implies that both Austrian parents and non-Austrian ones (who work in Austria and come from other EU MS) can apply for and obtain the family allowances. However, several parents from other EU countries (especially Eastern Europe) work and reside in Austria but left their children in the home countries.

On that basis, she argues that families whose children reside in more expensive countries (with lower purchasing power and higher living costs), such as Austria, can afford much less than those whose children reside in less

³¹ She does not explicitly mention the EU social security coordination framework, but she talks about “EU rules” in rather generic terms. Still, we can presume she is referring to such a framework, since it is the main mechanism at EU level to guarantee that citizens of any EU MS who work and reside in another EU country (e.g., Austria) have the same access rights to social benefits as the nationals of the host country (in this case, the same family allowances as Austrian citizens).

expensive countries, with the very same amount of money received through the family allowance (Ibid). This ends up producing a “disadvantage for our own families” (NC Deb, 24th of October 2018, Column 115, Pos. 1070), i.e., Austrian families whilst benefiting non-Austrian families (from inside the EU) to a larger extent – notably those whose children live in less expensive EU countries.

According to this reasoning, indexation is necessary to ensure and restore fairness for Austrian families. By adjusting the allowances to the costs of life in each country, politicians want to make sure that every family and child receive in proportion to their actual costs and expenditures. Indexation is also meant to enable Austrian families living in the country to ensure their children’s needs properly (NC Deb 24 October 2018, p.116).

“Let me also make it quite clear at this point: every child is worth the same amount to this federal government, but not every euro in every European country is worth the same amount. According to the present EU rules, with the very same amount of money, a Hungarian or a Polish family in Hungary and Poland can afford much more than an Austrian family living in Austria. That is the crux of the matter! If we do not adjust the family allowance to the cost of living in the respective countries, it will result in a disadvantage for our own families, and that is not what we want”.

(FPÖ deputy Schimanek, NC Deb, 24th of October 2018, Column 115, Pos. 1070)

The 885th FC’s plenary session

Since most of the deputies voted in favor of it, the draft law is finally adopted by the NC. Thereafter, it is further discussed during the 885th FC’s plenary session on the 8th of November 2018 which also adopts the proposal. As in the previous session, most politicians use the argument of fairness and unfairness to legitimize and promote indexation. In particular, the Federal Councilor Georg Schuster stresses again the difference in purchasing power between Austria and other EU countries, especially Hungary, Slovakia, and Poland.

In line with that, the Federal Councilor Steiner-Wieser (FPÖ) claims that the current system of family benefits is generating a real “discrimination against Austrian children” (FC Deb 8th of November 2018, Column 110, Pos. 1071) who

can afford much less since they live in a more expensive country. Hence, indexation is meant to eliminate disadvantage at the expense of Austrian families and children and rather saving money for them. In her speech, she uses several words relevant to the semantic sphere of social fairness, like “fairness”, “justice”, “more expensive”, “cheaper”, “adapting” (cfr. Table B in the Appendixes also).

“This federal government has spoken out in favor of fairness and justice. So, family allowances are adjusted according to the Eurostat index. What is bad about that, please? There is no cancellation of family allowances, but adjustment to the cost of living in the countries, and that is fair. Or do you want to discriminate against Austrian children? They can do nothing to grow up in a country where life is extremely expensive, where you may get only half or even a third of what you get in other European countries for one euro. Therefore, in future, the family allowance must be adapted to the purchasing power of the child's country of residence”.

(Federal Councilor Steiner-Wieser, FC Deb 8th of November 2018, Column 110, Pos. 1071).

4. Analysis: welfare chauvinist turns in the means-tested social assistance program

The Austrian social assistance program (*Sozialhilfe*, or *Bedarfsorientierte Mindestsicherung* between 2010 and 2019) is a means-tested income replacement program. Between 2010 and 2016, an agreement is in place between the federal government and the Austrian Lander about uniform standards (Ennsner-Jedenastik, 2020). Once the agreement expired, the social assistance program is decentralized, with each Land administrating it autonomously and in different ways. On the 22nd of May 2019, the New Basic Act on Social Assistance is passed by the ÖVP and the FPÖ coalition. This sets up the new legal and policy framework for social assistance, centralizing the governance of such a program again.

What is particularly relevant to this thesis is that the new law introduces compulsory language and training courses requirements for some groups of migrants, as a condition to obtain the program’s entitlement. The main groups of

migrants targeted are refugees, subsidiary protection holders and TCNs³² (those without the permanent residency), also including asylum-seekers. They are only awarded the full amount of benefit at the condition that they successfully attended such courses and obtained a sufficient knowledge of either German (B1) or English (C1).

This measure has been repeatedly accused by the left-wing political opposition to discriminate against these categories of migrants, imposing severe legal and practical limitations to their access to social assistance. Moreover, several NGOs working with migrants and refugees have accused the government to discriminate against these groups, since these measures do not take into account the practical difficulties that many of them may have in learning German. Differently from before, I consider it a form of *soft* welfare chauvinism (Reeskens and Van Oorschot, 2012). Namely, it does not inevitably exclude migrants and refugees, but it rather makes the entitlement conditional to the fulfillment of the language and working requirement mentioned above. This law is no longer in force today and the new Austrian government is developing a new social assistance scheme.

4.1. Welfare chauvinist arguments

The 66th NC's plenary session

The first parliamentary debate on the new reform is held on the 27th of March (66th plenary session of the NC), a few months after the submission of the draft legislation to the NC. During the parliamentary discussions, politicians from the ÖVP and notably the FPÖ speak in favor of the new law, especially by exploiting both economic-based chauvinist arguments: the benefit tourism/welfare magnet argument (H2a, category 1) and the economic burden ones (H2b, category 2). When exploiting the first economic argument, some politicians mainly exploit the benefit tourism side of the argument, whereas some others link that to welfare magnet concerns as well. By doing that, they exploit the two arguments as a part of the same rhetorical strategy, in compliance to what expected in Chapter 1.

The point of benefit tourism is clearly made by the FPÖ deputy

³² Although not saying it explicitly, politicians drafting the law were aimed at targeting especially TCNs coming from non-Western migrants (Ennsner-Jedenastik, 2020). They are indeed the ones having the highest dependency rate on welfare benefits in the country (Ibid).

Rosenkranz. In her speech, she compares asylum seekers and refugees to Austrian citizens. The former, she argues, have higher dependency rates on social assistance (given their lower incomes), but most of them do not have a job and do not pay taxes, which are needed to fund such a program. Conversely, the latter tend to have lower dependency rates (because of higher incomes and earnings) but they finance the social assistance program through their job and taxes (NC Deb 27th of March 2019, Column 90, Pos. 1060). In her speech, we can observe several words, expressions and rhetorical forms (i.e., the textual indicator, cfr. methodological Chapter) referring to migrants and refugees as benefit tourists and abusers, in particular “abusing”, “benefit tourists” and “not worked for a single day”.

“In most recent times, so many migrants from non-Western countries, including many asylum-seekers and refugees, have come to Austria and they are now receiving huge amount of money through the social assistance system, although they have not worked here for a single day. By contrast, there are countless Austrian people who work and pay taxes in this country, and so they also pay to finance the social assistance. Yet, they receive significant lower amount of social assistance, as they formally have a job and thus their incomes and earnings are necessarily higher than those of refugees! Migrants and refugees are abusing of our social assistance system and behaving as benefit tourists. This is incomprehensible and this problem must be solved! If you do not do something, this will incentive further benefit tourism”.

(FPÖ Deputy Rosenkranz, NC Deb 27th of March 2019, Column 90, Pos. 1060)

At the end of her speech, she links the argument of benefit tourism to immigration concerns about the welfare magnet effect as well. Namely, she argues that many asylum-seekers and TCNs are incentivized to come Austria, and notably to Vienna, because they know that it is possible to obtain generous social assistance scheme for free, without working³³.

“One thing is already worrying us: we see that one of our a federal State, namely

³³ The Land of Vienna in Austria is one of the few ones granting generous welfare support also to asylum-seekers, rather than to recognized refugees only. In Vienna asylum seekers are entitled to both social assistance and the Basic Welfare Support, i.e., temporary care and assistance for those foreigners in need of support and protection.

Vienna, has become the Eldorado for many migrants, including those who claim to be asylum-seekers, where they can get milk and honey without working, as they can live on the generous social assistance scheme. This will in turn continue to incentivize further immigration to our country and to Vienna in particular. I believe that the situation in Vienna will be specifically examined by the other speakers from my group”.

(FPÖ deputy Rosenkranz, NC Deb 27th of March 2019, Column 90, Pos. 1061)

Furthermore, politicians also portray refugees as a burden upon the social and economic system (H1b, category 2). In particular, the FPÖ’ deputy Dagmar Belakovich explains that social assistance for refugees, and notably Syrian refugees, is funded mainly through raised by Austrian citizens. Given the high number of refugees claiming for this benefit, Austrian citizens are subject to continuing rising costs (NC Deb 27th of March 2019, Column 90, Pos. 1063). Besides, since Syrian refugees send a significant amount of the social assistance cash benefit they receive to their families in Syria, Austrian citizens end up paying welfare for them as well. In spite of any humanitarian considerations, she holds, the Austrian welfare state cannot economically afford that (Ibid).

“[...] in 2016 alone, only Syrian refugees received €2 millions through the social assistance scheme and they then transferred a good portion of these to their families and relatives in Syria. Who paid for that? Austrian citizens paid! Austria is not in an economic position to rebuild the economy in all these countries with its social assistance, and we do not want that either. That is why it is so urgent that this reform should take place” (deputy Dagmar Belakovich, NC Deb 27th of March 2019, Column 90, Pos. 1063)

Given all that, the new chauvinist measures are deemed necessary to ease the economic burden (in form of taxes) upon Austrian citizens as well as to stop the unconditioned benefit tourism by the groups of migrants targeted (TCNs, asylum seekers and refugees, subsidiary protection holders). That will especially protect Austrian citizens working hard and regularly paying taxes. At the same time, these measures are intended to reduce incentives to migrate to Austria, thus accomplishing to the right-wing government’ immigration policy objectives.

Moreover, making social assistance conditional to the language and

professional test is a way to make refugees, and other groups of migrants already living in the country, more appealing for the Austrian labor market. Great emphasis is given to the learning of German. The idea behind is that a good knowledge of the native language makes foreigners more appealing for national employers and at the same time facilitates the search for an employment (NC Deb 27 March 2019, p.47). One of the biggest problems at the time of politicians' speeches is that many migrants and refugees do not have the necessary skills required by Austrian companies and they cannot communicate in German properly³⁴ (NC Deb 27 March 2019, p. 50; pp.52-53). This make them fundamentally unemployable, even in the cases where they are willing to work.

By contrast, by making them more appealing for the Austrian labor market, the new reform will enable refugees and the other groups of migrants to contribute to the national economy – rather than living off Austrian citizens. Refugees and migrants' active participation in the professional and language course is seen as a way to demonstrate their willingness to economically contribute to Austria. Such a willingness will be rewarded by giving them entitlement to the full amount of social assistance. The Federal Minister Hartinger-Klein makes this point clear by claiming that “only after establishing a fundamental employability on the Austrian labor market and a corresponding will to provide services for our society has been shown, is it justified to grant social assistance”.

This logic reminds us of the the reciprocity principle of deservingness, illustrated in Chapter 1 (van Oorschot 2000, 2006). In particular, this type of reciprocity looks at the extent to which benefits' claimants (in this case, migrants and refugees) are able to contribute *in the future* by actively seeking a job and being willing to participate in re-insertion or insertion programs, as the one envisaged by the new law. Accordingly, the more participation, the more reciprocation, the more deserving (Ibid).

The 892nd FC's plenary session

Since most of the deputies voted in favor of it, the draft law is finally adopted by the National Council, thus passing to the Federal Council's discussion in April

³⁴ at least this is the politicians' views on this matter

2019. Following a technical analysis and favorable deliberation by the Committee on Labor and Social Affairs of the Federal Council, the draft law is discussed for the last time during the 892nd plenary session of the Council on the 9th of May.

Government politicians (FC Deb 9 May 2019, pp.78-82) promote the new law by using the economic-based arguments again (H1), and notably the benefit tourism/welfare magnet one (H1a, category 1). Once again, the Councilor Steiner-Wieser stresses this point, by reinforcing it with some examples from the city of Salzburg. In this city, she argues, several employed and tax-payer Austrian citizens have seen their amount of social assistance being drastically reduced to provide social assistance to refugees who are unemployed and do not pay taxes regularly (FC Deb 9th of May 2019, Column 95, Pos. 1050).

“There are Salzburg examples of this. Salzburg families, Salzburg households have seen their amount of social assistance reduced because the money was devoted to provide social assistance to refugees who do not even work and pay taxes regularly!”(Federal Councilor Steiner-Wieser, FC Deb 9th of May 2019, Column 95, Pos. 1050).

Besides, the Federal Councilor Steiner-Wieser links the argument of benefit tourism to immigration concerns about the welfare magnet effect as well. She accuses the left-wing party, the SPÖ, and former SPÖ government, of incentivizing immigration, also including illegal immigration. They do that, she argues, by giving newcomers social assistance “for free”, thus creating very attractive redistributive conditions for migrants and encouraging them to come to Austria. The Minister highlights that the right-wing government wants to promote a completely different type of immigration policy, reducing migration inflows rather than incentivizing them (FC Deb 9th of May 2019, Column 95, Pos. 1050).

The red-green state government in Vienna supported and promoted immigration for years. How? – by giving these persons the full amount of social assistance from day one. We remedy this situation with our law of principle: there will no longer be free social assistance for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, and in accordance with EU law, this will now be limited to core social benefits, i.e., basic security. Besides, refugees will not be able to get social assistance for free any longer, but they will now have to work and pay taxes regularly, as Austrians

do. [...] We are finally putting this welfare magnet effect to an end (Federal Councillor Steiner-Wieser, FC Deb 9th of May 2019, Column 95, Pos. 1050).

In light of that, the new law is intended to “bring more justice for people working in this country”. Namely, it grants social assistance to refugees and the other groups of migrants only when they make the necessary economic contribution to the national economic and social system (FC Deb 9th of May 2019, Column 95, Pos. 1053) This is aimed at lightening the fiscal burden upon Austrian citizens and stopping benefit tourism by people who “may not want to work at all” (Ibid). Conversely, it is far more worthy to make the country attractive for all those who are willing to work and contribute (Ibid).

Again, some politicians claim that the new measure also aims at making refugees and the other groups of migrants more employable into the national labor market (FC Deb 9th of May 2019, Column 95, Pos. 1054). As in the previous session, great emphasis is given to the acquisition of the German language, to make them more employable. Following the same reasoning than before, politicians hold that those who do not want to learn German and increase their employability are not allowed to stay and receive social assistance in Austria (Ibid). Again, this points back to the reciprocity principle of deservingness (van Oorschot 2000, 2006).

“This new law creates the incentives to meet the necessary employability criteria and, of course, to acquire sufficient knowledge of German. The German language is the best way to integrate in Austria, into our society, into our job market”.

(Federal Councillor Marlies Steiner-Wieser, FC Deb 9th of May 2019, Column 95, Pos. 1054)

5. Summary and discussion of the findings in the case of Austria

5.1. Summary of the main findings

Table 5: summary of the main findings in the case of Austria

Hypotheses				Findings observed			
Welfare chauvinist arguments				Welfare chauvinist arguments			
Social programs				Social programs			
Universal	Means-tested	Insurance-run		Universal	Means-tested	Insurance-run	
Economic arguments	✓	✓	Not applying	Economic arguments	Not applying	✓	No chauvinist reforms observed
<i>Economic hypotheses</i>	(H1)	(H2)	(H3)				
Cultural argument	✓	Not applying	Not applying	Cultural argument	Not applying	Not applying	No chauvinist reforms observed
<i>Cultural hypotheses</i>	(H4)	(H5)	(H6)				

Table 5 summarizes the main findings observed (grey column) and compares them to those expected by the thesis' hypotheses (white column).

Starting with the cultural hypotheses, I cannot really provide an answer the third cultural hypothesis (insurance-run, H6), since I have found *no* instances of welfare chauvinist policies targeting insurance-run programs in Austria. As for the second cultural hypothesis (means-tested benefits, H5), it is empirically supported since politicians do not apply the cultural distance argument to the means-tested social assistance program. Conversely, the first one (universal benefits, H4) does not find empirical support. Politicians do not apply the argument of cultural distance to justify and promote the indexation of the universal family allowances program either.

With regard to the economic hypotheses, a similar picture emerges. The

third economic hypothesis (insurance-run, H3) cannot be assessed, for the same reason illustrated above for the cultural one. The second economic hypothesis (means-tested, H2) finds empirical evidence. Namely, politicians rely on the economic arguments, and notably the benefit tourism/welfare magnet (H2a) and the economic burden arguments (H2b), to promote the chauvinist measures targeting the means-tested social assistance program. The first economic hypothesis (universal, H1) does not find empirical support. Politicians indeed do not rely on the economic arguments to justify the indexation of the universal family allowance program.

Since politicians do not apply the cultural nor the economic arguments to the universal program under observation, a significant divergence from the thesis' hypotheses emerges. Interestingly, they apply an additional type of justificatory argument to this end. This additional argument does not point back to economic nor cultural considerations (at least not in the speeches analyzed). It is rather concerned about the overall well-functioning of the social redistributive system, especially in terms of fair and equal redistribution ("advancement in terms of fairness and justice").

In the lexicon of the content analysis methodology, this may be defined as an "in vivo" and "data-driven" category (Schreier 2014; Kuckartz 2019). Namely, it is not conceptualized in the previous literature on welfare chauvinism (cfr. Chapter 1) but it emerges inductively from the speeches analyzed. This is opposed to "concept-driven" categories, that are based upon existing concepts in the literature or hypotheses (Ibid). In light of all that, I consider this argument as an additional, *sui generis* type of justification, conceptually different from the others. I label this as the *unfairness argument* (or fairness/unfairness).

5.2. Relating welfare chauvinist arguments and types of welfare programs in Austria

Based on the thesis' hypotheses, I would expect a causal linkage to exist between the welfare chauvinist arguments observed and the relevant social programs. If this is the case, a logical relation should exist between the characteristics of the arguments and the characteristics of the programs. Namely, the justificatory arguments should question the design and organization of the programs to which they refer. The findings show a nuanced picture.

With regard to the universal family program and the unfairness argument, this causal link is not observed. It seems indeed that this argument does not really question the design of the family allowance program. Conversely, it questions the organization of EU rules, and notably the principle of equal treatment or non-discrimination of EU mobile workers in the EU territory. It emerges that the key of the problem is that these rules guarantee that all parents working in Austria receive the same amount of family allowances, whilst not taking into consideration children's place of residence too – either in Austria or in less expensive EU countries. This is leading to the unfavorable situation at the expense of Austrians children, as described by the government politicians, thus making the indexation measure necessary.

In simple terms, we may also say that it is *not* the *structure* of the social programs *itself* which prepares the ground for the expression of this chauvinist argument in the political debate. The unfairness argument is used here in relation to universal family benefits, but it may also apply to different types of social programs which fall into the EU social security coordination framework, like for example unemployment-related insurance programs, pensions and benefits targeting accidents at work and occupational diseases. Thus, overall, this first empirical finding does not corroborate the thesis' expectations and claim of a causal relation.

As far as the means-tested social assistance scheme is concerned, we can see that a logical relation exists between the design of this program and the relevant justificatory arguments (the economic ones, the benefit tourism/welfare magnet and the economic burden). Namely, these arguments question the social assistance's fundamental design and organization, especially the combination between the program's' redistributive outcomes (resulting from the need-based redistributive logic) and its funding mechanism (taxes-based). In politicians' view, these are the very characteristics that allow refugees (and the other groups of migrants targeted) to behave as benefit tourists and abusers.

On the one hand, these migrants usually pay less taxes (as they have lower level of labor market integration and lower incomes and earnings), thus their financial contribution to fund the social assistance program is lower than that by Austrian citizens. On the other hand, in terms of outcomes, they take benefit of these programs to a larger extent than nationals, exactly because of their lower

income (i.e., need principle of redistribution).

Moreover, these characteristics also encourage politicians to portray migrants, especially refugees, as an economic burden, in compliance to the thesis' hypothesis. They argue that the combination of the tax-based funding mechanisms and programs' redistributive outcomes has led to a growing burden for Austrian citizens. Indeed, they have to pay far higher taxes to finance the growing requests of social assistance by refugees (especially Syrian refugees) and, indirectly, their families in the home countries. In order to stop these negative situations, politicians invoke the chauvinist measures as the potential solution.

Building on that, we feel safe to claim that the design of the social program itself prepares the ground for the expression of said chauvinist arguments in the political arena. This second finding corroborates the thesis' expectations and claim of a causal relation between the types of social programs and the types of welfare chauvinist arguments.

To be sure, the argument-programs link is assessed with regard to means-tested and universal types of benefits merely. Since I do not have a real diverse pool of all program types, also including insurance-ones, it is more difficult to provide a test of the argument-programs link in its entirety, as formulated in Chapter two. However, I argue that the lack of insurance-run benefits should not significantly affect our conclusions, because of the way the thesis is designed and the purpose it pursues. I illustrate this point in the Conclusions.

Chapter 5

The case of Denmark

1. Introduction

This Chapter explores the welfare chauvinist arguments behind some selected welfare chauvinist policy reforms in Denmark. More specifically, I focus on two policies, one in the labor market field and one in the immigration policy field. Both were implemented in the in the period 2001-2015 and are still in effect today. Furthermore, both limit migrants' access to the Danish means-tested social assistance program, but they target different groups of migrants. This first reform takes place in the immigration policy field. It is the 2002 *Introductory payment at the level of starting allowance*, popularly labeled as “starting allowance”. The second is the 2006 *Future immigration*, in the field of labor market and employment. As in the previous Chapter, the analysis relies on a qualitative content analysis of several selected parliamentary debates preceding and leading to the approval of the relevant chauvinist policies.

Denmark has already been object of several comparative and single-case studies about welfare chauvinism (for examples: Agersnap et al. 2019; Ennsner-Jedenastik 2018; Careja et al. 2016; Schumacher and van Kersbergen 2016; Jørgensen and Thomsen 2016; Kautto 2010, and several others). Indeed, the country provides an ideal setting for studying this political phenomenon. The Danish People Party (DPP) is considered one of the most successful populist radical right parties (PRRPs) in Europe (Ennsner-Jedenastik 2018, Careja et al. 2016). Moreover, a strong inclination to implement welfare chauvinism is widespread in the Danish policy frames, involving both the DPP, and mainstream parties too (Careja et al., 2016; Jørgensen and Thomsen, 2016).

To be fair, previous research on Denmark has already explored the welfare chauvinist arguments in the Danish policy debate and policy reforms (Jørgensen and Thomsen, 2016). We have seen in Chapter 1 that several politicians (of both the DPP and the Liberal Party) justify the introduction of some restrictive measures against migrants into the 2013 Social Security reform by relying on the benefit tourism and the economic burden arguments. In spite of that, I have decided to work on Denmark again. The present analysis complements previous contributions, rather than differentiating itself from them

(differently from the analysis of the case of Austria). Namely, I extend the analysis to other instances of chauvinist policy reforms, preceding the 2013 reform and that are not analyzed by the study of Jørgensen and Thomsen (2016). To be fair, these reforms were rather analyzed by some other studies (for example Careja et al., 2016, Agersnap et al., 2019 and also some others). The study by Careja took these reforms as examples of direct welfare chauvinism, in order to explain the conceptual difference between direct and indirect chauvinism. Instead, the work by Agersnap relied on the Starting allowance reform to empirically test the welfare magnet hypothesis.

Nevertheless, these contributions did analyze the reforms from the same perspective I do, since they did not investigate the underpinning justificatory arguments. Moreover, I re-read the findings about the chauvinist arguments in the previous literature (Jørgensen and Thomsen, 2016) in light of the thesis' theoretical framework and hypotheses.

The Chapter is organized as follows. To better contextualize the analysis, I start by briefly illustrating the key features of the Danish welfare state system, immigration patterns and development of the welfare chauvinist discourse. Secondly, I illustrate the most recent chauvinist-oriented turns in social policies, which are object of the thesis' investigation. Thereafter, I proceed to the analysis of the selected welfare chauvinism instances. To conclude, I discuss the main findings in light of the thesis' hypotheses.

2. The Danish context

2.1. Contours of the Danish welfare State and immigration patterns

The Danish welfare state has the characteristics of a Social Democratic welfare regime model. It is based upon a high level of tax-based redistribution organized by the state on a universalistic basis. Namely, social benefits and services are provided to all those owning the citizenship and (most recently) legal residency. In the aftermath of the 2008 economic downturn, the gross national product significantly fell, and the national governments implemented several economic reforms aimed at reducing public costs by lowering public expenses, also including the universal welfare provision. Several work-related benefits have been introduced to safeguard against the loss of earnings. Moreover, means-tested

schemes have been reinforced, at the expense of purely universalistic programs (Kautto, 2010).

This trend has been observed also in other countries characterized by the Social Democratic welfare regime. Given that, some scholars argue that it symbolizes a shift and convergence into both the Liberal and the Conservative regimes (Kautto 2010; Sainsbury 2012). This is not relevant to the thesis' ends. What is important here is that, following the 2008 downturn, the discussion on the future of the welfare state model has become a central topic. In such a context, the DPP has repeatedly claimed that the government should cut welfare benefits for all non-Danish living in the country, in order to save more public money.

In the wake of the 2011-2015 refugee's crisis, Denmark experienced a heightened influx of immigrants in 2015, many of whose were asylum-seekers (or declared so). However, in the following years the number of extra-EU migrants, notably those from non-Western countries applying for the international refugee protection significantly decreased, most likely due to the implementation of some policy reforms that made asylum procedures longer and more complex. At the beginning of 2021, the majority of non-Danish citizens living in the country come from inside the EU, and namely Poland. The second and third most popular origins are Turkey and Syria, amounting to roughly 33 thousand and 36 thousand people, respectively.

2.2. Welfare chauvinism in party policy platforms in Denmark

The DPP was founded in 1995 as a splinter party of the Progress Party (Careja et al. 2016). Starting from the late 1990s and first years of the 2000s, the party has been growing its parliamentary strength. After the 2001 election, its parliamentary strength turned it into the main parliamentary support party for the right-wing government until 2011 (Ibid). In the 2015 general election, the party obtained 21 percent of the votes and 15 extra seats, thus becoming the second largest party. Thus, once again it served as an important parliamentary support party for the new right-wing government.

These were very good opportunities for the DPP to advance welfare chauvinist proposals and policies (Careja et al. 2016; Schumacher & Van Kersbergen 2016). The literature concludes that the DPP has clearly influenced

the social policies in Denmark in the last decade in a welfare chauvinistic direction (Careja et al., 2016).

2.3. The welfare chauvinist-oriented turn in social policy

As a result of the DPP's chauvinist influence, in the period 2001-2015, the Liberal-Conservative governments implemented several policy reforms containing instruments that can be characterized as chauvinistic (Careja et al., 2016; Jørgensen and Thomsen, 2016). Most of these reforms took place in the field of labor market and employment (labor market-related) reforms, especially involving the social assistance program (*Kontanthjælp*, in Danish).

Interestingly, the majority of them contain measures that do not directly affect any category of migrants. Rather, they apply to both Danes and migrants, but deliberately negatively affect migrants (and, in some cases, specific categories of migrants) the most (i.e., indirect welfare chauvinism, cfr Careja et al., 2016). A few reforms contain instead retrenchment instances that explicitly exclude migrants from social protection or reduce the level thereof (direct welfare chauvinism). The prevalence of indirect upon direct welfare chauvinism is most likely due to the exogenous constraints limiting the DPP's action, such as anti-discrimination legislation or endogenous ones, the need to negotiate with parties that are reluctant to be associated with strong anti-foreigner policies (Careja et al. 2016).

The thesis is only interested in direct welfare chauvinist policies. The Liberal-Conservative governments introduce in March 2002 the aforementioned Starting Allowance reform, by means of the Law amending the Act on Active Social Policy and the Integration Act (Law No 361). Finally, in 2006, the 2006 Future immigration reform was approved, stemming from an intense negotiation between the governmental parties and the DDP (Careja et al., 2016).

I select those parliamentary debates and speeches during which politicians discuss on these new reforms and vote their approval. I take the written transcripts from the official website of the Danish Parliament (<https://www.thedanishparliament.dk/>). All along the analysis, I selectively quote some short sections and specific words from politicians' speeches, to make the reading smoother. Then, I present a more detailed overview of politicians' speeches for each parliamentary session in the final appendixes.

3. Analysis: welfare chauvinist turns in the means-tested social assistance program (1).

The starting allowance scheme replaces ordinary social assistance for refugees whose asylum claim had been approved after the 1st of July 2002³⁵. More specifically, it replaces social assistance with a “starting allowance” which amounts to around 50% less of the previous social assistance benefit. In addition to this cut, the reform envisages two main conditionality clauses for migrants. Namely, it states that: 1) the entitlement to the starting allowance is conditional on participation in vocational courses to increase labor market participation. Refugees who fail to comply with these obligations immediately become ineligible for the starting allowance and therefore the social assistance program as well; 2) to shift from the starting allowance to the full social assistance scheme, refugees are asked to stay in Denmark for at least 7 years.

The starting allowance scheme is repealed in January 2012 and subsequently reintroduced with minor changes in August 2015. I consider this policy reform an instance of soft welfare chauvinism (Reeskens and Van Oorschot, 2012), in that it does not inevitably exclude migrants but it rather makes entitlement conditional to the fulfillment of the aforementioned criteria.

3.1. Welfare chauvinist arguments

The 45th parliamentary session

Following the submission of the draft legislation to the Danish Parliament, the new reform is discussed during three different parliamentary sessions, from March to May 2002. Two of these sessions are particularly relevant for the thesis’ analysis, since politicians expressly engaged in explaining the reasons behind the chauvinist cuts they proposed. Conversely, in the third session, they did not specifically deal with that but rather spoke about the reform’s scope and purposes in broader terms (or about other topics).

The first section takes place on the 21st of March 2002 (45th session). All along the session, the rapporteurs from the governmental parties (Conservatives

³⁵ To be precise, the type of benefits included are means-tested *cash* social assistance. Refugees may be still eligible for other forms of social assistance such as means-tested housing benefits, which are not covered by the starting allowance scheme.

and Liberal Party) who proposed the reform also spoke in favor it, supported by politicians from the DPP. They illustrate the functioning and scope of the Bill, explaining their reason for supporting it and answering the criticism advanced by the opposition parties. In conformity with the thesis' second economic hypotheses, (means-tested, H2), they primarily rely on the economic-based chauvinist arguments, especially the benefit tourism/welfare magnet one (H2a, category 1 in the coding frame). The economic burden argument (H2b) is rather not observed.

Namely, politicians emphasize that the new measure is necessary to counter benefit tourism and promote incentives for refugees to integrate into the national labor market. Deputy Lars Barfoed (The Conservatives) portrays refugees as abusers, who live on the generous Danish social assistance scheme paid by Danish workers rather than actively seeking for a job and paying taxes to fund such a scheme.

By contrast, he argues, a reduction of social assistance to the level of the starting allowance (almost 50% less of cash) will make it more difficult for refugees to live on social benefits merely, thus increasing incentives to find a job. At the same time, the new Bill facilitates labor market integration also by strengthening refugees' vocational skills by means of the participation in vocational courses – compulsory to get entitlement to the starting allowance scheme. The integration into the labor market will in turn increase refugees' economic self-reliance, reducing the dependency rates upon the national social assistance program. In his speech, we can observe some textual indicators pointing back to the semantic sphere of the benefit tourism/welfare magnet argument and, more broadly, of economic contribution and self-support (e.g., “support themselves”, “welfare abusers” ,“effort to integrate into the labor market”).

The proposal aims in particular at increasing the benefits of getting a job quickly and being able to support themselves. It aims at making it less attractive to come to Denmark to live on social assistance at the expense of Danish workers and taxpayers. This is done by introducing a new starting allowance scheme, i.e., a lower rate than the standard social assistance. Refugees will be therefore obliged refugees to take part in professional and

language courses and to put a greater effort to integrate into the Danish labor market rather than living as welfare abusers

(Lars Barfoed, The Conservatives, Deb 21st of March 2002, Column 3951, Pos. 1745).

Moreover, the rapporteur of the Liberal Party Flemming Oppfeldt also links the argument of benefit tourism to concerns about the welfare magnet effect, thus exploiting both sides of this economic argument. He claims that many people from extra-EU and non-Western migrants apply for asylum in Denmark because they think the country is a sort of “Land of Cockaigne”, i.e., a place with very generous welfare support and, specifically, very generous social assistance (Deb 21st of March 2002, Column 3951, Pos. 1743).

This bill is aimed at putting an end to today’s undesirable immigration situation. [...]. There is no doubt that the expectation of getting generous social benefits largely incentivizes immigration (Flemming Oppfeldt, Liberal Party, Deb 21st of March 2002, Column 3951, Pos. 1743).

As a response to this “undesirable situation” (Deb 21st of March 2002, Column 3951, Pos. 1743), the new policy reform will stress the reciprocity principle enshrined in the Danish social culture, by showing that rights’ earning is strictly linked to the fulfillment of duties, namely employment and economic contribution to the Danish society.

In the long run, this also forms a wrong image of Denmark as place where one can enjoy benefits without paying back any contribution. [...] If this proposal is adopted, it will be a strong signal that Denmark is a healthy society with duties and rights. One of the main duties that this bill wants to stress is that refugees have to actively contribute to the labor market and economy with as much business activity as the born Danes in order to earn the right to the starting allowance scheme. They cannot just take advantage of the Danish social assistance, using the excuse that they have much lower incomes and earn less than Danes. Therefore, this law continues a Danish custom of reciprocity principle (Flemming Oppfeldt, Liberal Party, Deb 21st of March 2002, Column 3953, Pos. 1755).

The 80th parliamentary session

The second relevant parliamentary session section takes place on the 22nd of March 2002 (80th session). During this session, politicians apply again the benefit tourism/welfare magnet argument (H2, category 1). They highlight that the current organization of the Danish social assistance scheme (especially the tax-based funding mechanism and income-based entitlement) has fostered abuses and benefit tourism by many migrants and refugees. This has also contributed to creating a wrong image of Denmark, as a place where one can obtain welfare benefits (notably the social assistance scheme) without economically contributing (working and paying taxes). In his speeches, he uses some words and rhetorical expressions pointing back to the semantic sphere the benefit tourism/welfare magnet argument, like “free riders” and “get benefits without any special duty”.

“Today, half of the immigrant population is supported by the public sector and Danes’ taxes, especially by means of our social assistance scheme which is intended to support lower-income families and individuals. By relying on this mechanism, we have made them veritable free riders, contributing to build a view of Denmark as a place where you can get benefits and social rights without any special duty. Unfortunately, this is the situation in many places in Denmark today”

(Flemming Oppfeldt, Liberal Party, Deb 2nd of March 2002, Column 7851, Pos. 1935).

Accordingly, the new policy reform will readjust the image of Denmark abroad, and notably in immigration countries, especially extra-European one. It will finally show that economic contribution and reciprocity lay at the foundation of the Danish society and must be respected by foreigners too.

“With the starting allowance, we want to send the signal that rights and duties apply in Denmark. We want to send the signal that one should not plan one’s life on the national social assistance, but that we have a welfare society where everyone should contribute to it to the best of their ability”

(Flemming Oppfeldt, Liberal Party, Deb 2nd of March 2002, Column 7851, Pos. 1936).

4. Analysis: welfare chauvinist turns in the means-tested social assistance program (2)

The second policy reform under investigation is the 2006 *Future immigration*, in the field of labor market and employment. As the previous one, it limits migrants' access to the Danish social assistance program, but it targets third-country nationals (TCNs) without a permanent residency. Such a reform is the result of negotiations between the governmental parties and the DPP (Careja et al., 2016) and it enshrines specific policy measures targeting migrants, especially referring to entry requirements, acquisition of permanent residence and access to social assistance. More specifically, it introduces a green card scheme for permanent residence and an Integration Examination (language and culture test) for obtaining the entitlement to the social assistance scheme. Given these conditionality criteria, this can be considered a form of *soft* welfare chauvinism (Reeskens and Van Oorschot, 2012) rather than a strong one (inevitably excluding migrants from welfare).

The analysis is only focused on the passages where politicians illustrate and support the conditionality measures for the entitlement to social assistance (i.e., the Integration Text). Conversely, all the passages addressing the topics of entry requirements and acquisition of permanent residence are not of interest of the analysis since they do not directly address the topic of welfare entitlement for migrants³⁶.

4.1. Welfare chauvinist arguments

The 37th parliamentary session

The new reform is discussed during three different parliamentary sessions, from November 2006 to April 2007. Only one of them is relevant for the thesis' analysis, the 37th parliamentary session, taking place on the 1st of January 2007. In that occasion, politicians deal specifically with the topic of migrants' entitlement to social assistance. During the other sessions, they focus more on the topics of entry requirements and acquisition of permanent residence.

More specifically, the rapporteurs of the Conservatives, the Liberal Party

³⁶ Although they touch it indirectly, by setting the rules for the acquisition of permanent residency. However, this is not relevant here.

and the DPP answer the criticism by the opposition parties and support the new measures. Focusing on the access social assistance, they support the integration examination as entitlement measure by relying on economic arguments (H2), and notably the benefit tourism/welfare magnet argument (H2a, category 1).

As for the previous reform, government Liberal and Conservatives politicians argue that the integration examination is necessary to “finally put an end to benefit tourism” and to promote labor market integration. They describe TCNs in the same way that refugees in 2002, i.e., as benefit tourists (still not using this specific term) living on generous Danish social assistance scheme. Compared to the 2002 reform, a greater emphasis is given to immigrants’ language skills – working as an incentive to labor market integration. The idea is that a good knowledge of Danish makes migrants more appealing for national employers and at the same time facilitates the search for an employment. For this reason, the language test is a necessary requirement to obtain social assistance.

“This should be seen as a motivation to enter the labor market, as foreigners will have the possibility to learn the Danish language that is essential to integrate into the national labor market. We Conservatives therefore hope that these measures will help us to better integrate foreigners who come to Denmark, especially to integrate them from an economic perspective. We hope these measures will put an end to benefit tourism by making them economically self-reliant”

(Henriette Kjær, the Conservatives, Deb 1st of January 2007, Column 2706, Pos. 1629).

Moreover, the Liberal Party’ party rapporteur Irene Simonsen stresses against two fundamental points. First, economic self-reliance and reciprocity are the necessary conditions to stay in Denmark and take benefit of the national welfare. Accordingly, the new bill aims at promoting and ensuring that social assistance is the payback for migrants’ economic contribution. Secondly, learning the Danish language is the best way to becoming more appealing into the labor market and find a job more quickly.

“Upstream of all, there is the language. In order to get an employment, learning the Danish language is essential. The main emphasis in the

integration exam is on Danish skills. In the Liberal Party, we believe that Danish is an important prerequisite for being able to commit in society and to integrate into the labor market”

(Irene Simonsen, Liberal Party, (Deb 1st of January 2007, Column 2706, Pos. 1630).

5. Summary and discussion of the findings in the case of Denmark

5.1. Summary of the main findings

Table 6: summary of the main findings in the case of Denmark

Hypotheses				Findings observed			
Welfare chauvinist arguments	Social programs			Welfare chauvinist arguments	Social programs		
	Universal	Means-tested	Insurance-run		Universal	Means-tested	Insurance-run
Economic arguments	✓	✓	Not applying	Economic arguments	No chauvinist reforms observed	✓	No chauvinist reforms observed
<i>Economic hypotheses</i>	(H1)	(H2)	(H3)				
Cultural argument	✓	Not applying	Not applying	Cultural argument	No chauvinist reforms observed	Not applying	No chauvinist reforms observed
<i>Cultural hypotheses</i>	(H4)	(H5)	(H6)				

Table 6 summarizes the main findings observed (grey column) and compares them to those expected by the thesis’ hypotheses (white column). In the case of Denmark, I could only test the cultural and economic groups of hypotheses dealing with means-tested programs (H2 and H5), since I have found *no* instances of welfare chauvinist policy reforms targeting universal, nor insurance-run programs³⁷.

Similar to the first case-study, the second cultural hypothesis (H5) finds

³⁷ As specified in the methodological chapter, in this thesis I only analyze instance of *direct* welfare chauvinism, not indirect ones. Thus, we do not know whether indirect welfare chauvinist measures have targeted some other types of programs.

empirical evidence. Politicians do not apply the argument of cultural distance to justify and promote the chauvinist restrictions in the means-tested policy areas – the policy reforms to social assistance analyzed. Conversely, they rely on the economic arguments to promote these chauvinist measures (H2). They specifically apply the benefit tourism/welfare magnet argument (H2a), but not the economic burden. This finding thus complies to the second economic hypothesis.

5.2. Relating welfare chauvinist arguments and types of welfare programs in Denmark

As in the case of Austria, the benefit tourism/welfare magnet argument is examined in relation to the social program it refers to, i.e., social assistance in this case (as both reforms target this policy). The qualitative analysis enables me to “spot” the existence of a logical relation between this argument and the design of the social assistance program. Following a reasoning close to that observed in Austria, Danish politicians argue that the crux of the matter is the combination between these means-tested programs’ redistributive outcomes (resulting from the need-based redistributive logic) and the funding mechanism (taxes-based). In their view, it is *precisely because* of these characteristics that migrants (in this case refugees and TCNs) can so easily behave as benefit tourists and living off national citizens.

Namely, these characteristics produce the fundamental contradiction highlighted by the benefit tourism argument, i.e., the fact that migrants and refugees can enjoy generous welfare provisions (having lower incomes) without adequately contributing to them (in economic and tax terms). As seen in the methodological Chapter, the existence of this logical link further corroborates the thesis’ claim that the type of social design shapes the arguments used.

In the case of Denmark, the argument-programs link is assessed with regard to means-tested types of benefits merely. Since I do not have a real diverse pool of all program types, it is more difficult to provide a test of the argument-programs link in its entirety, as formulated in Chapter two. However, I argue that this fact does not significantly affect our conclusions, because of the way the thesis is designed and the purpose it pursues. I deal specifically with this point in the Conclusions.

Chapter 6

The case of Italy

1. Introduction

The present Chapter explores welfare chauvinist policy reforms and the underpinning justificatory arguments in the third case-study, Italy. I assess the thesis' theoretical framework, holding that the types of political justifications are shaped by the welfare benefit types and structures. As for the previous cases, I proceed by analyzing the policy discussion surrounding the actual instance of welfare chauvinism in the Italian social policies.

The specific instances of welfare chauvinism under analysis are some measures embedded in the *Reddito di cittadinanza*, the Citizenship Income program (CI henceforth), a means-tested minimum income scheme introduced in 2019 by the Conte I government (June 2018- September 2019), with the Law num. 26 of the 28th of March 2019. This law is currently still in place today³⁸. The specific measures under analysis are introduced by one of the coalition members, the League, an Italian right-wing party, commonly classified by scholars as a PRRP, also in regard to its approach to the welfare state and social policy (Pellegata and Visconti 2020; Pavolini et al., 2019; Enggist 2019; Kriesi 2006).

The three main strands of research dealing with welfare chauvinism have paid only limited attention to the case of Italy. We find some research on public attitudes to welfare chauvinism (Magni 2020; Pellegata and Visconti 2020; Enggist 2019) as well as party manifestos (Pavolini et al., 2019). By contrast, the policy side of welfare chauvinism remains largely under investigated. Research have not explored whether and how the chauvinist appeals are translated into exclusionary social policies. Neither they examined the political justifications behind welfare chauvinism. The present Chapter contributes to increasing the attention on welfare chauvinist policy reforms and the justificatory arguments behind welfare chauvinism, both in general terms and in the case of Italy specifically.

The Chapter is organized as follows. I begin by briefly illustrating the Italian welfare state system, immigration patterns and development of the welfare chauvinist discourse. Thereafter, I proceed to the analysis of the selected instance

³⁸ To be precise, at the time of writing, a reform of the CI by the Draghi Government is under discussion

of welfare chauvinist policy reforms. Finally, I discuss the main findings and general implications of this case in the backdrop of the thesis' hypotheses and theoretical framework.

2. The Italian context

2.1. Contours of the Italian welfare state

Core characteristics

In order to understand the working and nature of the Italian welfare state, we need to look at it into a comparative perspective. Italy was originally the only Southern-European country included within Esping-Andersen's sample of countries and it had been assigned to the Conservative-coorporativist cluster (Ferrera, 2010). With the conceptualization of a fourth welfare regime, the Southern welfare State regime (Ferrera 1996, 2010), Italy is typically considered a member of the new cluster, together with Spain, Portugal, and Greece (Ferrera 1996, 2010). However, as seen in the Introductory Chapter, several scholars question the empirical validity of such clustering. Conversely, they argue that, in spite of important similarities among Mediterranean welfare systems, they are ultimately variations of the larger Conservative-Coorporativist cluster (Sciortino, 2004).

The present thesis does not enter the debate specifically, but it is interested in highlighting the main features of the Italian welfare state, traceable back to both the Conservative-Coorporativist and the Mediterranean clusters. On the one hand, Italy shares some common traits with the other Southern European countries, in terms of social programs and related labor laws (Sciortino, 2004). First, similarly to the other Southern European countries, Italy has an overall lower social expenditure and a much larger expenditure for pensions (both old age and survivor), as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP), than the EU average (Sciortino, 2004).

Secondly, the Italian welfare system makes traditionally a very limited use of means-tested benefits – less than half the European average (Ibid). Specifically, Italy has a larger percentage of non-means-tested cash provisions (75% of the social benefits delivered, against an EU average of 63%) and a very low percentage of means-tested benefits delivered in kind (23% against a

European average of 31%) (Sciortino, 2004). A third difference refers to the structure of salaries produced by the interaction of labor laws and collective bargaining. Namely, a large section of the employed labor force is sheltered from most employment-related risks and are paid according to family wage levels, accompanied by a lack of income support for those who have never worked and the long-term unemployed (Ibid).

On the other hand, the characteristics of the Italian welfare are traceable back to the Conservative-Coorporativist cluster too (Sciortino, 2004). In particular, the traditionally limited use of means-tested benefits and programs is combined with the significant role of the compulsory social insurance programs in providing social provisions, namely health, pension and work accident insurance. Moreover, the Italian welfare system is centered around a very strong relationship between the welfare system itself and families and households. In other words, families play a key role for most welfare matters. This is linked to the centrality of the male breadwinner model, i.e., the expectation that primary breadwinner assumes wider responsibility “on behalf” of his household (Sciortino, 2004).

While the centrality of families is typical of all Conservative-Coorporativist welfare regime, this is especially evident and even stronger in the case of Italy. Here, families are legally and socially considered real “buffer institutions” (Sciortino 2004, p.115). Namely, they at the same time act as mediation providers of most public social resources and services and integrate these with additional “personal services” (Ibid) specifically reserved to the members of the family, especially children and elderly care. These services somehow outweigh the scarcity of social services available on a generalized basis – with the exception of health care (Sciortino, 2004).

Most recent developments

The traditional mechanisms and functioning of the Italian welfare system have most recently started to be put into question. What is particularly relevant to the present thesis is that means-tested benefits, and notably minimum income protection schemes,³⁹ have acquired a new importance, at both citizens and

³⁹ This is a specific form of social assistance measures, which is intended to contrast and alleviate the effects of socio-economic poverty.

politicians' level. Natili (2018) argues that this has occurred as a reaction to the constant growth of relative and absolute poverty rates, in the aftermath of the 2008 economic slowdown. In light of that, the traditional marginality of minimum income protection – a traditional anti-poverty measure – has become a clear mismatch between needs and policies (Natili, 2018).

This tendency has taken place, in different ways, in almost all Southern Europe countries and welfare systems. However, not all of them have followed the same policy development trajectory (Natili, 2018). The other Southern Europe countries (especially Spain) have started to introduce or strengthen social assistance and minimum income schemes already at the beginning of the 2000s. By contrast, in Italy the minimum income protection system has remained fairly weak until 2017, despite interesting efforts both at the national and at the local level. Among the reasons, the opposition to the institutionalization of anti-poverty social assistance and minimum income schemes by right-wing parties, at both the national and local level of governance, has played a key role (Ibid).

In particular, the League maintained very strict positions against the introduction of a minimum income schemes (Natili, 2018), whilst it took more expansionary positions on other social policy fields (cfr. next paragraphs). Interestingly for the present work, the party supported the strict positions against the minimum income by exploiting the welfare chauvinist rhetoric and notably the benefit tourism argument. Namely, several politicians of the League claimed that, if the minimum income had been introduced, that would have ended up supporting migrants (especially extra-EU) to a larger extent than Italians because of their lower income (Ibid).

Starting from 2017 a partial change has been taking place and two minimum income anti-poverty schemes have been approved between 2017 and 2019. The first one is the Inclusion Income, *Reddito di inclusione sociale*, approved in 2017 by the centre-left government (Siza, 2019). It is an in-cash means-tested type of benefit, based on claimants' income (Ibid). The second is the CI scheme, one of the warhorses of the Five Stars Movement (*Movimento Cinque Stelle*), introduced by the Conte I Cabinet. Like its antecedent, it is an in-cash means-tested type of program, based on applicants' income and especially the family income. Only families whose income is below a given threshold can apply and legitimacy obtain the benefit. Accordingly, applicants have to present a

certification showing the actual economic condition of their families (based on earnings, wealth and properties), called ISEE, Indicator of the Equivalent Economic Condition (*Indicatore Situazione Economica Equivalente*).

It is initially drafted as a Decree-Law (num.4/28th of January 2019) and then turned into the final law (num. 26 of the 28th of March 2019) between February and March 2019. To be precise, such a law deals with two major topics: the introduction of the new minimum income scheme, the CI, and a new pension reform, overhauling the former 2011 Fornero pension scheme.

2.2. *Contours of immigration patterns in Italy*

Italy is typically labelled a “new immigration country” (Geddes and Scholten 2016; Pellegata and Visconti 2020). It has traditionally been characterized by emigration patterns to Northern and Central Europe and to the Americas, especially at the end of the 19th century and during the first part of the 20th century (Geddes and Scholten, 2016). Starting from the mid-1990s this trend is partially reversed and the country starts to experience significant inflows of foreign citizens (Geddes and Scholten 2016; Pellegata and Visconti 2020).

After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the EU enlargement, Italy experiences massive inflows of immigrants from Eastern European countries, especially Albania and Romania. In most recent times, it also becomes one of the countries of first landing for migrants and asylum-seekers leaving North Africa in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, especially due to the geographical proximity (Pellegata and Visconti, 2020). According to the statistics by Istat, at the beginning of 2018 foreign-born residents were around 5 million in number, about 8.5 per cent of the total population in the country, a sharp increase compared to the 1.5 million foreign-born residents in the early 2000s (Istat, 2019).

These migration patterns are characterized by some specific socio-economic and geographical characteristics (Urso, 2018). A significant portion of incoming migrants are young men, low-skilled workers from non-Western countries, usually employed in the service sector or in small-and medium-size firms in the industrial and agricultural sectors. A second strand which has been growing since 2011 onwards is that made up by asylum seekers: the number of asylum applicants increased from 30,140 to 128,850 in 2017. Moreover, a peculiarity of the Italian case is the existence of a robust informal sector,

“clandestine” entries, that the immature Italian immigration policies are not able to manage (Urso, 2018).

This immigration pattern was coupled with new emigration dynamics that emerged in the aftermath of the 2008 economic recession and the euro crisis (Pellegata and Visconti, 2020). In that period, the number of Italian citizens who emigrated to another country tripled from 2007 to 2017, from 51,113 to 155,110 (Fondazione Migrantes, 2019). These were often young and highly educated people from southern regions characterized by low economic growth and high unemployment rates (Ibid).

2.3. Welfare chauvinism in party policy platforms

As previously mentioned, the right-party the League is commonly classified by scholars as a PRRP, also in regard to its approach to the welfare state and social policy (Pellegata and Visconti 2020; Pavolini et al., 2019; Enggist 2019; Kriesi 2006). Before proceeding a clarification is needed. The League who proposed the chauvinist measures within the new CI reform is the so-called “new League” (Albertazzi et al., 2018), i.e., the party after Matteo Salvini became its leader in 2013. Before that moment, the League was called the *Northern League*⁴⁰ and was a regional party centered around a form of regionalism based on the North–South divide (Albertazzi et al., 2018). Accordingly, it advocated the secession of northern Italy from the central and southern regions.

Since 2013, the party has undergone a process of profound ideological transformation. Among others, this has included a progressive “nationalization” (Diamanti 2015; Albertazzi et al., 2018), replacing regionalism by a form of nativist nationalism, failing to address socio-economic issues related to the North-South divide (Ibid). A 2019 research by Pavolini examines the discourse on the welfare state and welfare chauvinism by the League from the 1990s to the 2018 elections, looking at all the main social policy fields.

It emerges that the party has progressively adopted a pro-welfare state approach, calling for expansionary social policy interventions, in line with the NWF of PRRPs (Pavolini et al., 2019). These findings are apparently in contrast to those pointed out by other fields of research, especially studies on the

⁴⁰ To be precise, its full name was the Northern League for the Independence of Padania.

evolution and changes of the Italian welfare State (cfr. previous paragraph). As seen, these highlight that The League maintained very strict positions against welfare expansion and notably the introduction of a minimum income schemes (Natili, 2018).

Nevertheless, looking at Pavolini's study more in depth, it emerges that the findings by the two different literatures are rather coherent. Namely, this study highlights that the approach of The League is more ambivalent towards the welfare state and welfare expansion than that of other similar PRRPs that have adopted the NWF (Pavolini et al., 2019). Namely, the League's expansionary welfare proposals have selectively addressed some specific social policy areas merely, i.e., family benefits, pensions, and health care. On the contrary, the pro-welfare approach has not addressed the field of anti-poverty social assistance measures, in line with the findings by Natili (2018, cfr. previous paragraph) Over the years, The League has repeatedly opposed the introduction and institutionalization of anti-poverty minimum income schemes in all its party manifestos (Pavolini et al., 2019). In addition to that, The League has maintained along time its original neoliberal positions, especially regarding the issue of taxation. The party's crucial proposition in its 2018 political program is reduce drastically taxation with a system that is quite distant from any redistributive goal (Ibid).

Similarly to other PRRPs, when adopting a pro-welfare state view, The League tends to decline it according to the exclusive solidarity approach highlighted by Lefkofridi and Michel (2014). This is especially clear in its policy proposals regarding family policies in the 2018 program (Pavolini et al., 2019). Namely, the party claims for tripling the level of public investment in this policy area, through the implementation of a new "structural plan to support families and boost fertility". This should include including several points such as fiscal incentives in favor of households with children, cash transfers for new-born children, increased care services for families and support for parental leave (Ibid)⁴¹. At the same time restrictions on the access to these benefits are proposed for foreigners: 20 years of residence for the access to the 5000 euros benefit for each newborn and 5 years of residence for the access to free early childcare

⁴¹ These objectives are explicitly inspired to the French National Front's program and view about welfare and family policies. The overall objective of these measures is to reaffirm the centrality of "the family" in the Italian society and to fight against the Italian low fertility rate (Ibid).

(Ibid).

To summarize, the findings from both the literature on welfare chauvinism and that about the Italian welfare State offer a coherent and nuanced picture. It emerges that the salience of the issues of immigration increased significantly after 2014 (Pellegata and Visconti, 2020), especially following the changing immigration patterns to the country. Along with unemployment, immigration became one of the prominent problems for Italian citizens (Ibid). Among its various dimensions, one of the most problematic aspect of immigration concerned the topic of migrants' access to national welfare (Pellegata and Visconti 2020; Enggist 2019). Indeed, the Italian public are largely in favor of welfare chauvinist-oriented reforms Enggist (2019). This is especially true for the supporters of the League (Ibid).

At the same time, political parties and notably The League put the issue of immigration at the top of their political agenda as well, by pursuing two different strategies. On the one hand, the party has recently put forward policy proposals that tried to limit the inflows of migrants, especially from non-Western and non-EU countries. This has culminated in the decision by Matteo Salvini, in his capacity of Ministry of Interior, to close Italian ports to NGO ships and foreign-flagged merchant vessels carrying migrants rescued off the shore of Libya, in June 2018 (Cusumano e Gombeer, 2020). On the other hand, the party has also promoted over time several policy proposals trying to limit the opportunities for migrants *already inside* the Italian territory. For example, the party has repeatedly opposed the introduction of the *Ius soli*, advocating for making the rules to obtain the Italian citizenship even stricter than they are.

When it comes to the relation between migrants and welfare, the party explicitly adopted a chauvinist position. In its most recent political manifestos, the party adopted simultaneously the NWF and the exclusive solidarity approach (Lefkofridi and Michel, 2014). Namely, it claimed for the exclusion of migrants from welfare expansion, particularly in the family field (Pavolini et al., 2019). A good illustration of such an approach is the typical chauvinist slogan *Prima gli Italiani* (Italians first) of which Matteo Salvini, the leader of The League since 2013, made repeated use. Furthermore, the party also exploited the welfare chauvinist rhetoric when holding governmental positions at both the national and local level of governance to justify its opposition to the introduction anti-poverty

minimum income schemes (Natili, 2018).

This overall picture helps us to better understand and contextualize the skepticism by The League towards the new Citizenship Income introduced in 2018 by the Conte I Cabinet. Not surprisingly, the League, as a government party, proposed the introduction of some additional measures that can be considered as welfare chauvinist, within the Citizenship Income law (cfr next paragraph). It is worth noting that these measures are addressed to non-Western migrants already living in Italy not to incoming ones, thus fitting into the second type of strategy illustrated above.

2.4. The welfare chauvinist-oriented turn in the Italian social policy

As previously mentioned, the instance of welfare chauvinism under investigation is the newly introduced Citizenship Income. It was initially drafted as a Decree-Law (num. 4 of 28th of January 2019) and then turned into the final law (num. 26 of the 28th of March 2019) between February and March 2019. It dealt with two major topics: the introduction of the new minimum income scheme, the CI, and a new pension reform, overhauling the former 2011 Fornero pension scheme.

During the draft of the Decree-Law, the League put forward an amendment to the Article 2.1. of the D-L (establishing the beneficiaries of the CI and the entitlement rules), which contained some restrictive measures targeting migrants, not envisaged in the original proposal. These measures target a specific category of migrants, namely non-EU migrants (third-country nationals, TCNs) and establish that 1) they must show evidence of 10 years uninterrupted residency in Italy (rather than 5 years, as before) and 2) they must also present, as a proof of their income status, a certification attesting the absence of movable property and real estate abroad, in their home countries. This certification does not substitute the ISEE one, but it constitutes an additional requirement for TCNs only. In other words, in order to obtain the entitlement to the CI, Italian citizens must present the ISEE citizens only; TCNs must present instead both their ISEE and the additional certification from the home countries. Both 1 and 2 were embedded in the final law and precisely in the Art. 2.

The new CI, and notably these additional measures introduced by the League, have been repeatedly accused by the political opposition (notably the Italian centre-left Democratic Party) and public opinion to discriminate against

TCNs, imposing severe legal and practical limitations to their access to the new citizenship income (Siza, 2019). They were accused, in particular, not to take into consideration that many countries (non-Western ones) are not be able to certify these properties because of war or inefficient public administration systems. Thus, this measure is deemed to discriminate especially TCNs coming from non-Western countries.

In light of the concepts outlined in the thesis, I consider these measures as a form of *soft* welfare chauvinism. I rely on Reeskens and Van Oorschot's differentiation between strong and soft welfare chauvinism (2012). Namely, they do not unavoidably retrench the CI for TCNs, but they make entitlement conditional to strict residence and administrative requirements. Since these measures specifically target migrants, these can also be considered as an instance of *direct* welfare chauvinism (Careja et al., 2016).

In line with the thesis' objectives, I explore the justificatory arguments used by politicians of The League to support and legitimize these chauvinist measures, during the relevant parliamentary debates held at the Italian Chamber of Deputies (CD) and Senate during which the Decree-Law was translated into the final Law. These take place between February and March 2019. I focus merely on the debates where the design and approval of the CI is discussed, while neglecting those where other topics (especially the pension reform) are touched. To explore the underpinning welfare chauvinist arguments, I focus on the passages where politicians (mainly those of the League) speak in favor of such measure and explain their reason for doing that. I take the written transcripts of these debates from the official website of the Italian Chamber of Deputies (<https://www.camera.it/leg18/1>).

3. Analysis: welfare chauvinism behind the new Citizenship Income law

3.1. Welfare chauvinist arguments

The CI issue is discussed during the Chamber's 145 and 146 sessions (20th and 21st of March respectively). Interestingly, what emerges from these sessions is that the party is slightly changing its positions on welfare expansion compared the previous years (Natili 2018; Pavolini et al., 2019). As seen, before 2018 the party was in favor of an expansionary social policy only in specific social policy

areas, whilst strongly opposing the introduction of an anti-poverty minimum income scheme (cfr. Pavolini et al., 2019).

Conversely, politicians of the League now present the party as being among the primary supporters, together with the M5S, of the CI scheme. They stress out that this reform is fundamental to counter the process of impoverishment affecting a large portion of the Italian middle-class (20th of March, Column 145, Pos. 193-194; 21st of March, C.146, Pos. 1069-1070). It will provide social protection and improve the quality of life for this “new proletariat”⁴² (21st of March, C.146, Pos. 1070-1071). Following a typical populist rhetoric,⁴³ politicians also claim that the League and the M5S were the only parties who had the courage to support this new “pact of social inclusion” (20th of March, C.145, Pos. 198-199) against the European Commission. This latter is portrayed as the enemy since it was very critical towards the introduction of both the CI and the pension reform.⁴⁴

Moreover, they also argue that the new CI is intended to act not only as a poverty-alleviation scheme but also as an active labor market measure (20th of March, C.145, Pos. 195-197; 21st of March, C.146, Pos. 1070-72). Together with the in-cash benefit, the scheme includes several measures to promote the reinsertion of the beneficiaries into the labor market. These are, for example, the obligation, for all the beneficiaries of the CI, to take part into a series of training and educational courses helping them to re-enter the labor market. Additional examples are the de-taxation measures for employers who hire CI’s beneficiaries and for all people starting their own business.

These labor-oriented measures were also proposed by the League. Thus, the new CI will not be a measure for “loafers” and “people on their couches” (21st of March, C.146, Pos. 1069-1070), as the political opponent, the Italian Democratic Party, argued. Here politicians of the League introduce the topic on migrants’ entitlement to national welfare and the CI specifically. They also highlight the reasons why the restrictive proposals targeting TCNs are needed – i.e., the welfare chauvinist arguments.

⁴² i.e., those people who used to be employed or self-employed but lost their jobs and currently live below the line of economic and social poverty.

⁴³ Namely, the rhetoric pitting a virtuous, homogenous people against a set of self-serving *poteri forti* (powers-that-be), typically embodied by the central State authority, the EU or other International Organizations and actors.

⁴⁴ They refer to Italy’s quarrels with the European Commission over Italy’s fiscal plans. Namely, in late 2018, the European Commission rejected Italy’s draft of the 2019 budgetary plan, also including the introduction of the CI, pension, and tax changes whose expenditure would have expanded the Italian fiscal deficit.

The argument used is slightly different from that expected by the thesis' hypothesis. Conversely, politicians claim that the chauvinist proposals are a way to make the CI's commitment to reduce poverty and promote labor market integration more effective. More specifically, the measures will reduce the risk of cheating behaviors by TCNs. Such behaviors had indeed a very negative impact on the Italian welfare system and public economy in the previous years. Accordingly, politicians frame TCNs (especially those coming from African countries) in very negative terms, as being fundamentally dishonest people (the Italian word is *furbe*), ready to cheat in order to obtain more economic advantages for themselves, at the expense of Italian people living in extreme poverty.

More specifically, they argue that, in the previous years, most of these migrants declared less properties and income than they actually had, in order to get the entitlement to the former minimum income schemes (21st of March, C.146, Pos. 1072). This way, migrants took away several social and economic resources, that may otherwise be spent to improve the welfare services for Italians living below the poverty line (Ibid). Some of them even left Italy to spend the money received abroad, in their home country (20th of March, C.145, Pos. 200). In politicians' view, this phenomenon was especially made possible by the fact that administrative controls by frontline social workers were too light in the previous years, and therefore unable to assess the real estate and income situation of people claiming for the benefit (Ibid).

In light of that, the League politicians argue that the new restrictive measures are necessary in order to prevent migrants (especially TCNs from African countries) from doing the same for the CI scheme as well. By asking them to present an additional certification, the government will be able to strengthen the control over migrants and make it more difficult to declare less properties, earnings, and income than they actually have (21st of March, C.146, Pos. 1072).

Moreover, the new property and residency requirements will also make it a longer and more difficult procedure for TCNs to apply for the CI. In politicians' view, this should disincentivize them to even start the application procedure. As a result, these measures prevent and reduce the possibility of cheating at the expense of Italians, finally ensuring that more resources are left for Italian

citizens. In simple terms, this may be a strategy “to cut the problem at its root” (20th of March, Column 145, Pos. 200).

“Because, Mr. President, that was what happened with the previous minimum income scheme: the majority of migrants who took the Inclusion Income played dumb and did not declare all their real properties, in order to get the benefit. Some of them even went to spend it in their country of origin rather than here in Italy! This situation was also likely to create an economic damage to our country and a fiscal loss for our citizens who lost a lot of resources we wish the Government could have rather spent to help them. The frontline delivery services were definitely too inaccurate and unable to check what was going on! We, on the other hand, said: more barriers to the access to benefits for migrants, to cut the problem at its root and prevent the cheating practices, so to make sure that more resources are left for Italians”.

(Deputy Edoardo Ziello, the League, CD Deb, 20th of March, Column 145, Pos. 200).

“It is required, for those who present an ISEE declaration, given that there are patrimonial requirements to be respected, that the embassy of the State of origin certifies that the foreigner, who asks for obtaining the Citizenship Income, is not trivially cheating us, is not trying to fool us again, as happened with the inclusion income, for which many foreigners did not declare all their actual properties and real estates and stole money from Italian citizens”.

(Deputy Riccardo Molinari, the League, CD Deb, 21st of March, C.146, Pos. 1072).

4. Summary and discussion of the findings in the case of Italy

4.1. Summary of the main findings

Table 7: summary of the main findings in the case of Italy

Hypotheses				Findings observed			
Welfare chauvinist arguments	Social programs			Welfare chauvinist arguments	Social programs		
	Universal	Means-tested	Insurance-run		Universal	Means-tested	Insurance-run
Economic arguments	✓	✓	Not applying	Economic arguments	No chauvinist reforms observed	Not applying	No chauvinist reforms observed
<i>Economic hypotheses</i>	(H1)	(H2)	(H3)				
Cultural argument	✓	Not applying	Not applying	Cultural argument	No chauvinist reforms observed	Not applying	No chauvinist reforms observed
<i>Cultural hypotheses</i>	(H4)	(H5)	(H6)				

Table 7 summarizes the main findings observed (grey column) and compares them to those expected by the thesis' hypotheses (white column). In the case of Italy, I could only test the cultural and economic groups of hypotheses dealing with means-tested programs (H2 and H5), since I have found *no* instances of welfare chauvinist policy reforms targeting universal, nor insurance-run programs⁴⁵.

The second cultural hypothesis (H5) finds empirical evidence. Politicians do not apply the argument of cultural distance to justify and promote the chauvinist restrictions in the means-tested CI program. On the contrary, the second economic hypothesis does not find confirmation. In contrast to the thesis' expectations, politicians do not apply any of the economic arguments to legitimize the chauvinist measures targeting the CI program.

Conversely, they apply an additional type of justificatory argument, not conceptualized in the previous literature on welfare chauvinism. In the lexicon of

⁴⁵ As specified in the methodological chapter, in this thesis I only analyze instance of *direct* welfare chauvinism, not indirect ones. Thus, we do not know whether indirect welfare chauvinist measures have targeted some other types of programs.

the content analysis methodology, this may be defined as an “in vivo” and “data-driven” category (Schreier 2014; Kuckartz 2019). Given its focus on migrants’ “cheating” behaviors, I label it *cheating argument*. In line with the thesis’ scope, I read this finding through the lens of the theoretical model under investigation, based on the separation between economic and cultural arguments. Building on that, one may have several interpretations for the present findings; here, I will only concentrate on those I elaborated.

4.2. The cheating argument: economic considerations or an implicit cultural meaning?

First, it can be presumably argued that the cheating argument fall into the general economic cluster. Namely, politicians justify the chauvinist measures by making economic-centered considerations. They blame migrants (TCNs) for creating economic problems, in that they take away several economic resources, that may otherwise be spent to improve the welfare services for Italians living in extreme poverty. This argument does not fully correspond to the other economic arguments, the benefit tourism and economic burden ones. However, we can observe some common points, especially if looking at the logic underpinning each argument.

Namely, both the economic burden argument and that of cheating highlight that a lot of economic and financial resources are lost because of migrants. According to the economic burden argument, migrants who reside in the host countries take a lot of public economic resources away from nationals since they generally have lower incomes and therefore need more public support. Likewise, the cheating argument blames migrants for taking economic resources away by pretending to have less income and properties than they actually have and then exporting such resources in their home countries.

Moreover, the cheating argument stresses the point that migrants take economic resources in an illegitimate way, similarly to what the benefit tourism argument claims. In the case of benefit tourism, migrants’ access to national welfare is illegitimate since they do not contribute to financing the welfare system through work and taxes. As for the cheating argument, it is illegitimate because migrants make false statements regarding their properties and earnings in order to get the benefits.

A possible interpretation of this finding is that immigration and the immigration-welfare nexus are relatively recent issues in the Italian political debates. When a new issue comes to the political agenda, it usually goes through an evolution of its framing. That is, it starts being framed in a certain way, then the arguments elaborate further and changes over time. Looking at the Italian context, we can presumably argue that the development of the debate around welfare entitlement and welfare chauvinism (also at policy level) is still in a sort of “infancy” phase, i.e., at its very beginning.

If this is the case, I expect the justificatory arguments not to be as well-developed as in other countries where the immigration and welfare chauvinism issues are present since more time, like in the Scandinavian countries (Jørgensen and Thomsen 2016; Keskinen 2016; Norocel 2016). With the evolution of the welfare chauvinism issue in the national policy debate, the argument observed here may further evolve and develop into a more structured economic argument, similar to the ones observed elsewhere.

Secondly, the broader argument of cheating may be linked, to a certain extent, to some cultural considerations as well. The improper “cheating” behavior is used only with regard to the law’ targets, i.e., TCNs. This may implicitly suggest that such behaviors are somehow part of some specific cultural traits characterizing this group of migrants and marking a difference between them and Italians. Following this reasoning, we have on the one hand, honest and truly in need Italians and, on the other hand, dishonest and cheaters migrants. While both views are logically plausible, we may also have room for other possible interpretations. Future research will have to explore deeper and disentangle these points.

4.3. The cheating argument and the broader “leghismo-phenomenon”

Beyond specific economic or cultural considerations, the cheating can also be read in light of a broader phenomenon linked to the League party and notably to its antecedent, the Northern League. This is defined by Tronconi and Bulli (2011) as the “leghismo-phenomenon” (p.67). In simple terms, this phenomenon is made up by the party’s autonomist strategy (Diamanti, 1993), coupled with mobilization against central political institutions (referred, in broader terms, as “Rome”) and regions of the south of Italy, identified as the primary “enemy” to

be opposed (McDonnell 2006; Tronconi and Bulli 2011). Indeed, as most populist party, the League's rhetoric has always been based on the antagonism between "friends" and "enemies" who orchestrate a series of danger at the expense of the "people", i.e., northern Italians attached to their local traditions (McDonnell 2006; Tronconi and Bulli 2011).

Accordingly, the main argument is that southern Italian regions are characterized by corruption and backwardness and all the wealth produced in the northern regions should be used to promote the wellbeing of citizens in those territories rather than being "squandered" (Tronconi and Bulli 2011, p.67) on welfare policies benefitting the southern corrupted regions (Ibid). Linked to that, already at the beginning of the 1990s, the League (at that time still Northern League) adopted anti-immigrant positions against workers from southern Italy settled in the north. This also included the portray of southern Italians as corrupted and dishonest, eventually ready to cheat to obtain a higher amount of social support (McDonnell 2006; Tronconi and Bulli 2011).

However, the identity of the "enemies" of most PRRPs may shift over time with the "friends" and "enemies" of the people even interchanging. This has occurred for the League as well. In the wake of the party's broader process of "nationalization" in recent times (Diamanti 2015; Albertazzi et al., 2018), the anti-immigration rhetoric has been used to refer to migrant workers from outside the EU, rather than (or, in some cases, coupled with) people from southern regions (McDonnell 2006; Tronconi and Bulli 2011). Namely, the party has put forward several *ad-hoc* measures to limit the inflows of migrants, especially from non-Western and not-EU countries.⁴⁶

In light of that, the cheating argument against migrant workers can be read as a further development of the anti-immigration rhetoric and, more specifically, the broader argument about corruption and cheating, characterizing both The North League of the 1980s and 90s and, most recently, the League. One may argue that, since the cheating argument was already very common in the party's rhetoric on southern Italians, it was relatively easy for the League to exploit it also for migrants (TCNs, specifically), leveraging on its appeal on the Italian public opinion. This interpretation can be applied to the cheating argument

⁴⁶ This has culminated in the decision by Matteo Salvini, in his capacity of Ministry of Interior, to close Italian ports to NGO ships and foreign-flagged merchant vessels carrying migrants rescued off the shore of Libya, in June 2018 (Cusumano e Gombeer, 2020).

irrespective of its nature – i.e., either as an economic or a cultural type of argument.

To conclude, those listed here are just some plausible interpretations of the finding related to welfare chauvinism and the chauvinist arguments in Italy. We may also have room for other possible interpretations. Further research is needed to explore deeper and disentangle these points.

4.4. Relating the welfare chauvinist argument and types of welfare programs in Italy

Irrespective of the nature of the nature of the cheating argument, it can still be analyzed in relation to the means-tested CI program, to assess the existence of a causal linkage. I hold that the relation between the “cheating” argument and the design and organization of the CI as a means-tested program remains more ambiguous than in the other cases.

On the one hand, based on the speeches analyzed, it seems that the logical relation between the characteristics of the argument and the characteristics of the program is not at play. Namely, this argument is based on considerations about the Italian administrative system, rather than the structures and organization of the program *per se*. Accordingly, politicians claim that the lack of adequate administrative controls by social workers during the frontline delivery of the CI has prepared the ground for these negative cheating behaviors by migrants. This first interpretation of the finding does not comply to the thesis’ expectations and does not bring further evidence of a causal relation between the types of social programs and the types of welfare chauvinist arguments.

On the other hand, a second view is also possible. Namely, the argument of cheating assumes that there is actually something on which migrants (or southern Italians or whoever) can cheat. Thus, it can be logically argued that means-tested programs, as the CI, provide leverage for this type of behaviors since they are based on income and earnings which can be more easily falsified than, for example, contributions in insurance schemes.

These two interpretations are not necessarily in contrast. Conversely, they can also complement each other: means-tested programs, as the CI, provide leverage for cheating behaviors and this is further strengthened by the lack of adequate administrative controls by social workers during the frontline delivery

of the cash benefit. On the whole, both these interpretations are plausible but, again, further studies are needed to clarify the nature of the link between the “cheating” argument and the design and organization of means-tested programs.

It remains unclear whether and to what extent the cheating argument may also be applied to universal types of programs, since the Italian case does not provide any example of this (and neither do the other cases in this thesis). As universal programs are based on the principle of equality, all legal residents in a country should receive equal benefits – both citizens and permanent resident migrants – regardless of their income and employment situation (Ennsner-Jedenastik, 2018).

Hence, one may easily counter answer the cheating argument by saying that migrants do not need to cheat on their properties and earnings, since they will receive the universal benefit in any case once they acquire the permanent residency. Nevertheless, it can also be argued that that, even if they cannot cheat on their income, migrants can still cheat on their real residency status, to obtain the benefit much faster. Thus, future research will have not only to explore the nature of the relation between the cheating argument and means-tested programs but also to explore the link between this argument and universal types of programs.

Chapter 7

The case of the United Kingdom (UK)

1. Introduction

Similar to the other Chapters, I explore here the welfare chauvinist arguments politicians use to promote and legitimize several selected welfare chauvinist policy reforms in the UK. I specifically consider two policies, the Immigration Bill and the Benefit Entitlement (Restriction) Bill (BERB henceforth). The former deals with several matters related to immigration, including migrants' entitlement to national social programs as well, specifically the universal national health system (NHS, universal type of program). The latter makes some provision to restrict the entitlement of EU/EEA citizens (i.e., migrants from inside the EU) to a large number of means-tested benefits in the UK, among which several social housing benefits and the council tax benefit⁴⁷. As in the other Chapters, I rely on a qualitative content analysis of several selected parliamentary debates held in both the House of Commons (HC) and the House of Lords (HL), the two chambers making up the UK's Parliament, preceding and leading to the approval of the relevant chauvinist policy reforms.

The Chapter is organized as follows. First, I briefly illustrate the key features of the welfare state system, immigration patterns and development of the welfare chauvinist discourse in the country. Secondly, I illustrate the most recent chauvinist-oriented turns in social policies, and I explain the reasons why I selected the two policy reforms mentioned above. Third, I proceed to the analysis of such reforms (the underpinning welfare chauvinist arguments). In conclusion, I discuss the main findings in light of the thesis' hypotheses.

2. The British context

2.1. Contours of the British welfare state and immigration patterns

The British welfare state is typically categorized as a Liberal welfare regime, together with the United States. This may seem puzzling at first glance, since the British model differs from the US' one in several aspects (Sainsbury, 2012). In particular, in the aftermath of the second war world, it was built around the

⁴⁷ This is a means-tested benefit to help people who are on a low income to pay their Council Tax –an annual fee each local council charges local residents for the services it provides, like rubbish collection and libraries, ext.

principle of universalism which promoted coverage of the whole population. In empirical terms, this principle materialized in the shape of uniform national programs covering the entire population. All major social benefits (retirement pensions, sickness compensation and disability benefits, maternity allowances, and unemployment benefits) were consolidated into a single national insurance scheme. Non-contributory family allowances, covering all children except the first-born child, were introduced, and the National Health Service (henceforth NHS) was set up to provide medical and dental care to the entire population (Ibid).

Despite Britain's comprehensive welfare programs, it is still considered a Liberal welfare regime, since it enshrines some of the defining attributes of this type of regime. These are modest social insurance benefits, the prominence of means-tested benefits based on a bare minimum, and the importance of private welfare benefits and market solutions (Sainsbury, 2012).

Over time, the British welfare system has undergone a number of changes and cuts. These were part of the broader neoliberal policy line characterizing several European states in the 1970s and 1980s, aimed at reducing the public expenditure, limiting the state's intervention in economic and social matters and "marketizing" (Guentner et al., 2016). This was started in the UK by the Thatcher government (1979-1990) and continued, with alternating phases, during the following governments, until today. The healthcare sector (the NHS) was the policy area that was least touched by the retrenchment and liberalization process. In spite of some minor reforms, the NHS is still run on an universalistic basis today. Citizens and permanent residents are automatically entitled to free public health care through the NHS, including hospital, physician, and mental health care (Ibid).

Looking at the UK's migration patterns, we see that the country is traditionally considered an immigration country. That is, it has been characterized by immigration inflows since the colonial and post-colonial period. During the colonial period, the British Empire encompassed a quarter of the world's land surface and population. As a result, the number of migrants that post-war Britain received from its former colonies was relatively large and diverse as regard to ethnic and cultural backgrounds. In most recent years, the country received significant immigration flows from inside the EU as well. Poland was the top

country of birth among the EU-born in 2019, followed by Romania and Ireland. In 2019, India, Poland and Pakistan were the top three countries of birth for the foreign-born, accounting respectively for 9%, 9% and 6% of the total (Hawkins, 2019).

2.2. Welfare chauvinism in party policy platforms

The welfare chauvinism rhetoric is present in British party policies platform and notably in the electoral manifestos and policy proposals advanced by the UK Independence Party (UKIP). The UKIP was founded in 1993, since that time, its main policy proposal has always been that of taking the UK out of the European Union. The UKIP has been sometimes categorized as a borderline case within the populist radical right party family (Mudde 2007). In spite of that, along the years it has established itself as strong anti-immigration party in the British political panorama (Dennison & Goodwin, 2015).

With regard to the welfare policy field, the party has traditionally taken an economically liberal position, advocating for cuts in public expenditures and less government intervention in the markets. In its more recent manifestos, it has moved (partially) towards the PRRPs' new winning formula, starting to propose to redirect funds that the UK pays into the European Union budget towards domestic welfare expenditure. At the same time, it has also proposed to implement some welfare cuts at the expense of non-UK citizens, to save more money for national citizens (Ennsner-Jedenastik, 2018). For example, in its 2015 manifesto, the party advocates limiting access to the National Health Service (NHS) to national citizens and permanent residents and a five-year history of paying taxes in the country. It also advanced some chauvinist proposals in the family policy field. In 2015, it calls for an outright ban on benefits being paid to parents or children abroad (Ibid).

Interestingly, the instance of welfare chauvinist policies (and reforms) analyzed have not been implemented by the UKIP. The party indeed has never been a member of the government. Conversely, these instances of welfare chauvinism have been put forward by two different governments, made up by the Conservative party and the Liberal Democrats. The first is the Cameron-Clegg coalition government, in office from May 2010 to 2015 and formed by David Cameron (leader of the Conservative Party) and Nick Clegg (Liberal Democrats).

The second is the so-called second Cameron ministry, a Conservative majority government, in office between May 2015 to July 2016. To be sure, we cannot exclude that the presence and electoral success of the UKIP have (indirectly) contributed to the drafting and implementation of this law. However, this is not relevant to the thesis' ends.

2.3. The welfare chauvinist-oriented turn in social policy

In the period between 2010 and 2016, the aforementioned Conservative governments led by Cameron undertake a number of policy reforms that we may classify as instances of welfare chauvinist policies. Indeed, they impose some limitations in the entitlement to welfare programs' for (different groups of) migrants.

The first instances of welfare chauvinist reforms are a set of regulations amending the Jobseeker's Allowance Regulations 1996. These are defined together as *Jobseeker's Allowance Amendment Regulations 2013* and come into force on the 1st of January 2014. They introduce a new clause, stating that foreign citizens coming to the UK to seek for a job (i.e., the "jobseekers") have to serve a three-month period before they can be treated as "habitually resident", that is the legal status to claim for the means-tested-based JSA. In simple terms, jobseekers from both the EU and not-EU countries are not anymore able to make a claim for the means-tested JSA benefit until they have been living in the UK for three months.

The second instances are another set of regulations, defined as the *2013 Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations*. They come into force in December 2013 and make a change to the 2006 Regulations. These latter transpose into UK law the EU Directive 2004/38/EC on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the EU ('the Directive'). The Directive also sets out the right of Union citizens and their family members to claim welfare benefits in the other EU member states on equal basis than nationals of the MS (non-discrimination or equal treatment principle). The 2013 amendment introduces some limits to this right, specifically targeting some categories of EU citizens: those with the right to reside as a "jobseekers" or a "retained workers" (i.e., someone who was formerly in work but was made redundant). According to the amendment, these people are

required to provide compelling evidence that they have a “genuine chance of being engaged in the UK”, in order to maintain such a status. If they do not, they lose the status and cannot claim a number of social benefits anymore.

The third instance of welfare chauvinist reform is the 2014 *Immigration Bill*. It rules several matters related to immigration, including entry requirements, access to employment and to residential tenancy, marriage and civil partnerships and, most relevant to the thesis’ ends, entitlement to national social programs as well, specifically the universal health system (NHS). The different measures target several different categories of migrants/target groups: illegal/irregular migrants, asylum-seekers, third-country nationals (TCNs or not EU/EEA foreigners) with a temporary immigration status⁴⁸. The most relevant reform for this thesis is that envisaged in Part 3 of the Bill, stating that temporary migrants (from outside the EU) are required to pay a health surcharge as a precondition to access the country and be allowed to use the NHS.

Finally, another relevant policy reform is the 2014 *Benefit Entitlement (Restriction) Bill* (BERB henceforth). To be sure, this reform is discussed by the parliament between June 2013 and January 2014, but it is rejected after the second reading by the national Parliament, and specifically the House of Commons (HC). Thus, it fails to complete its passage through the national Parliament, and it is never turned into an actual law/legislation. In spite of that, I decided to include it in the thesis’ analysis since it represents amongst a *unicum* in the EU political and policy context.

The Bill proposes to restrict the entitlement of EU citizens to the main national means-tested programs and some universal social program. Significant examples of these means-tested programs are the social housing benefits and the council tax benefit. For maybe the first time in the EU context, this reform proposal targets all possible categories of migrants falling under the definition of “EU nationals”, including EU workers living in the UK. Accordingly, it is explicitly in contrast to the EU rules and notable the EU social security coordination framework.

The thesis only analyzes the parliamentary debates around the Immigration Bill and the Benefit Entitlement (Restriction) Bill. As in the

⁴⁸ It targets especially certain categories of workers and students who apply for limited entry clearance or limited leave to remain in the UK for more than 6 months. In this chapter I call them generically “temporary migrants”, referring to this specific sub-group of TCNs.

previous cases, I select those parliamentary debates and speeches (both in the HC and the HL) during which politicians discuss on these new policy reforms and vote their approval. I take the written transcripts from the official website of the British Parliament, and notably the platform collecting all the official report of all Parliamentary debates, called Hansard (<https://hansard.parliament.uk/>).

The thesis does not rather consider the aforementioned Regulations because they are not discussed in the national Parliament and, consequently, it is impossible to find relevant parliamentary speeches dealing with them. They are not discussed because they are passed a statutory instrument (Sis), rather than as primary legislation (as the Bills). Statutory instruments are a form of secondary legislation which are typically used to make technical changes to existing legislation/regulations under the terms of existing primary legislation. The vast majority of statutory instruments are passed using the negative procedure, meaning that once the Minister responsible has signed the legislation, it will become law without passing through the national Parliament.

It has to be specified that all these reforms are put forward and implemented *before* Brexit takes place. Today, they do not apply any longer. However, I selected them because they represent very good examples of welfare chauvinist-oriented reforms. Moreover, looking at these examples, we can presumably expect that some welfare restrictions may occur again, targeting migrants from both the EU and not-EU countries.

3. Analysis: welfare chauvinist turns in the universal national health care system

The 2014 Immigration Bill rules several matters related to immigration, including entry requirements, access to employment and to residential tenancy, marriage and civil partnerships and, most relevant to the thesis' ends, entitlement to national social programs as well, specifically the universal health system (NHS). The different measures target several different categories of migrants/target groups: illegal/irregular migrants, asylum-seekers, EEA/EU migrants with time-limited immigration status/non-permanent residents. Focusing on the access to the NHS, Part 3 states that third-country nationals (TCNs or not EU/EEA

foreigners)⁴⁹ with time-limited immigration status⁵⁰ are required to pay a health surcharge as a precondition to access the country and be allowed to use the NHS. The surcharge is to be paid together with the application fee when applying for the residence permit. It is refunded only where an application for the permit to enter or remain is refused. According to this measure, only those who pay the surcharge are able to access free NHS care to the same extent as UK citizens and permanent residents.

This measure has received a lot of criticism by the public opinion and the political opposition, notably the Labour Party. They accused the government of lying about the number of temporary migrants treated by the NHS, telling much higher numbers, to the end of excluding migrants from health services. They also blame the government of violating the fundamental health rights of migrants. Relying again on Reeskens and Van Oorschot's theoretical differentiation (2012), I classify this measure as a form of *soft* welfare chauvinism. Namely, politicians do not unavoidably exclude this group of migrants from healthcare, but they make entitlement conditional to the payment requirement.

3.1. Welfare chauvinist arguments

First second and parliamentary readings of the Bill in the HC

The first parliamentary debate on the Bill takes place on the 10th of October. This is not analyzed here since politicians only read the text of the Bill and do not discuss it deeper. Thereafter, the second parliamentary debate takes place on the 22nd of October 2013. The Secretary of State for the Home Department Mrs Theresa May opens the debate by discussing the subject of migration management in the UK, touching several topics such as migrants (especially TCNs)' access to welfare and health care, borders management, illegal immigration, entry/exit rules. She briefly illustrates the main achievements of the Conservative Government in charge as well as the goals it pursues by means of this new Bill. Thereafter she moves to present all the Parts of the Bill step-by-step, also including Part 3, that highlighting the new powers to regulate temporary migrants' access to the national health system (NHS) and various other

⁴⁹ Also defined here as "person subject to immigration control".

⁵⁰ It targets especially certain categories of workers and students who apply for limited entry clearance or limited leave to remain in the UK for more than 6 months. In this chapter I call them generically "temporary migrants", referring to this specific sub-group of TCNs.

public services.

In compliance to the first economic hypothesis (H1, category 1 in the coding frame), Theresa May promotes and justifies the introduction of the health surcharge by applying the benefit tourism justificatory argument (H1a). She exploits that at different times in her speech. When illustrating the Bill's main goals, she states that it aims at ensuring that temporary migrants coming to the UK and relying on the British universal NHS will contribute to its funding. She further specifies this point later, when addressing Part 3 and the topic of the access to the NHS specifically.

As in the other cases analyzed, the crux of the matter is the relation between migrants' access to the program (in this case, the NHS) and the extent to which they economically contribute (through tax and active employment) to finance such a program. Namely, she portrays "migrants from overseas" as "abusers", in that they can access the free and universal health system as British citizens and permanent residents do, without yet contributing to finance it – or to a limited extent only. Indeed, according to the UK legislation and fiscal rules⁵¹, temporary migrants are liable to lower taxes – which are indeed the main funding mechanism behind the NHS (HC Deb 22 Oct 2013: Column 157).

Against this background, Mrs May deems the new surcharge requirement as necessary to "clamp down" (HC Deb 22 Oct 2013: Column 157) on all temporary migrants acting like abusers and tourists. By doing that, the new measure will contribute to building a "fairer immigration system" which will reward all the hardworking citizens and migrants too (HC Deb 22 Oct 2013: Column 158).

"Finally, the Bill is aimed at building a fairer immigration system which addresses the concerns of hardworking people. Accordingly, the Bill will clamp down on migrants from overseas who try to abuse our public services and our public health. And you know who I am referring to. I refer to all those temporary migrants from outside the EU (and you know how many there are in the country!) who are presently allowed the same free and universal access to our tax-funded NHS for free as a citizen and a permanent resident. This approach is very generous, particularly because temporary migrants are liable to a lower

⁵¹ She is referring to the rules in force in that period (2014).

taxation and lower expenditures than permanent residents and citizens. You should agree with me that this leaves rooms to abuses by these migrants who enjoys many health services without paying for them, living at the expense of our taxpayers! You should agree that it is not fair to the British public and to all those foreigners who live here on a permanent basis and contribute to our society and economy as our citizens do!” (Secretary of State for the Home Department Theresa May, HC Deb 22 Oct 2013: Column 158).

All along the Session, several politicians of the political opposition step in to raise criticisms on various points. Criticism concerns both the new surcharge measure and several other measures envisaged by the Bill and notably the management of illegal immigration. On the specific point of health surcharge, opposition politicians accuse the Conservatives of portraying temporary migrants as abusers without being able to quantify benefit tourism and not-legitimate access to the NHS (HC Deb 22 Oct 2013: Column 164).

The Conservatives defend the health surcharge measure by exploiting the benefit tourism argument again. Mrs May explicitly refers to temporary migrants as “health tourists” (HC Deb 22 Oct 2013: Column 165) and argues that the number of them is definitively very high. In her view, this will end up in in the loss of millions of moneys at the expense of British workers and taxpayers as well as permanent migrants regularly paying taxes. She also insists that the new measure is needed to stop this negative trend and “recoup the money” the governments and British taxpayers are spending to support health services for incoming temporary migrants (Ibid).

“I suggest that the hon. Lady⁵² looks at the audit conducted by the National Health Service that was released today. It makes it absolutely clear that we are talking potentially about several hundred millions of pounds across the NHS when we consider the number of people who come here as health tourists, using our health service whilst barely contributing to financing it. That is why the Bill is absolutely right”.

(Secretary of State for the Home Department Theresa May, HC Deb 22 Oct 2013: Column 165).

⁵² Referring to MP Diane Abbott who criticized the measures envisaged by the Bill.

Moreover, the Deputy Robert Syms highlights that, irrespective of its empirical outcomes, the Bill and the health surcharge clause are intended to be a “signal” that the UK is sending to the world. Specifically, this clause would mean that the UK government will not anymore spend resources for foreigners “who do not deserve them”. It will rather use such resources for treating its citizens in need, for example those waiting for medical operations (HC Deb 22 Oct 2013: Column 166). This rhetoric reminds us of the benefit tourism argument again.

Third parliamentary reading of the Bill in the HC

The third parliamentary debate in the HC takes place on the 30th of January 2014. It develops in the same way as the previous one, with the Secretary of State for Theresa May briefly illustrating the content and the main purposes of the new Bill.

As before, we observe the benefit tourism argument. The new health surcharge measure is intended to put an end to the current situation, with most of temporary migrants (especially temporary workers and students) taking benefit of the NHS without adequately contributing to finance it (HC Deb 30th January 2014, Column 1124). She further stresses that this is “not fair” to citizens and permanent residents paying higher taxes to finance several public services, including the NHS (Ibid).

“We will require migrants who will be here temporarily to pay a surcharge so that they economically contribute to the NHS. I think that most hard-working people would agree that that is appropriate. At present, these migrants are allowed the same access to the NHS for free as a permanent residents and British citizens, without having to pay any surcharge. This is not fair given that they are required to pay less taxes and they therefore contribute to a significant minor extent to finance our NHS”.

(Secretary of State for Theresa May, HC Deb 30 Jan 2014, Column 1125).

Overall, politicians of the opposition continue to be very critical of the new measures introduced by the Bill. Differently from the previous session, the new surcharge clause receives now only limited attention by politicians, as they concentrate rather on the issue of illegal immigration. Finally, the Bill is

approved by the HC and therefore passed to the HL for further parliamentary discussion and for the final approval.

First and second parliamentary readings of the Bill in the HL

The discussion in the HL starts on the 30th of January 2014. As before, the first parliamentary session is not relevant to the thesis' ends, since politicians only read the text of the Bill and do not discuss it deeper. Likewise, the analysis does not consider the third and last parliamentary session/reading either. In that occasion, politicians discuss mostly about other measures envisaged in the Bill, not about the entitlement to the NHS specifically. The second reading of the Bill in the HL is indeed relevant for the analysis. It takes place on the 10th of February 2014. During this session, the Bill receives again many criticisms by the political opposition, concerning both the new surcharge measure and several other measures envisaged.

On the specific point of health surcharge, one of the main criticisms is that the surcharge clause (together with other provisions in the Bill) may make the UK a less attractive destination for many migrants, especially TCNs who wish to come to the UK for a limited working period only. This would imply the decrease of both high-skilled and low-skilled migrants in the UK and, therefore, a loss of material, economic and intellectual resources the country needs⁵³. They refer to the fact that many of these temporary migrants contribute to the country's economic and intellectual growth in several ways: students and PhD candidates bring in intellectual resources and innovation, low-skilled workers increase the workforce (HL Deb, 10 Feb 2014: Column 414).

Lord Taylor defends the new measure relying on the benefit tourism argument as well. The critical relation between the entitlement to NHS and temporary migrants' economic contributions is not made explicit in his speech, yet he uses terms and rhetorical expression like "abusers" and "exploitation of our social and health system" (HL Deb, 10 Feb 2014: Column 415).

"This Bill will not undermine those important achievements; it will support them. [...] Instead, it is about stopping abuses, especially the exploitation of our social and health system [...]. By dealing firmly with those who harm our

⁵³ This is one of the main warhorses of the politicians opposing the surcharge clause in the new Bill.

country, and I refer to both illegal migrants and also legal ones who abuse of our social system, this Bill allows us to continue to welcome those who will bring benefits, in social and economic terms”.

(Lord Taylor, HL Deb, 10 Feb 2014: Column 415).

During the last parliamentary reading, the Bill is finally approved since most of the deputies vote in favor of it. Following the last steps required by the national parliamentary procedure for primary legislation, it receives the Royal Assent, and it is turned into the new Immigration Act 2014 on the 14th of May.

4. Analysis: welfare chauvinist turns in the means-tested social policy area

As previously mentioned, the BERB restricts the entitlement of EU citizens to social housing benefits and the council tax benefit several, as well as other means-tested benefits⁵⁴ (and some universal benefits too). Differently from previous chauvinist laws, this Bill target all possible categories of migrants falling under the definition of “EU nationals”, so also including EU migrants working and living in the UK. Accordingly, it is explicitly in contrast to the EU rules and notable the EU social security coordination framework.

Differently from the previous one, I consider it a form of *strong welfare chauvinism*: it inevitably excludes EU migrants from social benefits, without envisaging any conditionality clause. The Bill is discussed by the parliament between June 2013 and January 2014, but it is rejected after the second reading by the HC. Thus, it fails to complete its passage through Parliament and is never turned into an actual law/legislation.

4.1. Welfare chauvinist arguments

The first parliamentary session in the HC takes place on the 24th of June 2013. As before, this first parliamentary session is not relevant to the thesis’ ends, since politicians only read the text of the Bill and do not discuss it deeper. The second reading of the Bill in the HC takes place on the 17th of January 2014, in the same period when the Parliament is also discussing welfare restrictions for extra-EU (temporary) migrants (cfr. previous paragraph). The Deputy Mr Christopher

⁵⁴ In the title and text of the Bill these benefits are referred as *taxpayers’ benefits*. Looking at the core characteristics, we see that they are means-tested types of benefits and social programs.

Chope (Conservative Party) introduces the Bill, presenting it as a response to citizens' immigration and welfare concerns. He says that this matter has become of "tremendous public concern" (HC Deb, 17th of January 2014: Column 1137) since some years already and the government needs to finally address it. Thereafter, he illustrates the content and main Parts of the Bill.

In his speech, we can recognize the benefit tourism/welfare magnet argument. In compliance to the thesis' expectation, he exploits both sides of the arguments in a complementary manner. First, he holds that EU migrants come to the UK to "sponge off" the national taxpayer-funded benefits system, referring especially to EU workers from Eastern European countries (HC Deb, 17th of January 2014: Column 1138). Secondly, he further argues that such an "easy" access to most universal and means-tested benefits will incentivize further immigration, leading to an "infinite" supply of migrants (Ibid).

"The present state of affairs, with EU migrants coming here and sponging off our means-tested benefits, is unacceptable. [...] They often have lower income and thus, can access these benefits very easily, but most of them do pay much less than British citizens for these benefits. How can someone, who work works 2 days a week and earns very little, pay as much of someone who work the whole week and earn much more? In addition the EU rules protect them and ensure the perpetration of such a situation! A foreign citizen from another EU country has effectively has as much access to our benefits system as you or me, Madam Deputy Speaker, even if pay much less taxes than we do. [...] That is definitively benefit tourism and our Bill is trying to finally put an end to this situation".

(Lord Taylor, HC Deb, 17th of January 2014: Column 1138).

From this speech, we can spot a logical relation between the chauvinist argument and the design and underpinning characteristics of the social programs targeted by the Bill (consistently with the thesis' hypotheses). In Taylor's view, the intersection of tax-based funding mechanisms and real-world redistributive patterns of means tested programs allows EU migrant workers to behave as benefit tourists. He argues that many of these migrant workers are very often employed in low-earnings jobs, especially those from Romania and Bulgaria. Low-earnings jobs tend to produce lower incomes and so lower taxation payments. This means that, although they work and pay taxes, their economic and

financial contributions to fund mean-tested benefits are still lower than those of nationals. In spite of that, in empirical terms, these migrants still enjoy these programs benefits as much as workers citizens do (or even more), exactly because of their lower incomes and earnings.

In the second part of the speech, he argues that this contradiction is further “perpetrated” by the EU rules of social security coordination. These rules foresee that EU migrant workers have the same access rights to social protection and are covered by the same legislation as nationals. Accordingly, they can access means-tested benefits if they fulfill the income criteria. In his view, however, these rules do not take into account the fact that many EU workers who access means-tested benefits usually pay less taxes (because of low-earning jobs), which are needed to fund them. Thus, the EU rules make it impossible for the British national Government to correct this contradiction produced by means-tested programs’ design by legally restricting entitlement to such benefits for EU migrant workers.

The Bill receives several criticisms by the members of the opposition. In particular, several Labor MPs criticize the Bill’s supporters for not providing adequate data about the actual percentage of EU citizens coming to the UK purely to claim benefits (HC Deb, 17th of January 2014: Column 1139). Furthermore, they also hold that the Bill would end up disadvantaging EU citizens not only relative to UK ones, but also relative to citizens of non-EU countries⁵⁵.

While acknowledging that these types of data are hardly collectable, Conservatives’ politicians keep portraying EU migrants (especially jobseekers and EU workers) as benefit tourists. Namely, they claim that most EU migrants declare they are coming for some fake reasons (like improving English language skills) but, in fact, coming to get benefits for free (or almost free) (HC Deb, 17th of January 2014: Column 1139). They further stress that the EU rules permit them to behave this way.

⁵⁵ According to the EU legislation (Directives 2011/98 and 1231/2010) TCNs are covered by the principle of non-discrimination (or equal treatment) in regard to the access to social benefits in the EU countries, at the condition they have obtained the permanent residence status – i.e., at least five years of uninterrupted residence.

5. Summary and discussion of the findings in the case of the UK

5.1. Summary of the main findings

Table 8: summary of the main findings in the case of the UK

Hypotheses				Findings observed		
Welfare chauvinist arguments		Social programs		Welfare chauvinist arguments		Social programs
Universal	Means-tested	Insurance-run	Universal	Means-tested	Insurance-run	
Economic arguments						
✓	✓	Not applying				
(H1)	(H2)	(H3)	Economic arguments	✓	✓	No chauvinist reforms observed
<i>Economic hypotheses</i>						
Cultural argument						
✓	Not applying	Not applying	Cultural argument	Not applying	Not applying	No chauvinist reforms observed
(H4)	(H5)	(H6)				
<i>Cultural hypotheses</i>						

Table 8 outlines the main findings observed (grey column) and compares them to those expected by the thesis' hypotheses (white column).

Starting, as usual, with the cultural hypotheses, I cannot provide an answer to the third cultural hypothesis (insurance-run, H6), since I have found *no* instances of welfare chauvinist policies targeting insurance-run programs in the UK. This is the same pattern observed in all the other cases. As for the second cultural hypothesis (means-tested benefits, H5), it is empirically supported since politicians do not apply the cultural distance argument to the means-tested benefits enshrined in the BERB (social housing, council tax). On the contrary, the first one (universal benefits, H4) does not find empirical support, consistently with what observed in the other cases. Politicians do not apply the cultural argument (cultural distance) to justify and promote the introduction of the health surcharge to access the universal NHS program either.

As far as the economic hypotheses are concerned, we observe a fairly different picture. The third economic hypothesis (insurance-run, H3) cannot be assessed, for the same reason illustrated above for the cultural one. The second economic hypothesis (means-tested, H2) finds empirical evidence. Namely, politicians rely on the economic arguments (the benefit tourism/welfare magnet, H2a) to promote and legitimize the chauvinist measures targeting the means-tested programs in the BERB. The first economic hypothesis (universal, H1) is empirically observed too. Politicians indeed apply the economic arguments to justify and promote the introduction of the health surcharge as well.

5.2. Relating welfare chauvinist arguments and types of welfare programs in the UK

Similar to the findings in Austria and Denmark, we observe a logical relation between the benefit tourism/welfare magnet argument and the design of the social programs (both the universal NHS and the means-tested programs in the BERB) it refers to. In simple terms, we can argue that the design of both means-tested and universal social programs prepares the grounds for the expression of the said chauvinist argument by politicians.

Namely, this argument fundamentally questions the organization of both the universal NHS and the means-tested programs in the BERB. In particular, it questions the intersection between the tax-based funding mechanisms (common to both the means-tested and universal programs considered) and these programs' redistributive outcomes (resulting from the need-based and universalistic redistributive logics) In politicians' view, these are the very characteristics that allow the different groups of migrants targeted to behave as abusers and benefit tourists, for the reasons illustrated in detail in the previous cases. Against this background, the welfare chauvinist measures are deemed necessary to solve this undesirable situation, generated by the organization of these programs. Thus, the present case contributes to empirically corroborating the thesis' claim of causality.

As in the case of Austria, the argument-programs link is assessed with regard to means-tested and universal types of benefits merely. Since I do not have a real diverse pool of all program types, also including insurance-ones, it is more difficult to provide a test of the argument-programs link in its entirety, as

formulated in the hypotheses. Nevertheless, I argue that the lack of insurance-run benefits should not significantly affect our conclusions, because of the way the thesis is designed and the purpose it pursues. I illustrate this point in the Conclusions.

General conclusions

1. What has been done

This doctoral thesis has dealt with the topic of migrants' exclusion from social benefits and programs in four Western European host countries: Austria, Italy, Denmark, and the United Kingdom. It has approached this topic from the angle of the political science research on *welfare chauvinism*. As illustrated in the introduction, such a concept can be conceptualized in two different, although connected, phenomena (Ennsner-Jedenastik, 2018).

The first conceptualization defines it as a specific ideological position in the two-dimensional policy space that combines neoliberal views on economic issues – free trade and minimal State intervention in the economy – and authoritarian views on socio-cultural issues – law and order, morality and authority, national way of life and opposition to immigration (Kitschelt and McGann, 1995). This ideological position applies to both individual attitudes and political parties' strategies (Ibid).

The second definition says that welfare chauvinism refers to the application of nativism and the nativist principles to the design of social policies (Ennsner-Jedenastik, 2018). Nativism relies on a group-based logic, pitting the native in-group (citizens) against the non-native out-group (migrants, refugees) in the competition for national social benefits and protection. The in-group is typically delineated by formal citizenship, and, in its stricter interpretation, ethnicity, race, or religion. These two conceptualizations of welfare chauvinism are indeed strictly linked. I adopt the second conceptualization, being more relevant to the thesis' ends.

The present thesis is situated in a specific strand of literature dealing with welfare chauvinism, i.e., that about welfare chauvinist policies and policy reforms. It has pursued the overall objective of increasing the attention on and expanding this field of research, which has often remained at the fringe of both the theoretical discussion and the empirical research about welfare chauvinism. Most of the studies on this topic have rather focused on party politics and individual-level chauvinist attitudes (Ibid). Within this broader objective, the thesis has specifically explored the welfare chauvinist arguments, or justificatory

arguments, that lay behind welfare chauvinist policies and notably the explanatory factors shaping these arguments.

The idea that different chauvinist arguments may exist in policy frameworks and policy debates is not new but is already present in the literature (cfr. Chapter 1). The studies by Jørgensen and Thomsen; Keskinen and Norocel (2016, cfr. Chapter 1) have outlined the existence of several welfare chauvinist arguments to promote and legitimize welfare chauvinism in political debates, political manifestos and social policies (especially in the Scandinavian area). My work systematizes and summarizes them into a common framework, conceptually distinguishing between economic-based and culturally-rooted set of arguments. This point is made very clearly in table 1 in Chapter 1.

However, the present thesis also differs from previous contributions in a fundamental point, namely it has engaged in making a *causal* type of inference, rather than a *descriptive* one. Building on the previous studies, it has developed and tested in the case-studies a novel theoretical and analytical framework to generate expectations about 1) the explanatory factors that shape the chauvinist arguments and (linked to the first point) 2) how politicians (belonging to different political parties) use the different types of justificatory arguments to legitimize and promote welfare chauvinism.

The thesis' fundamental proposition is that the types of chauvinist arguments used (economic and/or cultural) are shaped by the different types of social programs observed (means-tested, universal and insurance-based). In simple terms, the types of social programs are the expected predictors, and the types of welfare chauvinist arguments are the outcome under observation. I have hypothesized in Chapter 2 that the design of *universal* programs provides the opportunity for the mobilization of both an *economic* and a *cultural* type of migrants-natives *conflict* (the economic and cultural arguments respectively). Instead, the design of *means-tested* programs appeals to the economic one only. Finally, the organization of insurance-based schemes does not provide the opportunity for the mobilization of neither the *cultural* nor the *economic* type of migrants-natives *conflict*.

To test these hypotheses, the thesis has relied on a multi-cases comparative analysis (Yin, 1984). I have compared the types of justificatory arguments used to support and legitimize the adoption of welfare chauvinist

policies or specific measures, across different types of policy areas (universal, means-tested, insurance-based). The comparison has been conducted both *between* different countries and between different types of programs *within* each country. This has allowed me to assess whether the justificatory arguments correspond to those hypothesized and to establish a link between the types of social programs and the types of justificatory arguments.

To capture the different types of justificatory arguments and allocate them across the different types of social programs, I have relied on an in-depth qualitative content analysis (Schreier 2014; Kuckartz 2019) of politicians' speeches during parliamentary debates. I have selected the debates where politicians discuss about the proposed chauvinist policy reforms and vote their approval, in each of the selected countries. To speed up the process of analysis, I have built a precise and well-defined system of codes and categories (more details in Chapter 3).

As for the selection of cases, I have built on the most-different approach of comparing, also known as method of similarities (Mill 1843; Gerrig 2016; Fabbrini and Molutsi 2011). Accordingly, the four countries mentioned above have been selected since they belong to different welfare regimes (1 case for each of the 4 regimes) and, at the same time, they all share the same outcome, i.e., some instances of welfare chauvinism. These can be already implemented or about being approved exclusionary social laws or reforms in the national policy framework.

I have relied on this type of approach of comparing since it allows me for ruling out the possibility of a spurious relation (Corbetta, 2003) between the types of social programs and the types of chauvinist arguments, involving welfare regimes as potential confounding factors (for more details, cfr. Chapter 3). This in turn has allowed me to bring evidence to the main theoretical claim, i.e., that the types of social programs and the types of chauvinist arguments are not only associated but also causally related.

In the next paragraphs, I provided a detailed summary and discussion of the findings stemming from the analysis and based on that I proceed to answer the thesis' main research question(s). As specified in chapter 3, the analysis voluntarily neglected the recently developed differentiation between direct and indirect forms of welfare chauvinism. In line with previous recent studies on the

topic (Jørgensen and Thomsen 2016; Keskinen 2016; Noricel 2016), I narrowed down the scope of analysis to a specific form of welfare chauvinism, that is the direct one (Careja et al., 2016). Accordingly, the thesis' purpose is not to reach results speaking for all forms of welfare chauvinism, but for direct welfare chauvinism specifically.

2. Summary and discussion of the findings

2.1. *Welfare chauvinist arguments and types of social programs*

Table 9 and table 10 at the end of this Chapter provide a comprehensive overview of the thesis' main findings. Table 9 illustrates the existing links between the fundamental factors at play, namely the types of social programs (expected explanatory factor/predictor) and these of welfare chauvinist arguments (outcome under investigation). Moreover, the table allows for comparing the expected links programs-arguments (white column) to the ones observed (grey column), from an overall perspective, including all the country-cases. Table 10 shows instead where, among the cases selected, these arguments and the programs-arguments links are observed. Besides, it also outlines the specific policy reform(s) to which these arguments apply. Some interesting findings emerge.

What we observe at first glance from table 9 is that, on the whole, the existence of a clear link between types of social programs and types of chauvinist arguments is supported by empirical evidence. In several cases, the observed associations comply to the expected ones, to a certain extent; however, several important divergencies emerge as well.

Starting from the cultural hypotheses, the first one (universal programs, H4) is not supported by empirical evidence. Politicians do not apply the argument of cultural distance to any of the instances of welfare chauvinist policies targeting universal programs. This pattern is consistent across all the four countries analyzed. On the contrary, the second cultural hypothesis (means-tested programs, H5) finds support, across all the four countries analyzed. Politicians never use the cultural distance argument with regard to means-tested programs.

Instead, it seems more difficult at first glance to provide an answer to the third cultural hypothesis (insurance-run schemes, H6), as I have found *no* instances of direct welfare chauvinist policy reforms targeting the national

insurance schemes, in any of the selected cases. As mentioned in Chapter 3, a possible explanation may be that politicians could sometimes promote welfare chauvinism with regard to insurance schemes in *indirect* ways. By excluding indirect welfare chauvinism from my analysis, I cannot assess this eventuality. We cannot either rule out the possibility that politicians rely on some economic or culturally-based justificatory arguments (similar to those hypothesized in this thesis) to support these indirect forms.

On the one hand, the lack of insurance-based benefits in the analysis is a limitation. Since I do not have a real diverse pool of all program types, it is more difficult to provide a comprehensive test of the argument-programs link. On the other hand, I argue that the lack of insurance-run benefits should not significantly affect our conclusions, because of the way the thesis is designed and the purpose it pursues.

Namely, the goal is to contribute to breaking ground on research about the welfare chauvinist arguments, starting from a specific form of exclusion, i.e., *direct* welfare chauvinism. I have outlined in Chapter 3 the reasons and advantages of this choice. Conversely, the thesis does not aim at providing a fully exhaustive account of *all* the different forms and facets of welfare chauvinism and the underpinning justificatory arguments. That would be rather difficult to accomplish in a single work indeed.

When sticking to direct welfare chauvinism, we still face a problem. The fact that, in these four cases, I have found no instances of direct welfare chauvinism targeting insurance-run programs, nor the relevant justificatory arguments, does not automatically imply that these programs never appeal to one or more of these arguments. A larger number of cases (countries) should be considered, in order to further assess the relation between insurance-run schemes-direct welfare chauvinism-chauvinist arguments.

Despite that, I claim that it is overall highly unlikely to observe direct welfare chauvinism and the chauvinist argument targeting insurance programs. While I cannot empirically assess this statement in my thesis, I feel quite safe to support it, building on previous research on the topic. Through an in-depth analysis of similar policies across several countries, Ennser-Jedenastik (2016, 2018) has shown that that the design of insurance benefits does not tend to attract direct welfare chauvinism. I go further by arguing that a logical consequence of

this is that insurance-based benefits do not attract any of the welfare chauvinist arguments either, in compliance to both H6 (cultural hypothesis) and H3 (economic hypothesis). As just shown, there are some solid bases in support of this assumption. This should not prevent, however, future studies to go deeper into this topic to empirically assess my assumptions. For further considerations about the results' generalization, please refer to paragraph 5.3.

As far as the economic hypotheses are concerned, the first and second ones (universal and means-tested programs, H1 and H2) are confirmed in almost all the cases analyzed. Politicians apply the benefit tourism/welfare magnet economic argument (H1a) to justify migrants' exclusion from the universal health care system in the UK – but not the economic burden one (H1b). Similarly, politicians apply the benefit tourism/welfare magnet argument also to justify the chauvinist measures targeting the means-tested programs in Austria, Denmark and the UK (H2a). In Austria, they also apply the economic burden argument (H2b). Finally, it can be presumably argued that H3 (insurance-run programs) is confirmed, for the same reason illustrated above for the corresponding cultural hypothesis.

2.2. Exceptions to the thesis' hypotheses

We observe two major exceptions to the thesis' hypotheses. The first one takes place in the universal social policy area, in Austria. Here, the FPÖ and the ÖVP government politicians do not apply the economic nor the cultural arguments to legitimize the indexation of the universal family allowances program. They apply instead an additional argument, that of an alleged “unfairness” in the national redistribution of social benefits. Namely, they argue that Austrian families and children living in Austria suffer from social unfairness, whilst non-Austrian and non-resident children⁵⁶ enjoy several advantages from the present system of family benefits. Against this background, politicians invoke the indexation measure to restore fairness for Austrian families. By adjusting the allowances to the costs of life in each country, politicians want to make sure that every family and child receive in proportion to their actual costs and expenditures. Indexation is also meant to enable Austrian families living in the country to ensure their

⁵⁶ As seen, they refer specifically to non-Austrian children living outside the country (in other EU countries, especially Eastern European ones) but whose parents work in Austria.

children's needs properly

As seen, the fairness/unfairness argument does not point back to economic nor cultural considerations. It is rather concerned about the overall well-functioning of the social redistributive system, especially in terms of fair and equal redistribution (who receives what). For this reason, I consider it as an additional, *sui generis* type of justification, conceptually different from the others. Accordingly, I keep it separated also in table 9. In the lexicon of the content analysis methodology, this argument should be defined as an “in vivo” and “data-driven” category (Schreier 2014; Kuckartz 2019). Namely, is not conceptualized in the previous literature on welfare chauvinism; it rather emerges inductively from the speeches analyzed in the Austrian case. It therefore differs from the other three categories, that are rather “concept-driven”, i.e., I derived them from the existing concepts in the literature about welfare chauvinism and the chauvinist arguments (Ibid).

The second exception regards means-tested programs and it occurs in Italy. Here, the League politicians justify the restrictions to the access to means-tested Citizenship Income program for migrants (TCNs in particular) by relying on a peculiar argument, i.e., that portraying migrants as cheaters. Accordingly, I have defined it as the “cheating argument”. Namely, politicians of the League blame migrants for cheating on their real properties and income (declaring less) in order to get the entitlement to the minimum income schemes. This way, politicians argue, migrants take away and spend in their home countries several social and economic resources, that may otherwise be spent to improve the welfare services for Italians living below the poverty line. Politicians blame migrants of behaving that way with the previous minimum income scheme (*Reddito di Inclusione Sociale*). To avoid this same behavior with the new CI, the chauvinist measures are therefore needed.

Similar to the unfairness one, the cheating argument is not observed in any of the existing studies about justificatory arguments. It emerges instead inductively from the speeches analyzed in the Italian case. Given that, I likewise consider it as an inductively-made argument and data-driven analytical category (Schreier 2014; Kuckartz 2019). To be sure, its real nature and the link with the other arguments in the table 9 at the end of this Chapter are not still completely clarified.

On the one hand, it can be included into the economic cluster since it shares some common points to the other economic arguments. On the other hand, it may also have some cultural elements (cfr. Chapter 6). Both these interpretations need more empirical research to be fully assessed and, at the same time, other interpretations are possible too, not necessarily linked to economic nor cultural considerations. In light of that, I do not feel safe to include this argument neither among the economic nor the cultural arguments in tables 1 and 2. Conversely, I prefer to keep it separated in table 9, while also being aware of the potential connections to the other arguments in the tables (cfr. Chapter 6).

3. Answering the research questions

Based on the findings and discussion in paragraph 1, I will now move to answer the thesis' starting research questions:

RQ: How do politicians promote welfare chauvinist policies and reforms, in the Western European political context?

SRQ1: What arguments do politicians exploit to exclude migrants from social benefits?

SRQ2: Which are the factors that shape the different types of welfare chauvinist arguments?

I will proceed backwards, by starting from the sub-research questions and then moving to the thesis' main question. This allows for providing a more complete answer all the RQs, especially the main one.

3.1. SRQ1: What arguments do politicians exploit to exclude migrants from social benefits?

Building on the literature, the analysis considers both the economic-based and the culturally-rooted sets of arguments (cfr. table 1 Chapter 1). The former is made up by two distinct (but also connected) justifications, i.e., the benefit tourism and the economic burden one. Both look at migrants' economic performances and stress migrants' economic deviances compared to citizens. Specifically, the benefit tourism looks at migrants' economic behaviors and notably their contributions to fund national welfare benefits (in terms of taxes) as well as their efforts to economically self-support themselves. The economic burden is

concerned about the increase of taxes paid by national citizens and the risk for a national economic collapse due to migrants (Jørgensen and Thomsen, 2016; Keskinen, 2016; Noricel, 2016). The latter is the cultural distance argument (Jørgensen and Thomsen 2016; Keskinen 2016; Noricel 2016). It simply applies *strictu sensu* the nativist principle implicitly embedded in the chauvinist discourse. By making this principle explicit, it highlights the cultural distance (and often incompatibility) between citizens and migrants.

Furthermore, the thesis explores an additional potential chauvinist argument, that of “welfare magnet” (in table 1 Chapter 1 as well). This is conceptualized in the literature about the international migration-welfare nexus. It is often part of the reasoning used by several politicians, especially in the Scandinavian countries, to justify and support immigrant welfare schemes that sharply reduce welfare benefits to certain foreign immigrants (Borjas 1999; Dodson 2001; De Giorgi and Pellizzari 2010; Agersnap et al., 2019). Namely, they claim that generous welfare benefits in European host countries may work as an incentive for many migrants (from both inside and outside Europe) to migrate to these countries. Since these reasonings are infused with anti-immigration ideology, they claim that welfare benefits should be reduced for migrants in order to keep under control and reduce the incoming immigration flows.

In Chapter 1, I have argued that the welfare magnet argument is linked to the other arguments and especially to that of benefit tourism. While being aware of the differences between these two arguments in the respective literatures, I claim that they are connected when looking at them through the lens of the chauvinist-oriented political rhetoric (more details in Chapter 1). Given that, I introduce a new common conceptualization of these arguments in the thesis, referring to them as a single, two-faces argument, i.e., the “benefit tourism/welfare magnet” one. In other words, this (partially) novel concept is deemed to function as a heuristic, that helps me to speed up the process of analysis.

The question of which of these hypothesized arguments is empirically observed has already been partially answered in paragraph 1. In summary, looking at tables 1 and 2 again, politicians use the following arguments to limit migrants’ access to social benefits and programs, or exclude them:

- The economic arguments:

- Benefit tourism/welfare magnet (Austria, Denmark, the UK);
- Economic burden (Austria)

Besides, in some cases, they rely on two additional, inductively-observed arguments:

- The unfairness argument (Austria);
- The cheating argument (Italy).

On the contrary, politicians do not use the cultural argument to support the chauvinist policies in any of the selected cases.

In this paragraph I have only mentioned the arguments observed, without special reference to the types of social programs they apply to. The next paragraph illustrates this point in detail, in order to answer the second sub-question.

3.2.SRQ2: Which are the factors that shape the different types of welfare chauvinist arguments?

The thesis' main claim is that the types of welfare chauvinist arguments (outcome under observation) exploited by politicians are shaped by the different types of social programs observed (expected predictor). Furthermore, the thesis also holds that, contrary to what one may expect from the literature on welfare State' developments in Europe, the four different types of welfare regimes are ultimately irrelevant in explaining the justifications behind welfare chauvinism.

We have seen in table 9 (paragraph 1) that the analysis has *not* found any instances of welfare chauvinism targeting insurance-run programs, in any of the selected cases. It logically follows that no welfare chauvinist arguments apply to this type of programs either (at least, not in the cases analyzed). I have argued that this occurs since the design of insurance-run programs makes no appeal to the economic nor the cultural types of chauvinist conflict. Since they individualize benefit claims ("to each according to his/her contribution", cfr. Ennser-Jedenastik 2018, p.6), insurance-based schemes usually produce very low levels of redistribution from nationals to migrants. Such a characteristic fundamentally undercuts the economic type of conflict between migrants and nationals. This in turn makes it harder for nativist politicians to frame migrants as benefit tourists or as an economic burden (i.e., the economic arguments).

Furthermore, I have also argued that the cultural-based in-out conflict (i.e., the cultural distance argument) does not hold either. As explained in Chapter 2, non-citizens migrants have always been able to formally access the national insurance funds, as long as they paid the employment-related contributions and resided for a certain period of time in the host country. Accordingly, the insurance-based programs had ever undergone a real process of denationalization over time (Sainsbury 2012; Nordensvarda and Ketola 2015). Consequently, I have argued that they are less likely to come into contrast with the nativist logic and to attract the argument of (real or alleged) cultural distance. These findings are in line with previous studies on welfare chauvinism, highlighting that insurance-based programs are usually less vulnerable to the welfare chauvinistic rhetoric thanks to their design (Ennsner-Jedenastik 2016, 2018, 2020).

By contrast, table 9 also highlights the existence of an association between universal and means-tested programs and some of the hypothesized chauvinist arguments – and even to some inductively-made arguments. While relevant, this finding is not enough to assess the existence of a causal linkage between the types of programs and types of justificatory arguments. In order to substantiate the thesis's theoretical claim, I have delved into the details of politicians' parliamentary speeches in each of the case-study by means of the qualitative content analysis methodology. This method has allowed me to investigate whether politicians use one or more justificatory arguments based on considerations on the programs' structures and organization (more details provided in chapter 3).

The thesis' causal claim is supported by empirical evidence in several cases. To begin with, a causal link is observed between the benefit tourism/welfare magnet argument (outcome) and the following types of social programs (predictor) in three of the cases analyzed:

- Austria: means-tested social assistance program (2019 New Basic Act on Social Assistance);
- Denmark: means-tested social assistance program (2002 Starting allowance reform and 2006 Future immigration reform);
- The UK:

- means-tested social housing, council tax benefit and other means-tested benefits (Benefit Entitlement Restriction Bill 2013-2014);
- universal health care scheme (Immigration Bill 2014).

Based on parliamentary speeches, we can see that the design of these social programs prepares the ground for the expression of the benefit tourism chauvinist argument in the parliamentary debates. That is, this argument questions the fundamental design and organization of both means-tested and universal programs, notably the combination between the tax-based funding mechanisms and the programs' redistributive outcomes (resulting from the need-based and the universal logics of social redistribution). Consistently across the three cases, politicians (from both mainstream parties and PRRPs) argue these are the very characteristics that allow migrants to behave as abusers and to live off national citizens.

Namely, migrants usually pay less taxes (as they have lower level of labor market integration and lower incomes and earnings), so their contribution to fund universal and means-tested programs are lower than that by nationals. However, they at the same time benefit of these programs to the same or even a larger extent than nationals, exactly because of their lower income (i.e., need-based redistributive logic, means-tested programs) or because they have acquired the permanent residency (i.e., universalistic redistributive logic, universal programs). In the case of EU migrants' access to the means-tested benefit in the UK (Benefit Entitlement Restriction Bill), the (alleged) contradiction produced by the programs' design is further strengthened by the EU rules protecting them.

Furthermore, an additional causal link is observed between the economic burden argument (outcome) and the means-tested social assistance program, in Austria (2019 New Basic Act on Social Assistance). Once again, we can presumably argue that the design of social assistance, as a means-tested program, prepares the ground for the expression of said chauvinist argument. As in the previous case, this argument questions the combination between the program's tax-based funding mechanisms and redistributive outcomes. In politicians' view, the combination between these characteristics has led to a growing burden for Austrian citizens. Indeed, they have to pay far higher taxes to

finance the growing requests of social assistance by refugees (especially Syrian refugees) and, indirectly, their families in the home countries⁵⁷.

By contrast, I argue that the causal linkage between the characteristics of the social programs and the characteristics of the chauvinist arguments is not observed in the case of the Austrian fairness/unfairness argument. It emerges indeed that this argument does not really question the design and organization of the family social program. By using this argument, politicians question instead the organization of EU rules, and notably the principle of equal treatment or non-discrimination of EU mobile workers in the EU territory enshrined in the EU social security coordination framework⁵⁸.

These rules are seen as are problematic because of the effect they produce on the broader social redistribution system across different countries⁵⁹. In politicians' view, the key of the problem is that these rules guarantee that all parents working and paying taxes in Austria are subject to the same entitlement rules, whilst not taking into consideration children's place of residence too (either in Austria or in the less expensive home countries).

That is, with the very same amount of money received through the family allowance, children who reside in more expensive countries (with lower purchasing power), such as Austria, can afford much less than children who reside in less expensive countries. In spite of that, the latter receive the same amount of money than the former, because their parents work in Austria and have therefore right to the same family benefits than Austrian parents (EU non-discrimination principle). This is leading to this unfavorable situation at the expense of Austrians children described by the government politicians, making the indexation measure necessary.

Finally, the thesis' causal claim remains more ambiguous in the case of the cheating argument, in Italy. On the one hand, based on the speeches

⁵⁷ As several refugees send a significant part of the money received through the social assistance scheme to their families and relatives in the home countries (cfr. chapter 4).

⁵⁸ To be sure, politicians do not explicitly mention the EU social security coordination framework, but they talk in general terms about "EU rules". In spite of that, we can presume they refer to such a framework, since it is the main mechanism at EU level to ensure citizens of any EU MS who work and reside in another EU country the same right to social benefits than the citizens of the host country (in this case, the same family benefits than Austrian citizens).

⁵⁹ This is slightly different from the case of means-tested benefits in the UK, where politicians deem these same EU rules problematic because they further strengthen the contradiction between migrants' favorable redistributive outcome and lower tax payments, enshrined in social programs

analyzed, it seems that the logical relation between the characteristics of the argument and characteristics of the CI program (means-tested) is not at play. The League politicians link this argument to general considerations about the Italian administrative system, rather than the structures and organization of the program *per se*. Namely, they argue that the lack of adequate administrative controls by social workers during the frontline delivery of the CI has prepared the ground for these negative cheating behaviors by migrants.

On the other hand, the thesis has also provided a second reading of the findings in the case of Italy. The argument of cheating assumes that there is actually something on which migrants can cheat. Building on that, it can be logically argued that means-tested programs, as the CI, provide leverage for this type of behaviors since they are based on income and earnings which can be more easily falsified than, for example, contributions in insurance schemes.

As mentioned in chapter 6, these two interpretations are not necessarily in contrast, but they can also complement each other. That is, means-tested programs, as the CI, provide leverage for cheating behaviors and this is further strengthened by the lack of adequate administrative controls by social workers during the frontline delivery of the benefit. Overall, both these interpretations are plausible. Further studies are needed to clarify the nature of the link between the “cheating” argument and the design and organization and structures of means-tested programs (as the Italian CI).

The analysis has also ruled out the possibility of a spurious association between types of programs and types of arguments involving the welfare regime as confounding factor. The qualitative methodology adopted has been helpful in assessing that. First, I have selected four country-cases that correspond to the four types of welfare regimes in Europe (most-different approach to comparison). Within each of them, I have dealt with different types of social programs. This already shows that each of these regimes is characterized today by a combination of different types of social programs rather than a prevailing one, thus dismantling the claim that the welfare regime types shape the prevailing type of social program.

In addition, the in-depth qualitative content analysis of parliamentary speeches has enabled me to establish a logical link between the characteristics of the different justificatory arguments and those of the different types of social

programs, strengthening the causality claim (as just illustrated). Conversely, this same link is *not* observed between the different justificatory arguments and the different types of welfare regime, in any of the countries analyzed. Thanks to that, I feel safe to exclude the possibility that the welfare regime types shape the types of welfare chauvinist arguments.

3.3. *RQ: How do politicians promote welfare chauvinist policies and policy reforms, in the Western European political context?*

Overall, the present thesis has pointed out that politicians promote welfare chauvinist policies by relying on four different (but somehow connected) welfare chauvinist arguments: the benefit tourism/welfare magnet and the economic burden (economic-based arguments), the cheating argument and the unfairness argument. Conversely, the thesis does not observe the cultural distance argument (the culturally-rooted argument) in any of the cases under investigation.

This does not mean, however, that this argument does not exist in policy frameworks and debates. Since the thesis examines a limited number of cases and policies (small-N study), it may also be the case that the cultural argument is used by politicians to justify chauvinist policies in countries different from the ones selected. Thus, it is left to future research to disentangle this specific point.

Generally speaking, we can plausibly support the view that the social programs' design shapes the justificatory arguments used by chauvinist politicians to exclude migrants from national welfare. This view is an interesting tool to both understand and explore how welfare chauvinism is publicly legitimized in the Western European social and political context, especially when it moves from the *politics* (party manifestos and electoral declarations) to the *policy* level, i.e., actual laws, policies and policy reforms.

In spite of that, the present research has also shown that not all welfare chauvinist arguments (irrespective of their economic or cultural nature) can be read in relation to the types of social programs. On the contrary, the causal claim is not observed in the case of the unfairness argument and universal programs in Austria. Finally, the claim remains more ambiguous with regard to the cheating argument and the means-tested minimum income scheme in Italy. Other explanatory factors may be at play, that have consciously not been considered

here.

Moreover, it may also be the case that the methodological tools and data used are not always able to exhaustively capture the causal connections between the cheating argument, the organization of means-tested programs (and/or eventually other potential predictors). Qualitative content analysis of parliamentary speeches is only one of instruments (although a very effective and valid one) to investigate the relevant causal linkages. Such linkages can rather emerge more clearly when including in the analysis other methods and sources of information on the possible chauvinist arguments. These can be, for example, interviews with key informants, systematic analysis of relevant legislation, official government documents and political actors' publications.

To conclude, the thesis has the merit of opening the path to the investigation of welfare chauvinist arguments, and of drawing the scholars' attention to the potential link between these arguments and the different types of social programs (i.e., the programs' design and structures). Future research on welfare chauvinist policies can benefit from incorporating these aspects in order to better assess the explanatory nature of the programs-arguments relation.

4. Relevance of the findings

4.1. Theoretical relevance

The findings of this thesis are theoretically and empirically relevant. Theoretically speaking, this thesis aims at opening a broader reflection about two points. First, it shows that the design of social policy programs is a key element to improve our understanding of welfare chauvinism and, in this specific case, of its underpinning justifications and ground for legitimization. Ennser-Jedenastik's work has for the first time demonstrated the importance of programs' design for any investigation of welfare chauvinism; despite that, the policy component in research on welfare chauvinism remains understudied. This thesis aligns with Ennser-Jedenastik's work and further stresses this point.

Secondly, the thesis points out the implications the chauvinist arguments may have on the concept and understanding of welfare chauvinism. The thesis' main contribution to this broader reflection is the claim that the different welfare chauvinist arguments constitute the basis of a variety of

different forms of welfare chauvinism. These forms are deemed to exist in policy reforms and in the surrounding policy discussion, both in the cases observed and in other European host countries (if the findings are generalized).

Relying on the traditional understanding of welfare chauvinism (Andersen and Bjørklund, 1990), we know that this concept is defined by two overarching properties:

- the *separation* of society into two distinct groups: national citizens (and sometimes permanent residents too), i.e., the native *ingroup*, and migrants (including, depending on the case, different categories of migrants), the non-native *outgroup*;
- the *exclusion* or *limited access* on welfare benefits and programs at the expense of the members of the outgroup.

Since these properties lay at the core of the definition of welfare chauvinism itself, they characterize all the different forms of welfare chauvinism and chauvinist policies. The various forms differ instead in terms of the justificatory arguments supporting them. Namely, politicians each time justify the exclusion (or limited access) of the members of the non-native out-group by exploiting different justificatory/chauvinist arguments. Based on the thesis' analysis and findings, I distinguish two (and eventually three) forms of welfare chauvinism. These are linked to specific types of social programs, i.e., means-tested and universal, across the cases analyzed.

These forms are:

1. The first is an *economic form of welfare chauvinism*, since it relies on the economic justificatory arguments. This mobilizes an economic type of conflict between national citizens and migrants (including different groups of migrants, at least in the cases analyzed). On the one hand, we have national hard-working citizens, who contribute to the national economy and welfare expenditure through their work activities and taxes. On the other hand, non-citizens migrants (different groups, depending on the case) who enjoy the generous national welfare benefits without economically contributing to them (nor working, nor paying taxes, or not sufficiently). They also impose additional costs to the national public economy.

Accordingly, politicians exclude migrants on the basis of their (alleged) low economic performances and negative behaviors, namely the low levels of

engagement in the national labor market and economic self-reliance. They also exclude migrants because of their low levels of economic reciprocity, i.e., their limited willingness to participate in publicly-funded re-insertion programs and to actively look for an employment (in politicians' view).

Having in mind the studies about citizens' attitudes (cfr. van Oorschot 2000; Nielsen et al. 2019, cfr. chapter 1), one can see that this type of reasoning points back to the reciprocity principle observed at citizens' level. The debate remains open, though, on the causality link between the individual attitudes and the economic form of welfare chauvinism put forth by politicians. It is still unclear whether politicians conform to individual chauvinist views (i.e., they exploit the same deservingness principles), as to obtain more popular consensus, or if they create a hegemonic discourse about migration and welfare deservingness and spread it across the public, also by means of chauvinist-oriented policy reforms. While this point is of high relevance, yet it is not relevant to the thesis' ends. Future research can incorporate this finding to further disentangle the direction of causality between individual attitudes, politicians' public discourses and chauvinist-oriented policy reforms.

We observe the economic form of welfare chauvinism especially in regard to means-tested social assistance programs, across almost all the cases analyzed. It also emerges in regard to the universal health care program (NHS), in the UK. The members of the native ingroup and the non-native outgroup slightly change across the cases. In almost all cases, the "natives" are national citizens of the countries in point. The "non-natives" are often immigrants from extra-EU countries (third-country nationals, TCNs), who are also from non-Western countries. Yet we observe economic welfare chauvinism also in relation to EU and Western migrants (in the UK). Interestingly, in the case of the UK, this form of welfare chauvinism includes not only British citizens but also permanent resident migrants in the native in-group, thus opposing the latter to temporary migrants.

2. The second form of welfare chauvinism is that observed in the case of the universal family allowance program in Austria, based on the argument of fairness and unfairness in the social redistributive system. It is slightly different from 1). Indeed, it does not seem interested in mobilizing a real conflict between

natives (in this case, Austrian citizens) and migrants (in this case, EU migrant workers, the “non-natives” in this case). Politicians do not focus on migrants’ individual economic behaviors and performances nor the economic consequences they produce. They do not even necessarily portray migrants in negative terms or stresses some deviant behaviors from their side. They rather reduce the amount of family allowances for EU migrant children on the basis of broader considerations regarding the features and overall well-functioning of the social system. In their view, this measure is necessary to safeguard an equal social distribution and avoid that Austrian children and family receive less than others social groups. I define it as *fairness-based form of welfare chauvinism*.

3. Finally, a potential third form of welfare chauvinism may be that observed in the case of Italy and the means-tested Citizenship Income scheme (CI), based on the cheating argument. It mobilizes a clear conflict between Italian nationals and migrants, especially non-EU migrants (third-country nationals, TCNs). It is yet not clear whether it should be considered an economic type of conflict or a cultural one, for the reasons illustrated before. Regardless of that, this argument portrays migrants in a negative manner, as they carry out deviant and dishonest behaviors. It is exactly on the basis of such behaviors that politicians legitimize the reduction of the CI at migrants’ expenses. Against this background, we need further research to understand whether this is a third form of welfare chauvinism (maybe a cultural one), or it can rather be classified as an additional ramification of the economic form of welfare chauvinism.

Beyond the specific differences in the forms of welfare chauvinism, this theoretical differentiation has two major implications in light of the literature on welfare chauvinist policies. First, the thesis has shown the importance of nuanced conceptualizations of the concept of welfare chauvinism. The theoretical distinction proposed is a useful tool to understand how chauvinist policy changes occurring at the macro-level are debated and implemented at the *meso* level of politics, i.e., by the actors who play an important role in setting the political and policy agenda. Namely, it sheds the light on how politicians (of PRRPs but not only) in Western European host countries frame the migration-welfare nexus, one of the hotter topics in contemporary public debates, in public debates and public

arenas as national parliaments. The next paragraph will illustrate how different frames and forms of welfare chauvinism may empirically conditionate migrants' likelihood to counter exclusion and get social benefits' entitlement.

In second place, the present thesis also demonstrates that the chauvinist justificatory arguments, typically left at the fringe of the theoretical discussion on welfare chauvinism, are not supplementary properties to the concept merely. On the contrary, they may constitute a key *criterion* to *break down* and further *specify* the concept of welfare chauvinism into different manifestations (i.e., different forms) of it.

4.2. Empirical relevance

The conceptual differentiation outlined in the previous paragraph has empirical implications as well. If welfare chauvinism continues to gain foothold in national legislation, as it is currently doing (Chueri 2019, Lafleur and Vintila 2020), migrants will see their social rights increasingly challenged (Ibid). Nevertheless, they may be more or less likely to counter exclusion and obtain the entitlement to social programs according to the type of welfare chauvinism at play.

When we have an economic form of welfare chauvinism, migrants can obtain the entitlement to social benefits if they are willing to “reciprocate back”, i.e., they put an effort to integrate into the labor market (cfr. Jørgensen and Thomsen, 2016). Based on that, I argue that the extent of migrants' entitlement and exclusion may depend, to a certain extent, on migrants' behaviors and attitudes, meaning that have some form of control upon that.

On the contrary, when we have a form of welfare chauvinism based on considerations of fairness and unfairness (as in the case of Austria), migrants may remain excluded for the sake of the overall well-functioning of the social system, independently from their willingness and all their efforts. Contrary to the previous case, being economically active and paying taxes can be still not enough to obtain access to national welfare. Indeed, politicians can always invoke broader, systemic-based considerations that urge to implement restrictions in the social welfare field. In this case, I claim, migrants have far less control (or even not all) upon the extent of their entitlement and exclusion from national welfare programs and benefits. As soon as this form of welfare chauvinism remains confined in Austria, it can simply be considered a peculiarity of the Austrian

case. If future research assesses its presence also elsewhere, it may be a signal of a political willingness to more severely challenge and limit social rights for migrants.

From a more general perspective, migrants' exclusion from (or limited access to) social programs can lead to major consequences for both migrants and the European host countries. While this point has already been highlighted by Marshall (1950) half a century ago, it remains today fundamentally unheard. By contrast, several significant welfare chauvinist-oriented turns in social policies have taken place in most recent times in Europe, of which the thesis' case-studies are a good illustration.

From migrants' perspective, legal access to national social benefits and programs through inclusive social policies has the potential to enable social inclusion. This has to be intended in broader terms, as the inclusion within the overall society, including several different aspects (Marshall, 1950). In particular, social inclusion refers to the satisfaction of migrants' basic needs (protection against sickness, disability, unemployment, and old age) as well as their inclusion into the larger political community in the host countries (Marshall 1950; Sainsbury 2012). Namely, by furnishing migrants the resources for individual development, inclusive social policies also contribute to enhancing their capabilities to exercise political rights⁶⁰, i.e., the ability to participate in the civil and political life – in all its different forms (Ibid).

Social inclusion produces in turn positive spillovers that go far beyond migrants and the welfare sphere. Among others, host countries also benefit from a successful social inclusion of migrants (Marshall 1950; Sainsbury 2012). The exercise of political rights favors migrants' sense of belonging to the host society. This, in the long run, has the potential to combat the emergence of permanent social and political divisions in society that may weaken the functioning of democracy (Ibid).

On the contrary, restrictive and/or exclusionary social policies hamper migrants' individual development and the satisfaction of the basic needs for survival (Marshall 1950; Sainsbury 2012). This is visible in geographical terms as well, with migrants living in marginalized and poorest areas, in both cities and

⁶⁰ It goes without saying that social rights and inclusionary social policies are not the only factors behind migrants' ability to participate in civic and political life of the host countries. Nevertheless, social policies play still a key role in that.

villages, in several European host countries (Bartoli, 2016). Social and political segregation in turn prevent migrants from actively participating in the host countries' society, also including the exercise of political rights (Marshall 1950; Sainsbury 2012).

All this can bring in turn several negative consequences upon the host country social and political stability (Marshall 1950; Sainsbury 2012). The lack of a public response to migrants' poor living conditions and the exclusion from political choices that often affect them may end up producing resentments towards the host country' government and politicians. Scholars agree that such a phenomenon may be at the root of various forms of radicalization (political, religious, ext.) and political instability too (Marshall 1950; Sainsbury 2012; Castles and Schierup 2010).

5. Shortcoming of the research and possible ways forwards

5.1. Other potential explanations behind the justificatory arguments

The theoretical discussion presented in the thesis focuses mainly on what justificatory arguments are used and how they may depend on the different types of social programs. However, one of the defining features of social science is to be multi-factorial (King, Keohane and Verba, 1994). Namely, complex sociopolitical phenomena, such as welfare chauvinism, are hardly explicable by a single factor (Ibid). Several factors may contribute to explaining them, and it is impossible to capture all of them in a single work (Ibid).

A further potential factor shaping the justificatory arguments may be, for example, the different types of groups/categories of migrants targeted. This doctoral thesis is not interested in exploring whether and how welfare chauvinism varies across (and eventually depends on) different categories of migrants. During the analysis of the specific instances of welfare chauvinist policies, I have pointed out the main targets of restrictions (whether TCNs, refugees or others, ext.). However, I have not explored this specific point and its causal implication further deeper.

Moreover, this thesis has considered PRRPs and mainstream ones together at the moment they promote and/or support welfare chauvinist policy reforms. Nevertheless, differences between mainstream and populist politicians and parties can also influence the types of chauvinist arguments, and forms of

welfare chauvinism, at play. Intra-parties' differences may matter as well. In light of that, future analyses can address these points more in depth, exploring differences and similarities across various groups of migrants as well as different parties (and sub-factions within the same party). Additional explanations behind the justificatory arguments may be, for example, different groups of migrants, citizenship rules in the host country, political traditions and specific socio-economic factors, etc.

In the present thesis, I acknowledge the impossibility of providing a fully comprehensive explanations for the types of welfare chauvinist arguments politicians exploit and notably the factors shaping them. The purpose is not to explore all the potential explanations but rather to primarily assess the causal effects of a specific factor, i.e., the type of social program. While acknowledging the potential effects by other factors like the ones mentioned above too, this work is not interested in exploring these.

Therefore, the thesis provides a first step in exploring the potential *explanatory mechanisms* that shape these arguments and generate expectations about how politicians use the different types of arguments⁶¹. The present findings could provide new interesting research avenues to further refine the theoretical and analytical argument presented in the thesis. This will help to better understand the explanatory mechanisms that are left uncovered in the above analysis.

For instance, are the justificatory arguments also shaped by the different categories of migrants they refer to? To what extent do they relate to parties' ideological positions? Is there any difference between direct and indirect welfare chauvinism in terms of justificatory arguments? Scholars can answer these questions also by relying on the analytical strategy put forward by this thesis. Being reliable and easily replicable, that can be applied to parliamentary speeches in other European countries as well as other types of data, e.g., interviews and/or informal speeches by politicians.

5.2. *Forms of welfare chauvinism and choice of policy areas*

By leaving aside indirect forms of welfare chauvinism, I may have somehow

⁶¹ and the corresponding forms of welfare chauvinism

impacted upon the final results. Namely, the findings could have been different if I had included cases of indirect welfare chauvinism, especially regarding the vulnerability of insurance-based programs to the welfare chauvinist claims. I have argued, however, that the exclusion of insurance-based types does not significantly affect our conclusions, considering the thesis' purposes. I have discussed this point in depth in Chapter 3 and at paragraph 2.1. of the present Chapter (please, refer to them for an exhaustive answer).

Furthermore, by including indirect welfare chauvinism, some of the results concerning means-tested and universal programs may have been different as well. It may indeed be the case that politicians decide to limit migrants' access to these types of benefits in indirect ways, eventually relying on some of the hypothesized arguments to legitimize that. Nevertheless, as argued in Chapter 3, indirect welfare chauvinism is sometimes a fairly blurred category in empirical terms. It may, in several cases, be difficult to assess whether politicians mean to purposefully exclude migrants or if this is instead an unintentional spillover. Likewise, we may encounter troubles in testing that the justificatory arguments underpinning indirect welfare chauvinist policies are targeted specifically to migrants. Moreover, including instances of indirect welfare chauvinism would have fallen outside the present scope. As repeatedly claimed, I want to contribute to breaking ground on research about a specific form of welfare chauvinism, i.e., the *direct* one.

By focusing on direct chauvinism only, I have investigated the justificatory arguments for a significant part of existing welfare chauvinist policies – since several of them take a *direct* rather than *indirect* shape, as this thesis has shown. Indirect welfare chauvinism can be considered a valid category, despite its limitations that I have tried to outline. Some policies can presumably be built so to *indirectly* exclude migrants from national welfare (Careja et al., 2016). Given that, the elucidation of the chauvinist arguments behind indirect welfare chauvinism will require and reward a great deal more research. I am confident that future studies will find a valuable starting point in this thesis' results and will be able to use the conceptual and analytical framework proposed here to explore the justificatory arguments behind indirect welfare chauvinism – eventually, modifying and enriching such a framework.

5.3. Generalization of the findings

The thesis pursues an *analytical* form of generalization. This allows for making sound generalizations, also starting from a limited number of cases, as in the thesis. Generalizations are made by tracing the results back to a set of hypotheses and/or a theory, used as a sort of “template” (Maxwell and Chmiel 2014, p.541; Yin 2003, p.32). The “template” of reference are both my newly developed theoretical argument and the hypotheses stemming from it. By means of the qualitative content analysis, I have traced the results in each case back to them, thus assessing the strength of the generalization potential.

We have seen in 2.1. that, overall, the existence of a clear link between types of social programs and types of chauvinist arguments is supported by empirical evidence. In several cases, the observed associations comply to the expected ones, although some important divergencies emerge as well. This finding strengthens the thesis’ claim for generalization. As stated by Yin (2003): “if two or more cases are shown to support the same theory, replication may be validly claimed”. It is true, however, that I have not analyzed the same policies in all countries, as insurance-run programs are not included. Thus, I may have some difficulties in arguing that the hypothesis about insurance programs is empirically supported.

Nevertheless, as argued in 2.1, previous literature on the topic can help me consolidating the claim that the design of insurance benefits does not attract direct welfare chauvinism, nor its relevant justificatory arguments (Ennsner-Jedenastik 2016, 2018, 2020). Given the difficulty to apply direct welfare chauvinism to insurance benefits, politicians may rely on indirect forms of exclusion. However, as repeatedly stated along the thesis, this falls out of the present scope. i.e., direct welfare chauvinism. On that basis, I argue that this does not significantly hamper the ability to extend the thesis’ results beyond other cases.

Furthermore, looking at each of the cases more specifically, we observe some indications that may enhance the findings’ generalization potential. First, the argument of benefit tourism is becoming increasingly popular among politicians, especially in TV and other media speeches. For example, the UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has repeatedly used such an argument in official and unofficial debate on national TV, to demonstrate the good intention behind

the country's decision to leave to the European Union (BBC, 2020). Given that, it is not so unlikely that the post-Brexit UK government as well as other national governments (not included in the present analysis) may issue new chauvinist reforms, relying on the benefit tourism argument.

Moreover, in the selected cases, we find a good mix of different factors. Beyond differences in the welfare state regimes (that was one of the selection criteria), I have pointed out several other types of differences, for example in countries' immigration regimes and patterns as well as evolution of welfare and specific social policies. In spite of these differences, the findings hold quite consistently, although some exceptions.

5.4. Additional sources of data

An additional limitation of the present study is of having mostly focused on parliamentary speeches (parliamentary minutes). These are, in several respects, a more valid tool to explore the arguments behind welfare chauvinism than political manifestos and social policies (cfr. methodological section, chapter 3). Nonetheless, focusing exclusively on parliamentary speeches offers only a partial (although fairly illustrative) view about politicians' strategies.

In light of that, future research will have on the one hand, to add new countries in the parliamentary speeches analysis; on the other, to consider closely other sources of information on the possible chauvinist arguments by politicians. These can be, for example, informal speeches, social networks, interviews with key informants, systematic analysis of relevant legislation, official government documents and political actors' publications.

6. What to do next? Paths for future research

The present thesis has increased the attention on welfare chauvinism at the *policy* level, a still somewhat underexplored field of research, compared to those on political parties' welfare chauvinism and individual-level chauvinist attitudes. It has provided an in-depth investigation of legitimizing explanations behind direct welfare chauvinism in the Western European political context, examining in particular some of the potential explanatory factors shaping them. Against this background, many new questions remain open for future research. Some of these future research directions have already been mentioned all along the chapters and

in the previous paragraphs; here I provide a detailed summary of them.

First, scholars interested in welfare chauvinism should include new countries in the comparative analysis of the chauvinist arguments and the arguments-social programs links. As previously mentioned, this would allow researchers for reaching stronger generalizations of the present findings. Moreover, this would help us to assess whether some of the chauvinist arguments observed, and namely the unfairness and the cheating ones, are peculiar of Austria and Italy respectively or they are rather observed elsewhere as well. In the case of the cheating argument, we need further research also to assess whether it may also apply to universal types of social programs and not only means-tested ones (like in Italy).

Secondly, future studies may further refine the theoretical and analytical framework developed in the thesis by exploring additional explanatory mechanisms that may shape the type of welfare chauvinist arguments observed. These can be, for instance, different types of groups/categories of migrants targeted, citizenship rules in the host country, ideological differences inter and intra-parties, and specific socio-economic factors, ext.

Thirdly, the analysis has highlighted a link between the individual attitudes and the economic form of welfare chauvinism put forth by politicians. However, the debate remains open, though, on the direction of causality characterizing this link. Do politicians conform to individual chauvinist views, as to obtain more popular consensus? Or do they spread a hegemonic discourse about migration and welfare deservingness through social policies and public debates? Broadly speaking, the causal links between micro, meso and macro welfare chauvinism, from individual attitudes to party strategies and policy outcomes need further investigation.

Fourthly, the analysis has contributed to break ground on research about the welfare chauvinist arguments, starting from direct forms of chauvinism. The possibility that the same (or different) justificatory arguments underpin indirect forms of chauvinism too is not implausible. Accordingly, this point will need further research, as further spelt out in the previous section (cfr. 5.2. above). Moreover, this thesis has focused on some precise instances of direct welfare chauvinism (chauvinist policies) and periods in time when these took place. Future research can enrich the present research by means of more longitudinal

analyses. Namely, they can explore the associations (and statistical correlations), and eventually the causal linkages between the types of programs and types of welfare chauvinist arguments (and corresponding forms of welfare chauvinism) over (more or less) extended period. They may implement that either by considering the thesis' case-studies or other countries (or both).

While we have outlined that welfare chauvinist policies have raised across Europe in recent years, we may find some instances of exclusionary policies in the past as well, either in indirect or direct forms. Moreover, it will be interesting to trace whether and how these types of policies will raise again in the future. We know that several of contemporary welfare chauvinist policies have been struck down by national and EU Courts (like in the case of Austria). However, this may not necessarily prevent national governments from promoting chauvinist policies again. Longitudinal studies may therefore help us exploring whether and how chauvinist policies have evolved and will evolve over time. Among others, they may also provide leverage in exploring further deeper the existence and the nature of the programs-arguments linkage(s).

Lastly, in line with the view by Careja and Harris (2021), any study concerning welfare chauvinism (either at policy, party or individual level) should try to extend its field of investigation so to include non-democracies and States from the global south too. It goes without saying that this may be hampered by some difficulties in finding and collecting the appropriate data, especially with regard to non-democratic and-transparent political regimes.

Several other paths for further research exist and it is not possible to outline here all of them. future discussions and confrontations on the present thesis will bring further inspiration.

Tables-General Conclusions

Table 9: hypothesized and observed links between types of welfare chauvinist arguments (outcome under investigation) and social programs (expected predictor)

Hypotheses				Findings observed			
Welfare chauvinist arguments	Social programs			Welfare chauvinist arguments	Social programs		
	Universal	Means-tested	Insurance-run		Universal	Means-tested	Insurance-run
Economic arguments <i>Economic hypotheses</i>	✓ (H1)	✓ (H2)	Not applying (H3)	Economic arguments	✓	✓	No chauvinist reforms observed
Cultural argument <i>Cultural hypotheses</i>	✓ (H4)	Not applying (H5)	Not applying (H6)	Cultural argument	Not applying	Not applying	No chauvinist reforms observed
				Unfairness argument (inductively made)	✓	Not applying	No chauvinist reforms observed
				Cheating argument (inductively made)	Not applying	✓	No chauvinist reforms observed

Source: own elaboration

Table 10: links between types of welfare chauvinist arguments and social programs across the cases selected

Welfare chauvinist arguments	Social programs			Countries where the links are observed and relevant policy reforms
	Universal	Means-tested	Insurance-run	
Economic arguments	✓	✓	Not applying	<p>Austria: Means-tested social assistance scheme (New Basic Act on Social Assistance 2019)</p> <p>Denmark: Means-tested social assistance scheme (Starting allowance reform 2002 and Future immigration reform 2006)</p> <p>The UK: Means-tested housing benefit and council tax (Benefit Entitlement Restriction Bill); Universal health care system (Immigration Bill 2014).</p>
Cultural argument	Not applying	Not applying	Not applying	Austria, Denmark, Italy, the UK
Unfairness argument	✓	Not applying	Not applying	<p>Austria: Universal family allowances (Amendment 83/2018)</p>
Cheating argument	Not applying	✓	Not applying	<p>Italy: Means-tested social assistance/minimum income (CI Reforms-Law num. 26 of the 28th of March 2019).</p>

Source: own elaboration

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APPENDIXES

The case of Austria

Welfare chauvinism instances in Kurz Cabinet I

Analysis of welfare chauvinist arguments in parliamentary speeches (2017-2019)

Family policies (family allowances)- Amendment 83/2018

Table A: Politicians' speeches and welfare chauvinist arguments during the 43th NC's plenary session

Illustration and promotion of the proposed chauvinist measures (quotations)	Welfare chauvinist arguments observed	Speakers
<p>“Let me also make it quite clear at this point: every child is worth the same amount to this federal government, but not every euro in every European country is worth the same amount. According to the present EU rules, with the very same amount of money, a Hungarian or a Polish family in Hungary and Poland can afford much more than an Austrian family living in Austria. That is the crux of the matter! If we do not adjust the family allowance to the cost of living in the respective countries, it will result in a disadvantage for our own families, and that is not what we want” (NC Deb, 24th of October 2018, Column 115, Pos. 1070)</p>	Unfairness argument	Deputy Carmen Schimanek (FPÖ)
<p>“The introduction of indexation for children residing in another EU, EEA country or Switzerland is long overdue and fair. Adapting to the cost of living in each country is an absolutely justified desire. All children are treated equally, regardless of where they come from. All parents receive the same percentage of relief in relation to the real costs in the respective countries” (NC Deb, 24th of October 2018, Column 115, Pos. 1071).</p>		

Source: own elaboration from MAXQDA Matrix Table

Table B: Politicians' speeches and welfare chauvinist arguments during the 885th FC's plenary session

Illustration and promotion of the proposed chauvinist measures (quotations)	Welfare chauvinist arguments observed	Speakers
<p>“This federal government has spoken out in favor of fairness and justice. So, family allowances are adjusted according to the Eurostat index. What is bad about that, please? There is no cancellation of family allowances, but adjustment to the cost of living in the countries, and that is fair. Or do you want to discriminate against Austrian children? They can do nothing to grow up in a country where life is extremely expensive, where you may get only half or even a third of what you get in other European countries for one euro. Therefore, in future, the family allowance must be adapted to the purchasing power of the child's country of residence. With this indexation, we can save over 100 million of Euros, money that we urgently need for further family initiatives. It would be negligent to act differently. It would be negligent not to start saving for the Austrian children, for children living in Austria, for children for which life is much more expensive” (FC Deb 8th of November 2018, Column 110, Pos. 1071).</p>	Unfairness argument	Federal Councilor Steiner-Wieser (FPÖ)

Source: own elaboration from MAXQDA Matrix Table

Social assistance-New Basic Act on Social Assistance

Table C: Politicians’ speeches and welfare chauvinist arguments during the 66th NC’s plenary session

Illustration and promotion of the proposed chauvinist measures (quotations)	Welfare chauvinist arguments observed	Speakers
<p>“In most recent times, so many migrants from non-Western countries, including many asylum-seekers and refugees, have come to Austria and they are now receiving huge amount of money through the social assistance system, although they have not worked here for a single day. By contrast, there are countless Austrian people who work and pay taxes in this country, and so they also pay to finance the social assistance. Yet, they receive significant lower amount of social assistance, as they formally have a job and thus their incomes and earnings are necessarily higher than those of refugees! Migrants and refugees are abusing of our social assistance system and behaving as benefit tourists. This is incomprehensible and this problem must be solved! If you do not do something, this will incentive further benefit tourism” (NC Deb 27th of March 2019, Column 90, Pos. 1060).</p> <p>“This law finally brings fairness to all hard-working people in our country, especially those people in Austria who have already made a contribution to Austria and to our social system for years. There is no point in giving generous social support to migrants who are not willing to work at all” (NC Deb 27th of March 2019,</p>	<p>Benefit tourism/welfare magnet</p>	<p>Deputy Walter Rosenkranz (FPÖ)</p>

Column 90, Pos. 1061). [...]

One thing is already worrying us: we see that one of our a federal State, namely Vienna, has become the Eldorado for many migrants, including those who claim to be asylum-seekers, where they can get milk and honey without working, as they can live on the generous social assistance scheme. This will in turn continue to incentivize further immigration to our country and to Vienna in particular. I believe that the situation in Vienna will be specifically examined by the other speakers from my group” (NC Deb 27th of March 2019, Column 90, Pos. 1061).

“Currently, more than half of all the recipients of the social assistance program are not Austrian citizens but refugees. These recipients must not, of course, have social assistance for free. By contrast, they must be available to the labor market. However, their willingness is worth nothing if there are no employers who want to hire them. This problem mainly affects people who have recently immigrated, speak poorly German and have not the required professional qualifications. Because of that, they are not appealing to national employers, and they will end up being unemployable” (NC Deb 27th of March 2019, Column 90, Pos. 1062).

“With this law we create incentives for refugees to integrate into the Austrian labor market. We ensure that integration services are met, that value courses are attended, and that German is learned. German will in turn facilitate their

Benefit tourism/welfare magnet	Federal Minister for Labor, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection Hartinger- Klein (FPÖ)
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search for an employment. Only after establishing a fundamental employability on the Austrian labor market and a corresponding will to provide services for our society has been shown, is it justified to grant social assistance” (NC Deb 27th of March 2019, Column 90, Pos. 1063).

“We hear reports that western Union Bank has announced that in 2016 alone, only Syrian refugees received €2 millions through the social assistance scheme and they then transferred a good portion of these to their families and relatives in Syria. Who paid for that? Austrian citizens paid! Austria is not in an economic position to rebuild the economy in all these countries with its social assistance, and we do not want that either. That is why it is so urgent that this reform should take place” (NC Deb 27th of March 2019, Column 90, Pos. 1063).

Economic burden

Dr Dagmar
Belakovich (FPÖ)

Source: own elaboration from MAXQDA Matrix Table

Table D: Politicians' speeches and welfare chauvinist arguments during 892nd plenary session

Illustration and promotion of the proposed chauvinist measures (quotations)	Welfare chauvinist arguments observed	Speakers
<p>“There are Salzburg examples of this. Salzburg families, Salzburg households have seen their amount of social assistance reduced because the money was devoted to provide social assistance to refugees who do not even work and pay taxes regularly!” (FC Deb 9th of May 2019, Column 95, Pos. 1050).</p>	<p>Benefit tourism/welfare magnet</p>	<p>Federal Councilor Steiner- Wieser (FPÖ)</p>
<p>“If you look at the figures of recipients of the social assistance, you can see that from 2011 onwards, the number of migrants who receive our social assistance program has risen sharply. These are mostly people who have not even worked here for a day, and yet they have got full length of our social assistance [...]</p> <p>The red-green state government in Vienna supported and promoted immigration for years. How? – by giving these persons the full amount of social assistance from day one. We remedy this situation with our law of principle: there will no longer be free social assistance for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, and in accordance with EU law, this will now be limited to core social benefits, i.e., basic security. Besides, refugees will not be able to get social assistance for free any longer, but they will now have to work and pay taxes regularly, as Austrians do” (FC Deb 9th of May 2019, Column 95, Pos. 1050).</p>	<p>Benefit tourism/welfare magnet</p>	<p>Federal Minister Hartinger-Klein (FPÖ)</p>

“We want to bring more justice for people working in this country. We are all particularly committed to those people in Austria who have already made contributions to Austria and our social system for years. It makes no sense to use attractive social benefits to help our country for migrants who may not want to work at all. On the contrary, it makes sense to be attractive to people who are willing to work and contribute, but who can then fully benefit from their previous achievements and contributions in an emergency. That is sensible and fair, ladies and gentlemen, and there is no place for abuse!” (FC Deb 9th of May 2019, Column 95, Pos. 1053).

“It is out of the question for us to guarantee full benefits without ifs and buts for new migrants. According to our model, newly migrant people should make a greater effort to integrate into Austrian society and into the labor market in the future rather than continuing to behave as tourists into the Austrian welfare state. This new law creates the necessary incentives to meet the necessary employability criteria and, of course, to acquire sufficient knowledge of German. The German language is the best way to integrate in Austria, into our society, into our national labor market. And labor integration is the best way to get social assistance” (FC Deb 9th of May 2019, Column 95, Pos. 1054).

“Society is falling apart more and more, into those who want to make something out of life, and those who want to live at the expense of others. In order to help the earlier, it is necessary to close the self-

Benefit tourism/welfare magnet	Federal Councillor Bruno Aschenbrenner (ÖVP)
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service shop for those who could work but prefer to live at the expense of others” (FC Deb 9th of May 2019, Column 95, Pos. 1055).

Source: own elaboration from MAXQDA Matrix Table

Chapter 4-Denmark**Social assistance policy- Starting Allowance reform**Table E: Politicians' speeches and welfare chauvinist arguments during the 45th plenary session

Illustration and promotion of the proposed chauvinist measures (quotations)	Welfare chauvinist arguments observed	Speakers
<p>“This bill is aimed at putting an end to today’s undesirable immigration situation. Today, in the province of Konya in Turkey, Danish social legislation is known. Therefore, a picture can be drawn of Denmark as a place where a married couple with two children can have more than DKK 20,000 made available as social assistance without any special consideration other than being available, without any special duty. This portrait of the Danish welfare society is unvarying, but when the DKK 20,000 is translated into Turkish, Pakistani or Somali currency, a picture is drawn of Denmark as a sort of land of Cockaigne where the gold lies on the streets for those who bother to bow to it. There is no doubt that the expectation of getting generous social benefits largely incentivizes immigration” (Deb 21st of March 2002, Column 3951, Pos. 1743).</p> <p>“In the long run, this also forms a wrong image of Denmark as place where one can enjoy benefits without paying back any contribution. [...] If this proposal is adopted, it will be a strong signal that Denmark is a healthy society with duties and rights. One of the main duties that this bill wants to stress is that refugees have to actively contribute to the labor market and economy with as much business activity as the born Danes in order to earn the right to the starting</p>	Benefit tourism/welfare magnet	Flemming Oppfeldt (S.L.)

allowance scheme. They cannot just take advantage of the Danish social assistance, using the excuse that they have much lower incomes and earn less than Danes. Therefore, this law continues a Danish custom of reciprocity principle. We know it from unemployment benefits; we know it from early retirement, where you have to be registered for a number of years to be able to earn rights; we know it from national pension, where you must also have lived in the country to have a full national pension” (Deb 21st of March 2002, Column 3953, Pos. 1755).

The aim of this is first and foremost to get the immigrants into employment and get the immigrant women into employment. At present, most of them just stay home, without any incentive to work because the amount of social assistance they received is already very high. That is where the big group is. That is, the motive here is to increase the motivation to go to work, so that you can get into ordinary work and get that job retention, which we think is immensely important” (Deb 21st of March 2002, Column 3953, Pos. 1757).

“I would say that the main purpose of this measure is to make a service that allows us to promote motivation to enter the labor market and counter benefit tourism. It is clear that the measure does not in itself make job openings, of course not, but we must counter what we call the social worker culture, that is, that it must automatically be a social matter to be an immigrant. Instead, we must say that the lack of a job is a matter that needs to be resolved, but it does not make

immigrants welfare clients nor tourists. That is our main idea with this proposal, so that we have a service that motivates to get out in a hurry, be interested in making oneself indispensable in a workplace and in gaining own income through working activity. Then I and the left also believe that we can make a faster integration in our labor market. [...]

Coming back to the purpose and overall view of this bill, can be said that the proposal here is designed to support more people entering active employment rather than receiving passive support, as they do now. The system itself will be designed for activity from day one. It is the goal of the Liberal Party that the majority come to work from day one, possibly with supplementary Danish lessons in connection with the work. It is the goal of the Liberal Party that as many as possible get into ordinary work with an ordinary salary as soon as possible. Immigrants who are healthy and fit and whose only occupational disability is a language barrier should not be turned into social issues. This will help to implement the Liberal Party's integration policy. Therefore, we would recommend this proposal. Today we have an immigrant proletariat, and that is the situation that the Liberal Party wants to break" (Deb 21st of March 2002, Column 3954, Pos. 1655).

"The proposal aims in particular at increasing the benefits of getting a job quickly and being able to support themselves. It aims at making it less attractive to come to Denmark to live on social assistance at the expense of Danish workers and taxpayers. This is done by introducing a new starting allowance scheme, i.e., a lower rate than the standard social assistance.

Benefit tourism/welfare magnet	Lars Barfoed (Conservatives)
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Refugees will be therefore obliged refugees to take part in professional and language courses and to put a greater effort to integrate into the Danish labor market rather than living as welfare abusers. However, it is important to be aware of and remember that the purpose of it all is not that foreigners must stay 7 years in Denmark on starting allowance. On the contrary: the purpose is that foreigners, otherwise just like Danes who are unemployed, should go to work as soon as possible and at the same time they should stop coming to this country to live only on the national social assistance program, as they are doing today” (Deb 21st of March 2002, Column 3951, Pos. 1745).

“Then I just want to say in terms of discriminating that I do not really think my use of that word went up for Mrs Karen Klint. The word discriminate simply means that one can see the difference and ascertain that there are differences. We have equality before the law, and there must be no discrimination. But of course, there must be a difference between Danish citizens and foreigners who come traveling here. It is then a gross abuse of Danish citizens not to maintain that difference, but to equate them with wild strangers, to equate Danish citizens who have paid taxes all their lives, with wild strangers from the village in Turkey who have come to our country to enjoy welfare programs rather than working” Deb 21st of March 2002, Column 3954, Pos. 1656).

Benefit	Søren Krarup
tourism/welfare	(DPP)
magnet	

Source: own elaboration from MAXQDA Matrix Table

Table F: Politicians' speeches and welfare chauvinist arguments during the 80th plenary session

Illustration and promotion of the proposed chauvinist measures (quotations)	Welfare chauvinist arguments observed	Speakers
<p>“Today, half of the immigrant population is supported by the public sector and Danes’ taxes, especially by means of our social assistance scheme which is intended to support lower-income families and individuals. By relying on this mechanism, we have made them veritable free riders, contributing to build a view of Denmark as a place where you can get benefits and social rights without any special duty. Unfortunately, this is the situation in many places in Denmark today. So, what is the government doing to tackle this situation? First, there is this law: the introduction of a starting allowance for the first 7 years you live in Denmark. The idea is that the benefit itself should be less than the normal social assistance benefit. A couple with two children and housing expenses of DKK 4,000 can today receive social assistance of around DKK 20,000. If you come from e.g., Somalia, it is not certain that this level motivates one to rise further in Danish labor market and society. Perhaps this level will be the goal in itself. That is why we are introducing the starting allowance scheme, which must be seen in the context of more targeted integration, more targeted education and more jobs for immigrants. The starting allowance is not a lousy poverty aid. It is a generous steppingstone on the way into Danish society” (Deb 2nd of March 2002, Column 7851, Pos. 1935).</p> <p>“With the starting allowance, we want to send the signal that rights and duties apply in Denmark. We want to send</p>	Benefit tourism/welfare magnet	Flemming Oppfeldt (S.L.)

the signal that one should not plan one's life on the national social assistance, but that we have a welfare society where everyone should contribute to it to the best of their ability. [...] The SF's rapporteur asks: Why just the immigrants? Implied: Why can this method not be used on Danish citizens? But the problem for the immigrants in our society is markedly different. The immigrant group has a very low employment rate compared to the Danish group. So there is a special problem for those who come to the country. It is, as I also said earlier, both for the sake of signaling to the wider world - you have to know what kind of society you are coming to - and to send a significant signal to this group - that they cannot live on Danish welfare system without contributing. That is why we are introducing starting allowance" (Deb 2nd of March 2002, Column 7851, Pos. 1936).

Source: own elaboration from MAXQDA Matrix Table

Social assistance policy-Future immigration reform

Table G: Politicians' speeches and welfare chauvinist arguments during the 37th parliamentary session

Illustration and promotion of the proposed chauvinist measures (quotations)	Welfare chauvinist arguments observed	Speakers
<p>“In addition, an employment requirement and a so-called integration examination have been introduced. This should be seen as a motivation to enter the labor market, as foreigners will have the possibility to learn the Danish language that is essential to integrate into the national labor market. We Conservatives therefore hope that these measures will help us to better integrate foreigners who come to Denmark, especially to integrate them from an economic perspective. We hope these measures will put an end to benefit tourism by making them economically self-reliant. The main emphasis in the integration exam is on Danish skills. In the Liberal Party, we believe that Danish is an important prerequisite for being able to commit in society and to integrate into the labor market. Therefore, it is crucial that you master the Danish language to such an extent that you can pass the test in Danish 2 or test in Danish 1 and an English test at a level corresponding to a test in Danish 2. [...]</p> <p>I believe that in the long run we can raise the level of employment of refugees and immigrants, since the incentives to get a job are far higher when you know the national language and you can communicate with your potential employers. It is important for me to emphasize that the integration exam was not created to keep the number of immigrants down. On the contrary, this is a tool that simply ensures that immigrants are aware that the principle of reciprocity</p>	Benefit tourism/welfare magnet	Henriette Kjær (Conservatives)

applies in Denmark and therefore that it pays to work and to economically contribute” (Deb 1st of January 2007, Column 2706, Pos. 1629).

“Another important ingredient that this law contains is the requirement that foreigners must pass a so-called Integration Exam if they want to obtain an indefinite residence permit and access to our social benefit program. The purpose is to send a clear signal to foreigners about how important it is to get into employment and being able to economically support themselves, rather than living on welfare benefits only, namely the current situation. Upstream of all, there is the language. In order to get an employment, learning the Danish language is essential. The main emphasis in the Integration Exam is on Danish skills. In the Liberal Party, we believe that Danish is an important prerequisite for being able to commit in society and to integrate into the labor market. Therefore, it is crucial that you master the Danish language to such an extent that you can pass the test in Danish 2 or test in Danish 1 and an English test at a level corresponding to a test in Danish 2” (Deb 1st of January 2007, Column 2706, Pos. 1630).

Benefit	Irene Simonsen
tourism/welfare	(L.)
magnet	

Source: own elaboration from MAXQDA Matrix Table

Chapter 5-Italy**Social assistance/minimum income-Reddito di cittadinanza**Table H: Politicians' speeches and welfare chauvinist arguments during the 145th parliamentary session (Chamber of Deputies)

Illustration and promotion of the proposed chauvinist measures (quotations)	Welfare chauvinist arguments observed	Speakers
<p>“Therefore, with the two measures that we, the League, have introduced, namely residence for ten years for all non-EU citizens and the additional certification attesting to the absence of property abroad, we want to make sure, we are sure that this benefit [i.e., the Citizenship Income] will go primarily to Italian citizens and that cheating behaviors by extra-European migrants are avoided” (20th of March, Column 145, Pos. 198-199).</p>	Cheating argument	Deputy Edoardo Ziello, The League
<p>“Because, Mr. President, that was what happened with the previous minimum income scheme: the majority of migrants who took the Inclusion Income played dumb and did not declare all their real properties, in order to get the benefit. Some of them even went to spend it in their country of origin rather than here in Italy! This situation was also likely to create an economic damage to our country and a fiscal loss for our citizens who lost a lot of resources we wish the Government could have rather spent to help them. The frontline delivery services were definitely too inaccurate and unable to check what was going on! We, on the other hand, said: more barriers to the access to benefits for migrants, to cut the problem at its root and prevent the cheating practices, so to make sure that more resources are left for Italians!” (20th of March 2019, Column 145, Pos. 200).</p>		

Source: own elaboration from MAXQDA Matrix Table

Table I: Politicians' speeches and welfare chauvinist arguments during the 146th parliamentary session (Chamber of Deputies)

Illustration and promotion of the proposed chauvinist measures (quotations)	Welfare chauvinist arguments observed	Speakers
<p>“The measures we proposed are to be seen as a way to make the Citizenship Income even more effective. It is required, for those who present an ISEE declaration, given that there are patrimonial requirements to be respected, that the embassy of the State of origin certifies that the foreigner, who asks for obtaining the Citizenship Income, is not trivially cheating us, is not trying to fool us again, as happened with the inclusion income, for which many foreigners did not declare all their actual properties and real estates and stole money from Italians citizens” (21st of March, Column 146, Pos. 1072).</p>	Cheating argument	Deputy Riccardo Molinari, The League

Source: own elaboration from MAXQDA Matrix Table

The case of the UK**Universal Health care Service-2014 Immigration Bill**

Table L: Politicians' speeches and welfare chauvinist arguments during the Second parliamentary reading of the Bill in the HC

Illustration and promotion of the proposed chauvinist measures (quotations)	Welfare chauvinist arguments observed	Speakers
<p>“It has been clear for some time, as I have laid out, that the Government want to bring forward legal and policy framework proposals to make sure that we can deliver for people in this country a fair approach on immigration, which ensures that those who come here and stay here and use our public welfare services and our health services actually contribute to them [...]” (22 Oct 2013: Column 157).</p>	Benefit tourism	The Secretary of State for the Home Department Theresa May (Conservative Party)
<p>“Finally, the Bill is aimed at building a fairer immigration system which addresses the concerns of hardworking people. Accordingly, the Bill will clamp down on those from overseas who try to abuse our public services and our public health. And you know who I am referring to. I refer to all those temporary migrants (and you know how many there are in the country) who are presently allowed the same free and universal access to the NHS for free as a citizen and a permanent resident. This approach is very generous, particularly because temporary migrants are liable to a lower taxation and lower expenditures than permanent residents and citizens. You should agree with me that this leaves rooms to abuses and it is not fair to the British public and to all those migrants who live here on a permanent basis and contribute to our society and</p>		

economy as our citizens do” (22 Oct 2013: Column 158).

“Let me turn to the National Health Service. I do not like repeating myself but at this point it is necessary to do that. As I have already said, many temporary migrants, with limited tax obligations, are currently allowed free access to the NHS exactly as permanent residents, with higher taxes obligations, are. Such an approach is extremely generous, also compared with wider international practice. Our intention is to bring the rules regulating migrant access to the NHS into line with wider Government policy on migrant access to benefits and social housing. That means restricting access to free NHS care to those non-EEA nationals with indefinite leave to remain and those granted refugee status or humanitarian protection in the UK. Under this Bill, other migrants will have to contribute to a higher extent that they currently do before getting access to our universal health service. Temporary migrants seeking to stay in the UK for more than six months will have to pay an immigration health surcharge on top of their visa fee. I assure the House that this surcharge will make the system fairer and will not undermine our aim to attract the brightest and the best” (22 Oct 2013: Column 164).

“I suggest that the hon. Lady looks at the audit conducted by the National Health Service that was released today. It makes it absolutely clear that we are talking potentially about several hundred millions of pounds across the NHS when we consider the number of people who come here as health tourists, using our

health service whilst barely contributing to finance it.

That is why the Bill is absolutely right.

I say to Opposition Members who say that somehow it is wrong to ask people who come to this country to contribute, that it is only fair to the millions of hard-working people who pay into the NHS through their taxes that somebody who comes here to live for a period of time should be asked to contribute. It is only fair also to ensure that when people come here to use the NHS, or use it when they are here and their Government should be paying, that we actually recoup that money” (22 Oct 2013: Column 165).

“The Government have made it a high priority to have a firm but fair immigration policy. Hon. Members know that many legal migrants add fully to our country. Many create jobs, and there are many surgeons, doctors, and others in the NHS. However, in our hearts, we know that many come to the UK for limited periods of time to take advantage of us and see us as a soft touch, and that many are here illegally. In the Bill and a series of measures taken since 2010, the Government are trying to tighten the system and make it more robust, and to send a signal to the world that we are not a soft touch, and that we are determined to ensure that only people who economically and financially contribute to the UK should be here” (22 Oct 2013: Column 177).

Benefit tourism

MP Robert Syms
(Conservative Party)

“On the NHS, I welcome the health surcharge. Nothing annoys my constituents more than the feeling that resources that should be devoted to their care are being used by people who do not deserve them. All hon. Members know that the NHS has not followed its policy of collecting money. The easiest thing to do is say that

someone does not come from abroad and collect the money as if they were British citizens. The government’s measures are sensible” (22 Oct 2013: Column 179).

“I am sure that, like me, my hon. Friend hears pleas for unaffordable, high-value and new treatments for cancers and so on, but the pot is not limitless. Our constituents wish to know that those who have contributed to the pot will be able to take from it in their time of need. We might provide universal health care, but we do not provide global health care” (22 Oct 2013: Column 179).

Benefit tourism

MP Anne Main
(Conservative Party)

[In support of MP Anne Main’s statement] “Absolutely. The measure does not affect accident and emergency or short-term care, but it is a signal that the Government are serious. We should not squander resources on those who do not deserve them, particularly if people are waiting for operations. One figure used today is that 4,000 more doctors could be employed if we collected the money. There is therefore a prize for tightening the system” (22 Oct 2013: Column 179).

Benefit tourism

MP Robert Syms
(Conservative Party)

Source: own elaboration from MAXQDA Matrix Table

Table M: Politicians' speeches and welfare chauvinist arguments during the Third parliamentary reading of the Bill in the HC

Illustration and promotion of the proposed chauvinist measures (quotations)	Welfare chauvinist arguments observed	Speakers
<p>“Let me remind the House why the Bill is so necessary. It will bring clarity, fairness, and integrity to the immigration system, and will address long-standing problems that have prevented the effective operation of immigration controls. It will do that by [...] and also by ensuring that temporary legal migrants who do not adequately contribute to our country, especially in economic terms, are not granted free access to our national health system anymore, [...].” (30 Jan 2014, Column 1124).</p> <p>“We will require migrants who will be here temporarily to pay a surcharge so that they economically contribute to the NHS. I think that most hard-working people would agree that that is appropriate. At present, these migrants are allowed the same access to the NHS for free as a permanent residents and British citizens, without having to pay any surcharge. This is not fair given that they are required to pay less taxes and they therefore contribute to a significant minor extent to finance our NHS” (30 Jan 2014, Column 1125).</p>	Benefit tourism	<p>The Secretary of State for the Home Department Mrs Theresa May (Conservative Party)</p>

Source: own elaboration from MAXQDA Matrix Table

Table N: Politicians’ speeches and welfare chauvinist arguments during the Third parliamentary reading of the Bill in the HL

Illustration and promotion of the proposed chauvinist measures (quotations)	Welfare chauvinist arguments observed	Speakers
<p>“This Bill will not undermine those important achievements; it will support them. [...] Instead, it is about stopping abuses, especially the exploitation of our social and health system [...]. By dealing firmly with those who harm our country, and I refer to both illegal migrants and also legal ones who abuse of our social system, this Bill allows us to continue to welcome those who will bring benefits, in social and economic terms” (HL Deb, 10 Feb 2014: Column 415).</p>		<p>Lord Taylor (Conservative Party)</p>
<p>Before turning to some of the detail, let me say a little more about what the Bill does <i>not</i> do. [...] The Bill does not deter legitimate students. Yes, they will have to pay a little more to access health services in future, but that is designed as a fair contribution, not a deterrent. We have consulted widely and given careful thought to this matter, taking into account the international market in which our universities compete. The extra cost to international students represents just over 1% of the total cost of their studying in the UK. The Government remain absolutely committed to ensuring that the UK is competitive as a place for the brightest and best to come. Nothing in these proposals will prevent us achieving that goal, but it cannot be right that the National Health Service is open to the whole world. By taking action, we are addressing some long-standing anomalies in a wholly proportionate way (HL Deb, 10 Feb 2014: Column 415).</p>		

Source: own elaboration from MAXQDA Matrix Table

Benefit Entitlement (Restriction) Bill (several means-tested benefits)

Table O: Politicians' speeches and welfare chauvinist arguments during the second parliamentary reading of the Bill in the HL

Illustration and promotion of the proposed chauvinist measures (quotations)	Welfare chauvinist arguments observed	Speakers
<p>“The present state of affairs, with EU migrants coming here and sponging off our means-tested benefits, is unacceptable. [...] They often have lower income and thus, can access these benefits very easily, but most of them do pay much less than British citizens for these benefits. How can someone, who work works 2 days a week and earns very little, pay as much of someone who work the whole week and earn much more? In addition the EU rules protect them and ensure the perpetration of such a situation! A foreign citizen from another EU country has effectively has as much access to our benefits system as you or me, Madam Deputy Speaker, even if pay much less taxes than we do. [...] That is definitively benefit tourism and our Bill is trying to finally put an end to this situation!” (17th of January 2014: Column 1138)</p>	Benefit tourism/welfare magnet	Lord Taylor (Conservative Party)
<p>“The bigger problem was referred to by Dominic Lawson also in an article in last week’s edition of <i>The Sunday Times</i>. He wrote that although the great majority of East European migrants are entrepreneurially seeking the much higher wages available in the richer nations, a proportion will be benefit tourists. He then referred to «the point made many years ago by Milton Friedman, who believed in open borders: he asserted that you can have a generous welfare state or open borders, but not both [...]. There is no doubt that free and open</p>		

immigration is the right policy in a libertarian state, but in a welfare state, it is a different story; the supply of immigrants will become infinite». Indeed, that is the concern of people in this country –that the supply of immigrants is becoming infinite. We look in the Government statistics for the numbers, but again we find that they fudge the figures and do not even collect the raw material” (17th of January 2014: Column 1139).

Source: own elaboration from MAXQDA Matrix Table