

ECONOMIC FORCES AND ANTI-IMMIGRANT ATTITUDES IN WESTERN EUROPE: A PARADOX IN SEARCH OF AN EXPLANATION

Introduction

The nature and causes of prejudice are a classic area of study for social psychologists¹. Somewhat inevitably, a competing and diverse set of theoretical perspectives on the phenomenon has been generated, ranging from those based on social-learning (Towles-Schwen and Fazio, 2001), to personality dynamics (Adorno et al., 1950), to social-cognition (cf. Fiske, 1998), and especially, to theories based around social identity (see Capozza and Brown, 2000). Hagendoorn et al. (2001; 154-165) provide a detailed overview of different sets of theories of prejudice, employing Simpson and Yinger's (1985) trichotomy of the cultural, the individual, and the group. One powerful 'group' approach, particularly appealing to social psychologists, is an understanding of prejudice based on a conflict of interests (Bobo, 1983), especially group-conflict driven by competing economic interests (see Hardin, 1995). This 'realistic group-conflict' approach suggests that economic factors and hostility to minorities are often interconnected. Racism, it holds, as well as discriminatory actions, even 'hate-crimes', and ultimately genocide, are at least partially explicable by dire economic conditions or a collapse in the material well-being of large sections of a society.

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Classic social-psychological research around inter-group hostility easily accommodates the realistic group-conflict approach. For example, Dollard (1938) documented the growth of prejudice towards German immigrants in a town in the US; initially there was little hostility towards them but as jobs grew scarce in the local woodenware plants, opinion changed so that the immigrants came to be spoken of in very derogatory ways. Jacobs and Landau (1971) also report how the Chinese who joined the gold rush in nineteenth century California were described by their white mining rivals as “depraved, vicious ... bloodthirsty and inhuman” (p. 71); the prejudice towards this group re-emerged at the end of the American Civil War as demobilized soldiers sought employment in a time of depression. Sherif et al’s (1961) ‘robber’s cave’ experiments, also provide strong evidence that intergroup hostility can be understood as a function of competition over scarce resources.

Political data supporting the economic (deprivation) hypothesis are also plentiful.

Analyses of some voting patterns have shown political support for authoritarian parties to be greatest in constituencies experiencing jumps in unemployment; in France for example, strong support for the Front National is found in the ‘rust belt’ of the North East as well as in the less economically successful Mediterranean départements. In the second round of the French 2002 presidential elections, 38% of unemployed voters were estimated to have backed Le Pen, against the general population percentage of 18% support, (see O’Connell, 2003). Most notoriously, the rise to power of the Nazis in Germany coincided with the sharp economic depression of the nineteen thirties.

Consistent with this, but less dramatically, political scientists have noted that changes in

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monetary conditions may alter public beliefs and values, including those involving out-group hostility and racism. For example, Inglehart (1997) has proposed that insecure (whether assessed by economic or political criteria) societies foster 'scarcity values', xenophobia prominent among them. The 'authoritarian reflex' is a response to severe insecurity; "nativist reactions [are] found among the more traditional and less secure strata in industrial societies" (ibid; 38).

However, the conclusions of sophisticated research in the last decade have become increasingly sceptical that economic forces have a direct, unproblematic and unidirectional effect on both attitudes towards immigrants, and related behaviours, including voting patterns. For example, Pettigrew and Meertens (1995) have commented that their research on West European publics casts doubt on the deprivation, or 'riff-raff', theory of prejudice, i.e. that it "flourishes largely among the deprived and alienated pockets of industrial societies" (ibid; 72). In their influential empirical paper on prejudice in Western Europe, they distinguished between an old-fashioned, 'blatant' form of prejudice versus a modern, 'subtle' type based predominantly on perceived threat to values and culture. The authors noted that, "group relative deprivation contributed significantly to the prediction of blatant prejudice in six samples. But it attained statistical significance in only two samples as a predictor of subtle prejudice" (ibid; 72). Furthermore, Knigge's analysis (1998) suggested that right-wing extremism in six European countries was facilitated by rising levels of immigration, rather than a declining national economy (which was actually found to correlate with a dampening down of the phenomenon).

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Lubbers' (2001) analysis is also of relevance here. It was based on a detailed series of studies examining variation in far-right support by region (in West Germany, Flanders and France), over time (in Germany and the Netherlands), and cross-nationally (in the EU countries plus Norway). He concluded that "unemployment levels turned out to be unimportant in explaining extreme right-wing voting; ... in regions or countries with a well-performing economy...the extreme right managed to attract relatively many supporters" (ibid; 241). A more recently published, elaborate experimental study of Dutch public opinion concluded that "exclusionary reactions to immigrant minorities" were associated more strongly with considerations about Dutch identity than with perceptions of economic threat, (see Sniderman et al., 2004; 35). In that study, it was thus suggested that social identity approaches to prejudice may offer a richer alternative to researchers than economic, or 'realistic conflict' ones.

And yet it is the case that simple economic measures continue to act as explanatory variables with regard to variance in people's attitudes towards, for example, immigrants and foreigners. In the section below, consistent differences between different socio-economic groups among European societies found in the 2002/3 European Social Survey are highlighted. These differences in attitude measures are generally in line with those found in the studies cited in the 'realistic-conflict' tradition, i.e. deprivation appears to increase out-group hostility. Yet intriguingly, the trend with regard to voting behaviour in recent years has run counter to the predicted 'deprivation = racism' pattern: instead, wealthier, not poorer European countries, have returned significant numbers of anti-immigrant representatives to parliaments. The purpose of this paper is to explore and

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suggest an explanation for the (apparently) paradoxical or contradictory influences of economic forces on patterns of prejudice. It is thereby hoped to make a contribution to considerations about the power, and limits, of economic determinism.

Income and anti-immigrant attitudes in contemporary West European societies

Data gathered as part of the European Social Survey² (ESS) 2002/3 facilitate a broad analysis in Europe of the influence of economic factors on attitudes towards minorities, particularly immigrants. Representative groups from thirteen EU states, plus Norway and Switzerland (henceforth to be labeled as 'West European states' for convenience) were sampled on a wide range of issues in the ESS. (In addition, a number of East European states and Israel were included in the ESS but these are not the focus of analysis in this paper; Austria and France also participated in the ESS but attitudinal data drawn from these states were not available at the time of analysis.) One module of the survey focused on attitudes relating to immigrants, asylum-seekers and to a lesser degree, ethnic minorities. Respondents were also categorized into one of 12 income groups. By collapsing the twelve income groups into three larger ones, differences between the poor (n = 14,277), middling (n = 9,650) and well-off (n = 6,995) respondents on a number of items relating to minorities and immigrants could be assessed.

The pattern found was straightforwardly in line with the deprivation model; i.e. a linear increase in negative perceptions of the contribution of immigrants to their new state

² The European Social Survey 2002/2003 is directed by Roger Jowell and coordinated by researchers in the UK, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany. The author wishes to express his gratitude to the Institute for the Study of Social Change (ISSC, at University College Dublin, Ireland) for making the data available to Irish researchers.

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appeared to be associated with lower incomes. For example, one item asked respondents whether they believed "their country was made a better or worse place to live by people coming to live here from other countries" (item D29); answers were placed anywhere on a scale from 0 (worse place to live) to 10 (better place to live). Excluding 'Don't knows', the mean score of respondents from the fifteen West European states was 4.90 (standard deviation of 2.19). However among the respondents coded as poor, middling and well-off, the mean scores respectively were 4.46, 4.99 and 5.32. A Scheffé post hoc statistical test indicated that these differences are significant at the 0.05 level.

A similar pattern is found when respondents were asked whether they believed that their country's "cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live [there] from other countries" (item D28). As above, answers were given on a scale from 0 (undermined) to 10 (enriched). The mean response of all of those from the fifteen states (excluding 'Don't knows') was 5.85 (and a standard deviation of 2.45). The mean responses of the three income groups, from poorest to wealthiest, respectively were 5.37, 6.08 and 6.45. Again a post hoc Scheffé test indicated that these differences were statistically significant. Furthermore, not only are poorer respondents on average less positive in their beliefs about immigrants, but the poor in less economically egalitarian countries are relatively more hostile than the poor in more economically egalitarian ones³, see figure 1 below. Countries have been recoded into one of two groups; more or less egalitarian.

³ Economic egalitarianism is based on the 'income quintile share ratio'. This is derived by calculating the ratio between the income of the top 20% of a society's population with the income of the bottom 20%. The higher the score, the greater the economic inequality. The inequality of income distribution scores for EU

FIGURE 1 about here.

As figure 1 shows, not only is lower income associated with more hostility towards immigrants, but (and as should logically follow), this hostility is stronger where the consequences of being poor are more serious and therefore more likely to result in greater insecurity, and that is in more inegalitarian societies; see Wilkinson (1996) for a discussion of the psychosocial characteristics of more versus less equal societies.

Not only do income differences *within* countries correspond with differences in opinion towards immigrants but so too do differences in average national income *between* West European societies. Table 1 contains information on the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of each country, measured in Purchasing Power Parities⁴ (PPP), with a clustering of the countries into three groups.

TABLE 1 about here

Mean differences by country were assessed. It was found that again income level, this time by national average, was associated in a linear way with mean scores on survey items relating to immigrants. For example, regarding the survey item, belief that their country was "made a better or worse place to live by people coming to live here from

states, EU accession states as well as a number of other countries are provided by Eurostat through their website <http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/Public/datashop>.

⁴ PPPs are "a common currency that eliminate the differences in price levels between countries allowing meaningful volume comparisons of GDP between countries", see Eurostat website, structural data, section on 'General Economic Background'.

other countries" (item D29); the mean scores for the low, medium and high income national groups outlined in table 1 were respectively, 3.93, 4.96, and 5.13. Furthermore, the level of economic equality also had a significant association with anti-immigrant views, as well as significantly interacting with the association of wealth and such views, as can be observed in figure 2.

FIGURE 2 about here

As figure 2 makes clear, the economic features of a country appear to be strongly associated with the attitudes of respondents from those countries, whereby wealthier and more egalitarian societies (and these factors also overlap since there are no poor *and* egalitarian countries among the fourteen states) have on average more positive attitudes towards immigrants. Some readers may be concerned about levels of measurements and the risk of ecological fallacies whereby survey data make assessments at the level of the individual while the comparisons in table 1 and figure 2 are at a national level; however the basic point being conveyed is that at whatever level one examines it, there is an association between *lower* income, and anti-immigrant attitudes.

The Paradox – Right-wing populism in contemporary West European societies

Despite the findings noted above, whereby greater affluence and equality were associated with more positive survey responses towards immigrants, the, at least superficial, paradox is that recent anti-immigrant political movements and parties have tended to appear almost precisely in those states that are wealthy and egalitarian. Betz (1994) proposed

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that such political movements or parties in Europe could be characterized as radical, right-wing and populist (RRWP). The parties are radical in that many of them challenge fundamental components of the political structure such as the European Convention on Human Rights or the Geneva Conventions. Their right-wing character is expressed through hostile rhetoric towards ethnic minorities, foreigners or immigrants. And by presenting their case as a defence of the interests of the general public against their political elites, they inevitably take on a populist hue.

In table 1, the data on GDP by country were made available. If a rule of thumb for political success were achieving at least a tenth of the vote in a general election, then it becomes clear that the countries where RRWP parties have had such success are concentrated among the wealthiest ones.

In Norway, the populist Freedom Party of Carl Hagen took 14.7% of the vote and 26 parliamentary seats in the general election of 2002. Aside from its demand that Norway's North sea oil fund be used for income tax reductions, it has campaigned on a platform of reducing annual immigration to a capped 1,000.

In Denmark in 1995, a euro-sceptic anti-immigration party called the Danish People's Party was formed and in the general election of 2001, it took 12% of the vote and 22 parliamentary seats. Its website states that the party "will not accept transformation to a multi-ethnic society" and it is generally accepted that its influence has pushed the government towards the right, especially with regard to the party's hostile policies towards immigrants and asylum-seekers.

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The reputation of the Netherlands for pragmatic liberalism and tolerance has also come under closer scrutiny in recent years. In 2001, a political organization called Leefbaar Nederlands (Liveable Netherlands) chose Pim Fortuyn as its leader but expelled him one year later for his outspoken hostility to Muslim values. He set up his own party, List Pim Fortuyn and took 40% of the local election vote in Rotterdam, campaigning on a demand of zero immigration of Muslims, because of their alleged "backwardness" and failure to integrate into Dutch society. Fortuyn was assassinated, apparently by an animal rights' activist and his party, partly benefiting from a sympathy vote, took 26 seats in the election of May 2002. In a subsequent general election in 2003, this declined to eight seats but observers noted that in the rhetoric of that general election, all the major political parties echoed aspects of Fortuyn's anti-immigrant message.

In Belgium, the Vlaams Bloc (Flemish Block) obtained 40% of the city seats in Antwerp and 30% of the vote in council elections in 2000. Despite having virtually no appeal to the francophone speakers of mainly southern Belgium, it achieved 10% of the national vote in 1999. The party is described as "fiercely anti-immigrant and openly anti-semitic" by the website of the Manchester Guardian. On the party's own website, it advocates a "policy of return ... to Turkey and North Africa" of ethnic minorities in Belgium as well as an amnesty for Belgian wartime collaborators and SS members.

None of the other countries listed in table 1 demonstrates the presence of a strong RRWP party. It is true that in the 2001 election, Italy's Alleanza Nazionale took 12% of the vote but it describes itself as post-fascist. The Lega Nord has instead sounded the anti-immigrant rhetoric more typical of right-wing populism but its vote was below 4% in

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2001. While Portugal's Popular Party's rhetoric is often anti-immigrant and euro-sceptic, it has never attained as much as 10% of the national vote. No political party of the hard right has achieved substantial political success on a national basis in any of the remaining countries.

While ESS data from Austria were not available at the time of writing, Austria can be characterized both as a wealthy nation (its PPP was 111.0 in 2002 placing it among the high GDP per capita states) as well as egalitarian (its income quintile score for 2001 at 3.5 brought it close to Scandinavian levels of economic equality). In Austria in 1999, the Freedom Party took 27% of the Austrian national vote, campaigning on anti-immigration and euro-sceptic slogans and the coalition government of which it became a member reduced immigration quotas and the welfare-entitlements of some asylum-seekers. After some infighting, the party's vote was reduced to a still substantial level of just over 10% in the election in 2002.

Switzerland is one of Europe's wealthiest countries as well as one of its more egalitarian ones; government expenditure in 2001 on 'social protection' per person was above that of Sweden and Austria. In 2003, the Swiss People's Party (SVP) took 27% of the vote running on anti-immigrant, anti-foreigner and anti-EU positions.

The only exception to the pattern is provided by France whose GDP in PPP was 104.6 in 2002, i.e. average rather than high. Its inequality coefficient of 2001 at 4.0 was also close to the EU average of 4.4. France's candidates of the far right took respectively 16.8% (Le Pen) and 2.3% (Megret) in the first round of the presidential election in 2002 and Le Pen achieved 18% of the vote in the second round.

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The paradox then is that while respondents and citizens from wealthier and more egalitarian countries report more positive attitudes towards minorities in general and immigrants specifically, nonetheless the successes of radical right-wing parties have been registered almost entirely (with the exception of France) among the wealthiest and more egalitarian European societies. How can such an apparent discrepancy be explained ? Should attempts to explain patterns of prejudice and public sentiment at least partially by economic determinism be abandoned in the face of this kind of paradox ?

Some simple explanations for the paradox

Of course, the thoughtful observer should consider some obvious alternative possibilities that might explain the apparent inconsistency between attitudes (as expressed in surveys) and behaviour (as expressed in votes). Indeed, the expectation that people's attitudes and behaviours are, in general, consonant with one another has been jettisoned by mainstream social psychology⁵. In the still more amorphous world of political attitudes and behaviour, even less consistency might be expected. It might be that a person's vote is decided by factors other than those elicited in a survey. For example, it might be that people base their vote on a candidate's characteristics rather than his/her expressed views or party policies. Or that in some poorer societies, even if people are troubled by what they perceive as 'immigration problems', other issues and concerns are more salient or pressing in informing their electoral decision-making. Alternatively, it may be the case that the discrepancy between survey data and voting behaviour arises as a consequence of

⁵ See the work by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) on the 'Theory of Reasoned Action' and Ajzen (1991) on the 'Theory of Planned Behavior' for more sophisticated ways of expressing the relationship between attitude and behaviour.

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hypocrisy. Jackman and Muha (1984) for example, have proposed that while the picture of the better educated (and obviously education and income overlap quite heavily) US citizen that tends to emerge from survey responses is that she is more tolerant and less prejudiced than her less well-educated compatriots, this, they suggest, is simply a superficial and abstract adherence to a refined ideology, designed to make its holder look more fair-minded, rather than an expression of real views. Thus, this argument runs, we should be sceptical of accepting survey responses at face value.

The problem is compounded when trying to compare political behaviour and parties across a wide number of states, each with their own complex histories. It may be that parties labeled as 'far right' in some small, liberal European states are misnamed and are really the equivalent of mainstream right-wing parties in countries like the UK and Germany. Or alternatively that mainstream conservative parties in European countries like the UK and Germany, are capable of retaining the electoral support of both moderate and more extreme right-wing voters, thus stymieing far-right growth. And of course, it must not be forgotten that political success and failure rely to a great degree on 'random' factors like timing and the supply-side of the system, e.g. the charisma, or lack of it, of party candidates at election time. Or with regards to timing; an analysis of Dutch political trends, say, in 1995, might have concluded that the Dutch system was perhaps uniquely insulated from the mass appeal of right-wing populism or anti-immigrant politics, but an observer in 2005 would be unlikely to reach the same conclusion.

The dual impact of economic determinism: Unravelling the paradox

However, despite the specific and unique domestic factors in each country, as well as taking on board all the qualifications and *caveats* noted above, it is still strange, indeed remarkable, that the right-wing populism of the last decade has been so chiefly a phenomenon of wealthy European states. It must be that the apparent inconsistency between public attitudes and political behaviour is at least partially a logical function of economic factors, rather than being an irrational by-product of an amorphous political system, a flawed methodology or a fickle public. Perhaps material prosperity can have both direct and indirect consequences on politics generally, and on attitudes towards immigrants specifically. But the apparent inconsistency in attitudes may arise because the effects of direct and indirect economic forces actually run *counter* to one another. The positive association between attitudes towards minorities and national income has already been noted above whereby people living in wealthier and more egalitarian West European states had on average less hostile attitudes towards immigrants. However, it may also be the case that the state that is more egalitarian and wealthier may be more attractive to outsiders. That socio-economic structure may act as one specific pull factor for immigrants and refugees should not be seen as sinister. People seeking to move to another state, in so far as they have any discretion over the decision about that move, must inevitably be influenced by certain pull factors such as language(s) spoken, presence of compatriot communities, family contacts and transport links to the state. It also seems plausible that states perceived as wealthier and more egalitarian are also likely to be more attractive, since they offer more opportunities, greater social cohesion and social inclusion, easier access to services such as health and education, as well as lower

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levels of anti-immigrant sentiment; again, see Wilkinson (1996) for a contrast of more and less egalitarian societies, for example.

The data for a group of West European countries, including France and Austria, on wealth (2001), inequality (2001), asylum applications per 1,000 population (1997-2001) and immigrants per 1,000 population are presented (2001) in table 2.

TABLE 2 about here

The broad association between higher levels of GDP, lower economic equality (or higher inequality), greater numbers of asylum-seekers per head of population and greater foreign population is visible in table 2, even without formal statistical tests. The actual levels of correlation between GDP and asylum level is 0.725, GDP and immigration level is 0.816, between inequality score and asylum level is -0.636 and inequality score and immigration level is -0.347 .

With regard to those West European countries, identified above as having had significant Radical Right-Wing Populist success (RRWPs), it is clear that they have also had a higher immigrant and asylum-seeker intake than those without RRWP success (non-RRWPs). For example, the mean asylum-seeker percentage in table 2 for the seven RRWPs (Norway, Switzerland, Denmark, Netherlands, Austria, Belgium and France) is 11.5 against 4.9 for the other ten states. The mean immigration figure for the RRWPs is 9.0 against 8.4 for the non-RRWPs. (The modest differences with regard to the

immigration figures may be at least partly due to the varied means by which they are calculated, and indeed the Eurostat website warns that “the differences between countries in terms of data sources and definitions reduce the comparability of the [immigration] statistics”. By contrast, asylum-seekers are by definition making formal applications to the state and the figures are therefore much more precise.)

Contradictory influences, differing fears

The analysis therefore suggests that the impact of economic influence is unlikely to be uni-directional. Rather greater economic well-being (whether through higher national income or more equally shared ones) is *directly* associated with a reduction in negative views towards minorities and new arrivals such as immigrants and refugees. However, *indirectly*, an increase in wealth and equality is *also one* important factor in making that society more attractive to those seeking to leave their own. An increase (or perceived increase) in new arrivals to a society raises the concerns of at least a section of the indigenous population, and for some of them, this concern may be salient enough to alter their voting patterns, so they become more sympathetic to RRWP parties. One partial piece of supporting evidence for this interpretation can be obtained from the figures in table 2 above. The mean GDP (in PPPs) for RRWPs is 116.1, while it is 105.0 for non-RRWPs. On the other hand, as noted above, the difference in the mean asylum-seeker per 1,000 population (1997-2001), a reasonable proxy estimate for relative differences in newcomers to the various states, for RRWPs is 11.5 against 4.9 for non-RRWPs. In other words, the difference in the *directly* influential demographic variable is, as one would

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predict, more extreme, than the difference in the *indirectly* influential economic variable; see figure 3 below for a presentation of the differences by ratio to one another.

FIGURE 3 about here

The differences between poorer, less egalitarian states, with lower proportions of newcomers and the wealthier, more egalitarian states should, according to this model, be visible not just in contrasting political dynamics but also in general public attitudes. The survey data from ESS provide some confirmatory evidence. Respondents were posed a number of directly economic questions, including one which asked whether “average wages and salaries are generally brought down by people coming to live and work here” (item D18). Comparing the responses of those from non-RRWPs (i.e. poorer, less egalitarian states, with lower numbers proportionally of immigrants and asylum-seekers) versus those from RRWPs (i.e. wealthier, more egalitarian ones, with higher numbers of immigrants and asylum-seekers proportionally), a large difference is found whereby those from the non-RRWPs are more likely to agree; on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 = agree strongly, the non-RRWP mean was 2.87 compared to an RRWP mean of 3.30, a difference statistically significant at below the 0.01 level using a t-test, $t = 31.0$. Thus it appears that to the typical respondent from a non-RRWP, new arrivals are more likely to be perceived as an economic concern. On the other hand when the contrast is made for the same two sets of respondents on a non-economic survey item such as “communities of people who have come to live here should be allowed to educate their children in their own separate schools”, a different pattern emerges. The RRWP respondents are more

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likely to disagree with this statement, thus now looking less liberal than their non-RRWP counterparts; again on a scale of 1 to 5, the non-RRWP is 3.31 while the RRWP mean is 3.69, difference significant at below the 0.01 level using a t-test, $t = 26.9$. This suggests that for the RRWP respondents, new arrivals are perceived more as a concern of integration rather than as one of economics, hence the greater rejection of the idea that immigrant children should be separately educated. Or to put it more crudely, in poorer states, immigrants, for many, represent an economic threat/problem while in wealthier ones, they are perceived instead as a problem related to social integration. This might explain, for example, the phenomenon of right-wing populism in a country like the Netherlands; it is wealthy, egalitarian, and has relatively high numbers of immigrants and asylum-seekers. The rhetoric of the right there has focused less on economic issues and more on 'normen en waarden' - norms and values - and the perception that new migrants, as well as some Dutch ethnic minorities, are not integrating or subscribing to Dutch values.

Concluding Summary

Evidence has been produced to highlight a potential, or perhaps superficial, contradiction whereby although greater wealth appeared to be associated with less hostile attitudes towards minorities such as immigrants, it also was clear that most of the recent successes in right-wing populist political movements were emerging from societies where the average citizen appeared to endure relatively little economic hardship. An explanation based on dual influence was offered for this pattern whereby wealth can alleviate some feelings of threat about minorities while also, at the same time, increase the attractiveness of a society to greater numbers of incomers (in turn, indirectly raising the perceived

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threat). However, the qualitative nature of this concern changes in wealthier societies so that it is less to do with economics and more to do with integration. The political scientist Ronald Inglehart has noted that this kind of phenomenon can be observed in a broad range of contexts. Labelling the principle, the 'diminishing marginal utility of economic determinism', he argued that "economic factors tend to play a decisive role under conditions of economic scarcity; but as scarcity diminishes, other factors shape society to an increasing degree" (1987; 1289). In wealthier European states, immigrants are less likely to be perceived as an economic threat, but non-economic concerns about issues of integration come to the fore as greater numbers of new migrants are attracted to these states. The position of the analysis presented in this paper is not that 'economics don't matter' but that economic security has bi-directional (competing) influences in setting the context in which anti-immigrant politics develop.

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Table 1 – Three way categorisation of West European states by GDP per capita in PPPs. Data for 2002. Data unavailable for Switzerland. Source: Eurostat.

Low GDP Group		Medium GDP Group		High GDP Group	
Country	GDP in PPP	Country	GDP in PPP	Country	GDP in PPP
Portugal	70.9	Germany	99.6	Netherlands	111.5
Greece	70.9	Italy	100.1	Denmark	112.3
Spain	86.1	Finland	101.8	Ireland	125.5
		Sweden	104.6	Norway	136.4
		Belgium	107.0	Luxembourg	188.9
		UK	107.4		

Table 2 - Measures of GDP, (In)equality, Asylum-seekers per 1,000 population and Immigrants per 1,000 population. Sources – Eurostat and UNHCR (2001).

Country	GDP in PPP (2001 with EU 15 = 100)	Ratio score of income inequality (2001)	Asylum-seekers per 1,000 population (combined 1997-2001)	Immigrants per 1,000 population, estimates mainly for 2001
Luxembourg	194.3	3.8	14.4	27.6
Norway	144.4	3.2	10.3	7.6
Switzerland	Not available	Not available	20.8	17.0
Ireland	117.7	4.5	9.9	12.1
Denmark	115.4	3.1	9.6	10.5
Netherlands	113.3	3.8	12.4	8.3
Austria	112.0	3.5	11.0	11.1
Belgium	107.0	4.0	13.4	7.6
Sweden	106.2	3.4	8.3	6.8
UK	105.1	4.9	5.7	6.2
France	104.8	4.0	2.7	1.0 *
Finland	104.2	3.5	2.0	3.7
Germany	100.5	3.6	5.7	10.7
Italy	100.2	4.8	1.2	3.9 *
Spain	84.3	5.5	0.9	10.3
Portugal	70.6	6.5	0.1	1.8
Greece	67.2	5.7	1.7	1.2 *

* Most recent immigrant figure for Greece is from 1998, for France is 1999 and for Italy is 2000. All immigrant figures are estimates.

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