

INEQUALITY, IMMIGRANTS AND SELECTIVE SOLIDARITY

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ABSTRACT

Gabriele Magni: Inequality, Immigrants, and Selective Solidarity
(Under the direction of Liesbet Hooghe)

How does economic inequality influence policy preferences and political behavior? What is its impact on support for welfare redistribution toward native citizens and immigrants? This work develops and tests a theory in which economic inequality reinforces identity boundaries.

The first chapter explores whether economic inequality makes citizens less generous toward immigrants. It explains that inequality triggers selective solidarity. Individuals exposed to inequality grow more supportive of welfare for natives but not for immigrants, which increases the gap in support for natives vs. immigrants. This happens because inequality erodes beliefs in social mobility, which in turn intensifies ingroup favoritism. I first provide evidence with cross-national analysis of OECD survey data linked to national and subnational socio-economic indicators. I then present a survey experiment conducted with a nationally representative sample of Italian citizens, which includes attitudinal measures and a behavioral task.

The second chapter asks: Who deserves welfare support? Does working hard matter more or less than being a native citizen? To answer these questions, I run original survey conjoint experiments in France and Italy with nationally representative samples. The divide between native citizens and immigrants emerges as the most important determinant of welfare deservingness. Immigrants are considered less deserving than unemployed who are not looking for a job, who rely on welfare despite being fit and healthy, or who have never had regular jobs. Even Western European hardworking immigrants cannot significantly reduce their disadvantage.

Beyond shaping opinions on redistribution, does inequality prompt citizens to take action? The third chapter focuses on the impact of perceived economic unfairness on political participation. Despite their demand for change, individuals dissatisfied with economic inequality turn away from conventional political participation, because deep economic disparity alienates citizens from a political system that seems to lack representational legitimacy. On the other hand, individuals facing economic unfairness are more likely to engage in unconventional participation, but this effect is limited to citizens with high education, which is therefore instrumental to turn demobilization into re-engagement. I offer evidence for this argument using German survey data and structural equation modeling with latent variables.

To mom and dad
Thank you for your unconditional support

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They say it takes a village to accomplish long-term projects. I am not sure this is always true. What I know is that I grew up in an Italian village of less than 2,000 people from lower-middle class parents who always performed clerical jobs. My sister and I were the first to graduate from college in my extended family. No one in my family had ever travelled to the United States. And while my parents did not have much knowledge of higher education, let alone American universities, they have always supported my plans – even when that meant moving a continent away. If it wasn't for my family and for the educators that I have met along the road, I would have not made it this far.

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CHAPTER 1

INEQUALITY, IMMIGRANTS, AND SELECTIVE SOLIDARITY: HOW ECONOMIC DISPARITY FUELS CULTURAL CONFLICT

Does economic inequality make individuals less generous toward immigrants? Inequality has reached its highest levels in 30 years in OECD countries. Since the mid-1980s, the Gini coefficient has grown on average by 3 points. The richest 10% now earn 9.5 times more than the bottom 10%, up from 7 times in the mid-1980s (OECD 2014). Citizens are also increasingly aware of inequality. In a 2013 Pew Research poll, 85% of Europeans believed that the gap between rich and poor had increased, and 60% agreed that inequality was a “very big” problem (Pew 2013). Similarly, 62% of Americans considered the economic system unfair (Pew 2014).

At the same time, many western democracies have faced another fundamental challenge: rising immigration. Immigration has been salient in the context of the refugee crisis, Brexit, and recent elections in the US and European countries. On average, 5% of Americans have mentioned immigration as the top political problem since 2001, but the number has jumped to 15% in 2018 (Gallup 2018). Between 2005 and 2017, the share of Europeans considering immigration a political priority grew from 14 to 39% (Eurobarometer 2017). As a result, immigration has become one of the most relevant issues shaping political contestation (Hooghe and Marks 2018).

While the relationship between competition over scarce resources and hostility toward immigrants has been widely explored (Citrin et al. 1997, Dancygier and Donnelly 2012), the impact of economic inequality on attitudes toward welfare support for immigrants has received

less attention. Existing scholarship on preferences for redistribution examines the separate effects of inequality (Lupu and Pontusson 2011, Kuziemko et al. 2015, Rueda and Stegmueller 2016) and immigration (Alesina and Glaeser 2004, Mau and Burkhardt 2009, Brady and Finnigan 2014). And while previous work shows that immigration can sometimes spark opposition to redistribution, we do not know whether inequality amplifies this effect. In fact, still missing is a good understanding of how economic inequality and communal identity interact to affect welfare support.

Furthermore, while individuals tend to exhibit different welfare preferences depending on the social policies under consideration (Moene and Wallerstein 2001, Cavaillé and Trump 2015, Ballard-Rosa et al. 2017) and the identity of welfare recipients (Bobo and Kluegel 1993, Gilens 1999, Luttmer 2001, Arceneaux 2017, Rueda 2018), most of the comparative literature on inequality focuses on support for general redistribution. As a result, it is not clear what groups benefit or are penalized under inequality.

This article argues that economic inequality triggers *selective solidarity*. When inequality is high, people grow more supportive of welfare benefits for native citizens, but do not extend such support to immigrants. As a result, inequality increases the gap between willingness to help natives and willingness to support immigrants. This happens because economic inequality erodes beliefs in social mobility, which in turn favors ingroup favoritism. The seeming dearth of opportunity in society to improve individual condition through personal effort makes people more discriminating about who should be prioritized in the distribution of government support. Reserving welfare for natives ensures therefore that resources are channeled to deserving recipients – who, given the strong historical linkage between welfare and citizenship, are identified as native citizens.

I offer evidence for my argument combining cross-national observational analysis with an original survey experiment. This strategy allows me to evaluate trends across countries and to isolate causally identified effects. The observational analysis links survey data from OECD countries to contextual socio-economic indicators. I focus on regional economic inequality, which takes into account the large variation in the levels of inequality within countries and captures aggregate conditions arguably closer to residents' experience. A strong correlation emerges between inequality and welfare attitudes, with a negative effect on support for immigrants.

I then introduce an original survey experiment with a nationally representative sample of 1,275 Italian citizens. Exposure to objective information about inequality significantly increases support for redistribution through higher taxes on the rich (+11%) and for income subsidies for native citizens (+7%), but does not boost willingness to help immigrants. In fact, among conservative individuals, inequality reduces support for income subsidies for immigrants by 17 percentage points. I also present a behavioral task, which reveals that inequality shapes actions beyond opinions. By depressing beliefs in social mobility, inequality indirectly increases the likelihood that respondents contact elected officials to voice their support for welfare programs that benefit native citizens. Since I collect all the messages, this task allows me to evaluate actual behavior rather than just self-reported compliance.

This study bridges political economy and political psychology by bringing together work on the politics of welfare and public good provision and by proposing a causal mechanism that draws on social identity theory. I show how the socio-economic context measured by a macro variable (economic inequality) leads to selective solidarity via its influence on a psychological component (erosion of beliefs in social mobility). This way, I build upon recent scholarship that

emphasizes the importance of identity and other non-material factors in shaping preferences for redistribution under inequality (Shayo 2009, Trump 2017, Dimick et al. 2018).

Understanding the relationship between economic inequality, ethnic diversity, and redistribution is important in a time when a global populist turn accompanies rising inequality. To this regard, my work proposes an institutional cause for welfare chauvinism by showing that inequality stimulates selective solidarity via depressed beliefs in social mobility. Welfare chauvinism, therefore, can emerge as a product of despair over lack of opportunity, rather than simply as a result of prejudice when individuals are confronted with diversity. More broadly, this study suggests a micro-foundational explanation for the increased support for populist radical right parties in recent decades of growing economic disparity. By fueling welfare chauvinism, inequality may indeed favor the success of parties that often embrace nativist positions.

Previous Work: Economic Inequality, Identity, and Redistribution

The study of the impact of economic inequality on pro-social dispositions has a long history. Plato believed that inequality generates divisions between the rich and the poor and makes the rich neglect their responsibilities (Plato n.d.). Aristotle suggested in *Politics* that inequality reduces solidarity by making individuals concerned about their short-term self-interest and by pitting the rich against the poor (Aristotle 2013, Pol. 1295b; Tranvik n.d.). In his *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*, Rousseau warned that inequality leads to fragmented societies where the rich are less inclined to help the poor (Rousseau [and Gourevitch] 1997, 137, 171, 185). While Adam Smith believed that moderate inequality boosts political stability, he also worried that high inequality diminishes willingness to help the disadvantaged (Smith 1982, I.iii.2, 50–61; Rasmussen 2016).

Modern social science has extensively explored the link between economic inequality and welfare support. The median voter theorem suggests that higher inequality (before taxes) favors greater support for redistribution. This is because the distance between the income of the median voter and the average income is greater in more unequal societies (Romer 1975, Meltzer and Richard 1981). Empirical work on the impact of economic inequality on preferences for redistribution, however, has yielded mixed results. Some studies find that inequality increases support for redistribution (Finseraas 2009, Tóth and Keller 2011). This happens especially among the rich, who become more altruistic as a result of a negative externality of inequality: crime (Rueda and Stegmueller 2016, Dimick et al. 2016).

Other studies find no effect of inequality on preferences for redistribution (Lübker 2007, Kenworthy and McCall 2008, Kuziemko et al. 2015, Trump 2017, Trump and White 2018) or an effect that is conditional on the structure rather than the level of inequality (Lupu and Pontusson 2011). Still others show that inequality reduces support for redistribution (Bowles and Gintis 2000, Paskov and Dewilde 2012), specifically among higher-income individuals (Côté et al. 2015) and when wealth disparities are more visible (Nishi et al. 2015).

One reason why previous studies have produced inconsistent outcomes is that they have usually focused on support for *general* redistribution rather than for *specific* welfare policies. Redistribution, however, can assume various meanings and elicit different attitudes depending on the social groups who are thought to benefit from social policies (Ballard-Rosa et al. 2017, Arceneaux 2017, Rueda 2018). In the US, for instance, welfare has become racially coded and associated with blacks among large subsets of the white electorate (Gilens 1996, 1999), while Social Security has become linked to whiteness (Winter 2006).

As a result, the effect of inequality on welfare preferences is conditional on the type of redistributive measures under evaluation (Moene and Wallerstein 2001). When they consider redistributive policies, individuals tend to differentiate between those that “take from the rich” and those that “give to the poor” (Cavaillé and Trump 2015). Since the latter are more likely to generate other-oriented social affinity considerations rather than self-oriented income maximization, the identity of welfare receivers critically shapes the effects of inequality on preferences for redistribution toward low-income recipients.

Indeed, individuals often display parochial altruism: they are prone to help members of their own community but deny support to out-group individuals (Bernhard et al. 2006, Bowles and Gintis 2011, Marks 2012). The relevance of race and immigration in shaping welfare attitudes confirms the conditionality of help. Support for welfare increases in the United States as the number of welfare recipients of the same race grows (Luttmer 2001, Bobo and Kluegel 1993), while attitudes toward welfare are more negative in racially or ethnically heterogeneous environments (Alesina and Glaeser 2004, Hopkins 2009). Race also shapes welfare preferences through negative stereotypes. Individuals who believe that blacks are lazy generally exhibit lower support for welfare (Gilens 1995, 1999, Pfefferly et al. 1997, Fox 2004).

In Europe, where immigration rather than race is salient, individuals are usually more in favor of welfare support for native citizens than for immigrants (Van der Waal et al. 2010, Reeskens and van Oorschot 2012). Both economic competition and cultural beliefs can drive such attitudes (Burgoon et al. 2012, Dancygier and Donnelly 2012, Ford 2015).

At the aggregate level, ethnic diversity often undermines public good provision (Alesina, et al. 1999). This happens because ethnic diversity hinders cooperation (Habyarimana et al. 2007), generates different preferences over public goods (Watkins and La Ferrara 2005), and

negatively affects enforcement in public good production (Miguel and Gugerty 2005). These factors may explain why higher levels of immigration often predict lower support for the welfare state in Europe (Mau and Burkhardt 2009, Eger 2009, Dahlberg et al. 2012).

While previous scholarship makes clear that ethnic diversity and immigration increase feelings of competition and negatively affect preferences for redistribution, we do not know whether these sentiments are more common when economic inequality is higher.¹ Considering that inequality increases the stakes of redistribution and that immigration is politically salient, it is important to understand how economic disparity affects willingness to help different groups in society. The next section develops a theory that links economic inequality to welfare redistribution toward native citizens and immigrants.

Theory: Inequality, Immigrants, and Selective Solidarity

To understand how macro-level factors influence micro-level behavior, we need to consider how individuals react to the context in which they live. Social identity theory explains that individuals tend to see themselves as members of groups in society, and that they strive to maintain a positive social identity. Such identity is based on a favorable comparison between the in-group and relevant out-groups (Tajfel and Turner 1979; see also Shayo 2009).

What are the relevant outgroups in the context of economic inequality and redistribution? For a start, we can distinguish between those who pay for redistribution and those who benefit from it – a basic distinction consistent with the tendency of people to differentiate between redistribution “from the rich” and “to the poor” (Cavaillé and Trump 2015).

¹ As a partial exception, Van der Waal et al. (2013) find that individuals in liberal and conservative welfare regimes embrace welfare chauvinism more than citizens in social-democratic welfare states.

A further division among potential beneficiaries of redistribution has become salient in recent decades: the divide between native citizens and immigrants. Not only have far-right parties moved over time from promoting small government to proposing welfare chauvinism, a political position that advocates the allocation of welfare benefits only to natives (Kitschelt 2007, 1997; Van der Waal et al. 2010). Larger sectors of the electorate now embrace exclusionary tendencies, as a result of the zero-sum competition reasoning induced by fiscal stress and resource scarcity in many post-industrial democracies (Cavaillé and Ferwerda n.d.; Dancygier and Donnelly 2012).

What should we expect from these groups? Survey data from recent years show that a vast majority is unsatisfied with the income distribution. 62% of Americans judge the economic system unfair (Pew 2014), while, among Europeans, 60% agree that inequality is a “very big” problem and 77% that the economic system favors the wealthy (Pew 2013).

Dissatisfied individuals strive to improve their condition, and social identity theory suggests social mobility as a possible response (Tajfel and Turner 1979). Citizens may aspire to climb the social ladder through hard work because people judge “social class by relative comparison; they assess other people’s status at a glance; and they physically crave to be higher than others on the status ladder” (Payne 2017: 45). Hirschman similarly described the “exit” option: “The traditional American idea of success [...] – or, what amounts to the same thing, upward social mobility – has long been conceived in terms of evolutionary individualism. The successful individual who starts out at a low rung of the social ladder, necessarily leaves his own group as he rises” (Hirschman 1970: 108).

However, I argue, social mobility is not perceived as a viable option when economic inequality is high. Not only does inequality depress the likelihood of upward mobility and favor

the transmission of economic advantage (Chetty et al. 2014, Corak 2013). Inequality also erodes beliefs in the existence of economic opportunity and in the role of individual effort to get ahead in life (McCall et al. 2017).

When inequality is high, wealth is concentrated in the hands of fewer individuals, while a larger number is in a relatively worse position. The increased distance between the top and the rest highlights the economic advantage of the wealthy and emphasizes the contrast between the super-rich and the rest. Economic hierarchy becomes therefore more apparent (Newman et al. 2015). In such a context, I anticipate that citizens will lose faith in the existence of opportunities to climb the socio-economic ladder. Under deep inequality, the steps of the ladder grow further apart (Chetty et al. 2014) and moving up those steps appears prohibitive, as if people were climbing skyscrapers rather than human scales (Payne 2017: 28-29). Hard work, as a consequence, is no longer seen as a guarantee of economic success.

I expect these feelings to be widespread because the increase in inequality in the last few decades has been strongly top-skewed (Atkinson et al. 2011, Volscho and Kelly 2012). The key points here are relative position and social comparison. Relative income influences satisfaction with one's own condition (Clark and Oswald 1996). And because of social comparison, as social psychology explains, "inequality makes people *feel poor* [...] *even when they are not*" (Payne 2017: 4). Survey data provide indirect evidence to support this claim. Today, only 1% of Europeans and 2% of Americans identify with members of the higher class (Eurobarometer 2016; Pew 2012). For these reasons, I hypothesize that inequality erodes beliefs in social mobility in the large majority of citizens – even in the relatively wealthy who do not see themselves as belonging to the super-rich who have benefited from growing inequality. Hence:

H1: Economic inequality weakens beliefs in social mobility and in the existence of economic opportunity.

By depressing beliefs in social mobility, inequality increases support for redistribution.² When people do not think that individuals can improve their situation through personal effort, they grow more likely to favor external help. Almost two hundred years ago, De Tocqueville (1835) hypothesized that different mobility rates distinctively shaped attitudes toward redistribution in Europe and the US. More recent scholarship shows that people are more likely to support redistribution when they have experienced limited social mobility or do not expect future upward mobility (Piketty 1995, Benabou and Ok 2001, Alesina and LaFerrara 2005).

But the effects of social mobility on preferences for redistribution are not limited to direct personal experience. General beliefs about the determinants of position in the social ladder also influence redistribution attitudes. Lipset (1992; Lipset and Bendix 1959) suggested that different perceptions of social mobility and class rigidities helped explain diversity in redistribution preferences in Europe and the US. A vast literature has then shown that people who do not deem that hard work leads to economic success exhibit greater support for redistribution (Piketty 1995, Corneo and Gruener 2002, Alesina and LaFerrara 2005, Giuliano and Spilimbergo 2014). This applies also to individuals who are personally wealthy and unlikely to benefit from redistribution (Fong 2001).³ Similarly, citizens who think that social causes beyond individual control determine individuals' economic condition are more in favor of redistribution (Bullock 1999, Weiner et al. 2011). Hence:

² This hypothesis is based on the assumption that beliefs come before preferences.

³ Consistently, wealthy individuals display greater support for redistribution under inequality, even if they do not materially personally benefit in the short term (Rueda and Stegmueller 2016, Dimick et al. 2018).

H2: By depressing beliefs in social mobility, economic inequality increases support for redistribution.

Not everyone, however, is considered equally deserving of welfare support. In fact, the apparent scarcity of opportunity to improve individual economic condition through personal effort leads people to be more discriminating about who should be prioritized with government aid. I argue that the inequality-induced perceived lack of social mobility generates *selective solidarity* – that is, it increases the gap in support for welfare redistribution toward native citizens vs. immigrants. By sparking despair over lack of opportunity, inequality strengthens the conviction that native citizens are more deserving than immigrants of being supported through welfare services – i.e. *government* programs funded by *public* resources.

Why does despair over opportunity intensify welfare chauvinism? Selective solidarity is rooted in the communal boundaries that have historically characterized the welfare state, and, consequently, welfare deservingness considerations. The concept of distributive justice presupposes a bounded world, that is, a political community within which goods and resources can be redistributed (Walzer 1983: 31). As a form of solidarity, the welfare state demands individuals to make sacrifices to help anonymous others, and these sacrifices are more likely to be accepted if donors and receivers are united by a common identity (Kymlicka 2001).

In modern times, nationality has provided this common identity. The welfare state has developed in the context of the nation state (Huber and Stephens 2001) and the national community has emerged as the natural reference group for social inequality (Whelan and Maître 2009). A strong linkage has consolidated between citizenship and welfare, to the extent that for many individuals, especially in Europe, “rights to welfare have [...] entered into the definition of citizenship” (Miller 1999: 31).

Such linkage makes it harder for immigrants to convincingly claim their right to welfare. Coming from outside the national community, immigrants are considered less deserving of welfare support (Van Oorschot 2006, Ford 2015).⁴ Reserving welfare for native citizens when inequality is high ensures therefore that resources are channeled to entitled recipients in times of perceived lack of opportunity. If natives are not given a fair shot to improve their condition through personal effort, they should at least be prioritized in the distribution of government support.

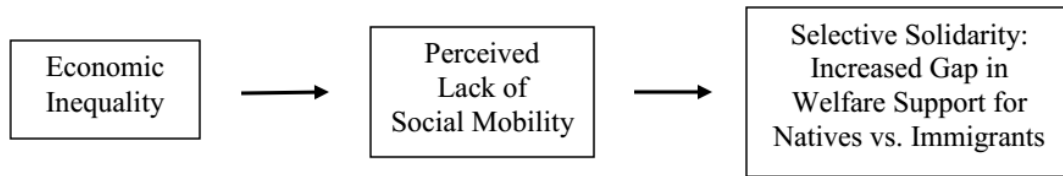
H3: By depressing beliefs in social mobility, economic inequality generates selective solidarity, that is, it increases the gap in welfare support for native citizens vs. immigrants.

Theory Summary

By increasing the distance and highlighting the contrast between the top and the rest, inequality erodes beliefs in social mobility. The perceived lack of economic opportunity for individuals to improve their condition, in turn, increases support for redistribution. Not everyone, however, is considered equally deserving of welfare support. Inequality, in fact, widens the gap in support for native citizens vs. immigrants. The historically national character of the welfare state explains the link between perceived lack of opportunity and selective solidarity.

⁴ This may also due to the fact that reciprocity via past contributions to the community influences deservingness evaluations (Petersen 2012). By definition more recent members of the community, immigrants – all things equal – have weaker reciprocity credentials.

Figure 1.1 – From economic inequality to selective solidarity



Data and Methods

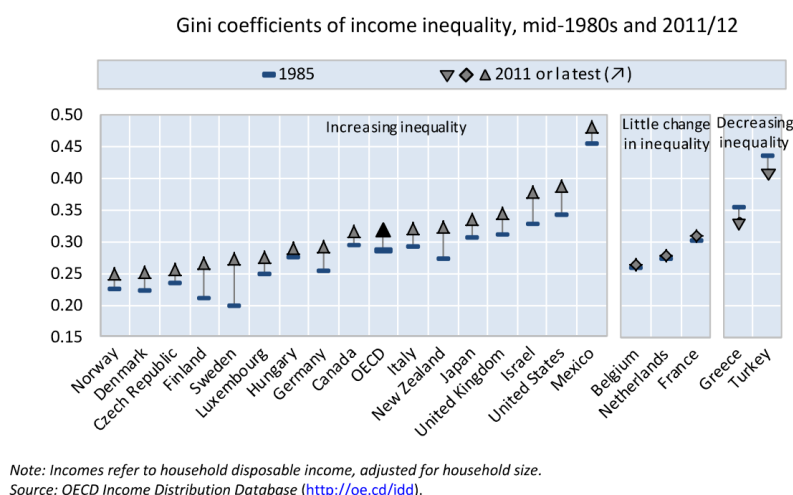
To test these hypotheses, I use data for 13 OECD countries from the European Social Survey, which I link to contextual socio-economic indicators, including a measure of regional inequality. The cross-national analysis allows me to explore the correlation between observed inequality and preferences for redistribution in a large sample of countries. There are, however, important limitations in such analysis, especially with regard to identification and causality. Moreover, some of the survey items are imprecise measures of the concepts of interest.

I address these shortcomings by complementing the observational analysis with an original survey experiment conducted with a nationally representative sample of Italian residents. With the experiment, I can precisely evaluate the causal effect of exposure to information about inequality on support for welfare policies benefiting natives vs. immigrants with both attitudinal and behavioral measures; separate the effects of perceived inequality from the impact of perceived poverty; and explore the causal mechanism. The experiment therefore allows me to estimate how individuals react when they are made aware of the extent of inequality, which is important given that people tend to underestimate the scope of economic disparity in society (Osberg and Smeeding 2006, Norton and Ariely 2010).

Italy is a hard test for my theory. On the one hand, the country is representative of the level and the dynamics of income inequality in OECD countries (figure 1.2). Immigration is also

a central concern, as it is in most European democracies. 49% of Italians in 2016 and 39% in 2017 considered immigration the most important issue faced by the EU, compared to averages of 45% and 38%, respectively, across all EU member states (Eurobarometer 2016, 2017).

Figure 1.2 – GINI coefficient in OECD countries



On the other hand, beliefs in meritocracy and social mobility are especially weak in Italy. Compared to other OECD citizens, Italians place greater importance on family background and connections – rather than individual effort and hard work – as determinants of economic success. Data from 29 countries in the International Social Survey Program⁵ reveal that the percentage of Italians who believe that hard work is important to get ahead in life is 11 points lower than the OECD average (64% vs. 75%). Compared to OECD citizens, Italians are more likely to attribute economic success to coming from a wealthy family (37% vs. 26%), having political connections (43% vs. 21%), and knowing the right people (59% vs. 51%). The already weak faith in

⁵ The survey was conducted in 2009. Of the 35 OECD countries, only six are not included: Canada, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Mexico, and Netherlands.

meritocracy and social mobility makes therefore the prediction that the inequality treatment will further erode beliefs in social mobility a demanding expectation.

A Cross-National Analysis of the Effects of Inequality

I merge survey data from the European Social Survey (ESS) with macro socio-economic variables measured at the regional and national level. The countries in the analysis are the 13 OECD countries in the 2008 ESS wave for which the measure of regional inequality is available.⁶ I use the 2008 ESS wave because it presents a rich module on welfare state attitudes and because the measure of regional inequality is available for the years 2002-2009. Given the hierarchical structure of the data, I run multilevel random effect models with varying intercept. In the appendix, a robustness check includes country fixed effects.

Economic inequality is measured by the Gini index at the regional level and is captured by the indicator built by Rueda and Stegmueller (2016). In theory, the Gini index ranges from 0, i.e. a condition of perfect equality, to 1, a condition of absolute inequality. An indicator of regional inequality allows me to capture within-country variation, thereby accounting for the substantial differences observed in many European countries. For instance, in Spain, the Cantabria region has a Gini value of 0.22, the lowest in the entire sample, while Castilla-La Mancha has a Gini value of 0.37, which is higher than the value corresponding to the third quartile.

Furthermore, an indicator of regional inequality arguably captures economic conditions closer to the experience of residents, which increases the likelihood that respondents are exposed to the inequality “treatment” (Newman et al. 2015). This issue deserves attention given that

⁶ Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. The 2008 ESS wave did not include Italy.

recent studies underline the importance of the *visibility* of inequality (Nishi et al. 2015) and *perceptions* of inequality (Gimpelson and Treisman 2015, Trump 2017) for preferences for redistribution.

I adopt two separate dependent variables, one measuring general support for individuals facing economic hardship and the other capturing welfare support specifically for low-income immigrants. Regarding help for people in need, higher values correspond to the belief that benefits for the poor are insufficient.⁷ The wording of this survey item is especially fitting for my analysis because it mentions the country in which the question is asked, which should emphasize considerations related to one's national identity (Kuo and Margalit 2012). Willingness to provide economic help to immigrants is measured by an item focused on support for the provision of welfare services to immigrants. Greater values indicate greater willingness to support immigrants.⁸

The models include controls at the individual, regional, and national level. Regarding individual variables, the first model presents socio-demographic indicators that may affect preferences for redistribution. In addition to gender, age and education, I control for income – whose measure is based on deciles and therefore comparable across countries, – political ideology (where 0 corresponds to “left” and 10 to “right”), and religiosity.

⁷ Respondents stated to what extent they agreed or disagreed that “[t]here are insufficient benefits in [country] to help the people who are in real need” on a 5-point scale. One limitation in this measure must be acknowledged. An individual living in a country with a well-developed welfare system may think that support for the poor is enough, even if that individual is in favor of redistributive policies. Hence, I evaluate whether the impact of inequality varies depending on the levels of social expenditure or the type of welfare state. Results remain substantively unchanged (see footnote 10). The survey experiment then offers a more precise measure of welfare support for low-income natives.

⁸ “Thinking of people coming to live in [country] from other countries, when do you think they should obtain the same rights to social benefits and services as citizens already living here?” The variable is measured on a five-point scale with the following categories: “They should never get the same rights; Once they have become a citizen; After worked and paid taxes at least a year; After a year, whether or not have worked; Immediately on arrival.”

The second model adds socio-demographic controls for union membership, employment status, household size, and age squared (displayed in the appendix because of space constraint). It also controls for socio-economic perceptions and attitudinal positions. I consider feelings of economic security, which are often related to welfare support (Ford 2015); inequality evaluation, which is a strong test for the effect of observed inequality; the perceived numbers of the poor and immigrants, which measure both the perceived spread of neediness and the possible costs of assistance (shown only in the appendix); poor and immigrant deservingness, which is an important determinant of welfare support (Petersen 2012); and economic and cultural attitudes toward immigrants, which likely influence preferences over welfare benefits for immigrants.

Additionally, all the models include regional controls to isolate the impact of inequality from other regional socio-economic indicators. GDP per capita and the unemployment rate control for general economic conditions, since both support for redistribution and hostility toward immigrants may be higher during economic hardship. Population density accounts for the possibility that individuals who live in urban areas often exhibit different preferences (Cho et al. 2006). I also control for the share of foreigners, given the often negative link between ethnic heterogeneity and support for the welfare state (Alesina and Glaeser 2004, Finseraas 2009).

Finally, the third model includes socio-economic indicators at the national level: average GDP per capita, social expenditure, unemployment rate, and share of foreigners.⁹ Because of space constraint, Table 1.1 reports only some individual controls, while the appendix reproduces the full model specifications.

⁹ The variable “Social expenditure” comes from the OECD Social Expenditure Database. I also ran model 3 in table 1.1 with an interaction between inequality and social expenditure. While the interaction is negative, the overall marginal effect of inequality is always positive, which indicates that inequality always has a positive impact on support for low-income citizens.

Table 1.1 – Welfare support for people in need and immigrants

	Welfare support for people in need			Welfare support for immigrants		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Inequality (regional)	1.489** (0.518)	1.205* (0.522)	1.158* (0.517)	-1.083* (0.528)	-1.228* (0.528)	-1.033* (0.517)
Income	-0.010*** (0.003)	0.022*** (0.004)	0.011** (0.004)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.011** (0.004)	-0.008* (0.004)
Female	0.061*** (0.013)	0.063*** (0.014)	0.058*** (0.015)	0.033* (0.014)	0.055*** (0.015)	0.042** (0.015)
Age	-0.001 (0.0004)	0.0004 (0.002)	-0.0003 (0.002)	-0.001* (0.0004)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.0003 (0.002)
Education	-0.063*** (0.006)	-0.038*** (0.006)	-0.032*** (0.006)	0.075*** (0.006)	0.025*** (0.006)	0.016* (0.006)
Right	-0.022*** (0.003)	-0.016*** (0.003)	-0.015*** (0.003)	-0.034*** (0.003)	-0.026*** (0.003)	-0.036*** (0.004)
Religiosity	-0.012** (0.005)	-0.010 (0.005)	-0.017** (0.005)	-0.007 (0.005)	-0.005 (0.005)	0.009 (0.006)
Union		-0.001 (0.017)	0.008 (0.017)		0.054** (0.017)	0.051** (0.017)
Economic security		-0.092*** (0.011)	-0.093*** (0.011)		0.009 (0.011)	0.022 (0.011)
Inequality Evaluation		0.071*** (0.008)	0.087*** (0.008)			
Poor Undeservingness		-0.257*** (0.008)	-0.239*** (0.008)			
Immigr. Attit. (Economy)					0.058*** (0.004)	0.056*** (0.004)
Immigr. Attit. (Culture)					0.049*** (0.004)	0.049*** (0.004)
Immigr. Undeservingness					-0.051*** (0.004)	-0.040*** (0.004)
Addit. individual controls	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Regional Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
National Controls	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Constant	3.586*** (0.200)	3.964*** (0.203)	4.490*** (0.317)	3.826*** (0.200)	3.488*** (0.206)	2.604*** (0.310)
Observations	20,487	17,029	15,855	20,179	16,692	15,562
Log Likelihood	-28,141.23	-22,649.03	-20,889.22	-28,071.32	-22,406.34	-20,505.07
Akaike Inf. Crit.	56,310.46	45,344.05	41,832.45	56,172.65	44,862.68	41,068.13
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	56,421.44	45,522.14	42,039.57	56,291.33	45,055.75	41,290.06

Note:

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Models 1 through 3 show that higher levels of inequality increase willingness to provide support to people in need, even after controlling for numerous individual and contextual indicators. On the other hand, models 4 through 6 reveal that the average willingness to provide economic help to immigrants decreases as inequality grows. The negative effect of inequality on support for welfare for immigrants is substantial. The calculation of predicted values from model 4 reveals that the difference in support between an average individual living in the region with the lowest level of inequality and one living in the region with the highest level is roughly similar to the difference in predicted support between an individual with the lowest level of education and one with the highest level and between two citizens at the opposite extremes on the political ideology scale.

The robustness of these findings is quite remarkable if one considers that inequality remains significant even after controlling for feelings of undeservingness of the poor (models 2 and 3) and immigrants (models 5 and 6), and for individual economic and cultural attitudes toward immigrants (models 5 and 6). This analysis, therefore, shows a correlation between economic inequality, on the one hand, and two contrasting attitudes, on the other: general support for people facing economic difficulty and desire to tighten immigrant access to social benefits. Next, I turn to the survey experiment, which allows me to isolate the causal effect of inequality on support for welfare policies benefiting either native citizens or immigrants.

Survey Experiment: Experimental Design

I conducted a survey experiment with a nationally representative sample of 1,275 Italian citizens.¹⁰ After providing information on their age and gender and confirming that they reside in Italy, respondents are randomly assigned to one of the three following conditions: the economic inequality treatment, the poverty treatment, or the control group. The inequality treatment exposes participants to objective information about inequality and allows me to evaluate the effect of perceived inequality on preferences for redistribution and welfare policies.

The poverty treatment is not the focus of this article, but allows me to test whether the effect of inequality (i.e. unequal resource distribution between the top and the bottom) is distinct from that produced by a focus on the lack of resources for the bottom. Respondents in the control group start answering attitudinal questions on social policies right away, while those in the treatment groups are asked to carefully read data about Italy's economic situation before answering the same survey questions.

The two treatments are built symmetrically. They are divided into two pages and provide information about economic inequality and poverty, respectively, in Italy with bullet-point data summary, graphs, and pictures. The first page of the inequality treatment provides information about the levels of economic inequality in Italy and contrasts the income and wealth of the top 1% with the income and wealth of the rest of the population. A plot also shows the income distribution by quintile. The second page contains information about the recent growth of economic inequality in the country and compares wealth accumulation and income trends for the top and the rest since 2000. The second page also presents two pictures that contrast a wealthy

¹⁰ The survey was distributed by the survey platform company Cint on December 13, 14 and 15, 2016. The median time for completion was 12 minutes. The experiment was registered with EGAP (Evidence in Governance and Politics) before data collection. More information on survey respondents can be found in the appendix.

individual standing in front of an expensive car and a luxury house with a lower-income individual who is looking for food among surplus products at a city food market.¹¹

Similarly, the first page of the poverty treatment offers information on the level of poverty in Italy and presents a plot showing the number of poor who cannot afford basic services. The second page reports data on the increase of poverty in the country in the last two decades, in addition to a picture depicting a lower-income individual looking for food among surplus products at a city market.

Respondents then answer questions about social policies. I gauge welfare attitudes in two ways. First, I measure support for redistribution that takes away from the rich. To emphasize the cost of redistribution for the rich, the survey item asks respondents to what extent they agree or disagree with the following statement: “The government should increase taxes on the rich to decrease income differences in Italy.”

Second, I focus on policies that distribute to the needy by measuring support for monthly income subsidies for natives and immigrants: “How much are you in favor of or against a government intervention to promote the following policies, even if such intervention required a tax increase or a spending cut in other sectors? Providing a payment card of 350 euros per month for food, health and bills-related expenses to Italian citizens who live in absolute poverty [/to immigrants who live in Italy in absolute poverty]?”¹²

I also collect a behavioral measure of welfare support, which consists in the possibility for survey respondents to write a message in favor of a petition asking the government to

¹¹ The appendix reproduces the two treatments.

¹² The policy, which is in place in Italy, is the same but the identity of potential receivers varies. The question order was randomized across respondents.

increase resources for the National Fund for Social Policies. The survey item explains that the messages would be delivered to the President of the National Institute for Social Policies, the Prime Minister, and the President of the Republic.¹³ This is a relatively demanding task because it requires respondents to craft their own message without any guiding script rather than signing an existing petition.¹⁴ By collecting all the messages, I can evaluate whether inequality affects actual behavior without relying on respondents' self-reported compliance.

To investigate the causal mechanism through which inequality shapes welfare preferences, I include an item that measures beliefs in meritocracy and social mobility, which are captured by the perceived importance of hard work to improve one's own economic condition. I also measure perceptions of welfare deservingness of low-income natives and low-income immigrants.

In the second part of the survey, respondents answer questions about their socio-economic situation and their political preferences. The post-experiment questionnaire also includes manipulation and attention checks. The manipulation checks confirm that the inequality and the poverty treatment increase awareness of inequality and poverty, respectively (appendix).¹⁵

¹³ To avoid partisan effects, I clarified that the petition was not promoted or supported by any political party. To avoid interest distortion, respondents were told that they would not receive any additional compensation for writing a message and that they would not be penalized if they decided not to write.

¹⁴ The survey completion time indirectly confirms this point. The median time for respondents who did not write a message was 11 minutes, compared to 14 for those who did write a message.

¹⁵ I placed the attention check at the end of the survey to avoid bias that could be elicited by the screener-induced feeling that the respondent is being monitored. This makes the attention check a strong screener, since respondents are more likely to lose attention at the end of a survey. Of the 1,275 respondents that completed the survey, 1,018 passed the attention check.

Experimental Findings

Below I present and discuss the results of the analysis conducted with the entire sample of respondents. As a robustness check, the appendix reports the analysis run with the subset of respondents who passed the attention check and the subset that excludes the 5% fastest and slowest respondents. Results remain substantively unchanged.

Redistribution That Takes Away from the Rich

I first analyze support for redistribution that takes away from the rich. The results reveal that inequality significantly increases support for redistribution. While 40.9% of respondents in the control group strongly agree that taxes on the rich should be raised to reduce income differences, the share of respondents who strongly support higher taxes on the rich in the inequality group is 51.4%. In contrast, the impact of the poverty treatment is positive but not significant, with 43.3% of respondents strongly agreeing with this policy option.

To further evaluate the treatment effect, table 1.2 reports the results of OLS, logit and ordered logit models with and without controls (because of space constraint the controls in this and the following tables are shown in the appendix).¹⁶ All the model specifications confirm that inequality increases support for redistribution through higher taxes on the rich. Focusing on the OLS models that offer easier interpretation, when we add controls (model 2), the inequality treatment produces a 14 percentage point increase in support of higher taxes on the rich.

The appendix also shows that, as expected, richer and economically conservative individuals display significant opposition to redistribution. The effect of the inequality treatment

¹⁶ In tables 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4, the dependent variables are measured on a five-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” in the ordered logit models, while they are binary variable for which 1 corresponds to “strongly agree” in the OLS and logit models. The total number of observations in the models with controls is 1,098 because some respondents did not answer questions about their income and political preferences.

is about one third the size of the effects of income and economic ideology – a relatively strong impact for a rather mild informational treatment.

In contrast, the impact of the poverty treatment is not significant. Why this is the case remains to some extent a matter of speculation. One could hypothesize that the inequality treatment – which highlights the resource unbalance between the top and the bottom – leads participants to focus on the very rich at the top, while the poverty treatment – which emphasizes the lack of resources for the bottom – on the have-nots. If this is the case, inequality may make the majority of respondents feel poor compared to the top (see Payne 2017), in a way that the poverty treatment that clearly separates the majority from the bottom does not. Recent experimental work finds that changes in people's social comparisons can modify political opinions. Individuals who are made to feel comparatively richer become less supportive of redistribution, while subjects who feel relatively poor show increased support (Brown-Iannuzzi et al. 2015). Under inequality, therefore, even relatively affluent respondents may favor increased redistribution.

Table 1.2 – Support for redistribution

	Support for Redistribution					
	<i>OLS</i>		<i>Logistic</i>		<i>Ordered logistic</i>	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Inequality treatment	0.11** (0.03)	0.14*** (0.04)	0.44** (0.14)	0.61*** (0.16)	0.28* (0.13)	0.39** (0.14)
Poverty treatment	0.03 (0.03)	0.01 (0.04)	0.12 (0.14)	0.05 (0.16)	-0.04 (0.13)	-0.12 (0.14)
Control mean	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	4.02	4.02
Covariates?	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	1,273	1,098	1,273	1,098	1,273	1,098

Note:

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

All the models in this and the next tables include the following covariates: gender, age, education, household income, economic ideology, social ideology, party ID, and location of residence.

Control mean reports the mean of the outcome variable for the entire control group.

Welfare Support for Natives vs. Immigrants

What is the impact of inequality on support for welfare redistribution to native citizens and immigrants? The experimental findings reveal that inequality – but not poverty – significantly increases the willingness to redistribute to low-income natives. 48.6% of respondents in the inequality group strongly support monthly income subsidies for low-income natives, compared to 41.8% in the control group and 43.8% in the poverty group.

On the other hand, the overall levels of support for subsidies for immigrants are much lower, and they are not statistically significantly different across control and treatment groups. The shares of respondents who strongly back welfare support for immigrants are 9.9% in the inequality group, 7.8% in the control group and 6.6% in the poverty group.

Table 1.3 reports OLS, logit and ordered logit models with and without controls. The models confirm that inequality increases the willingness to support low-income natives (models 1 through 6), but does not have a significant effect on the willingness to help immigrants (models 7 through 12). In the OLS model with controls (model 2), exposure to information about inequality increases support for welfare redistribution toward natives by 9 percentage points. The full specifications in the appendix also show that women and lower-income respondents are more in favor of welfare for natives, while supporters of Lega Nord – a party promoting nativism – strongly oppose welfare for immigrants.

Overall, these results provide evidence that the increased support for redistribution sparked by inequality is limited to policies that benefit native citizens of the country. Exposure to information about economic inequality, therefore, widens the gap in support for welfare policies in favor of natives vs. immigrants.

Table 1.3 – Support for welfare policies benefiting natives and immigrants

	Support for											
	Low-Income Natives						Low-Income Immigrants					
	<i>OLS</i>		<i>Logistic</i>		<i>Ordered logistic</i>		<i>OLS</i>		<i>Logistic</i>		<i>Ordered logistic</i>	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Inequality treatment	0.07*	0.09*	0.29*	0.39*	0.23 ⁺	0.31*	-0.01	-0.02	-0.06	-0.07	-0.00	-0.07
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.14)	(0.17)	(0.12)	(0.14)
Poverty treatment	0.02	0.04	0.10	0.17	0.05	0.09	0.02	-0.01	0.09	-0.05	0.04	-0.15
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.15)	(0.17)	(0.12)	(0.14)
Control mean	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	4.07	4.07	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	2.42	2.42
Covariates?	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	1,273	1,098	1,273	1,098	1,273	1,098	1,273	1,098	1,273	1,098	1,273	1,098

Note:

+p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

These findings are consistent with social identity theory, which argues that social identification favors ingroup favoritism but does not necessarily generate hostility toward outgroups (Brewer 1999, 2001). Situational triggers, however, have the potential to trigger predisposing factors and promote outgroup hostility. Previous work has shown that economic threats can activate latent national identity considerations and spark exclusionary reactions toward immigrants (Sniderman et al. 2004; see also Newman et al. 2015).

Similarly, we could expect economic inequality to work as a situational trigger that stimulates a latent negative opinion toward immigrants among socially conservative individuals. Latent opinions are “ingrained sets of values, criteria for judgment, attitudes, preferences, dislikes [...] that come into play when a relevant action, event, or proposal arises” (Key 1961: 264; Zaller 2003). Socially conservatives tend to show greater in-group attachment and to endorse the ingroup/loyalty moral foundation more strongly (Graham et al. 2009). They also generally place greater importance on nationalism and display more negative attitudes toward immigrants (Hooghe et al. 2002, Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007). By inducing despair over lack of opportunity, therefore, inequality may promote selective solidarity *especially* among conservatives.

Table 1.4 examines the impact of inequality conditional on the level of respondents’ social conservatism.¹⁷ Models 4, 5 and 6 show that inequality boosts opposition to immigrant access to welfare among socially conservatives. In contrast, inequality does not significantly decrease support for welfare for natives among the same socially conservative respondents (models 1, 2 and 3). Moreover, the general non-significance of the social conservative coefficient

¹⁷ “Socially conservative” is a dummy variable in which 1 corresponds to respondents who placed themselves on 7 or higher on a 10-point scale ranging from liberal to conservative. Results remain substantively unchanged when I adopt different cutoff points (i.e. 8 or 9).

reveals that conservative individuals in the control group do not exhibit greater opposition to helping immigrants. It is the exposure to inequality, therefore, that sparks exclusionary reactions with a substantial effect, considering that inequality decreases support for immigrants among conservatives by 17 percentage points (model 4).

The analysis conducted so far shows therefore that economic inequality promotes selective solidarity. In the general sample, inequality widens the gap in willingness to help natives vs. immigrants by increasing support only for redistributive policies that benefit native citizens. Additionally, among conservative citizen, inequality also directly weakens willingness to provide welfare support to immigrants.

Table 1.4 – Support for welfare policies for natives and immigrants among social conservatives

	Support for					
	Low-Income Natives			Low-Income Immigrants		
	OLS	Logistic	Ordered logistic	OLS	Logistic	Ordered logistic
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Inequality treatment	0.09*	0.40*	0.39*	0.03	0.17	0.11
	(0.04)	(0.18)	(0.17)	(0.04)	(0.20)	(0.16)
Inequality*Social conservative	-0.02	-0.09	-0.37	-0.17*	-0.82*	-0.69*
	(0.08)	(0.34)	(0.32)	(0.08)	(0.37)	(0.31)
Poverty treatment	0.07	0.28	0.28	0.01	0.07	-0.05
	(0.04)	(0.18)	(0.16)	(0.04)	(0.19)	(0.15)
Poverty*Social conservative	-0.11	-0.50	-0.89**	-0.09	-0.41	-0.35
	(0.09)	(0.38)	(0.34)	(0.08)	(0.40)	(0.33)
Social conservative	0.06	0.24	0.35	0.06	0.32	0.27
	(0.06)	(0.26)	(0.23)	(0.06)	(0.28)	(0.23)
Control mean	0.41	0.41	4.05	0.08	0.08	2.42
Covariates?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,098	1,098	1,098	1,098	1,098	1,098
<i>Note:</i>			*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001			

Causal Mechanism: Lack of Economic Opportunity and Welfare Deservingness

Why does economic inequality spark these reactions? To explore the causal mechanism, I first present separate models and then run causal mediation analysis. The models in table 1.5 evaluate the effects of inequality on perceptions of social mobility and the existence of economic opportunity in society and examine the impact of perceived lack of mobility and opportunity on welfare support. Model A is a logit model in which the binary dependent variable equals 1 for respondents who “strongly disagree” or “disagree” that one can improve their own economic condition through hard work. Models B1, B2 and B3 are ordered logit models in which lack of opportunity is an independent variable, while the dependent variables are the same indicators of welfare support presented above.

The results reveal that economic inequality has a negative impact on beliefs in social mobility. Inequality – but not poverty – significantly increases the conviction that hard work is not conducive to economic success. In turn, believing that society is not offering a channel for those at the bottom to improve their own condition *increases* support for redistribution that takes away from the rich and for welfare programs that benefit natives, but *decreases* willingness to help immigrants through welfare support.

Table 1.5 – Inequality, lack of opportunity, and welfare preferences

	Belief that: Society Lacks Meritocratic Opportunity	Support for: Redistribution from rich	Low-Income Natives	Low-Income Immigrants
	(A)	(B1)	(B2)	(B3)
Inequality treatment	0.37* (0.15)	--	--	--
Poverty treatment	0.07 (0.15)	--	--	--
Lack of opportunity	--	0.49*** (0.12)	0.28* (0.12)	-0.54*** (0.11)
Covariates?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,098	1,098	1,098	1,098
<i>Note:</i>		+p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001		

I now run causal mediation analysis to test more systematically whether beliefs about the lack of social mobility mediate the impact of inequality on welfare preferences. Here, inequality is the treatment, lack of economic opportunity is the mediator, and the outcome is support for redistribution (or for welfare policies benefiting either low-income natives or low-income immigrants). Since I treat all the outcomes as binary, the estimated effects should be interpreted as the increase in the probability that respondents support the policy under consideration.¹⁸

The results – reported in the appendix – reveal that the average causal mechanism (ACME) is statistically significant at the .05 level in the three analyses. ACME is positive for support for redistribution and low-income natives and negative for support for low-income

¹⁸ I also ran causal mediation analysis with lack of meritocracy as a five-category variable and with the outcome variables as five-category variables. The results remain unchanged. Since inferences about the causal mediation effects depend on the sequential ignorability assumption, the appendix discusses this assumption and presents the results of the sensitivity analysis.

immigrants. Inequality therefore negatively influences perceptions of economic opportunity, which in turn have a significant and positive (for redistribution and natives) or negative (for immigrants) effect on welfare support. Regarding the negative impact on welfare for immigrants, the proportion of the total effect of inequality mediated by lack of opportunity is about 20%.

Further analysis shows that lack of opportunity *strengthens* the opinion that low-income natives have received less than what they deserve, but *weakens* the belief that immigrants have received less than what they deserve. As a result, the inequality-induced perceived lack of opportunity promotes the conviction that natives should receive priority over immigrants in welfare access (see the appendix). By depressing belief in social mobility, therefore, inequality reinforces the linkage between native citizenship and welfare deservingness. The economic grievances sparked by the perceived lack of social mobility fuel cultural conflict and promote social exclusion to the detriment of immigrants.

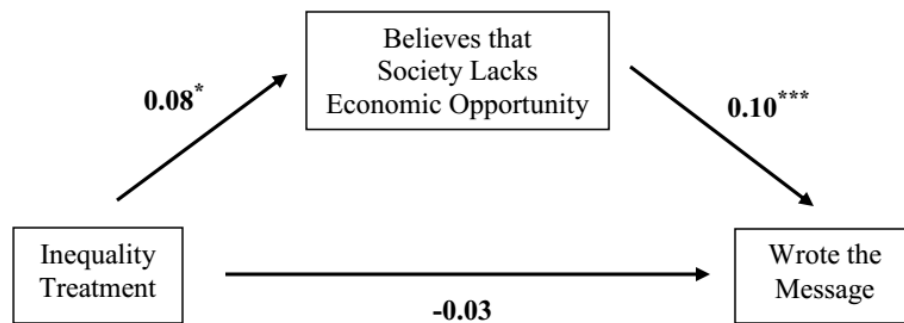
Behavioral Effects of Inequality

Do individuals exposed to inequality also grow more willing to take action in support of natives considered more deserving of help? A critique of survey experiments that focus on opinion is that they often fail to examine whether the preference changes induced by the treatment also affect behavior. To address this issue, I analyze the impact of the inequality treatment on the likelihood that respondents write a message to elected officials in support of the National Fund for Social Policies. Since I collect all the messages, I can evaluate actual behavior rather than just self-reported action.

Mediation analysis (figure 1.3) reveals that the inequality treatment indirectly affects the likelihood that respondents write a message in support of low-income citizens. Exposure to

information about inequality spurs the belief that society lacks economic opportunity, which in turn stimulates individuals to contact their representatives to express support for welfare programs benefiting natives. By depressing beliefs in social mobility, therefore, inequality generates a behavioral response and nudges citizens to act upon their beliefs.¹⁹

Figure 1.3 – The effect of economic inequality on political action



Addressing Alternative Explanations: Identity, Altruism, and Self-Interest

The mechanism outlined in this study argues that inequality depresses beliefs in social mobility, which in turn activates an identity conflict between ingroup and outgroups over welfare deservingness. As a result, selective solidarity is stronger among conservative individuals who are already favorably predisposed toward ingroup favoritism. To support this point, table 1.4 has shown a direct negative impact of inequality on welfare support for immigrants among conservatives. Other established explanations, however, could be compatible with the emergence of selective solidarity under inequality. To evaluate these alternative accounts, we can consider the testable implications that they generate.

¹⁹ The mediation analysis reported in figure 1.3 is based on OLS models. The appendix reports the full models and the mediation analysis with both OLS and logistic models.

On the one hand, recent comparative literature on inequality and preferences for redistribution argues that inequality increases support for redistribution among the rich, who become more altruistic when inequality is high (Rueda and Stegmueller 2016, Dimick et al. 2016, Dimick et al. 2018). Group heterogeneity also seems to affect redistribution preferences only among high-income citizens (Rueda 2018). A testable implication of these studies, therefore, is that the rich are more responsive to variation in inequality, especially when redistribution benefits immigrants.²⁰

On the other hand, several studies on inequality and redistribution attitudes focus on material self-interest and concerns about relative position. Models of difference aversion posit that individuals react to inequality because they care about their rank in the income distribution (Fehr and Schmidt 1999). Last-place aversion argues that the strongest opposition to welfare comes from individuals above the poverty line but below the median income (Kuziemko et al. 2014). According to the social rivalry effect, redistribution preferences depend on the effect of redistribution on relative living standards (Corneo and Gruener 2002). The compensation hypothesis implies that the poor increase their support for redistribution only if redistribution does not benefit their competitors (Finseraas 2008). The activated class conflict argument maintains that exposure to inequality erodes beliefs in meritocracy only among lower-income residents (Newman et al. 2015).

These theories generate two testable implications. First, welfare preferences of lower-income individuals – who face a relative worse condition under inequality – should be more responsive to inequality. Second, lower-income individuals should be especially likely to oppose

²⁰ While my work confirms the role of other-regarding preferences and heterogeneity in preferences for redistribution under inequality, it deviates from this literature on three points: the impact of inequality is not limited to the rich; the inequality effects are stronger among conservatives; the perceived lack of social mobility mediates the impact of inequality and generates selective solidarity.

welfare for immigrants to defend their socio-economic position vis-à-vis immigrants with whom they may be competing. In contrast, inequality-induced beliefs about social mobility should have little effect among richer citizens who plausibly do not personally suffer from lack of opportunity and do not expect short-term material benefits from redistribution.

To test whether the preferences of the rich or the poor are more sensitive to inequality, I investigate how the effect of the inequality treatment varies among lower-income and higher-income respondents.²¹ A greater responsiveness of the rich to the treatment would support an explanation based on altruism, while greater sensitivity of the poor would be evidence of self-interest. Either explanation would differ from the mechanism outlined above sparked by lack of opportunity and based on ingroup favoritism to which conservatives are favorably predisposed.

Table 1.6 reveals that richer and poorer respondents react similarly to the treatment. While the analysis is underpowered, the results show that – contrary to predictions based on altruism or material self-interest – the impact of inequality does not substantively vary based on respondents' income.

²¹ I defined them as respondents with household income smaller than 20,000 and greater than 40,000 euros per year, respectively.

Table 1.6 – Effect of inequality among lower-income and higher-income respondents

	Support for					
	Redistribution		Low-Income Natives		Low-Income Immigrants	
	<i>Poorer Respondents</i>	<i>Richer Respondents</i>	<i>Poorer Respondents</i>	<i>Richer Respondents</i>	<i>Poorer Respondents</i>	<i>Richer Respondents</i>
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Ineq. Treat	0.21*** (0.06)	0.14* (0.07)	0.10 (0.06)	0.10 (0.07)	-0.02 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.07)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	416	266	416	266	416	266
R ²	0.11	0.22	0.04	0.10	0.16	0.15
Adjusted R ²	0.07	0.16	0.00	0.03	0.12	0.09

Note:

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

I now explore whether the effects of the inequality-induced negative beliefs in social mobility on welfare support are affected by respondents' income or conservatism. Table 1.7 shows that the impact of perceived lack of opportunity is stronger among social conservatives, but is not greater among lower-income subjects. Among respondents who have lost faith in social mobility, conservative citizens are more likely than non-conservative ones to support welfare redistribution to natives (model 1) and to oppose welfare support to immigrants (model 3). On the contrary, in the group of subjects who do not believe in the existence of opportunity for social mobility, low-income citizens are not more likely than richer citizens to support or oppose redistribution toward natives vs. immigrants (models 2 and 4). These findings provide further evidence in favor of a mechanism based on identity and ingroup favoritism, rather than pure economic self-interest and competition.

Table 1.7 – Effect of social mobility conditional on conservatism and income

	Support for			
	Low-Income Natives		Low-Income Immigrants	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Lack of Social mobility	0.45*** (0.13)	0.54*** (0.15)	-0.39*** (0.13)	-0.50*** (0.14)
Lack of Social mobility* Conservative	0.70** (0.28)	--	-0.55* (0.26)	--
Lack of Social mobility* Low income	--	0.18 (0.24)	--	-0.05 (0.23)
Covariates?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,098	1,098	1,098	1,098
<i>Note:</i>		+p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001		

Conclusion

Economic inequality is a serious concern in many western democracies. Inequality generates important social consequences, including resentment and weakened sense of community (Neckerman and Torche 2007, Wilkinson and Pickett 2009), decreased social trust (Uslaner and Brown 2005, Alesina and La Ferrara 2002, Knack and Keefer 1997), reduced civic and social participation (Alesina and La Ferrara 2000, Costa and Kahn 2003, Putnam 2000), and diminished life satisfaction (Alesina et al. 2004).

This work shows that economic inequality generates selective solidarity and promotes nativism. The cross-national analysis reveals a robust correlation in European countries between economic inequality and opposition to welfare programs benefiting immigrants. A survey experiment from Italy then isolates causal effects. While exposure to information about inequality increases support for redistribution away from the rich and for income subsidies for native citizens, inequality does not boost willingness to help immigrants. Among conservative

citizens, economic inequality actually reduces support for welfare redistribution toward immigrants. These findings are consistent with work showing that social contexts characterized by economic threats and anxiety trigger ingroup favoritism (Sniderman et al. 2004, Hopkins 2010, Arceneaux 2017). I also show that inequality promotes selective solidarity by negatively affecting perceptions of social mobility and existence of economic opportunities.

The fact that the identity of potential recipients powerfully shapes the impact of inequality helps explain why existing scholarship on preferences for redistribution – which has usually focused on *general* redistribution – has produced inconsistent outcomes. When inequality is high, individuals are more willing to provide help to native citizens, but do not show increased support for welfare programs that benefit immigrants. Considering the identity of potential recipients is therefore essential to evaluate the effects of inequality on welfare preferences.

This work, therefore, highlights that non-material considerations are important to shape preferences for redistribution under inequality, in addition to economic self-interest, which has traditionally been the main focus in political economy. Hence, future work would do well to further explore the role of factors such as identity, fairness, and deservingness under inequality (see Dimick et al. 2018), and to analyze how they moderate the impact of economic self-interest.

Can we expect to observe selective solidarity outside Europe? Such a phenomenon could face severe hurdles in the United States. Inequality may more weakly affect convictions about meritocracy and social mobility in the US because of the entrenched belief in the American dream, or may influence such beliefs only among low-income individuals (Newman et al. 2015). Inequality may also spur hostility toward immigrants without increasing support for redistribution. Because of last-place aversion (Kuziemko et al. 2014) and the racial connotation

that welfare programs have acquired in large subsets of the electorate (Gilens 1999), American citizens below the median income may not display greater support for welfare programs.

In Europe, however, where support for welfare is higher, selective solidarity has emerged under inequality as a result of depressed beliefs in social mobility. This suggests that welfare chauvinism can sometimes be a product of despair over lack of opportunity, rather than simply a perception of scarcity based on prejudice when individuals are confronted with diversity. The distinction is important, because it identifies an institutional cause for welfare chauvinism – lack of economic opportunity – rather than simply blaming individuals for their prejudices. This finding also implies that promoting opportunity-enhancing policies in society could yield the important byproduct of successfully contrasting negative attitudes toward immigrants.

More broadly, this work provides a possible micro-foundational explanation for a relevant contemporary political puzzle. In times of growing inequality, why have radical right parties, more than left-wing forces, scored important electoral successes? Part of the answer may lie in the fact that economic inequality favors culturally exclusionary reactions and, among favorably predisposed individuals, intensifies hostility toward immigrants. Far right parties that often mobilize on immigration and advocate welfare chauvinism may therefore have increased their popularity by promoting nativist positions that receive greater support in times of deep economic disparity.

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CHAPTER 2

IMMIGRANTS, HARD WORK, AND PUBLIC OPINION ON WELFARE: THE LINK BETWEEN WELFARE CHAUVINISM AND DESERVINGNESS EVALUATIONS

At a 1976 campaign rally, Ronald Reagan introduced the welfare queen: “She used 80 names, 30 addresses, 15 telephone numbers to collect food stamps, Social Security, veterans’ benefits for four nonexistent deceased veteran husbands, as well as welfare.”¹ The welfare queen became a derogatory term to describe an able-bodied woman taking advantage of welfare. One aspect was implicit: the lazy woman was black. Ever since that 1976 rally, candidates in the United States and Europe have focused on welfare recipients. In a campaign ad from the Austrian *FPÖ* party, a young, healthy, dark-skinned Greek man is happily lying at the beach waiting to receive 500 Euro bills. An election poster from the Italian *Lega Nord* depicts five people in line for welfare services: a Chinese man, a Roma woman, an African immigrant, and an Arab man, all young and fit. At the end of the line is an elderly Italian retiree in precarious health. “Guess who is last?” the ad asks.

These messages share a focus on two characteristics of welfare recipients: their ability and willingness – or lack thereof – to work and their race or nationality. The question of who should receive government support is sensitive because welfare resources are limited. Most post-industrial democracies have retrenched their welfare states in recent decades (Pierson 1996, Huber and Stephens 2001). The 2008 economic and financial crisis has increased the number of

¹ “The Welfare Queen is a Lie.” *The Atlantic*, 28 September 2016.

citizens in need, put solidarity under tremendous strain, and worsened state fiscal stress. At the same time, immigration is a very salient political issue (Hooghe and Marks 2018, Geddes and Scholten 2016, Haynes et al. 2016). In such a context, which welfare recipients deserve support? Does working hard matter more or less than being a native citizen in shaping people's welfare attitudes? And what happens when hardworking immigrants are compared to seemingly lazy natives?

The literature suggests different answers. On the one hand, work on welfare deservingness (Petersen 2012) and the attribution theory of poverty (Fincham and Jaspers 1980, Weiner 1993, Bullock 1999, Feather 1999) argue that the most important determinants of welfare support are the level of effort displayed by welfare recipients to improve their situation and the degree of control that they have over their own condition. This allows people to distinguish hard workers who are on welfare because of bad luck from lazy individuals. On the other hand, a rich body of research highlights the importance of identity. Race plays a fundamental role in the United States (Bobo and Kluegel 1993, Gilens 1999, Luttmer 2001, Fox 2004). In Europe, nationality is a powerful constraint, and citizens show little support for redistribution benefiting immigrants or individuals living in other countries (Kleider and Stoeckel in press, Cavaillé and Ferwerda n.d., Ford 2015).

Two limitations in existing scholarship leave important questions unanswered. First, most studies focus either on effort and control or on identity, neglecting the interplay between identity and hard work in influencing welfare preferences. For example, what happens when an immigrant is a hard worker while a native citizen appears lazy?² Second, the literature often confounds several attributes of welfare recipients and depicts deserving receivers as individuals

² As partial exceptions, I discuss Kootstra (2016) and Aaroe and Petersen (2014) below.

with several positive characteristics: they are hardworking *and* have contributed to society *and* are out of work because of factors beyond their control. This makes it hard to disentangle the independent effect and to evaluate the relative importance of separate but correlated criteria of welfare deservingness.

To unpack these conditions, I present original survey conjoint experiments conducted with two nationally representative samples from France and Italy, two countries with very different histories and experiences with immigration. This approach combines the internal validity of the experiments with the external validity of the representative surveys. Respondents evaluate the welfare deservingness of four pairs of unemployed individuals for whom I randomly vary attributes related to effort, control, reciprocity, immigrant identity, religious identity, need, and education. The conjoint analysis allows me to examine the marginal effect of separate but correlated attributes, determine the relative importance of hard work and immigrant identity, and test how effort and nationality interact.

Nationality emerges as the most powerful determinant of welfare deservingness. People consider immigrants less deserving of welfare support than unemployed individuals who are not looking for a job, who rely on welfare despite being fit and healthy, or who have never had regular jobs. Immigrants can do little to improve their situation, inasmuch as a hardworking disposition does not significantly reduce their disadvantage. These attitudes are widespread: economically secure, progressive, highly educated, and younger citizens, too, strongly favor natives over immigrants. While the results are strikingly similar in Italy and France, Italians seem to penalize immigrants more harshly. In Italy, even a western European immigrant faces welfare penalization twice as large as that incurred by an unemployed with a seemingly lazy work attitude.

This work offers an important contribution to the literature on public opinion on welfare and immigration by providing causal evidence on the crucial link between welfare deservingness and welfare chauvinism. By isolating the independent impact of separate attributes, I show how perceived welfare deservingness is closely intertwined with native membership in the national community. One reason why this study can isolate strong identity effects is that the conjoint design is a powerful antidote against social desirability bias on sensitive issues such as immigrant and religious identity. For instance, in Italy the conjoint analysis shows that Muslim recipients are consistently discriminated against, even if only 3 out of 1,275 survey respondents admitted in open-ended answers that they considered religion when they evaluated deservingness.

This study also has broader implications. In times of fiscal stress, governments must decide how to allocate limited resources among potentially competing groups. Given that public opinion can influence the development of the welfare state, better understanding citizens' welfare attitudes will shed light on the incentives that governments face when they design welfare policies. By explaining that communal identity remains a powerful constraint to redistribution in Europe, this work also corroborates previous findings showing how identity – in addition to economic calculations – fundamentally shapes public opinion with regard to European integration and immigration (Hooghe and Marks 2004, 2005; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010). This suggests that the transnational responses to unemployment currently considered in the European Union will face serious challenges in building public support. More broadly, the widespread hostility toward welfare for immigrants that this study highlights helps us understand why populist radical right parties have been successful in recent years. By promoting welfare

chauvinism, these parties have advocated a position embraced by a share of the population larger than what we may expect.

Welfare Deservingness and the Attribution Theory of Poverty

Perceptions of the deservingness of welfare recipients are among the most important determinants of support for the welfare state (Petersen 2012). Earlier qualitative studies suggested that deservingness considerations are positively associated with receivers' disability, proximity, and docility (De Swaan 1988), as well as with receivers' need, responsibility, gratefulness, and pleasantness (Cook 1979). Systematizing previous work, Van Oorschot (2000) proposed five deservingness criteria that may affect welfare considerations: control over one's condition, level of need, identity, attitude, and reciprocity.

Recent experimental studies show that deservingness considerations are strongly shaped by receivers' effort to improve their own condition, which allows one to categorize needy individuals into "cheaters" and "reciprocators" (Petersen 2012). People who try hard to improve their situation deserve to be supported, while those who exhibit little effort and appear lazy do not deserve assistance (Petersen et al. 2012).

The effort-based deservingness heuristic shapes welfare preferences across contexts, in environments as diverse as the United States and Scandinavia (Aaroe and Petersen 2014; see also Coughlin 1980).³ The heuristic also appears impervious to political sophistication and to

³ Larsen (2008) suggests that the welfare regime type influences discussions of deservingness and, consequently, welfare support. In social democratic welfare regimes, individuals are less likely to believe that poverty is due to laziness, which in turn increases support for welfare programs.

ideology – liberals as well as conservatives react to it.⁴ The impact of left-wing ideology and egalitarianism on welfare attitudes significantly decreases when unambiguous deservingness cues are present (Petersen et al. 2010).⁵

The research agenda known as the attribution theory of poverty (ATP) has reached similar conclusions. ATP argues that the perceived causes of poverty fundamentally influence willingness to help (Weiner et al. 2011). The central concept here is control over one's own condition of need, which leads to attribution of responsibility (Feather 1999, Fincham and Jaspers 1980, Weiner 1995). Willingness to help is lower when individuals are perceived as responsible for their situation (Feather 2006; Weiner et al. 1988, Appelbaum 2002). In contrast, support for welfare programs is higher when people consider social and external causes beyond individual control as the main determinants of individual economic condition (Fong 2001, Appelbaum 2001, Bullock 1999, Iyengar 1990). For example, people are more willing to help a disabled person or someone who has been laid off, but display lower support for those who put in little effort in searching for a job or voluntarily quit their job (Weiner et. al. 2011, Will 1993, Feather and Dawson 1998).

Focusing on effort and control, much research on poverty attribution and deservingness has paid less attention to the impact of identity. What happens, for instance, when an immigrant tries really hard to improve their condition, or when a native citizen seems lazy? The few studies that consider both identity and effort suggest that the deservingness heuristic trumps identity

⁴ Earlier studies found that political ideology influences deservingness evaluations in the United States. Conservatives are more likely to believe that a lazy attitude generates need for welfare, while liberals tend to attribute such need to external circumstances (Skitka and Tetlock 1992, Skitka et al. 2002).

⁵ Recent work suggests that one's income position determines variation in the importance of the deservingness heuristic. Deservingness considerations seem to matter more for high-income individuals who are less likely to benefit from redistribution and need to rely on heuristics to form their preferences for redistribution (Cavaillé n.d.).

considerations. The difference in support for natives and immigrants seems to disappear when potential welfare recipients show clear effort (Kootstra 2016). This is because counter-stereotypical information can reverse the effect of stereotypes expecting laziness (Aaroe and Petersen 2014). We can therefore derive two hypotheses from the literature:

Hypothesis 1 – The laziness predominance hypothesis: Laziness (as opposed to bad luck) of welfare recipients is the most important determinant of welfare deservingness

Hypothesis 2 – The conditional immigrant identity hypothesis: Immigrants can improve their perceived welfare deservingness with effort and hard work

Identity and the Politics of Welfare: The Role of Race and Immigration

Is identity therefore a factor that goes on the back burner when welfare recipients are trying hard to improve their condition? In fact, a diverse body of work argues that identity powerfully shapes willingness to help. People often engage in parochial altruism: they prioritize help for members of their own group and deny support to outgroup individuals (Bernhard et al. 2006, Bowles and Gintis 2011; Marks 2012).

Race plays a central role by promoting a group loyalty effect in the United States. Citizens are usually more supportive of welfare if recipients have the same race as they have (Luttmer 2001, Bobo and Kluegel 1993, Fong and Luttmer 2011). Furthermore, since welfare is often associated with blackness (Gilens 1996, 1999), individuals who embrace racial stereotypes and believe that blacks are lazy exhibit greater opposition to welfare (Gilens 1999, Pfefferly et al. 1997, Fox 2004).⁶

In Europe, national identity, rather than race, is salient with regard to welfare preferences. At the transnational level communal identity has traditionally played a fundamental role in

⁶ At the aggregate level ethnic heterogeneity is negatively correlated with welfare spending and support (Alesina and Glaeser 2004).

influencing opinions toward the European project (Hooghe and Marks 2004; 2005). In recent years nationality has been a decisive boundary to solidarity, with individuals less willing to support government assistance for non-nationals (Kuhn and Kamm n.d.; Bechtel et al. 2014; 2017). This is especially true for less cosmopolitan citizens (Kuhn et al. 2017), but even left-wing individuals who are generally in favor of welfare show weak support for transnational redistribution (Kleider and Stoeckel in press).

Within countries, scholars have documented the rise of welfare chauvinism, a political position that combines welfare support for native citizens with the exclusion of immigrants from government assistance (Kitschelt 1997; 2007, Van der Waal et al. 2010, Reeskens and van Oorschot 2012). Opposition to welfare programs that benefit immigrants can be rooted in material concerns when immigrants are seen as a fiscal burden (Hanson et al. 2007, Facchini and Mayda 2009, Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010) or as competitors for limited resources (Dancygier and Donnelly 2012, Cavaillé and Ferwerda n.d.), but can also be driven by ethnocentrism and more general anti-immigrant attitudes (Ford 2015, Garand et al. 2017).

Building upon these findings, identity is expected to play a crucial role in shaping welfare preferences in Europe. Important political processes and events can activate ethnocentrism, a psychological predisposition to divide the world into ingroups and outgroups – into “us” and “them” (Kinder and Kam 2009). Two factors have the potential to trigger ethnocentrism in Europe and to make the divide between natives and immigrants salient: the political relevance of immigration and persisting fiscal constraints.

The share of Europeans identifying immigration as a political priority increased from 14% to 36% between 2005 and 2015 (Eurobarometer 2015). As a result, immigration has become a dominant issue that shapes political contestation (Hooghe and Marks 2018, Geddes

and Scholten 2016). Since contestation increases the salience of group boundaries (Jasper 1997), I anticipate that such salience will intensify the focus on immigrants with regard to welfare considerations and that it will lead individuals to strongly penalize non-nationals.

This is because the welfare state has historically developed within the bounded community of the nation state. With the national community emerging as the natural reference group for social inequality (Whelan and Maître 2009), the welfare state has become a form of solidarity toward individuals sharing the same nationality (Kymlicka 2001). A strong linkage has therefore developed between citizenship and welfare, to the extent that for many Europeans “rights to welfare have [...] entered into the definition of citizenship” (Miller 1999: 31).

Furthermore, identity considerations often play a relevant role when resources are limited. Competition over scarce resources has historically spurred parochial altruism, a form of conditional help driven by communal identity (Choi and Bowles 2007, Bowles 2008). Economic hardship favors hostility toward immigrants (Citrin et al. 1997, Dancygier and Donnelly 2012), as do concerns about access to limited welfare services (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010, Cavaillé and Ferwerda n.d.). This is consistent with the group threat hypothesis, which anticipates greater hostility toward outgroups – often minorities, including immigrants – when outgroups are perceived as competitors for scarce resources (Quillian 1995).⁷

Given the political relevance of immigration and the budget constraints that characterize many advanced democracies, I expect the divide between natives and immigrants to be a crucial factor shaping evaluations of welfare deservingness. Hence, we can derive two hypotheses alternative to the previous ones:

⁷ Relatedly, citizens who feel economically insecure are especially likely to oppose welfare benefits for immigrants (Ford 2015).

Hypothesis 1.b – The immigrant identity predominance hypothesis: Communal identity – and specifically the divide between natives and immigrants – is the most important determinant of welfare deservingness

Hypothesis 2.b – The unconditional immigrant identity hypothesis: Immigrants cannot significantly improve their perceived welfare deservingness with effort and hard work

Limitations of Previous Work

Previous work does not provide definitive answers to which factors are relatively more important with regard to welfare deservingness – i.e. laziness vs. bad luck or nationality. First, existing scholarship usually focuses *either* on effort- and control-based deservingness cues *or* on identity, and rarely studies the interplay between immigrant status and work attitude. Second, previous studies often confound several attributes of welfare recipients, which prevents us from establishing which individual characteristics, and to what extent, drive welfare preferences.

Pioneering work in the identity camp, for example, has shown that the belief that blacks are lazy drives negative welfare attitudes in the US (Gilens 1999, Fox 2004). This work, however, does not separate taste for discrimination from the effort-related beliefs that blacks are lazy. Similarly, the attribution theory of poverty does not evaluate the separate importance of related criteria, since the division between controllable and uncontrollable causes of recipients' condition lumps together considerations as diverse as disability, effort, and reasons for job termination.

Recent experimental studies on welfare deservingness also do not disentangle correlated attributes because they usually focus on the comparison between deserving and undeserving receivers of help. Deserving recipients combine several positive attributes and are depicted as individuals who have always had regular jobs *and* are out of work because of injuries *and* are trying hard to get back to work. Undeserving individuals, on the other hand, lack *all* these

positive attributes (Petersen et al. 2012; Aaroe and Petersen 2014). These characterizations, therefore, conflate at least three separate potential criteria: reciprocity, control, and effort.

Case Selection

To disentangle the effect of separate but correlated attributes on evaluations of deservingness, I adopt a conjoint design, which allows me to evaluate the marginal effect, the relative influence, and the interaction of nationality and laziness. I run original survey experiments with two nationally representative samples of 1,275 Italian respondents and 1,403 French respondents.⁸

France and Italy substantially differ with regard to their experiences with immigration. While immigration has a long history in the former, it is a more recent phenomenon in the latter. In the aftermath of WWI, a considerable number of workers migrated to France from its colonies. Such number increased remarkably after WWII, when men and women from North Africa and Vietnam moved to France. Today, about 8 million foreign-born people live in the country, corresponding to 12% of the population.⁹ Additionally, 7.3 million residents (11% of the population) are direct descendants of immigrants, since they have at least one immigrant parent.¹⁰

⁸ The surveys were distributed by the survey platform company Cint. Data for the Italian survey were collected on December 13, 14 and 15, 2016. Data for the French survey on February 28 and March 1 and 2, 2018. The experiments were registered with Evidence in Governance and Politics (<http://egap.org/>) before data collection.

⁹ Eurostat (2016): [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Foreign-born_population_by_country_of_birth,_1_January_2016_\(%C2%B9\).png](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Foreign-born_population_by_country_of_birth,_1_January_2016_(%C2%B9).png).

¹⁰ INSEE (2017): <https://www.insee.fr/en/statistiques/2856476>.

Italy, in contrast, was not a significant destination country until the 1990s, when refugees from the Balkan wars and workers from Albania migrated to the Mediterranean peninsula. In the early 2000s, the number of immigrants living in the country was just above 1 million. While that number had increased to about 5 millions (8% of the population) by 2016, direct descendants of immigrants are still less than 1 million.¹¹ The recency of immigration and the more limited exposure to foreign residents could lead one to expect Italians to penalize immigrants more strongly than French with regard to welfare. If immigrants are less integrated in the national community, they may be considered less deserving of government support.

Despite different experiences, immigration is now a salient political issue in both countries. Italy has been at the forefront of the refugee crisis. In 2016 – the year in which the Italian survey was conducted – 180,000 immigrants arrived from the Mediterranean Sea, an increase of 18% from 2015.¹² 42% of Italians considered immigration a top national priority that year.¹³ In France, immigration has been a dominant topic in the 2017 presidential election and a point of deep disagreement between candidates Marine Le Pen and Emmanuel Macron. Evaluating welfare attitudes toward natives vs. immigrants in these countries is therefore socially relevant and timely.

Furthermore, in terms of economic situation, both Italy and France have experienced fiscal stress in recent decades as a result of structural changes and the financial and economic crisis. Resource constraints demand that governments decide how to allocate limited resources

¹¹ ISTAT (2016): https://www.istat.it/it/files/2016/04/Cap_2_Ra2016.pdf.

¹² International Organization for Migration: <https://www.iom.int/news/mediterranean-migrant-arrivals-top-363348-2016-deaths-sea-5079>.

¹³ Eurobarometer 2016.

among potentially competing recipients, which makes understanding citizens' attitudes toward potential recipients politically meaningful. While both countries face budget constraints, the economic situation has been more negative in Italy. Around the time the surveys were conducted, the public debt ratio was 132% of GDP in Italy and 96.5% in France. The unemployment rate was 11.8% and 9.2% in Italy and France, respectively. One could expect greater resource scarcity to spur more negative welfare attitudes toward immigrants in Italy (see Citrin et al. 1997, Sniderman et al. 2004, Dancygier and Donnelly 2012).

Experimental Design

Conjoint analysis asks respondents to rate or choose alternative options with multiple attributes that are randomly varied in order to estimate the relative effect of each attribute on the resulting decision (Hainmueller et al. 2013). I have developed almost identical conjoint designs for Italy and France, in which I present respondents with four pairs of individuals living in Italy (or France) who have lost their job and are receiving unemployment benefits. In the experiments, I randomly vary attributes of the unemployed related to immigrant identity, effort, control, reciprocity, religious identity, need, and education (table 1.1).

Regarding immigrant identity, I distinguish between Western European, Eastern European, and non-EU immigrants. The only difference in the conjoint setup in the Italian and French surveys concerns the specific countries of origins. Participants in the Italian survey evaluate Italian citizens and French, Moroccan, and Romanian immigrants. French respondents consider French citizens and German, Moroccan, and Romanian immigrants. These countries offer variation in terms of two factors that may affect immigration attitudes: social closeness and

timing, given that immigration from France and Morocco (in Italy) and from Germany and Morocco (in France) has a longer history than immigration from Romania.

Work attitude operationalizes effort and considers whether the unemployed are actively looking for a job. Health addresses the control criterion, indicating whether individuals are fit and healthy or are out of work because of conditions beyond individual control (chronic disease or injury). Work history, which divides unemployed into those who have always had a regular job and those who have not, captures reciprocity through past contributions.

Each attribute includes a “No information” category, so that I can analyze the effect of both positive and negative components against a neutral baseline. This allows me, for instance, to evaluate whether respondents only penalize lack of effort or also reward hard work.¹⁴ The order of the attributes is randomized across pairs of profiles to avoid primacy effects.

¹⁴ One may argue that respondents do not see the “No information available” category as neutral but fill in their guesses about missing values, which could be correlated with the other components in the profiles. To verify that the results are not driven by the inclusion of the “No information” category, the appendix reports an analysis in which the “No information available” components are eliminated. The relative effects of the attributes and their components remain substantively unchanged.

Table 2.1 – Criteria, attributes and components of the conjoint analysis

Criteria	Attributes	Components
Identity	Nationality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Italy</i>: Italian citizen; French immigrant; Romanian immigrant; Moroccan immigrant ○ <i>France</i>: French citizen; German immigrant; Romanian immigrant; Moroccan immigrant
Effort	Work Attitude	Actively looking for a job; Not looking for a job; (No information available)
Reciprocity	Work history	Always had a regular job; Never had a regular job; (No information available)
Control	Health	Fit and healthy; Victim of work-related injury; Victim of serious chronic health problems; (No information available)
Identity II	Religion	Christian; Muslim; Not religious; (No information available)
Need	Family Condition	Single; Married; Married with kids; (No information available)
Reciprocity II	Education	Middle school diploma; High school diploma; College Degree; (No information available)

Table 2.2 – Example of conjoint survey item displayed to Italian respondents

Please read carefully the description of the following individuals who have lost their job and are currently receiving unemployment benefits. Then answer the questions below.

	Unemployed 1	Unemployed 2
Nationality	Italian citizen	Romanian immigrant
Family Condition	(No information available)	Married with kids
Religion	Christian	Muslim
Work Attitude	Not looking for a job	Actively looking for a job
Health	Victim of work-related injury	(No information available)
Work history	Always had a regular job	Always had a regular job
Education	High school graduate	College graduate

Note: Each cell content is randomized and varies from respondent to respondent.

After seeing each pair of profiles, respondents answer the question: “To what extent do you agree or disagree that the first [second] unemployed individual deserves to receive unemployment benefits over the next 2 years?”¹⁵ The rating is measured on a seven-point scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.” Since respondents answer questions about each profile of the four pairs, the total number of observations is 10,157 in Italy and 11,204 in France.

The post-experiment questionnaire collects information about respondents’ demographics and socio-economic condition, including age, gender, education, income, economic security, and political ideology. The questionnaire also contains an attention check to isolate inattentive respondents. When only respondents who passed the screener are considered, the total number of observations is 8,125 in Italy and 8,205 in France.

Since the units of analysis in the conjoint experiment are the individual characteristics of welfare recipients, I can evaluate the independent marginal effect of separate but correlated attributes, determine their relative importance, and test the interaction effect of different attributes. Hence, I can shed light on which factors make recipients be perceived as more or less deserving and assess the relative role of effort, control, and immigrant identity. The conjoint setup also reduces social desirability concerns by always providing varying attributes and offering multiple ways to justify one’s choice. We can therefore more confidently observe the

¹⁵ Two years is the maximum duration of the most important forms of unemployment support in both Italy (*NASPI – Nuova Assicurazione Sociale per l’Impiego*) and France (*Allocation d’aide au retour à l’emploi*). Respondents also answered a choice-based question that forced them to choose between the two unemployed: “Which of these two individuals is more deserving of receiving unemployment benefits?” The analysis based on the choice-based question produces substantively unchanged results and is reported in the appendix. I adopt the rating-based question for the main analysis because it is a harder test, inasmuch as respondents can assign the same deservingness rating to both profiles. This also allows me to evaluate respondents’ attitudes in a more natural way without forcing a decision.

impact of characteristics such as immigrant and religious identity that may otherwise elicit socially desirable answers.

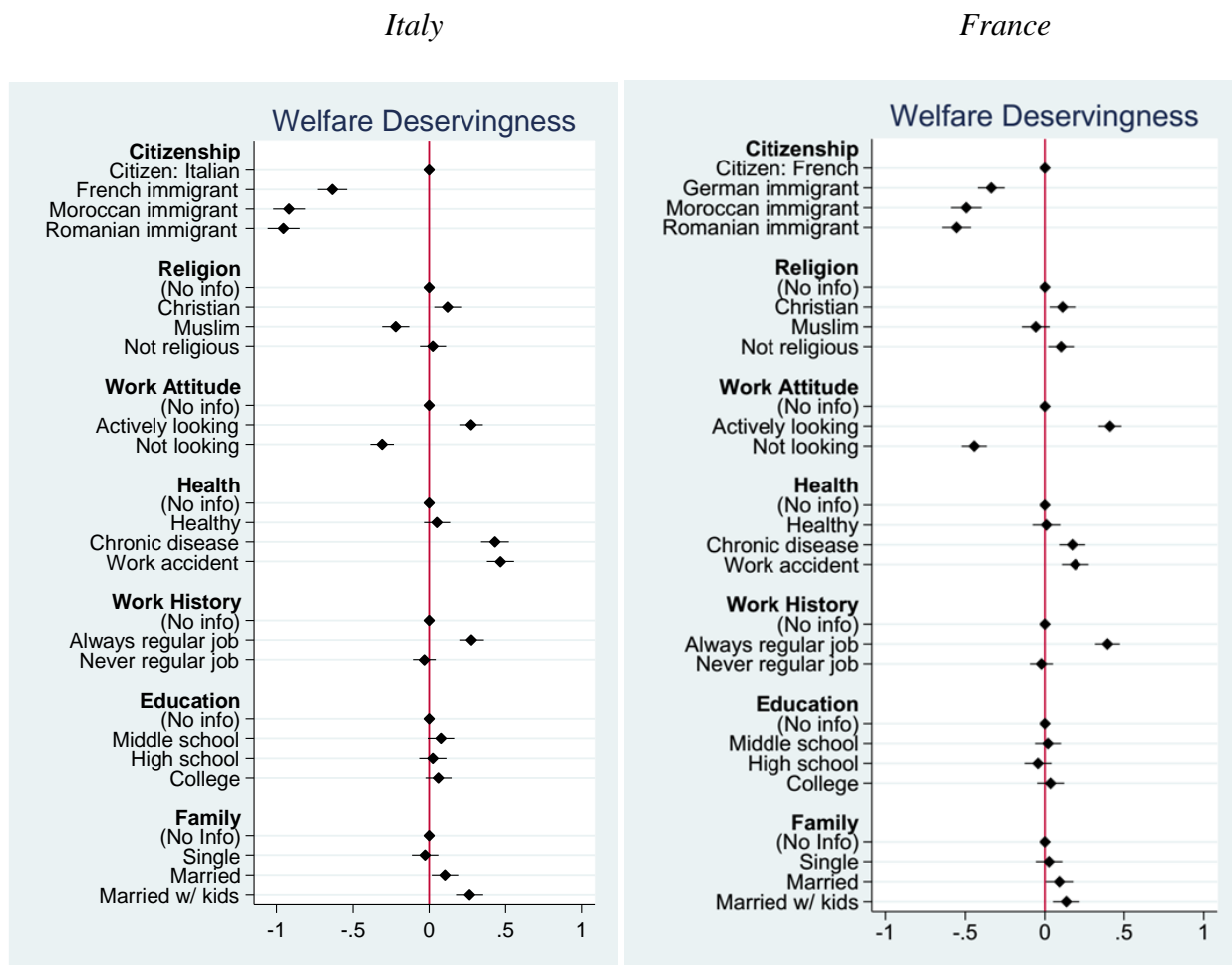
Results: The Centrality of the Natives vs. Immigrants Divide

I run ordinary least square regressions with cluster-robust standard errors because each respondent evaluates four pairs of unemployed individuals.¹⁶ In the plots below, the x-axis measures the impact of each component on the 7-point deservingness scale. The vertical line depicts a null effect. Points to the right of the line indicate a positive impact of the corresponding attribute, points to the left a negative effect. The plot also reports 95% confidence intervals.

The size of the component effects within the same attribute should be interpreted in relation to the baseline category, whose corresponding point estimate is on the null effect line (e.g. someone who is actively looking for a job compared to lack of information on that trait). Because coefficient sizes in conjoint analysis are directly comparable, the plot also reveals the relative importance of each attribute as a determinant of welfare deservingness. The larger the absolute size – i.e. the farther the estimate point from the vertical line – the stronger the impact of the attribute. Figure 2.1 presents the baseline results that include all survey respondents in Italy and France.

¹⁶ Results remain substantively unchanged with an ordered logit model.

Figure 2.1 – Baseline Results of Conjoint Analysis



The results are strikingly similar in the two countries and reveal the centrality of immigrant identity as a determinant of welfare deservingness. Native membership in the national community is by far the strongest predictor in Italy (left) and is at least as important as work attitude in France (right). Respondents strongly prefer citizens over immigrants regardless of immigrants' country of origin. In contrast, the effort that the unemployed show to improve their condition and the control that they have over their condition generally have a smaller impact.

Being an immigrant in Italy has a negative effect three times as large (for Romanians and Moroccans) and twice as large (for French) as not looking for a job. Moreover, the negative impact of being an immigrant in Italy is between one and a half (for French) and two (for Romanians and Moroccans) times larger than the effect of relying on welfare despite being fit and healthy. In France, respondents penalize immigrants as strongly as unemployed who are not looking for a job. Remarkably, the negative effect of being an immigrant is three times as large as the impact of health conditions resulting from bad luck.

In both countries, Romanian and Moroccan immigrants severely suffer from lack of welfare support, which suggests that non-western European immigration has an especially strong negative impact. The divide between western and non-western European immigrants is more apparent in France, where German immigrants are penalized less severely than unemployed who are not looking for a job. On the contrary, one should notice that in Italy even French immigrants – that is, a group that normally does not evoke negative sentiments among Italians – are more strongly penalized than individuals who show little effort.

While effort and control are generally less important than nationality, they do influence evaluations of welfare deservingness. The unemployed who are actively looking for a job are considered more deserving, while those who are not looking are punished for their lack of effort. Respondents are also more willing to support recipients who are on welfare because of chronic disease or work injury, rather than fit and healthy individuals. In contrast, reciprocity matters only in part. While the unemployed who have always had jobs benefit from positive attitudes, those who do not have a regular work history do not face punishment. This may be due to the fact that individuals are less likely to be personally blamed for lacking a regular work history during times of economic hardship (Blekesaune 2007, Kam and Nam 2008).

Religion confirms the relevance of identity in the politics of welfare. Italian respondents penalize Muslims and reward Christians. Similarly, in France Christian and non-religious unemployed benefit from more positive attitudes. It is interesting to notice, however, that immigrants – including Western European ones – are penalized substantially more severely than Muslim residents. When it comes to welfare, citizenship plays a bigger role than religion. This confirms the centrality of the link between national community and welfare deservingness.¹⁷

Need matters to some extent, inasmuch as both Italian and French residents judge unemployed who are married with kids as more deserving of help. On the contrary, education does not influence deservingness evaluations: respondents do not discriminate between unemployed with higher and lower education.

These results are robust to a variety of robustness checks, which I present in the appendix. When I eliminate the “No information” component, the relative effect of separate attributes does not change in Italy, while the effort criterion becomes only slightly more important in France. Nationality is the most important determinant of welfare deservingness in Italy and remains as strong as work attitude in France when the dependent variable is a choice-based question that forces respondents to choose which unemployed individual is more deserving of support. The analysis conducted with the subset of survey respondents who passed the attention check also confirms the results presented above.

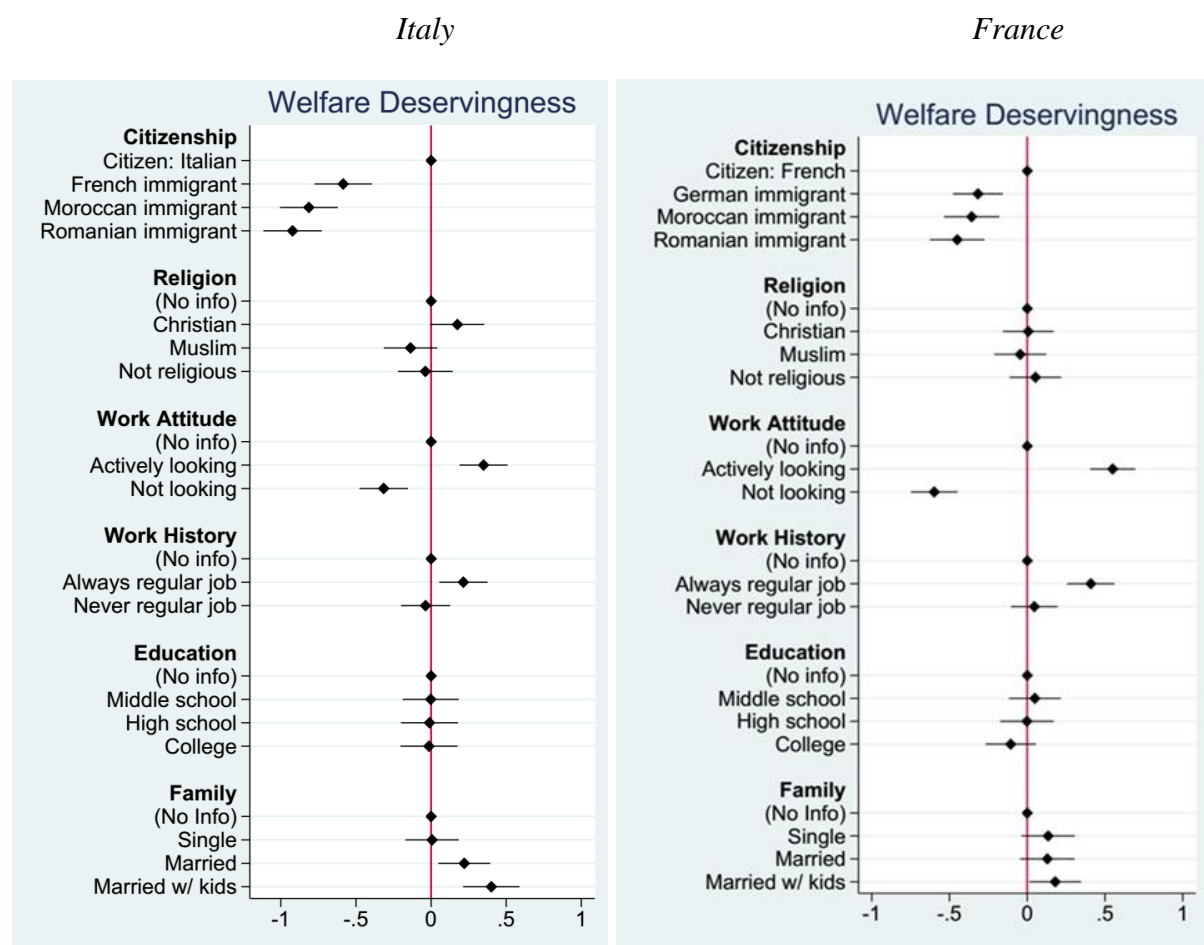
These findings are surprising against the backdrop of existing scholarship that emphasizes the importance of recipients’ effort and control. My results show that effort and control do matter, but they become less important once we take into account identity. One could argue, however, that effort has an artificially small impact in this study because half of the

¹⁷ This does not indicate that Muslim discrimination does not exist – in fact, Muslims are penalized, especially in Italy – but the penalty that they face may be higher in other social domains.

unemployed profiles in the conjoint experiment have a good reason why they are unable to look for a job. Indeed, two of the health components present individuals suffering from chronic disease or work injury.

To address this concern, I run the analysis including only unemployed individuals who are “fit and healthy.” This allows me to capture the importance of identity and effort for the group of recipients who are presumably able to look for a job. Figure 2.2 shows that the results remain substantively unchanged in Italy (left), where – even in the case of healthy individuals – the impact of nationality is stronger than the effect of work attitude. When it comes to welfare deservingness, being a Romanian, a Moroccan or even a French immigrant is more penalizing than not looking for a job. On the other hand, work attitude gains greater importance in France (right), even though nationality remains a strong predictor of deservingness, especially when respondents evaluate non-western European immigrants.

Figure 2.2 – Results of the conjoint analysis including only “fit and healthy” individuals



Contrasting Signals: Hard-Working, Reciprocating, and Well-Educated Immigrants

I now investigate what happens when counter-balancing information is provided. Can immigrants make up for their disadvantage by working hard, exhibiting a regular work history, or when they are out of work because of bad luck? To answer this question, I run separate models, in which I introduce interaction terms between nationality, on the one hand, and work attitude, work history, health, and education, respectively, on the other.

These models, which are reported in the appendix, produce remarkably similar results in Italy and France. They generate two main findings. First, none of the levels in the interactions

between nationality and work history, health condition, and education is significant in either country. Unemployed immigrants who have always had a regular job, who are out of work because of injury or disease, or who have higher education are not treated more favorably than immigrants who lack these characteristics.

Second, in both Italy and France the interaction between nationality and work attitude is significant only for the negative component of work attitude (“not looking for a job”). The interaction coefficient is positive but smaller than the negative immigrant coefficient. Hence, respondents still penalize unemployed immigrants when both immigrants and natives are not looking for a job, but nationality has a smaller negative effect than in the case when no information about work attitude is available. In contrast, the interaction between immigrants and “actively looking for a job” is not significant, which implies that immigrants cannot improve their deservingness in the eyes of Italians and French even when they try hard. No matter their level of effort, unemployed immigrants are considered less deserving than unemployed native citizens.

Welfare Attitudes among Progressive, Economically Secure, Young, and Educated Residents

This section investigates how widespread the penalization of immigrants is by focusing the analysis on subsets of citizens. The literature on immigration attitudes finds that individuals who are economically insecure show greater hostility toward immigrants because of competition over jobs and welfare services (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010, Dancygier and Donnelly 2012). Citizens who are socially conservative, place greater importance on national identity, or have ethnocentric views also tend to be less supportive of immigrants (Hooghe et al. 2002, Sniderman et al. 2004, Dustman and Preston 2007, Ford 2015). In contrast, educated and younger

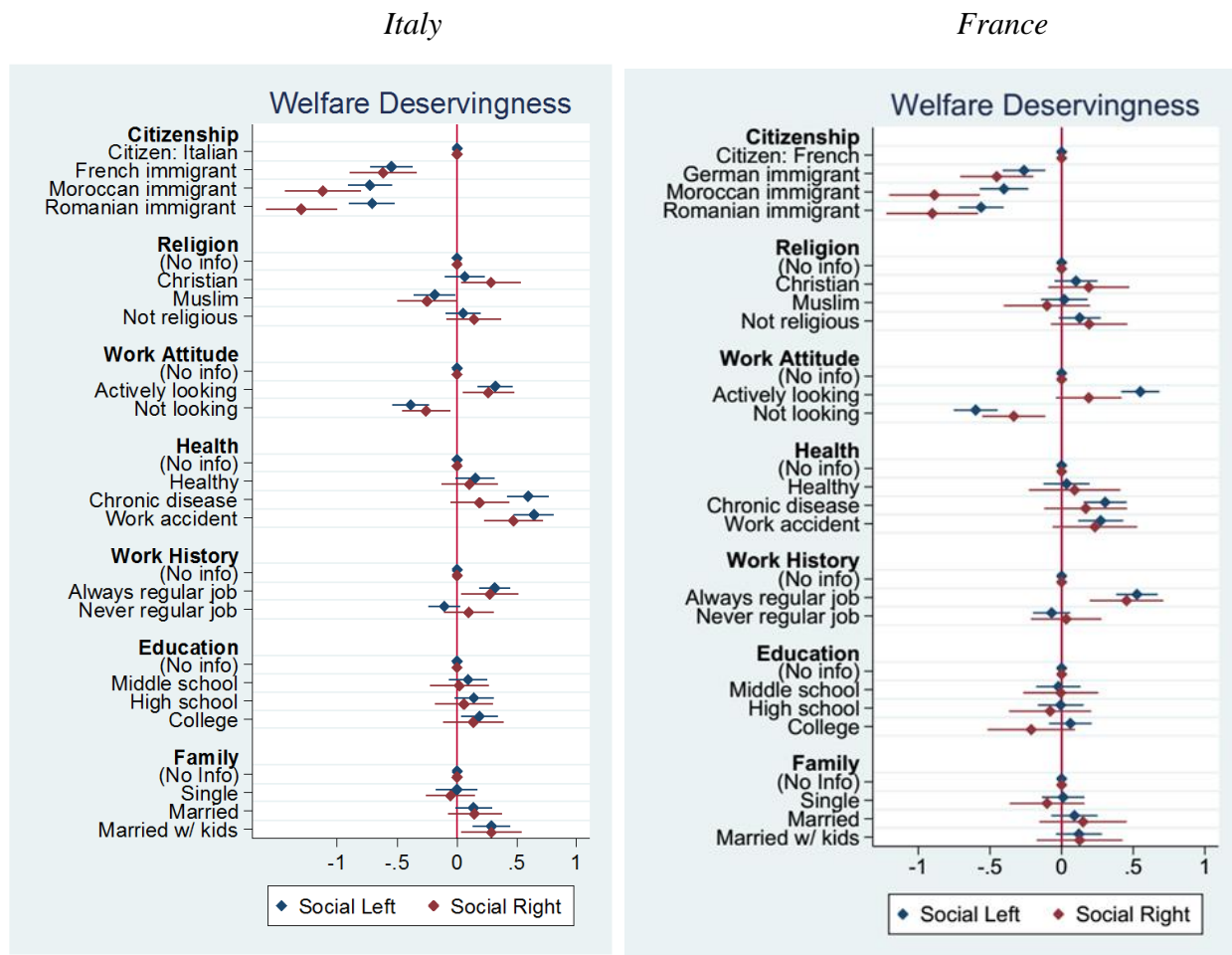
individuals generally have more positive attitudes (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007, Chandler and Tsai 2001).

To test these expectations, I run four subset analyses, which distinguish between socially liberal and socially conservative citizens; economically secure and economically insecure individuals; residents with higher education and residents with lower education; and younger and older respondents. The subset analyses reveal limited differences between Italy and France. Nationality is always the strongest predictor in all the subsets considered in Italy, while its relative importance is partially conditional on the socio-demographic characteristics of survey respondents in France, even though French citizens, too, consistently penalize immigrants.

The subset analysis based on political ideology separates socially progressive (values 1, 2, or 3 on a 10-point scale measuring political ideology on social issues) from conservative respondents (values of 8, 9 or 10). As Figure 2.3 shows, nationality is relatively more important for conservatives in both Italy and France, but even progressive citizens significantly penalize immigrants in both countries. While in France socially liberal respondents place slightly more importance on work attitude, in Italy nationality remains the strongest determinant of welfare deservingness even for progressive respondents.¹⁸

¹⁸ Interestingly, in Italy even progressive respondents penalize Muslim unemployed.

Figure 2.3 – Subset conjoint analysis: socially progressive vs. conservative respondents

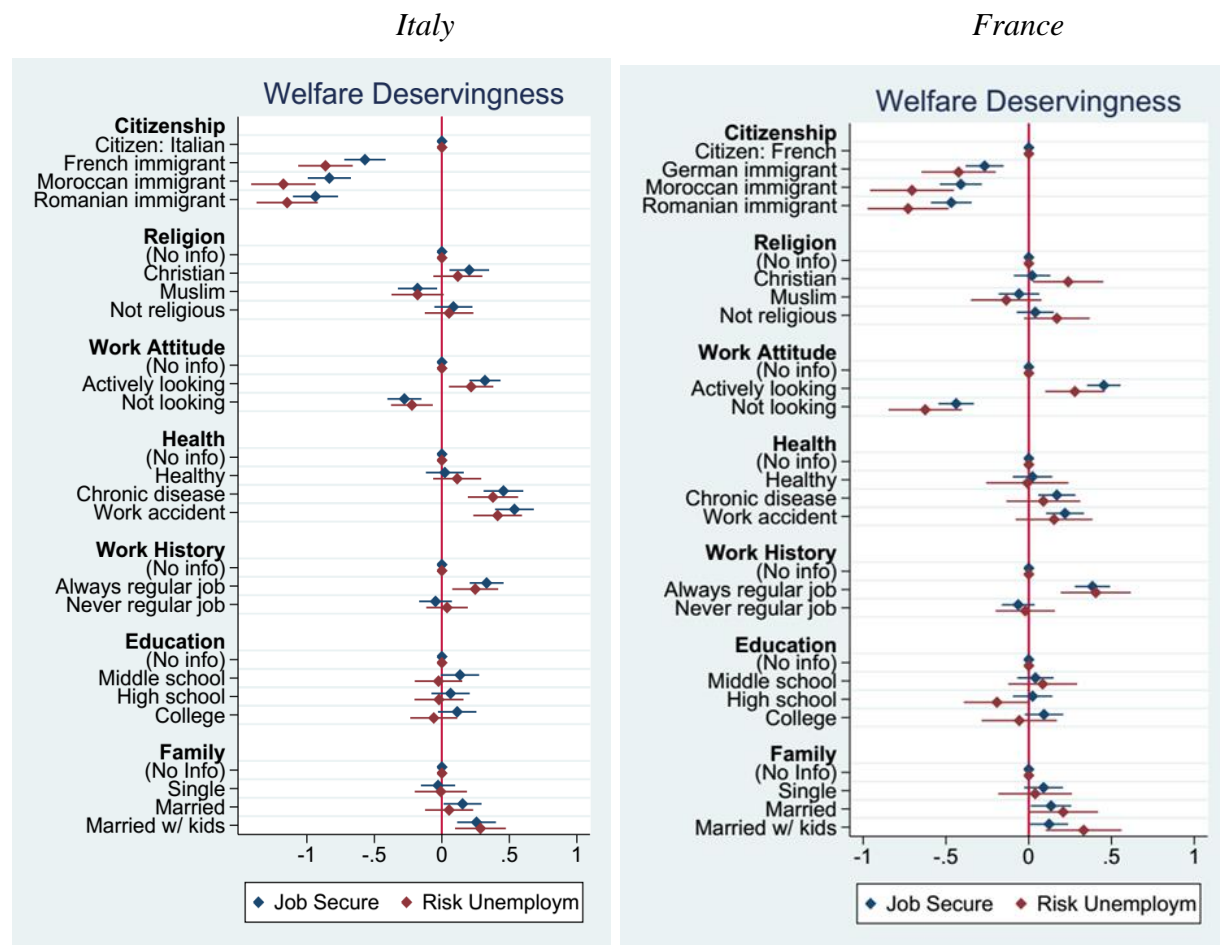


To operationalize economic security, I consider respondents' perception of their own job situation. I separate those who say that it is very unlikely or unlikely that they will become unemployed in the next 12 months from those who are already unemployed or say that it is very likely that they will lose their job over the next 12 months. This latter category should be especially sensitive to competition over unemployment benefits.¹⁹ Figure 2.4 shows that

¹⁹ Results are substantively unchanged when I operationalize economic insecurity with household income (i.e. those who have a household income smaller than 10,000 euros per years vs. those with household income greater than 40,000 euros per year) or respondents' feelings of economic security. In this latter case, economically insecure individuals are those who say that their household income is not sufficient to cover all of the expenses. Economically secure respondents are those who say that their family income allows them to live comfortably.

economically insecure individuals penalize immigrants to a greater extent, but nationality remains the most important determinant of deservingness even among economically secure respondents, especially in Italy (left). Even residents who are less likely to see immigrants as direct competitors for welfare services, therefore, harbor welfare hostility toward immigrants.

Figure 2.4 – Subset conjoint analysis: economically secure vs. insecure respondents



Similarly, the subset analyses based on education and age (Figures 2.5 and 2.6) produce limited variation across subgroups. In Italy, nationality is always the strongest determinant of welfare deservingness, and immigrants are consistently penalized to a greater extent than

individuals who are not looking for a job. Even college graduates deem nationality the most important attribute, especially when they consider non-western European immigrants. Similarly, younger people do not show significantly greater support than older residents for welfare benefits for immigrants. In France, younger respondents and college graduates attribute relatively more importance to work attitude, but if immigrant identity remains an important determinant of welfare deservingness even in these subgroups.

Figure 2.5 – Subset conjoint analysis: college graduates vs. respondents without high school

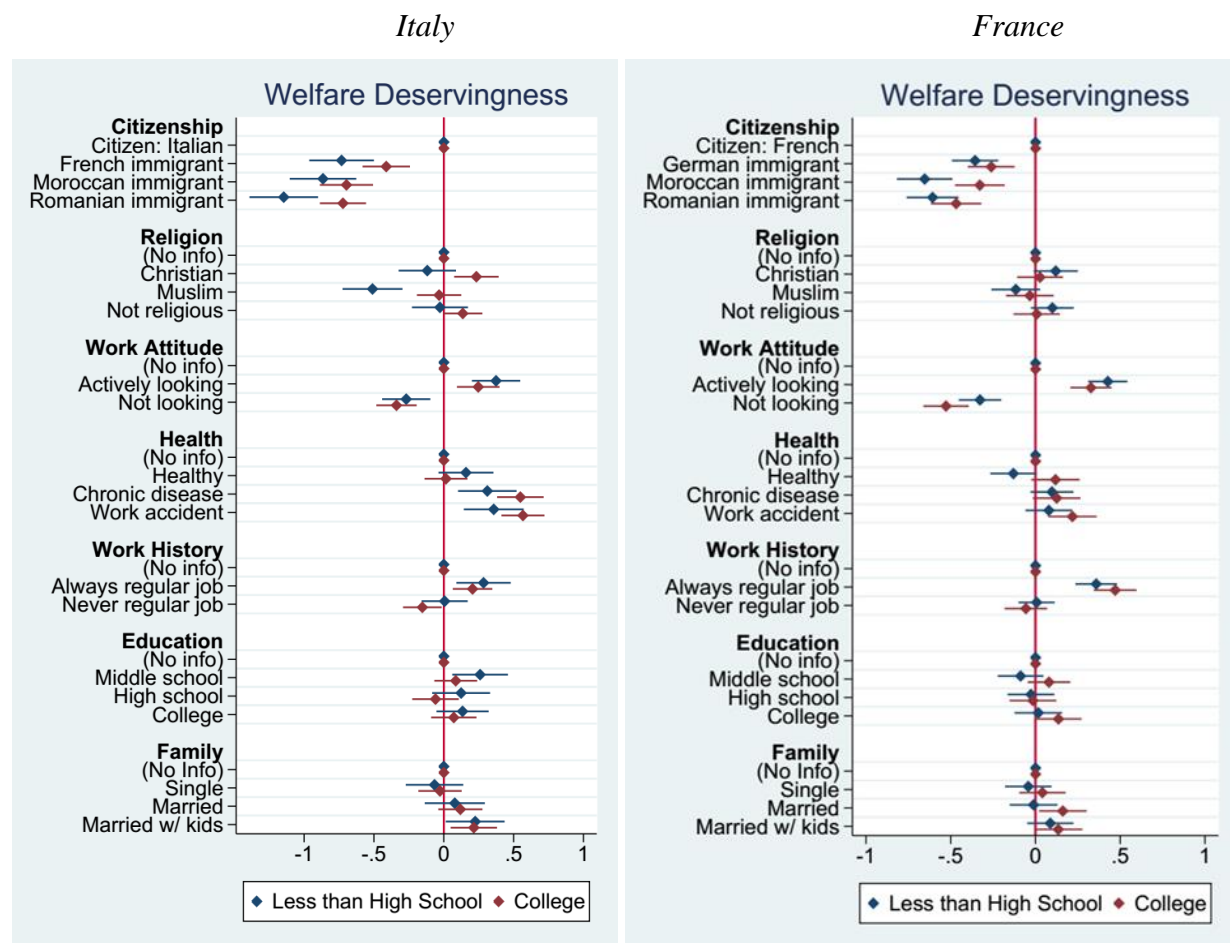
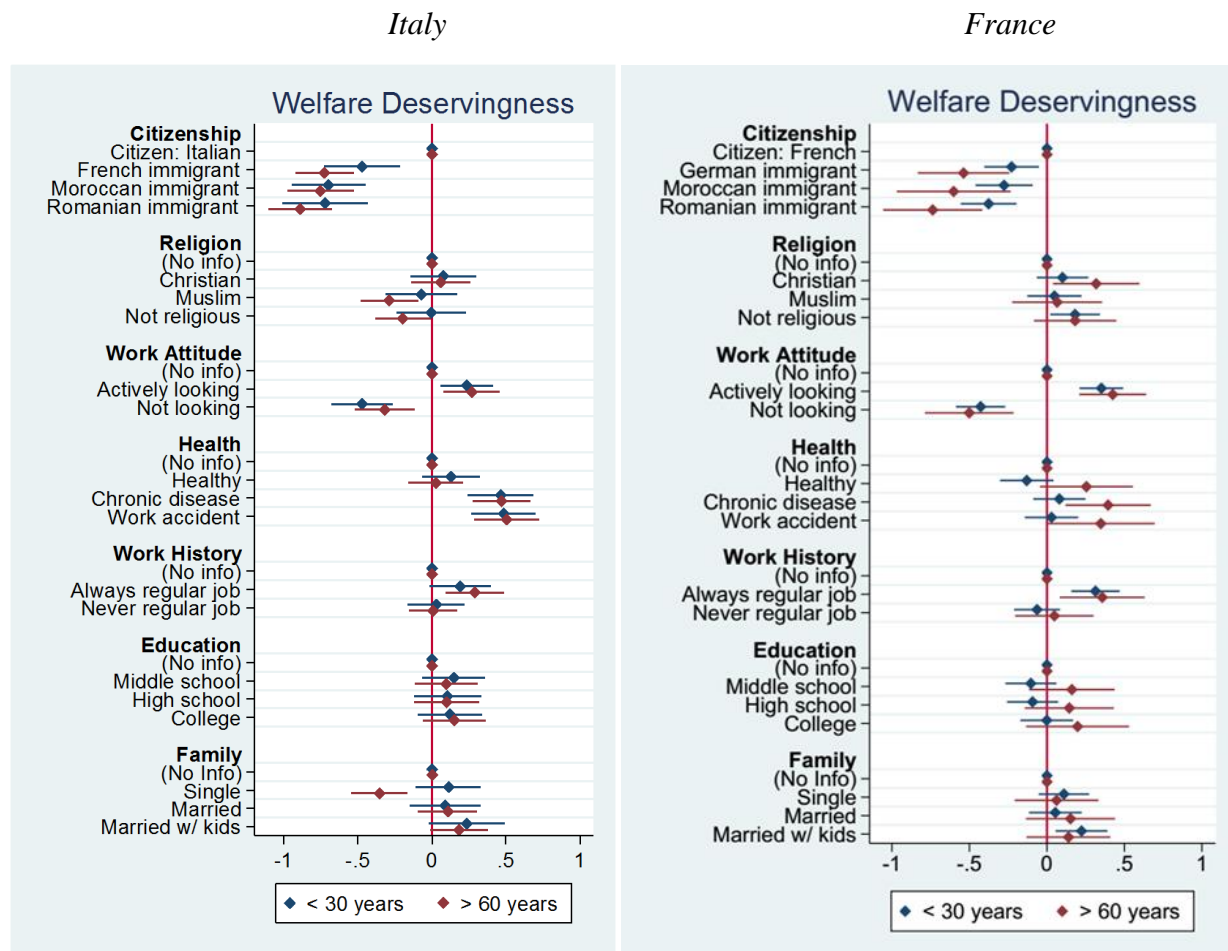


Figure 2.6 – Subset conjoint analysis: younger vs. older respondents



Discussion and Conclusion

This study, which is based on nationally representative surveys from Italy and France, reveals that native membership in the national community is generally the strongest determinant of welfare deservingness. Being an immigrant is a disadvantage greater than showing a lazy work attitude, lacking a regular work history, or relying on welfare despite being fit and healthy. Welfare chauvinism, therefore, powerfully informs evaluations of deservingness.

My results corroborate previous work and, at the same time, deviate from important findings in the literature. In line with studies on identity in the politics of welfare and with work

on welfare chauvinism, I show that people consider unemployed immigrants less deserving of welfare support than native citizens. This finding also validates Van Oorschot's seminal hypothesis (2000), which proposed identity as one of the deservingness criteria.

Consistently with more recent scholarship on deservingness, I find that effort matters: individuals penalize unemployed who are displaying low effort and reward those who are actively looking for a job. "Reciprocators," that is, individuals who can boast a regular work history, benefit from positive evaluations. These results, therefore, confirm the importance of the effort-based deservingness heuristic in Mediterranean countries that have faced a severe economic crisis and enrich a literature so far mostly focused on northern Europe and the United States. Finally, in line with the attribution theory of poverty, I offer evidence that welfare support is higher if recipients are in need because of reasons beyond their control like work injury or chronic disease.

On the other hand, the results presented here contrast with existing scholarship on two fundamental points: the impact of immigrant identity when information about work attitude is available and the extent to which welfare penalization of immigrants is widespread in the population. First, the few studies that have considered both deservingness criteria and identity factors have generally found that that traditional deservingness criteria trump identity. Pfeffley (1997) shows that strong effort cues can reverse racial stereotypes. Aaroe and Petersen (2014) argue that the effort-based deservingness heuristic severely decreases the impact of stereotypes. Kootstra (2016) finds that the ethnic background of potential recipients is no longer decisive when factors such as effort and work history are considered.

In contrast, this study shows that being an immigrant generally produces the largest negative effect regardless of the presence of effort cues – and that it is specifically the immigrant

status that drives the negative impact. While Italians most strongly penalize Romanian and Moroccan unemployed, they also strongly prefer Italian citizens over French immigrants. Italians may not have generally negative sentiments toward the French, but they draw a strong divide between Italian citizens and immigrants *tout court* when they consider welfare support. French residents may be relatively less negatively oriented toward western European immigrants, but they still considerably penalize German unemployed.

Immigrants also face an uphill battle to improve their condition. Showing a hardworking disposition, a past history of regular employment, or higher levels of education does not significantly improve their perceived welfare deservingness vis-à-vis native citizens. These results differ from – without necessarily challenging – work that analyzes general attitudes toward immigrants in the context of immigration reforms or acceptance, which often shows a bias in favor of highly educated and high-skilled immigrants (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010). When it comes to welfare benefits, there is little that immigrants can do to reduce the gap with natives.

Second, the subset analysis reveals that the penalization of immigrants is widespread. In France, immigrant identity is by far the strongest predictor among socially conservative, economically insecure, low-education and older citizens. Among progressive, highly educated, economically secure, and younger citizens work attitude also plays a relevant role – immigrant identity, however, remains at least as important as work attitude. Even citizens that we may not expect, therefore, strongly favor natives over immigrants.

In Italy, even progressive and economically secure individuals consider nationality the most important deservingness criterion. This finding deviates from previous work suggesting that anti-immigrant attitudes emerge mostly among low-income citizens because of fear of labor

market competition (Kessler 2001, Mayda 2006, Scheve and Slaughter 2001). It also differs from recent work on welfare preferences suggesting that ethnocentrism and economic security mostly drive discrimination against immigrants (Ford 2015). On the other hand, these results are in line with work on the preferences of American citizens on immigration, which finds a generalized consensus with little difference based on respondents' education, partisanship, and economic position (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2015).

One reason why this study can strongly detect hostility toward welfare benefits for immigrants and, more generally, reveal the importance of identity lies in the advantages of the conjoint framework. Conjoint analysis reduces social desirability bias because it always offers multiple ways to justify respondents' choices. This becomes apparent if one considers the impact of religious identity on welfare deservingness in the Italian survey. Participants constantly discriminated against Muslims, but they were not willing to openly admit it. This is revealed by the comparison between the conjoint findings and the responses to a post-experiment open-ended survey item that asked respondents to list the factors that they took into account to evaluate deservingness. While Muslims were consistently penalized in the conjoint analysis – even by socially progressive respondents – only 3 out of 1,275 survey participants explicitly admitted in the open-ended answers that they considered the religion of the unemployed.

Understanding which individual characteristics influence perceptions of welfare deservingness and, more generally, citizens' welfare attitudes is important because public opinion can influence governments' decisions over welfare programs (Skocpol 1992, Rothstein et al. 2012). This is crucial given that governments often must decide how to allocate scarce budgets and limited welfare resources among potentially competing groups. Indeed, not only has the retrenchment of the welfare state been in process for decades in most advanced democracies,

but the 2008 economic and financial crisis has worsened the fiscal constraints that affect many countries and increased the number of people in need of welfare support.

More broadly, this study warns that prospects for deeper European cooperation in times of economic hardship look bleak. With regard to preferences for redistribution, nationality remains a powerful constraint, and citizens show little desire to provide assistance to individuals from other countries. This raises fundamental challenges to transnational and multi-level responses to unemployment under consideration in the European Union, such as the European Unemployment Benefit Scheme. Future work would therefore do well to explore the conditions that may boost support for redistribution and cooperation across national lines. At the individual level, the finding of widespread welfare hostility toward immigrants offers a possible explanation for the recent rising popularity of far-right parties. By embracing welfare chauvinism, far-right actors have likely adopted a position that is widely shared by the people, even by citizens above suspicion who may be reluctant to openly admit it.

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CHAPTER 3

THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM IS UNFAIR!

ECONOMIC UNFAIRNESS, EDUCATION, AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

A deep sense of economic unfairness is palpable in many societies. In a poll conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2014, 62% of Americans agreed that the “economic system unfairly favor[ed the] powerful.” European public opinion is even more unsatisfied with the inequity of the system. A 2013 multi-country poll revealed that 85% of European found that the “gap between rich and poor [had] increased”, 77% that the “economic system [favored the] wealthy” and 60% that the “rich-poor gap [was] a very big problem” (Pew 2013). In a context prone to economic resentment, education has emerged as a relevant social divide that affects political attitudes and voting behavior, as shown by the Brexit referendum and the 2016 US Presidential Election (Goodwin and Heath 2016, Hendrickson and Galston 2016).

Lasswell’s seminal definition (1936) described politics as a competition over “who gets what, when, and how.” If politics decides on the allocation of resources and a very large number of citizens consider the system unfair, the consequences for citizens’ political engagement can be significant. How do perceptions of economic unfairness influence political behavior? And how does education condition the impact of economic unfairness?

While studies on political participation have explored the impact of psychological factors such as emotions (Marcus and MacKuen 1993, Marcus et al. 2000, Valentino et al. 2008, 2011) and risk propensity (Kam 2012), they have devoted less attention to perceptions of economic unfairness. Economic unfairness, however, sparks some of the psychological factors that

influence participation, such as anger and risk acceptance. Indeed, equity theory explained several decades ago that perceptions of unfairness can prompt people to take action and redress the injustice (Adams 1963, Walster et al. 1973). Injustice, however, is not sufficient to promote action, inasmuch as individuals need channels through which they believe they can promote change. When *voice* is not a viable option, *exit* may remain the only alternative (Hirschman 1970).

In this study I argue that perceptions of economic unfairness produce two outcomes. On the one hand, they decrease conventional political participation. Citizens considering society unfair grow dissatisfied with the political institutions responsible for the allocation decisions and question the legitimacy of traditional channels as means of effective representation. As a result, these citizens become less likely to participate within channels perceived as delegitimized, especially in costly forms of engagement that would require the investment of more resources in a discredited system. On the other hand, economic unfairness increases unconventional participation, but only among highly educated individuals. While political engagement outside traditional channels provides a pathway for change, unconventional participation is cognitively and organizationally demanding, and consequently not readily available to every citizen. Education is therefore instrumental to turn demobilization into re-engagement via alternative forms of participation.

To test this argument, I use the 2013 German Election Study and I adopt structural equation modeling with latent variables. A system of equations allows me to examine the impact of economic unfairness on alternative forms of participation. The use of latent variables for economic unfairness and political participation accounts for measurement errors, which can lead

to biased estimates if left untreated.¹ This is important not only because the concepts of unfairness and participation are rather abstract and not easily measurable; but also because measurement issues often affect indicators of participation such as survey measures of voter turnout, which are consistently over-reported (Burden 2000).

Substantively, this work helps us understand how economic attitudes influence political behavior. It contributes to the scholarship on political participation by focusing on a predictor – economic unfairness – that substantially increases the amount of explained variance, by exploring different forms of participation, and by offering new insights into the conditioning role of education. By showing that, when faced with economic unfairness, individuals with low education embrace an “exit” option and disengage from politics while the more educated “voice” their discontent through alternative avenues, this study confirms the role played by education in structuring political divides and contestation (Hooghe and Marks 2018).

More broadly, questions about economic disparity and political engagement are important because individuals care about fairness (Fehr and Schmidt 2001). European citizens have constantly valued economic equality and welfare state intervention to help the disadvantaged (Kaase et al. 1997). Given that the recent economic and financial crisis has sharpened concerns about distributional justice, exploring how citizens react to economic unfairness invests issues of political representation and legitimacy.

What Drives Political Participation?

The scholarship on political participation has for a long time focused on stable resources and long-term skills. Both demographic characteristics and the socio-economic status, which is

¹ The indicators of the latent variables contain both random and systematic error, while the latent variables are free from measurement errors (Bollen 1989: 11).

usually defined by education, income, and occupation, influence political engagement (Verba and Nie 1972, Bennett and Bennett 1986, Nagel 1987). Mobilization – variously operationalized by contact by political parties, membership in social networks, or closeness of elections – affects participation (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). Resources that can be acquired outside of politics such as time, money, and civic skills also play an important role (Verba et al. 1995).

Many studies have highlighted the positive relation between education and political participation (Campbell et al. 1960, Nie et al. 1996, La Due Lake and Huckfeldt 1998, Hillygus 2005) and found education to be *the* most important predictor of participation (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980, Putnam 1995, Verba et al. 2003, Lewis-Beck et al. 2008). Philip Converse famously noted: “education is everywhere the universal solvent [...] The educated citizen is attentive, knowledgeable, and participatory, and the uneducated citizen is not” (1972: 324).² The predictive effect of education is especially strong for demanding forms of political action, such as campaign donations (Verba and Nie 1972, Verba et al. 1995).

More recently, psychological factors have received greater attention. Personality traits account for variation in political engagement (Gerber et al. 2010). A positive link exists between risk propensity and general political participation, with the exception of voting (Kam 2012). Emotions also play an important role, with anger and anxiety influencing political information seeking and behavior (Marcus et al. 2000, MacKuen et al. 2010, Valentino et al. 2008, Brader 2005). Anger, specifically, facilitates collective mobilization (Jasper 2011) and favors electoral participation to a greater extent than anxiety and enthusiasm (Valentino et al. 2011, Weber 2013), but favors disengagement among individuals with low political efficacy (Magni 2017).

² Others have suggested that education could be a proxy for individual characteristics that develop at a young age and affect participation (Kam and Palmer 2008; Berinsky and Lenz 2011). Education can also decrease participation in non-democratic regimes (Croke et al. 2016).

Perceived Unfairness, Negative Emotions, and Political Consequences

What are the sources of the negative emotions that affect political participation? Equity theory explains that perceptions of unfairness generates anger and, consequently, stimulate action to redress the injustice (Adams 1965, Walster et al. 1978). Anger, rage and indignation are the most likely emotional reactions to feelings of unfairness (Mikula et al. 1998, Mikula 1986). These justice-related emotions, in turn, influence participation in prosocial activities in favor of the disadvantaged, including demonstrations, petition signing, and money donations (Montada and Schneider 1989). At the group level, appraisal of injustice and collective disadvantage stimulating external blame lead to anger, which promotes collective action (Van Zomeren et al. 2018, 2012). Relative deprivation theory explains that social comparisons leading to a sense of unjust disadvantage spurs action to redress the injustice (Walker and Smith 2002).³

Perceptions of economic unfairness also shape voting behavior. In the US, judgments on the fairness of Reagan's economic recovery program influenced voting decisions in the 1982 midterm elections (Petrocik and Steeper 1982). Socio-tropic fairness – i.e. citizens' concerns with an equitable economic distribution in society – can influence vote choice by affecting government evaluations (Mutz and Mondak 1997).

Beyond vote choice, economic unfairness produces long-term and systemic effects. Perceptions of unfairness diminish trust in a wide range of elective and non-elective political institutions and leaders (Tyler et al. 1985).⁴ In post-communist countries, considerations about

³ At the collective level, injustice may spark rebellion via frustration-aggression mechanisms (Gurr 1970) or because of its instrumental use by revolutionary leaders who stress the unfairness of the status quo and promise a more just future world (Martin et al. 1990).

⁴ In the US, perceptions of injustice led to negative evaluations of political leaders from different parties and with varying degrees of liberalism and favored distrust of several institutions, including the Federal Government, the Presidency, Congress, and the Supreme Court.

the unfairness of the new economic regime depressed political trust and satisfaction with the political system (Mishler and Rose 1999, Kluegel and Mason 2004).

Existing scholarship, therefore, highlights two main findings: economic unfairness mobilizes collective action and promotes dissatisfaction with political leaders, institutions, and systems. Given the mobilization potential and the political discontent sparked by economic unfairness, the next section develops a theory linking economic unfairness to individual political participation.

Theory: Economic Unfairness, Education, and Political Participation

Political participation can take many forms. Work focusing on collective action has distinguished between normative and non-normative actions or disruptive and non-disruptive forms of engagement. The latter division, however, does not differentiate enough among forms of non-radical behavior, and a distinction defined by normativity can be ambiguous (Jost et al. 2012: 199). Hence, I prefer a classification based on conventional and unconventional participation, which relies on whether the action occurs within or outside traditional political channels and institutions.

Unconventional participation includes activities such as demonstrations, protests, sit-ins, boycotts, and community actions. Conventional participation is further divided into cheap and costly forms based on the resources required for participating, such as time and money (Verba et al. 1995). Cheap conventional participation refers to activities like political information seeking, political discussion, and voting. Costly conventional participation covers forms of campaign involvement, such as donating money, volunteering for candidates, and joining party rallies.

How does economic unfairness influence different forms of political participation?

Evaluations of unfairness generate distrust and discontent with the political system responsible for the allocation decisions that determine distributional outcomes. These negative evaluations, in turn, lead citizens to question whether the political authorities are representing citizens' interests. Evaluations of unfairness, therefore, negatively affect the perceived legitimacy of traditional political channels and institution as means of effective interest representation.⁵

This diminished representational legitimacy has mixed effects on participation. On the one hand, I hypothesize a negative impact on conventional participation that takes place within the discredited traditional channels controlled by institutions deemed inadequate to ensure representation. People are reluctant to cooperate with and support actors that fail to represent their interests.⁶ The negative impact of economic unfairness on conventional participation is expected to be larger for costly forms of engagement. This is because citizens have even fewer incentives to invest more resources – in terms of time or money – to support institutions that fail to represent their interests. Concretely, citizens who are less likely to go vote for discredited actors are even less likely to campaign or donating money to those actors.

On the other hand, I anticipate that economic unfairness will promote unconventional participation – but only among individuals with high education. Citizens look for paths of representation outside the traditional channels when the traditional ones are discredited. Forms of

⁵ These claims are consistent with previous work highlighting the link between justice considerations and legitimacy attribution. Studies focusing on opinions about the police and the effectiveness of the rule of law show the importance of perceptions of justice of authority behavior to confer legitimacy to authorities (Mazerolle et al. 2013; see also: Tyler and Fagan 2008, Tyler 2003, Sunshine and Tyler 2003).

⁶ This prediction is consistent with the literature on institutional legitimacy, which shows a positive link between perceived legitimacy and cooperation. Legitimacy “is considered to be particularly key for voluntary cooperation” (Mazerolle et al. 2013: 36) and increases support for institutions and authorities (Sunshine and Tyler 2003, Weatherford 1992). People tend to obey the law and cooperate with legal authorities and the police when they perceive the law and the authorities as legitimate. See Tyler (2006) and Tyler and Fagan (2008).

unconventional participation, however, are cognitively and organizationally demanding. These actions are not promoted by traditional actors and often lack direct mobilization by established political forces. Hence, they require individuals to actively seek information that may not be readily available, find alternative avenues of participation, and believe that such engagement can produce effective results.

Because of these reasons, education is instrumental in facilitating unconventional participation. First, education increases human capital by favoring the development of cognitive ability (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996), the acquisition of civic skills (Verba et al. 1995), and the strengthening of political efficacy (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). These traits and resources facilitate the engagement in cognitively demanding actions whose outcomes may not be immediately apparent.

Second, education is positively correlated with wealth, prestigious occupations, and involvement in voluntary organizations. Individuals with high education also benefit from more connected social networks (Nie et al. 1996). These organizational networks are especially important to promote unconventional forms of participation which do not take place within traditional channels. For these reasons, I expect higher levels of education to be instrumental to turn feelings of unfairness into unconventional participation. As a result, re-engagement outside the established channels emerges as a pathway to change available only to the highly educated.

Theory Summary and Hypotheses

Economic unfairness generates distrust and dissatisfaction with the political authorities in charge of the allocation decisions, which decrease the perceived representational legitimacy of traditional institutions. This diminished legitimacy, in turn, decreases conventional participation,

with a larger impact on costly forms requiring the investment of more resources in a discredited system. Education, then, plays a fundamental discriminating role by providing cognitive and organizational skills. For individuals with lower education, such resources are not easily available, and perceptions of unfairness simply lead to demobilization. On the other hand, high levels of education are instrumental to translate feelings of unfairness into re-engagement via unconventional forms of participation:

Hypothesis 1: Economic unfairness decreases conventional political participation.

Hypothesis 1.b: The negative impact of economic unfairness on conventional political participation is greater for costly (rather than cheap) forms of participation.

Hypothesis 1.c: [causal mechanism] Economic unfairness decreases conventional political participation by diminishing the representational legitimacy of traditional political institutions.

Hypothesis 2: Economic unfairness increases unconventional political participation only among citizens with high education.

Concepts, Data and Model

To test these hypotheses, I use the 2013 German Longitudinal Election Study. Germany is a hard case to investigate the link between economic unfairness and political participation because perceptions of unfairness are less severe in Germany than in many other countries.⁷ Hence, if the analysis confirms the hypotheses above, we can expect the findings to generalize to consolidated democracies where judgments of unfairness are more severe and polarized.

The central concepts in the analysis are political participation and perceived economic unfairness, which are operationalized by latent variables. As explained, political participation is divided into conventional and unconventional forms. Within conventional participation, I further

⁷ See the 2013 Pew Research poll conducted in several European countries: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/05/14/europeans-grow-dissatisfied-with-the-inequities-of-the-economic-system/>.

differentiate between cheap and costly forms of engagement. Cheap conventional participation is measured by three indicators: reported turnout, attention paid to the election campaign, and news information seeking about political parties. Costly conventional participation is measured by three indicators that tap into the degree of involvement with the election campaign: general campaign support, visits to the election stands of political parties, and attendance of party rallies. Two indicators are selected for unconventional participation: joining a demonstration and engaging in a community action group. Finally, perceived economic unfairness relies on two indicators that measure perceptions of society macro-economic justice and justice development in recent years.⁸ Table 3.1 reports the descriptive statistics for the indicators of the latent variables.

Table 3.1 – Descriptive statistics of the indicators of the latent variable

Variable Label	Variable Description	Mean or Proportion	Min – Max Values
Vote	Voted or not in 2013	0.844	0 – 1
AttCamp	Attention to campaign	2.512	1 – 4
NewsInfo	Read party advertisement	0.549	0 – 1
CampSupp	Supported party campaign	0.029	0 – 1
ElecStan	Visited election stand	0.124	0 – 1
PartRall	Joined party rally	0.078	0 – 1
Demonstr	Joined demonstration	0.043	0 – 1
ComActGr	Joined community action group	0.033	0 – 1
MacrJust	Justice of society	3.435	1 – 5
JustDev	Justice development in recent years	3.603	1 – 5

*AttCamp: 1 = not closely at all; 4 = very closely

*MacrJust: 1 = very just; 5 = very unjust

*JustDev: 1 = much more just; 5 = much more unjust

⁸ The appendix reports the list of survey questions.

Model Description and Identification

Figure 3.1 depicts the structural equation model. The ovals illustrate the four latent variables (cheap conventional participation, costly conventional participation, unconventional participation, and perceived economic unfairness). The squares represent the indicators of the latent variables and the controls.⁹ The arrows from the latent variables to their measures indicate that each latent variable influences its measures, since we can think about latent variables as unobserved factors that affect observed indicators. For instance, we can consider the latent variable “cheap conventional participation” as the propensity for an individual to engage in cheap conventional behavior. As the propensity goes up, the probability for that individual to vote, pay more attention to the election campaign, and seek information about political parties increases.¹⁰ The arrows between the latent variables represent the direction of causality.¹¹

The controls can be grouped into five categories. The first set includes individual socio-economic resources: education, income, number of years of unemployment over the last decade, and subjective class perception. Second, general political dispositions are captured by interest in politics, political knowledge, and internal political efficacy. Third, I account for political mobilization with a binary variable measuring whether an individual was contacted by political parties during the campaign. Fourth, I control for the impact of social involvement on political behavior by measuring frequency of church attendance, sports or hobby club membership, and

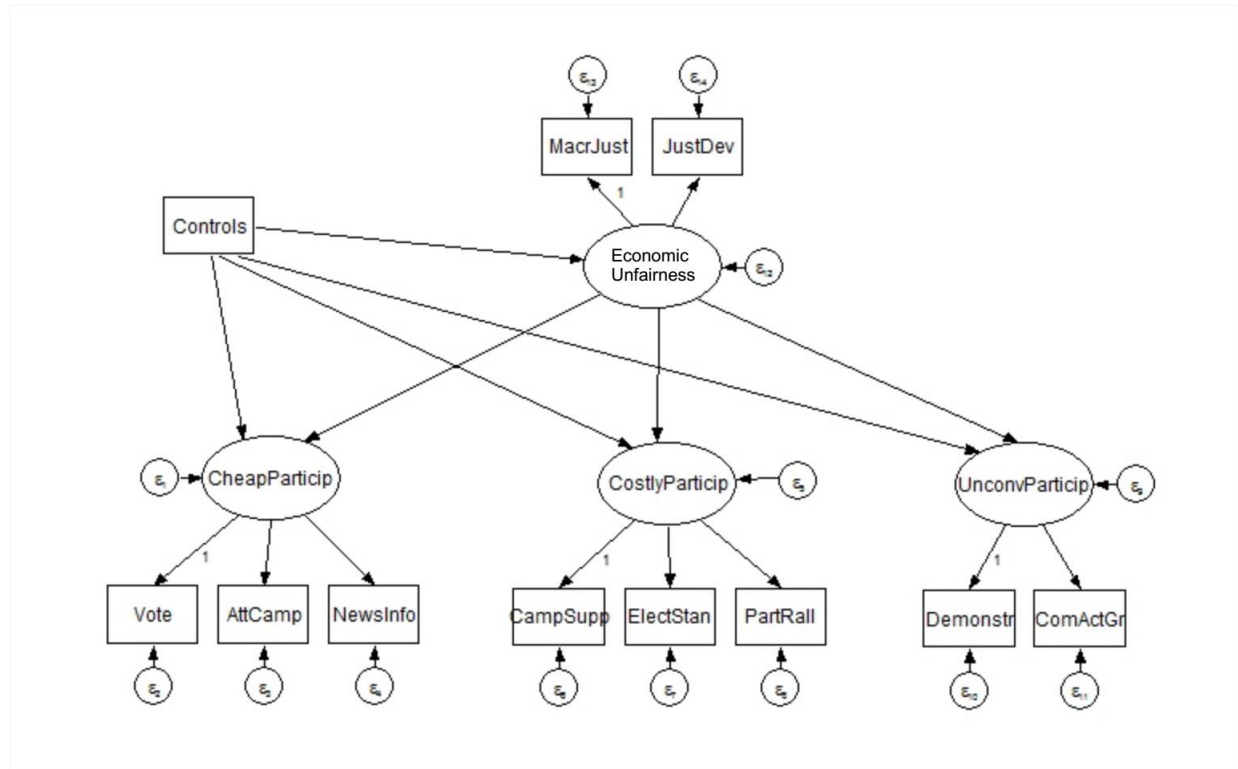
⁹ To make the figure easier to read, the controls are grouped into the squared box on the top left of the diagram.

¹⁰ As the figure shows, the factor loading on one indicator for each latent variable is constrained to 1, thereby allowing me to set the scale for the latent variable. Since all of the indicators for the latent variables come from the same source, no correlation among error terms of the indicators is specified in the model.

¹¹ Each endogenous variable is also influenced by a disturbance term, represented in the path diagram by a circle with an arrow going towards the latent variable. The disturbance term represents all of the factors that have an impact on the variable but that are not included in the model.

trade union membership. Finally, demographic controls include gender, age, and whether the individual has been a German citizen from birth.¹²

Figure 3.1 – Economic unfairness and political participation: the general model



Controls include: gender, age, citizenship, education, income, years of unemployment, subjective class, church membership, union membership, club membership, political interest, political knowledge, internal efficacy, party contact.

Estimation and Model Fit

I first present a system of equations for the general sample and then a subgroup analysis based on education. The subgroup analysis allows me to evaluate the moderating effect of education on the impact of economic unfairness on participation. Since many of the indicators of

¹² Models of political participation in the American context usually control for race. Citizenship from birth is a good choice in the German context. Whether someone was born from German parents or was the son or the daughter of immigrants likely influence their socialization and their political attitudes and behavior. Table A3.1 in the appendix reports the descriptive statistics of the control variables

the factors are binary or categorical variables, I use the weighted least squares means and variance adjusted estimator, which is appropriate for categorical observed endogenous variables. I adopt listwise deletion for missing data only if data are missing on the exogenous variables, *i.e.* the controls, while I use direct maximum likelihood for missing data of the indicators of the latent variables.¹³

Table 3.2 presents the statistics of overall fit. The Chi-Square test is expected to be significant given the large sample size.¹⁴ The other global fit statistics suggest that the proposed model and the data are consistent with each other. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and (1 – Root Mean Square Error of Approximation [RMSEA]) are all well above the cutoffs indicating good fit.¹⁵ The negative BIC is further evidence of good model fit.¹⁶

¹³ I ran the model in Mplus. The two-step rule establishes the identification of the model, *i.e.* the fact that unique coefficient values can be estimated. For the first step, which relates to the measurement model that links the latent variables to their indicators, considering that each latent variable has at least two indicators, the factor complexity of one correlated error rule establishes identification (Davis 1993). For the second step concerning the structural model, the fully recursive rule establishes identification: causation is one-way and errors of the latent variables are not correlated.

¹⁴ The Chi-Square test relies on a comparison between the saturated model and the hypothesized model. A high p-value, *i.e.* a non-significant test, is evidence in support of the hypothesized model. However, given the large sample size, the statistical power of the test allows for the detection of even minor discrepancies between the saturated model and the hypothesized model, and is likely to return a significant p-value. For this reason, other statistics must be evaluated to assess the global fit of the model.

¹⁵ For CFI, TLI, and (1 – RMSEA) a value of 1 represents perfect fit. A value greater than .9 is considered good fit for CFI and TLI, while for (1 – RMSEA) a value greater than .95 indicates good fit.

¹⁶ A negative BIC (Bayesian Information Criterion) is evidence in support of the hypothesized model as compared to the saturated one. Since the Chi-Square for WLSMV is approximately the same as the Chi-Square for maximum likelihood, I calculated the BIC as: Chi-Square – [degrees of freedom * ln(number of observations)].

Table 3.2 – Economic unfairness and political participation: global fit measures

Test statistic*	df	p-value	CFI	TLI	(1-RMSEA) (90% C.I.)	BIC
172.591	113	0.0003	0.980	0.968	0.982 (0.976, 0.987)	-659.03

*Chi square test statistic from WLSMV estimator

Number of observations: 1571

Table 3.3 – Economic unfairness and political participation: measurement model results

	Estimate	R-squared
Cheap Conventional Participation		
Vote	1.000 ^{NA} (0.000)	0.50
Attention to the Campaign	1.400*** (0.110)	0.74
News Information Seeking	0.722*** (0.068)	0.31
Costly Conventional Participation		
Campaign Support	1.000 ^{NA} (0.000)	0.60
Visit to Election Stand	1.139*** (0.119)	0.73
Joining a Party Rally	1.163*** (0.123)	0.75
Unconventional Participation		
Joining a Demonstration	1.000 ^{NA} (0.000)	0.76
Community Action Group	0.809*** (0.163)	0.55
Economic unfairness		
Macrojustice	1.000 ^{NA} (0.000)	0.81
Justice Development	0.808*** (0.075)	0.55

Table 3.3 presents the results of the measurement model. The R-squared of the indicators show that the latent variables explain a substantial portion of the variance in the indicators, especially considering that these are individual-level data.¹⁷ The significance of the indicator coefficients also confirms that the latent variables are influencing the observed indicators selected as their measures.

Table 3.4 presents the results of the structural model for the general population. The model explains a substantial portion of the variance in the three forms of participation. The R-squared for conventional cheap participation (greater than 0.7) is particularly remarkable if one considers that past models of participation focusing on turnout often accounted for a little more than 30% of the variance of the dependent variable.¹⁸ Furthermore, the significance of the covariance estimates highlights the importance of adopting a system of equations that allows one to simultaneously consider separate but correlated forms of participation.

The economic unfairness coefficients are statistically significant and go in the expected directions. Economic unfairness has a negative effect on conventional participation, and the size of the impact is larger for costly forms of engagement. Citizens who believe that the society is unfair disengage from traditional politics. They are less likely to pay attention to the election campaign or to go to the polls, and they are even less likely to embrace more demanding forms of participation that require greater investment of time and money. On the other hand, economic

¹⁷ Factors and latent variables are used as synonyms. With the exception of “newsinfo”, all of the R-squared are greater than .5. The sensitivity analysis in the appendix presents two models with alternative indicators. The alternative models produce similar results in terms of global fit statistics and size and significance of the impact of economic unfairness on the three forms of participation. I have adopted “newsinfo” as one of the indicators of cheap conventional participation because this model explains the highest portion of variance in the latent variables.

¹⁸ For instance, “one prominent model [Plutzer 2002] includes 32 variables but accounts for only 31% of the variance in turnout” (Fowler et al. 2008: 234).

unfairness has a positive impact on unconventional participation. Citizens who are dissatisfied with the unfairness of society are more likely to act outside the established channels.¹⁹

The control variables also reveal interesting findings. Individuals who face difficult economic conditions are more likely to judge the system unfair. Income and subjective perception of class also are negatively correlated with perceived economic unfairness. On the other hand, gender, age, and education do not have a significant impact. Interestingly, union members are more likely to consider the system unfair, while church goers are more prone to judge society fair.

If we consider cheap conventional participation, the variables with a significant positive effect include education, age, political interest, political knowledge, contact by parties and sports or club membership. The only two controls that have a significant and positive effect on costly conventional participation are contact by parties and political interest. These findings suggest that party mobilization plays an important role in convincing individuals to engage in costly forms of campaign support.

The standardized coefficients (shown in the appendix) also reveal that economic unfairness has one of the biggest impact on participation, along with party contact, political interest, and age. Feelings of unfairness, mobilization, and political interest play therefore an important role in predicting political participation. Since these factors can vary in a relatively short term, this finding helps explain change in individual participation over time.

¹⁹ These results hold when I assess their sensitivity to model specification with several robustness checks. The sensitivity analysis in the appendix presents seven alternative models and shows that the overall fit and the impact of economic unfairness on the three forms of participation remain qualitatively unchanged. Two models adopt different indicators for the latent variable cheap conventional participation, i.e. discussing politics with family and friends and a general measure of interest in politics, respectively. A third model adds individual reported turnout at the previous federal election as a covariate. Three additional models introduce an alternative operationalization of partisan identification. A final model considers only a few basic socio-demographic controls. See the appendix for an explanation of the rationale behind these alternative specifications and the results of these models.

Table 3.4 – Economic unfairness and political participation: structural model result

	Cheap Conventional Participation	Costly Conventional Participation	Unconventional Participation
Economic unfairness	-0.141*** (0.027)	-0.177*** (0.043)	0.130* (0.061)
Income	0.003 (0.010)	-0.015 (0.019)	-0.001 (0.031)
Education	0.060** (0.022)	0.068 (0.036)	0.179* (0.069)
Male	0.022 (0.042)	0.155 (0.083)	-0.028 (0.126)
Age	0.006*** (0.001)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.012** (0.004)
Club/sport membership	0.116** (0.043)	0.100 (0.073)	0.184 (0.127)
Church attendance	0.010 (0.014)	0.030 (0.027)	0.075 (0.041)
Union membership	0.017 (0.057)	0.176 (0.099)	0.258 (0.165)
Party contact	0.128** (0.045)	0.574*** (0.081)	0.319** (0.099)
Internal efficacy	0.009 (0.020)	0.062 (0.034)	-0.012 (0.062)
Citizenship from birth	0.218* (0.092)	-0.039 (0.168)	0.309 (0.346)
Interest in politics	0.573*** (0.046)	0.303*** (0.054)	0.375*** (0.089)
Political knowledge	0.120*** (0.023)	0.044 (0.049)	-0.063 (0.089)
Unemployment (years)	-0.013 (0.019)	0.021 (0.036)	-0.026 (0.113)
Subjective class	0.010 (0.026)	-0.056 (0.046)	-0.084 (0.098)
<i>R-Square</i>	0.71	0.41	0.33
<i>Covariance</i>			
Cheap Conventional Participation	--	0.156*** (0.028)	0.085** (0.029)
Costly Conventional Participation		--	0.141** (0.045)

***p<0.001; **p<0.01; *p<0.5

Table 3.4 above reveals another seemingly puzzling finding: party contact is positively related to unconventional participation. One may be surprised to find out that contact by parties – i.e. established traditional actors – increases participation in alternative forms. To make sense of this result, we can explore the separate impact produced by contact by different parties. I therefore run the same structural model described above for the general population, but I substitute the variable “party contact” with eight contact dummy variables, one for each major party.²⁰

Table 3.5 – Impact of contact by each party on political participation

	Cheap Conventional Participation	Costly Conventional Participation	Unconventional Participation
Contact by CDU/CSU	-0.012 (0.027)	0.061*** (0.008)	-0.071** (0.021)
Contact by SPD	0.045 (0.029)	0.050*** (0.007)	0.008 (0.021)
Contact by FDP	0.030 (0.044)	-0.005 (0.004)	0.078* (0.033)
Contact by Green	0.009 (0.036)	0.022*** (0.004)	0.088** (0.028)
Contact by Die Linke	0.110** (0.037)	0.053*** (0.007)	0.126*** (0.029)
Contact by AfD	-0.016 (0.054)	0.045*** (0.008)	-0.125** (0.041)
Contact by NPD	-0.139 (0.091)	-0.061*** (0.012)	-0.016 (0.068)
Contact by Pirate Party	0.063 (0.069)	-0.011 (0.007)	0.088 (0.051)

***p<0.001; **p<0.01; *p<0.5

²⁰ See the appendix for the full model with measures of overall fit and coefficient estimates for all latent and observed variables, including the controls.

Table 3.5 shows that the impact of contact on unconventional participation varies substantially across parties. The general positive effect of party contact previously observed is mostly driven by contact by the Green Party and Die Linke. This helps explain the previous finding, since the electorates of these parties have often been active even outside the traditional political channels. On the other hand, contact by the two biggest traditional parties, i.e. CDU and SPD, does not increase the likelihood of joining unconventional forms of participation. While the impact of contact by the SPD is not significant, such impact for the CDU is negative.²¹ One can also notice how parties are especially good at mobilizing citizens into more costly forms of conventional participation, such as joining party rallies and campaign donations.²²

The Moderating Role of Education in the Link between Economic Unfairness and Political Participation

The analysis therefore shows a generalized effect of economic unfairness, which decreases conventional participation and increases unconventional participation. If we take a more careful look at the descriptive statistics (Table 3.1), however, we notice two seemingly contrasting points. Economic unfairness appears to be a widespread feeling in the German

²¹ When interpreting this last finding, one should consider that party contact is not random, inasmuch as parties normally contact likely supporters. The CDU may have targeted older and more conservative voters, already less inclined to join unconventional actions. Since the dummy is equal to 1 for those who were contacted by the CDU and 0 for everyone else – which likely includes sectors of the electorate of the Green Party and Die Linke – the effect may be negative because of the already negative initial propensity of those contacted to join unconventional acts. Hence, while we can more confidently say that contact by the CDU did not have a positive effect on unconventional mobilization, we should be more careful about claiming that such contact demobilized citizens.

²² The standardized coefficients (not shown) reveal that the CDU and the SPD are the most effective parties at promoting participation in conventional costly forms.

society, and yet the proportion of individuals engaging in unconventional participation is rather small.²³

This suggests that feelings of unfairness are not sufficient to mobilize individuals into unconventional action. Economic unfairness may turn individuals away from conventional politics, but an additional condition seems necessary to translate feelings of unfairness into unconventional forms of engagement. As mentioned, I expect education to be instrumental in promoting cognitively and organizationally demanding forms of unconventional participation. To explore this hypothesis, I run a subgroup analysis that divides respondents based on their educational levels.²⁴

Table 3.6 presents the results of the impact of economic unfairness on the different forms of participation in the subgroups of citizens with low education and with high education.²⁵ The results are striking. Economic unfairness decreases conventional participation among individuals with both low and high education. The impact of economic unfairness on unconventional forms of engagement, on the other hand, is conditional on citizens' education. While individuals with low education simply demobilize, people who are more educated engage in alternative forms of participation.

²³ 45% of respondents believed that society is “unjust” or “very unjust” and more than half (53.5%) believed that society has become more unjust in recent year. Instead, a little less than 5% joined a demonstration and a little more than 3% participated in a community action group.

²⁴ To run these models I use the R *Lavaan* package, which allows me to have a greater flexibility in data management. I adopt subgroup analysis instead of an interaction term between the latent variable economic unfairness and education because interaction terms in a SEM approach are either not available (*Lavaan* package in R) or computationally extremely demanding (MPLUS).

²⁵ The appendix reports the full model results, including measures of overall fit and all the coefficients.

Economic unfairness has the second-largest impact on unconventional participation among highly educated individuals, producing an effect larger than the influence of age, subjective class perception, and unemployment. These findings suggests that the educational divide is central in the political community. Not only are highly educated individuals more likely to engage in traditional forms of participation, as a robust literature has shown. They are also more likely to find alternative venues of expression when they are unsatisfied with the unfairness of the system. In contrast, individuals with lower education grow politically alienated and simply disengage.

Table 3.6 – Economic unfairness and political participation among citizens with low and with high education: structural model results

Low Education			
	Cheap Conventional Participation	Costly Conventional Participation	Unconventional Participation
Economic unfairness	-0.030*** (0.008)	-0.006* (0.003)	0.005 (0.006)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
R-Square	0.725	0.335	0.21
Number of observ.	1139	1139	1139
High Education			
	Cheap Conventional Participation	Costly Conventional Participation	Unconventional Participation
Economic unfairness	-0.021** (0.008)	-0.028* (0.011)	0.052* (0.020)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
R-Square	0.659	0.316	0.26
Number of observ.	369	369	369

***p<0.001; **p<0.01; *p<0.5

The Mediating Role of Legitimacy of the System

The following section uses structural modeling to test the causal mechanism. As explained, I anticipate that economic unfairness will generate dissatisfaction with the political authorities responsible for the allocation decisions, which in turn should decrease the perceived representational legitimacy of traditional institutions. It is this decreased legitimacy that, in turn, suppresses cooperation and support for traditional institutions, thereby decreasing conventional participation and promoting unconventional participation. The causal mechanism linking economic unfairness to participation, therefore, relies on evaluations of representational legitimacy of traditional political institutions.

Figure 3.2 – Economic unfairness, legitimacy of the system, and political participation: the model depicting the causal mechanism

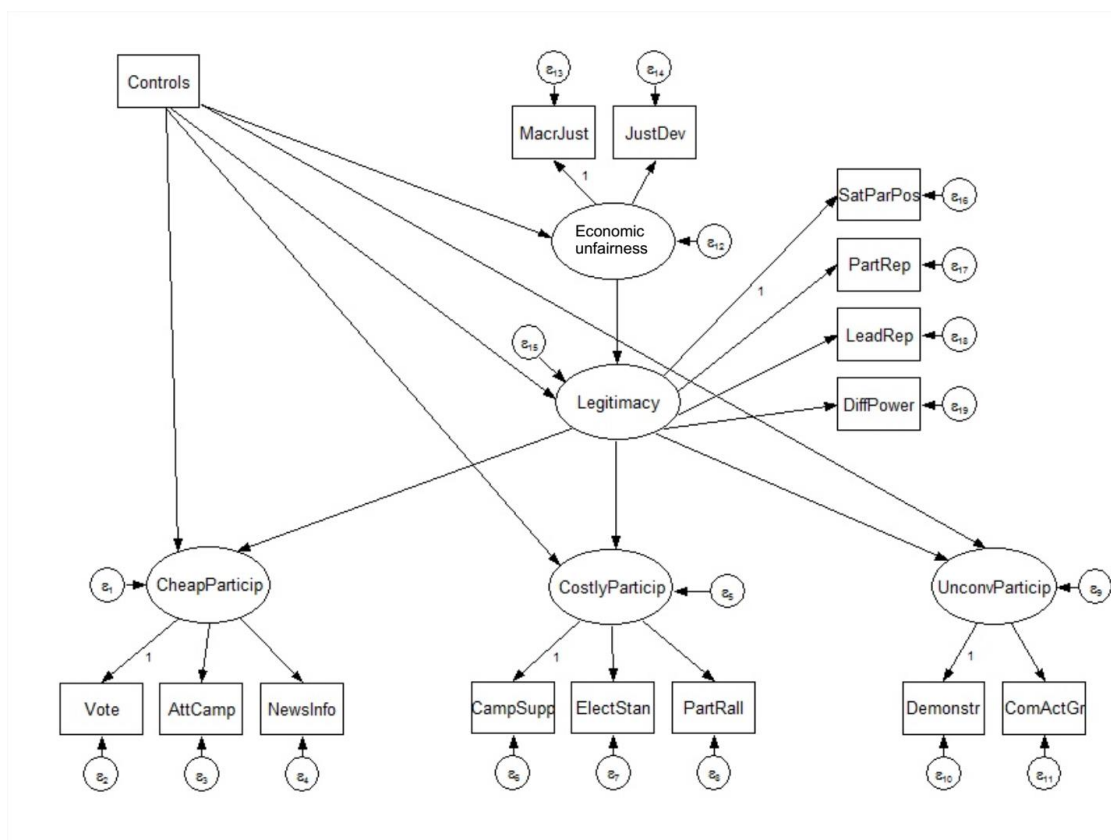


Figure 3.2 shows the model that tests the causal mechanism. The model is similar to the one presented in Figure 3.1, but a new latent variable – legitimacy – is introduced to operationalize the mediator. Four indicators measure the representational legitimacy of traditional channels: considerations on how well the political parties in the country represent the respondent's views; beliefs on how well existing party leaders represent the respondent's views; respondent's satisfaction with the range of political positions advanced by political parties; and respondent's belief that the identity of who is in power makes or does not make a difference.^{26,27}

²⁶ A low score in the answer to this question suggests that citizens do not feel represented within the political system, since believing that no difference exists among political actors implies that the identity of those in power does not have meaningful consequences. In other words, respondents with a low score do not believe that any political actor could effectively represent their own interests if elected. The choice of these indicators as measurement of legitimacy is consistent with previous operationalization of the concept of legitimacy in the literature, which considered dimensions such as consistency between individuals' own views and the law, identification with the institution, satisfaction and trust in the authorities, and obligation to obey. For previous operationalization, see Mazerolle et al. (2013), Tyler and Fagan (2008), and Kluegel and Mason (2004).

²⁷ Two alternative specifications of the model are considered. The first one includes only the first three indicators, which are closer in nature. The second alternative includes a fifth indicator, which measures citizens' beliefs that voting is a civic duty. This last indicator captures another dimension of legitimacy, *i.e.* obligation to comply. No substantive differences emerge in the findings. The results of the alternative specifications are available upon requests.

Table 3.7 – Economic unfairness, legitimacy of the system, and political participation: overall fit and coefficient estimates for the latent variables

Overall Fit						
Chi-Square	df	p-value	CFI	TLI	1-RMSEA	BIC
586.807	196	0.0000	0.936	0.906	0.964	-855.65
Coefficient Estimates (Structural Model: Latent Variables)						
	Legitimacy	Cheap Conventional Participation	Costly Conventional Participation	Unconventional Participation		
Economic unfairness	-0.255*** (0.027)					
Legitimacy		0.560*** (0.055)	0.398*** (0.071)	-0.189* (0.087)		
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
R-Square	0.37	0.79	0.45	0.34		

***p<0.001; **p<0.01; *p<0.5

Table 3.7 shows that the model has a good overall fit. The table also shows a statistically significant and negative relation between economic unfairness and perceptions of legitimacy of political institutions. Citizens who judge the system unfair are likely to attribute a lower level of representational legitimacy to traditional political channels.

Perceptions of legitimacy, in turn, have a significant impact on participation. While legitimacy is positively correlated to conventional forms, it is negatively related to unconventional engagement. Hence, citizens attributing low legitimacy to traditional political actors and institutions are less likely to engage in conventional forms of participation and more likely to join unconventional forms. These findings, therefore, offer support to the proposed causal mechanism: perceptions of economic unfairness influence citizens' participation via their impact on feelings of representational legitimacy of traditional political institutions.

Conclusion

Economic unfairness has diversified effects on political participation. On the one hand, believing that the system is unfair decreases conventional participation, and especially participation in costly forms of engagement. On the other, feelings of unfairness increase unconventional participation – but only among individuals with high education. These findings acquire particular significance in a time when the social and economic system is perceived as increasingly unfair. As more citizens grow dissatisfied with the unfairness of the system, more individuals become likely to disengage from the political system.

While this work relies on data from Germany, the findings can arguably apply to other established democracies, since the concepts investigated are not peculiar to the German context. It is plausible to hypothesize that indicators similar to those adopted in this study can be considered cheap forms of participation (e.g. voting, paying attention to the campaign) or more costly forms (e.g. campaign support) in other established democracies. The same logic, however, does not apply to non-established democracies, where even voting can sometimes be dangerous and therefore a costly form of participation.

The moderating role that education plays with regard to the impact of economic unfairness also raises concerns. While more educated citizens are able to engage in alternative venues in the face of economic unfairness, individuals with lower education simply disengage. This is evidence that a political divide along educational lines shapes not only political contestation (Hooghe and Marks 2018), but also political engagement more broadly. Future research could therefore examine how economic unfairness influences voting behavior. Is education instrumental in influencing the voting decisions of citizens who believe that the system is unfair? Such investigation could offer interesting insights into the recent growing support for

populist parties and allow us to shed further light on fundamental aspects of democracy, such as representation, legitimacy, and participation.

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APPENDIX 1: INEQUALITY, IMMIGRANTS AND SELECTIVE SOLIDARITY

Observational Analysis: 2008 ESS Data

Below I report the full specifications of the models presented in Table 1 in the paper. Before showing the full models, I offer a more detailed description of the controls.

Compared to Table 1 in the paper, as a further robustness check, I split model 2 and 5 in Table 1 into two separate models (models A2 and A3 and A6 and A7 in the table 1 below, respectively). As I explain below, models A2 and A6 include only socio-demographic controls and feelings of economic security. Models A3 and A7 – which correspond to models 2 and 5 in the main paper – also reports attitudinal controls.

Independent Variables: Controls

Individual Level

Models A1 and A5 include basic socio-demographic controls:

Income: The variable contains 10 categories, each of which corresponds to a decile in the income distribution. A measure that relies on deciles, rather than actual values of income, offers two advantages. First, it makes data comparable across countries. Indeed, 10,000 euro have a different value in Switzerland or Portugal. A measure based on deciles overcomes this shortcoming because a category of 1 corresponds to the lowest decile in the country in which the respondent resides, regardless of different costs of living. Second, this measures allows me to consider relative income by providing information to infer the position of the respondent in the

income distribution. We know, for instance, that respondents with a value of 4 are always below the median income in their country.

Gender: The variable “Female” is equal to 1 for women and 0 for men.

Age: Measures the age of respondents in years.

Education: The variable, which ranges from 0 to 4, measures the highest level of education attained by the respondent. Compared to variables that simply count the total years of education, the categories of this variable are harmonized and comparable across countries.

Political ideology: I control for respondents’ general political preferences, since right-wing individuals are expected to be less supportive of both redistribution and assistance for immigrants. The variable “Right” ranges from 0 (left) to 10 (right).

Union membership: I control for whether the respondent is, or has been, a union member, since such a membership is likely positively correlated with support for redistribution.

In model 5 measuring support for immigrants, I also control for *citizenship*, which is equal to 1 for respondents who are citizens of the country in which they reside. One can expect non-citizens to be more supportive of assistance to immigrants, since they have direct personal material interests at stake.

Models A2 and A6 include additional socio-demographic controls and an indicator of perceived economic security:

Religiosity: This 11-category variable is equal to 0 for respondents who are “not at all” religious and 10 for those who are “very” religious.

Household size: The variable controls for the number of individuals living in the household and ranges from 1 to 7.

Unemployment status: It controls for respondents' current working situation and is equal to 1 for those who are unemployed. Unemployed individuals likely have a direct material interest in supporting redistribution.

Economic security: While one's income position is directly related to the benefits and costs of redistribution, individuals with similar income may have different evaluations of their economic conditions.¹ Recent work has shown that economic insecurity is related to welfare attitudes (Ford 2015). For this reason, I include a variable that measures a personal assessment of whether one's own economic means are adequate to live comfortably.

Model A3 and A7 include perceptions of one' socio-economic surroundings and attitudinal variables:

Perceived number of poor and perceived number of immigrants: These items, which control for the perceived number of individuals who can potentially benefit from economic support, are at the same time measures of perceived spread of neediness and possible costs of assistance.

Model A3 also includes:

Attitudes toward inequality: This variable measures to what extent respondents agree that differences in income should be small for a society to be fair (higher values indicate stronger agreement). This is arguably a strong robustness test, since we expect concerns about distributive justice to be closely correlated with support for redistribution and willingness to help those at the bottom of society.

¹ Consider, for instance, the vast literature on relative deprivation. See e.g. Walker and Smith 2002.

Feelings of poor undeservingness. This item asks respondents whether they agree that low-income individuals get less benefits than what they are entitled to. Higher values indicate more negative feelings.

Model A7 introduces additional controls:

Two controls measure *attitudes toward immigration*, because these attitudinal positions likely affect willingness to help immigrants. These two indicators measure opinions about the impact of immigrants on the economy and the cultural life of the country, respectively.

Perceptions of *immigrant deservingness*: this control is operationalized by an item measuring respondents' opinion about whether immigrants contribute to society more than what they receive, or vice versa. This item follows Petersen's (2012) operationalization of deservingness, in which the fundamental distinction is between reciprocators (i.e. individuals who contribute to society) and cheaters (i.e. individuals who free ride). Higher values correspond to the belief that immigrants are underserving.

Regional Level

In addition to economic inequality, all of the models present four regional controls that are obtained from Eurostat:

Average GDP per capita: This item is measured at current prices in US Dollars and controls for average levels of wealth in society.

Unemployment rate: The variable measures unemployment rate by all ages. As a measure of economic hardship, unemployment rate can potentially affect support for redistribution and attitudes toward outgroups.

Share of foreigners: This variable provides a measure of immigrant and ethnic heterogeneity.

Previous studies have shown that ethnic heterogeneity is related to welfare provision and support for redistribution (Alesina and Glaeser 2004, Finseraas 2009). Regarding support for immigrants, this variable also controls for a possible exposure effect. Its predicted direction is not clear, since previous work has yielded mixed results (e.g. Luttmer 2001, Fox 2004).

Population density: This macro-economic variable controls for the fact that individuals who live in high-density, mostly urban areas may exhibit different preferences (Cho et al. 2006).

National Level

Finally, model A4 and A8 include four additional contextual indicators at the national level:

average GDP per capita, social expenditure, unemployment rate, and percentage of foreigners

living in the country. These indicators control for common trends that may affect individuals

living in the same country and that may be emphasized by national media. Specifically,

controlling for current levels of social expenditure² is important because the type of welfare state influences opinions about the role of the state in society (Korpi 1980), which could be correlated with support for redistribution.

² Social expenditure is measured as a percentage of GDP. The variable comes from the OECD Social Expenditure Database and includes the following social policy areas: old age, survivors, incapacity-related benefits, health, family, active labor market programs, unemployment, housing, and other social policy areas.

Table A.1.1 – Welfare support for people in need and immigrants: full specification

	Welfare support for people in need				Welfare support for immigrants			
	(A1)	(A2)	(A3)	(A4)	(A5)	(A6)	(A7)	(A8)
Inequality	1.489** (0.518)	1.524** (0.516)	1.205* (0.522)	1.158* (0.517)	-1.083* (0.528)	-1.088* (0.527)	-1.228* (0.528)	-1.033* (0.517)
<i>Individual Controls</i>								
Income	-0.010*** (0.003)	0.010** (0.003)	0.022*** (0.004)	0.011** (0.004)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.005 (0.003)	-0.011** (0.004)	-0.008* (0.004)
Female	0.061*** (0.013)	0.065*** (0.013)	0.063*** (0.014)	0.058*** (0.015)	0.033* (0.014)	0.035* (0.014)	0.055*** (0.015)	0.042** (0.015)
Education	-0.063*** (0.006)	-0.059*** (0.006)	-0.038*** (0.006)	-0.032*** (0.006)	0.075*** (0.006)	0.067*** (0.006)	0.025*** (0.006)	0.016** (0.006)
Right	-0.022*** (0.003)	-0.020*** (0.003)	-0.016*** (0.003)	-0.015*** (0.003)	-0.034*** (0.003)	-0.034*** (0.003)	-0.026*** (0.003)	-0.036*** (0.004)
Religiosity	-0.012** (0.005)	-0.010* (0.005)	-0.010 (0.005)	-0.017** (0.005)	-0.007 (0.005)	-0.006 (0.005)	-0.005 (0.005)	0.009 (0.006)
Age	-0.0003 (0.0004)	0.003 (0.002)	0.0004 (0.002)	-0.0003 (0.002)	-0.001* (0.0004)	-0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	-0.0003 (0.002)
Age squared		-0.00003 (0.00002)	-0.0000 (0.00002)	0.00001 (0.00002)		-0.00001 (0.00002)	-0.00002 (0.00002)	-0.00002 (0.00002)
Union		0.013 (0.016)	-0.001 (0.017)	0.008 (0.017)		0.060*** (0.016)	0.054** (0.017)	0.051** (0.017)
Household		-0.005 (0.005)	-0.004 (0.006)	0.010 (0.006)		-0.008 (0.006)	-0.008 (0.006)	-0.002 (0.006)
Unemployed		0.10*** (0.028)	0.067* (0.030)	0.031 (0.031)		0.041 (0.029)	0.0005 (0.031)	0.022 (0.031)
Economic security		-0.132*** (0.010)	-0.092*** (0.011)	-0.093*** (0.011)		0.039*** (0.010)	0.009 (0.011)	0.022 (0.011)
Perceived # Poor			0.026*** (0.003)	0.037*** (0.003)			-0.007* (0.003)	-0.006* (0.003)
Perceived # Immigrants			0.008* (0.003)	0.002 (0.004)			-0.002 (0.003)	-0.006 (0.004)
Inequality Evaluation			0.071*** (0.008)	0.087*** (0.008)				
Poor Undeservingness			-0.257*** (0.008)	-0.239*** (0.008)				
Citizen					-0.567*** (0.035)	-0.573*** (0.035)	-0.425*** (0.036)	-0.446*** (0.036)
Immigration Attit. (Economy)							0.058*** (0.004)	0.056*** (0.004)
Immigration Attit. (Culture)							0.049*** (0.004)	0.049*** (0.004)

							(0.004)	(0.004)
Immigrant Undeservingness							-0.051***	-0.040***
							(0.004)	(0.004)

Regional Controls

GDP	-0.002	-0.002	-0.004	-0.003	-0.006	-0.005	-0.004	-0.001
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Unemployment Rate	0.068	0.086	-0.104	-0.049	0.074	0.104	0.378	0.584
	(0.482)	(0.480)	(0.480)	(0.473)	(0.490)	(0.490)	(0.486)	(0.473)
% Foreign	-0.386	-0.258	-0.007	-0.212	0.151	0.080	0.071	0.011
	(0.362)	(0.361)	(0.369)	(0.366)	(0.370)	(0.370)	(0.375)	(0.368)
Pop. Density	-0.0003	-0.001	-0.0002	-0.001	0.004*	0.004*	0.003	-0.0001
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)

National Controls

GDP				-0.003				0.005
				(0.003)				(0.003)
Social Expenditure				-0.020				0.011
				(0.011)				(0.011)
Unemployment Rate				0.005				0.041
				(0.024)				(0.023)
% Foreign				-0.016				0.012
				(0.008)				(0.008)
Constant	3.586***	3.634***	3.964***	4.490***	3.826***	3.802***	3.488***	2.604***
	(0.200)	(0.202)	(0.203)	(0.317)	(0.200)	(0.205)	(0.206)	(0.310)
Observations	20,487	20,377	17,029	15,855	20,179	20,077	16,692	15,562
Log Likelihood	-28,141.23	-27,896.14	-22,649.03	-20,889.22	-28,071.32	-27,897.11	-22,406.34	-20,505.07
Akaike Inf. Crit.	56,310.46	55,830.28	45,344.05	41,832.45	56,172.65	55,834.22	44,862.68	41,068.13
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	56,421.44	55,980.80	45,522.14	41,039.57	56,291.33	55,992.37	45,055.75	41,290.06

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table A.1.2: Welfare support for people in need and immigrants: country fixed effects

	Welfare support for people in need			Welfare support for immigrants		
	(A1)	(A2)	(A3)	(A4)	(A5)	(A6)
Inequality	1.535** (0.521)	1.584** (0.519)	1.287* (0.528)	-1.047* (0.532)	-1.051* (0.531)	-1.222* (0.535)
<i>Individual Controls</i>						
Income	-0.010*** (0.003)	0.010** (0.003)	0.022*** (0.004)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.005 (0.003)	-0.011** (0.004)
Citizen				-0.567*** (0.035)	-0.573*** (0.035)	-0.425*** (0.036)
Female	0.061*** (0.013)	0.065*** (0.013)	0.063*** (0.014)	0.033* (0.014)	0.035* (0.014)	0.055*** (0.015)
Age	-0.0003 (0.0004)	0.003 (0.002)	0.0004 (0.002)	-0.001* (0.0004)	-0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)
Age squared		-0.00003 (0.00002)	-0.00000 (0.00002)		-0.00001 (0.00002)	-0.00002 (0.00002)
Education	-0.062*** (0.006)	-0.058*** (0.006)	-0.038*** (0.006)	0.075*** (0.006)	0.068*** (0.006)	0.025*** (0.006)
Right	-0.022*** (0.003)	-0.020*** (0.003)	-0.016*** (0.003)	-0.034*** (0.003)	-0.034*** (0.003)	-0.026*** (0.003)
Union		0.014 (0.016)	-0.0005 (0.017)		0.062*** (0.017)	0.056** (0.017)
Religiosity	-0.013** (0.005)	-0.011* (0.005)	-0.011* (0.005)	-0.007 (0.005)	-0.006 (0.005)	-0.005 (0.005)
Household		-0.005 (0.005)	-0.004 (0.006)		-0.008 (0.006)	-0.008 (0.006)
Unemployed		0.105*** (0.028)	0.066* (0.030)		0.041 (0.029)	0.001 (0.031)
Economic security		-0.131*** (0.010)	-0.092*** (0.011)		0.038*** (0.010)	0.009 (0.011)
Inequality Evaluation			0.071*** (0.008)			
Perceived # Poor			0.025*** (0.003)			-0.007* (0.003)
Perceived # Immigr.			0.009** (0.003)			-0.002 (0.003)
Poor Undeserving			-0.256*** (0.008)			

Immigr. Attit. (Econ.)	0.057*** (0.004)
Immigr. Attit. (Cult.)	0.049*** (0.004)
Immigrant Undeserv.	-0.051*** (0.004)

Regional Controls

GDP	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.004 (0.003)	-0.006* (0.003)	-0.005 (0.003)	-0.004 (0.003)
Unemployment Rate	0.125 (0.485)	0.151 (0.483)	-0.026 (0.486)	0.054 (0.495)	0.086 (0.494)	0.322 (0.493)
% Foreign	-0.401 (0.363)	-0.273 (0.361)	-0.021 (0.370)	0.171 (0.371)	0.099 (0.370)	0.099 (0.376)
Pop. Density	-0.0005 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.0005 (0.002)	0.004* (0.002)	0.004* (0.002)	0.003 (0.002)

Country
Fixed Effects

	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	20,487	20,377	17,029	20,179	20,077	16,692
R ²	0.936	0.937	0.941	0.894	0.895	0.905
Adjusted R ²	0.936	0.937	0.941	0.894	0.894	0.905
Residual Std. Error	0.952 df = 20460	0.947 df = 20345	0.909 df = 16993	0.969 df = 20151	0.966 df = 20044	0.920 df = 16654
F Statistic	11,167.69*** df =27; 20460	9,487.26*** df =32; 20345	7,590.73*** df =36; 16993	6,074.05*** df =28; 20151	5,150.62*** df =33; 20044	4,181.13*** df =38; 16654

Note:

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

Survey Experiment

The survey is based on a nationally representative sample of the population of Italian residents according to census data for gender, age, and location of residence. The survey value for income also closely resembles the national average value. The average household income in Italy in 2015 was 23,443 € and the average income among survey respondents is 6.89 (where category 6 equals 20,000-25,000 €).

Before running the survey experiment, I conducted two pilot studies. I ran the first pilot study on Amazon MTurk in August 2016 with 200 American respondents. The second pilot study was run in November 2016 with a nationally representative sample of 120 Italian respondents and was administered by the survey company Cint.

Group Covariates

The table below show the mean values (or proportions) for the main controls across the three groups: control group, inequality treatment, and poverty treatment.

	Control Group	Inequality Treatment	Poverty Treatment
Female	48.6%	48.0%	50.8%
Age	44.6	45.5	44.2
Education (1-7)	5.1	5.0	5.1
Income (1-15)	6.8	6.8	7.0
Economic right (1-10)	5.6	5.6	5.2
Socially conservative (1-10)	5.0	5.3	4.6

Variable Operationalization

Female: 0 = Male; 1 = Female

Age: years of age

Education: 1 = No degree; 2 = Elementary school; 3 = Middle school; 4 = Professional qualification; 5 = High school degree; 6 = College degree; 7 = Post-college degree

Income: 1 = no income; 2 = less than 5,000 €; 3 = 5,000-10,000 €; 4 = 10,000-15,000 €; 5 = 15,000-20,000 €; 6 = 20,000-25,000 €; 7 = 25,000-30,000 €; 8 = 30,000-35,000 €; 9 = 35,000-40,000 €; 10 = 40,000-50,000 €; 11 = 50,000-60,000 €; 12 = 60,000-70,000 €; 13 = 70,000-85,000 €; 14 = 85,000-100,000 €; 15 = more than 100,000 €

Economic right: 1 = left; 10 = right

Socially conservative: 1 = liberal; 10 = conservative

Inequality Treatment

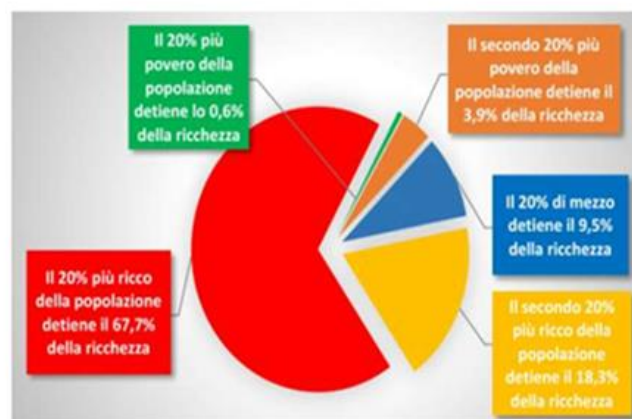
The inequality treatment is divided into two pages, which provide bullet-point information about the level (first page) and the recent growth (second page) of economic inequality in Italy. The first page of the treatment also shows a graph depicting income distribution by quintiles. The second page presents a picture depicting the contrast between a wealthy individual, who stands in front of an expensive car and house, and a lower-income individual who looks for food among surplus waste products at a city food market. The two treatment pages are reproduced below.

Censis: i 10 italiani più ricchi possiedono più ricchezza di 500.000 famiglie operaie

Oggi l'1% più ricco degli italiani ha una ricchezza maggiore di quanto possiede il 70% più povero della popolazione (circa 42,5 milioni di persone).

È evidente la disuguaglianza dei redditi:

- L'1% più ricco della popolazione guadagna in media 102.000 euro a testa all'anno
- Il 10% più povero della popolazione guadagna meno di 4.500 euro a testa all'anno



Il 20% più ricco della popolazione (in rosso) possiede quasi il 70% della ricchezza in Italia.

Il 20% più povero (in verde) possiede appena lo 0,6% della ricchezza nazionale.

Disuguaglianza economica sempre più alta, Italia tra i peggiori in Europa

- Dal 2000 il 10% più ricco della popolazione ha ricevuto più della metà della ricchezza una quantità 50 volte superiore a quanto ricevuto dai 12 milioni di italiani più poveri
- Sono aumentati i super ricchi: oggi 2.000 italiani possiedono più di 100 milioni di euro a testa
- È peggiorata la condizione del ceto medio: uno su quattro ha rinunciato a cure mediche private e all'acquisto di automobili, tre su cinque hanno tagliato vacanze e uscite al ristorante
- Dal 2007 gli operai hanno perso in media 1.700 euro all'anno e gli impiegati circa 1.200, mentre i redditi dei dirigenti sono aumentati dell'1,5%



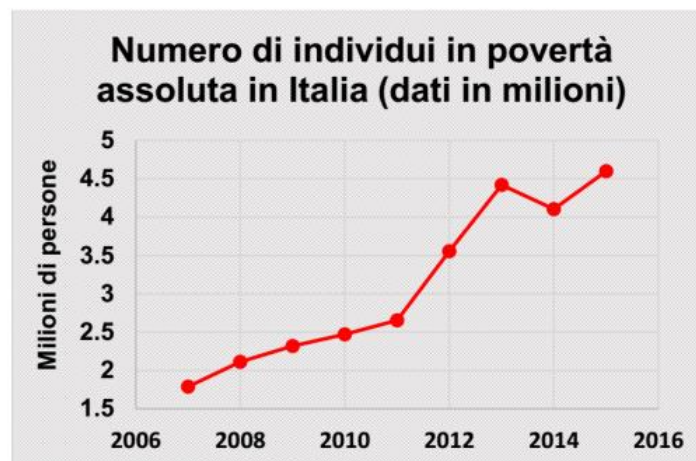
Poverty Treatment

The poverty treatment is divided into two pages, which provide bullet-point information about the level (first page) and the recent growth (second page) of absolute poverty in Italy. The first page of the treatment also shows a graph depicting the level of poverty in the last ten years. The second page presents a picture depicting a lower-income individual who looks for food among surplus waste products at a city food market. The two treatment pages are reproduced below.

Istat, record di povertà assoluta in italia: quasi 5 milioni i poveri

Durante la crisi, il numero dei poveri in Italia è più che raddoppiato.

- Il 10% più povero della popolazione guadagna oggi meno di 4.500 euro all'anno
- I poveri assoluti sono quasi 5 milioni, il numero più alto in tutta Europa
- Queste persone non riescono a coprire le spese per beni e servizi essenziali quali casa, cibo e vestiario



*Dal 2007 al 2015 in Italia il numero dei poveri assoluti è più che raddoppiato.
Oggi 5 milioni di persone non riescono a coprire le spese per cibo, casa e bollette.*

Cresce sempre più il numero di persone che hanno perso casa e lavoro

- Durante la crisi la disoccupazione è cresciuta del 108% e ha raggiunto il nuovo record del 13,4%. Tra i giovani, più di due ragazzi su cinque non trovano lavoro
- I consumi alimentari sono tornati indietro di oltre 30 anni ai livelli minimi del 1981, segnando il peggior crollo in Europa
- Un italiano su tre ha dovuto rinunciare alla carne, uno su cinque è stato costretto a risparmiare su riscaldamento e cure mediche
- Ogni anno vengono pignorate quasi 300,000 case di persone che non riescono a pagare i propri debiti



Manipulation Checks

As a manipulation check, a question gauged factual knowledge of inequality in the country. The following survey item therefore allows me to evaluate inequality perceptions:

In your opinion, which one of the following statements about economic inequality in Italy in the last 30 years is correct?

- *The crisis has decreased most workers' income, which has produced a decrease in economic inequality*
- *The economic inequality has continued to grow and has reached one of the highest levels in Europe*
- *Economic inequality has become more visible because of the crisis, even if it has remained stable*

The correct answer is the second one.

In the logit models below the binary dependent variables equal 1 for correct answers and 0 otherwise. The first model shows the results for the entire sample of respondents; the second one the results for the subsample of respondents who passed the attention check.

	Manipulation Check 1	
	Inequality Perception	
	Entire sample	Subset: Passed Attention Check
Inequality Treatment	0.28* (0.14)	0.34* (0.15)
Poverty Treatment	0.20 (0.14)	0.24 (0.15)
Constant	-0.25* (0.10)	-0.16 (0.11)
Observations	1,270	1,016
Log Likelihood	-876.91	-701.59
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,759.82	1,409.17
Note:	+p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001	

As an additional manipulation check, a second survey item asked respondents how important economic inequality is. This is a less straightforward and more demanding manipulation check, inasmuch as respondents in the inequality treatment may be more aware of inequality but might not consider it a very important issue. The survey question asked:

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Economic inequality in Italy is too large.

- *Strongly disagree*
- *Disagree*
- *Neither agree nor disagree*
- *Agree*
- *Strongly agree*

Below I present ordered logit models, in which the dependent variable is measure on a five-point scale. The first model shows the results for the entire sample of respondents; the second one reports the results for the subsample of respondents who passed the attention check.

	Manipulation Check 2	
	Inequality Importance	
	Entire sample	Subset: Passed Attention Check
Inequality Treatment	0.27* (0.13)	0.34* (0.15)
Poverty Treatment	-0.07 (0.13)	0.05 (0.15)
Observations	1,273	1,018
Res. Deviance	2,717.626	2,037.492
Akaike Inf. Crit.	2,729.626	2,049.492
<i>Note:</i>	+p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001	

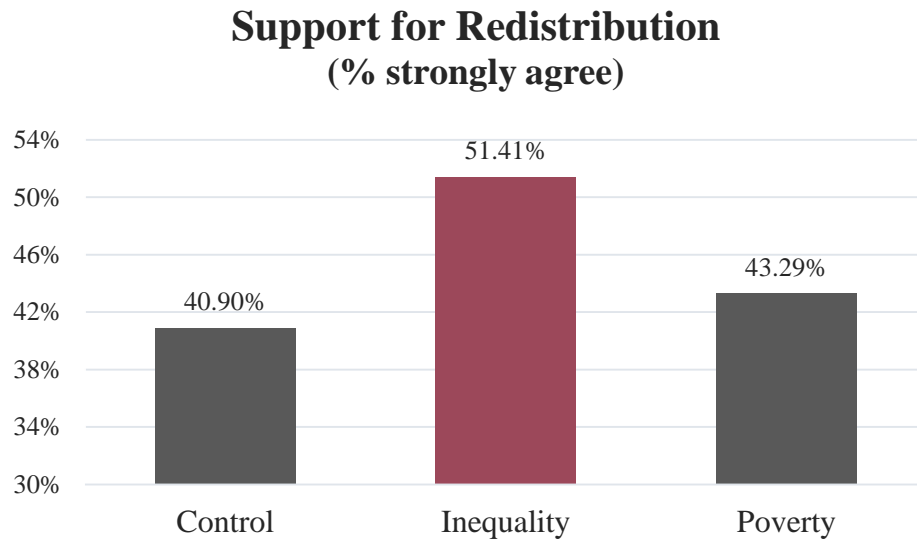
Finally, I show the results of the main manipulation check based on perceived inequality measured by the question described above with controls. I also report the results of the

manipulation check for the poverty treatment, which measures perceived poverty.³ I show logit models in which the binary dependent variables equal 1 for correct answers and 0 otherwise.

	Manipulation check 1			
	Inequality Perception		Poverty Perception	
	Entire sample	Subset: Passed Attention Check	Entire sample	Subset: Passed Attention Check
Inequality treatment	0.36* (0.15)	0.48** (0.17)	-0.08 (0.17)	0.06 (0.20)
Poverty treatment	0.26 (0.15)	0.33 (0.17)	0.34* (0.17)	0.48* (0.20)
Education	0.07 (0.06)	0.09 (0.08)	0.06 (0.07)	-0.06 (0.09)
Age	0.01 (0.005)	0.01 (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Female	-0.07 (0.13)	-0.15 (0.14)	-0.10 (0.14)	-0.32 (0.17)
Income	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.08** (0.03)	-0.06 (0.04)
Economic insecurity	0.03 (0.07)	0.05 (0.08)	0.10 (0.07)	0.09 (0.09)
Economic right	-0.08** (0.03)	-0.09** (0.03)	-0.05 (0.03)	0.02 (0.04)
Party ID (Lega Nord)	-0.11 (0.34)	-0.33 (0.37)	-0.21 (0.40)	-0.14 (0.45)
Location (North-East)	-0.05 (0.21)	-0.05 (0.23)	0.15 (0.24)	0.22 (0.28)
Constant	-0.23 (0.64)	-0.02 (0.77)	0.62 (0.73)	1.26 (0.92)
Observations	1,136	910	1,137	910
Log Likelihood	-767.22	-605.11	-641.50	-466.47
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,574.44	1,252.22	1,323.00	974.94
<i>Note:</i>			*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001	

³ “In your opinion, which one of the following statements about absolute poverty in Italy since the beginning of the crisis is correct?” The three possible answers were: “The condition of the middle class has severely worsened, but the number of absolute poor has decreased;” “Workers’ salaries have collapsed and the number of unemployed has substantially increased, but the number of poor has remained stable,” “The number of absolute poor has almost doubled and the number of unemployed has broken a new record.” The correct answer is the third one.

Support for Redistribution



Percentage difference in support for redistribution among control group, inequality treatment and poverty treatment without any other control variables.

The red bar indicates a statistically significant difference between treatment and control groups at the .05 level.

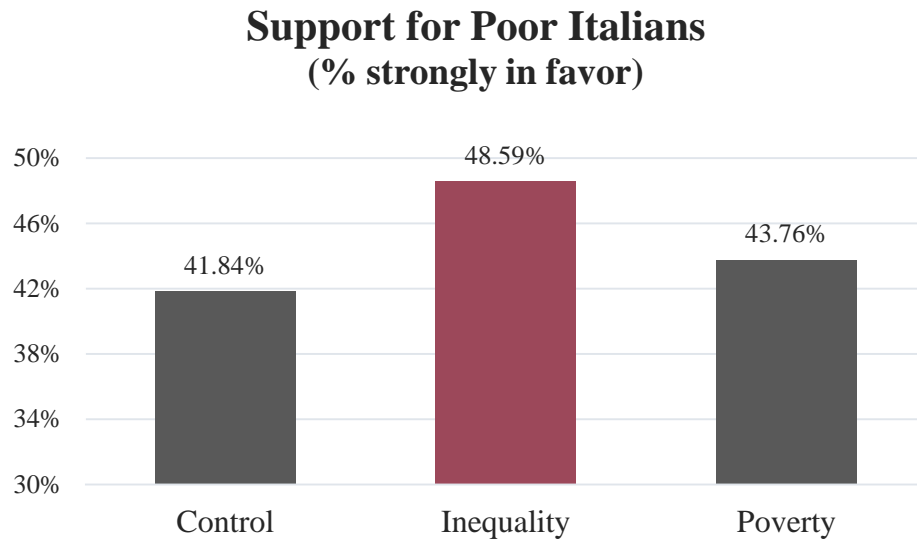
Support for Redistribution: Logit Model

DV: 1 = strongly agree

Hence, number of observations: DV= 0 : n=697; DV=1 : n=576

	Support for Redistribution
Inequality treatment	0.61*** (0.16)
Poverty treatment	0.05 (0.16)
Education	-0.002 (0.07)
Age	0.01* (0.01)
Female	-0.25+ (0.13)
Income (household)	-0.12* (0.05)
Economic right	-0.18*** (0.03)
Socially conservative	-0.06* (0.03)
Party ID (Lega Nord)	0.70+ (0.41)
Location (North-East)	0.26 (0.22)
Constant	0.06 (0.65)
Observations	1,098
Log Likelihood	-689.92
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,419.85
Note:	+p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Support for Low-Income Natives

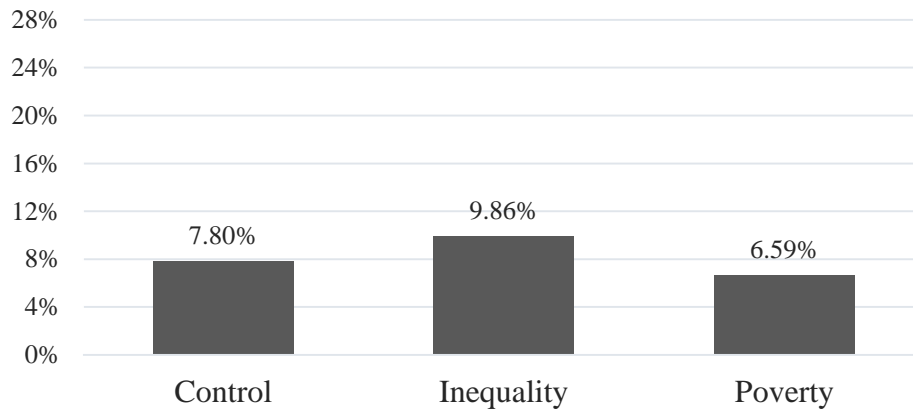


Percentage difference in support for low-income natives among control group, inequality treatment and poverty treatment without any other control variables.

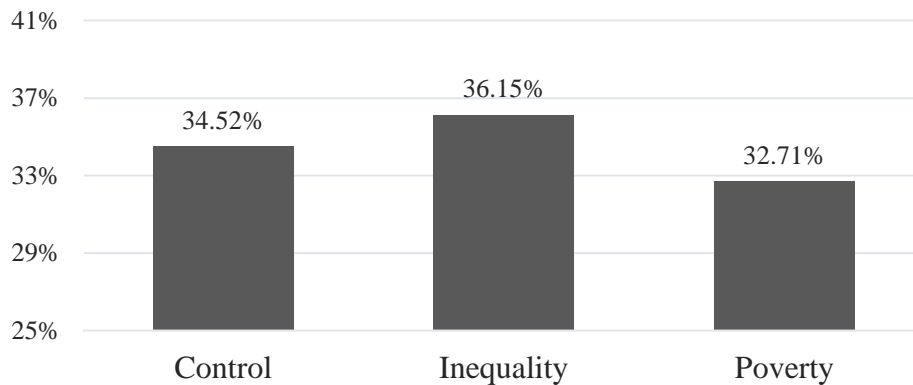
The red bar indicates a statistically significant difference between treatment and control groups at the .05 level.

Support for Low-Income Immigrants

Support for Poor Immigrants (% strongly in favor)



Opposition to Support for Poor Immigrants (% strongly against)



Percentage difference in support (top) and opposition (bottom) to low-income immigrants among control group, inequality treatment and poverty treatment without any other control variables.

The red bar indicates a statistically significant difference between treatment and control groups at the .05 level.

Support for Low-Income Natives vs. Low-Income Immigrants: Logit Models

Support for low-income natives: 1 = strongly in favor (n=570); 0 = all others (n=703)

Support for low-income immigrants: 0 = strongly against (n=439); 1 = all others (n=834)

	Support for			
	Low-Income Natives		Low-Income Immigrants	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Inequality treatment	0.39*	0.40*	-0.07	0.17
	(0.15)	(0.18)	(0.17)	(0.20)
Inequality treatment*Social conserv	--	-0.09	--	-0.82*
		(0.34)		(0.37)
Poverty treatment	0.17	0.28	-0.04	0.07
	(0.15)	(0.18)	(0.17)	(0.19)
Poverty treatment*Social conserv	--	-0.50	--	-0.41
		(0.38)		(0.40)
Education	-0.10	-0.10	0.04	0.03
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Age	0.004	0.005	0.001	0.001
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Female	0.30*	0.31*	-0.10	-0.08
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.14)
Income (household)	-0.08 ⁺	-0.09 ⁺	0.06	0.06
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Economic right	-0.05 ⁺	-0.05 ⁺	-0.13***	-0.13***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Social conservative	0.06	0.24	-0.13	0.32
	(0.15)	(0.26)	(0.16)	(0.28)
Party ID (Lega Nord)	0.04	0.02	-0.68*	-0.66 ⁺
	(0.34)	(0.34)	(0.35)	(0.35)
Location (North-East)	0.42*	0.41 ⁺	-0.19	-0.20
	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.23)	(0.23)
Constant	0.19	0.14	1.01	0.91
	(0.58)	(0.59)	(0.62)	(0.62)
Observations	1,098	1,098	1,098	1,098
Log Likelihood	-726.28	-725.29	-635.82	-633.34
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,492.57	1,494.58	1,311.65	1,310.68

Note: +p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Summary of Models without Controls

	<i>Support for</i>					
	Redistribution		Low-Income Natives		Low-Income Immigrants	
	<i>Logistic</i>	<i>Ordered Logistic</i>	<i>Logistic</i>	<i>Ordered Logistic</i>	<i>Logistic</i>	<i>Ordered Logistic</i>
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Inequality Treat	0.44** (0.14)	0.28* (0.13)	0.29* (0.14)	0.23+ (0.13)	-0.06 (0.14)	-0.003 (0.12)
Poverty Treat	0.12 (0.14)	-0.04 (0.13)	0.10 (0.14)	0.05 (0.13)	0.09 (0.15)	0.04 (0.12)
Constant	-0.38*** (0.10)	--	-0.34*** (0.10)	--	0.63*** (0.10)	--
Observations	1,273	1,273	1,273	1,273	1,273	1,273
Log Likelihood	-871.15	--	-873.15	--	-819.53	--
Residual Dev.	--	3,368.341	--	3,209.667	--	3,855.724
AIC	1,748.31	3,380.341	1,752.30	3,221.667	1,645.06	3,867.724

Note: +p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Causal Mediation Analysis

Inequality, Lack of Opportunity, and Preferences for Redistribution: Summary of Results

		<i>Support for</i>	
	Redistribution	Low-income natives	Low-income immigrants
ACME (average)	0.0106* (0.0009, 0.0231)	0.0062* (0.00005, 0.0158)	-0.0103* (-0.0214, -0.0011)
ADE (average)	0.1239*** (0.0565, 0.1963)	0.0834* (0.0108, 0.1560)	-0.0041 (-0.0694, 0.0603)
Total Effect	0.1345*** (0.0652, 0.2049)	0.0896* (0.0153, 0.1630)	-0.0144 (-0.0799, 0.0514)

Estimates of the effect and 95% C.I. in parenthesis; White's heteroskedasticity-consistent estimator. For each of the three mediation analyses: Sample size: 1098; Simulations: 1000

The results show that the causal mediation (ACME) is consistently statistically significant at the .05 level in the three analyses. The average causal mechanism is positive for redistribution and low-income natives and negative for low-income immigrants. This indicates that the treatment (inequality) has a significant impact on the mediator (lack of meritocracy), which in turn has a significant and positive (for redistribution and natives) or negative (for immigrants) impact on support for welfare. The analysis also reveals that the average direct effect (ADE) and the total effect are positive and significant for support for redistribution and low-income natives, which confirms that inequality also produces a direct positive impact on support for these policies. On the other hand, the average direct effect and the total effect are not significant in regard to support for immigrants. This finding suggests that inequality does not have a direct negative impact but negatively affects support for immigrants via its effect on meritocracy (see Tingley et al. [n.d., 7] for interpretation of causal mediation analysis results when ACME is significant but

ADE and total effect are not.). The inequality treatment increased perceptions of lack of meritocracy, which in turn made respondents more likely to oppose support for low-income immigrants.

Full Results

For each of the three mediation analyses: Sample size: 1098; Simulations: 1000; White's heteroskedasticity-consistent estimator.

Support for redistribution

	Estimate	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI	p-value
ACME (control)	0.0105	0.0010	0.0229	0.03
ACME (treated)	0.0108	0.0009	0.0234	0.04
ADE (control)	0.1238	0.0566	0.1962	0.00
ADE (treated)	0.1241	0.0565	0.1971	0.00
Total Effect	0.1345	0.0652	0.2049	0.00
ACME (average)	0.0106	0.0009	0.0231	0.03
ADE (average)	0.1239	0.0565	0.1963	0.00

Support for low-income natives

	Estimate	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI	p-value
ACME (control)	0.0060	0.00005	0.0156	0.04
ACME (treated)	0.0063	0.00004	0.0160	0.04
ADE (control)	0.0833	0.0108	0.1560	0.02
ADE (treated)	0.0835	0.0109	0.1560	0.02
Total Effect	0.0896	0.0153	0.1630	0.02
ACME (average)	0.0062	0.00005	0.0158	0.04
ADE (average)	0.0834	0.0108	0.1560	0.02

Support for low-income immigrants

	Estimate	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI	p-value
ACME (control)	-0.0102	-0.0216	-0.0011	0.03
ACME (treated)	-0.0103	-0.0211	-0.0011	0.03
ADE (control)	-0.0041	-0.0691	0.0599	0.89
ADE (treated)	-0.0041	-0.0697	0.0606	0.89
Total Effect	-0.0144	-0.0799	0.0514	0.65
ACME (average)	-0.0103	-0.0214	-0.0011	0.03
ADE (average)	-0.0041	-0.0694	0.0603	0.65

Sensitivity Analysis for Causal Mediation Effects

As Imai, Keele and Tingley (2010) explain, for mediation effects to be interpreted as causal, the sequential ignorability assumption must be satisfied. The first part of the assumption requires the treatment to be independent of potential outcomes and potential mediators. This part of the assumption is satisfied in my study because survey respondents are randomly assigned to the inequality treatment and the control conditions. The second part of the assumption requires that the mediator is independent of the potential outcomes. This second part is not automatically satisfied, because the level of perceived meritocracy (i.e. the mediator) is not randomly assigned. This part of the assumption requires that the meritocracy mediator can be considered as if it were randomized among the survey respondents who were assigned to the same inequality treatment and who share the same pre-treatment characteristics (Imai, Keele and Tingley 2010, 313).

To address this point, the outcome model in my mediation analysis controls for the treatment status and for a set of covariates (see table 3 in the main paper). However, as in observational studies, even after collecting all the seemingly relevant covariates, one can never be fully certain that unobserved variables are not confounding the relationship between mediator and outcome. This assumption can never be directly tested from the observed data. What I can do is to run sensitivity analysis, which allows me to quantify the degree to which my empirical findings are robust to potential violation of the sequential ignorability assumption.

For each of the three mediations presented, the sensitivity analysis is based on the sensitivity parameter ρ , i.e. the correlation between the error terms of the outcome and the mediator models. Under sequential ignorability, ρ equals 0. The correlation measured by ρ differs from 0 when omitted variables affect both the mediator and the outcome variables. The analysis in my study reveals that when the value of ρ equals 0.1 (for redistribution and poor

natives) and -0.2 and -0.1 (for low-income immigrants), the confidence interval for ACME contains 0. As an alternative quantification, the ACME estimate would be 0 when the product of the original variance explained by the omitted confounders is 0.0077 in the case of support for redistribution; 0.0088 with regard to support for low-income citizens; and 0.0295 for support for low-income immigrants (see Tingley et al. 2014 for an interpretation of the results).

Additional Causal Mediation Analysis

Inequality, Lack of Opportunity, and Welfare Deservingness

I present here two additional causal mediation analyses to test more directly the impact of inequality on relative deservingness of natives vs. immigrants and the resulting impact on welfare chauvinism. This analysis confirms the conditioning role of national identity.

First additional causal mediation analysis

First, as already shown in the paper and reported in model A below, inequality strengthens the belief that society is not offering meritocratic opportunities.

This, in turn, variously shapes deservingness beliefs. On the one hand, it *strengthens* the opinion that low-income natives have received less than what they deserve (model B1). On the other, it *weakens* the belief that immigrants have received less than what they deserve (model B2). Consistently, the inequality-induced perceived lack of opportunities promotes the conviction that natives should receive priority over immigrants in welfare access (model B3).

Second additional causal mediation analysis

Second, inequality directly *positively* influences perceptions of poor deservingness (model C1) and *negatively* affects perceptions of immigrant deservingness (model C2).

Perceptions of group deservingness are then positively related to welfare support for the group under consideration (model D1 and D2).

Causal mediation analysis confirms that inequality shapes welfare support for natives and immigrants in a diametrically opposing way via these contrasting deservingness perceptions.

Impact of Inequality on Perceived Lack of Opportunity (Model A)

Impact of Lack of Opportunity on Perceptions of Deservingness (Models B1, B2 and B3)

(A: logit model, B: ordered logit models)

	<i>Beliefs that</i>			
	Society Lacks Meritocratic Opportunities	Poor are Undeserving	Immigrants are Undeserving	Natives Deserve Welfare Priority Over Immigrants
	(A)	(B1)	(B2)	(B3)
Inequality treatment	0.37* (0.15)	--	--	--
Poverty treatment	0.07 (0.15)	--	--	--
Lack meritocracy	--	-0.83*** (0.12)	0.50*** (0.12)	0.64*** (0.12)
Education	0.01 (0.06)	0.11+ (0.06)	-0.12+ (0.06)	-0.13* (0.06)
Age	-0.01 (0.005)	-0.02*** (0.005)	0.01** (0.004)	0.01* (0.005)
Female	0.17 (0.13)	-0.14 (0.12)	0.24* (0.12)	0.02 (0.12)
Economic right	-0.04 (0.03)	0.15*** (0.03)	0.15*** (0.03)	0.12*** (0.03)
Social conservative	-0.05+ (0.03)	-0.02 (0.03)	0.10*** (0.03)	0.11*** (0.03)
Income (household)	-0.001 (0.03)	0.07* (0.03)	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.04 (0.03)
Party ID (Lega Nord)	0.57+ (0.34)	-0.29 (0.34)	0.65+ (0.33)	0.82* (0.34)
Location (North-East)	0.16 (0.21)	-0.06 (0.19)	0.24 (0.19)	-0.01 (0.19)
Observations	1,098	1,098	1,098	1,098
Log Likelihood	-739.85	--	--	--
Residual Deviance	--	2,232.227	2,780.10	2,645.191
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,519.71	2,276.227	2,824.10	2,689.191

Note:

+p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Causal Mediation Analysis

Inequality, Lack of Opportunity, and Poor Undeservingness

	Estimate	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI	p-value
ACME	-0.0292	-0.0621	-0.0011	0.04
ADE	-0.1044	-0.2264	0.0155	0.10
Total Effect	-0.1336	-0.2590	-0.0065	0.04

Inequality, Lack of Opportunity, and Immigrant Undeservingness

	Estimate	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI	p-value
ACME	0.0186	0.0012	0.0433	0.04
ADE	0.0830	-0.0888	0.2464	0.34
Total Effect	0.1016	-0.0720	0.2631	0.25

Inequality, Lack of Opportunity, and Beliefs in Welfare Priority for Low-Income Natives over Low-Income Immigrants

	Estimate	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI	p-value
ACME (control)	0.0130	0.0003	0.0270	0.04
ACME (treated)	0.0131	0.0005	0.0270	0.04
ADE (control)	0.0197	-0.0495	0.0903	0.58
ADE (treated)	0.0198	-0.0495	0.0908	0.58
Total Effect	0.0328	-0.0390	0.1040	0.36
ACME (average)	0.0131	0.0004	0.0269	0.04
ADE (average)	0.0198	-0.0495	0.0905	0.58

Impact of Inequality on Perceptions of Deservingness (Models A) and Impact of Perceptions of Deservingness on Welfare Support for Natives and Immigrants (Models B)

(All models are ordered logit models)

	Belief that:		Support for:	
	Poor are Undeserving	Immigrants are Undeserving	Low-Income Natives	Low-Income Immigrants
	(C1)	(C2)	(D1)	(D2)
Inequality treatment	-0.47** (0.15)	0.26+ (0.14)	--	--
Poverty treatment	-0.14 (0.14)	0.16 (0.14)	--	--
Poor undeserving	--	--	-0.65*** (0.07)	--
Immigrants undeserving	--	--	--	-0.76*** (0.06)
Education	0.10 (0.06)	-0.11+ (0.06)	-0.08 (0.06)	0.07 (0.06)
Age	-0.02*** (0.005)	0.01* (0.004)	0.005 (0.005)	0.01 (0.004)
Female	-0.18 (0.12)	0.26* (0.12)	0.25* (0.12)	0.13 (0.11)
Income (household)	0.07* (0.03)	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.03)
Economic right	0.15*** (0.03)	0.15*** (0.03)	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.08** (0.03)
Social conservative	-0.01 (0.03)	0.09*** (0.03)	-0.01 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.03)
Party ID (Lega Nord)	-0.40 (0.33)	0.73* (0.33)	-0.01 (0.33)	-0.50 (0.32)
Location (North-East)	-0.07 (0.19)	0.24 (0.19)	-0.05 (0.19)	-0.20 (0.18)
Observations	1,098	1,098	1,098	1,098
Residual Deviance	2,268.222	2,795.566	2,629.522	2,973.716
AIC	2,314.222	2,841.566	2,673.522	3,017.716
<i>Note:</i>		+p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001		

Causal Mediation Analysis

Inequality, Poor Undeservingness, and Support for Low-Income Natives

	Estimate	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI	p-value
ACME (control)	0.0377	0.0127	0.0638	0.00
ACME (treated)	0.0388	0.0131	0.0648	0.00
ADE (control)	0.0525	-0.0116	0.1215	0.10
ADE (treated)	0.0535	-0.0121	0.1235	0.10
Total Effect	0.0913	0.0214	0.1627	0.01
ACME (average)	0.0383	0.0130	0.0642	0.00
ADE (average)	0.0530	-0.0118	0.1225	0.10

Inequality, Immigrant Undeservingness, and Support for Low-Income Immigrants

	Estimate	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI	p-value
ACME	-0.0297	-0.0634	-0.0003	0.049
ADE	0.0154	-0.0422	0.0718	0.61
Total Effect	-0.0143	-0.0805	0.0504	0.68

Additional Causal Mediation Analysis: Behavioral Effects of Inequality

Inequality, Lack of Opportunity, and Writing the Message

	Belief that Society Lacks Meritocratic Opportunity		Wrote the message	
	<i>OLS</i>	<i>Logistic</i>	<i>OLS</i>	<i>Logistic</i>
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Inequality treatment	0.09* (0.04)	0.37* (0.15)	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.14 (0.16)
Poverty treatment	0.02 (0.04)	0.07 (0.15)	-0.02 (0.04)	-0.08 (0.16)
Lack of opportunity	--	--	0.10*** (0.03)	0.46*** (0.13)
Education	0.005 (0.02)	0.02 (0.06)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.05 (0.07)
Age	-0.002 (0.001)	-0.01 (0.005)	0.01*** (0.001)	0.02*** (0.01)
Female	0.04 (0.03)	0.17 (0.13)	0.03 (0.03)	0.12 (0.13)
Income (household)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.05 (0.05)
Social conservative	-0.01+ (0.01)	-0.05+ (0.03)	0.001 (0.01)	0.01 (0.03)
Economic right	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.003 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.03)
Location (North-East)	0.04 (0.05)	0.17 (0.21)	0.03 (0.05)	0.12 (0.22)
Party ID (Lega Nord)	0.13 (0.08)	0.55 (0.34)	0.11 (0.08)	0.52 (0.38)
Constant	0.53*** (0.14)	0.13 (0.59)	0.13 (0.14)	-1.69** (0.63)
Observations	1,098	1,098	1,098	1,098
R ²	0.04		0.05	
Adjusted R ²	0.02		0.03	
Log Likelihood		-739.69		-692.98
Akaike Inf. Crit.		1,519.38		1,427.96
Residual Std. Error	0.49 (df = 1078)		0.47 (df = 1077)	
F Statistic	2.23** (df = 19; 1078)		2.92*** (df = 20; 1077)	

Note:

+p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Causal Mediation Analysis

Inequality, Lack of Opportunity, and Writing the Message: Logistic Models

	Estimate	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI	p-value
ACME (control)	0.0092	0.0005	0.02	0.04
ACME (treated)	0.0089	0.0005	0.02	0.04
ADE (control)	-0.0286	-0.0951	0.04	0.41
ADE (treated)	-0.0289	-0.0953	0.04	0.41
Total Effect	-0.0197	-0.0874	0.05	0.57
ACME (average)	0.0090	0.0005	0.02	0.04
ADE (average)	-0.0288	-0.0952	0.04	0.41

Inequality, Lack of Opportunity, and Writing the Message: OLS Models

	Estimate	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI	p-value
ACME	0.0091	0.0014	0.02	0.016
ADE	-0.0325	-0.1042	0.03	0.35
Total Effect	-0.0235	-0.0934	0.05	0.51

Analysis with Subsets of Respondents

Support for Redistribution (Ordered Logit)

	Support for redistribution	
	<i>Passed attention check</i>	<i>Eliminated 5% slowest and fastest</i>
	(1)	(2)
Inequality treatment	0.44** (0.16)	0.60*** (0.17)
Poverty treatment	-0.04 (0.16)	0.02 (0.17)
Education	-0.11 (0.07)	-0.06 (0.07)
Age	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 ⁺ (0.01)
Female	-0.29* (0.13)	-0.30* (0.14)
Income (household)	-0.07* (0.04)	-0.08* (0.04)
Economic right	-0.24*** (0.03)	-0.20*** (0.03)
Social conservative	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.05 ⁺ (0.03)
Party ID (Lega Nord)	0.25 (0.34)	0.74 ⁺ (0.43)
Location (North-East)	0.30 (0.21)	0.24 (0.23)
Observations	878	1,032
Residual variance	2104.718	1294.6
AIC	2150.718	1334.6
<i>Note:</i>	+p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001	

Support for Low-Income Natives and Low-Income Immigrants (Ordered Logit)

	<i>Passed attention check</i>				<i>Eliminated 5% slowest and fastest</i>			
	Support for							
	Low-Income Natives		Low-Income Immigrants		Low-Income Natives		Low-Income Immigrants	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Inequality treatment	0.38*	0.42*	0.003	0.23	0.25 ⁺	0.35*	-0.08	0.33
	(0.16)	(0.19)	(0.16)	(0.18)	(0.15)	(0.17)	(0.14)	(0.17)
InequalityTreat*Soc.Conserv	--	-0.18	--	-0.99**	--	-0.43	--	-0.85**
		(0.37)		(0.37)		(0.33)		(0.33)
Poverty treatment	0.14	0.27	0.01	0.13	0.06	0.28 ⁺	-0.16	-0.08
	(0.16)	(0.18)	(0.15)	(0.17)	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.14)	(0.16)
PovertyTreat*Soc.Conserv	--	-0.66 ⁺	--	-0.62	--	-0.99**	--	-0.34
		(0.39)		(0.39)		(0.35)		(0.34)
Education	-0.13 ⁺	-0.13 ⁺	0.12 ⁺	0.11 ⁺	-0.14*	-0.14*	0.11 ⁺	0.10 ⁺
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Age	0.003	0.003	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.0002	0.0001
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Female	0.24 ⁺	0.25 ⁺	0.12	0.14	0.21 ⁺	0.23 ⁺	0.10	0.1q
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Income (household)	-0.04	-0.04	0.01	0.01	-0.02	-0.02	0.001	0.001
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Economic right	-0.05	-0.05	-0.19***	-0.20***	-0.07*	-0.07*	-0.16***	-0.17***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Social conservative	0.06	0.32	-0.30 ⁺	0.27	0.07	0.38	-0.15	0.29
	(0.16)	(0.27)	(0.16)	(0.27)	(0.15)	(0.25)	(0.14)	(0.25)
Party ID (Lega Nord)	-0.11	-0.11	-0.57	-0.52	0.03	0.04	-0.77*	-0.72*
	(0.36)	(0.36)	(0.36)	(0.36)	(0.36)	(0.36)	(0.34)	(0.34)
Location (North-East)	0.07	0.08	-0.29	-0.28	-0.03	-0.02	-0.22	-0.22
	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.19)
Observations	878	878	878	878	1,032	1,032	1,032	1,032
Residual variance	2,038	2,035	2,456	2,449	2,478	2,470	2,952	2,945
AIC	2,084	2,085	2,502	2,499	2,524	2,520	2,998	2,995

Note:

+p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

APPENDIX 2: IMMIGRANTS, HARD WORK, AND PUBLIC OPINION ON WELFARE

Figure A.2.1 – Baseline results: choice-based question

Analysis based on the conjoint choice question: “Which of the two unemployed individuals is more deserving of receiving unemployment benefits?”

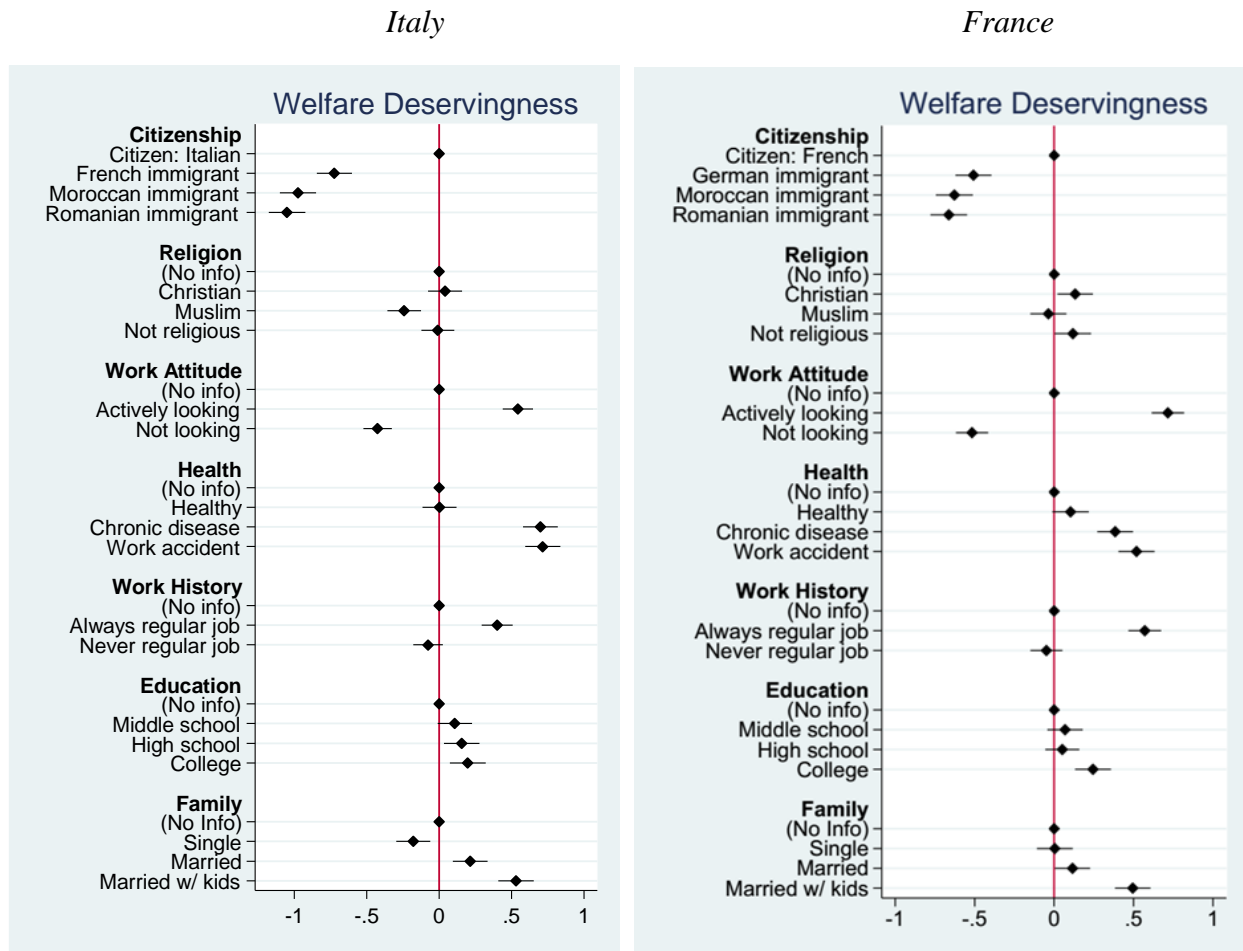


Figure A.2.2 – Results eliminating the “No info” component

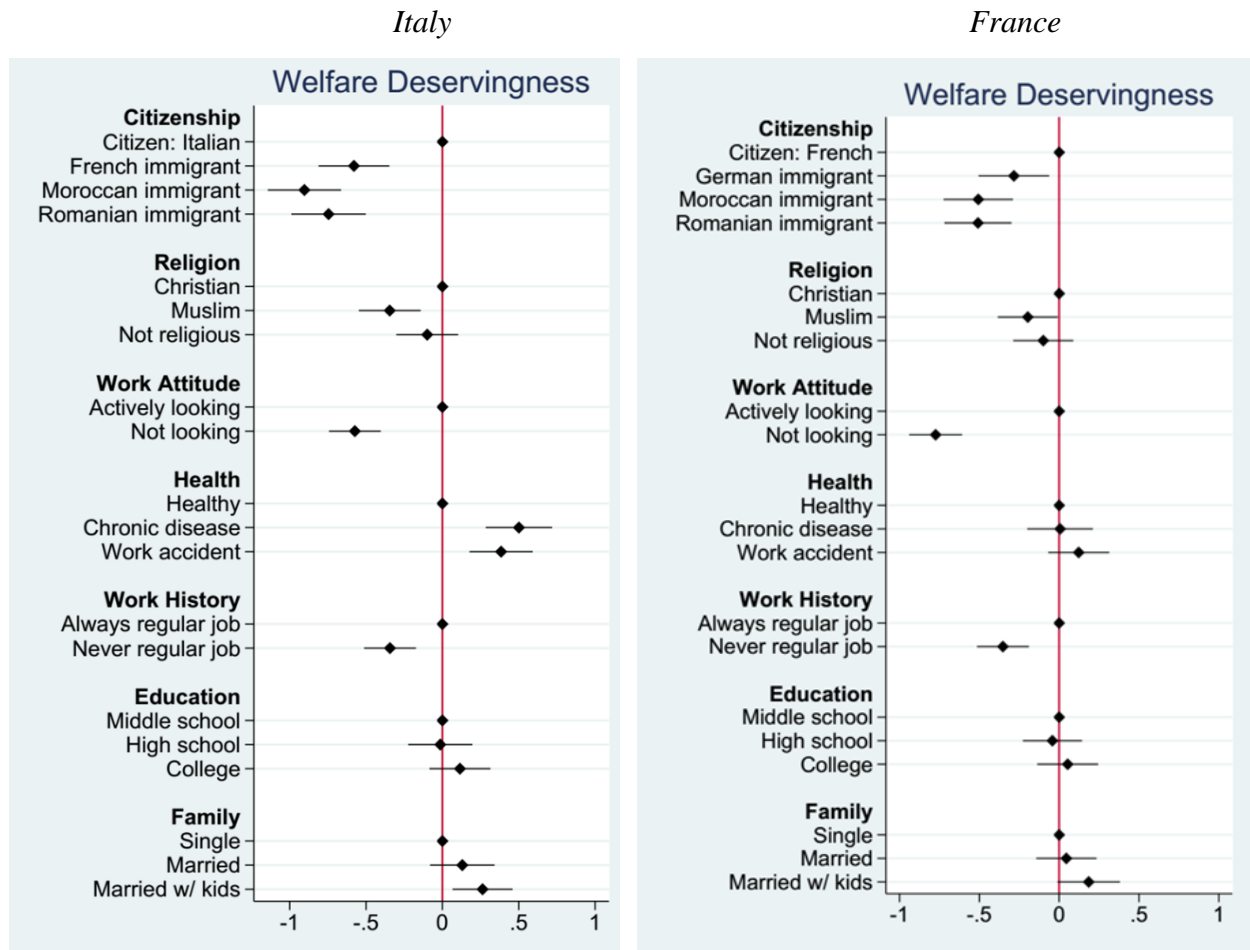
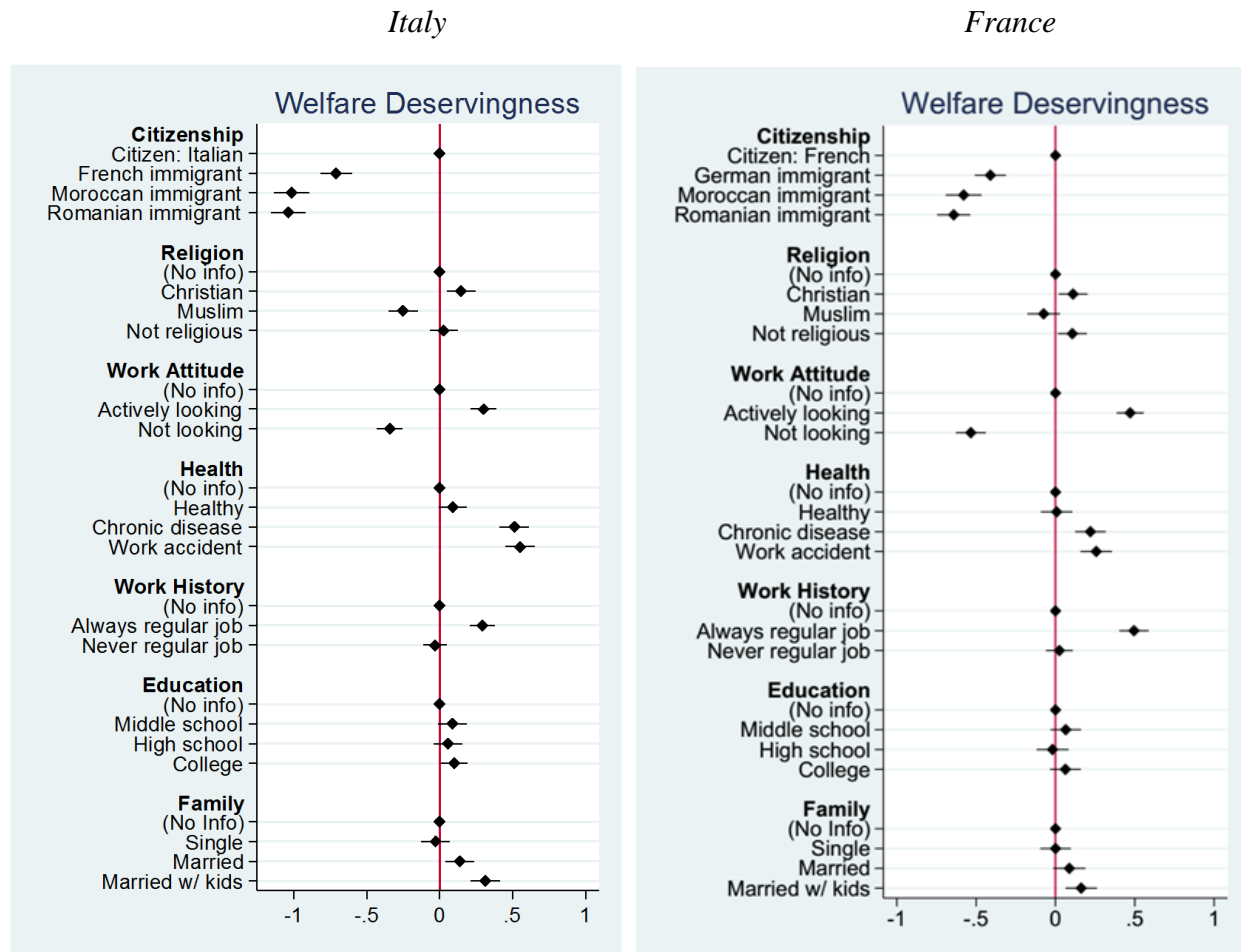


Figure A.2.3 – Baseline results for respondents who passed the attention check



Note: Italy: N= 8,125; France: N = 8,205

Table A.2.1 – Italy: rating-based analysis with interaction between citizenship and work attitude (1), work history (2) and health (3)

	<i>Welfare Deservingness (Rating)</i>		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Family: Single	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.04)	-0.03 (0.04)
Family: Married	0.10* (0.05)	0.10* (0.05)	0.10* (0.05)
Family: Married with Kids	0.26*** (0.04)	0.26*** (0.04)	0.26*** (0.04)
Citizenship: French Immigrant	-0.74*** (0.08)	-0.74*** (0.08)	-0.69*** (0.09)
Citizenship: Moroccan Immigrant	-0.87*** (0.08)	-0.87*** (0.08)	-0.96*** (0.09)
Citizenship: Romanian Immigrant	-1.02*** (0.08)	-0.90*** (0.08)	-0.98*** (0.09)
Religion: Christian	0.12** (0.05)	0.12** (0.05)	0.12** (0.05)
Religion: Muslim	-0.22*** (0.04)	-0.22*** (0.04)	-0.22*** (0.04)
Religion: Not Religious	0.03 (0.04)	0.02 (0.04)	0.03 (0.05)
Work Attitude: Actively Looking	0.33*** (0.08)	0.27*** (0.04)	0.27*** (0.04)
Work Attitude: Not Looking	-0.45*** (0.08)	-0.31*** (0.04)	-0.31*** (0.04)
Health: Fit and Healthy	0.05 (0.05)	0.05 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.09)
Health: Chronic Disease	0.43*** (0.04)	0.43*** (0.04)	0.43*** (0.09)
Health: Work Accident	0.47*** (0.04)	0.47*** (0.04)	0.42*** (0.09)
Work History: Always Regular Job	0.28*** (0.04)	0.22** (0.08)	0.28*** (0.04)
Work History: Never Regular Job	-0.03 (0.04)	0.02 (0.08)	-0.03 (0.04)

Education: Middle School	0.07 (0.05)	0.07 (0.05)	0.08 (0.05)
Education: High School	0.02 (0.05)	0.02 (0.05)	0.02 (0.05)
Education: College	0.06 (0.05)	0.06 (0.05)	0.06 (0.05)
Citizenship: French Immigrant * Work Attitude: Actively Looking	-0.002 (0.11)		
Citizenship: Moroccan Immigrant * Work Attitude: Actively Looking	-0.17 (0.11)		
Citizenship: Romanian Immigrant * Work Attitude: Actively Looking	-0.04 (0.11)		
Citizenship: French Immigrant * Work Attitude: Not Looking	0.31** (0.11)		
Citizenship: Moroccan Immigrant * Work Attitude: Not Looking	0.04 (0.11)		
Citizenship: Romanian immigrant * Work Attitude: Not Looking	0.23* (0.11)		
Citizenship: French Immigrant * Work History: Always Regular Job		0.17 (0.11)	
Citizenship: Moroccan immigrant * Work History: Always Regular Job		0.05 (0.11)	
Citizenship: Romanian Immigrant * Work History: Always Regular Job		0.02 (0.11)	
Citizenship: French Immigrant * Work History: Never Regular Job		0.14 (0.11)	
Citizenship: Moroccan Immigrant * Work History: Never Regular Job		-0.18 (0.11)	

Citizenship: Romanian immigrant *		-0.18	
Work History: Never Regular Job		(0.11)	
Citizenship: French Immigrant *			0.10
Health: Fit and Healthy			(0.13)
Citizenship: Moroccan Immigrant *			0.15
Health: Fit and Healthy			(0.13)
Citizenship: Romanian Immigrant *			0.06
Health: Fit and Healthy			(0.13)
Citizenship: French Immigrant *			0.0005
Health: Chronic Disease			(0.13)
Citizenship: Moroccan Immigrant *			-0.05
Health: Chronic Disease			(0.13)
Citizenship: Romanian Immigrant *			0.04
Health: Chronic Disease			(0.13)
Citizenship: French immigrant *			0.11
Health: Work Accident			(0.13)
Citizenship: Moroccan Immigrant *			0.08
Health: Work Accident			(0.13)
Citizenship: Romanian immigrant *			-0.002
Health: Work Accident			(0.13)
Constant	4.36*** (0.08)	4.32*** (0.08)	4.35*** (0.08)
Observations	10,157	10,157	10,157
R ²	0.11	0.11	0.10
Adjusted R ²	0.10	0.10	0.10
Residual Std. Error	1.60 (df = 10131)	1.60 (df = 10131)	1.60 (df = 10128)
F Statistic	47.67*** (df = 25; 10131)	47.61*** (df = 25; 10131)	42.12*** (df = 28; 10128)
<i>Note:</i>		*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001	

Table A.2.2 – France: rating-based analysis with interaction between citizenship and work attitude (1), work history (2) and health (3)

	<i>Welfare Deservingness (Rating)</i>		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Family: Single	0.03 (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)
Family: Married	0.09* (0.04)	0.09* (0.04)	0.09* (0.04)
Family: Married with Kids	0.14** (0.04)	0.14** (0.04)	0.14** (0.04)
Citizenship: German Immigrant	-0.36*** (0.07)	-0.26*** (0.07)	-0.34*** (0.08)
Citizenship: Moroccan Immigrant	-0.61*** (0.07)	-0.47*** (0.07)	-0.48*** (0.08)
Citizenship: Romanian Immigrant	-0.66*** (0.07)	-0.59*** (0.07)	-0.57*** (0.09)
Religion: Christian	0.11** (0.04)	0.11** (0.04)	0.11** (0.04)
Religion: Muslim	-0.06 (0.04)	-0.06 (0.04)	-0.06 (0.04)
Religion: Not Religious	0.10* (0.04)	0.10* (0.04)	0.10* (0.04)
Work Attitude: Actively Looking	0.35*** (0.07)	0.41*** (0.04)	0.41*** (0.04)
Work Attitude: Not Looking	-0.57*** (0.07)	-0.44*** (0.04)	-0.44*** (0.04)
Health: Fit and Healthy	0.01 (0.04)	0.01 (0.04)	-0.05 (0.08)
Health: Chronic Disease	0.17*** (0.04)	0.17*** (0.04)	0.19* (0.08)
Health: Work Accident	0.19*** (0.04)	0.19*** (0.04)	0.22** (0.08)
Work History: Always Regular Job	0.39*** (0.04)	0.44*** (0.07)	0.40*** (0.04)
Work History: Never Regular Job	-0.02 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.07)	-0.02 (0.04)

Education: Middle School	0.02 (0.04)	0.02 (0.04)	0.02 (0.04)
Education: High School	-0.05 (0.04)	-0.04 (0.04)	-0.04 (0.04)
Education: College	0.03 (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)
Citizenship: German Immigrant * Work Attitude: Actively Looking	0.06 (0.10)		
Citizenship: Moroccan Immigrant * Work Attitude: Actively Looking	0.12 (0.10)		
Citizenship: Romanian Immigrant * Work Attitude: Actively Looking	0.09 (0.10)		
Citizenship: German Immigrant * Work Attitude: Not Looking	0.02 (0.10)		
Citizenship: Moroccan Immigrant * Work Attitude: Not Looking	0.24* (0.10)		
Citizenship: Romanian immigrant * Work Attitude: Not Looking	0.24* (0.10)		
Citizenship: German Immigrant * Work History: Always Regular Job		-0.11 (0.10)	
Citizenship: Moroccan immigrant * Work History: Always Regular Job		-0.06 (0.10)	
Citizenship: Romanian Immigrant * Work History: Always Regular Job		0.01 (0.10)	
Citizenship: German Immigrant * Work History: Never Regular Job		-0.13 (0.10)	
Citizenship: Moroccan Immigrant * Work History: Never Regular Job		-0.002 (0.10)	

Citizenship: Romanian immigrant *		0.10	
Work History: Never Regular Job		(0.10)	
Citizenship: German Immigrant *			0.02
Health: Fit and Healthy			(0.12)
Citizenship: Moroccan Immigrant *			0.11
Health: Fit and Healthy			(0.12)
Citizenship: Romanian Immigrant *			0.11
Health: Fit and Healthy			(0.12)
Citizenship: German Immigrant *			0.06
Health: Chronic Disease			(0.12)
Citizenship: Moroccan Immigrant *			-0.08
Health: Chronic Disease			(0.12)
Citizenship: Romanian Immigrant *			-0.06
Health: Chronic Disease			(0.12)
Citizenship: German immigrant *			-0.07
Health: Work Accident			(0.12)
Citizenship: Moroccan Immigrant *			-0.08
Health: Work Accident			(0.12)
Citizenship: Romanian immigrant *			0.02
Health: Work Accident			(0.12)
Constant	4.40*** (0.08)	4.31*** (0.08)	4.33*** (0.08)
Observations	11,204	11,204	11,204
R ²	0.08	0.08	0.08
Adjusted R ²	0.08	0.08	0.08
Residual Std. Error	1.58 (df = 11178)	1.58 (df = 11178)	1.58 (df = 11175)
F Statistic	40.04*** (df = 25; 11178)	39.80*** (df = 25; 11178)	35.62*** (df = 28; 11175)

Note:

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Surveys and Data Collection

The surveys were distributed by the survey platform company Cint (<https://www.cint.com/>).

Data for the Italian web-based survey were collected on December 13, 14 and 15, 2016. Data for the French web-based survey on February 28 and March 1 and 2, 2018. The experiments were registered with Evidence in Governance and Politics (<http://egap.org/>) before data collection.

Both surveys are based on nationally representative samples of the population of Italian residents and French residents, respectively, according to census data for gender, age, and location of residence.

In Italy, the survey value for income also closely resembles the national average value. The average household income in Italy in 2015 was 23,443 € and the average household income among survey respondents is 6.89 (where category 6 equals 20,000-25,000 €).

In France, the survey value for income is just slightly lower than the national average value. The average household income in France in 2017 was 26,659 € and the average household income among survey respondents is 6.81 (where category 6 equals 20,000-25,000 €).

Before running the survey experiment, I conducted two pilot studies. I ran the first pilot study on Amazon MTurk in August 2016 with 200 American respondents. The second pilot study was run in November 2016 with a nationally representative sample of 120 Italian respondents and was administered by the survey company Cint.

Figure A.2.4 – Election campaign posters described in the introduction



United States – The welfare queen



Austria – FPÖ party
“Our money for our people!”



Italy – Lega Nord
“Guess who is last? For the right to social housing, work, and healthcare”

APPENDIX 3: ECONOMIC UNFAIRNESS, EDUCATION, AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Table A.3.1 – Descriptive statistics of the control variables

<i>Variable Label</i>	<i>Variable Description</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean or Proportion of yes</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>Min - Max</i>
<i>Income</i>	Net household monthly income	1571	6.35	2.28	1 – 13
<i>Educati</i>	Level of education (categorical)	1571	3.00	1.11	1 – 5
<i>Male</i>	Gender of respondent	1571	0.49	0.50	0 – 1
<i>Age</i>	Age of respondent	1571	56.8	17.8	16 – 95
<i>Club</i>	Sports or hobby club membership	1571	0.33	0.47	0 – 1
<i>Church</i>	Church attendance (days)	1571	2.30	1.43	0 – 7
<i>Union</i>	Trade union membership	1571	0.13	0.33	0 – 1
<i>Contact</i>	Party contacts during campaign	1571	0.17	0.44	0 – 4
<i>Inteffic</i>	Perception – political issue diffic.	1571	3.04	1.18	1 – 5
<i>Citizen</i>	German citizenship from birth	1571	0.94	0.25	0 – 1
<i>Interest</i>	General interest in politics	1571	2.84	0.97	1 – 5
<i>Polknowl</i>	Level of political knowledge	1571	3.21	1.00	0 – 4
<i>Unmplyrs</i>	Years of unemployment	1571	0.24	1.03	0 – 10
<i>Subjclas</i>	Subjective perception of class	1571	3.04	1.02	1 – 6

*The number of observations is the same for each variable because it refers to the number of observations employed by the analysis (i.e. units with no missing data)

Table A.3.2 – Economic unfairness and political participation: structural model results with standardized coefficients

	Cheap Conventional Participation	Costly Conventional Participation	Unconventional Participation
Economic unfairness	-0.153*** (0.025)	-0.189*** (0.041)	0.123* (0.058)
Income	0.007 (0.027)	-0.039 (0.050)	-0.003 (0.070)
Education	0.076** (0.028)	0.085 (0.044)	0.197** (0.075)
Male	0.013 (0.024)	0.087 (0.046)	-0.014 (0.063)
Age	0.131*** (0.025)	-0.052 (0.047)	-0.221** (0.071)
Club/sport membership	0.062** (0.023)	0.053 (0.039)	0.086 (0.058)
Church attendance	0.017 (0.023)	0.048 (0.044)	0.107 (0.058)
Union membership	0.006 (0.021)	0.066 (0.037)	0.085 (0.054)
Party contact	0.064** (0.022)	0.285*** (0.030)	0.139** (0.044)
Internal efficacy	0.012 (0.026)	0.082 (0.044)	-0.014 (0.072)
Citizenship from birth	0.061* (0.025)	-0.011 (0.046)	0.075 (0.084)
Interest in politics	0.638*** (0.025)	0.334*** (0.049)	0.363*** (0.078)
Political knowledge	0.137*** (0.025)	0.050 (0.054)	-0.063 (0.088)
Unemployment (years)	-0.016 (0.022)	0.024 (0.041)	-0.027 (0.115)
Subjective class	0.012 (0.030)	-0.065 (0.052)	-0.085 (0.099)

Sensitivity Analysis

In order to assess the sensitivity of the results to model specification, several alternatives are also tested.⁴ Fit statistics and coefficient estimates for the alternative models reveal that the findings reported above – in terms of global fit and impact of economic unfairness on participation – remain consistent across different specifications. Two models adopt different indicators for the latent variable cheap conventional participation. In the first model, the indicator “newsinfo” is substituted with a variable measuring how often the respondent discussed politics with family members, friends or colleagues. Indeed, talking about politics can be seen as a form of political engagement, which is usually not too demanding in terms of resources when done with friends or acquaintances. Using talking about politics instead of “newsinfo” does not produce substantial changes in global fit or in the effect of economic unfairness on participation.⁵

The second model replaces the indicator “newsinfo” with a variable measuring general interest in politics. In the main model presented above, and following the literature on participation, general interest in politics was introduced as a control variable, rather than an indicator of cheap conventional participation. Indeed, it is logical to assume that individual general interest in politics comes before and affects political behavior. However, since sometimes respondents provide similar answers to survey items aiming to capture general interest in politics and attention paid to the specific campaign – which, in the main model above,

⁴ The full model specifications are available upon request. Below I report the global fit statistics and the coefficients of the latent variables.

⁵ If anything, consistently with my second hypothesis, the difference in the magnitude of the impact of economic unfairness on cheap and costly forms of conventional participation slightly increases. Furthermore, while the R-squared of the latent variable “cheap conventional participation” slightly increases (from .71 to .74), the amount of variance in the indicator “talking about politics” predicted by the factor on which it loads is smaller than the R-squared of “newsinfo” (.28 vs. .31).

is an indicator of cheap conventional participation – I checked the robustness of the findings to a specification considering both interest and attention as indicators of cheap participation. Even in this case, results remain largely unchanged.⁶

Additional alternative specifications consider a different set of control variables. A model adds individual reported turnout at the previous federal election as an additional covariate. Previous work has suggested that voting may be habit forming and that casting a ballot at one election increases the likelihood to vote at the following ones (e.g. Gerber et al. 2003). No substantial differences arise in terms of global fit and impact of economic unfairness on participation. Moreover, as suggested by the literature, previous reported turnout emerges as a strong predictor of cheap conventional participation, while its effect on more costly or unconventional forms is not significant.

Three additional models introduce alternative operationalization of partisan identification. In the first model, partisan identification is operationalized through a yes or no question; the second model aims to capture the strength of party identification and considers how close an individual feels to a political party; the third model combines these two questions to build a variable measuring strength of party identification on a scale from 0 to 3.⁷ None of these models leads to substantially different results in terms of global fit, impact of economic unfairness on participation, and amount of explained variance in the participation latent

⁶ In this second alternative specification, consistently with my second hypothesis, the difference in the magnitude of the coefficients for cheap and costly conventional participation increases. The R-squared of the indicator “interest” is substantially higher than the R-squared for “newsinfo” (.75 vs. .31), but the R-squared for the latent variable cheap participation is considerably lower (.485 vs. .71).

⁷ Respondents who did not identify with any party are assigned 0, while respondents who felt not very close, somewhat close, and very close to a party were assigned 1, 2 and 3, respectively. This operationalization allows me to retain all of the observations in the dataset.

variables. The variables measuring party identification present mixed results in terms of significance depending on the operationalization adopted.

Finally, a last model considers only a few basic controls, which include gender, age, income, education, political interest and political knowledge. Despite the very limited set of controls, the coefficient estimates of the effect of economic unfairness on participation are still significant and go in the expected directions. This suggests that the results presented above are not due to overfitting. Interestingly, while many of the variables that are significant in the basic model lose their significance when additional controls are added, economic unfairness remains significant. This finding supports the claim that economic unfairness produces a real and meaningful impact, and is not just capturing the effect of omitted variables.

Table A.3.4 – Economic unfairness and political participation: Sensitivity analysis

<i>Model 1: Talking about politics as indicator of cheap conventional participation</i>			
Chi-Square (df) p-value	CFI	TLI	1-RMSEA (90% C.I.)
180.004 (113) 0.0001	0.978	0.964	0.981 (0.975, 0.986)
	Cheap Conventional Participation	Costly Conventional Participation	Unconventional Participation
Economic unfairness	-0.114*** (0.025)	-0.175*** (0.043)	0.132* (0.061)
<i>Model 2: Interest in politics as indicator of cheap conventional participation</i>			
Chi-Square (df) p-value	CFI	TLI	1-RMSEA (90% C.I.)
194.742 (107) 0.000	0.979	0.966	0.977 (0.972, 0.982)
	Cheap Conventional Participation	Costly Conventional Participation	Unconventional Participation
Economic unfairness	-0.108*** (0.024)	-0.176*** (0.043)	0.111 ⁺ (0.057)

Model 3: Reported turnout in 2009 (vote2009) as additional covariate

Chi-Square (df) p-value	CFI	TLI	1-RMSEA (90% C.I.)
210.854 (119) 0.000	0.967	0.945	0.977 (0.972,0.982)
	Cheap Conventional Participation	Costly Conventional Participation	Unconventional Participation
Economic unfairness	-0.139*** (0.029)	-0.180*** (0.045)	0.140* (0.061)

Model 4: Partisan identification as additional covariate (yes or no)

Chi-Square (df) p-value	CFI	TLI	1-RMSEA (90% C.I.)
209.620 (119) 0.000	0.969	0.949	0.978 (0.973, 0.983)
	Cheap Conventional Participation	Costly Conventional Participation	Unconventional Participation
Economic unfairness	-0.124*** (0.026)	-0.163*** (0.045)	0.144* (0.021)

Model 5: Strength of partisan identification as additional covariate (only for those who identify as partisan)

Chi-Square (df) p-value	CFI	TLI	1-RMSEA (90% C.I.)
181.300 (119) 0.0002	0.965	0.943	0.977 (0.971, 0.984)
	Cheap Conventional Participation	Costly Conventional Participation	Unconventional Participation
Economic unfairness	-0.079** (0.027)	-0.145** (0.051)	0.235** (0.080)

Model 6: Strength of partisan identification as additional covariate (coded as 0 for those who do not identify as partisan)

Chi-Square (df) p-value	CFI	TLI	1-RMSEA (90% C.I.)
216.828 (119) 0.000	0.966	0.945	0.977 (0.972, 0.982)
	Cheap Conventional Participation	Costly Conventional Participation	Unconventional Participation
Economic unfairness	-0.122*** (0.027)	-0.135** (0.044)	0.172** (0.062)

Model 7: Model with only basic controls

Chi-Square (df) p-value	CFI	TLI	1-RMSEA (90% C.I.)
124.156 (65) 0.000	0.984	0.974	0.976 (0.970, 0.983)
	Cheap Conventional Participation	Costly Conventional Participation	Unconventional Participation
Economic unfairness	-0.137*** (0.027)	-0.144** (0.043)	0.143* (0.061)

List of Survey Questions from Which the Variables Were Derived

Reported voter turnout: “Many voters didn’t get around to voting or did not participate in the federal election on 22 September for other reasons. What about you? Did you vote or not?”

Attention to election campaign: “How closely did you follow the election campaign of the federal election?” and measured by a 4-point rating scale ranging from “not closely at all” to “very closely.”

Seeking information about political parties: “And now some questions about the federal election campaign 2013 and the activities of parties and candidates. Please don’t take into account other elections that have taken place this year. Did you read election advertisements of parties in newspapers or magazines?”

Supporting election campaign: “If you think back over the last twelve months, did you do any of the following to exercise political influence and to assert your point of view? Support the election campaign of a political party.”

Visiting election stands and attending party rallies: “And now some questions about the federal election campaign 2013 and the activities of parties and candidates. Please don’t take into account other elections that have taken place this year: (1) Have you visited one or more election stands here in town? (2) Have you attended election meetings or rallies of political parties?”

Joining a demonstration and participating in a community action group: “If you think back over the last twelve months, did you do any of the following to exercise political influence and to assert your point of view? (1) Take part in a demonstration; (2) Take part in a community action group.”

Society macrojustice and justice development: (1) “If you think about the state of society in Germany - how just or unjust is it all in all?” (2) “And how has the society developed in Germany in recent years? Has the society become much more just, a little more just, stayed the same, a little more unjust or much more unjust?” Both items were measured by a 5-point rating scale ranging from “very just” to “very unjust” and from “much more just” to “much more unjust.”

Internal political efficacy is operationalized by the respondent’s agreement with the item: “I often find political issues difficult to understand.” Answers are measured by a 5-point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Social class perception: “There is a lot of talk about social class these days. Which of these social classes do you consider you belong to? Please name the appropriate number from this list.” The respondent could choose from: under class, working class, lower middle class, middle middle class, upper middle class, upper class.

Political knowledge: I built the variable from the following four questions: (1) “Which of these persons was the Finance Minister before the recent election - Rainer Bruederle, Thomas de Maizière, Wolfgang Schaeuble oder Dirk Niebel?” (2) “Which party came in second in seats in the federal election - FDP, GRUENE, SPD or CDU?” (3) “In the federal election, you have two votes: the first vote and the second vote. Which one of the two is decisive for the relative strengths of the parties in the Bundestag?” (4) “Now I would like to know: What is the percentage of the second votes a party needs to be able to definitely send delegates to the Bundestag?” For each question, the respondent was assigned 1 for the correct answer and 0 otherwise. The variable political knowledge, therefore, ranges from 0 to 4.

Party contact: I built the variable from the following four items: “And now some questions about the federal election campaign 2013 and the activities of parties and candidates. Please don’t take into account other elections that have taken place this year. (1) Did you receive E-Mails or SMS from political parties? (2) Have you been approached directly by a person, e.g. on the road or at your front door? (3) Have you been contacted by phone? (4) Have you been contacted via social networks on the internet, such as Facebook?” For each question, the respondent was assigned 1 in case of positive answer and 0 for negative answer. Therefore, the variable contact ranges from 0 to 4.

Political discussion: “On how many days over the last week have you talked about political parties and politics in general with other people, e.g. members of the family, friends or work colleagues?” Answers were measured by an 8-point scale ranging from not at all to 7 days.

General interest in politics: “In general terms: How interested in politics are you? Very interested, fairly interested, moderately, not very interested or not interested at all?”

Reported turnout at the previous election: “At the last federal election on 27 September 2009 many people didn’t get around to voting or didn’t take part in the election for other reasons. What about you? Did you vote?”

Party identification: “Do you feel yourself a little closer to one of the political parties than the others?”

Strength of party identification: “Do you feel very close to this party, somewhat close, or not very close?” Given that the question was asked only to respondents who answered positively to the question whether they identify with a political party, the number of observations drops substantially (more than 500 observations are lost).

Representation by parties: “Would you say that any of the parties in Germany represent your views reasonably well?”

Representation by leaders: “Regardless of how you feel about the parties, would you say that any of the individual party leader at the federal election 2013 represents your views reasonably well?”

Satisfaction with range of party positions: “On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the range of political positions and proposals presented by political parties during the election?”

Difference among elected parties and leaders: “Some people say that it doesn't make any difference who is in power. Others say that it makes a big difference who is in power. Using the scale on this card, (where ONE means that it doesn't make any difference who is in power and FIVE means that it makes a big difference who is in power), where would you place yourself? ”

Voting as a civic duty: “Please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements. [...] In a democracy it is the duty of all citizens to vote regularly in elections.”