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The political economy of immigration and welfare state reform: a collection of comparative political and economic essays on human mobility and social protection

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In many advanced economies, immigration has become a defining characteristic of open, interconnected, and interdependent economies. Nowhere is this more evident than in the European Union (EU), where the process of widening and deepening integration has established a distinctive framework for fostering intra-European mobility. This dissertation examines how increasing immigration structurally and conceptually challenges the boundaries of European welfare states.

Using insights from political economy and social psychology, and using new indicators of intra-EU labour mobility, the research analyses how different forms of immigration affect both public support for redistribution and welfare state effort. The findings show that increased immigration does not systematically erode welfare generosity; in some cases, it is associated with increased welfare state effort, suggesting welfare state resilience.

The dissertation calls for more nuanced data, greater disaggregation of immigration, and attention to political and economic mediators such as job insecurity, unemployment, and social program design. It contests the assumption that immigration inevitably leads to welfare state retrenchment, showing instead that welfare state responses may vary depending on the type of migration, economic context, and public attitudes.

This is a volume in the series of the Meijers Research Institute and Graduate School of the Leiden Law School of Leiden University. This study is part of the Law School's research programme 'Reform of Social Legislation'.

The Political Economy of Immigration and Welfare State Reform

A collection of comparative political and economic essays on human mobility and social protection

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