

MIGRATION AND WELFARE IN THE NEW EUROPE

Social protection and the challenges of integration

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First published in Great Britain in 2011 by

The Policy Press
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www.policypress.co.uk

North American office:

The Policy Press

c/o International Specialized Books Services (ISBS)

920 NE 58th Avenue, Suite 300

Portland, OR 97213-3786, USA

t:+1 503 287 3093

f:+1 503 280 8832

e-mail info@isbs.com

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A catalog record for this book has been requested.

ISBN 978 1 84742 644 4 hardcover

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Cover design by The Policy Press Front cover: image kindly supplied by Flavio Takemoto

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Hobbs, Southampton

The Policy Press uses environmentally responsible print partners



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Local immigrant communities, welfare and culture: an integration/segregation dilemma

Siniša Zrinščak

Introduction¹

The role of social networks in the life of immigrants has been a highly debated topic highlighting the importance of cultural and social capital, both for migration as well as for the social orientation and integration of immigrants in the countries of destination (Castles and Miller, 2009, pp 27-30). More recently, the concept of transnationalism has come to the attention of the international academic community, highlighting the global character of migration movements and of their social networks. In this context, transnationalism requires the development of new ways of studying the integration of immigrants (Faist, 2000; Kivisto, 2003; Castles and Miller, 2009). Not denying the important role of global migrant networks for the integration of immigrant this chapter concentrates only on local immigrant communities and their role in the life of immigrants. Furthermore, its aim is not simply to emphasise the importance as well as the ambiguities of the role played by local immigrant communities, but also to build a bridge between the study of welfare rights of immigrants and a broader investigation of the impact of rising ethnic (and religious) diversity in contemporary welfare state development. Generally speaking, there are two ways of studying the social position of immigrants. The first is based on an approach that looks at differences of social or welfare status of immigrants in comparison to non-migrants, such as in the fields of unemployment, poverty or different benefit recipients (Hatton and Williamson, 2005; OECD, 2007; Castles and Miller, 2009; Koopmans, 2010). An extension of this approach concerns the question of the general social features that influence differences, and more specifically the impact of welfare state models. The most interesting point to note in this respect is the existence of intra-regime variations (see Morissens and Sainsbury, 2005; Banting and Kymlicka, 2006). The second approach is more focused on the issue of increasing diversity, multiculturalism and the welfare state. The crucial question here concerns the possible trade-off between diversity and solidarity (see, for example, Taylor-Gooby, 2005; Banting and Kymlicka, 2006) This is part of a more general discussion of how to deal with

ethnic, religious and cultural differences in contemporary European societies, and the ways in which immigration and integration policies are formulated.

Based on a literature review on immigrants, the welfare state and multiculturalism, and on the findings of the comparative research project 'Welfare and Values in Europe: Transitions related to religion, minorities, and gender' (WAVE), this chapter investigates the significance of local immigrant social networks (family, ethnic and religious organisations), drawing attention to their indispensable role not only in the more general social orientation of immigrants, but also in articulating and realising their welfare needs. Such a role in social integration and orientation emphasises the importance of cultural elements (such as religion, language, symbols, food, clothing and so on) in promoting the welfare rights of immigrants. As a result, this chapter confirms that immigrant social networks can also play an important role in the study of the welfare state and immigrants. The question of the integration of immigrants represents not only a question of the relationship between diversity and solidarity, but of the possibility of welfare state models to capture the different needs of minority populations.

The chapter is divided into six parts. This introductory section is followed by a theoretical discussion relevant for the study of the integration strategies of local immigrant communities. The third section provides basic information about the WAVE research project which constituted an empirical base for the chapter. Empirical findings are elaborated in two further sections, one of which deals with the role of immigrant social networks, while the other one interprets empirical findings about the role of social networks in the light of welfare state models. The conclusion summarises the main findings of the chapter.

Theoretical insights

As underlined in the introduction to this chapter, a common approach in social policy is to explore how different welfare states deal with the welfare needs of immigrants, as unemployment rates or social exclusion tend, for example, to be higher among the minority population. Despite the existence of differences among countries (in Australia and in the USA, immigrants are for instance, better integrated in the labour market), high unemployment and low activity rates are prominent almost everywhere, revealing the disadvantaged position of immigrants in respect of country nationals (Castles and Miller, 2009, p 243). The situation improves, however, among the second generation of immigrants, although with large variations within the ethnic groups and the destination countries taken into account (for example, for the case of Germany, see Chapter Seven, this volume). With respect to gender, women also often have a more disadvantaged position. Of particular interest here is rising labour market segmentation, as according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), migrants are more likely to be employed in temporary jobs than non-migrants in almost all (although there are some exceptions) European immigration countries (Castles and Miller, 2009, p 235). Do differences among countries depend on specific welfare

state characteristics or other social features? Morissens and Sainsbury (2005) have explored this issue in great detail, analysing the social rights of immigrants and minority ethnic groups in six countries corresponding to different welfare regimes, according to the well-known Esping-Andersen typology (1990): liberal (UK and US), conservative (France and Germany) and social democratic (Denmark and Sweden). The authors started from the assumption that better outcomes for immigrants in terms of their participation in social transfer programmes and maintenance of an acceptable living standard could be found in welfare states with high levels of de-commodification (social democratic welfare regime) in contrast to welfare regimes with moderate (conservative welfare regime) or particularly low levels of de-commodification (liberal welfare regime). Their analysis showed that on the basis of the data on poverty, both immigration status and being a member of a minority ethnic group were associated with higher poverty risk across these different welfare regimes. Of particular interest here were intra-regime variations, as, for example, 'Swedish poverty rates for migrants and ethnic minorities are the lowest, while Danish poverty rates are the highest for ethnic minority migrant households and second highest for all migrant households' (Morissens and Sainsbury, 2005, p 645), even though these two countries belong to the same social democratic welfare model. A similar, although slightly lower, difference can also be found between the US and the UK, as in the UK there were much lower poverty rates than in the US, and both countries belong to the same liberal welfare regime. In general, however, the analysis of the effects of social programmes shows that in the analysed countries, immigrants tend to perform worse than citizens. What is important to note from that analysis is the inadequacy of the welfare regime approach to capture the complex differences that exist in the social rights of immigrants in various countries (see the discussion on migrant integration regimes in Chapter Two, this volume).

Laparra (2008) has also underlined the differences existing in Germany and Sweden, which are not only connected with welfare models, but also with their migration policies. While in Germany access to welfare is connected with employment status, the Swedish migration policies, following an egalitarian logic typical of the Scandinavian welfare regimes (welfare more based on residence rather than on employment), have tended to treat citizens and immigrants more equally, even though since the 1990s the association between reforms of social and immigration policy (particularly increasing restrictions in asylum policy) has had a negative impact on the status of immigrants. The claim of a failure in the cultural integration of immigrants in Europe requires special attention that has to be found in intensified debates, tensions and a shift in migration policies from 'promotion of multiculturalism' to 'promotion of integration' (see Afonso, 2005; Carrera, 2006; Kremer, 2008). There is even an argument that multicultural policies in connection with generous welfare states have produced negative integration outcomes visible in a low level of labour market participation, a high level of segregation and higher criminal behaviour (Koopmans, 2010), although this analysis did not focus on other quality of life indicators. In general, a trend from multiculturalism back

to assimilation can be observed, even though it should be kept in mind that the concept of assimilation has also changed over time (Brubaker, 2001). Still, based on an examination of a number of European Union (EU) countries (Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany, France and the UK, among others), Vertovec and Wessendorf (2009) also noted the backlash of multicultural discourse, claiming at the same time that the promotion of integration defined as a new policy goal does not, in fact, differ much from previous multicultural policies.

The rising diversity of European societies puts on the agenda the general question of a possible erosion of welfare state models, starting from the assumption that, based on the US experience, a trade-off between diversity and solidarity may exist (see Alber, 2006). Anti-immigrant voices expressed by (extreme) right-wing politicians have contributed, in this context, to the erosion of solidarity(ies) on which different welfare states have been built during their history (see the discussion on contentious migration politics in Chapter One, this volume). The results of recent studies on this topic have been far from unanimous, however. In a study on welfare states in Europe and the US, Taylor-Gooby (2005, p 669) concluded, for instance, 'that [cultural] diversity does have a negative impact on welfare spending, but one that is much weaker and less significant in the advanced welfare states outside the US'. The impact of the political left is much stronger in EU countries, which contributes to the preservation of the welfare state against the negative impact of growing diversity.

Similarly, Banting and Kymlicka (2004) concluded that no evidence could be found that the adoption of multicultural policies leads to the erosion of the welfare state. In this debate, it is particularly important to note that the creation and development of multicultural policies does not seem to respond to changes in the composition and number of immigrant groups. The countries differ, for instance, in the ways in which they formulate their approach to different types of minorities, but, more generally it seems difficult to apply the US experience to other (EU) contexts). Relations between immigrants, multicultural policies and the welfare state are, in fact, much more complex (Banting, 2005). In order to fully capture this diversity, not only is it necessary to introduce ethnic heterogeneity or other characteristics as crucial explanatory variables in the comparative study of social spending, but it is also necessary to develop a more subtle conceptualisation of the links that exist between multicultural policies and the political and economic integration of immigrants (Banting and Kymlicka, 2006). The crucial question is what will happen in the future, as there is a possibility that growing ethnic diversity will generate ethnically defined cleavages, which will, in turn, provide an additional impetus for welfare state retrenchments (Myles and St-Arnaud, 2006, p 349). In contrast, the importance of multiculturalism for welfare state development has been most radically argued by Parekh (2006), although it is still an open question to what degree his theory on multiculturalism is analytical and/or normative. The crucial difference between Parekh and other modern liberal thinkers such as Kymlicka, Raz or Rawls, lies in his conceptualisation of human beings, which requires a deeper understanding and recognition of culture in the sense of

'respect for a community's right to its culture and for the content and character of that culture' (Parekh, 2006, p 176). This implies a further acknowledgment of collective rights that can be exercised individually, but also collectively. However, the acknowledgment of collective rights, and particularly collectively exercised rights, calls for a rather radical reorganisation of the ways in which societies deal with different ethnic, cultural and religious identities. There are, in fact, no clear guidelines of how to resolve the complex relations that have emerged between a historically inherited identity of majority and multiple minority identities. An unavoidable step in this direction is, probably, the full acknowledgment of collective rights, mainly built around different cultural traditions. To sum up, as Parekh argues, 'what I might call a multicultural perspective is composed of the creative interplay of these three complementary insights, namely the cultural embeddedness of human beings, the inescapability and desirability of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, and the internal plurality of each culture' (Parekh, 2006, p 338). As is shown in this chapter, despite all debates about the sustainability of multiculturalism in Europe, the multicultural approach developed by Parekh offers valuable insights into the empirical evidence gathered through the WAVE project and, in particular, those concerning the role of social networks in the life of local minorities.

The importance of cultural aspects in the life of minorities has, in fact, often been emphasised in the literature on immigrants. Modern migration network theory has highlighted how macro- and micro-structures facilitate migration movements, but also how the informal social networks (micro-structures) developed by the migrants themselves can be successful for coping with problems related to migration and new settlements (for an interesting discussion, see Castles and Miller, 2009, p 28). However, this chapter is not concerned with migration processes per se, but more with the life of immigrant communities in the countries of destination, including not only the first generation of migrants, but of their children and grandchildren. Schrover and Vermeulen (2005) focus on several important factors necessary to understand the role and the possibilities of migrant communities: the migration process, the opportunity structure in the society of residence and the characteristics of the immigrant community. In their paper the relevance of gender is highlighted (for example, women are carriers of ethnic identity but are absent from the power structure of immigrant organisations), as well as the relevance of state relations (for example, relations with the societies of origin and destination), politics (for example, the political structure of the society and attitude of governments toward immigrant organisations) and size (for example, the volume of the immigrant population, and its capacities).

WAVE research project

This chapter originates from the comparative European project WAVE, funded by the EU Under the Framework 6 research programme scheme.² The project analysed social changes in Europe, particularly those related to religion, minorities

and gender, and examined these dimensions through the prism of welfare. It started from an assumption that values promoted at the societal level have to be present in the expression and provision of individual and group needs of the religious or minority ethnic population. Therefore, it paid special attention to values that could lead to cohesion or conflict within society (between and within groups, with a special focus on minority/majority relations). Finally, the gender aspects of the position of minorities were of particular interest

The project included 12 European countries and the empirical part of the study entailed in-depth qualitative research in medium-sized towns of these countries.¹ Based on the 'mapping process', the research groups were chosen as a subject of the in-depth research in the majority of cases, Muslim groups (obviously of different ethnic backgrounds) were chosen, but there were also other ethnic and religious minorities, such as Jews, Germans from the former Soviet Union, FSU (in Germany), Pentecostals, Roma, Polish (in England), Ukrainians (in Poland) and so on. In each case, members of the majority (churches, welfare organisations, professionals from the majority population) were included in the research. Additionally, each country study focused on different welfare issues that, according to the researchers, presented in the best way the research topics, ranging from care for older people, reproductive health, the school system and care for children, provision of welfare assistance and other care services. The research applied a range of qualitative methods: observations, interviews, focus groups, media content analyses and analyses of other collected materials. Besides the local case study reports, research teams in each country also produced 'national reports', based mainly on the literature review about the researched issues. As the local case studies could be very local, preventing any generalisation, the national overview served to illuminate the meanings of locally generated data. The same approach is also used in this chapter. As it is mainly based on readings of the research report for each country, the examples provided below come from the local case studies, while the more general observations come from the national reports as well as other available literature.

Immigrants and their social networks

Family

The importance of the family as the basic social unit for different immigrants was stressed in all WAVE research reports. The majority reaffirmed that the importance of family was stronger for immigrants and more visible than for country nationals. The role of the family in the life of individuals also constituted one of the biggest differences between immigrants and the local population. There are several possible reasons for this. Life insecurities in general and difficulties in integrating in society (such as unemployment, difficulties in obtaining social rights, poverty and so on) move individuals closer to their families (including their extended family), where they are able to find support and solutions. The family also provides

advice and assistance in many difficult situations (such as in the case of dealing with administrative procedures), while helping to connect individuals with other social networks that are important for social integration. But the family is also an important factor in keeping contact with the country of origin, through helping family members abroad by sending them economic remittances. The family also plays a very important symbolic value as a carrier of cultural identity, preserving the identity of their family members, while maintaining their cultural (primarily ethnic and religious) identities.

However, the role of the family is not unambiguous. First of all, the family is not capable of doing all that is expected of it, and this contributes to various tensions among family members, mostly along gender and generational lines. In addition, an apparent contradiction arises from the expectation that the family nourishes separate identities and, at the same time, socialises and integrates its members into the society of the destination country. These two important tasks are in permanent tension and several strategies of how different families cope with this emerge. In many cases family members rely on the help of other minority ethnic and religious communities that perform the same (in a way, contradictory) tasks. The crucial question here is how a society, and in particular the welfare system, evaluates the role of family. Misunderstandings can arise from the universalistic logic of the welfare state, and its willingness to help families (including those from minority communities) based on certain presumptions of what a (majority) family is and what needs it has. That was shown in the case of the family centre in the relevant locality in Sweden (Pettersson and Edgardh, 2008) and in the municipality public care service for older people in the Germany case (Albert and Leis-Peters, 2008). In these cases, public authorities expected that the services would also have been used by minorities. This was not the case, however, as immigrant families do not usually use public help for issues defined as the primary task of the family. For instance, there is a widespread feeling among immigrants that they have to take care of their parents and if parents go to nursing homes that means that the family has failed. Furthermore, if the family fails in that respect, then there is nothing left of a separate identity, that is, immigrant families become similar to the families of their society of residence, 'abandoning' their parents. Another example is the promotion of active parenting among immigrant communities which does not correspond to a gender division of labour among immigrants (Sweden), or organising of events by public authorities that do not respect the different daily routines of different families (for the English case, see Middlemiss Lé Mon, 2008): if family members usually work during nights, then they have completely different time schedules than the majority, and night shifts are more present among immigrant and minority communities than among majority communities.

Cultural and religious differences are most visible in respect to gender. Family is, for the majority of immigrants, a domain of women, and it is generally expected that women would take care of family members and transmit specific cultural values to their children, although this is also a task carried out by men in ethnic and religious organisations. Although the general picture suggests the special place

of women for immigrant families, there are some very important exceptions. First, the way in which women are treated and the position they have in the family varies greatly from country to country and from cultural origin to cultural origin, and in this respect it is, for example, not possible to compare a Muslim woman of Bosnian origin in Croatia with a Muslim woman of Turkish or Iranian origins in Norway (Angell and Briseid, 2008; Geiger et al. 2008), as they are culturally (and in some cases religiously) very different. Nonetheless, the crucial question is how to draw a line between cultural and religious specificities that have to be respected, and occurrences that are seen as completely inappropriate for the majority in countries of destination, such as the oppression of women inside the family. This research suggests that there are no definitive answers on this issue and that answers have to be found in the continuous exchange of opinions between different communities. There are also other cultural differences that play an important role. Researchers noted that Ingrian women were more active and more involved in social networks than Ingrian men in the Finnish case study (Juntunen and Yeung, 2008), and German women who came from the FSU were more open and had better communication skills than their husbands (Biendarra, 2008). These skills helped them in finding jobs and other contacts within society more generally, thus contributing to easier integration in comparison to men.

Ethnic and religious communities

Immigrant organisations usually take the form of ethnic and religious communities. In some cases they overlap, while in others they are quite distinct. Religious communities include both churches and church-related or religiously inspired organisations. Ethnic and religious communities, much like the family, perform dual tasks. They are carriers of separate identities, and they serve as social networks, helping immigrants to be integrated into the society. They provide information and help with different administrative procedures, but they are also able to offer welfare assistance or other kinds of welfare services. The most important tasks carried out by these communities are education in the mother tongue and in a particular religion, but also helping to acquire the necessary skills in the host language.

The way immigrant organisations operate depends on several factors,⁴ but their effectiveness also largely depends on how a society sees them, and, to a lesser degree, on the general position of the churches and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the welfare system. The WAVE project in that respect provided some interesting insights. The Nordic countries, in connection with their universalistic welfare state, do not seem to provide much room for NGOs in delivering services, and the role of churches is generally quite limited, both in public life and within the welfare system. Still, recent cuts in welfare programmes have opened some space for other non-state actors. This is most visible in the case of Finland, which already had a tradition of a strong church (the Lutheran Church of Finland) involvement in social work activities, working in cooperation with

the municipality and other organisations. There is also space for other minority religious communities, since the Lutheran Church of Finland and other minority churches devote much of their resources to working with immigrants (Juntunen and Yeung, 2008). In Norway, there is no formal place for either the majority church or minority communities in the welfare system (Angell and Briseid, 2008). Indeed, some programmes, such as the after-school homework assistance programme offered by a minority organisation could, seen from outside, contribute to the segregation of minority children, provoking some interesting public debates. However, the specific character of some welfare activities could contribute to the establishment of formal relations between minority communities and public authorities. Furthermore, despite limited involvement in service provision, local case studies in all Nordic countries showed more intensive contacts with minority organisations than in other European countries as well as public discussion about how to take into account the specific needs of immigrants. The same is true for England with its long history of immigration, and established ethnic and religious communities. Recently, the government's intention has been to deepen official multicultural policy by including minority communities in decision-making processes and trying to reach them through additional services that became very visible in our research (Middlemiss Lé Mon, 2008).

The German welfare system, on the contrary, traditionally involves NGOs, and churches in particular, in providing services, although it is restricted to traditional churches and church-related organisations (Caritas and Diakonisches Werk). There are numerous ethnic and religious immigrant organisations which focus on the different needs of their members, mostly cultural, religious and educational. However, our research noticed substantial dissatisfaction among them (Albert and Leis-Peters, 2008; Biendarra, 2008). Although many wanted to become welfare providers, and not only recipients there are only few examples- of immigrant organisations providing welfare services. In addition, it seems that they complain about insufficient funding and unequal treatment from the majority and official organisations, which prevented them from becoming partners inside the welfare state architecture.⁵

In Italy the number of immigrant associations is increasing, but these organisations tend to be very small, usually divided, or very informal, so it is difficult to judge their real effectiveness. They have no formal relations with welfare providers. Church-related welfare organisations play the most prominent role in Italian welfare provision (Frisina and Cancellieri, 2008). In that respect, our research showed that the situation was very similar, or even worse, in Greece (Fokas, 2008). There were some immigrant organisations, most of them religious, cultural or ethnic, but they were faced with some basic organisational problems - they did not usually have a place to gather, and it was particularly hard to organise a place for worship for minority religions. Communication between minority and majority organisations was quite limited in Greece.

In Poland and Croatia the situation seemed to be similar, even though these two countries did not have similar welfare systems (Borowik et al, 2008; Geiger

et al, 2008). In Poland there was much more space for the Catholic Church to deliver services, while in Croatia the welfare system was predominantly public, with a quite limited role of churches and other non-state actors. The important factor here is that both countries (in the localities investigated in this project, but according to national reports, to a great extent in the countries in general) have not yet faced significant immigrations from abroad, and, as a result, the issue seems to concern more traditional ethnic or national (simultaneously religious) minorities, with a history of contacts and relations, such as the Ukrainians in Poland and Bosnians in Croatia. In both cases, however, language does not represent a problem in communication between minorities and majorities, although some tensions occasionally emerge. Moreover, their ethnic and religious organisations were focusing on some of the social, cultural and obviously religious needs of their members, but these were usually not involved in welfare provision.

Welfare state models and immigrant social rights

Some of the contributions discussed in the first part of this chapter (see, for instance, Morissens and Sainsbury, 2005; Banting and Kymlicka, 2006; Myles and St-Arnaud, 2006) have highlighted the (in)adequacy of welfare state models in researching the rights of immigrants, as well as their general social position in the respective countries. The analysis of research reports inside the WAVE project suggests, however, that in investigating the position of immigrants, cultural factors and the social position of immigrant organisations are vital factors, and this has far too often been overlooked by existing literature on immigrants and welfare. On this basis, this section focuses on how integration issues are correlated with different welfare state models. In doing so, it stresses the importance of immigration policies and minority formation, including the different effects of different types of immigrant organisations (Castles and Miller, 2009, pp 245-76), but also the relevance of multicultural policies when researching the social rights of minorities. Following the Esping-Andersen typology (1990, 1999), the Nordic countries included in this research can be found in a group of social democratic states and they share several similarities concerning the position of immigrants. The research demonstrated that in all three countries there are, for example, many organisations established just to fulfil immigrant needs, and that noticeable attention is paid to the integration activities of immigrants. According to the research reports the problem of rising illegal immigration was not visible in the local cases and this, in a way, helps solve the problem of the different access to social rights. Needless to say, several other aspects that concern the lives of immigrants and the roles of their organisations can cause public tension and discussions, but a higher degree of cultural sensitivity seems to be present. There are official initiatives attempting to accommodate different values in the school system and in other welfare provision agencies. Namely, the need for accommodation comes from the acknowledgment that schools and other public institutions are supposedly secular, but in reality, are

mainly based on the Christian tradition, which can cause tensions and debates about equal rights in a multicultural society.

Interestingly, England shows some similarities with the Nordic countries. Taking into account a long history of immigration, multicultural policies have been developed based on the recognition of group rights rather than individual rights. Tensions and problems concerning how to accommodate ethnic and religious rights also exist, but there is an extensive cooperation between religious organisations and public authorities at the local level. The government has even developed guidelines for local authorities for cooperating with religious organisations (Middlemiss, 2008). Our research in that respect confirmed the involvement of immigrant organisations, and the importance of building contacts between health and social workers and minority groups. Therefore, the English case confirms that the recognition and involvement of immigrant organisations in community development and inside the welfare domain in a way facilitates the tension between ambiguous tasks they have to perform: a task of maintaining separate identities and serving as a mediating tool in the integration of their members into society.

Germany is a conservative welfare state based on employment and citizenship (Esping-Andersen, 1990,1999), which contributes to a differentiated treatment among the country's minorities, depending on their official status. In line with this categorisation, our research noted that, compared to the Nordic countries and England, there is much more cultural misunderstanding between the majority and the minorities in the welfare field. Here results of the report highlighted the very limited involvement of minority organisations in delivering welfare, and limited communication and hospitality from the side of the majority resident population. However, important generational differences connected with the history of the presence of each minority in Germany can also be observed. Still, the issue of how to maintain one's cultural identity, how to accommodate the German way of life and how to include minority communities in policymaking and delivering welfare remains unresolved.

Italy and Greece have been labelled as South European or particularistic welfare models (see Ferrera, 1996; Katrougalos, 1996), although important differences between these two countries also exist. The WAVE research reported both similarities and differences. In both countries the issue of illegal immigrants and their social rights remains a pressing issue and, in both countries, the immigrant organisations are not involved in policymaking and delivery. Cultural misunderstandings are present in both countries, but to a larger extent in Greece than in Italy. Greece is also a special case when it comes to its immigration policy, due to the high costs for residence permits and delays in administrative procedures, which associate insecurity and bad communication with civil servants, all of which contribute to the creation of obstacles in addressing the welfare needs of migrant communities. Communication between the majority and the minority in terms of contacts and the social involvement of immigrants is most limited in Greece compared to all the researched countries. The research also noted that Greece is a

country with a high level of prejudice against religious minorities that influences the position of immigrant organisations.

There is no agreement in the literature about the existence of a 'post-communist welfare state', and even more so concerning the meaning of this term (see, for instance, Cerami, 2006; Bohle and Greskovits, 2007; Stubbs and Zrinščak, 2009). Similarities and differences between Croatia and Poland exist, and these countries have not yet faced major immigrant flows. Although religiously different, the cultural and even linguistic similarities of the majority population and large minorities (such as Ukrainians in Poland and Bosnians in Croatia) have caused most tensions. Nevertheless, there are some worrying trends that could be more important if these countries are to face up to immigration in the future. The research noticed that the division between 'us' and 'them' is very much present and as the range of social problems (unemployment, poverty) strikes all the population, there is no sensitivity (nor policy) that takes into account the positions and needs of the minority populations.

Conclusion

By observing public debates and even some empirical trends, one could easily conclude that both the welfare state and multiculturalism are in retreat. However, this chapter suggests a more complex picture, which is in fact in line with many other empirical and theoretical studies (Banting and Kymlicka, 2006; Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2009, and so on). Kivisto has underlined, for example, that multiculturalism - as social policy - ought to be viewed as a form of assimilation or incorporation strategy that requires embracement by newcomers of core societal values, while simultaneously valorising ethnic diversity (Kivisto, 2003, p 29). In a similar vein, Castles and Miller (2009, p 311) have also emphasised that wider social changes - such as multiple identities - also exist. Our analysis highlights the importance of immigrant organisations and in particular the cultural aspects of their existence in shaping concrete experiences of integration. Although the role of local organisations is not unambiguous, and can indeed contain negative aspects (social control, exclusion of some members, emphasis on difference and segregation), their role in social orientation is indispensable, and the everyday life of many individuals relies on that role. Another aspect is also important. Welfare needs (like educational, health and long-term care needs) are not abstract, but are rooted and expressed in particular social/cultural terms, shaped to a great extent through collective action and collective experience. Hence there is a need to speak about immigrants and their welfare rights through multicultural lenses. In addition, financial pressures on the welfare state stress the importance of different stakeholder involvement, which also opens a space for immigrant organisations. The voice of immigrants heard in our research emphasises the need for an open dialogue about their position, and that dialogue includes their local organisations as well as cultural aspects of their existence. Otherwise the welfare needs of immigrants (and of minorities in general) are not understood and

consequently not met. We do not predict, however, that the situation in Europe will necessarily go in this direction. Still, perhaps there is room to understand that the welfare state needs to be reformulated along cultural lines, to facilitate the inclusion of immigrant communities inside the welfare state architecture.

Notes

¹ As this chapter is built on the empirical material deriving from the comparative research project, I am very grateful to all the researchers for their invaluable inputs. I particularly thank Effie Fokas, whose first draft of the comparative WAVE analysis served as stimulus for this chapter, and the book's editors for their comprehensive comments on previous versions of this chapter. Thanks also to my Croatian colleagues, V.Bačak, S.Božić, M.Geiger, T.Puhovski and T.Vučković Juroš for comments and suggestions. Previous versions of this chapter were presented at the 6th Annual ESPAnet Conference: 'Cross-border Influence in Social Policy', Helsinki, 18-20 September 2008, and the 9th ESA Conference, Lisbon, 2-5 September 2009. Support for and funding from the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport of the Republic of Croatia 'Social cohesion indicators and development of the Croatian social model' is also acknowledged

² More information about the project can be found at www.waveproject.org and in Fokas (2009),

³ The countries included in the project were: Sweden, Norway, Finland, Latvia, England, Germany (one report was produced for Germany but two case studies were conducted in Germany, one in a town with a Catholic majority and one in a town with a Protestant majority), France, Poland, Croatia, Italy, Romania and Greece. However, as the work on the comparative analysis for this chapter started in early 2008, when research reports were not available for all countries included, this chapter analyses nine countries, thus excluding France, Latvia and Romania.

⁴ There is not enough room here for more details, but big differences among immigrant organisations should not be forgotten, and in many of them, internal divisions are very much present.

⁵ As underlined by Brubaker, critics have observed that the German .system actually treats immigrants as passive clients of the charitable organisations, and also tends to reinforce and perpetuate a national origin distinction (Brubaker, 2001, p 537).

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