



RE M I N D E R

ROLE OF EUROPEAN MOBILITY AND ITS IMPACTS
IN NARRATIVES, DEBATES AND EU REFORMS

Deliverable 10.4: Perceptions of EU and Non-EU Immigrants' Welfare Impacts: Who Receives More in Benefits?

REPORT

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Deliverable 10.4: Perceptions of EU and Non-EU Immigrants' Welfare Impacts: Who Receives More in Benefits?

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Abstract

This report presents latest findings on Europeans' perceptions of the welfare impacts of EU and non-EU immigrants. We ask to what extent Europeans think that EU immigrants receive more in benefits than the native-born, and whether perceptions are more positive or negative when it comes to EU or non-EU immigrants' impacts. We rely on newly-collected survey data for seven EU countries: Germany, Spain, Great Britain, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Sweden (Meltzer et al. 2019).

The first part of the empirical analysis uses descriptive statistics to highlight differences in these attitudes between countries and demographic groups. The second part contrasts perceptions across countries with statistical estimates of immigrants' take up of welfare benefits to explore to what extent public opinion diverges from the 'realities' of those impacts (Nyman and Ahlskog 2018). Do Europeans overestimate how much EU migrants receive? Are misperceptions more or less pronounced with regards to the impacts of EU or non-EU immigrants?

Our findings suggest that:

- About one in three people think that EU immigrants receive a little or much more than natives in welfare and benefits. Just below half of those surveyed thought the same for non-EU immigrants' receipt of welfare.
- While there are some differences in views across countries, the disparity is smaller between countries than it is across some demographic groups.
- The percentage of those saying that EU and non-EU immigrants receive much more in welfare than natives is higher among respondents with low education, those with negative views of the EU, and those who prefer to restrict immigration from poorer countries from both within and outside Europe.
- On average, the proportion of people with negative views of the impact of intra-EU migrants is smaller than the proportion with negative views of those coming from outside the EU. However, over 80% of respondents placed the effects of both groups at

the same or similar levels, with more than half of all respondents giving the exact same evaluation of migrants from within or outside the EU.

Introduction

As its name suggests, the ‘welfare burden hypothesis’ posits that opposition to immigration primarily stems from the belief that immigrants will drain state coffers by using more in benefits than they contribute in taxes (Citrin et al. 1997; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010; Gerber et al. 2017). In recent survey data from the Eurobarometer, 56% of respondents thought that immigrants are a burden on the welfare system, compared to 39% saying that immigrants take jobs away from natives (Special Eurobarometer 469). According to the British Social Attitudes survey, more than three in five Britons express the view that citizens of other EU countries ought to wait a minimum of three years before claiming welfare benefits in the UK. Qualitative evidence also shows that citizens and media outlets often make negative associations between immigrants and use or even abuse of benefits systems (Wiggen 2012; Anderson 2013; Loyal 2018).

In this light, it is surprising that so little research has focused on the fiscal burden hypothesis as an explanation for anti-immigration attitudes. Evidence on perceptions of fiscal and welfare impacts is scant, and there is virtually no existing knowledge about possible distinctions between EU and non-EU perceptions of welfare impacts (Markaki and Blinder 2019; Blinder and Markaki 2018, 2019). In this report, we explore perceptions of welfare impacts of intra-EU and non-EU migration across seven EU countries. We discuss to what extent Europeans think that EU immigrants receive more in benefits than the native-born, and whether perceptions of EU immigrants’ impacts are more positive or negative than perceptions of non-EU resident foreign nationals. The second part of our analysis compares perceptions across countries with statistical estimates of immigrants’ actual take up of welfare benefits (*‘realities’*). Do Europeans overestimate how much migrants receive? Are misperceptions more or less pronounced with regards to the impacts of EU versus non-EU immigrants?

This report serves as a synthesis of empirical findings using data collected and estimated specifically to assist with addressing these questions. Our results are based on the analysis of cross-national survey data (Meltzer et al. 2019), which we match with country level statistics on welfare take-up (Nyman and Ahlskog 2018) and demographics on intra-EU mobility (Marchand et al. 2019). Descriptive statistics and mean tests are used to compare responses across countries and demographic groups. Wherever we refer to issues covered by previous research outputs for this project, especially reviews of literature, the discussion points the reader to the relevant publication.

The report is structured as follows: we begin with a discussion on the design of new survey questions measuring welfare impacts among EU and non-EU immigrants and their implications for the empirical analysis. We continue with an overview of the data and the definitions of variables. The analysis section starts with summary statistics and country level differences, followed by comparisons across groups of the population. The empirical analysis then turns to a discussion on the similarities or dissimilarities between perceptions and realities (estimates) across countries.

Measuring welfare impact perceptions

Our goal is to assess how Europeans perceive the welfare impacts of immigrants, whether they distinguish between the effects of immigrants from within and outside the EU, and to what extent these perceptions reflect realities. In the absence of relevant questions in existing comparative data, we embedded new ones into the data collection of Work Package 9 in the REMINDER project (Meltzer et al. 2019). We developed two tailored survey questions that ask respondents whether, on average, they think that immigrants take out more or less in services and welfare benefits than natives; one refers to EU-born migrants, and the other to non-EU born migrants (see Table 1 for complete wording). Available responses include much less/a little less/about the same/a little more/much more. The questions reference country of birth as the identifier of migrant status (EU-born/non-EU born/native-born).

Table 1. Survey questions on perceived welfare impacts of EU and non-EU immigrants

EU	On average, do you think that people who come to live and work in [country] from other countries that are part of the European Union take out more or less in services and welfare benefits compared to people who were born in [country]? EU migrants take out
Non-EU	Now please think about people who are not part of the European Union. On average, do you think that people who come to live and work in [country] from other countries that are not part of the European Union take out more or less in services and welfare benefits compared to people who were born in [country]? Non-EU migrants take out
Response options	much less than people born here/a little less than people born here/about the same as people born here/a little more than people born here/much more than people born here

The questions we developed differ from those in existing surveys in a number of ways. Ours are notably different from those in previous surveys which ask respondents whether immigrants should have access to benefits, which benefits they should receive, or what criteria they should meet in order to qualify for social support (length of stay, prior contributions, or other). We designed our questions with the intention of identifying people's evaluations of already-experienced impacts on welfare. While there are some survey databases with questions phrased specifically about impacts on welfare and taxes, such as the European Social Survey and the European Quality of Life Survey, these do not distinguish between the perceived impacts of EU and non-EU immigration.

Beyond providing evidence on a specific aspect of this issue that has not been studied before (EU versus non-EU immigration welfare impacts), our approach serves various other purposes. While comparative surveys so far have asked for a general evaluation of whether impacts are positive or negative in their own right, our questions do not reference the words 'impacts' or 'effects', but instead ask for an assessment of how much immigrants receive on average in welfare and benefits. A large proportion of political narratives (i.e. media representations, (Blinder 2015)) and economic analyses (i.e. welfare magnet hypothesis, (Razin and Wahba 2015)) about immigrants' impacts on welfare touch upon the issue of self-selection: in other words, how likely immigrants are to be unskilled, low-income, or in economic hardship, and therefore proportionally in higher need of some form of public assistance. Either explicitly or implicitly, any evaluation of the broader public

finance impacts of immigrants involves a presumption/calculation about how much they receive (and contribute). Our study therefore benefits from using perceived level of welfare receipt as the starting point to better understand broader evaluations of welfare burdens. By mentioning welfare only, we also bypass complications arising from evaluating total net fiscal impacts and taking account of tax contributions and many other factors.

We also ask respondents to compare immigrants' welfare receipt to natives', rather than to other groups of immigrants. We argue that a country's welfare context with respect to what natives have access to and what they are receiving will act as a point of reference in any considerations of what is affordable (capacity) or 'too much' (generosity) for newcomers to receive. Contrasting immigrants' benefits receipt to that of natives effectively serves as a type of embedded control for the country's welfare context. Furthermore, responses are somewhat comparable to econometric estimates of per capita receipt in benefits by claimants' country of birth, and allow the analysis of misperceptions as a form of economic innumeracy regarding welfare usage (Herda 2010).

When asking respondents to what extent they think immigrants or natives receive more in benefits, the question does not specify whether this means in amount (euro) or in the relative number of people receiving (share). This is to be expected, considering that the survey question needs to strike a reasonable balance between specificity and simplicity. Finally, our questions also mention EU and non-EU immigrants, instead of other European or geographic groupings that are less likely to prompt respondents to the specific issue of EU mobility. The distinction between EU and non-EU immigrants is more than a social grouping of ethnocultural identities. It serves as an institutional threshold associated with access to distinct rights within EU countries, and especially in the case of welfare and benefits (Ruhs 2017). Whether this distinction is also reflected in public perceptions about the welfare impacts of immigrants remains unknown.

For a comprehensive discussion of conceptual issues related to perceptions and realities of welfare impacts from immigration and overview of prior evidence, see Blinder and Markaki (2018) and Markaki and Blinder (2019).

Data

This analysis draws on databases collected or estimated within the REMINDER project by other Work Packages (Meltzer et al. 2019; Nyman and Ahlskog 2018; Marchand et al. 2019).

The individual level data, referred to here as the REMINDER Panel, comes from a survey fielded online between 2017 and 2019 to adult residents (18+) in seven EU countries, Germany, Spain, Great Britain, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Sweden. The sampling frame included quotas for gender, age, and region to ensure responses are representative of national populations. While the survey is designed as a panel and involves three consecutive waves almost a year apart, the questions we take into account were asked only once. Therefore, our comparisons do not focus on longitudinal or dynamic effects. The majority of questions we utilize from the survey in this report were asked in the first wave (December 2017-January 2018), unless otherwise specified. See Table 2 for a breakdown of unweighted sample sizes by country in wave 1.

Table 2. Survey sample sizes by country

Country	Sample size
Germany	3,223
Spain	3,209
Great Britain	3,226
Hungary	3,250
Poland	3,367
Romania	3,240
Sweden	3,206
Total	22,721
unweighted sample of wave 1	

Table 3 shows the breakdown of valid responses to the two key questions on welfare impacts from immigration (unweighted sample). The majority of people select the option saying that EU and non-EU immigrants claim about the same in benefits compared to native-born. However, there is more concentration of respondents on the side of ‘negative’ impacts (a little more/much more) than in the categories of ‘a little’ and ‘much less’.

Responses to the two questions give the impression that perceptions of impacts on welfare are more positive on average for EU immigrants than they are for non-EU. The introduction of statistical weighting in the analysis section gives a similar impression (Figure 1). However, differences or lack thereof remain partly hidden when only considering the average distribution of responses. In order to contrast perceptions of impacts between EU and non-EU we proceed to cross-reference responses to the two questions.

Table 3. Sample breakdown for perceived welfare uptake questions

How much do you think EU/non-EU born receive in benefits compared to native born?		
	EU	Non-EU
Response categories	(unweighted n of respondents)	(unweighted n of respondents)
much less than people born here	1,605	1,457
a little less than people born here	2,377	2,632
about the same as people born here	10,342	7,180
a little more than people born here	3,943	5,123
much more than people born here	3,101	5,139
Total	21,368	21,531

As shown in Table 4, we classify each respondent on the basis of the difference between their two evaluations. If they gave the same answer to both, then we identify them as having the same evaluation of impacts of EU and non-EU immigrants. The evaluations could be positive, neutral, or negative, but they would be at the same level. For every person whose response differed between the two questions, we classify as more positive towards EU or more positive towards non-EU impacts, respectively.

Table 4. Construction of variable identifying differences between perceived EU and non-EU welfare impacts (number of respondents)

		How much do non-EU born receive in benefits compared to native born?				
		much less	a little less	about the same	a little more	much more
How much do EU-born receive in benefits compared to native born?	much less	757	268	250	137	183
	a little less	263	955	584	398	162
	about the same	299	1,072	5,425	2,195	1,173
	a little more	60	238	585	1,905	1,106
	much more	60	73	192	351	2,384

EU immigrants more positive effects than non-EU				
+4	+3	+2	+1	
Non-EU immigrants more positive effects than EU				
+4	+3	+2	+1	
the same effects				
Unweighted sample				

The final classification is based on the level of difference between the two evaluations. Since the original questions have five categories, the difference ranges from +1 for those whose answer was one category/step more positive, to +4 for those four categories/steps more positive for immigrants of one origin than the other. For example, if a person said that EU-born immigrants receive much more than natives but that those coming from outside the EU receive much less, they are classified as +4 more positive towards non-EU impacts.

In addition to perceptions of impacts we also consider realities of impacts using country level data (Nyman and Ahlskog 2018; Marchand et al. 2019). The indicators of welfare impacts are drawn from recent comparative estimates on the fiscal impacts of intra-EEA migration. The measures are derived from established sources of data used to calculate comparative statistics across European countries, including the EULFS and EUSILC. For the four indicators drawn from Nyman and Ahlskog 2018, and since aggregation is based on survey data in most countries, we take the average (Euro or number) between two years before calculating any statistics.

Table 5

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Welfare cost of EU born relative to native-born (diff as % native cost, per average household), 2013-14	6	-27.3	12.1	-45.0	-7.5
Welfare cost of non-EU born relative to native-born (diff as % native cost, per average household), 2013-14	6	-0.7	34.9	-46.1	45.5
EU born welfare recipients relative to native-born (diff in % claiming any benefits), 2013-14	6	-8.3	7.3	-19.5	3.3
Non-EU born welfare recipients relative to native-born (diff in % claiming any benefits), 2013-14	6	1.2	7.6	-11.2	8.5
EU-born as % of total population, 2017	7	3.7	2.2	0.6	5.9

Notes: indicators, other than EU-born population, missing for Romania.

Respondents are matched with data relating to 2013-14 because of data availability. We also draw additional statistics on the share of the population born in other EU countries (2017 latest available) for a brief comparison between perceptions and demographic statistics on the relative size of EU immigrant populations (Marchand et al. 2019). We conduct our comparisons with country-level aggregates. Average perceptions for each country are compared with country-level indicators of welfare impacts and relative size of immigrants born in other EU countries (see Table 5 for summary statistics).

We estimate two categories of indicators of realities of welfare impacts, each of them separately for EU and for non-EU immigrants. We construct an indicator based on the cost of providing welfare (how much) and another indicator based on the share of those who are receiving any welfare benefits (how many). The cost-based measure calculates how much the average household receives in welfare and benefits in Euro per year, separately for EU immigrants, non-EU immigrants, and the native-born (Nyman and Ahlskog 2018).

Households are defined based on country of birth, with household members assigned to origin groups proportionally (for details on definitions and calculations see Nyman and

Ahlskog 2018). The difference in costs between the respective immigrant group and the native-born identifies to what extent immigrants in that country receive more in Euro on average than natives. Since the absolute amounts in currency vary significantly across countries, we express the immigrant-native difference as a percentage of native costs.

An alternative set of indicators estimate the percentage of households that receive benefits, again separately for EU, non-EU, native-born. We take the difference in percentage points between the respective immigrant group and natives. We should note that claimant households in this case are defined broadly to include any welfare received, such as child allowance and other benefits, that are possibly provided regardless of financial status in some countries.

Analysis

This section has three parts. We begin with summary statistics in key variables of interest, at sample and country level. This is followed by comparisons across groups of the population based on demographic and other differences. The last part of the analysis turns to a discussion of the similarities and dissimilarities between perceptions and realities (estimates) of welfare impacts from immigration. All descriptives and means tests using survey data are calculated with supplied weights. Differences based on the use of alternative weights are minor and limited mostly to decimal points. This is further indication, however, that caution is advised when comparing groups on the basis of small disparities.

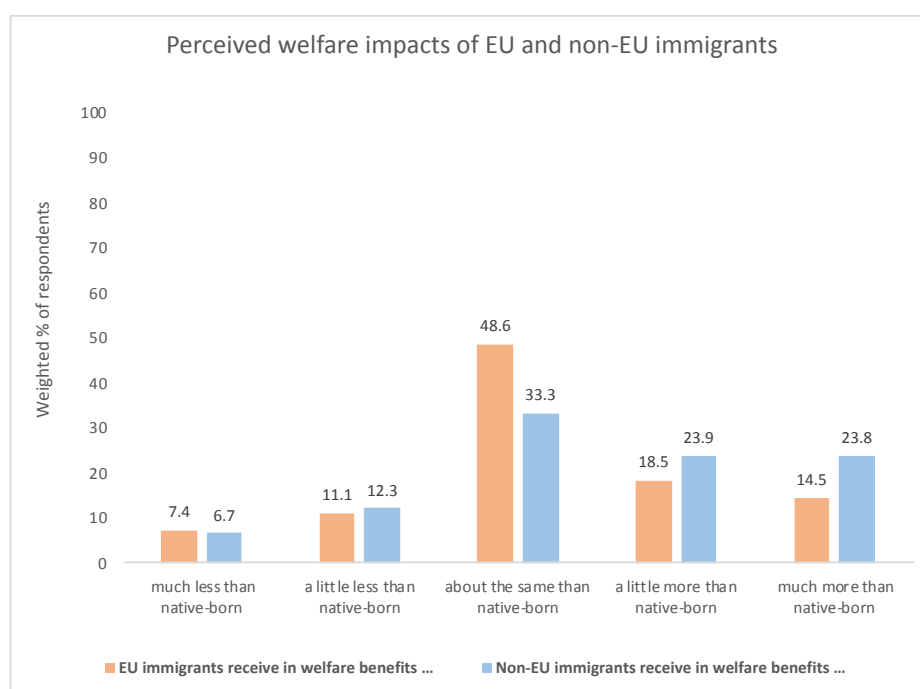
Part 1. How Do Europeans Evaluate EU And Non-EU Immigrants' Welfare Impacts?

About one in three respondents think that EU immigrants receive a little or much more than natives in welfare and benefits, whereas just below half thought the same for non-EU immigrants' receipt of welfare. There are some differences across countries, but the disparities are far smaller between countries than they are across some groups of the population, especially when it comes to education level and other attitudes related to the

EU and immigration policy. On average, the proportion of people with negative views of EU impacts is smaller than the proportion with negative views of non-EU impacts. However, over 80% of respondents placed the effects of both at the same or similar levels, with more than half of the sample giving the exact same evaluation.

When taking all countries into account, 48.6% of respondents thought that EU born immigrants receive about as much as those born in the country in terms of welfare and benefits (Figure 1). Around 33% of respondents thought the same when asked about non-EU immigrants' receipt compared to the native-born population.

Figure 1

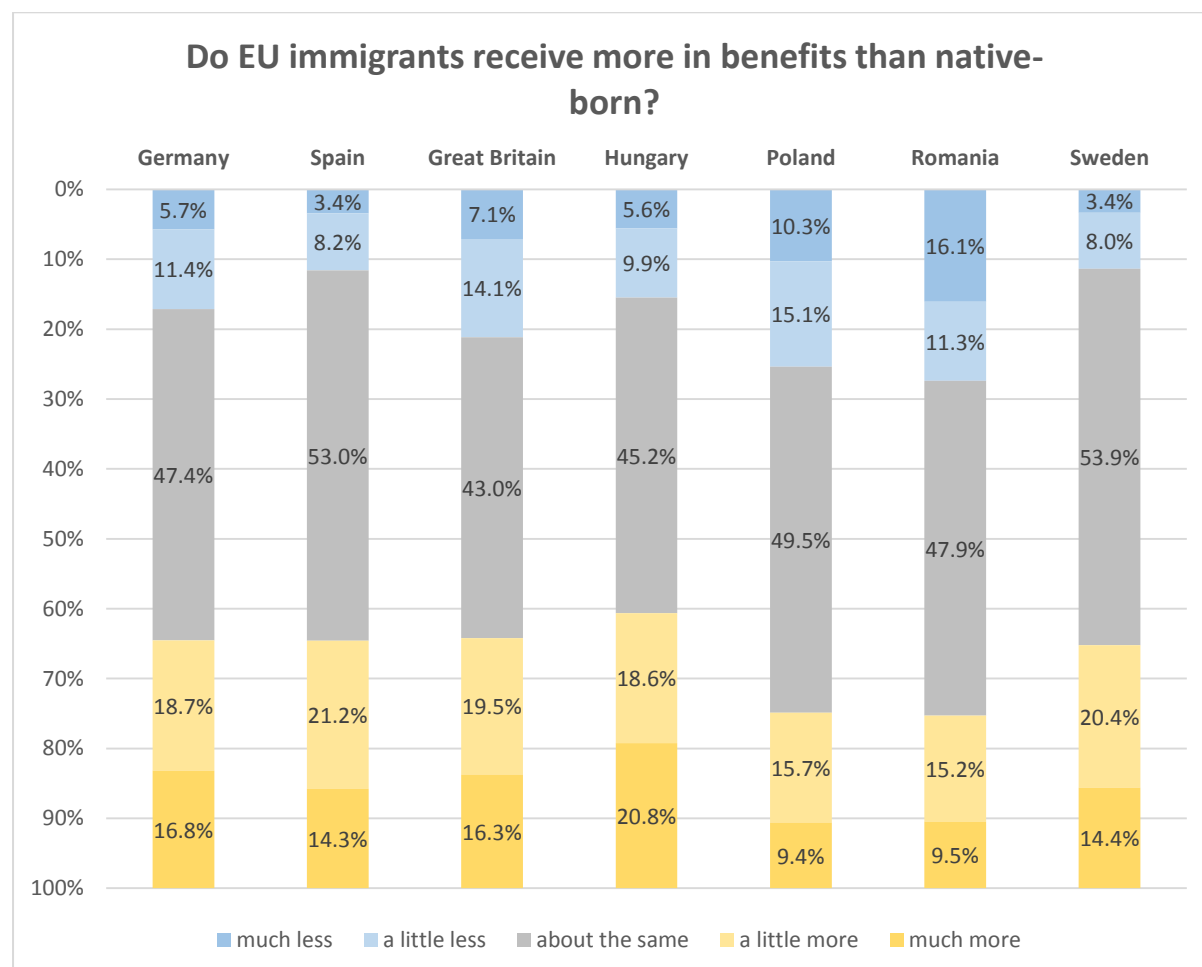


Weighted sample (21,368 EU / 21,531 non-EU)

On average, 11% of respondents thought that EU immigrants receive a little less than natives (12% non-EU). Another 7.4% (EU) and 6.7% (non-EU) of respondents said that immigrants receive much less than natives. On the other side, between 18.5 (EU) and 23.9% (non-EU) said that immigrants receive a little more, and 14.5 (EU) and 23.8% (non-EU) that they receive much more than native-born.

The average share of the population who say that EU immigrants receive more than natives in welfare is similar across most of the countries included. Statistical tests suggest that the average percentage of respondents expressing this view does not differ substantially across Germany, Spain, Sweden, Great Britain, and Hungary. The portion of the population with this view is lower on average in Poland and Romania compared to all other five countries.

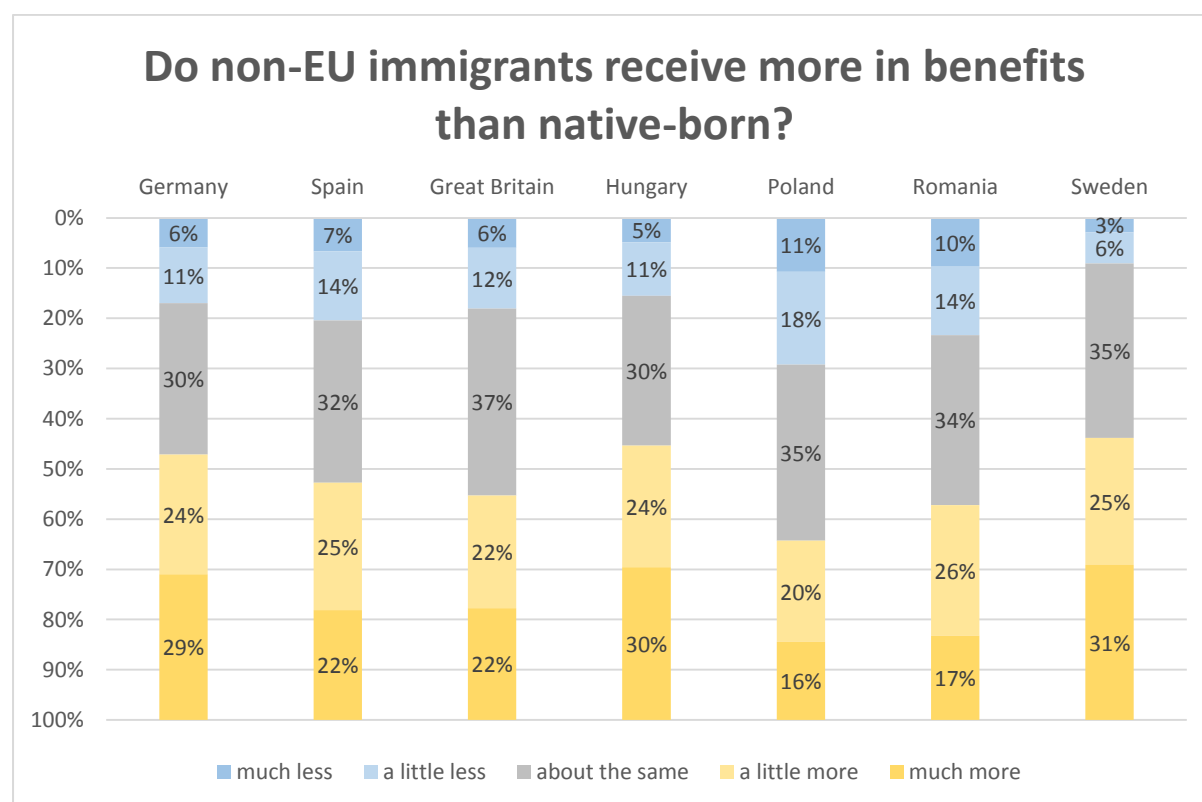
Figure 2



Statistical tests indicate some differences between countries in the portion of the population who evaluated the welfare impacts of non-EU immigrants as negative (i.e. they receive a little or much more than natives). However, these remain small. Without controlling for any other differences, negative perceptions of non-EU impacts were less common in Poland and Romania than in the other five countries. Negative perceptions of non-EU welfare receipts were more common in Sweden than they were in Germany,

Hungary, and Great Britain. More people also opted for those categories in Germany than in Spain and Great Britain.

Figure 3



A larger portion of respondents on average opted for the a little more/much more categories in the question about non-EU immigrants than the portion who opted for those categories in the question about those from within the EU. However, contrasting the two responses for each respondent can tell us something that a comparison of averages across respondents cannot. To what extent is there overlap between people who hold negative perceptions about the two origins of inflows? If we were to find little overlap, it would mean that respondents who hold positive views about EU impacts were less likely to also hold positive views of non-EU impacts, and vice versa. This would suggest that public opinion about the welfare impacts of immigrants makes a sharp differentiation between intra-EU mobility and non-EU immigration. In the case of substantial overlap, it would indicate that most people who have negative views about one type of inflow have the same or similar view about the other origin of inflows, and that few people actually differentiate.

Table 6 shows the percentage breakdown of perceived impacts when each respondent's answers to the two questions on EU and non-EU immigrants are contrasted. Over half of the sample population of these countries evaluates the effects of EU and non-EU immigrants on welfare benefits at the same level (54%). Note the perceived effect could be either positive or negative or neutral; either way they were assessed as the same for both origins. To what extent one category of inflows is seen as having more or less positive effects than the other depends on the threshold chosen. About a third of the sample in each country thought the welfare effects of EU immigrants are more positive than the effects of non-EU (any difference +1/+4). This would suggest that non-EU immigrants are more likely to be seen as receiving more in benefits than natives, compared to EU immigrants. In Germany, about 33% of respondents had a more positive evaluation for EU immigrants, compared to 13% with more positive views on non-EU impacts (Figure 4). The gap is starker in Sweden, with 36% (EU more positive) and 9% (non-EU more positive) respectively.

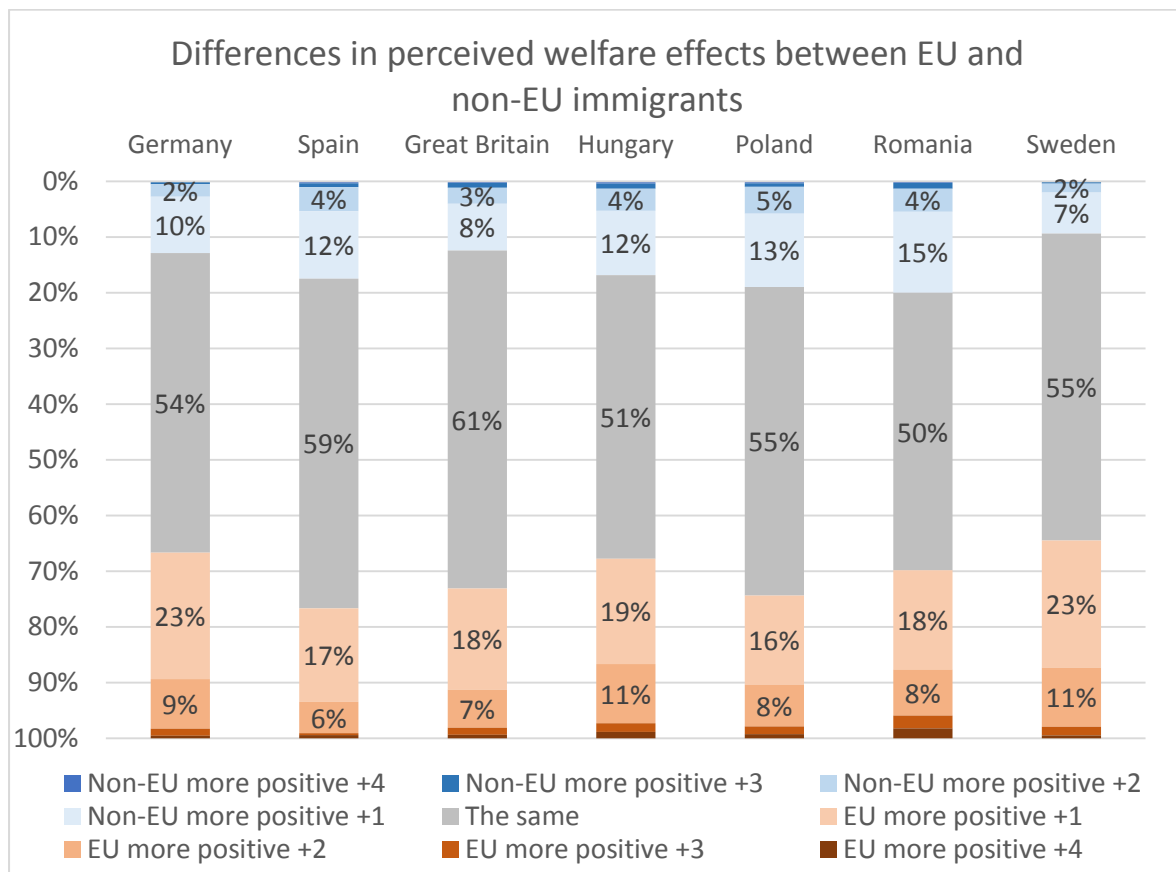
Table 6

Differences in perceived welfare effects between EU and non-EU immigrants	
	Weighted % of respondents
Non-EU more positive +4	0.28
Non-EU more positive +3	0.61
Non-EU more positive +2	3.46
Non-EU more positive +1	10.86
The same	54.03
EU more positive +1	19.84
EU more positive +2	8.63
EU more positive +3	1.42
EU more positive +4	0.86
Total	100
Observations	20,957

When adjusting the threshold to those with a difference of two and above, the relative number of people drops markedly, giving a different picture. Just over 10% of people provided an evaluation that was more positive towards EU benefits receipt than non-EU based on two points and over, and another 4.3% stood on the opposite side (non-EU more

positive than EU). Based on this threshold (+2/+3/+4), a larger portion of respondents in Sweden held more positive views of EU than of non-EU impacts on welfare compared to other countries, followed by those in Hungary, and then Germany. Fewer people in Spain and Great Britain evaluated the impacts of EU as more positive than non-EU.

Figure 4



If we take into account those who position the effects of one group at least 3 or 4 categories away from the other (on the 1 to 5 scale), fewer than 5% distinguish between the welfare effects of EU and non-EU immigrants. For Germany, Great Britain, Poland, and Sweden, about 2% said that EU immigrants have notably more positive effects than non-EU immigrants. Romania stands a bit higher, with 4%, and Spain a bit lower, at 0.9%. Another 0.39%-1.34% had views suggesting that non-EU immigrants have more positive effects on welfare benefits than those from the EU. These disparities, however, are too small to confidently claim that there are substantial differences in the perceived effects of EU and

non-EU immigrants on welfare benefits. The descriptive comparisons suggest that there is little distinction between the effects of EU and non-EU immigrants on welfare.

Part 2. Demographic and Other Differences

Beyond variation in attitudes across countries, it is also informative to explore to what extent some groups of the population are more or less likely than others to express negative perceptions of welfare impacts. This section of the report looks more carefully into those who expressed the most negative perceptions, i.e. those who said that EU-born or non-EU born immigrants receive much more in welfare benefits than native-born people.

Table 7 shows the percentage of respondents for each demographic subgroup who said that immigrants receive much more in welfare benefits than native-born (EU-born/ non-EU born). Unless otherwise specified, all group differences discussed in the text are statistically significant using weighted tests of means.

On average, when looking at all respondents together, about 14.5% expressed the view that EU immigrants receive much more than natives in welfare benefits. However, men (13.9%), people with high education (10.8%), and those between the ages of 18 and 24 years old (10.7%) were less likely to express this opinion. Women were slightly more likely than men to view the welfare impacts of EU immigrants as negative (15.1%), alongside people with medium education (15.7%), and people between the ages of 55 and 64 years old. Among basic demographic groups of the population, the percentage who think that EU immigrants receive much more than natives was highest among people with low education (22.5%) and people between the ages of 40 and 54 years old (17%).

Table 7

EU/non-EU immigrants receive much more in welfare benefits than native-born (% of respondents within each row group for each question)			
Group	Category	EU-born	Non-EU born
Gender	Men	13.9%	24.2%
	Women	15.1%	23.5%
Education level completed	Low (ISCED 0-2)	22.5%	30.6%
	Medium (ISCED 3-4)	15.7%	25.3%
	High (ISCED 5-8)	10.8%	20.2%
Age groups	18-24	10.7%	15.3%
	25-39	13.7%	20.6%
	40-54	17.0%	26.6%
	55-64	15.2%	27.3%
	65+	13.7%	25.7%
"EU a good thing?" (wave 2)	Very bad thing	39.1%	52.0%
	Fairly bad thing	20.0%	35.3%
	Neither good nor bad	15.9%	24.2%
	Fairly good thing	10.1%	19.5%
	Very good thing	8.9%	15.2%
Immigration restriction preferences from within and outside Europe* (wave 2)	General inclusionists	7.3%	11.6%
	General restrictionists	23.0%	38.4%
	Europe inclusionists	10.5%	25.9%
	Non-Europe inclusionists	10.4%	17.6%

Weighted comparison of means across groups (overall sample mean = > EU-born 14.5%, non-EU born 23.8%); values represent the % of respondents in a given category who opted for category 5 in the welfare impacts question, i.e. EU-born receive much more than native-born; *general inclusionists and restrictionists are those who favour many-some/few-none from either Europe or outside, Europe inclusionists are respondents who support many-some from Europe but few-none from outside, and vice-versa for non-Europe inclusionists

In addition to demographic differences, is it also informative to check for disparities in responses between people with positive or negative views of the European Union in general and between people who express different preferences about inflows from within and outside Europe (Blinder & Markaki 2019). As expected to a certain extent, negative evaluations of welfare impacts are particularly common among people who also have

negative views about the European Union. Almost 40% of respondents who said that the EU is a “very bad thing” also said that EU immigrants receive in welfare much more than natives. For those who said that the EU is a “fairly bad thing”, the percentage also stands above average at 20%. When it comes to immigration policy preferences, negative welfare impact perceptions of EU immigrants are more common among those who preferred to restrict immigration regardless of origin from within or outside Europe (23%).

More people on average give negative evaluations of non-EU impacts (23.8%) than people who give negative evaluations of EU impacts (14.5%). Disparities between population groups across the two questions generally follow the same broad dynamics, save for a few notable exceptions. When it comes to education groups and age groups, negative perceptions of welfare impacts of both EU and non-EU immigrants peak among people with low education, and between the ages of 40 and 64. While the difference is small, more men (24.2%) on average said that non-EU immigrants receive much more than natives, compared to women (23.5%).

The dynamics are somewhat different for inflow preferences. When it comes to respondents who hold negative views of EU impacts, there are no substantial differences between those who opt for restricting inflows from Europe only (Europe inclusionists) or from outside Europe only (non-Europe inclusionists). A preference for general restrictions from both within and outside Europe was most common among those with negative views of EU impacts. However, negative views of non-EU impacts on welfare are more common among Europe inclusionists and general restrictionists than other preference groups. This could be an indication that a portion of respondents with negative non-EU impact views opted for Europe inclusionism instead of general restrictions. It could also suggest that a small portion of respondents take welfare impacts into account when forming their views on immigration flows from different origins. Further analysis is necessary to settle this question, however.

Part 3. How Do Perceptions Compare To Realities?

The third section of this report continues with a comparative overview of perceived and estimated welfare impacts of EU and non-EU immigrants across the countries in our analysis. Realities of impacts are measured with two measures that identify the difference between how much immigrants and natives are receiving in welfare and benefits. These are contrasted with the percentage of respondents in that country whose answers broadly matched the estimate. First, we discuss perceptions of EU, followed by non-EU, welfare impacts. The section ends with a comparison of realities and perceptions in the relative size of the EU-born immigrant population.

Perceptions and realities of EU welfare receipts

Figures 5 and 6 plot average country level attitudes on the perceived welfare impacts of EU immigrants with each of the econometric indicators of impacts, the first based on average cost and the second based on how many receive benefits. EU-born immigrants' average cost in welfare benefits is lower than natives' in all of the countries considered in our analysis. Plotting differences in welfare costs alongside the percentage of respondents who said that EU immigrants receive either a little or much less than natives can provide insight into potential reality-perceptions divergences. For example, relatively fewer people in Sweden than in Germany or Great Britain say that EU immigrants receive less than natives (Figure 5, vertical y-axis).¹ In Sweden, EU immigrants' benefits receipts were about 7.5% lower in average euro amount than natives'. This stands at 29-30% lower for Germany and Great Britain, and 40% less for Poland. The ranking in perceived impacts is somewhat consistent with the equivalent relative ranking of countries in the average amount received in welfare generally (realities). The more it costs on average for the country to provide for immigrants' benefits compared to natives', the fewer people evaluate the impacts as positive. It is broadly informative, but it does not serve as a confirmation of a causal or statistical relationship.

¹ Due to survey weighting, values on perceptions are estimates with statistical variation. Percentages can thus differ slightly from graph to graph depending on the exact grouping chosen. For example, in Figure 2, the % of respondents in Sweden who said a little less or much less would appear to add up to 11.4%. However, when the mean for Sweden is estimated for these two categories together, it stands at 9.6% (Figure 5).

Figure 5

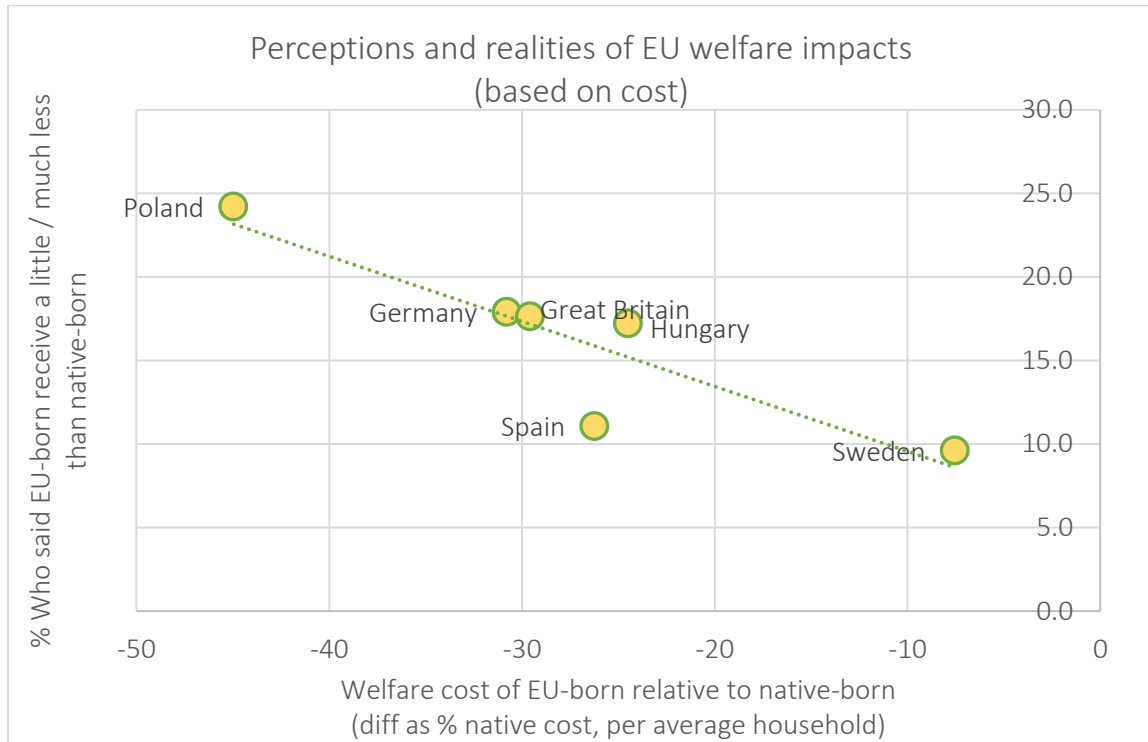
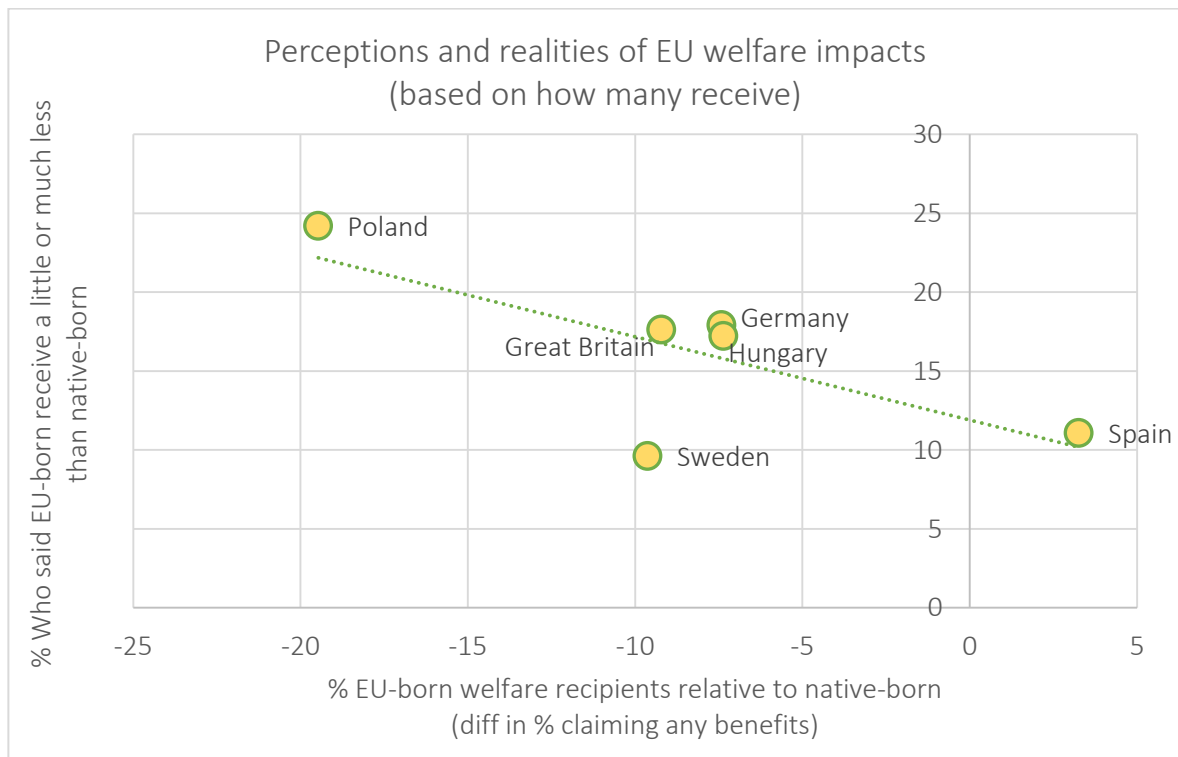


Figure 6



When asking respondents to what extent they think immigrants or natives receive more in benefits, the question does not specify whether this means in amount (euro) or in the relative number of people receiving (share). This is to be expected, considering that the survey question needs to strike a reasonable balance between specificity and simplicity. The second measure of realities of impacts we consider is based on the percentage of households who receive any benefits (see Markaki and Blinder 2019 for a discussion on distinctions between economic and demographic measures of welfare burdens). Using the alternative measure of welfare impact estimates, which is based on how many receive benefits, Spain is the only country where a larger share of EU immigrants are claimants than natives. All other countries have again a negative difference (Figure 6).

The ranking of countries in average perceptions does not match the demographic measure as well as it did the economic one shown in Figure 5. In Sweden, the percentage of EU immigrants receiving any benefits is 9.6 percentage points lower than the percentage of natives who receive any benefits. In Spain, EU migrants as a percentage of claimants stand 3.3 percentage points higher than natives. However, the percentage of people with positive views of EU impacts is more or less the same in both countries (difference not statistically significant). On the other side, the demographic indicator of EU welfare claimants places Sweden alongside Germany, Great Britain, and Hungary. However, more people identified that EU migrants receive less than natives in the latter three, than in Sweden.

Perceptions and realities of non-EU welfare receipts

Similar dynamics can be seen with regards to non-EU impacts on welfare. The indicator based on the share of those who receive (Figure 8) is less informative about differences in average perceptions across countries than the measure based on cost (Figure 7).

Perceptions in Spain and Sweden differ by over ten percentage points, even though the estimated welfare impact of non-EU immigrants (share based) is at a similar level. About 20% of respondents in Spain said that non-EU immigrants receive less than natives, compared to 9% in Sweden, although the immigrant-native difference in those who claim is at 8.5% for Spain and 7.2% for Sweden.

Figure 7

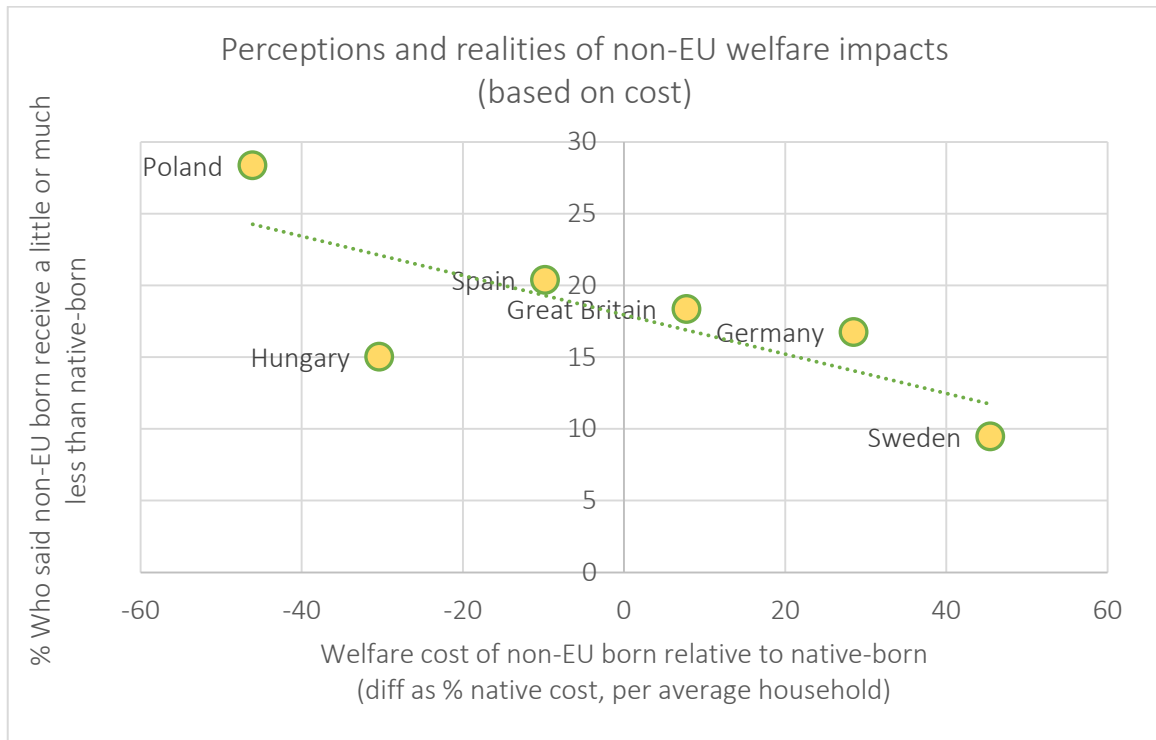
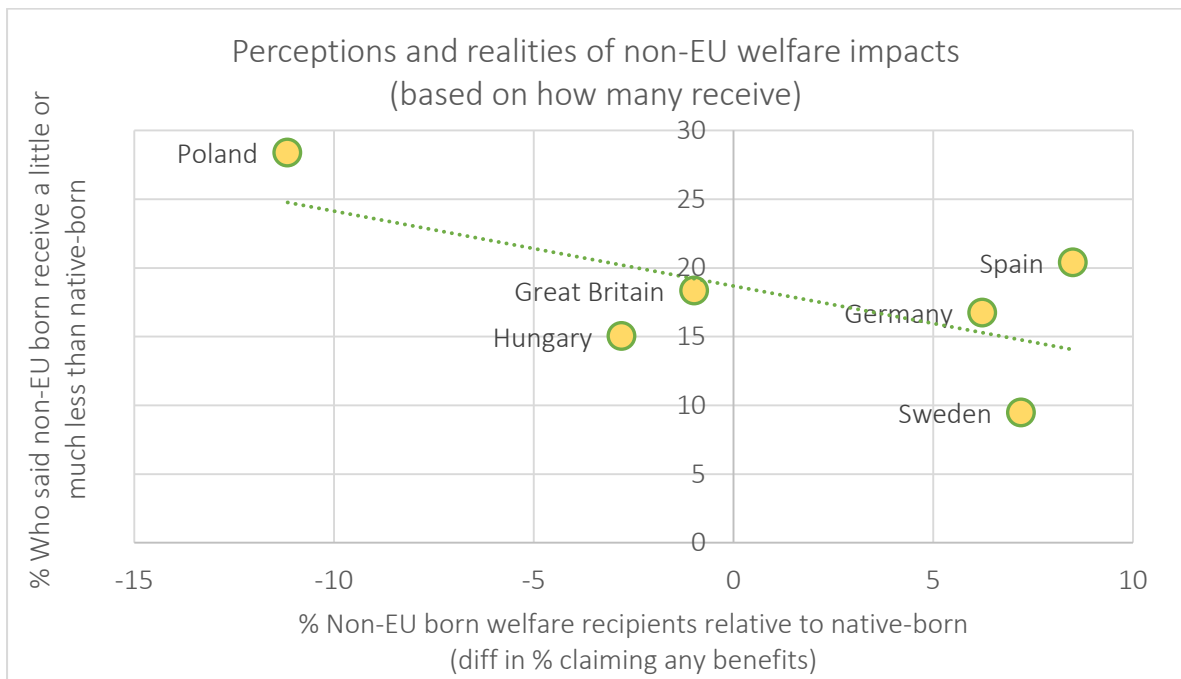


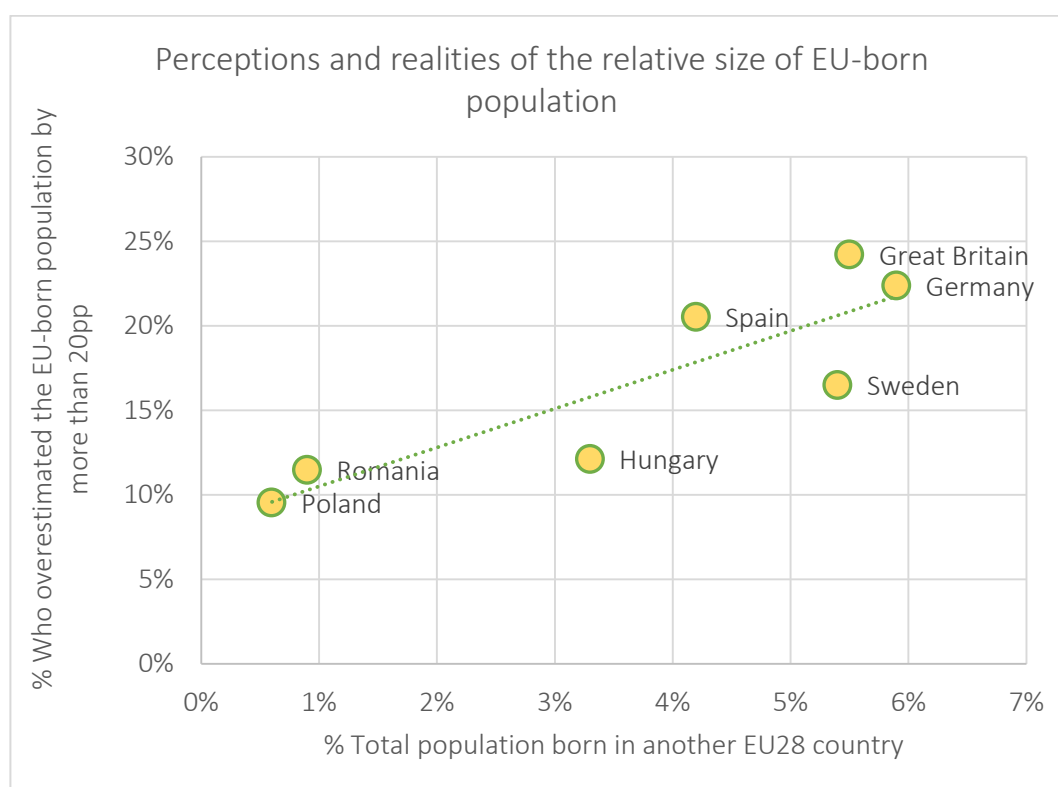
Figure 8



Perceptions and realities of the relative size of EU-born population

Do Europeans overestimate how many mobile EU immigrants live in their country? We identify overestimations or underestimations of the relative size of EU population by contrasting respondents' perceived percentage of EU-born in the population with country-level statistics (Marchand et al. 2019; Meltzer et al. 2019). The question asks: "Out of every 100 people in [COUNTRY], about how many do you think were born in another EU country?". We take the difference between the person's estimate and the statistical estimate for the percentage of total population who are born in another EU-28 country.

Figure 9



Among all respondents, 68% overestimated the relative size of EU population by at least 1 percentage point, and another 22% underestimated the percentage in their country. The remaining 9-10% either estimated the percentage correctly, or overestimated it by up to 1 pp. While maximum underestimation stood at around 5 percentage points, overestimation is notably higher. About 19% of respondents had overestimated the EU-born population in their country by more than 20 percentage points (max of 99.4pp).

Underestimation and overestimation of the relative size of EU population varies across countries. About one in three respondents in Germany (32%), Hungary (35%), and Sweden (34%) slightly underestimated the percentage. About 26% of respondents in Poland, 19% in Romania, and 15% in Spain gave the correct percentage, either exactly or up to one percentage point over. Across all seven countries over 60% of respondents overestimated the relative size of EU immigrants in their country, with Romania (75%), the UK, and Poland (both 68%) on the higher end of the spectrum. Since the range of overestimation is quite large, it is informative to look at responses that overestimated the percentage by more than 20 points. Using this grouping, about 24% of respondents in the UK, 22% in Germany, and 21% in Spain gave a perceived estimate that was more than 20 percentage points over the demographic estimate.

Summary

In this report we explore perceptions of EU and non-EU Immigrants' welfare impacts across seven EU countries: Germany, Spain, Great Britain, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Sweden. We discuss differences in these attitudes between countries and demographic groups and contrast perceptions across countries with statistical estimates of immigrants' take up in welfare benefits.

Our findings suggest that about one in three people in our sample thinks that EU immigrants receive a little or much more than natives in welfare and benefits. Just below half of those surveyed thought the same for non-EU immigrants' receipts in welfare. The share of people with negative views of EU impacts is smaller than the share with negative views of non-EU impacts. However, more than half of all respondents gave the exact same evaluation in both questions.

The percentage of those saying that EU and non-EU immigrants receive much more in welfare than natives is higher among respondents with low education, with negative views

of the EU, and those who prefer to restrict immigration from poorer countries from both within or outside Europe. However, we do not find evidence of substantial country differences in the share of the population with negative views of welfare impacts.

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APPENDIX

Values for Figure 1

	EU immigrants receive in welfare benefits?	Non-EU immigrants receive in welfare benefits?
much less than native-born	7.4	6.7
a little less than native-born	11.1	12.3
about the same as native-born	48.6	33.3
a little more than native-born	18.5	23.9
much more than native-born	14.5	23.8
Total %	100	100
Number	21,368	21,531

Weighted percentages and unweighted total number for wave 1²

Values for Figure 2

EU immigrants receive in welfare?	much less	a little less	about the same	a little more	much more	Total
Germany	5.7%	11.4%	47.4%	18.7%	16.8%	3,148
Spain	3.4%	8.2%	53.0%	21.2%	14.3%	3,131
Great Britain	7.1%	14.1%	43.0%	19.5%	16.3%	3,059
Hungary	5.6%	9.9%	45.2%	18.6%	20.8%	2,966
Poland	10.3%	15.1%	49.5%	15.7%	9.4%	3,039
Romania	16.1%	11.3%	47.9%	15.2%	9.5%	3,058
Sweden	3.4%	8.0%	53.9%	20.4%	14.4%	2,967

Weighted percentages and unweighted total number for wave 1

Values for Figure 3

Non-EU immigrants receive in welfare?	much less	a little less	about the same	a little more	much more	Total
Germany	6%	11%	30%	24%	29%	3,169
Spain	7%	14%	32%	25%	22%	3,132
Great Britain	6%	12%	37%	22%	22%	3,086
Hungary	5%	11%	30%	24%	30%	2,992
Poland	11%	18%	35%	20%	16%	3,054
Romania	10%	14%	34%	26%	17%	3,068
Sweden	3%	6%	35%	25%	31%	3,030

Weighted percentages and unweighted total number for wave 1

² Each individual is identified with RESPID1 (observations flagged by Exclusion 1 criteria excluded) and weighted using the probability weight w1_WEIGHTEX1 and country as strata

Values for Figure 4

	Non-EU +4	Non- EU +3	Non- EU +2	Non- EU +1	The same	EU +1	EU +2	EU +3	EU +4	Total
DE	0.13%	0.4%	2%	10%	54%	23%	9%	1.3%	0.5%	3,126
ES	0.32%	0.7%	4%	12%	59%	17%	6%	0.4%	0.6%	3,094
GB	0.27%	0.9%	3%	8%	61%	18%	7%	1.2%	0.7%	3,007
HU	0.41%	0.9%	4%	12%	51%	19%	11%	1.6%	1.2%	2,887
PL	0.36%	0.6%	5%	13%	55%	16%	8%	1.4%	0.8%	2,935
RO	0.29%	1.0%	4%	15%	50%	18%	8%	2.3%	1.8%	2,993
SE	0.13%	0.3%	2%	7%	55%	23%	11%	1.6%	0.5%	2,915

Weighted percentages and unweighted total number for wave 1

Values for Figure 5

Country	Welfare cost of EU-born relative to native-born (diff as % native cost, per capita)	% Who said EU-born receive a little or much less than native-born
Germany	-30.8	17.9
Spain	-26.2	11.1
GB	-29.6	17.6
Hungary	-24.5	17.2
Poland	-45.0	24.2
Sweden	-7.5	9.6

Values for Figure 6

Country	% EU-born welfare recipients relative to native-born (diff in % claiming any benefits)	% Who said EU-born receive a little or much less than native-born
Germany	-7.4	18
Spain	3.3	11
GB	-9.2	18
Hungary	-7.4	17
Poland	-19.5	24
Sweden	-9.6	10

Values for Figure 7

Country	Welfare cost of non-EU born relative to native-born (diff as % native cost, per average household)	% Who said non-EU born receive a little or much less than native-born
Germany	28.5	17
Spain	-9.8	20
GB	7.8	18
Hungary	-30.3	15
Poland	-46.1	28
Sweden	45.5	9

Values for Figure 8

Country	% Non-EU born welfare recipients relative to native-born (diff in % claiming any benefits)	% Who said non-EU born receive a little or much less than native-born
Germany	6.2	17
Spain	8.5	20
GB	-1.0	18
Hungary	-2.8	15
Poland	-11.2	28
Sweden	7.2	9

Values for Figure 9

Country	% Total population born in another EU28 country	% Who overestimated the % EU-born population by more than 20pp
Germany	5.90%	22%
Spain	4.20%	21%
GB	5.50%	24%
Hungary	3.30%	12%
Poland	0.60%	10%
Romania	0.90%	11%
Sweden	5.40%	16%



REMINDER

ROLE OF EUROPEAN MOBILITY AND ITS IMPACTS
IN NARRATIVES, DEBATES AND EU REFORMS

The REMINDER project is exploring the economic, social, institutional and policy factors that have shaped the impacts of free movement in the EU and public debates about it.

The project is coordinated from COMPAS and includes participation from 14 consortium partners in 9 countries across Europe



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