

## Social distance, immigrant integration, and welfare chauvinism in Sweden

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**Working Paper**

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# WZB

Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin  
für Sozialforschung



Tina Goldschmidt and Jens Rydgren

## **Social Distance, Immigrant Integration, and Welfare Chauvinism in Sweden**

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Tina Goldschmidt and Jens Rydgren  
**Social Distance, Immigrant Integration, and Welfare Chauvinism in Sweden**  
Discussion Paper SP VI 2018–102  
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## **Abstract**

Populist radical right-wing parties across Europe garner support for welfare chauvinistic promises to limit government spending on immigrants and focus on natives' welfare instead. However, most research on the so-called immigration-welfare nexus does not study welfare chauvinism but instead focuses on generalized support for the welfare state. Using Swedish register-linked survey data from 2013, we study three hypothetical pathways into welfare chauvinism: via ethnic prejudice, operationalized as a desire for social distance; via the direct experience of immigrant unemployment and putative welfare receipt in the neighborhood context; and via immigrant competition at the workplace. Based on our sample of native-born Swedes, we find that both negative prejudice and the share of unemployed immigrants among the neighborhood population provide two distinct and independent routes into chauvinism, while workplace competition does not.

### **Key Words:**

welfare chauvinism, government spending, immigration, integration, prejudice, Sweden

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## 1. Introduction

A contentiously debated hypothesis states that national majorities are inclined to show little support for government expenditures that benefit groups which “they do not recognize as their own” and to whom they hence do not feel obliged by social proximity (Banting, 2000: 16). Since non-Western immigrants in particular are among the most visible outgroups across affluent European democracies, this relationship is likely reflected in lower support for spending perceived to aid such immigrants, compared to spending on members of the given majority. This should especially be the case when expenses are perceived as drawing on investments in the welfare of native citizens. The notion that there is a tradeoff between spending on immigrants and the government’s ability to invest in welfare for “natives” is often called *welfare chauvinism* (a term coined by Andersen and Bjørklund, 1990). Past research suggests that welfare chauvinism should be most pronounced in majority members who dislike the presence of immigrants in their immediate environments (i.e., who harbor affective prejudice, measured as a desire for social distance; cf. Goldschmidt, 2015; Gorodzeisky, 2013). It has also been argued that the effect of social distance is exacerbated when immigrants are not sufficiently economically integrated, that is, if they are overrepresented among the poor or unemployed, and thus among those likely to receive welfare (Burgoon, 2014; Finseraas, 2012; Luttmer, 2001; Stichnoth, 2012). Another less studied pathway into chauvinism is via competition for jobs and wages, such that immigrants’ economic integration might also incentivize natives to oppose spending on immigrants that is seen as drawing on the welfare of natives (cf. Burgoon et al., 2012).

Even though there is a large and growing body of research dedicated to the so-called welfare/immigration nexus (Brochmann and Hagelund, 2011), very few studies have addressed the issue of welfare chauvinism, focusing on generalized support for the welfare state instead. This implies a problematic disconnect between measurement and theory and



also does not account for the actual political debate on immigration and welfare. After all, the vast majority of populist radical right-wing parties across Europe do not (or no longer) garner support based on promises to dismantle the welfare state per se, but rather to restrict its provisions to native recipients (Rydgren, 2007; Eger and Valdez, 2015).

To address this issue, we devise a new outcome measure that contrasts native-born Swedes' preferences for government spending on immigrants with those for spending on the elderly, who are, for the most part, native-born themselves. We study the relevance of affective prejudice (social distance), immigrant unemployment in the neighborhood context, as well as the proportion of European and non-Western immigrants at respondents' workplaces for our outcome. Using register-linked Swedish survey data, we find that both negative prejudice and the share of unemployed immigrants among the neighborhood population provide two distinct and independent routes into chauvinism, while workplace competition does not.

## **2. Rethinking Welfare Chauvinism**

Prior research defines welfare chauvinism as support for the exclusion of immigrants from the receipt of all or certain kinds of welfare (cf. Reeskens and van Oorschot, 2012; Waal et al., 2010). While we do not contend that this form of chauvinism exists, we argue that another expression of the same sentiment is much more salient in current public debates across Europe.

Like elsewhere, large-scale immigration has been met by a rise in radical right-wing populism in Sweden, too. Politicians and parties adhering to this ideology argue that there is a zero-sum tradeoff between the government's ability to "help immigrants" in the broadest sense of government spending, usually without specifying which exact kinds of programs are being funded, and investments in welfare schemes for putative native-born citizens. This idea

of irreconcilability is not only purported by Sweden's increasingly successful radical right-wing party, the *Sweden Democrats*, but also by the conservative *Moderaterna* party. This became evident when former Prime Minister Reinfeldt, when asking Swedish voters to "open their hearts" to refugee immigration, publically announced that there can either be welfare (for natives) or immigration (of presumably poor people), as both are not affordable.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, outside of Sweden, the British "Vote Leave" campaign in the recent Brexit referendum also gathered much support by promising to put a stop of supposedly economically draining, EU-mandated migration into the UK to focus on jobs and welfare for native Brits instead.

In keeping with the nature of the zero-sum claims made in Swedish and other European debates on migration and welfare, we conceptualize and later measure welfare chauvinism as the contrast between native-born Swedes' support for two types of group-specific government spending: on the elderly, a large and mainly native-born group of welfare recipients; and on immigrants, for whom it is unclear whether spending takes the form of welfare payments or other kinds of investment (e.g., language courses, housing development, etc.).

### **3. Immigration and Support for Group-Specific Government Spending**

The so-called *anti-solidarity hypothesis* was the first to gain prominence in the debate on how the presence of large immigrant populations might influence the stance of majorities on government spending. Conceived in the era of democratic nation building, Western welfare states established citizenship as their primary criterion of belonging, distinguishing those who deserve support and empathy from those who are considered "strangers" and expected to fend for themselves (Marshall, 2009 [1950]). Some early European nation states, such as Belgium, comprised ethnically and religiously heterogeneous populations and were nevertheless able to

establish welfare communities based on territoriality (Pontusson, 2006). Yet today, ethno-cultural markers of belonging to a visible majority appear to matter greatly for the attribution of deservingness and hence for support for government spending targeting immigrants as opposed to natives (Clarke and Fink, 2008; van Oorschot, 2006). In other words, given large-scale immigration from diverse countries of origin, naturalization into the political national community by right and title does not automatically imply inclusion in terms of majority solidarity. The anti-solidarity hypothesis thus predicts that immigrants, as “outsiders”, cannot be made part of the welfare community without arousing the opposition of the national majority (Freeman, 1986; Kitschelt and McGann, 1995).

Existing studies vary in whether they regard anti-solidarity as motivated by group- or self-interest and do not provide empirical tests capable of untangling the two pathways. We briefly describe both theoretical pathways in turn, before section 5 explains how we restrict our sample to investigate them statistically.

### *3.1 Ingroup Favoritism and Group Interest*

A large body of research in social psychology reveals the importance of ingroup favoritism, a tendency to favor and show greater concern for the wellbeing of one’s own group, when allocating resources (Brewer, 1979; Tajfel, 1970, 1982). According to Turner et al. (1979), unwillingness to share with the outgroup is independent of ingroup members’ personal self-interest in the resources in question, as ingroup favoritism has been shown to be rooted in concerns for the group rather than the self. Experimental evidence even suggests that individuals are considerably more competitive over or protective of given resources when they perceive themselves as members of groups rather than as single, non-attached actors (Tajfel, 1982: 15).

Most important for the purpose of our study, both people's willingness to share and their propensity to reciprocate when shared with are stronger when the social and ethno-cultural distance among individuals is small (Bowles and Gintis, 2000). This suggests two hypothetical pathways into welfare chauvinism:

First, majorities who harbor negative prejudice and desire much social distance from others who do not belong to their ethno-cultural ingroup may be more likely to oppose spending on immigrants and favor spending on natives instead, disregarding their knowledge or experience of how much immigrants actually benefit. In line with this notion, Blumer noted that majorities derive their abstract images of ethnic outgroups "in the area of the remote and not the near," arguing that the immediate experience of who gets what does little to alter notions manifested in the "public arena," where prejudice may indeed be salient (1954: 6). In other words, prejudice may suffice to raise welfare chauvinism.

The literature investigating the interplay of anti-immigrant prejudice and majority attitudes toward welfare remains relatively sparse. To our knowledge, none of the existing studies test explicitly whether prejudice matters for welfare attitudes net of majorities' experience of, for instance, immigrant unemployment as an indicator of actual welfare receipt or lacking economic integration. One of the few studies addressing the joint relevance of prejudice and the presence of non-natives for majority welfare preferences was published by Senik et al. (2008). Analyzing European Social Survey data from 22 countries, they found that a negative association between the perceived national share of immigrants and support for the welfare state was present only in those respondents who disliked immigrants. Gorodzeisky (2013) also showed that perceived economic and cultural threat only came to bear upon the willingness of Israeli survey respondents to keep non-Jewish workers from accessing basic social rights when it was mediated by prejudice.

Studying the interplay of subjective perceptions and empirical realities, Spies and Schmidt Catran (2015) found that subjective perceptions of cultural and economic threat were stronger predictors of social spending preferences than objective measures of immigrants' presence and economic integration in Switzerland. Focusing on support for different types of welfare rather than generalized welfarism, Goldschmidt (2015) showed that native-born Germans' desire for social distance significantly predicted their opposition to government assistance for the unemployed, among whose beneficiaries residents with a migration background tend to be overrepresented. Importantly, the effect of affective prejudice (social distance) appeared to be independent of respondents' subjective assessment of the "economic burden" implied by immigrants' reliance on government assistance (ibid.).

Second, social distance and ingroup favoritism may only become relevant for majority attitudes toward government spending when those who are perceived to benefit are also the most different from the majority with regard to important ingroup/outgroup markers, such as race, ethnicity, and language (Bowles and Gintis, 2000: 45). In other words, it is the association between lacking economic integration and "otherness" that matters, not "otherness" and the disliking of immigrants alone.

There are a variety of spheres in which majorities may experience and develop notions of immigrant integration. Among them, residential neighborhoods have received most attention. Because neighborhoods are small enough to be known by their inhabitants, neighborhood characteristics likely serve as bases for the formation of attitudes and extrapolations to the general (see Hamilton and Troler [1986] and Rydgren [2004] on generalizing and stereotyping as cognitive coping mechanisms). For instance, if the number of unemployed immigrants is high where a given respondent lives, said respondent may be more likely to assume that immigrants tend to be unemployed throughout the municipality, county, etc., than someone who does not observe immigrant unemployment on a daily basis. If this is

the case, we should expect that the experience of immigrant unemployment in the neighborhood context should be positively associated with native-born Swedes' likelihood of being welfare chauvinistic rather than generally supportive of or opposed to group-specific government spending.

Though many studies have investigated the relationship between majority welfare support and measures of immigrant outgroup sizes or ethnic diversity (see Stichnoth and Van der Straeten [2013] for a detailed review), much fewer have been able to test the anti-solidarity hypothesis by considering immigrants' economic integration. Moreover, disregarding the fact that the anti-solidarity proposition does not necessarily predict a decline in support for the welfare state per se, but rather in support for government spending that benefit outgroups, existing studies have overwhelmingly examined generalized support for welfare rather than welfare chauvinism.

A notable exception in regard to our first criticism is a recent study by Burgoon (2014). Looking at a sample of 22 European societies, Burgoon concluded that the negative relationship between the country-level percentage of foreign-born residents and majority support for welfare is conditional upon the extent to which immigrants are represented among the unemployed and the recipients of social benefits in respondents' more immediate environments. Breaking the level of analysis down to 96 European regions within 14 countries, Finseraas (2012) also found that support for redistribution among wealthy citizens in particular is lower when the proportion of ethnic minorities among the poor is high. Studying Germany as a single case, Stichnoth (2012) found a weakly negative association between native-born Germans' support for unemployment assistance and the share of immigrants among the unemployed at the county level. Mirroring Stichnoth's study, Luttmer (2001) showed that white Americans' support for redistribution also declines as the percentage of black welfare recipients residing in their neighborhood rises. Interestingly,

black Americans are less likely to support social assistance if they live in communities with larger percentages of white recipients as well, but both black and white Americans' attitudes are not related to the local share of welfare beneficiaries belonging to their own ethnic group.

All in all, past research seems divided as to whether negative prejudice against immigrants may inhibit natives' willingness to share government funds directly or whether it rather mediates the effect of actually experienced immigrant integration or reliance on government assistance (cf. Bowles and Gintis, 2000). Drawing on this divide, we test the following hypotheses:

*H1 (ingroup favoritism due to prejudice/social distance):*

Negative prejudice against immigrants is positively associated with native-born Swedes' likelihood of being welfare chauvinistic, net of their actual experience of immigrant unemployment in their neighborhood of residence.

*H2 (ingroup favoritism due to lacking outgroup integration):*

Experience of immigrant unemployment in the neighborhood context is positively associated with native-born Swedes' likelihood of being welfare chauvinistic.

*H3 (prejudice as a mediator of lacking outgroup integration):*

The direct observation of immigrant unemployment in the neighborhood of residence is associated with a desire for greater social distance (affective prejudice), which then increases the likelihood of welfare chauvinism.

### ***3.2 Compensation and Self-Interest***

The neighborhood is not the only social sphere with the potential to influence majority attitudes. Most adults spend nearly as much of their time at workplaces as they do at home. One set of hypotheses has already stated that observing immigrant unemployment in the

neighborhood context is likely to trigger ingroup favoritism and the exclusivist pursuit of ingroup welfare, even among those who are themselves working and hence unlikely to compete directly for the same kinds of resources as poor or unemployed immigrants and natives. Foreign colleagues at the workplace may, however, be competition for a very different set of tangible economic resources, such as wages. Immigrants with qualification levels similar to or exceeding those of the majority population are particularly relevant competitors. The *compensation hypothesis* thus predicts that the increased presence of qualified immigrants leads natives to fear wage depression and job loss, which ultimately causes them to demand more social protection (Finseraas, 2008), or that less be spent on immigrants.<sup>2</sup> While experiences in the neighborhood may trigger a group-interest-based desire for the exclusion of immigrants even among comparatively well-off natives, workplace encounters may thus incentivize chauvinism based on self-interest. We test

*H4 (self-interest and compensation):*

Experience of immigrant competition at the workplace is positively associated with native-born Swedes' likelihood of being welfare chauvinistic.

Since most adults are exposed to both workplace and neighborhood settings, we have to ask how both sets of experiences interact to shape preferences for government spending. One possible scenario is that the combined threat to group- and self-interest increases majority chauvinism more than one without the other. This line of reasoning is supported by Breznau and Eger (2016), who find that majorities' material self-interest and their understanding of group-boundaries, that is, the degree to which they seek to defend their (in-)group interest by excluding immigrants, interact to shape support for the welfare state. We thus test



*H5 (self-interest moderates group-interest):*

The positive relationship between the proportion of unemployed immigrants in the neighborhood and native Swedes' likelihood of being welfare chauvinistic is moderated by exposure to immigrant co-workers of similar qualification, with higher workplace exposure strengthening the neighborhood-level association (or vice versa).

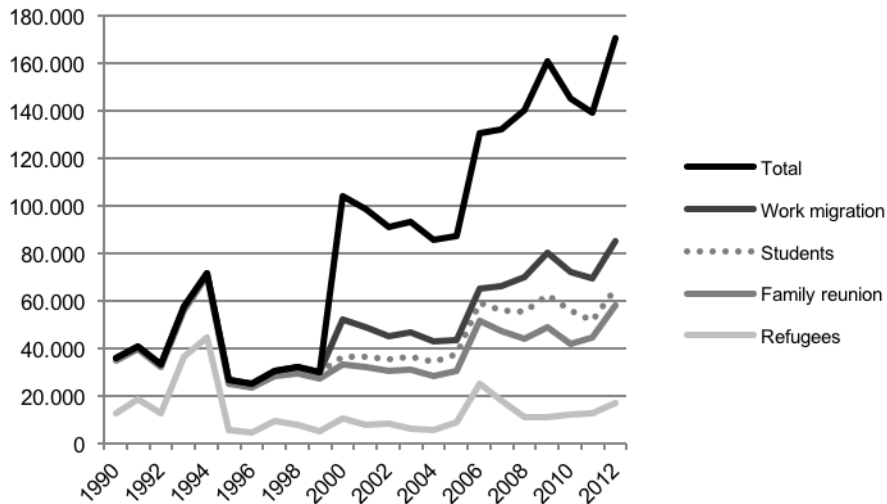
To address the issue of competitive qualifications, we distinguish between coworkers from EU 27 and non-Western countries of origin.

To our knowledge, no prior study has investigated job competition at the level of workplaces as a source of low solidarity with immigrants as opposed to natives. However, investigating majority demands for compensation, expressed as support for welfare in general, a few recent papers have nevertheless provided evidence for the compensation argument. Brady and Finnigan (2014) have shown that residents of 17 wealthy democracies were significantly more likely to demand higher social spending on health, pensions, and unemployment as their home countries' net migration increased. In addition, they found that immigration flows were negatively associated with support for government intervention that is explicitly universal in character, thus precluding the exclusion of immigrants. They take this to suggest that immigration "heightens perceptions of competition, instability, and insecurity," increasing both support for government compensation and welfare chauvinism (Brady and Finnigan, 2014: 35). While Brady and Finnigan's study does not allow us to infer where and how this sense of competition and insecurity might be experienced, Burgoon et al. (2012) showed that natives across European societies who face higher levels of foreign-born competition in their employment sectors are significantly more likely to display pro-redistribution attitudes. They also interpret their finding to signify that native majorities' fear of losing jobs and wages due to foreign competition spurs their demand for redistributive government intervention (cf. Finseraas, 2008).

#### 4. Sweden as a Test Case

In the 1950s and 1960s, government-mandated labor migration schemes caused a first wave of large-scale migration to Sweden, introducing a previously unknown component of diversity to the Swedish welfare community. Even after the labor migration policy was discontinued in the 1970s, family reunions, work-related immigration, and refugee inflows from countries plagued by humanitarian crises continued to increase Sweden's foreign-born population. Figure 1 shows that between 1990 and 2012 alone, the number of non-natives granted residency has nearly quintupled, from about 35,000 to 170,000 persons per year. The vast majority of foreign-born residents settled in Sweden for work purposes. However, given the ongoing refugee crisis and the observable, widely discussed and reported differences of many asylum seeker groups (e.g., in terms of religion and language), it is likely that majority attitudes toward immigrants' inclusion in the welfare state are currently driven by citizens' stance on refugees. Public opinion may thus not account for the fact that Sweden's total foreign-born population is actually marked by a rather unique degree of diversity in national origins and social prospects, with the five largest groups hailing from Finland, Iraq, Poland, the former Yugoslavia, and Iran (Statistics Sweden, 2014).

Sweden is the EU country with the fourth highest number of foreign-born nationals per capita (exceeded only by Luxemburg, Malta, and Cyprus; Eurostat, 2015). Yet, as in many other countries, poverty and immigrant status are closely associated. In 2007, 28 percent of all immigrants born outside and 17 percent of those born inside the EU faced poverty in Sweden, while merely 11.5 percent of all native-born Swedes had similarly low income levels (Fritzell et al., 2012). This is also reflected in the over-representation of immigrants among the recipients of means-tested social assistance, where the immigrant/native ratio was 12 to 2 percent in 2008 (Gustafsson, 2011).



**Figure 1.** Number of residence permits granted to foreign-born persons (Sweden, 1990-2012)  
*Note:* Based on data from the Swedish Migration Board (2014)

Motivated by these realities, Eger (2010) studied the relationship between the size of immigrant populations across Swedish counties and individual attitudes toward social spending. Eger found that “the proximity of an [ethnic] outgroup negatively affects attitudes about the allocation of resources” (2010: 211). Her conclusion was supported by Dahlberg et al. (2012), who claimed to establish a causal link between ethnic heterogeneity and lowered majority support for redistribution. They did so by exploiting exogenous variation in non-Western immigrant shares resulting from a Sweden-wide policy operating between 1985 and 1994 that aimed at distributing newly arriving refugees evenly across the country’s municipalities (but see Nekby and Pettersson-Lidbom, 2012).

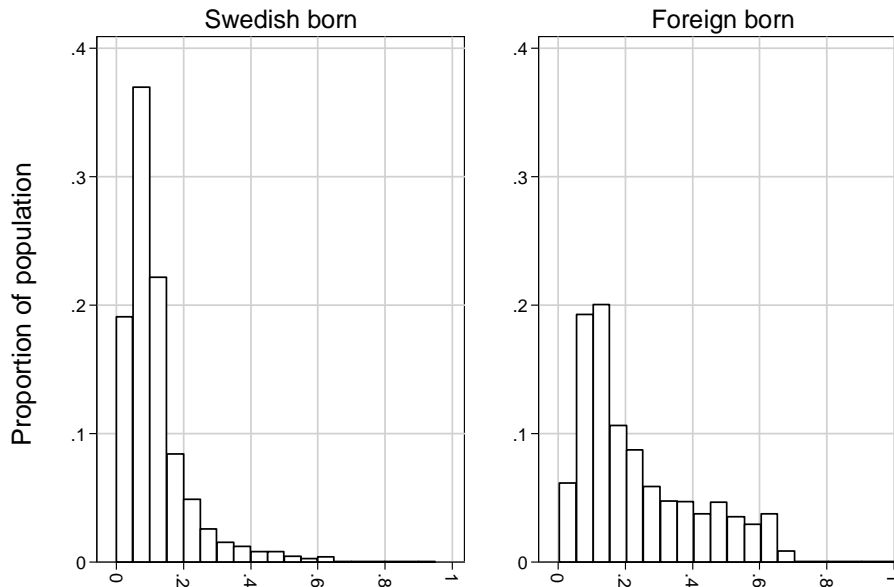
The use of government assistance by immigrants and, in particular, asylum seekers is contentiously debated in Swedish politics and media discourses. Yet Eger (2010) and Dahlberg et al.’s (2012) focus on support for social spending in general does not adequately reflect the ideological thrust of these debates. Rather than demanding the dismantling of the welfare state as a whole, Sweden’s radical right-wing party, the Sweden Democrats (SD), garners support around a clearly welfare chauvinistic demand of welfare ‘for natives only’ (Mulinari and Neergaard, 2014). Succeeding on their welfare chauvinistic agenda, SD entered

the national parliament for the first time in 2010, then securing 5.7 percent of the votes and further increasing their vote share to 12.9 percent in the 2014 general election.

The electoral success of the SD suggests that chauvinism and anti-immigrant sentiment are becoming increasingly manifest in some parts of the Swedish population (Rydgren and van der Meiden, 2016). At the same time, average attitudes toward immigration have become more positive over the past twenty years, and far more accepting than the European average (Demker 2014). But how are we to explain the co-existence of such widespread openness and fierce opposition to immigration in general and immigrants' dependence on welfare in particular?

One potential answer – and the focus of this paper – lies in the fact that individuals in Sweden receive their cues about immigration and its relation to issues of state-funded welfare from a variety of contexts. Importantly, while political debates and media reports tend to focus on larger, administratively relevant units of aggregation, such as municipalities, the degree to which such accounts become attitudinally relevant may well depend on where people actually spend their everyday lives.

Ethnic residential enclaves are very uncommon in Sweden and most immigrant-dense neighborhoods are heterogeneous with regard to national origins. Figure 2 shows that even though native-born Swedes and foreign-born residents are exposed to very different degrees of housing segregation, many of the native-born are exposed to at least some immigrants within their neighborhoods.



**Figure 2.** Neighborhood segregation (proportion foreign-born) experienced by native-born Swedes and foreign-born residents in 2012

*Note:* Calculations based on the Longitudinal Integration Database for Health Insurance and Labour Market Studies (LISA, national registry); neighborhoods are defined as SAMS units

In contrast to the neighborhoods, immigrants tend to be segregated from natives in workplaces. Åslund and Nordström Skans (2010) have reported that “even when accounting for age, gender, education, region, and industry, the average immigrant has 40 percent more immigrants in his or her workplace” than expected from a completely random distribution, while “natives are on average underexposed” to immigrant colleagues in Sweden (2010: 489). Foreign-born groups with low employment rates are most segregated from natives (*ibid.*).

Non-Western immigrants in particular face harsher economic conditions than native-born citizens in the Swedish labor market. Even seven years after immigration, non-Western immigrants’ levels of employment are well below those of native-born Swedes or Western immigrants (Nekby, 2002). They face substantially higher unemployment risks (Arai and Vilhelmsson, 2004), earn lower wages (le Grand and Szulkin, 2002), and tend to be segregated into lower-ranked jobs (Åslund and Nordström Skans, 2010) than natives. There is also some evidence of direct discrimination in the hiring process (Carlsson and Rooth, 2007).

Consequently, the Swedish workers most likely to experience contact with non-Western immigrants in particular are those who are also employed in lower-status, lower-income jobs, whose often precarious working conditions arguably render them concerned about government compensation for potential job loss. To address this relationship, we control for occupation types and investigate the relationship between welfare attitudes and the proportion of non-Western and non-Nordic, European colleagues separately.

## 5. Analytical Approach

To empirically test our hypotheses, we use data from the Swedish *Social Networks and Xenophobia Survey*. Telephone interviews were conducted with a random sample of the Swedish population between November 2013 and February 2014, and achieved a response rate of about 50 percent.<sup>3</sup> Additional respondent information was retrieved from administrative registers. Since this study aims at investigating the Swedish majority public's attitudes, foreign-born residents with non-Swedish parents as well as respondents with two foreign-born parents (second-generation immigrants) were excluded from the analyses. The final sample comprises 1,085 native-born Swedes who were employed at the time of the survey. Limiting the sample to those currently employed allows us to test all of our hypotheses on the same sample, allowing for comparability across models. Focusing on the employed excludes those who might oppose spending on immigrants because they compete for government aid that they themselves might be receiving (means-tested social assistance in particular). It also excludes those who are on old-age or disability pensions, which gives them a strong and immediate self-interest in safeguarding such provisions. By limiting the kind of immigrant-majority competition relevant to our respondents to the sphere of employment, we can test the *self-interest*-based compensation hypothesis by looking at workplace

compositions and the meaning of *group-interest* and ingroup favoritism (that should be independent of competition) by studying the neighborhood association.

The dependent variable is constructed from four answer combinations on two survey questions (Figure 3). In weighing spending on immigrants against spending on the old and the sick, who are likely thought of as native (van Oorschot, 2006), the measure seeks to capture the imagined zero-sum trade-off between government spending on immigrants and investments in welfare for natives that characterizes the politically salient form of welfare chauvinism we describe in Section 2.

		<b>Too <u>little</u> is spent on the old and the sick</b>	
		YES	NO
<b>Too <u>much</u> is spent on immigrants</b>	YES	28%	3%
	NO	62%	7%

**Figure 3.** Dependent variable  
*Note:* N=1,085

Levels of support for government intervention are known to be high among the Swedish majority, both over time and compared to other European societies (cf. Svallfors, 2011). It is thus not surprising that the majority (62%) of our Swedish sample supports increased spending on immigrants and the elderly alike. Yet, a non-trivial 28% believe that

the government spends too little on the old and sick, but too much on immigrants. They constitute our group of *welfare chauvinists*.

Since Sweden already invests quite a lot in old-age pensions, the group of generalized supporters (62%) is difficult to distinguish from those who do not agree that more should be spent on the elderly, but also do not think that too much is spent on immigrants (7%). Since we do not know whether they would like to see a cut in spending on the elderly, respondents might actually believe that current spending levels are “just right.” Coupled with the notion that more should be spent on immigrants, this support pattern might indicate generalized support for a non-discriminatory government investment strategy in its own right.

Overall, Figure 3 suggests that the main fault line in our Swedish respondents’ attitudes toward group-specific government spending is the question of whether immigrants should be included or not, with very few being opposed to spending on socially vulnerable groups more broadly (3%). In our analyses, we thus collapse the four categories into a binary outcome that predicts the likelihood of classifying as welfare chauvinistic as opposed to having any other spending preference. However, in the future, it would be interesting to construct our contrast measure for another, non-Nordic sample, where cell counts will likely be more balanced and all four answer combinations can be meaningfully contrasted. It should also be noted that we performed another set of analyses (available upon request) using multinomial logistic regression to estimate respondents’ likelihood of falling into any of the cells specified in Figure 3, with generalized support as the reference category. Throughout most of the multinomial models, we find that welfare chauvinism is the outcome category that is most persistently, statistically significantly related to our key predictors. Given that the associational findings are virtually the same for both our multinomial and logistic outcome specification, we decided to present the more easily accessible binary results.



Our predictors of main interest are variables describing respondents' neighborhoods of residence, workplaces, as well as a scale constructed to capture prejudice against immigrants (see Appendices 1 and 2 for a descriptive overview).

The neighborhood characteristic of primary interest is the proportion of foreign-born unemployed individuals among the total neighborhood population. Neighborhoods are defined as so-called SAMS (Small Areas for Market Statistics) units. SAMS units are based on local government areas within the larger municipalities and electoral districts. There are 9,200 SAMS areas in Sweden, nested within the 290 municipalities. Due to their small size and the typical structure of Swedish cities and towns, in which housing areas are built around their own local shopping, GP, and community centers, SAMS units can be expected to measure experienced neighborhood settings (cf. Edling and Rydgren, 2012).

For workplaces, our main predictors represent the proportion of co-workers born within the EU27 (excluding the Nordic Region) and the proportion of employees coming from outside the EU or the Nordic Region. The two measures are significantly positively correlated, but the strength of the correlation is very modest ( $r=.15$ ). This is likely due to the fact that EU and non-Western immigrants face different labor market opportunities and thus usually do not occupy the same types of workplaces (Adsera and Chiswick, 2007).

Prejudice is measured by the standard Bogardus social distance scale, which is constructed from items asking respondents whether they would mind having an immigrant marry into their family, become their boss, be their coworker, or live next door (Bogardus, 1933). The additive index ranges from 1 to 5, with higher values indicating a greater desire for distance (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .83$ ).

Since the survey is based on a random sample of the Swedish population and the number of neighborhoods and workplaces is large, we mostly observe only one case (for very few areas, up to three cases) per context. Consequently, modeling the neighborhood and

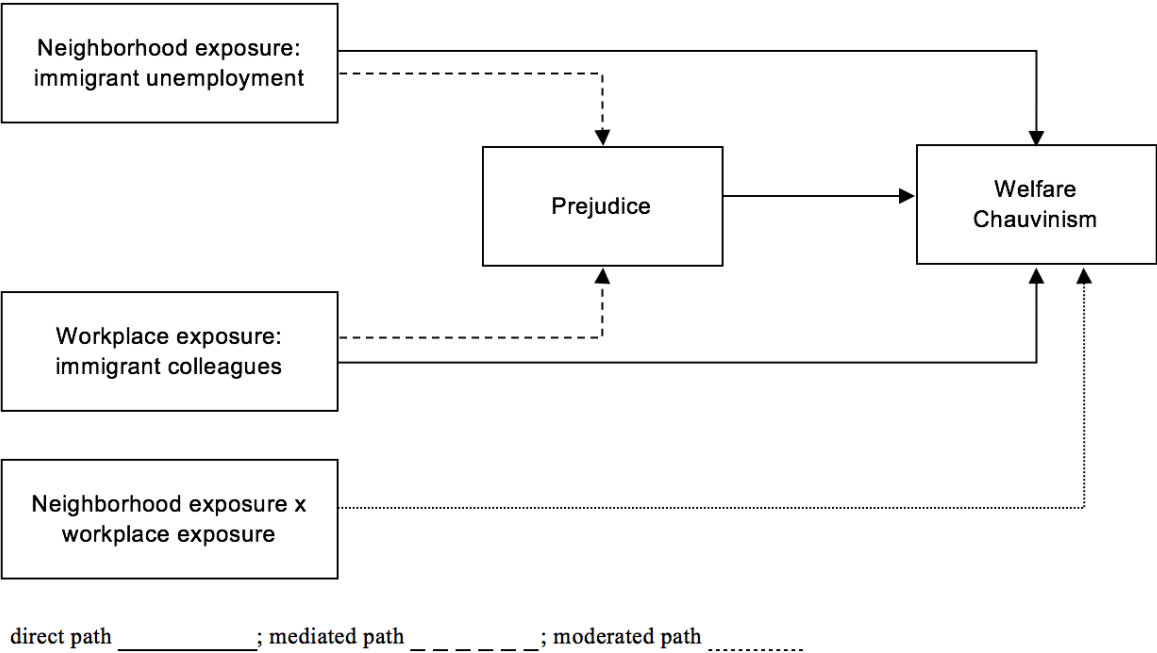
workplace associations in a multilevel framework is not possible, but the independence of observations is likely given and the traditional single-level approach seems appropriate. We do, however, adjust the standard errors for clustering within municipalities.

Given that our regression-based analyses are performed on cross-sectional data, the observed relationships must be understood as associations rather than (causal) effects. Self-selection is another issue raised by the design of our study. Is it likely that native-born Swedes who feel more positive toward redistribution and immigrants are more likely to, e.g., move into or stay in neighborhoods with higher proportions of (unemployed) non-native residents? We cannot exclude this possibility. However, we argue that self-selection by preferences for redistribution and native/non-native composition is much less likely to be an issue in workplaces than in areas of residence (Mutz and Mondak, 2006). For the neighborhood context, people with more negative attitudes toward immigrants and immigration can probably be expected to select out of places with large proportions of poor or unemployed immigrants. However, since these are also the people whom we would expect to be most likely to display exclusionary, welfare chauvinistic attitudes, self-selection should make our expected positive association less likely, not more. In other words, the fact that we find the neighborhood proportion of unemployed immigrants to be positively associated with the likelihood of being classified as welfare chauvinistic rather than generally supportive of welfare should be regarded as a rather conservative estimate, given the likely selection pattern.

To account for self-selection into neighborhoods as well as for alternative explanations of welfare attitudes, we control for a number of individual demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. These variables include neighborhood tenure, age, gender, civil status, the presence of children in the household, household income, educational attainment (in years), and a set of occupational indicators (e.g., unskilled, skilled, routine manual, etc.). In addition,

municipality, neighborhood, and workplace characteristics that might confound the relationship between the proportion of immigrants and welfare attitudes are considered as well (see Appendix 1).

**6. Findings**



**Figure 4.** Hypothesized pathways

Figure 4 summarizes the hypothesized pathways linking prejudice and majorities’ experience of immigrant integration and welfare chauvinism. In Table 1 (T1), we predict welfare chauvinism as defined by our binary indicator variable using logistic regression, reporting average marginal effects with municipality cluster-adjusted standard errors in parentheses. We start by estimating the direct associations between our outcome and prejudice as well as experience of immigrant unemployment in the neighborhood setting, before we turn to discussing how prejudice might mediate the latter association. Thereafter, we estimate the direct association between chauvinism and workplace exposure to immigrants, also testing whether the exposure variable moderates the neighborhood-level experience of immigrant unemployment.

**Table 1.** Prejudice and experience of immigrants' economic integration as predictors of welfare chauvinism

	<b>M1</b>	<b>M2</b>	<b>M3</b>	<b>M4</b>	<b>M5</b>
<b>Neighborhood</b>					
P foreign-born in unemployment	0.267* (0.13)	0.248* (0.12)	0.289* (0.13)	0.299* (0.14)	0.297+ (0.15)
IQR disposable hh income	-0.416+ (0.23)	-0.353+ (0.21)	-0.437* (0.22)	-0.438* (0.22)	-0.435+ (0.22)
ln density	-0.002 (0.01)	-0.002 (0.01)	-0.002 (0.01)	-0.002 (0.01)	-0.002 (0.01)
<b>Individual</b>					
Neighborhood tenure	0.002 (0.00)	0.001 (0.00)	0.002 (0.00)	0.002 (0.00)	0.002 (0.00)
Prejudice	–	0.118*** (0.01)	–	–	–
<b>Workplace</b>					
P EU27 colleagues	–	–	-0.118 (0.14)	-0.051 (0.23)	-0.118 (0.14)
P non-Western colleagues	–	–	0.008 (0.12)	0.011 (0.12)	0.041 (0.29)
P women	–	–	-0.193*** (0.04)	-0.192*** (0.04)	-0.193*** (0.04)
ln workplace size	–	–	0.004 (0.01)	0.004 (0.01)	0.004 (0.01)
<b>Interactions</b>					
imm. unemployment in nbh x EU colleagues	–	–	–	-0.628 (1.92)	–
imm. unemployment in nbh x non-Western colleagues	–	–	–	–	-0.195 (1.48)
Pseudo R-squared	0.142	0.201	0.153	0.153	0.153

+ p<0.10, \* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001

Note: N= 1,085; coefficients describe average marginal effects; standard errors in parentheses, adjusted for clustering within 232 municipalities; all models control for municipality characteristics (see Appendix 1) and additional individual socio-demographic variables (age, gender [female], civil status [single/married/widowed], presence of children in the household [yes/no], household income [SEK/month], education [years], occupation type [indicators]).

As expected, the association between a given respondent's degree of prejudice – her desire to exclude immigrants from her direct environments – and probability of being classified as welfare chauvinistic – believing that too little is spent on the old while too much is spent on immigrants, rather than choosing any other response configuration on these two items – is statistically significant and positive. This is true both in the bivariate setting (Appendix 3, A1) and after introducing an extensive set of control variables (T1, M2). Prejudice thus constitutes a statistically significant predictor of welfare chauvinism even net of respondents' actual experience of immigrant unemployment and putative dependence on government spending, rendering support for Hypothesis 1. The changes in predicted probabilities of chauvinism across levels of prejudice are quite substantial. A respondent with an average prejudice score of about 2 (out of 5, where 5 signifies the greatest desire for social distance) and mean values at each of the remaining covariates, is predicted to have a 25-percent probability of being classified as welfare chauvinistic. That probability increases to 42 percent with a prejudice score of 3, and again to 62 percent with a prejudice score of 4 (not shown; differences are statistically significant with  $p < 0.001$ ). But does prejudice constitute an independent pathway into chauvinism or is it rather an intervening variable, mediating the association between neighborhood exposure and our outcome?

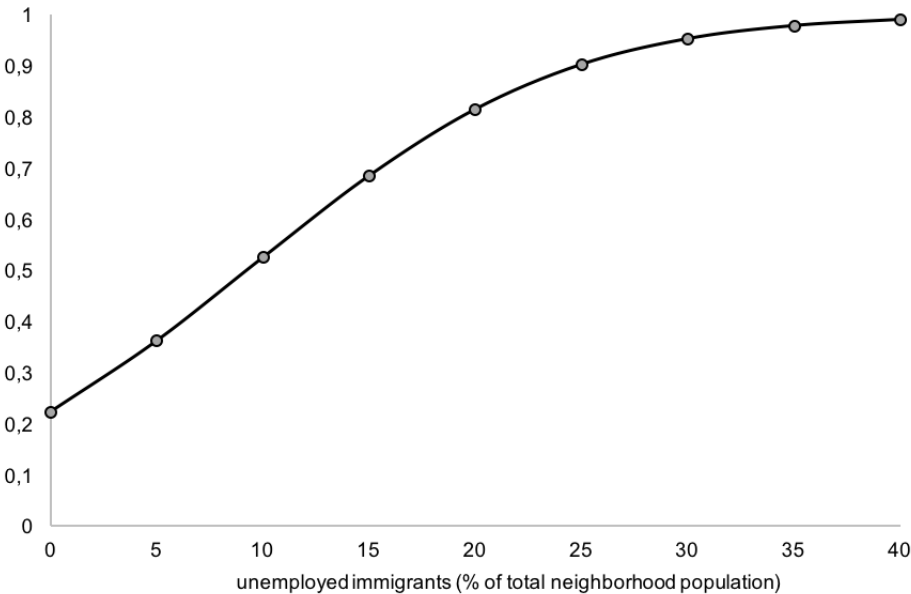
The estimation of mediation effects continues to be a very active field of research, resulting in a large variety of estimation procedures. While structural equation models are now widely used to estimate mediation involving continuous mediators and outcomes, the estimation and, above all, interpretation of mediation involving categorical variables within a generalized structural equation framework is still problematic. We thus follow the traditional four-step method of inferring mediation proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) and use the Product of Coefficients approach to estimate the magnitude of the mediation, utilizing the Stata command *binary\_mediation*, written by Ender (UCLA, Statistical Consulting Group).

After we establish that there is an association that might be mediated (Baron and Kenny's step 1; T1, M2), *binary\_mediation* estimates first, the association between our independent variable [IV] of main interest and the potential mediator [M] (step 2; IV as a predictor of M – not shown), and then establishes that M affects our outcome [Y] (step 3; M and X as predictors of Y; T1, M2). The magnitude of the indirect or mediated effect is then calculated as the product of the (standardized) coefficients for both separate paths ( $[X \rightarrow M] * [M \rightarrow Y]$ ).

Starting with step 1, we find that the association between the proportion of unemployed immigrants in a respondent's neighborhood and said respondent's probability of being classified as welfare chauvinistic is positive and statistically significant, both before (Appendix 3, A2) and after an extensive set of neighborhood, municipality, individual (T1, M1) and, eventually, workplace characteristics (T1, M3) are introduced to account for alternative explanations of the observed association. With the exception of neighborhood wealth, the proportion of unemployed immigrants attains the largest average marginal effect in the fully controlled models. To illustrate the magnitude of the association, Figure 5 shows predicted probabilities of chauvinism across levels of exposure to immigrant unemployment when all other variables included in Model 1 (T1) are held at their mean. At baseline, native-born Swedes who do not have any unemployed immigrants in their neighborhoods (4 percent of our respondents) have a 22-percent probability of being classified as welfare chauvinistic. However, once around 20 percent (our sample mean) of the neighborhood population are made up of unemployed immigrants, the predicted probability of chauvinism goes up to as much as 81 percent. In both the zero- and twenty-percent scenarios, the "mean respondent" under investigation is a 47-year-old, childless, single man, who has lived in his neighborhood for about 10 years. Of course, setting covariates at different levels will slightly change predicted probabilities, but the overall trend of quite rapidly increasing chauvinism with rising immigrant unemployment remains. We thus consider hypothesis 2 confirmed – the higher the

share of unemployed immigrants within a native-born respondents' neighborhood, the higher the likelihood of him or her harboring welfare chauvinistic attitudes.

Because we now know that both prejudice and the proportion of unemployed immigrants in the neighborhood are independently and positively associated with our outcome, we can exclude the possibility of full mediation and merely explore the possibility of prejudice serving as a partial mediator (step 4 in Baron and Kenny, 1986). However, we find the proportion of the total association between immigrant unemployment and chauvinism mediated by prejudice to be negligible and indeed not statistically significantly different from zero. We fail to establish that our neighborhood variable is statistically significantly correlated with the prejudice (given the fully specified model), which must be the case for the latter to serve as a mediator (step 2). We still perform step 3 and find that merely five percent of the total effect is mediated by prejudice. Using bootstrapping (500 replications), we estimate confidence intervals for our coefficients and, expectedly, find that they contain zero. We thus do not find support for Hypothesis 3.



**Figure 5.** Probability of welfare chauvinism across levels of immigrant unemployment

*Note:* Predicted probabilities from Model 1, Table 1; line drawn for illustrative purposes only, with probabilities being calculated in 5-percent steps from 0 to 40 percent unemployed immigrants in the neighborhood of residence and all covariates held constant at their mean; all differences across levels of exposure are statistically significant at  $p < .001$ .

In Model 3, we turn to investigating the *compensation hypothesis*, that is, the self-interest-based explanation of anti-solidarity. Neither working with non-Western nor European-born colleagues is statistically significantly associated with our binary outcome, both before and after controls are added to the model (cf. Appendix 3, A2 and A3; Table 1, M2). We do, however, have to concede, that those who work themselves and fear losses due to immigrant competition may not necessarily align their opposition to spending on immigrants with an endorsement of spending on the elderly, just by virtue of them being native. If it is self-interest that drives their attitudes toward government spending (cf. section 3.2), they might support investments that benefit them (working, native-born Swedes), but not other Swedes more broadly. This is something we cannot pick up with our contrast measure, but which studies operationalizing welfare chauvinism as exclusionary attitudes toward immigrants alone or studying support for the welfare state more broadly cannot disentangle either. The development of even more refined measures of group-specific spending preferences thus seems to be a promising avenue for future research, and our inability to confirm the compensation hypothesis (Hypothesis 4) should be regarded as tentative.

Looking at Models 4 and 5, we also see that the independently positive association between neighborhood exposure to immigrants in unemployment is not moderated, that is, intensified by workplace exposure to immigrants (Hypothesis 5). Unfortunately, given our relatively small sample (1,085 cases) and the resulting limitations in statistical power, we need to be wary of producing estimates liable to type II error when performing this kind of stratified analysis. In other words, it is quite possible that we are falsely retaining the null hypothesis according to which workplace encounters neither intensify nor abate the strongly positive association between immigrant unemployment and welfare chauvinism. Hopefully, a repetition of the survey used here will deliver a larger sample providing us with sufficient statistical power to reassess the interaction term.



## 7. Conclusion

Past research has well established that social solidarity, especially within the context of redistribution and welfare, and large-scale immigration are conflictual. This paper sought to contribute to our understanding of *how* this conflict comes about. Using Sweden as a case study, we investigated three hypothetical pathways into welfare chauvinism – the perceived tradeoff between government investments in the welfare of natives and spending on immigrants: via ethnic prejudice, operationalized as a desire for social distance; via the direct experience of immigrant unemployment and putative welfare receipt in the neighborhood context; and via immigrant competition at the workplace.

We found a strong and persistently positive association between the direct observation of immigrant unemployment in proximate neighborhood settings and native-born Swedes' propensity to prefer spending on the (native) elderly over spending on immigrants. This provides support for the frequently voiced concern that a lack in economic integration among immigrants can be detrimental to social solidarity (Burgoon, 2014; Finseraas 2012). As immigrants' integration into workplaces does not appear to have the expected chauvinism-bolstering effect, policies that seek to enhance social solidarity by providing new opportunities for work to decrease the association between immigrant-status and welfare receipt thus seem promising. However, due to statistical power issues, our non-significant workplace associations should be considered with care.

In an earlier survey experiment, Bay and Pedersen (2006) showed that a substantial sub-group among their Norwegian participants, who had initially been supportive of a universal basic income, became opposed once they were made aware that non-citizens would benefit too. This suggests that public discourses are likely to raise outgroup resentment and distancing, which has important consequences for social solidarity above and beyond

empirical realities of who benefits from what and why. Our finding that the desire for social distance from immigrants is positively associated with welfare chauvinism, even net of respondents' actual experience of immigrant unemployment, is equally telling in this regard. However, our understanding of how public discourses in media and politics structure support for different kinds of government intervention remains relatively limited (but see Petersen et al., 2011; Slothuus, 2007). Is it, for instance, the mere fact that immigrants are frequently mentioned as beneficiaries of government spending that turns majorities against supporting such investments or is it a more specific framing of immigrants as undeserving abusers of such support (a distinction also made by Bay and Pedersen, 2006: 432)? And is it, in turn, possible to harness public communications to alter preconceived chauvinism, or do such discourses only serve to harden existing prejudice with little or no power to abate it? Future research on the mechanisms linking large-scale migration and social solidarity will be crucial to ultimately reconcile both.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Key independent variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Prejudice <i>Bogardus social distance scale</i>	1.749	0.839	1	5
<b>MUNICIPALITY</b>				
Proportion foreign-born in unemployment	0.212	0.057	0.094	0.422
IQR disposable income <i>Interquartile range (<math>p_{75}</math>–<math>p_{25}</math>) of ln disposable income corrected for family size in municipality</i>	4.955	0.107	4.449	5.375
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD</b>				
Proportion foreign-born in unemployment	0.166	0.090	0	0.545
IQR disposable income <i>Interquartile range (<math>p_{75}</math>–<math>p_{25}</math>) of ln disposable income corrected for family size in SAMS.</i>	0.725	0.122	0	3.873
In density <i>In population density</i>	6.10	2.573	-1.554	10.306
<b>WORKPLACE</b>				
Proportion EU colleagues <i>Proportion of individuals born in one of the EU 27 member states (as of 2012, w/o Croatia), excluding the Nordic region</i>	0.020	0.055	0	1
Proportion non-Western colleagues <i>Proportion of individuals born outside of Europe, the US, Canada and Australia</i>	0.054	0.090	0	1
Proportion female colleagues	0.480	0.327	0	1
In establishment size	3.579	2.110	0	9.320

**Appendix 2. Correlations among key independent variables**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
(1) Prejudice	1.00									
<b>MUNICIPALITY</b>										
(2) P foreign-born in unemployment	0.08 (0.01)	1.00								
(3) IQR disposable hh income	-0.07 (0.03)	-0.33 (0.00)	1.00							
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD</b>										
(4) P foreign-born in unemployment	0.05 (0.12)	0.38 (0.00)	-0.14 (0.00)	1.00						
(5) IQR disposable hh income	-0.06 (0.06)	-0.18 (0.00)	-0.06 (0.04)	-0.12 (0.00)	1.00					
(6) ln density	-0.09 (0.00)	-0.27 (0.00)	0.05 (0.08)	0.06 (0.05)	0.09 (0.00)	1.00				
<b>WORKPLACE</b>										
(7) P non-Western colleagues	-0.04 (0.17)	-0.14 (0.00)	0.01 (0.86)	-0.03 (0.40)	0.10 (0.00)	0.21 (0.00)	1.00			
(8) P EU colleagues	-0.03 (0.27)	-0.10 (0.00)	-0.02 (0.50)	-0.06 (0.04)	0.03 (0.25)	0.02 (0.46)	0.15 (0.00)	1.00		
(9) P female colleagues	-0.20 (0.00)	-0.02 (0.57)	-0.00 (0.87)	0.01 (0.75)	-0.00 (0.87)	0.05 (0.13)	0.06 (0.06)	-0.04 (0.24)	1.00	
(10) ln establishment size	-0.09 (0.00)	-0.07 (0.02)	0.01 (0.86)	-0.03 (0.33)	-0.00 (0.90)	0.09 (0.00)	0.24 (0.00)	0.09 (0.00)	0.11 (0.00)	1.00

Note: N=1,085; p values in parentheses

**Appendix 3: Bivariate Associations**

	A1	A2	A3	A4
Prejudice	0.166*** (0.01)			
<b>Neighborhood</b>				
P foreign-born in unemployment		0.332* (0.14)		
<b>Workplace</b>				
P EU27 colleagues			-0.113 (0.21)	
P non-Western colleagues				-0.073 (0.14)
Pseudo R-squared	0.004	0.000	0.000	0.117

+ p<0.10, \* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001

*Note:* N= 1,085; coefficients describe average marginal effects; standard errors in parentheses, adjusted for clustering within 232 municipalities

## Notes

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- 1 In his speech on August 16, 2014, Reinfeldt stated: “I can already say that there will be substantial costs to accommodate these people [asylum seekers]. In fact, the costs are so extensive that it will put further restrictions on what we can do within the limits of our public finances. Therefore we promise almost nothing in this election; there will be no room for it” (authors’ translation from Swedish as cited in Pettersson Normark, 2014).
- 2 Another potentially counteracting mechanism may also be at play: If we follow the logic of our previous argument on how individuals generalize from their particular experience, then people working with a higher number of immigrants could be assumed to take their workplace encounters to imply that the unemployment rate among immigrants is relatively low (at least in comparison to the assessment made by those working in less heterogeneous workplaces). For instance, if native-born workers meet a lot of employed immigrants, they may generalize to the population of immigrants and assume that their presence implies lower costs to the welfare state than widely suggested, making these natives indeed less likely to display welfare chauvinism. While this is neither in line with our empirical findings nor with prior research, this alternative theoretical pathway should be borne in mind.
- 3 Despite the relatively low response rate, comparisons with external administrative statistics confirm that our sample represents the Swedish population well in terms of age, sex ratio, educational attainment, and support for various political parties.