

The Immigration Issue and the Transformation of Social Policies in the 21st Century: Challenges for Public Management

Mauricio Olavarria-Gambi¹ · María Esther del Campo-García² · Manuel Sánchez Reinón³

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Background

By the beginning of 21 st century, Alesina and Glaeser (2004) ventured that support for welfare policies in Europe would decline as ethnic diversity increased, as had already occurred in the United States. Banting and Kymlicka (2006) argued, in turn, that natives would be more skeptical about redistributing resources to people they did not trust and with whom they hardly identified. On the other hand, Kitschelt and McGann (1995) had already pointed out that voters and parties could adopt different positions on the economic (pro-welfare) and sociocultural (anti-immigration) dimensions of political conflict, and that these dimensions would be deeply interrelated. Their almost original definition of “welfare chauvinism” captures the ideological positions of parties and voters according to which the welfare state is “a system of social protection for those who belong to the ethnically defined community and who have contributed to it” (1995:22).

Although increased immigration has not always necessarily translated into a decline in support for welfare policies, it has been able to lead to a greater public

✉ Mauricio Olavarria-Gambi
mauricio.olavarria@usach.cl

María Esther del Campo-García
delcampo@cps.ucm.es

Manuel Sánchez Reinón
mansan12@ucm.es

¹ Departamento de Estudios Políticos, Universidad de Santiago de Chile, Santiago, Chile

² Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociología, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Madrid, Spain

³ Facultad de Trabajo Social, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Madrid, Spain

favoring dual and more restrictive social policies for immigrants. This is what is known as the chauvinist approach to social protection, according to which immigrants should not be entitled to the same level of social benefits as natives. The success of right-wing parties in mobilizing the traditional working class through nativist proposals, along with the resulting pressure on these parties to position themselves regarding social policies or the labor market, partly explains the relevance acquired by welfare chauvinism in academic, but also public, debate.

While in countries such as Sweden and Germany a negative relationship between regional immigration variation and attitudes towards social protection policies has been repeatedly shown, comparative research (Brady & Finnigan, 2013) has empirically questioned the existence of such a negative relationship. However, more recent studies, such as that of Eger and Breznau (2017), suggest that when immigration is measured at the regional level, a negative impact on support for inclusive social policies is observed.

Early scholars used the term “welfare chauvinism” in the context of the challenge posed by sociocultural changes to traditional links between voters and parties (Andersen and Bjørklund, 1990; Kitschelt and McGann, 1995). They argued that a new cultural divide between “left-libertarians” and “right-authoritarians” was responsible for the emergence of “new left” and new right parties. For these scholars, “welfare chauvinism” complemented the authoritarian values of manual workers while satisfying their desire for generous redistribution. Subsequent research (Afonso & Papadopoulos, 2015; Afonso & Rennwald, 2018; Röth et al., 2017) revealed that social protection policies that exclude immigrants have become a cornerstone of the socioeconomic agenda, both in electoral campaigns (Ennsner-Jedenastik, 2016; Koning, 2013) and in power (Chueri, 2020). Moreover, recent demand-side studies reinforce the idea that supporters of parties favoring “welfare chauvinism” have a strong preference for workfare-ism and judge welfare recipients based on their deservingness (Busemeyer et al., 2021), regardless of their attitudes towards immigration (Attewell, 2021).

It is important to continue and deepen this line of research on the impact of growing migration movements on the social policies of governments, as well as how these relate to the increase in the number of immigrants in these countries, as well as public attitudes toward them, in a context of economic uncertainty and, especially in the case of Latin America, of citizen insecurity.

Similarly, scholars should begin to think more systematically about social policy in these new contexts and how it relates to existing theories about the development of state capacities to manage social policy, and even to democracy.

Are we witnessing a global “social policy transformation”? Additionally, can failure to address poverty and inequality be morally legitimized? The new model of social protection, at least in some European cases, suggests that not only is it legitimate for the state to fail to address poverty among its population, but that combating poverty may be morally wrong. The moral separation between the “deserving” and “undeserving” of social benefits fuels the legitimization of unprecedented inequality, with the blessing of members of the same working class who have historically advocated for redistribution and the backing of mainstream parties.

Both case studies and comparative analyses will be accepted. The topic will be addressed from a transnational, national-state and subnational perspective. Contributions with a comparative perspective, including Europe, Latin and North America as well Oceania are encouraged. Articles using quantitative methods and qualitative approaches such as critical discourse analysis, grounded theory, or focus groups may be submitted.

Examples of Suitable Topics for the Special Issue

- Increased ethnic diversity and dualization and more restrictive social policies for immigrants.
- Control-focused migration policies change in the 21 st Century in Latin America.
- Competition within national bureaucracies to change a rights-based migration policy for a more security control-focused policy.
- Challenges to state capacities to manage social policy under migration policy pressures to change.
- Citizen's perceptions on social benefits for immigrants and the design of social policy.
- Political polarization and the design of social policy for immigrants.
- Demigration and Reverse Migration.
- Case Studies on Immigration, Anti-Immigration, and Reverse Migration.

Public Organization Review is the fastest growing TOP refereed Journal in Social Sciences. POR is a Q1 in Law in Scimago Journal Ranking since of 2024 and is posed to receive the Q1 with SSCI ranking in all areas of social sciences, including in public administration and management, business, and economics. Submissions to POR have increased more than doubled and in the mid-600 by mid-December 2025, and are expected to hit 700, while sustaining the selectivity of 15–20% per year.

Proposals and Manuscripts

Proposals should clearly present: (1) a descriptive title; (2) a statement of theme and purpose that includes a problem statement; (3) research questions, including descriptive and explanatory parts; (4) a theoretical/literature basic, briefly outlining central theories and concepts; (5) the 'originality' and significance of the paper; (6) a brief and clear methodology statement that includes, for example, sources of data and tools and methods; and (7) the paper's added value including potential contributions to knowledge (generalizability). Proposals should not exceed the 2-page limit.

Completed manuscripts should not exceed 30 pages double spaced (or 8000 words), inclusive of all tables, figures, and charts. APA style with third person writing is required. Style guidelines are on the POR website.

Timetable to Publication

Interested scholars are invited to submit proposals of approximately 800 to 1000 words POR by March 31, 2026. Proposing authors will be notified by May15-20, 2026.

Draft manuscripts of accepted proposals are due by August 31, 2026.

Authors of draft manuscripts will receive a preliminary review by October 31, 2026 from the Guest Editors; they will include:

- (1) a recommendation to complete the manuscript likely with some suggested revisions.
- (2) a recommendation to revise and resubmit with more substantive revisions; or.
- (3) a decision that the manuscript will not be accepted – consider submitting it to a different journal. A review with a (1) or (2) recommendation does not guarantee acceptance of the final manuscript.

Final manuscripts are due December 15, 2026. Final manuscripts will be double-blind reviewed during January-March 2027.

Final reviews and decisions will be posted on POR's Editorial Manager's Site by March 31, 2027.

The Special Issue will be published in POR: Online by June 30, 2027, as they are accepted and in print, in September 2027.

Proposals and manuscripts should be submitted to either the Editor-in-Chief of POR, or any of the Guest editors—see below.

Questions about the substance or process for proposals, manuscripts, or the Special Issue should be submitted to a Guest Editor.

Editor-In-Chief of Public Organization Review (POR): Professor Ali Farazmand, Florida Atlantic University. afarazma@fau.edu.

Special Issue Guest Editors:

Mauricio Olavarria-Gambi, University of University of Santiago, Chile, mauricio.olavarria@usach.cl

Special Issue Guest Co-Editors:

María Esther del Campo García, Complutense University of Madrid, delcampo@cps.ucm.es

Manuel Sánchez Reinón, Complutense University of Madrid, mansan12@ucm.es

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