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Author(s): Lillie, Nathan; Bontenbal, Ilona; Ndomo, Quivine

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Welfare regimes and labour market integration policies in Europe

Nathan Lillie, Ilona Bontenbal and Quivine Ndomo

Introduction

Migrant labour market integration (LMI) is widely regarded as important both to the migrants themselves, and to the economic and social welfare of the host countries. Because migrants, for a variety of reasons, tend to be less successful in host country labour markets than natives, governments often offer various kinds of support to migrants in finding employment. Migrant integration is often equated with LMI, and policy tools to promote LMI are a form of active labour market policy (ALMP). LMI policies and services consist of practical measures aiming to help migrants, refugees or asylum seekers find employment, or to improve their prospects for finding a job matching their career goals and potential. The form and extent of the offered support varies greatly between countries, with some offering few government services, or services narrowly targeted to small groups (in some cases relying on the third sector), while others have well-resourced bureaucracies offering systematically designed services. The extent and character of LMI policy regimes reflect their embeddedness in broader national welfare regimes, and the role of ALMP in it.

We define LMI policy inductively, based on the active labour market assistance that we find offered to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the host countries we investigate. We focus on assistance specifically offered due to their status as migrants seeking to join the job market of their new host state, although many of the policy tools, such as vocational education programmes, are also used to assist native job seekers. Others, such as language courses, are specifically targeted to migrant needs.

We find that integration policies embed deep contradictions, reflecting the way a particular host country engages with migrants generally. While, in general, host countries seek to limit access to welfare state services, including ALMP services, by non-citizens, they also seek to exploit migrants' labour power and skills. LMI services, like ALMP generally (Greer et al, 2017), tend to be caught between a political imperative to punish and control, and a functional imperative to assist. Well-functioning LMI promises to channel less

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employable migrants towards employment, an idea that, in concept at least, has broad political support. Nonetheless, xenophobic political sentiment and poorly designed policies following from these have, in some of the analysed countries, undermined the goals of LMI policies, as well as made them more punitive towards migrants in intent and outcome. Likewise, there is often a tension between migration management systems, which through various mechanisms function to keep migrants precarious and therefore cheap and highly exploitable, and the stated goals of LMI policies, which often seek to recognise and develop migrants' human capital.

We rely on seven national empirical case studies of the policy enablers and barriers to migrant LMI conducted under the auspices of the SIRIUS project (see Bontenbal and Lillie [2019] for the seven national reports). The seven countries in focus are the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Italy, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. In the cases of Greece, Italy, the Czech Republic and the UK, low levels of aggregate ALMP spending correspond with poorly funded, narrowly targeted and/or uncoordinated LMI support for migrants. Responsibility for integration shifts to individual migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and their networks, and to civil society actors. Finland and Denmark have a more top-down approach with national level policies guiding national and local approaches to LMI. Switzerland has decentralised LMI policy to the cantons, who manage it through intensive civil society engagement, consistent with how the Swiss welfare state and society is organised. Finland and Denmark have the best funded LMI policies, although restrictive immigration policies, particularly in Denmark, work counter to LMI policy goals.

The text is organised in six sections. The next section summarises relevant literature and the theoretical framework of the chapter, followed by a brief section on methodology. Next is a case-by-case characterisation of LMI policy environment and actual policies in the seven research countries. The following section offers a discussion of findings, while the final section wraps up the chapter with concluding remarks.

Welfare, active labour market policy and migrant labour market integration

In this chapter, we will introduce the framework that guides our analysis, namely the classification of states into various taxonomies according to their citizenship models and welfare models. Based on previous literature we will illustrate how these models shape migrants' LMI. LMI does not operate in a vacuum, but rather is embedded in national welfare regimes (as a social service to workers), capitalist production regimes (as a service to employers) and citizenship regimes (because of its interaction with migration policy). We will first describe the logics behind different typologies. After this, we

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will summarise the logics behind different types of welfare regimes, with an eye to how these relate to ALMP. Decommodification is central to welfare regime analysis, and this concept has a problematic relation to ALMP, and therefore also to LMI policy. By this reasoning, ALMP and therefore LMI should be marginal and stigmatised in less decommodifying regimes, but less so in social democratic regimes. Based on our analysis, it is not apparent, however, that this is the case.

Welfare regimes and labour market integration policies

Within many areas of social sciences, there have been attempts to classify national states into various typologies, based on stylised macro characteristics thought in some way to describe a nation's institutional setting or cultural milieu. Despite the well-known pitfalls of reifying nation states (Chernilo, 2011), typologies remain a fundamental comparative tool, because our global society is organised into nation states which share many characteristics, but can also be compared and contrasted on others. A major foundation stone of such approaches is that there are certain patterns of institutional relations which occur in some countries but not others. For example, some countries have industry level collective bargaining, while others do not. Some have contributory unemployment systems, while others do not. These characteristics form interconnected national institutional subsystems, which are interdependent, in the sense that changes to a subsystem reverberate throughout all the subsystems. This means the subsystems work together to create path dependencies and tendencies towards equilibrium states which are different for different countries.

There is not one settled typology, but how nations are categorised depends on the characteristics of the different subsystems, and different scholarly concerns. Thus, we have varieties of capitalism (Hall and Soskice, 2001), and national business systems (Morgan, 2007), which are concerned with structural incentives to economic actors. Welfare state regimes depend on political histories and class compromises (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Within migration and citizenship studies, integration has long been supposed to depend on national citizenship models, such as the exclusionist, assimilationist and multicultural models, which reflect the way in which national societies respond to the introduction of 'others' (Finotelli and Michalowski, 2012).

However, as Carrera (2006) points out, models based on conceptions of citizenship have to some extent eroded and they no longer explain integration policies (Carrera, 2006). In fact, migration regimes in Europe have become more similar, partly due to common regulation within the European Union (Koslowski, 1998; Helbling and Kalkum, 2018). Simultaneously also local governance appears to be rising in importance (Doomernik and Bruquetas-Callejo, 2016: 72–73). In fact, we see historical trajectories which reflect in

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part the policy failures of these models. In particular, we see the inability of exclusionist regimes to prevent long-term settlement of guest workers, the inability of assimilationist regimes to overcome the social exclusion of migrants, and the inability of multicultural regimes to prevent a right-wing populist backlash against migration.

Besides citizenship models, there has also been a good deal of discussion in the literature on welfare states on how models of welfare state shape immigration policy, insofar as states admit or refuse migrants, and the rights migrants have access to (Forsander, 2004). Models of welfare regime have, for example, been shown to shape women's levels of labour market integration, both in terms of labour market participation and career outcomes (Anxo et al, 2007). However, it is important to note that efforts to neatly plug migrant social rights into a 'world of welfare capitalism' taxonomy can sit uncomfortably with the real-world outcomes, because migrants do not automatically receive all the social benefits citizens are entitled to (Geddes, 2003). On the other hand, there are sometimes programmes and entitlements designed especially for them. In the first instance, state institutions are likely to fall back on existing policies or create new ones with analogues to those already in use; for example, a social democratic welfare state is associated with professionalised social workers, who apply their professional ethos and working methods to the problem of migrant integration (see, for example, Valtonen, 2001, 2016).

Welfare state 'regimes', like the other forms of stylised national archetypes used in comparative political economy, rely on historical institutionalist tracing of the rise of various class-based interest formation (Esping-Andersen, 1990), taking into account the timing of when particular events occur, and institutions arise (Therborn, 1984). Path-dependency is caused by the institutionalisation of interactions between the state, civil society and capital, and these tend towards certain equilibrium points, or regimes, each following its own logic. For example, Esping-Andersen lays out the liberal, conservative and social democratic welfare regimes, and his analysis shows that the political histories of the countries he places in these respective categories do indeed lead to sets of social welfare outcomes that correlate quite well to their respective welfare regimes.

The welfare regime shapes the LMI policy options and service offerings of each country case. A central characteristic of welfare regimes, defining a state's position within the taxonomy, is the degree of decommodification of labour, meaning the degree to which workers' standard of living is independent of labour market earnings, due to access to transfer payments and free services. If workers have access to non-labour income streams, such as social benefits can provide, this can raise their 'reservation wage', meaning the wage below which they would rather be unemployed than work. Social democratic regimes have the highest level of decommodification, with

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extensive benefits, and relatively less emphasis on means-testing and personal contributions. This means that workers are not required to be destitute to receive benefits, and that the level of benefits is relatively high regardless and not closely tied to contributions to benefit funds. This regime is universalist, in that it seeks to provide a decent living standard to all, independent of the market. 'All', in this context, however, refers to citizens, with migrants being potentially or actually excluded from universalist programmes, depending on their migration status. Denmark and Finland's welfare systems largely correspond to Esping-Andersen's social democratic welfare regime.

Conservative welfare regimes, compared to social democratic regimes, have a lower level of decommodification, because benefits tend to be tied to contributions, which relate to earnings. Thus, income transfers between social classes are less important because of the importance of occupational social insurance programmes that reproduce status differentials. There are fewer publicly provided services, particularly for families, a male-breadwinner bias in both tax and transfer systems, and a tendency to devolve authority over delivery and implementation of social policy to non-state actors. Italy's welfare state meets many of these criteria (D'Apice and Fadda, 2003). Additionally, family and relatives assume the central role in providing social buffer against social emergencies such as unemployment and disability, 'allowing' minimal state spending on social services including ALMP and service transfers (Lynch, 2009: 93). From the country cases selected for our research, the Greek system is frequently characterised in this way (see, for example, Ferrera, 1996; Katrougalos, 1996; Kallinikaki, 2010). The system designates the family as the main source of social provision even though the state invests minimally on family social welfare as well as ALMP. The Church also plays a significant role in shaping welfare policies, especially pertaining to the family, as well as directly delivering social services to seriously vulnerable groups (Kallinikaki, 2010: 122).

The UK is an archetypical example of the liberal regime especially concerning England, given that Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have own policies which make their welfare regimes different from the English one. This implies there is a 'residual' social welfare state. A minimal social welfare net is provided, but primarily to the destitute, so means-testing is important for programme eligibility. Services are often of poor quality and there is a stigma attached to using them. Switzerland is considered as a 'transitional' regime between liberal and conservative (Trampusch, 2010). The Czech welfare regime has been described as 'post-socialist', but developing into a conservative regime (Aspalter et al, 2009; Aspalter, 2011), which, however, is underfunded and therefore in practice functions as a liberal regime (Saxonberg and Sirovátka, 2009).

Welfare regimes encompass the size, capacity and generosity of the welfare state, but more than that they also determine who pays for it, and

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who receives benefits. There is therefore also a normative dimension, as the more tightly means-tested a service is, the more likely beneficiaries are to be stigmatised. Since ALMP and LMI programmes rely on employer acceptance of their beneficiaries, stigma is a problem.

Active labour market policy stigma and employer participation

Welfare regimes set the context in terms of the size of welfare state, how it is financed, who receives benefits, and how extensive those benefits are. While social democratic regimes are more universalist, and therefore provide a higher level of services to broader categories of people than conservative or liberal regimes, nonetheless, all differentiate between categories of recipients in terms of their 'deservingness' to receive benefits and services. A survey study conducted by Van Oorschot across 23 European countries finds that natives regard immigrants and refugees at the bottom of a hierarchy of 'deservingness' to receive benefits. There is remarkably little variation across countries, and it is true for universalist welfare states, as well as more marginal ones (van Oorschot, 2006). Active labour market measures, however, serve as a partial exception to this, and the reason is that ALMP is not an unambiguous benefit, but rather includes services, benefits and obligations designed to 'activate' the recipient. This means it is not (necessarily) decommodifying, but also involves commodifying elements.

ALMP programmes, similarly to other welfare state services, tend to be stigmatised if they are targeted exclusively at the destitute. ALMP programmes targeted exclusively towards marginal labour market participants risk being regarded by employers as substandard. Employer views on the programme determine whether they improve participants' labour market opportunities. Employers that have a favourable view of refugees as potential employees also tend to regard LMI programmes for refugees favourably (Fossati and Liechti, 2020). ALMP has been found to function better in systems where it is more universal and 'mainstream', and less well in systems where it is marginal and stigmatised. This is due to the fact that employer opinions about the quality of ALMP programmes and the workers participating in them is a key factor in determining whether those workers will be hired. It is therefore plausible that LMI would exhibit much the same dynamics.

ALMP use micro-level interventions to attempt to remove obstacles for labour market participation by marginal groups, upskill workers to better fill high demand jobs, and increase the efficiency of job searches for employers and job seekers. The core types of ALMP include one or more elements of the following: classroom or on-the-job training, job search assistance or sanctions for failing to search, subsidised private sector employment, and subsidised public sector employment. Passive elements might be designed to supplement the active ones, but without some form of active element, it

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is not an ALMP. ALMPs can be implemented by governments, including municipalities, or outsourced to private actors (Greer et al, 2017).

Within the welfare regimes literature, ALMPs hold an ambiguous position. ALMPs offer services free of charge, which workers in some cases find useful, but they are also very much oriented towards encouraging and enabling labour market participation. They tend also to have coercive elements, with the availability of passive income maintenance benefits being to some degree dependent on ALMP participation. They therefore can also be considered as commodifying elements, which in theory should not fit well into decommodifying social democratic welfare regimes, but do fit well into liberal regimes. On the other hand, since integration programmes are generally only targeted at the unemployed, there generally needs to be a mechanism in place to ensure the income of migrants during the training. 'Decommodification' is therefore not a straightforward metric for LMI policies.

As Martin and Swank (2004) show, however, ALMPs appear in different kinds of regimes, but they are fitted to the local regime, meaning that despite similar rhetoric and superficially similar policy design, their effects are different in different contexts. In Martin and Swank's analysis, Danish ALMP programmes fit well to the universalist Danish welfare state, while in the UK they tend to be characteristically more minimalist and narrowly aimed at the less well off. This has been identified as a problem for activation policies in the UK, for example, where employers perceive that lower quality workers participate in such programmes, in contrast to Denmark where employers see it as more of a mixed bag (Martin and Swank, 2004). Welfare state ideologies, as well as the various bureaucratic instruments and institutions which spring therefrom, give European host countries certain familiar tools to address the challenges posed by the perceived need to integrate new migrants. The functioning of these tools is not only related to the bureaucratic state apparatus, but also to private actors such as employers whose views on state policies can be key to their success. This insight can also be extended to the role of the third sector, which, as we will see in what follows, is a major actor, perhaps even *the* main actor in all our non-social democratic regime cases.

Methodology

This chapter applies qualitative meta-synthesis techniques to synthesise and summarise policy relevant conclusions from seven discrete and interconnected reports on the barriers and enablers to post-2014 migrants' LMI in the EU (Sandelowski et al, 1997; Zimmer, 2006). Specifically, the chapter develops a typology of the structure, and implication of migrant LMI policies implemented in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland,

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Greece, Italy, Switzerland and the UK. The core material reviewed consists of seven scientific reports, based on empirical research conducted by seven national teams participating in an international research consortium – Skills and Integration of Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers in European Labour Markets (SIRIUS), based in the seven countries (see Bontenbal and Lillie, 2019). Together, the seven reports constituted the main deliverable of the third work package of the SIRIUS project, which focused on the policy barriers and enablers to migrant LMI. Additionally, the chapter draws on the research project's national reports focusing on the role of civil society in the integration of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees and reports focused on individual enablers and barriers, as individual migrants and civil society emerge as central actors in migrant integration in all case countries (see Numerato et al, 2019; Baglioni and Isaakyan, 2020). The three sets of work package reports at the core of this meta-synthesis were based on qualitative interview data with migrants, asylum seekers and refugees and varied integration stakeholders, as well as relevant secondary data, mainly discourse and policy analysis. The chapter also draws on relevant literature external to the SIRIUS project, especially literature illuminating the theoretical framework applied to the analysis. Thus, our analysis borrows heavily from theoretical work on welfare regimes, and ALMPs.

Country characterisations

In this section, we will go over the country cases selected for our research, keeping in mind the previously introduced welfare regimes. We will analyse how the selected countries fit into these taxonomies of welfare states and their ALMPs, by describing the position of migrants in the labour market and the services that exist to induce LMI in each country.

Czech Republic

The Czech Republic migration regime is based almost entirely on ensuring a fully commodified and exploitable source of labour for its overheated labour market, while minimising the state's obligations to provide services to migrants, and satisfying populist political demands for anti-migrant policies. In recent years, the Czech labour market has experienced labour shortages, so that migrants are generally able to quickly find work, albeit at very low pay levels, and under very poor conditions. Migrants are for the most part seen as a disposable resource, and not encouraged in their career development. This situation suites the Czech authorities, leaving little reason to develop LMI policies.

The Czech government also offers the weakest level of support for migrant integration, entirely focused on integration training for the very small

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number of refugees the Czech Republic is persuaded to take in. Of the countries characterised in this research, the Czech Republic has the lowest number of migrants (5.5 per cent in 2019) among its population (European Website on Integration, 2019). The Czech Republic only uses 0.46 per cent (2018) of its gross domestic product on ALMPs, which is the lowest among the analysed countries (OECD Stats, 2021), so it would also not have the resources for LMI policy, were it to develop one.

Migration policy in the Czech Republic is highly focused on labour migration and the government promotes a vision of labour migration being mainly short-term and regulated according to the economic needs of the country akin to the guest worker era of the 1960s and 1970s (Gheorghiev et al, 2020). Thus, most migrants come to the Czech Republic with a specific job in mind which is typically in the so-called secondary labour market, in labour-intensive, difficult and sometimes dangerous, low-paid jobs (Drbohlav and Janurová, 2019). Moreover, migrants are often employed through agencies rather than directly by the employer, resulting in a pattern of precariousness (Hoření, 2019). For third country nationals, labour market testing is used, and they are thus allowed to take up job offers only when no applications from Czech or other EU citizens have been made (Drbohlav and Janurová, 2019).

It is important to note how the centrality of labour migration impedes the development of specific LMI policies for all migrant groups in the Czech Republic. For instance, migrants who have short-term residence permits or visas are expected not to stay in the country without work and are therefore not provided any assistance related to skills and career development (Gheorghiev et al, 2020). Although most migrants have the right to use Labour Office services, in practice, these services are not always helpful, since the Labour Office has limited knowledge of the specific needs of migrants and does not offer services or training schemes for foreigners with low language proficiency (Hoření, 2019). There is a State Integration Programme, which is a voluntary one-year assistance programme for asylum holders and holders of subsidiary protection, that has been running since 1994. The programme also includes job counselling (Hoření, 2019). Although most eligible individuals participate in these programmes, the total number of participants remains small since the Czech Republic has traditionally not been an asylum country and the overall number of refugees is small compared to most European countries (Drbohlav and Janurová, 2019). For example, in 2015 only 450 people were eligible for the integration programme (Hoření, 2019). Thus, the integration services are not used by the majority of migrants in the country.

There are also Centres for Support of the Integration of Foreigners in the different regions of the country, funded by the European Commission, which offer language courses, sociocultural courses, and legal and social

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counselling (Hoření, 2019). However, in practice, there is a chronic lack of language courses (Numerato et al, 2019), which hinders the integration process. Migrants themselves report that the lack of Czech language skills especially undermines their access to better-paid employment (Gheorghiev et al, 2020).

Filling the gap left by the state, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have a significant role in offering integration services, such as individual social and legal counselling, language courses, and the organisation of social events (Hoření, 2019; Hoření et al, 2019). However, funding for NGO-driven integration services is project-based and short-term. This partly explains why NGOs' assisting programmes have been found, in practice, to have a limited penetration capacity, with many economic migrants not even being aware of the existence of such programmes (Gheorghiev et al, 2020).

While there is little support for LMI, since 1 January 2021, foreign nationals have had to take a compulsory four-hour 'adaptation and integration course' organised by the Centres for Support of the Integration of Foreigners. This course is compulsory for foreign nationals who are issued a long-term residence permit and foreign nationals who are issued a permanent residence permit within one year of the date of collecting their residence permit. This does not apply to European Union citizens and their family members (Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, 2021).

Denmark

Denmark is a social democratic welfare state with universalist institutions, and this fact is reflected in its extensive and well-resourced ALMP bureaucracy, which is also used for the LMI of migrants. Danish politics, however, have become increasingly anti-immigrant, and this fact is reflected in coercive elements in the way ALMP is applied to migrants. In particular, the 'employment first' element devalues migrant skills through excessive emphasis on finding employment, at the expense of career development. In 2020, 12.30 per cent of the Danish population were foreign born. A comprehensive Act of Immigration has been implemented since 1998 (Jørgensen, 2014), and of the countries characterised in this research, Denmark spent the most of its GDP on ALMP – 2.87 per cent in 2018 (OECD Stats, 2021). This reflects the importance of the 'flexicurity' model of employment activation policy for which Denmark is known.

In Denmark, success in integration is only measured by employment. The Danish discussion on migration is highly polarised, and integration policy reflects the contradictions internal to this political consensus. High-skilled individuals and their family members are perceived as beneficial to the Danish state. Asylum seekers, refugees and their families, on the other hand, are seen as unskilled (regardless of their actual level of skill) and as a burden

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(Sen et al, 2019: 177, 183). This policy discourse reflects in the very limited number of services targeted at highly skilled migrants, who are considered to easily integrate into the labour market, whereas most available services are targeted at speedily pushing refugees and their family members into the first available employment. However, despite the central place of asylum seekers in the political discussion, they and their dependents constitute a very small percentage of the entire migrant population in Denmark. In 2020, of all the residence permits granted in Denmark, only circa 1 per cent were granted based on asylum and circa 8 per cent based on family reunification (Statista, 2021). Most third country national migrants enter Denmark on the basis of a work permit issued in relation to a particular job, in which case they are already employed and do not use LMI services.

The three-year integration programme is the core of the Danish integration policy. During the integration programme migrants are offered civic education, Danish language classes and job activation. Job activation includes activities such as counselling, skills-upgrading courses, internships and sometimes subsidised employment. For unemployed migrants, the programme is mandatory and non-participation can lead to the withdrawal of introduction benefits (European Commission Integration Information, 2021). The Danish integration is managed top-down and the main responsibility of implementing the integration programme lies with the municipalities, which often contract NGOs and private organisations to implement the activities (see Sen and Pace, 2019). Asylum centres provide basic education and language lessons to individuals awaiting a decision on their asylum application.

During the integration process refugees and their family members are expected to take on any job from day one, without questioning the type of job, or the suitability of it to the migrants' skills, qualifications or aspirations. Especially since the 'employment first' integration policy was implemented in 2015, municipal authorities have been 'pushing' migrants to take on any kind of job (Sen et al, 2019). From the perspective of migrants, this leads to devaluation of their skills and qualifications as well as being forced to reconsider their professional aspirations (Bjerre et al, 2020: 69). Furthermore, since 2019, the focus regarding refugees has shifted from integration to return, that is, the aim is to send refugees back to their country of origin as soon as conditions allow it (European Commission Integration Information, 2021). This also signals the fact that in Denmark the topic of integration is highly politicised (Jørgensen, 2014).

Finland

Like the Danish system, Finland's LMI is embedded in a well-developed ALMP infrastructure. While many migrants experience being pushed

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towards certain high-demand occupations, and needing to reskill as a result, Finland does not have the same 'employment first' emphasis as Denmark. Nonetheless, employment discrimination often in the end has similar effects – taking the first available job, because highly educated migrants choose to take unskilled jobs because employers in their field do not hire workers of their ethnicity. This is particularly common among members of visible minorities (Ndomo and Lillie, 2020). However, this is not a problem created by the *employment services*, but rather a reflection of employer attitudes and societal racism. Similar to the other Nordic countries, Finland spends comparatively highly on ALMP – 2.21 per cent of GDP in 2018 (OECD Stats, 2021). Most migrants in Finland come from neighbouring countries, such as Russia and Estonia. Labour migrants and family migrants form the largest stream, whereas asylum seekers and refugees form a significantly smaller stream of migrants. Of the countries characterised in this chapter, Finland has the second lowest number of migrants among the population (circa 7 per cent).

Compared to the other countries in the study, Finland's integration efforts are in many ways the most comprehensive; they are grounded in a coherent set of legislation, receive stable funding from the state, and offer a variety of services to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Integration services in Finland are delivered through an elaborate bureaucracy of state actors at both national and local level. As with the Danish integration policy, the Finnish integration policy is also very much focused on getting migrants into gainful employment and employment is considered synonymous to integration. This means employed migrants do not have access to most state-provided integration services such as free language courses. In Finland, all unemployed job seeking migrants or migrants that are considered to be living permanently (all migrants except those on a visa, or B permit for studies) can participate in integration training for up to 3–5 years after migration, and during this time they can receive income support. This does, however, exclude migrants who are students, and who are thus not considered unemployed, and asylum seekers, who are not considered to live in Finland permanently. In practice, however, both groups can take up employment, within specific regulations, and will therefore also experience unemployment and in-between job periods. Students have to rely on services offered by their education institutions and by NGOs, while asylum seekers mainly rely on services provided by the asylum reception centres, as they do not fit the migrant group targeted by most NGO service providers (see Bontenbal and Lillie, 2019).

The cornerstone of Finland's LMI policy is the integration training which is a component of the official integration programme. Integration training is in principle individualised based on the unique characteristics and needs of a migrant or refugee, although in practice this seems not to work as well as it should. Typically, it features a wide variety of discrete services

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such as language courses, labour market skill training, vocational training, internships, as well as compulsory education components such as reading and writing courses for special groups. Compared to the 'official' integration training, the courses offered by asylum reception centres for asylum seekers are far less comprehensive; once an asylum seeker receives a positive decision, however, LMI services become available.

The structure of the Finnish integration system is top-down, meaning that all levels of the state bureaucracy are involved and play a major role in implementation of services (see Bontenbal and Lillie, 2019). Employment offices (TE-offices) that spread across municipalities have a central role. Together with other municipality bodies, they are solely responsible for designing individual integration plans for migrants and for arranging integration training. The non-profit sector, on the other hand, has a limited and supplementary role to the state, also in terms of those policies and processes surrounding the integration of migrants (Bontenbal and Lillie, 2021). However, often course implementation is outsourced to learning institutes and NGOs.

Taking part in integration training is not compulsory for migrants. However, income support benefits may be reduced due to not taking part in the planned integration activities. There is no integration test. For those applying for citizenship there is a language test.

Greece

In Greece, LMI lags behind reception and immigration control as a policy priority, and there is no singular coherent LMI policy for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers (Bagavos et al, 2019). A unique dichotomy between pre- and post-2014 migration trends characterised by changing migrant demographics and host country context shape migrant LMI needs and outcomes in Greece. Pre-2014 migration featured widespread irregular migration practices, encouraged by an inefficient and ineffective bureaucratic residence permit and visa system, and overlooked to sustain a stream of economic migrants integrated solely through a labour market in need of labour (Bagavos et al, 2019). Post-2014 migration (of refugees and asylum seekers) faced greater LMI challenges owing to lingering adverse economic effects of the 2008 recession and budding informal labour market practices institutionalised by prior migration trends. The country also struggles with balancing resources between reception and integration for a population that was often not interested in integrating in Greece in the first place, seeing it rather as a transition point to other European countries (Bagavos and Kourachanis, 2020). Additional features of the Greek welfare system are divisions between the mainland and islands and urban and rural territories which usually undermine access of the islands and rural areas to social

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services. Of the seven countries compared in the chapter, Greece has the third largest migrant population, constituting circa 12.58 per cent of its entire population in 2020.

Despite stark LMI challenges, migrants' potential economic contribution as labour is desired, due largely to a declining native workforce and an established taste for cheap, malleable labour among employers in specific sectors such as agriculture. However, anti-migrant and xenophobic sentiment is present and shapes both political discourse and implementation of specific migrant integration policies exemplified, for example, by the botched implementation of a special work permit for irregular workers (Bagavos et al, 2019: 322).

Labour markets for migrants are strongly segmented by nationality-ethnicity, placing many migrants in informal and precarious work situations (Bagavos and Kourachanis, 2020). The conservative-corporatist nature of Greece's welfare regime therefore ensures that migrants are only minimally decommodified. This, coupled with weak ALMP spending generally, means that state-managed services are few, although there is a decentralised system with strong participation of local communities in governance, and civil society in implementation. Greece's welfare regime is commonly classified as conservative, but with a stronger role for families in social provision and with social contributions, it provides differential social protection that tends to favour the male 'breadwinner figure'. Since women are the main carers for children and the elderly, this welfare model hinders their labour market participation, a phenomenon that impacts migrant single-parent families (the common situation) even more severely (Bagavos and Kourachanis, 2020). However, alternatively, the availability of cheap migrant labour for care work functionally compensates for a lack of state support, by allowing families who can afford it to hire private caregivers more cheaply.

Lacking a dedicated migrant integration programme, LMI policy in Greece is grounded in the general 2018 National Integration Strategy. The strategy adopts a social integration model, thus prioritising access to education, the labour market and public services as pathways to integrate migrants and beneficiaries of international protection in Greece. The strategy also designates local communities as central actors in developing and delivering LMI services, with oversight from the central government administration. However, civil society organisations deliver most LMI services, and migrant and refugee associations, NGOs and UN agencies are the main providers of actual reception and integration services in Greece. LMI services in Greece are co-financed by international organisations and are exclusively available in mainland Greece while excluding asylum seekers arriving in the Greek islands after March 2016. However, the national integration strategy lacks a dedicated implementation framework and there is no evidence that it is being implemented at all as of 2021 (Bagavos and Kourachanis, 2020: 148).

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In addition to a limited capacity, civil society integration services are however not obligatory, and migrants can opt out of services, which they often do, guided by their view of Greece as a transition and not settlement country.

All legal residents of Greek municipalities enjoy 'equal access' to available social welfare services, health clinics and employment services, meaning that no services are tailored specifically for migrants. Municipalities operate community centres that provide the services. The centres also run the Public Employment Service (OAED) that provide unemployment services including unemployment benefits, subsidised vocational training programmes and employment counselling as well as family allowance, maternity allowance or day nurseries – indicative of ALMP trends (see Bagavos et al, 2019). However, many migrants are unable to access the scarce OAED and its services and turn instead to private employment agencies which often direct migrants into the 'migrant' labour market and occupations rife with informality and discrimination (Bagavos and Kourachanis, 2020).

Since 2017 there has been some progress in Greek LMI, especially the development of a more organised and systematic reception and identification system for asylum seekers (Bagavos and Kourachanis, 2020), in addition to legislative procedures simplifying and devolving residence permit issue and renewal processes to combat informal work (Bagavos et al, 2019). However, myriad LMI barriers withstand. The most significant shortfall is the lack of clear, coherent and enforced LMI policy, and the will and mandate for actors to develop one (Bagavos and Kourachanis, 2020: 143). Second is the sustenance of informal economy practices grounded in a robust history of ethnicity-nationality based discrimination and exploitation of migrant labour. Third is the complete absence of a national mechanism for recognition of foreign qualifications and skills, resulting in more migrants being routed to unskilled and informal work. Lastly, the extent to which integration services are targeted to specific migrant groups undermines migrant LMI. In Greece, integration services are predominantly mere extensions of generic public socioeconomic services rather than tailored services for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Where some targeting is done, refugees and asylum seekers in mainland Greece are the dominant beneficiaries, while migrants and asylum seekers in the islands are largely excluded. The result is that historical strata are likely to reproduce even with regards to the new population of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Greece.

Italy

Italy operates multiple fragmented LMI policies, implemented through a poorly coordinated and poorly financed network of actors spread across different levels of government – national and local – and sectors – public and private. As with the Greek policy, LMI outcomes reflect the highly

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segmented nature of the Italian labour market, between formal and informal sectors, with many migrants drawn into the informal sector to provide the cheap, exploitable labour on which much economic activity depends. Italian migration policies serve to reinforce the informal migration system which provides labour willing to accept precarious jobs. Migrants with formal status are assisted (or not) by the same labour market services and decommodifying welfare rights as Italian citizens, but nonetheless tend to face pay discrimination and undervaluation of their skills (Collini and Pannia, 2020). In Italy, LMI services are well targeted towards migrants' needs but fragmented and under-resourced. Civil society organisations have a central role in the running of LMI services, which are mainly targeted at refugees. Outcomes for migrants who arrived for international protection are shaped by LMI policies, while those who arrived for other reasons rely more heavily on personal networks and family contacts.

The dominant political narrative template on migration and migrants in Italy today, best evidenced by the 2018 elections, securitises migration to promote deterrent policy instruments such as the 'Salvini decree' for the stricter management of immigration. Although seemingly marginal, Italy's nascent politically driven anti-immigration rhetoric undermines the policies at the heart of its integration service delivery – the Sistema di Protezione per Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati (SPRAR) network, renamed as SAI (Sistema di Accoglienza e Integrazione) in 2020.

Historically underdeveloped state-run public social service infrastructure coupled with administrative competence vested only in local institutions of regions and municipalities (Lynch, 2009: 104) reflects in the apparatus of Italy's main migrant LMI policy implementer – the SAI network. This consists of a network of local actors from across the public and the private sector including municipality institutions, civil society actors such as NGOs and corporative associations, and companies who are the primary integration service providers in Italy (Maggini and Ibrido, 2019). The SAI network draws together a number of actors in collaboration, but only targets beneficiaries of international protection and unaccompanied minors.

Newly arrived post-2014 migrants, disproportionally consisting of asylum seekers and refugees, draw little benefit from LMI policies. Poor funding equals limited or non-existent integration services for asylum seekers in tier one reception centres where most new arrivals are concentrated (Maggini and Ibrido, 2019). However, second tier reception centres run by the state-funded SAI network provide comprehensive integration services including language training, upskilling, health and legal support, and employment services, albeit only to beneficiaries of international protection and unaccompanied minors (Maggini and Ibrido, 2019: 216). Integration services target confirmed 'stayers', excluding asylum seekers who have yet to receive a decision on their status.

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Economic and family migrants are not the central target of LMI programmes in Italy but have access to public social services in education, health and employment 'equal' to citizens, although equality here is defined narrowly in terms of access, not outcomes. Economic migrants have 'integration agreements', which are not labour market focused but include compulsory learning of Italian language, ethics and fundamental principles of the Italian constitution, but lack of funding for this programme hampers implementation. Economic migrants' residential status is tied to this obligation to learn Italian language, ethics and fundamental constitution principles. Unemployed refugees and asylum seekers are exempt from paying all or part of healthcare costs upon registering with the Public Employment Service. Asylum seekers stay in reception centres while unemployed or when employed with earnings below 5,889 euros annually. The extremely low earnings ceiling threatens to exclude from the reception centres many who would be unable to afford housing in the external market, effectively pushing them to informal sector work and undermining other integration policies combating the informal market in Italy (Maggini and Ibrido, 2019: 422). In general, limited finances from national public funds and Asylum, Migration and Integration Funds undermine ALMP programmes such as Employment Services in Italy.

At the national level, welfare benefits are available exclusively for long-term residents in dire need. Specifically, healthcare is guaranteed only for urgent and essential needs, while access to social housing is reserved for legally resident migrants temporarily unable to afford their own accommodation and subsistence needs. Separately, the Ministry of Labour – through the Agency Italia Lavoro Spa – supports projects delivering socio-occupational integration services for vulnerable migrant groups (pregnant women, children and elderly) through individualised integration plans. Asylum seekers and refugees are also legislatively considered vulnerable groups in Italy with regards to training internships.

The outcome of migrant LMI programmes in Italy is a mix of successes and shortfalls. A success is the SAI network, which epitomises best practices in LMI through its comprehensive integration services and outstanding performers such as training internships and public–private collaboration in integration service delivery.

> The area dedicated to training and job orientation is one of the most developed, and most important within the association [network] itself. Pairing this with targeted internships and training in cooperation with local enterprises, results successful integration of large numbers of migrants in the local job market, with many now having stable contracts. (Maggini and Collini, 2019: 152–153)

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On the contrary, skills and qualifications of migrants largely go unrecognised formally or in practice, evidenced by migrants, asylum seeker and refugee narratives of underemployment, and are poorly rewarded in terms of remuneration (Collini and Pannia, 2020: 187). In turn, migrants in Italy remain vulnerable and susceptible to exploitation in both the formal and informal labour market, furthering existing labour market segmentation and occupational differentiation patterns (Maggini and Ibrido, 2019: 427). Additionally, migrants, asylum seekers and refugees who pass through the national and subnational integration programmes fall short of achieving social integration or autonomy as graduates of the system struggle to manoeuvre the labour market for a job and society for accommodation on their own once out of the system.

Switzerland

Switzerland is sometimes portrayed as a 'liberal' welfare state, but a coordinated market economy; some scholars consider it as a conservative Central European welfare state, as a result of the heavy participation of civil society actors in managing public policies. Trampusch (2010: 58) refers to it as a 'post-liberal' welfare state, which is 'right on the divide between liberal and conservative welfare states'. Policymaking is heavily decentralised to cantons, and very much embedded in the agreements negotiated between the social partners. The canton-centric nature of the policy is reflected in the way refugees are randomly distributed among cantons, which is a political solution to share the burden among the cantons, but which is not helpful for migrant LMI (Mexi et al, 2021). This random resettlement system takes no account of the refugee's existing language skills, which means that a French-speaking refugee might be placed in a German-speaking canton, resulting in a more difficult integration process (Auer, 2018). Also, there is a tendency to try to shift responsibilities between government levels: municipal, canton, federal, as well as between civil society actors and the state (Russi et al, 2020: 221). According to the Federal Statistics Office, more than one-third of the Swiss population has an immigrant background, while over one-quarter of the population over 15 years old living permanently in the country was born abroad (FSO, 2018: Mexi, 2021).

Civil society organisations are involved most often as state-policy implementers of integration policies, but this is up to the canton which is the primary shaper of integration policy. This way of organising policy reflects Switzerland's close relations between political institutions and organised civil society, so that unions, employer organisations, civil society organisations and local political structures are cooperatively involved in both policymaking and implementation. Thus, Caritas, for example, is a primary player in integration programmes for refugees in Geneva, but this is different in each locality.

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There are also some civil society orgnisations that fill gaps in services not provided by government policy. Swiss law places the main responsibility for LMI on 'established frameworks', or mainstream unemployment, welfare or education services. However, often these do not meet the needs of specific categories of migrants, because of low language skills, or lack of time to invest in particular programmes or because the services offered do not meet their needs. The specialised programmes of the cantons therefore aim to fill these gaps (Russi et al, 2020: 221–222).

As with our other case countries, in Switzerland, migrants' skills and diplomas are often undervalued due to prejudices and assumptions made about certain nationalities and ethnicities. As in the Finnish case, it is often employer attitudes more than migrant skills that require improvement. As one Swiss stakeholder points out: "Integration projects need to break down those prejudices by showing through examples, that migrants have the capacity to work and to integrate" (SIRIUS Switzerland Work Package 3, Stakeholder Representative 9). Difficulties both in having diplomas formally recognised as well as in having foreign diplomas and suitability for skilled positions valorised by employers characterise migrant experiences. Discrimination is a common experience, as well as difficulties in coping with Swiss bureaucracy; migrants commonly do not fit into the necessary categories.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom is a liberal market economy (Hall and Soskice, 2001) with a liberal welfare state model (Esping-Andersen, 1990). This implies that the labour market is minimally regulated, so that entry to low-wage, precarious work is relatively easy for migrants. On the other hand, welfare state support is at a low level and intended primarily for the truly destitute. This means strict means-testing for access to benefits and programmes, which is reflected in programme access. Consistent with liberal market ideology, responsibility for integrating is almost entirely on the migrant. Aside from special government programmes for refugee resettlement, there is little in the way of ALMPs for migrants. Government programmes for job seekers such as Job Centre are available, but with the same well-documented limitations and problems which arise for natives, including heavy-handed disciplinary regimes enforced through the threat of benefit cuts, and programme metrics which incentivise taking easy-to-place clients and ignoring those who need support (see Greer et al, 2017, for a discussion of these). Civil society organisations are used for the delivery of public services for migrant integration, and this forms part of a general government tendency towards privatisation and marketisation of services, allowing government to capture the third sector to turn it into a not-very-effective welfare service arm. ALMP budget cuts have, however, reduced

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the role of third sector organisations in providing labour market services to migrants (Calò et al, 2021).

Even more than the other SIRIUS countries, the UK has an explicit 'hostile environment' policy towards foreign nationals (and certain of its own nationals), which serves as an impediment to integration (Lidher et al, 2020). The hostile environment policies are inconsistently applied policies, nominally designed to target 'illegal' immigration, but which through seemingly deliberate incompetence, serve the purpose of making life as difficult as possible for migrants. This is reflected in the gap between LMI policymakers and implementers: policy implementers in the UK tend to regard policymakers as deliberately obstructing LMI of migrants. At the UK level, policymakers do not regard LMI as a host-state responsibility (Calò et al, 2022).

Specifically, there is a refugee resettlement scheme, which is regarded as well-designed for assisting in LMI of refugees (Calò et al, 2022), but which was targeted only at certain refugees, and therefore not broadly accessible. Related to this, a major limitation for job market access for asylum seekers is that there is a lengthy period for reviewing applications, during which the asylum seeker does not have a right to work. The work ban on asylum seekers, particularly when combined with sometimes years-long asylum application periods has a major impact on the quality of life and career development of refugees. While in principle the time could be spent in learning activities, fragmentation and low funding levels for language courses and other programmes for integrating migrants mean that these programmes are inadequate in availability and quality (Calò et al, 2022).

While the UK is in principle a unitary state, its constituent components have in some cases received greater responsibilities through devolution, and this is most noticeable in Scotland, which has taken a different approach from the central government in being more welcoming towards migrants, in terms of taking a more careful and evidence based approach to programme design, and also in not engaging in 'hostile environment' types of rhetoric (Calò et al, 2019: 567). Despite the existence of various programmes and services, the UK's LMI policy regime can be characterised as incoherent. There is no universal programme; the programmes that do exist are either narrow (that is, refugee resettlement), or minimalist and stigmatised (that is, Job Centre). Thus, integration does de facto become the responsibility of the migrant.

Summary of cases

A summary of the cases can be found in Table 4.1.

Southern European countries, such as Italy and Greece, found themselves with inadequately developed policy frameworks to meet the challenges

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Table 4.1: Summary of the cases

	Welfare regime	ALMP spending	ALMP-LMI organisation	Eligibility for core LMI services	Other remarks
Czech Republic	Conservative/ liberal	Low	Fragmented, NGO-managed	Only refugees for state services, limited availability for others	Tight labour market, migrants as disposable resource
Denmark	Social democratic	High	Highly coercive/well resourced	Broad but especially targeted at refugees	'Jobs first', segmentation reinforcement
Finland	Social democratic	High	Mildly coercive service oriented/well resourced, top down	Broad, not only specific migrant groups: based on labour market status	Down-skilling and reskilling to migrant dominated professions
Greece	Conservative	Low	Fragmented, NGO-managed	Low capacity, limited availability	Informal labour market, segmentation
Italy	Conservative	Medium	Fragmented, NGO-managed	Low capacity, limited availability	Informal labour market, segmentation
Switzerland	Conservative/ liberal	Medium	Decentralised, corporatist	Only for refugees	Managed by cantons with strong NGO and social partner participation
UK	Liberal	Low	Fragmented, outsourced to NGOS	Refugees	'Hostile environment', tight labour market

brought on by migration. In these two, large economic sectors such as agriculture and home care have become dependent on migrant labour working informally. A common character of the Southern European integration policies has been that they have generally been elaborated from the bottom up. In Greece and Italy, NGOs play a very significant role in the implementation of integration policy, which suffers from a lack of central government funding. Integration policies thus started from the local and

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regional level, which is also why policies have been different from one area to another. Since the 2000s, however, efforts have been made to produce centralised national frameworks (Doomernik and Bruquetas-Callejo, 2016: 61–63).

In Central and Eastern European countries, the number of immigrants has been relatively small and so have the policy responses. Policy initiatives are largely EU-driven and accession to the EU has pushed countries to develop their policies in this area (Doomernik and Bruquetas-Callejo, 2016: 64, 71). Of the SIRIUS countries, Czech policy can be characterised in this way. However, the Czech Republic, due to economic growth and labour shortages, now hosts large numbers of labour migrants, whose integration prospects suffer from a lack of integration programmes. Formal publicly funded integration programmes in the Czech Republic are on a small scale, and targeted only at refugees. The UK is similar in that official anti-migrant hostility is combined with an economic need for migrants. The division between liberal (UK) and conservative (Czech) regimes is quite blurred in terms of LMI policy.

In Denmark, Finland and Switzerland, LMI policies are organised in a more 'top-down' manner, with state and quasi-state actors at the centre. The basic framework is set out by legislation in Denmark and Finland, and by multistakeholder canton-level initiatives in Switzerland. These policies are then implemented by bureaucracies in Finland and Denmark, and by a variety of quasi-state actors in Switzerland. Actors, such as NGOs and employers, are involved in implementation in all three countries, but the policy can be said in some sense to be state-driven. Although Finland's and Denmark's systems and policy context are broadly similar, Denmark's more punitive 'employment first' policy shows that policy intentions matter: policies that are deliberately cruel by design unsurprisingly have negative effects on their target groups, even if the programmes are well-funded and efficiently implemented.

Conclusion

We focus on migrant integration as public policy, which means that government activities are at the centre of the analysis, although the implementers of these policies are sometimes private or third sector organisations (see Numerato et al, 2019). Our analysis suggests that welfare policy regimes play an important role in shaping LMI policy, but this is more due to the residual effect of having ALMP structures, norms and policies in place, than employer demands or a deep-set political consensus.

According to Esping-Andersen (1990), central characteristics for classifying welfare regimes relate to how decommodifying and how universal they are. ALMP is not centrally about either commodification or decommodification,

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per se, although ALMP policies can be put to such use. LMI policies are by nature targeted at a special group – unemployed migrants – but can be more or less universal in terms of which migrants have access, and types of services provided. In this respect, LMI policy goals can be divided into two categories: helping migrants to find employment (that is, reducing their rate of unemployment), and helping migrants to achieve their career goals. Either can involve skill, language and job market training, or job brokerage, and the goals can complement each other. However, they differ insofar as the first is more about reducing social welfare budgets, and providing employers with workers, and the second more about granting migrants greater agency in navigating the host country job market. Migrants are a diverse group; from the ALMP perspective an individual's 'distance' from the labour market, and the kind of work he or she can realistically seek, is important in evaluating the type of support that should be offered. Seeking to upskill migrants, or to place highly skilled migrants in highly skilled jobs is more consistent with universalist welfare state aspirations, while pushing migrants, regardless of their skills, quickly into menial positions is more characteristic of a remedial welfare state.

However, from our cases, we find this is partly the situation in Finland where there is an aspiration to universalism in the LMI policy intent, but in Denmark, where high skilled migrants are deliberately pushed into low skill employment, universalism seems to be reserved for Danish nationals. As welfare regime theory predicts, the UK, as a liberal regime, lacks coherent national policies, and the policies it does have are small scale, and targeted to only the worst off. Similarly, the conservative regimes (Italy and Greece) also have smaller scale policies than those under social democratic regimes, due to less generous state funding, because such regimes de-emphasise wealth transfers between insiders and outsiders. Services are therefore more targeted and less universal. Switzerland and the Czech Republic are, in the literature, sometimes classified as liberal and sometimes as conservative, but for LMI policies it makes little difference as both conservative and liberal regimes are characterised by small, targeted 'resettlement' programmes for refugees and an important role for civil society organisations. The welfare regimes and ALMP literature suggests that participation in narrowly targeted LMI policies might carry a stigma, particularly among workers in liberal welfare states, but the interview data of the analysed reports did not give us a definitive answer on this topic. While there were indications from the interviewees in Denmark, and to a lesser extent in Finland, that they felt the LMI process demeaned them and devalued their skills, this is precisely the opposite of what we would expect. More detailed information, in particular from employers, would be needed to resolve this anomalous finding. We conclude that welfare regimes are clearly important in shaping terms of state capacities for LMI, but might be more usefully described in terms of state

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capacities. Furthermore, just as important is the politics of migrant inclusion and exclusion, which inform how, and for whom, those capacities are used.

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