Contentious Groups in the Politicization of Immigration

CEU Conference Living Together in Diversity
Budapest, 21st May 2012

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SOM – Support & Opposition to Immigration

- Cross-national comparison of the politicization of immigration 1995-2009 (A, BE, CH, EI, ES, NL, UK)
- Funding institution: European Commission (FP7)
- www.som-project.eu

→ End of project: September 2012

Research Questions

- Focus on groups of immigrants
  - Which groups are addressed predominantly by which actors?
  - In what way would these groups be affected?
  - How are groups portrayed, i.e. how do conflicts over groups differ in terms of polarization, positions and frames?

Theoretical framework

- Europeanization

  vs.
- National context and POS:
  - „Real-world developments“: size/composition of immigrant population
  - Distribution of rights according to status
  - Actor constellation: strength of anti-immigrant parties

Data & Methodology

- Patterns of claims-making
- Claims:unit of strategic action in the public sphere:

  „It consists of *the purposive and public articulation of political demands, calls to action, proposals, criticisms, or physical attacks, which, actually or potentially, affect the interests or integrity of the claimants and/or other collective actors* (Koopmans and Statham, 1999).
- Large-scale media study, 2 newspapers/country (~11000 articles)

Key Variables

Subject actor	Person or organization making the claim (claims-maker/claimant): Political parties, government, civil society actors etc.
Object actor	Person or group that would be affected if the claim becomes reality: Organized groups, or unorganized sections of society (e.g. illegal immigrants)
Effect of claim	Explicit or implicit effect of claim on the object actor – should the claim become reality: positive, neutral, or negative.
Frame	Justification or argument given or implied by the (subject) actor with respect to the claim

Politicization of Groups

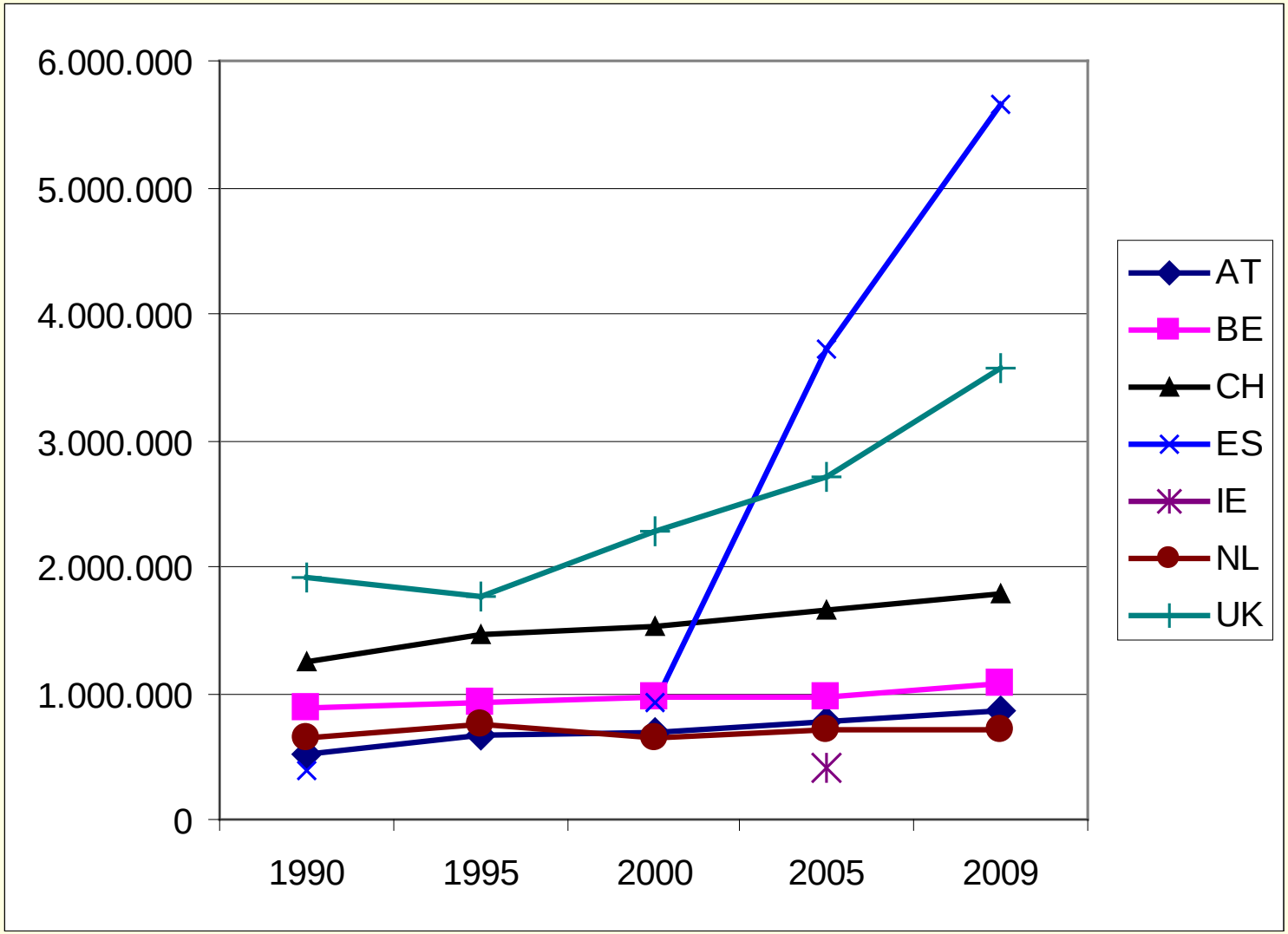
Size/composition of immigrant population

Politicization of groups

Legal frameworks: social/political rights granted to immigrants

Actor constellation: strength of anti-immigrant parties

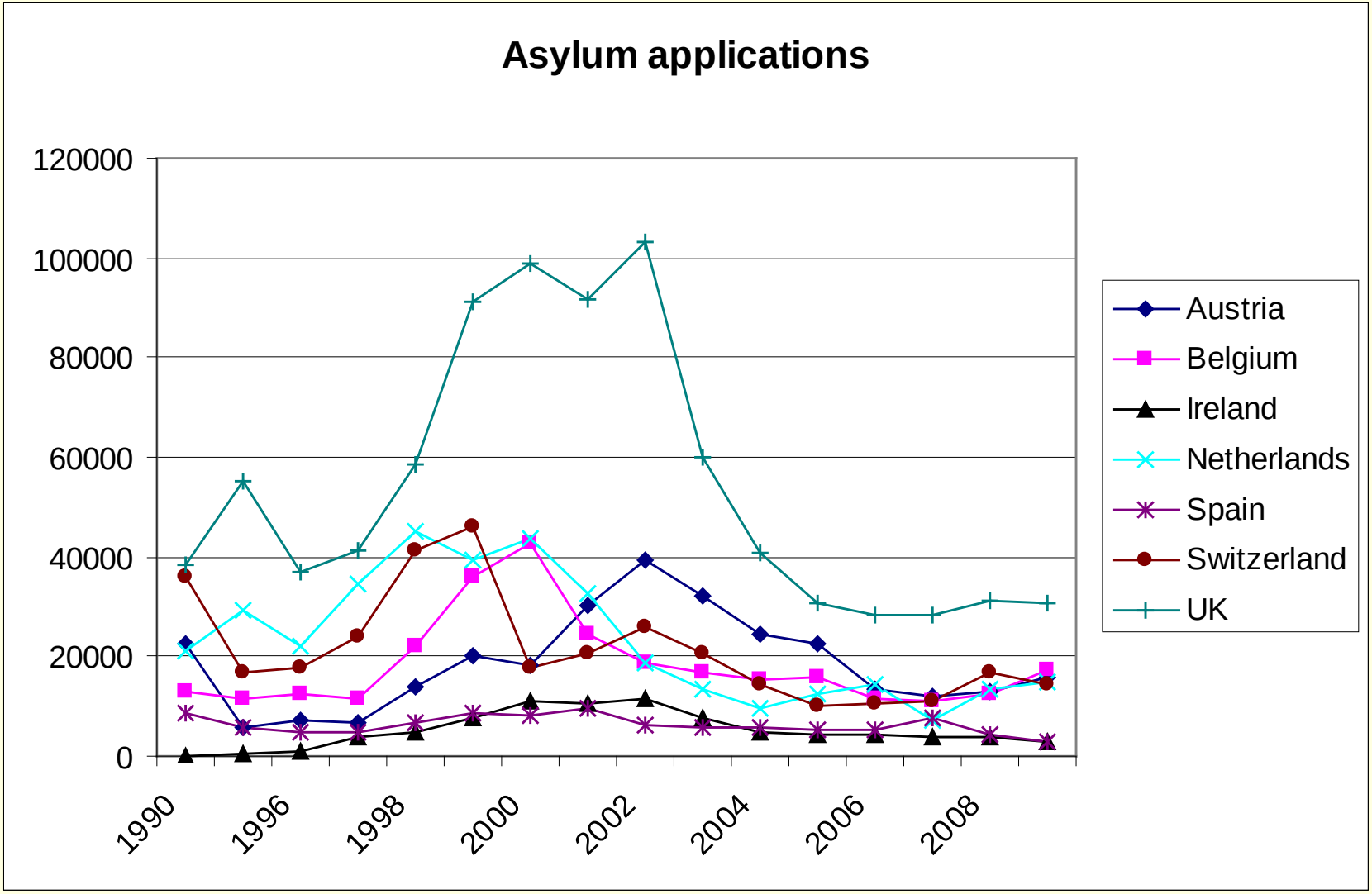
Immigrant Population - Size



Immigrant Population - Composition

- Significant role of „old“ EU15 immigration but also increasing shares of TCNs in all countries
- Considerable increase of new EU27 immigration from 1990-2009
- Muslim immigration: different patterns
- Asylum: variation; most of the time negligible shares
- Labour immigration: considerable increase
- Family related immigration: important status group

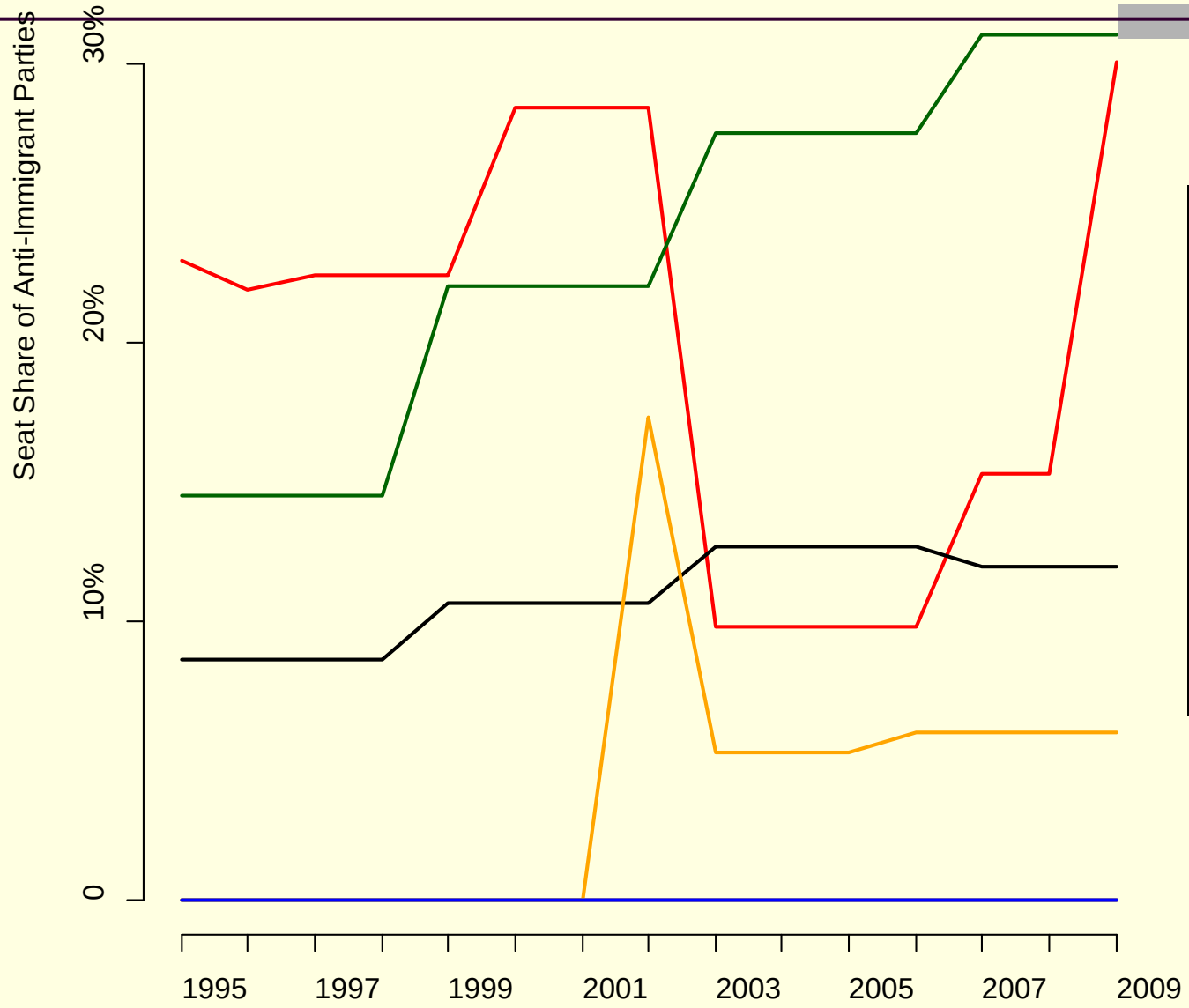
Asylum applications



Trends in Legal Frameworks

	Labour Market Status	*Family Reunion*	*Long Term Residence*	*Political Participation*	*Access to Nationality*	*Anti-Discrimination*	*Asylum Seekers*
AT	+	- (variation)	+ (variation)	- (variation)	-	+	-
BE	+ (variation)	+ (variation)	+	+	+ (variation)	+	Mostly unchanged
CH	+ (variation, recent restriction)	+ (variation, recent restriction)	- (variation)	+	+ (variation, recent restriction)	+	Unchanged
ES	+	+ (variation)	+	+	+ (variation)	- (variation)	+
EI	+	-	-	+	- (variation)	+ (variation)	-
NL	+ (variation)	- (variation)	+ (variation)	-	+ (variation)	- (variation)	+
UK	+	- (variation)	- (variation, drastic restriction)	Unchanged	- (variation)	+	- (variation, drastic restriction)

Anti-Immigrant Parties



Red: AT
Green: CH
Black: BE
Orange: NL

No anti-immigrant parties in parliament: EI, ES, UK

Findings: Dominant Categories

	All	AT	BE	IE	NL	ES	CH	UK
Legal status	82.77	90.44	81.72	98.18	78.27	94.82	79.03	57.59
Racial groups	4.14	1.46	1.84	1.16	0.65	1.64	0.85	24.82
Religion	10.45	7.32	14.1	0.17	12.22	0.27	19.39	16.6
Country of origin	2.64	0.78	2.35	0.5	8.86	3.27	0.73	0.99

Most common object actors

	Biggest group	*%*	*Second*	*%*	*Third*	*%*	*Fourth*	*%*
AT	Immigrants	32	Asylum	22	Refugees	9	Muslims	6
BE	Immigrants	27	Illegal	13	Asylum	13	Muslims	8
CH	Immigrants	22	Asylum	21	Muslims	12	Illegal	9
ES	Immigrants	50	Illegal	25	Labour	4	Minorities	4
EI	Asylum	35	Immigrants	22	Labour	9	EU/EEA	6
NL	Immigrants	20	Asylum	13	Illegal	12	Muslim	8
UK	Asylum	15	Racial Groups	11	Muslim	11	Immigrants	10

Contentious Immigrant groups

	Immigrants	Asylum	Illegal	Muslim	Refugees	Labour	Minorities	Muslim Org.
Polari zation	0.43	0.57	0.66	0.64	0.46	0.45	0.72	0.41

Polariziation scores lower than 0,5 indicate tendencies towards agreement, scores greater than 0,5 tendencies towards disagreement

Measure of agreement (van der Eijk 2001)

Position on Immigrant groups

	Immigr.	Asylum	Illegal	Muslim	Ref.	Labour	Min.
Government	Divided	More neg.	Mixed, neg.	Positive	Neutral, pos.	Mixed	Divided
Parties/ Legislat.	Divided	More pos.	Mixed, neg.	Neg.	More pos.	Positive	
Unions						Divided	
Rel. groups		Positive	Silent	Positive	Positive	Silent	
Media	Divided				Mixed		
Civil society	Positive	Positive	Positive	Divided	Positive	Positive	Divided
Minority org.							Positiv

Frames

- Most common: instrumental frames (general/public interest, state efficiency/cost, domestic crime/security)
- Most common non-instrumental: equal treatment, human rights (as commonly as economic interests)
- Significant differences in frames used for different groups: Immigrants, asylum seekers vs. refugees, illegal immigrants
- Visibly different frames for Muslims

Summary & Discussion

- Most important discursive categories: status groups
- Most common: immigrants (generic), asylum seekers
- Proportion of claims differ significantly, no clear association with size of immigrant population (asylum seekers, Muslim migrants), legal developments or political system
- Different frames at different points in time, continuity of instrumental frames

- Debates are inherently dynamic (influence of specific national events?)
- No evidence for convergence

Thank you!

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