



DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

“QUALITY OF GOVERNMENT- FOR ALL?”

QoG & Migrants' equal access to social rights

Frida Jonsson

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Abstract

The extent to which migrants can enjoy equal social rights as citizens vary between liberal democracies. Quality of government has been at the center of recent decades' debates on states' non-partial treatment of citizens. Despite an intuitive connection between Quality of government and migrants' rights, the relationship has not been investigated theoretically or empirically yet. By arguing that the relationship is connected on two levels, one at the level of bureaucratic, juridical, and political elites and one indirect link through the level of public opinion, the thesis hypothesizes that Quality of government is positively associated with migrants' social rights. The hypothesis is tested in a linear regression with panel-corrected standard errors by investigating time-series cross-section data. The results from 18 countries between 1984-2010 indicate that there is no robust evidence for the hypothesis. For future research, longer time series and wider country coverage are required to draw more confident conclusions about a relationship.

Keywords: Migrants' social rights, Quality of government, elites, public opinion, time-series cross-section data

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1. Introduction

The incorporation of migrants into liberal democratic societies has been a topical theme among researchers and political elites for several decades (Freeman, 1986; Cornelius & Tsuda, 2004; Sainsbury, 2006, 2012; Boräng et al., 2022). Migrants' social rights are of particular importance as it determines to what extent an individual can enjoy social security and individual independence- important determinators to living a "good life". The extent to which migrants can enjoy the same social rights as citizens varies between liberal democracies and across time (e.g., Römer, 2017). The "rights gap" between migrants and citizens (Boräng et al., 2020, p. 558) raises concerns among international organizations. For example, the European Union claims that unequal social rights are one main cause of the integration gap for third-country nationals (European Commission, n.d., a). This highlights the importance of studying the phenomena. While previous research mainly focused on immigration and integration, there is still a lack of knowledge about the incorporation of migrants into mainstream social policies (Schmitt & Teney, 2019).

The scholarly literature on the topic of migrants' equal access to social rights draws from the international migration literature, welfare state literature, and comparative politics. Some scholars have argued that migrants have enjoyed similar rights as citizens in countries with a historical heritage as immigration countries (Cornelius & Tsuda, 2004; Freeman, 1995) and with influential "clients" (Freeman, 1995; Joppke, 1998). In the more recent migrant-welfare state literature, migrants' social rights are explained by the logic of the welfare state (Boräng et al., 2022; Schmitt & Teney, 2019; Sainsbury, 2006, 2012; Römer, 2017). A third view argues that migrants have been supplied with equal rights primarily due to domestic courts and bureaucrats' "modus operandi" (Guiraoudon, 1999; see also Joppke, 2001, 1998). Other factors put forward in the literature are RPPRs with welfare chauvinism on the top of the agenda (Koning, 2020; Römer et al., 2022) and strong labor unions (Boräng et al., 2020).

This thesis will focus on the link between Quality of government and migrants' social rights. There are good reasons to study the role of Quality of government. Quality of government has been at the center of the past decades' debates about states' non-partial treatment of citizens (Person, 2021; Rothstein, 2009, 2014, 2021; Rothstein et al., 2012; Rothstein & Teorell, 2008). Furthermore, some of the literature mentioned above implicitly or explicitly points to different components of Quality of the institutions. First, courts and bureaucrats' modus of operandi (Guiraoudon, 1999) is indeed to act impartial (e.g., Rothstein

and Teorell, 2008). Second, according to the QoG literature (e.g., Rothstein & Stolle, 2008), we have good reasons to believe that it is not only comprehensive welfare institutions that can shape public opinion but also other central functions of the state. Third, research suggests that electoral support for RPPRs can be traced back to political climates where aspects of Quality of government are poor (Agerberg, 2017). More recently, however, concerns have been raised that the QoG literature has neglected the impact of QoG on non-citizens (Olander, 2021). Olander (2021, p. 389) even formulates the question: “Quality of government for whom?”.

Despite the intuitive connection between Quality of government and migrants’ rights, this has not been investigated yet. This generates a theory gap and an empirical gap in the literature. Moreover, to the author’s knowledge, relatively few quantitative analyses have examined migrants’ social rights (e.g., Boräng et al., 2020; Koning, 2020; Römer, 2017; Römer et al., 2022; Schmitt & Teney, 2019). This generates a methodological gap. Against this background, this thesis will try to answer the following research question:

- 1) *Does Quality of government affect states’ supply of equal social rights to migrants and citizens?*

To answer the research question, this thesis will investigate time-series-cross-sectoral data by employing a panel-corrected standard error estimate (PCSE) (Beck & Katz, 1995) with Prais-Winsten transformation, with unit-fixed effects. The main data sources are Immigration Policies in Comparison project (IMPIC) (Helbling et al., 2017) and the Quality of Government institute (Teorell et al., 2022). The overall conclusion is that there is no robust evidence that QoG is associated with the state’s supply of equal social rights to migrants and citizens. Future research should opt for longer time series and wider country coverage in order to draw more confident conclusions about a relationship.

The thesis’s disposition will be as follows: First, I will introduce the concept of migrants’ social rights and how it differs from other policy areas, followed by the delimitation of the scope of the topic. Second, I will review previous literature on migrants’ social rights. Third, I will present the theoretical framework that draws upon the Quality of government literature. In the chapter, I also develop the specific gaps the thesis aims to address. Thereafter, I present the hypotheses that aim to answer the research questions. This is followed by a chapter on data, operationalization, and research design. After that, I will present the results. The thesis ends with a discussion of the results and concluding remarks.

2. Migrants' equal access to social rights: Conceptualization and delimitation

All liberal democracies have a migrant population. Unlike citizens, migrants are not only affected by a country's general public policy but also by policies designed to apply exclusively to migrants. Policies directed toward migrants are divided into two main areas. *Immigrant policy* refers to areas associated with migrants' living conditions and well-being in the new host society: such as access to social benefits and social services, education, and housing, as well as opportunities to participate in the labor market, labor unions, and political affairs. The second main policy area, *Immigration policy*, encompasses issues related to admission policy and residence permits (Hammar, 1985, p. 7-9). This thesis focuses on the first area, particularly access to social benefits and social services, often referred to as social rights in the literature (e.g., Boräng et al., 2020). Rights are characterized by the fact that they are upheld by domestic law (Joppke, 2001). Therefore, migrants' social rights can be understood as *legal access to social benefits and social services*.

The topic of migrants' social rights is not only closely related to other types of immigrant policies but also to other neighboring fields. It is closely related to immigration policy because access to social rights may depend on the type of residence status (Sainsbury, 2006), e.g., labor migrant, asylum seeker, and refugees, among others. Civic integration policy and citizenship policy are, just like immigration policy, not handled in this study as the former mostly refers to requirements (e.g., cultural) migrants need to meet to acquire access to citizenship and resident status (Carrera, 2006) and citizenship (usually) entails full access to social rights. With the definition and delimitation in mind, this thesis moves on to review the literature that has previously tried to explain migrants' equal social rights.

3. Literature review

The first strand of the literature that aims to explain variation in migrants' rights goes back in history and concerns immigration models and migrants' rights. The immigration models represent diverse approaches to immigration, divided into three groups of countries

(Cornelius & Tsuda, 2004¹; cf., Freeman, 1995²). The first immigration model, “Classic countries of immigration,” is portrayed as the most generous with respect to rights. Non-citizens, especially permanent residents, have enjoyed similar access to rights as citizens. The approach is claimed to partly be a consequence of immigration as a fundamental part of the Classic countries of immigration’ historical founding, development, and national identity building (Cornelius & Tsuda, 2004; Freeman, 1995). According to Freeman (1995), the welcoming approach was also dictated by an anti-populist norm and influential “clients.” The norm imposed political elites not to exploit racial, ethnic, or immigration-related issues to win votes. The clients operate in networks, where some have reasons to push for generous policies for migrants (Freeman, 1995; see also Joppke, 1998).

The second immigration model, “Reluctant countries of immigration,” is characterized by their large-scale temporary migrant labor force, labeled as guest workers (until the 70s). Compared to the previous immigration model, the rights of migrants have, in most cases, been stricter. Governments considered the stay of guest workers as temporary, and the political discourse was often hostile. Consequently, there were few political initiatives to improve the rights of migrants (Cornelius & Tsuda, 2004; Freeman, 1995). However, there was at least one apparent exception, the Netherlands (Muus, 2004; see also Cornelius & Tsuda, 2004). Thus, migrants’ rights also differ within the models.

The third immigration model, the “Recent countries of immigration” have in the past been senders of the labor force. Rapid economic growth in the 70-80s created greater demand for labor, often supplied with foreign labor (Cornelius & Tsuda, 2004; Freeman, 1995). Consequently, the rights of migrants were introduced later than in the previous immigration models. In the case of the southern European countries’ rights were introduced after pressure from the European Union (hereinafter the EU) and, in some cases, strong labor unions (Calavita, 2004; Cornelius, 2004), whereas governments in Japan and South Korea were confronted by international conventions and domestic courts (Cornelius & Tsuda, 2004; Tsuda & Cornelius, 2004).

In summary, the immigration model literature primarily focuses on immigration policy and labor migrants’ rights in general (especially in the two recent models). Still, it

¹ Cornelius and Tsuda (2004) include the following countries in the immigration models: The United States, Canada, and Australia (Classic countries of immigration), France, Germany, The Netherlands, and Britain (Reluctant countries of immigration), Italy, Spain, Japan, and South Korea (Recent countries of immigration).

² Freeman (1995) uses the term “modes of immigration” and categorizes countries as the following: categorizes immigration models as the following: The United States, Canada, and Australia (The English-speaking settler societies), France, Britain, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Belgium (European states with postcolonial and guestworker migrations), Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Greece (New countries of immigration).

becomes clear that the rights vary between the models and within the models, noticeable in the reluctant countries of immigration. Furthermore, a tolerant political climate and clientelism depending on the participating actors, are pointed out as drivers of generous immigrant policies. However, in light of more recent contexts, the immigration models may be considered dated. For example, the new countries of immigration can scarcely any longer be labeled as “new.” All in all, it is unclear how much explanatory power the immigration models have today.

In another strand of the literature, the main factor put forward to explain social rights is the logic of welfare states. Studies within this literature are typically based on Gøsta Esping-Andersen’s (1990) welfare regime typology. The typology consists of the “social-democratic,” the “conservative,” and the “liberal” welfare regime, where the former type is more comprehensive in the supply of welfare, whereas the latter is the most limited. The scholarly work that connects welfare state characteristics and migrants’ social rights can be summarized into two main arguments.

The first argument expects a dualization of welfare. According to this view, states dualize welfare as a response to international immigration—by curtailing migrants’ access to welfare- but not so much for citizens (Emmenegger & Careja, 2012; see also Römer, 2017; Freeman, 1986). Thus, this version expects a negative association between welfare state generosity and migrants’ social rights, mediated by international immigration, also labeled the “dualization hypothesis” (Römer, 2017, p. 175). The essence of the argument is that generous welfare systems are suffering from a decline in public support caused by an increased number of welfare dependents (Römer, 2017). The argument rests on the assumption that states with a generous welfare policy work as “welfare magnets,” meaning that it attracts more migrants in need of care (Borjas, 1999, p. 611). As a result, comprehensive welfare states are more likely to dualize welfare than modest ones. The clash between migration and the welfare state should be greater for asylum seekers and refugees than labor migration since the former, for several reasons, are usually dependent on welfare, e.g., often do not have the right to work (Boräng et al., 2022, p. 328). Indeed, Emmenegger & Careja (2012) documented similar patterns in restricting social benefits for asylum seekers when investigating three countries (United Kingdom, France, and Germany) from two welfare states (Liberal and Conservative). Hence, this also indicates a dualization practice in different welfare states.

The second main argument claims that comprehensive welfare states are associated with social rights for migrants. The main line of this reasoning is that, unlike restrictive models, comprehensive welfare states shape norms of generalized social trust and solidarity. Due to the redistributive institutional practice, these norms are also extended to include migrants (Crepaz & Damron, 2009; Boräng et al., 2022; Schmitt & Teney, 2019). Generalized trust reflects feelings of a common bond across societies, even if they do not personally know each other (Rothstein & Uslander, 2005, p. 45). Notably, the argument emphasizes the shaping power of institutions. However, unlike the dualization hypothesis, political elites do not have any prominent role. Some scholars have found support for the argument (Römer, 2017; Schmitt & Teney, 2019). Römer (2017, p. 176) found, unlike the dualization hypothesis (see above), a positive association between comprehensive welfare states and the social rights of migrants, also labeled the “generosity hypothesis.” Along the same line, Sainsbury (2006, see also Sainsbury, 2012) concludes that the social rights of migrants have been more generous in the social-democratic regime (Sweden) followed by the conservative (Germany) than in the liberal regime (the United States) after 1990. It is conspicuous that the author’s results differ from the partly time-overlapping immigration model literature, claiming the United States belonged in the most generous category in terms of rights.

In summary, the migrant-welfare state literature argues that the welfare state logic determines whether migrants are provided with social rights as citizens or not. Interestingly, both arguments emphasize the role of public opinion, but political elites' intervention is sometimes unclear. As I will develop in the next chapter, it is likely that institutional effects do not exclusively stem from the degree of welfare generosity but also from institutions that bear the welfare state.

Another strand in the literature highlights the *modus operandi* of domestic courts and bureaucrats as a source of migrants’ social rights (Guiraudon, 1999, p. 2). Unlike politically accountable politicians, courts are protected from anti-immigrant movements and hostile opinion climates. The constructed immunity derives from the crucial element of establishing legitimacy, reached by consistency. In other words, if they treat groups differently, they will not be perceived as neutral. Without external pressure, courts have ruled that the principle of equality before the law is also applied to non-citizens (Guiraudon, 1999; see also Joppke, 2001; Joppke, 1998). More specifically, Guiraudon (1999) argues that in the cases of France, Germany, and the Netherlands, the courts’ mode of functioning, that is, to seek coherence in

the application of legal principles, made judges biased in favor of equality before the law. For example, the French Constitutional Council ruled against a legislative proposal that extended a welfare benefit to EU nationals but not other non-nationals. The Constitutional Court affirmed the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of nationality (Guiraudon, 1999, p. 6, 15-16). Another example put forward is the *Graham v. Richardson* decision of 1971 in the United States. The Supreme Court overturned state statutes that discriminated against migrants from receiving welfare benefits. The court considered migrants as minorities and ruled that they should not be discriminated against (Joppke, 2001, p. 344; see also Sainsbury, 2012). Nevertheless, it should be noted that the court's role in policymaking varies among judiciary traditions (Sainsbury, 2012).

Guiraudons (1999) also discuss the *modus operandi* of bureaucrats. The author argues that public servants in Germany, France, and the Netherlands were biased in favor of equality before the law due to their primary task to standardize operations. In the late 1990s, bureaucrats introduced equal social rights as it fitted suitable norms and afforded public servants a solution that required less organizational costs (Guiraudons, 1999, p. 13). Like judiciary traditions, bureaucratic cultures vary between countries. Sainsbury points out that bureaucracies share many norms and tasks, but administrative cultures are also developed domestically and within agencies. The author concludes that future studies should look closely at public servants' recruitment and staffing procedures to explain migrants' social rights (Sainsbury, 2012, p. 253).

To sum up, one can say that scholars, highlighting the role of bureaucrats and courts, claim that how courts and bureaucrats exercise authority matters for the inclusion of migrants in welfare. Still, whether the exercise of public power affects the legislative side (i.e., policy making) is a black box in this literature. As I will develop in the next chapter, we have good reasons to believe that such effects are present.

A fourth literature strand focuses on political actors to explain migrants' social rights. Some scholars have highlighted the ideological position of political parties. It has been argued that left-wing and social democratic-oriented political parties are traditional advocates of giving migrants social rights (Freeman, 1986; Guiraudon, 1999; Sainsbury, 2012). However, some found empirical evidence for the opposite (Schmitt & Teney, 2019).

Another ideology-driven group of actors put forward is populist radical right parties (from now on PRRPs³). Freeman (1986) announced already three decades ago that growing radical-right parties have forced mainstream parties (the author refers to traditional conservatives) to take a more restrictive position on immigration issues. Mainstream parties may change their position in situations when PRRPs are perceived as an electoral threat (van Spanje, 2010). Some scholars found evidence for Freeman's announcements. Koning (2020) found that restrictive rights policies for migrants have been introduced in countries where the PRRPs parties have high electoral support and where the public displays high levels of prejudice. Similarly, Römer et al. (2022) find that PRRPs are systematic drivers of cutting rights regardless of the coalition construction they govern together with when investigating 14 countries between 1980 and 2018. This indicates that PRRPs not only impact migrants' social rights policies when ruling in government coalitions but also when they have high electoral support.

Another influential group of political actors is labor unions. While scholars previously argued that trade unions oppose the rights of migrants, Boräng et al. (2020; see also Calavita, 2004; Freeman, 1995, p. 895-96) argue the opposite. Significant differences in wages and working conditions between migrants and the majority could entail the risk of greater acceptance of poorer employment conditions and wage reduction, which is the primary concern of unions. Their main finding is that the difference in rights between citizens and migrants, the rights gap, initially increased but, over time, diminished more in countries with solid unions than in countries with weak unions.

Among the central points made in this strand, the importance of strong labor unions is highlighted. Another central point is that PRRPs have challenged traditional political positions. This raises further questions about the circumstances under which such political parties are considered favorable to voters.

The next chapter aims to present the concept of Quality of government (1), identify the gap(s) in the previous literature (2) and, to build theoretical arguments why one could expect a link between the Quality of government and equal social rights between migrants and citizens (3).

³ The literature frequently uses PRRPs as an umbrella term for anti-immigrant parties, and populist radical right parties (e.g., Careja & Harris, 2022; Römer et al., 2022).

4. Theoretical framework: Quality of government & migrants' social rights

4.1 QoG: The concept

Quality of government (hereinafter QoG) has, for the recent decade, been at the center of debates on states' non-partial practice towards citizens (e.g., Person, 2021; Rothstein & Teorell, 2008; Rothstein, 2009). The concept of QoG is based on the output dimension and the input dimension, along which the state regulates the relationship with residents. The output dimension refers to the exercise of public power, which in the case of high QoG is guided by the procedural norm of impartiality (Rothstein & Teorell, 2008)⁴. Procedural differs from substantive norms in the sense that the former is based on the political process and the latter on political content (Rothstein, 2014; Rothstein, 2021), which I will return to later. Rothstein and Teorell define impartiality as the following "When implementing laws and policies, government officials shall not take into consideration anything about the citizen/case that is not beforehand stipulated in the policy or the law" (2008, p. 170). To put it bluntly, impartiality does not only rule out any form of corruption but also other forms of particularisms, such as discrimination (Rothstein, 2014; Rothstein, 2021; Person, 2021). With this, we understand discriminatory practices towards citizens are inconsistent with impartiality.

Impartiality does not only refer to how states exercise public power but is also expressed through the recruitment process of government officials (Dahlström et al., 2012; Rothstein & Teorell, 2008; Rothstein, 2021). Meritocratic recruitment entails public servants being hired based on competence and skills rather than political contacts and clientelist networks (Dahlström et al., 2012). Meritocratic recruitment has at least two important consequences. First, it will bring more competent civil servants that can deal with complex issues. Second, political elites will be surrounded by competent civil servants who can "speak back" to them from different sources of legitimacy (Holmberg & Rothstein, 2015, p. 26). In other words, a competent, non-politically accountable civil servant is more equipped to point out when the work of politicians deviates from appropriate norms and principles than bureaucrats operating in systems governed by other norms. All in all, this means that civil

⁴ The input side refers to access to public authority, where the content of policies is determined (Rothstein & Teorell, 2008, p. 169).

servants and judges operating in systems based on other norms than impartiality are more likely to act partial (Rothstein & Teorell, 2008; Rothstein, 2021). This implies that judges and bureaucrats in such systems may be more disposed to discriminate against residents. From this perspective, QoG, with impartiality as a guiding principle, can be seen as the key to non-discriminatory practice of residents in states.

While QoG in itself is primarily about what happens on the output side, many studies have shown that this also has consequences for policymaking (the input side). QoG shapes public perceptions about suitable policies in a range of areas, for example, taxes and social spending (Svalfors, 2013), social insurance (Rothstein et al., 2012), climate policy taxes (Davidovic & Haring, 2020), and EU integration (Bauhr & Charron, 2018, 2020). The basic assumption is that QoG is linked to trust in institutions that deliver policies. Thus, trust in institutions is commonly described as a consequence of the degree to which citizens feel that institutions perform what they are supposed to perform (Holmberg & Dahlberg, 2015, p. 5). Citizens perceiving state institutions as biased and ineffective will thus not assess the state as a legitimate provider of policies (Svalfors, 2013, p. 366; Rothstein & Stolle, 2008; Rothstein et al., 2012). Moreover, trust in institutions also has consequences for generalized trust (for definition, see the previous chapter). Citizens not trusting state institutions have little reason to believe that other citizens who do not follow the rules will be sanctioned for not following them. This creates suspicion among citizens and thus affects their trust in others (Rothstein & Stolle, 2008). Thus, trust in institutions also shapes the relations between citizens. The bottom line is that trust in the state's capacity to deliver policies in an impartial way and trust in that fellow citizens follow laws and rules will affect whether citizens support policies (Rothstein et al., 2012). This entails that both institutional trust and generalized trust, derived from QoG, matter for the public's perception of suitable policies.

As mentioned in the introduction, so far as the author knows, the relationship between Quality of government and migrants' rights has not been examined before. However, the political philosopher Marcus Agnafors has paid attention to a link between QoG and the state's treatment of immigrants in general, but without testing it. The author argues that public servants operating under QoG should be morally committed to treating potential citizens (migrants) on equal terms as legal citizens (Agnafors, 2012). The author bases the argument on his view of the concept of QoG, which he believes should *include* the moral content of enacted laws and policy (Agnafors, 2013; for review, see also Rothstein, 2014, p. 742-43). By contrast, scholars of the Quality of government theory, on which this thesis is

based, firmly assert that impartiality is a norm based on procedures rather than policy substance (Rothstein & Teorell, 2008, p. 171; Rothstein, 2014, 2021). In addition, unlike Agnafors' theory, several scholars suggest that QoG may *shape* the content of policy and laws (e.g., Rothstein et al., 2012; for a review on policy effects of QoG, see Holmberg et al., 2009). The point is that the theory of Agnafors and the Quality of government theory represent two completely different logics.

4.2 Gap(s) and clarifications

All in all, from the concept of QoG it becomes clear that discrimination is incompatible with impartiality in the exercise of public power. The question is, in what way could this have consequences for the social rights of migrants? Interestingly, some scholars in the previous literature on migrants' social rights stress different aspects of institutional quality. Guiraudon (1999; see also Joppke, 1998, 2001) argue that domestic courts and bureaucrats were biased in favor of equality before the law due to their *modus operandi*, which in turn contributed to extending the rights of migrants. From the argument, we understand that the author implicitly expresses that these state actors operated after the norm of impartiality. Second, some scholars argue that welfare institutions can shape public opinion, e.g., generalized trust (Crepaz & Damron, 2009; Boräng et al., 2022; Schmitt & Teney, 2019), which contributes to equal rights. According to the QoG literature (e.g., Rothstein & Stolle, 2008; Rothstein et al., 2012), we have good reasons to believe that it is not only comprehensive welfare institutions that contribute to creating generalized trust. Third, some scholars stress the impact of PRRPs on migrants' social rights (Koning, 2020; Römer et al., 2022). What they do not address is that research suggests that electoral support for PRRPs can be traced back to climates where a specified dimension of Quality of government (corruption) is poor (Agerberg, 2017). Given the conclusions of the previous literature, it is surprising that *the overall institutional environment* has received very little attention on the topic. This generates two gaps. It generates a theoretical gap because a potential association between QoG and migrants' social rights has not, to the author's knowledge, been previously investigated theoretically. It also generates an empirical gap since the potential association has not yet been tested.

The next part of this chapter aims to fill the theoretical gap. Below I will develop theorized reasons for why one could expect a link between QoG and migrants' rights.

4.3 How QoG affects migrants' social rights

Most of the previous research mainly studies whether the rights of migrants are on par with citizens (e.g., Boräng et al., 2020; Koning, 2020; Römer et al., 2022). When migrants and citizens have the same rights, the policy areas, i.e., general welfare and welfare for newcomers, have become coherent. According to May et al. (2005, 2006), a set of similar ideas is one crucial domain for policies to become coherent. The opposite, policy incoherence, could then be a result of the idea that welfare should not be entitled to migrants “(...) but restricted to our own” (Andersen & Bjørklund, 1990, p. 212). This idea is also known as welfare chauvinism (Andersen & Bjørklund, 1990; see also van Der Waal et al., 2013; Römer et al., 2022). As the author of this thesis will argue, QoG may impact the extent to which migrants’ social rights and citizens’ social rights are coherent.

Drawing upon the previous literature, it is reasonable to assume that the relationship between QoG and migrants’ rights could be connected on two levels. One at the level of elites and one indirect link at the level of public opinion. We will start with the first level, which concerns the bureaucratic, juridical, and political elite.

4.3.1 The first connecting level: elites

As revived in the previous chapter, scholars have shown that courts ruled against proposals and overturned state statutes that aimed to exclude migrants from access to social welfare. The courts based their decisions on general legal principles, i.e., non-discrimination and equal treatment (Guiraoudon, 1999; Joppke, 2001). Guiraoudon (1999) further illustrates that bureaucrats implemented social rights for migrants as it fitted equality before the law (for details, see the previous chapter). The general legal principles were applied to encompass migrants because courts and bureaucrats acted impartially. From this, we understand that bureaucrats, judges, and impartiality (which are very central in QoG) are of great importance for migrants’ social rights.

Bureaucrats are not only, as shown by Gourdon, key actors in the implementation stage but also in the stage of preparing law proposals. Before political preferences are turned into bills, the draft bills pass through the ministerial bureaucracy (e.g., Klüster, 2023). Following the “QoG logic” (e.g., Dahlström et al., 2012; Holmberg & Rothstein, 2015), one could expect the way how bureaucrats act to have consequences for the content in the draft bills. In the ministerial, if draft bills deviate from impartiality, incompetent and politically accountable bureaucrats will not have the strength to point out to

politicians when general principles are violated in their bills. Moreover, likely, if bureaucrats lack competence, they will have a more challenging time motivating why bills are problematic.

Furthermore, in addition to hearing cases, courts can fulfill other functions that can be crucial for migrants' rights. If impartial courts find that legislation is inconsistent with more general legislation, legislators may get "pushbacks" from the juridical system. For example, if general social security legislation encompasses principles such as equal access for all, then separate rules for migrants would conflict with general legislation. Impartial courts would interpret this conflict as problematic. Their interpretation would thus signal pushback to legislators. On the contrary, judges that operate in corrupt legal systems imply vulnerability to several sources of pressure (Dahlström et al., 2012; Rothstein & Teorell, 2008). Likely, jurists operating in partial climates will be more valuable not to respond to policies that are perceived as problematic. As a result, in countries with low QoG, where bureaucrats and courts are not impartial, we have no reasons to believe that they would be of help for migrants' rights.

A climate of impartiality may also have implications for political elites. According to Rothstein, "depending on the institutions we select for furnishing citizens with basic capabilities, we create different types of moral logic in the social policy discourse" (2002, p. 911). This implies that impartial institutions (QoG), which provide residents with resources, shape the logic in political discourse. Hence, in an impartial climate, the political discourse on migrants' rights should be characterized by similar ideas to the discourse on citizens' rights. If political discourses contain different ideas about the politics of migrants and the politics of citizens, the discourse cannot have been shaped by impartial institutions.

Furthermore, the overall organizing idea of a welfare policy is to prevent poverty (see, for example, Rothstein, 2002). Considering the moral logic of the political discourse, the majority (of political elites and citizens) perceive non-discrimination in the supply of basic capabilities as essential. In that case, policymakers in impartial climates are likely to find it difficult to argue why migrants should be restricted or excluded from general welfare.

The bottom line is that if the state machinery is based on impartiality, policymakers and public servants will perceive substantial differences in rights as problematic. A coherent policy for citizens and migrants is preferable for elites because it is in line with non-discrimination. Thus, we expect fewer rights when QoG is low.

4.3.2 The second connecting level: public opinion

The second link we can expect to connect the relationship between QoG and migrants' social rights lies on what we call the second level, which concerns public opinion. Public opinion is important in policymaking because political elites are held democratically accountable under public opinion (Holmberg & Rothstein, 2015). It means that it is in the interest of political elites to make choices based on the will of public opinion to avoid sanctions, such as electoral loss and reprisals (Brooks & Maza, 2006). Thus, the important level of public opinion is interlinked with the first level, in particular political elites. A number of scholars have explored the relationship between public opinion and immigrant policy. Huddleston (2012, 2 July) found that the level of public support for the rights of legal migrants in European countries corresponds to the nationwide policy granting equal rights and opportunities. Callens (2015) made a similar conclusion in her examination of eighteen studies on the relationship between attitudes toward migrants and immigrant policy. The author finds that lower anti-immigrant attitudes are associated with a higher degree of inclusiveness in integration policies. Thus, policy and public opinion (about the policy) tend to correspond. Although the author argues for a reverse logic, namely, policy affects public opinion; she further concludes that a dialectical relationship cannot be precluded, and the policy and public opinion probably influence each other through constant feedback effects. In that case, we can conclude that political elites will likely face *difficulties* enforcing or extending the social rights of migrants if the public opinion climate is hostile. Although, these studies do not intend to explain the origin of such attitudes.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, some scholars have paid attention to the importance of the norm-shaping power of institutions and generalized trust (Crepaz & Damron, 2009; Schmitt & Teney, 2019). The QoG literature argues (see, e.g., Rothstein et al., 2012) that public perceptions of appropriate policies can be shaped by the beliefs that the state can deliver policies in an impartial way (institutional trust) (Svalfors, 2013) and that fellow citizens trust each other (generalized trust), fostered by institutional trust (Rothstein & Stolle, 2008).

Unlike the previously presented literature on migrants' social rights, other scholars have found that institutional trust is crucial for perceptions of migrants. According to Halapuu et al., 2013 (p. 574), individuals who do not believe that government institutions have the capacity to deliver policies in a satisfactory way and particularly view governmental institutions as corrupt and weak in sanctioning law violators express negative attitudes towards migrants. These results are confirmed in a report on public attitudes toward

migration in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The results show that the opinion climate towards migrants is more hostile in countries where people perceive the government as corrupt and where institutional trust is low (Dennison & Dražanová, 2018). Interestingly, the first study found that institutional trust was more strongly related to opinion climate towards migrants than generalized social trust (although still significant). In the second study, institutional trust was statistically significant both at the individual and the country level. This provides us with strong indications that institutional trust is the key to shaping public perceptions about migrants. Consequently, the negative attitudes towards migrants will, in turn, impact the willingness to share their welfare with newcomers.

Previous research has provided us with one more factor at the second level, which concerns public opinion and political representation. Scholars have shown that migrants have suffered cuts in social rights when RPPRs (for meaning, see the previous chapter) have entered into cooperation in government coalitions (Römer et al., 2022) and have high voter support (Koning, 2020). These political parties are exponents of welfare chauvinism (for definition, see above) (Römer et al., 2022; Koning, 2020; van Der Waal et al., 2013). From this, we understand that the political representation of RPPRs, with welfare chauvinism on the agenda, has an impact on migrants' social rights.

What these scholars did not include in their research is what factors give rise to high political support for RPPRs. Indeed, studies have found that support for such political parties can flourish within low QoG climates. In a study, Agerberg (2017, p. 578) finds that personal experiences with low QoG in public administration make voters more likely to support RPPRs.⁵ According to the author: many citizens base their judgments of the legitimacy of the input side on how they perceive the quality of the institutions that deliver policies and uphold the rule of law (Rothstein, 2009; see also Agerberg, 2017, p. 582). In other words, people who perceive government quality as poor are inclined to replace political elites. These voters choose to vote for political elites who practice rhetoric that matches their understanding of the problem, e.g., migration or corruption, factors perceived as being neglected by mainstream political elites (Agerberg, 2017, p. 596). This indicates that QoG not only shapes public opinion attitudes towards migrants but also has an effect on political representation, which in turn can impact migrants' social rights policy. All in all, we expect more incoherent policies when QoG is low.

⁵ It should be noted that Agerberg includes both parties from the left and the right side of the political spectrum in his measurement of RPPRs (Agerberg, 2017, p. 580). However, most of the populist parties in his analysis are located to the right (Agerberg, 2017, p. 591).

5. Hypothesis

As argued above, this thesis expects that QoG is positively associated with migrants' equal access to social rights. A number of mechanisms are expected to connect the relationship, parts of the effect stem from the level of elites, and parts of them from the level of public opinion. These mechanisms are developed theoretically above, but they are not tested empirically. Figure 1 illustrates the relationship that this thesis aims to test empirically. Theorized mechanisms are not included in the figure.

Figure 1. Hypothesized relationship between QoG and migrants' social rights.



H₁: Quality of government is positively associated with migrants' legal access to social rights.

6. Data, operationalization & research strategy

This chapter aims to present the data, operationalizations of variables, and research strategy. To test the hypothesis, this thesis will perform a quantitative analysis. To the author's knowledge, relatively few quantitative analyses exist on the topic (Boräng et al., 2020; Koning, 2020; Römer, 2017; Römer et al., 2022; Schmitt & Teney, 2019). This constitutes a methodological gap, which this thesis aims to address.

6.1 Data & operationalization

6.1.1 Dependent variable

Data for migrants' social rights have been taken from the IMPIC social rights dataset, provided by the project "Immigration Policies in Comparison" (hereinafter IMPIC), covering 18 OECD countries for the period 1980-2010 (Helbling et al., 2017). The IMPIC project aims to measure national legally binding immigration regulations, including primary and secondary laws⁶ (here referred to as policy). In contrast to most other similar data sets, the IMPIC project allows assessing how migrants' right to social assistance differs from citizens' (Römer et al., 2022; Helbling et al., 2017), which constitutes a major advantage of using the data set. The data was collected in 2012 through questionnaires sent to one legal or migration field expert per country⁷. To address issues of reliability, the questionnaires were designed to avoid subjective evaluation statements. The experts were asked about the existence of a certain policy and answered with yes/no, or by a concrete number. Each item was provided with a comment box if the expert had the impression that the answer options would be misleading or not reflect reality. The answers were given a score (by taking eventual comments into account) by at least two researchers from the IMPIC project team (Bjerre et al., 2016). It is important to note that a certain degree of concern about reliability will always remain when working with expert-assessed data. Nevertheless, given the questionnaire design and the experts' professional background, IMPIC can be considered a valid source (see below for a discussion on alternative sources).

Migrants' social rights are operationalized after an index that the author of this thesis constructed from three IMPIC indicators (see table 1 below⁸). Inspired by Römer

⁶ Primary law refers to the law that has come into existence through the parliamentary legislative process. Secondary law is created by executive authority, derived from primary legislation (Bjerre et al., 2016, p. 11).

⁷ For the list of experts, see Bjerre et al. (2016, p. 26).

⁸ For details regarding coding, see Appendix A1.

(2017), the indicators concern eligibility for social assistance benefits and measure these rights for three migrant categories: Permanent migrant workers, temporary migrant workers, and asylum seekers. Eligibility for social assistance benefits measures legal access and constitutes the basis for social rights. The listed conditions, e.g., access after x years of residence permit or after undertaking integration class, do not apply to citizens, thus constituting discriminatory treatment of migrants– and not policy coherence. At the same time, eligibility for social assistance benefits without such conditions means eligibility on the same terms as a citizen. Taken together, the index measures migrants' equal access to social assistance benefits.

It should also be mentioned that the data set would have included all possible migration categories in an optimal scenario.

Table 1 below displays an overview of the dependent variable.

Table 1. Indicators and scores of the migrants' equal access index.

Question	Migrant group	Conditions and scoring
Did [migrant group] have a legal claim to tax-funded social assistance benefits?	Permanent migrant workers	0= no access .2= Indefinite permit and waiting time .3= indefinite permit .4= 10 years .5= 7 years and full-time employment .6= 7 years .7= 5 years .8= undertake integration class .9= 1 year 1= no conditions, that is the same as citizens
	Temporary migrant workers	0= no access .5= conditional access 10= no conditions, that is, same as citizens
	Asylum seekers	0= no access .5= lower benefits than citizens 10= no conditions, that is, same as citizens

Comment: Source (Bjerre et al., 2016; Römer, 2017).

The index is the unweighted average of the three indicators, being the arithmetic mean. Due to the unstandardized scoring of the indicators, the aggregation strategy was recommended by data set creators (Bjerre et al., 2016; for an example, see also Römer, 2017). An alternative aggregation strategy could have been standardizing the scales by equalizing the range and then combining the variables into an additive index. This option was deselected because standardizing the scaling would also mean a loss of substantial variation within the countries. In addition, countries that lack data on any indicators would be completely lost.⁹ In this case, an unfavorable option because the sample is already moderate. The final index ranges from 0 to 1 and covers 1980-2010 in 18 OECD countries. High values reflect more equality between migrants and citizens and low values more discriminatory treatment of migrants.

Despite the advantages of using IMPIC, the choice of data also entails limitations for this thesis. First, the most recent data is from the year 2010. Second, democracies such as Eastern Europe and South America are left out of the IMPIC Social rights data set. For these reasons, other data sources have been considered. For example, the data collection The Immigrants' Social Rights Index (Koing, 2020) includes more recent years but was not chosen since it only measures policies at four-time points. Alternatively, the Migrant Integration Policy Index 2020 (MIPEX) covers several countries in the above-mentioned geographical regions (Salano & Huddleston, 2020) but entails disadvantages concerning issues related to data collection. One stated critique is that it is unclear on which basis MIPEX is rated, i.e., the expert's knowledge, concrete regulation, or implementation effects (e.g., Bjerre et al., 2016). For these reasons, the IMPIC indicators were considered more valid measurements. In terms of generalization and validity, an even more promising source would have been The Migrant Social Protection Data Set (MigSP) (Römer et al., 2021). The questionnaires are designed similarly as IMPIC but cover a larger scope of countries and a more extended period. The author of this thesis has been in contact with the data creators regarding access to the data set. Unluckily, the data set will not be available until later year 2023.

⁹ Data for the years 2006-2010 on the first indicator is missing for Greece.

6.1.2 Main independent variable

Previous research has used several measurements to capture different state functions' degrees of impartiality. This thesis will use the ICRG Indicator of Quality of Government as a measure of QoG, a measurement previously used by several scholars (e.g., Davidovic & Harring, 2020; Rothstein et al., 2012). The variable is an index based on three expertly assessed indicators: Bureaucracy, Law and order, and corruption, from the International Country Risk Guide provided by the PRS Group (PRS Group et al., 2012). The mean value of the three indicators ranges between 0-1, where high values indicate that public servants have the expertise and strength to govern, that the judiciary is impartial, and that the political system does not suffer from high levels of corruption, i.e., high QoG (Teorell et al., 2022, p. 409). As discussed in chapter 4, competent public servants, an impartial juridical system, and low levels of corruption are all crucial components of QoG, contributing to shaping an overall QoG climate (e.g., Davidovic & Harring, 2020; Rothstein et al., 2012). Hence the indicator is to be considered a valid measurement. The index originally covers the period 1984-2020¹⁰, consequently reducing the number of investigated years in the statistical analysis. The variable is available in the QoG standard data set from the Quality of Government Institute (Teorell et al., 2022).

6.1.3 Control variables

There are, of course, a number of factors expected to affect migrants' social rights. To avoid "bad controls," the included control variables are expected to affect both the dependent and main independent variables. The strategy aims to rule out spuriousness.

First, migration inflow is expected to impact migrants' social rights, as some have argued that governments may react to international immigration by restricting migrants' social rights (e.g., Emmenegger and Careja, 2012). The impact of immigration on QoG is debated. Some have argued that immigration, and in particular immigration from lower institutional developed countries, impacts institutional quality (Roupakias & Dimou, 2021). Migration data by country of origin could have been controlled for. However, the length of available data differs quite a bit in the investigated sample. For example, Austria did not collect immigration data by country of origin until 1995 (Helbling & Leblang, 2019). Since measurements of net immigration usually are included in analyses investigating immigrant policy (e.g., Römer, 2017; Schmitt & Teney, 2019), this strategy was chosen instead. Net

¹⁰ West-Germany (1984-1990) is coded as Germany (1991-2010).

immigration is measured after the annual number of migrants minus the number of emigrants per 1,000 population. The data is obtained from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022).

The second factor that will be controlled for is EU membership. As Calavita (2004) points out, the EU has put pressure on countries to introduce social rights for migrants. EU membership is also expected to affect the level of QoG since the EU conducts strategies to combat corruption (see, e.g., European Commission, n.d., b). EU membership is operationalized after a dummy variable, measuring 1 if EU membership and 0 if no EU membership. Data for EU membership is obtained from the Comparative political data set (Armingeon et al., 2021).

Finally, the analysis will control for two economic factors. GDP per capita and GDP growth aim to capture countries' economic development and business cycle effects. Lower economic development may force states to deprioritize migrants, resulting in a larger rights gap. Economic development is also claimed to create a demand for aspects of institutional quality (La porta et al., 1999). However, others have argued for a reverse causal direction (For review, see Holmberg et al., 2009, p. 139-140, 143-144). Regarding business cycles, Sainsbury (2012, p. 223) observed that migrants in Sweden were particularly vulnerable to cuts in social rights during the recession in the early 1990s. This highlights the importance of including both GDP per capita and GDP growth. Some have argued for an effect on business cycles on aspects of QoG (Gokcekus & Suzuki, 2011), whereas, once again, others claim the opposite direction (For review, see Holmberg et al., 2009, p. 139-141). Despite disagreements about the casual directions, the variables are included since scholars often include measurements of GDP per capita and growth in research about immigrants' rights policy (e.g., Boräng et al., 2020; Römer et al., 2022). GDP per capita is measured in constant 2011 US dollars (thousands) and has been log-transformed (natural logarithm) due to skewness. The variable is originally from Maddison Project Database from 2020 (Bolt & Luiten van Zenden, 2020), obtained from the QoG standard data set from the Quality of Government Institute (Teorell et al., 2022). GDP growth (percent change from the previous year) is originally from the OECD (2021) and is taken from the Comparative Political data set (Armingeon et al., 2021).

Table 2 below displays summary statistics of the investigated data. Table 3 displays a list of the 18 investigated countries.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Migrants equal access index	468	.53	.264	0	1
Qog index	468	.888	.111	.523	1
GDP per capita (log)	468	10.343	.29	9.491	11.271
GDP growth	468	2.317	2.092	-5.693	7.489
EU	468	.564	.496	0	1
Net immigration	468	69.925	32.457	1	135

Comment: Sources: Armingeon et al., (2021); Helbling et al., (2017); Teorell, (2022); United Nations, (2022).

Table 3. List of investigated countries

Country
Australia
Austria
Belgium
Canada
Denmark
Germany
Greece
Italy
Japan
The Netherlands
Norway
New Zealand
Portugal
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
The United Kingdom
The United States

Comment: Source: Helbling et al., (2017).

6.2 Research design

The data includes observations from 18 countries between the years 1984 and 2010. Data structures with more years than observations are labeled time-series cross-section (TSCS). This type of data structure comes with advantages. Repeated observations of units (in this case, countries) over time combine information of time and space, which differs from cross-sectoral analyses where time is ignored. Hence, TSCS data provide a more valid estimate of the focal relationship than cross-sectoral data structures (Mehmetoglu & Jakobsen, 2017). However, TSCS data typically entails issues of autocorrelation, heteroscedasticity, and non-stationarity. Serial autocorrelation is likely to be present, meaning that errors are correlated between time points within countries (Kittel, 1999). In addition, it is likely that rights have not been subject to change for some time in a number of countries, while they have changed more frequently in others. This generates heteroscedasticity. Non-stationarity is likely to be detected if at least two unrelated units have the same time trend (Mehmetoglu & Jakobsen, 2017). If not considered, these issues imply a risk of misleading results.

As expected, the Wooldridge test for autocorrelation (Prob > F= 0.0000) showed signs of serial autocorrelation. Furthermore, the Modified Wald test indicated heteroscedasticity ($P > \chi^2 = 0.0000$). Finally, all tests were insignificant when running the Fisher's unit root test of the dependent variable. In other words, non-stationary was detected.¹¹

To handle these issues, this thesis will perform a linear regression with panel-corrected standard error estimate (PCSE) (Beck & Katz, 1995) with Prais-Winsten transformation, first-order autoregressive (AR1). Scholars that conducted analyses with similar data structures have used similar designs (e.g., Rothstein et al., 2012; Römer, 2017). The models in the main analysis include unit-fixed effects (in this case, country-fixed effects). The main reason for including unit-fixed effects is that these models are more suitable for testing hypotheses, like H_1 , that hypothesize a common effect on all units (Beck & Katz, 2007). Another major advantage of using unit-fixed effects is that they control for unobserved and observed constant variables, for example, political system. To handle the issue of non-stationary, time-fixed effects (in this case, year-dummies) are included in selective models. Moreover, all independent variables are lagged by one year. Finally, it is

¹¹ Other tests performed: Variance Inflation Factor along with the correlation matrix did not indicate on major problems with multicollinearity (see Appendix, figures B1 and B2).

vital to mention that even if problems with autocorrelation, heteroscedasticity, and non-stationarity are considered, nothing will solve the associated issues with TSCS data entirely.

The QoG index contains relatively little variation (see table 2), making all tests, especially unit-fixed effects, quite tricky to pass. For this reason, alternative model specifications will test the focal relationship with control variables. There are several approaches to handling associated issues with TSCS data. Although unit-fixed effects have advantages (see above), they also absorb important cross-section data variation. For this reason, a Random Effects (RE) model with Huber -White standard errors clustered by country is included. Another model will include a Lagged dependent variable (LDV) estimated with Prais-Winsten regression with panel-corrected standard errors. The models (RE and LDV) also represent other approaches to handling autocorrelation and heteroscedasticity. Finally, one model similar to the main model (model 4), without unit-fixed effects, is placed in the alternative model section. The aim is to compare the results when not including fixed effects.

7. Results

This chapter will present analyses of the results from the main models. This is followed by analyses of alternative model specifications.

7.1 Main analysis

Table 4 below visualizes the regression results of the migrants' access index from 18 OECD countries between the years 1984 and 2010. The aim is to test hypothesis 1, that QoG is positively associated with migrants' equal access to social rights. Models 1-4 in table 4 have panel-corrected standard errors and include country-fixed effects (see section 6.2 for discussion on research design).

Model 1 displays a bivariate analysis of the focal relationship between the QoG index and the migrants' access index without control variables and time-fixed effects. The coefficient of the QoG index is positive and shows an estimated effect of .169 but does not indicate a significant association.

Model 2 introduces time-fixed effects to the bivariate analysis. The model indicates an estimated effect of .177, which means that the effect slightly increases when time-fixed effects are included in the model. However, the effect does indicate a significant

association. Thus, from the bivariate analyses, no significant relationship between QoG and migrants' social rights is observed.

Table 4. Regression results: Quality of government and migrants' access to social rights.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
QoG index	0.169192 (0.16899)	0.176982 (0.20094)	0.145442 (0.17350)	0.132982 (0.19818)
GDP per capita (log)			-0.039127 (0.05659)	0.430493*** (0.12882)
GDP growth			0.001334 (0.00139)	-0.001381 (0.00186)
EU			0.014333 (0.04117)	0.024970 (0.04463)
Net immigration			-0.000015 (0.00016)	-0.000027 (0.00017)
_cons	0.176303 (0.15685)	0.189140 (0.18990)	0.601518 (0.65154)	-4.105052** (1.31669)
r2	0.420760	0.471890	0.416681	0.480766
rho	.838451	.814624	.842669	.814877
N	468	468	468	468
Time-fixed effects	-	Years	-	Years

Comment: Panel corrected standard errors in parentheses. *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001. Dependent variable: Migrants' equal access index is measured in arithmetic mean. All models include country-fixed effects. Year dummies are included in model 2 and model 4 (coefficients not reported). All independent variables are lagged by one year (except year dummies). GDP per capita is a natural logarithm. Countries included in the models: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The United Kingdom, and The United States.

Moving on to model 3, which introduces control variables to the relationship between the QoG index and migrants' access index. This model does not include time-fixed

effects. The positive direction of the estimated coefficient of the QoG index remains ($b=.145$) but does not indicate a significant association. None of the coefficients of the control variables indicates significant results.

Model 4 introduces time-fixed effects to the full specification model with all control variables. Thus, it is the most rigorous testing hypothesis 1. The estimated coefficient of the QoG index is .133. It means that the effect slightly decreases when introducing the time-fixed effects to the multivariate model. Given the investigated data, the effect is not significant. However, it should be noted that the estimated effect of the QoG index, like the other models (models 1-3), is positive. One control variable is significant (see below for interpretation).

Compared to models 1 and 3, the R-squared increases in models 2 and 4 (models with time-fixed effects), which is expected because time-fixed effects reduce some of the variances, capturing the general trend in migrants' social rights. Moreover, compared to model 1 and model 2, the effect of QoG drops a bit in Model 3 and Model 4, indicating that the control variables absorb some of the effects of QoG on migrants' social rights. The effect is the smallest in model 4, where one control variable is significant. The positive coefficient of GDP per capita (log) indicates significance on a 99 percent level of significance. The coefficient should be interpreted as the following: a one percent change in GDP per capita over a period of one-year results in approximately $(.43/100=)0.0043$ increase in migrants' access to social benefits. In substantial terms, it indicates that in wealthier countries, migrants tend to be provided with equal access to social rights across the entire sample and time frame when the other variables are held constant.

It should be noted that both GDP per capita and GDP growth show the opposite direction in model 4 compared to model 3. Model 4, however, is more interesting since it includes time-fixed effects. As mentioned above, no other coefficients of the control variables in models 3 and model 4 indicate significant results. Still, it is interesting that the coefficient of GDP growth in model 4 shows a negative direction, indicating that in periods of economic upswing, migrants tend to be supplied with fewer rights. Perhaps, migrants are a target for pursuing Keynesian economic theory. Simply put, the theory claims that it is beneficial for states to be more cautious in spending assets in times of economic growth and increase spending during economic recessions (Jahan et al., 2014). Moreover, the coefficient of the dummy variable EU membership shows a positive direction in model 4. It could indicate that EU members provide migrants with more equal rights than non-EU members. Nonetheless, these two assumptions cannot be confirmed given our data and the aim of the research of this

thesis. Finally, the estimated coefficient of net migration in model 4 is very weak. As mentioned in the previous chapter, there are better measurements than the variable. However, given the relatively small variation in the QoG index, another measurement would probably not have made any major difference.

To sum up, the QoG index indicates a positive coefficient direction in models 1-4. However, the coefficient of the QoG index is not significant in any of the models. Given the investigated data, it indicates that we cannot draw any conclusion about a positive association between QoG and migrants' social rights.

Although no support was observed for *H1* in models 1-4, it is still interesting to investigate the results in alternative approaches toward TSCS data.

7.2 Alternative specification models

This section investigates the focal relationship (with control variables) in alternative model specifications. Model 5, in table 5, displays the RE model. Standard errors are clustered by country. The estimated coefficient of the QoG index is positive and marginally significant ($p=.079$). This is interesting. For a standard deviation increase in QoG, migrants' equal access to social rights increases by about .49 standard deviations. In substantial terms, it means that QoG influences the supply of migrants' social rights. However, the effect is not common for all units. Still, the p-value does not indicate significance on a 95 percent level significance. In the next section, these results will be discussed more closely. Also interesting, the effect of GDP per capita is not significant when employing RE.

Table 5. Results from Random Effects model specification: Quality of government and migrants' access to social rights.

	Model 5
QoG index	0.487086 (0.27712)
GDP per capita (log)	0.449968 (0.32373)
GDP growth	0.002656 (0.00406)
EU	0.066842 (0.05134)
Net immigration	0.000326 (0.00048)
_cons	-4.444321 (3.37313)
N	468
Time-fixed effects	Years

Comment: Clustered standard errors by country in parentheses. *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001. Dependent variable: Migrants' equal access index is measured in arithmetic mean. Year dummies are included in the model (coefficients not reported). All independent variables are lagged by one year (except year dummies). GDP per capita is a natural logarithm. Countries included in the models: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The United Kingdom, and The United States.

Moving on to model 6 in table 6. The model displays a Prais-Winsten transformation regression with an included lagged dependent variable (LVD). Standard errors are panel corrected. The estimated coefficient of the QoG index is positive but does not indicate significant results. Similar to model 4, the coefficient of GDP per capita is significant but only on a 95 percent level of significance.

Table 6. Results from alternative model specifications: Quality of government and migrants' access to social rights.

	Model 6	Model 7
QoG index	0.069322 (0.07997)	0.208800 (0.18013)
GDP per capita (log)	0.065747* (0.03094)	0.267340* (0.11216)
GDP growth	0.000561 (0.00138)	-0.001507 (0.00177)
EU	0.022007 (0.01397)	0.035629 (0.03705)
Net immigration	-0.000049 (0.00011)	-0.000093 (0.00016)
Migrants equal access index (lagged)	0.912847*** (0.04005)	
_cons	-0.691879* (0.31990)	-2.321136* (1.07828)
r2	0.945882	0.233078
rho	-	.92388
N	468	468
Time-fixed effects	Years	Years

Comment: Panel corrected standard errors in parentheses *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001. Dependent variable: Migrants' equal access index is measured in arithmetic mean. Year dummies are included in both models (coefficients not reported). Model 6 includes country-fixed effects. All independent variables are lagged by one year (except year dummies). GDP per capita is a natural logarithm. Countries included in the models: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The United Kingdom, and The United States.

Finally, model 7 in table 6 displays a similar model to model 4 (the main model) but without unit-fixed effects. Standard errors are panel corrected. This model produces similar results as models 5 and 6; the coefficient is positive but not significant. Like model 6, the coefficient of GDP per capita is significant on a 95 percent level of significance.

To sum up, the RE model indicate significant result on a 90 percent level of significance. The two later models did not produce significant results. The results are interesting but not robust enough to reconsider the conclusion from section 7.1. For this reason, it remains the conclusion from section 7.1. The next section aims to discuss the empirical results.

8. Discussion

The previous section has investigated the link between Quality of government and migrants' social rights. The results from the bivariate analyses (models 1 and 2, in the previous section) indicate a positive effect of QoG on migrants' social rights. However, the results are not significant. The positive direction of the estimated coefficient of the QoG index remained after adding control variables (in model 3) and time-fixed effects (in model 4). Nevertheless, the results did not indicate a significant effect. Since model 4 includes both control variables and year dummies, it is the most rigorous test. The conclusion from the main analysis is that no support is observed for H_1 in models 1-4

Furthermore, the results, after testing the focal relationship in alternative models, did not indicate enough robustness to reconsider the conclusion from the main analysis.

Although no robust support is observed for H_1 , the results are still interesting. In addition, given the research design and the sample size, there are remaining questions regarding the validity of the conclusions made in this thesis. First, a possible explanation for the non-significant results in models 1-4, with unit effects, is that the time series are relatively short (26 years), meaning there is relatively little within-variation to investigate. The point is that the statistical tests are, therefore, "difficult to pass." Unit-fixed effects were chosen because they are, according to scholars, best suited to test hypotheses like H_1 . Unit-fixed effects are also beneficial in the sense of controlling for constant unobserved variables. Despite this, unit-fixed effects have limitations when it comes to capturing factors that change slowly over time (Mehmetoglu & Jakobsen, 2016, p. 249). As well know, QoG is a

persistent phenomenon and often takes a long time to change (Rothstein, 2018; Bauhr & Nasiritousi, 2012, p. 552). For this reason, one might suspect that the QoG index contains too little variation over time for the unit-fixed effects to capture. In that way, the unit-fixed effects might undermine the actual effect of QoG.

Furthermore, the results from the alternative models did not indicate significant results on the 95 percent level of significance. However, the coefficient of the QoG index in the RE model is positive and showed a p-value of $b=.079$. Some scholars argue that for small sample sizes, it is appropriate to change the level of significance to 10 percent level (Labovitz, 1968; see also, e.g., Beck, 2013, p. 2323). According to this advice, the result can be interpreted as statistically significant. As mentioned above, this could indicate that QoG has an effect on the supply of migrants' social rights; however, the effect is not common for all units. Despite the possibility of changing the significance threshold, significant results would not change the overall main conclusion, as H_1 hypothesized a common effect on all units and because the results in other models did not indicate significant results.

Moreover, it should also be emphasized that the coefficient of the QoG index showed a positive direction in all models (models 1-7). This observed result, together with the observed empirical result in the RE model, could mean that if we had more unit observations (in this case, countries), it is possible that we would observe statistically significant variation. It implies that social rights data for a wider set of democracies (with high and low QoG) would constitute a more reliable test for the hypothesis.

The results are still interesting. Whereas QoG affects policies and citizens' well-being (see Holmberg et al., 2009), there are no robust results about an effect of QoG on immigrant policy. This is interesting itself.

The overall conclusion from the empirical results is that no robust support for H_1 was observed. The answer of the research question this thesis aimed to answer: *Does Quality of government affects states' supply of equal social rights to migrants and citizens?* Is thus, there is no robust evidence that QoG affects states' equal supply of social rights to migrants and citizens.

The empirical results from this thesis have provided us with suggestions for further research. Most important, further research should examine the hypothesized relationship between QoG and migrants' equal access by examining the MigSP data set when it becomes available. The data opens up the possibility of investigating more countries and longer time-series. Moreover, further research should also take a closer look at the potential

non-common effect of QoG on the supply of migrants' social rights. Different methodological approaches may be helpful, such as quantitative and qualitative.

Lastly, further research should also look more into QoG and other immigration and migration policies in general. Following one of Olander's (2021) advice, one exciting question is, does QoG generate more property rights and freedom of movement for migrants?

9. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to examine the link between Quality of government and migrants' social rights. The theoretical relevance mainly rests on previous research, as some strands explicitly or implicitly stress aspects of institutional quality. Despite an intuitive connection, the overall institutional climate has yet to be investigated theoretically or empirically before. Based on this, this thesis has addressed three gaps.

First, a theoretical gap because QoG and migrants' social rights have not, to the author's knowledge, been investigated theoretically yet. Therefore, this thesis has developed theorized reasons why we could expect a link between Quality of government and the social rights of migrants. The theorized arguments emphasize that the relationship is interconnected at two levels – one at the elite level, which includes administrative, juridical, and political elites, and an indirect level through the level of public opinion. The mechanisms were acknowledged but not tested empirically. According to the theoretical arguments, the following hypothesis was formulated: *Quality of government is positively associated with migrants' legal access to social rights.*

Moreover, since the hypothesized association has not been tested before, this generates an empirical gap. This thesis has therefore introduced, within this field, a new explanatory variable, Quality of government. The hypothesis was tested by investigating time-series-cross-sectional data covering the years 1984 and 2010 in 18 OECD countries in a Linear regression with panel-corrected standard errors. What is more, to the author's knowledge, relatively few have conducted quantitative analysis on the topic of migrants' social rights, constituting a third gap, a methodological gap, which this thesis has addressed.

From the empirical findings, the overall conclusion is that no robust support was observed for the investigated hypothesis. The answer to the research question is, therefore, that there is no robust evidence that QoG affects states' equal supply of social rights to migrants and citizens.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that the hypothesized relationship should not be investigated in the future using larger samples and more extended time series. That said, the coefficient was positive in all models and showed marginal significance in one of them. Further research should therefore opt for longer time series and wider country coverage in order to draw more confident conclusions about a relationship. Preferably by employing the MigSP data set when it becomes available this year. Further research should also take a closer look at the potential non-common effect QoG on the supply of migrants' social rights, for example, with both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Finally, further research should also look more into QoG and other immigration and migration policies in general.

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11. Appendix

A. Questionnaire and coding

Table A1.

Type of policy & question	Migrant group	Scoring	Original coding
Did [migrant group] have a legal claim to tax-funded social assistance benefits?	Permanent migrant workers	0= no access .2= Indefinite permit and waiting time .3= indefinite permit .4= 10 years .5= 7 years and full-time employment .6= 7 years .7= 5 years .8= undertake integration class .9= 1 year 1= no conditions, that is the same as citizens	1= no access .9=indefinite permit and waiting time .8=indefinite permit .7=10 years .6=7 years and full-time employment .5=7 years .4=5 years .3=undertake integration class .2= 1 year 0=no conditions, that is the same as citizens
	Temporary migrant workers	0= no access .5= conditional access 1= no conditions, that is, same as citizens	1=no access .5=any conditions 0= no conditions, that is, same as citizens
	Asylum seekers	0= no access .5= lower benefits than citizens 1= no conditions, that is, same as citizens	1=no access .5=lower benefits 0= no conditions, that is, same as citizens

Comment: Eligibility for social assistance is taken from the “IMPIC Social Rights data set (Bjerre et al., 2016). The substantial meaning of the categories for Eligibility for social assistance is taken from Römer (2017, p. 180).

B. Diagnostics

B1. VIF: Multicollinearity test

	vif
QoG index	1.245488
GDP per capita (log)	1.296492
GDP growth	1.041739
Net immigration	1.120808
EU	1.184852
_cons	

B2. Correlation matrix

	Migrants' equal access index	QoG index	GDP per capita (log)	GDP growth	EU	Net immigration
Migrants' equal access index	1.00					
QoG index	0.37	1.00				
GDP per capita (log)	0.17	0.33	1.00			
GDP growth	-0.01	0.12	-0.02	1.00		
EU	0.07	-0.34	-0.27	-0.07	1.00	
Net immigration	-0.05	0.10	0.35	-0.02	-0.16	1.00