Citizenship, welfare, and the opportunities for political mobilization: Migrants and unemployed compared

CHABANET, Didier, GIUGNI, Marco

7. Citizenship, welfare and the opportunities for political mobilisation: migrants and unemployed compared

Didier Chabanet and Marco Giugni

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Migrants and the unemployed form the core constituency of two political or issue fields that are central to current debates and policy making in Western Europe: immigration and ethnic relations politics (migrants) as well as employment politics (unemployed). Furthermore, these are two underprivileged minority groups, subject to social and political exclusion, which are poorly equipped in terms of internal resources and mobilising structures that may facilitate collective action. As a result, they share a similar condition insofar as they face a number of obstacles for their mobilisation and therefore have difficulties entering the public domain. Such obstacles, however, are probably higher for the unemployed, given the specific collective action problem faced by them (Bagguley 1992; Faniel 2003; Fillieule 1993; Galland and Louis 1981; Maurer 2001; Richards 2002; Royall 1997). Therefore, we may expect the political mobilisation of the unemployed to be less likely than that of migrants.

This chapter aims to explain cross-national variations in the political mobilisation of migrants and unemployed people following a revised political opportunity approach. We argue that the mobilisation of such underprivileged minority groups is constrained by the political opportunity structures provided by the institutional context of the country in which they act. However, contrary to traditional opportunity theories, we suggest that their mobilisation also depends on a set of opportunities specific to the political or issue field most directly addressed by their claims. We propose to look for these specific opportunities in the institutional approaches to immigration and unemployment.

Following a neo-institutional framework, we maintain that such opportunities stem largely from the ways in which a given political or issue field
is collectively defined. Specifically, we aim to show how dominant conceptions of citizenship and the welfare state channel the mobilisation of migrants and unemployed people, as well as, more generally, the political claim making by collective actors in these two issue fields. In doing so, we draw from recent work on immigration politics that makes the distinction between institutional and discursive opportunities, in order to show how the discursive context in which claim making takes place can either encourage or discourage claim making by minority groups. In other words, political opportunities have both an institutional and a discursive side. From an institutional point of view, they are options for collective action that provide actors with different chances and pose different risks from one context to another (Koopmans 2004). From a discursive point of view, they are options for collective action that provide actors with varying visibility, resonance and legitimacy from one context to another (Koopmans et al. 2005). We conceptualise the latter aspect in terms of discursive contexts in which migrants and the unemployed find themselves. Thus, we propose a theoretical framework for explaining claim making by migrants and unemployed, shown in Figure 7.1, which stresses three main factors: (1) the general political opportunity structures, (2) the specific political opportunity structures and (3) the discursive context of claim making.

![Figure 7.1](image_url)  
*A theoretical framework for the analysis of claim making by migrants and unemployed people*

We compare four European countries which vary in their institutional approaches to both immigration and unemployment: Britain, France, Germany and Switzerland. The choice of these countries is both theoretically and pragmatically driven. From a theoretical point of view, we have four countries characterised by different political opportunity structures, generally as well as specific to the migration and employment fields. Pragmatically, these are the countries for which we have systematic empirical data on claim making in the two political fields stemming from two comparative projects recently conducted.

### 7.2 THE POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY APPROACH

Work on social movements and contentious politics has shown through a range of empirical research the impact of political opportunity structures on political mobilisation (see Kriesi 2004; McAdam 1996 and Tarrow 1998 for reviews). Political opportunities are, in the apt formulation of one of its major proponents, 'consistent but not necessarily formal, permanent, or national signals to social or political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements' (Tarrow 1996: 54). More specifically, they refer to all those aspects of the political system that affect the possibilities that challenging groups have to mobilise effectively. Koopmans (2004: 65) considers them as 'options for collective action, with chances and risks attached to them, which depend on factors outside the mobilising group'.

In an attempt to summarise the various aspects of political opportunity structures, McAdam (1996: 27) has identified four main dimensions that have been used by various authors to explain the emergence of social movements, their development over time, their levels of mobilisation, their forms of action and their outcomes: (1) the relative openness or closure of the institutionalised political system; (2) the stability or instability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically undergird a polity; (3) the presence or absence of elite allies; and (4) the state's capacity and propensity for repression.

The most comprehensive comparative analysis of the impact of political opportunity structures on the mobilisation of social movements in Western Europe was by Kriesi et al. (1995). They explained cross-national variations in the levels, forms and outcomes of social movements depending on the degree of openness or closedness of the political institutions, by the degree of inclusiveness of the prevailing strategies of the authorities towards the challengers, and by the configuration of power in the governmental and parliamentary arenas. To simplify a more complex picture, Kriesi et al. (1995)
frames and, more generally, 'the signifying work or meaning construction engaged in by social-movement activists and participants and other parties (e.g. antagonists, elites, media, counter-movements) relevant to the interests of social movements and the challenges they mount' (Snow 2004: 384; see further Benford and Snow 2000). These framing processes can also be conceptualised in terms of opportunities, as producing a set of discursive opportunities. These, in turn, determine which collective identities and substantive demands have a high likelihood of gaining visibility in the mass media, thus resonating with the claims of other collective actors, and achieving legitimacy in the public discourse (Koopmans et al. 2005). This is the second level on which the specific political opportunity structures work. However, we consider this aspect as a separate factor characterising the discursive context in which claim making takes place.

7.4 WELFARE STATE AND CLAIM MAKING IN THE EMPLOYMENT POLITICAL FIELD

If the idea that the actors, interests and collective identities involved in the migration political field depend on opportunity structures that are specific to this field is correct, we may expect other political fields to be influenced by certain endogenous characteristics of the institutional and discursive context. We draw from the work in this area and look at the relationship between conceptions of the welfare state and the structuring of public debates in the field of unemployment. We argue that the prevailing view of the welfare state specific to a given country impinging in significant ways upon the 'contentious politics of unemployment', that is, public debates and collective mobilisations pertaining to unemployment. In this neo-institutionalist perspective, dominant conceptions of the welfare state define a political opportunity structure that enlarges or constrains the options for action by collective actors. In other words, our main argument is that the modalities of the intervention of collective actors in the field of unemployment, including the mobilisation of the unemployed, depend on a mix of specific opportunities which derive from the prevailing welfare state regime.

Comparative works on welfare states offer us several typologies that show the differences in the underlying logics of unemployment insurance and social aid regimes. Among the most well-known typologies is that proposed by Esping-Andersen (1990) to distinguish between three welfare state regimes: the liberal or residual regime, the Bismarckian or insurance-based regime, and the universalist or social-democratic regime. Similarly, but more specifically focused on unemployment, Gallie and Paugam (2000) distinguish between four unemployment-provision regimes: the sub-protecting regime, which provides the unemployed with a protection below the substance level; the liberal/minimal regime, which offers a higher level of protection, but does not cover all the unemployed and in which the level of compensation is weak; the employment-centred regime, which offers a much higher level of protection, but in which the coverage remains incomplete because of the eligibility principles for compensation; and the universalist regime, which is characterised by the breadth of the coverage, a much higher compensation level and more developed active measures.

More recently, Berczag et al. (2004) proposed a typology of conceptions of the welfare state resulting from the combination of two analytical dimensions (the formal criteria of eligibility to social rights and the obligations relating to eligibility) which parallels the typology of Koopmans et al. (2005) of citizenship models insofar as both focus on the rights and duties attached to access to a given institution in the broader sense. The combination of these two dimensions generates a four-fold typology of conceptions of the welfare state which can be considered as different political opportunity structures for the mobilisation of the unemployed (and, more generally, for claim making in the field of employment politics): minimalism combines restrictive eligibility criteria and heavy obligations attached to the benefit of social provisions; corporatism also has restrictive eligibility criteria, but less constraints as to the obligations required to benefit from social provisions; universalism couples permissive eligibility criteria with light obligations for eligibility; finally, surveillance is characterised by permissive eligibility criteria, but at the same time heavy obligations for the unemployed in order for them to have the right to social provisions.

Such dominant conceptions of the welfare state define a political opportunity structure for claim making by collective actors in this field, including the mobilisation of the unemployed. Again, such opportunities are both institutional and discursive. For example, changes in the law that regulate unemployment insurance may have an impact on the situation of the unemployed and provide them with new options or motivations to organise and mobilise politically. But above all, cultural notions of social providence and dominant conceptions of the welfare state determine: which demands concerning unemployment and the unemployed are considered as reasonable or acceptable; which constructions of the reality of unemployment are considered as realistic; and which claims and collective actors involved in this field are considered as legitimate within the political system. The question is all the more important when we look at deprived groups, such as the unemployed, as they have difficulties redefining the cultural frames within
which the unemployment issue has been socially and politically construed. Such a redefinition is important in order to gain access to the public domain and have their own demands acknowledged as legitimate. As argued above, this aspect is treated separately in our consideration of the discursive context of claim making.

7.5 DATA RETRIEVAL

We test our hypotheses through primary data collected in two comparative research projects: the MERCI project (Mobilisation on Ethnic Relations, Citizenship, and Immigration) and the UNEMPOL project (The Contentious Politics of Unemployment in Europe). The data stem from a content analysis of one national newspaper in each country (The Guardian for Britain, Le Monde for France, the Frankfurter Rundschau for Germany and the Neue Zürcher Zeitung for Switzerland) aiming to retrieve reports of political claim making in the migration and unemployment issue fields (that is, all interventions by collective actors in the public domain on issues pertaining to immigration and unemployment). These are all independent newspapers with a nationwide scope of coverage and readership. All of them are broadsheet newspapers with a reputation for consistent and detailed coverage of the field of migration and ethnic relations. From these newspapers, the main news sections of every Monday, Wednesday and Friday issue were sampled and coded. The period covered by the data is 1990–1998 for the migration political field and 1995–2002 for the unemployment political field.

Following the method of political claims analysis (Koopmans and Statham 1999b), which allows us to analyse systematically the relationship between mobilisation and its political-institutional context, the unit of analysis is the single political claim, broadly defined as a strategic intervention, either verbal or non-verbal, in the public space made by a given actor on behalf of a group or collectivity and which bears on the interests or rights of other groups or collectivities. In other words, a claim is the expression of a political opinion by verbal or physical action in the public domain. If it is verbal, a claim usually consists of a statement, an opinion, a demand, a criticism, a policy suggestion and so on, addressed to the public in general or to a specific actor. A political claim can take three main forms: (1) political decision (law, governmental guideline, implementation measure and so on), (2) verbal statement (public speech, press conference, parliamentary intervention and so on); and (3) protest action (demonstration, occupation, violent action and so on). All claims taking one of these forms were coded, provided that they fell into the migration or unemployment issue fields. For each claim retrieved we coded a number of relevant variables. The most important were: the location in time and place of the claim, the actor who made the claim and its policy position relating to the issue at stake, the form of the claim, the thematic focus of the claim, the target of the claim, and the object of the claim (that is, the constituency group).

7.6 OPERATIONALISATION

7.6.1 Political Opportunity Structures

General opportunity structure will be operationalised indirectly, using the typology of the general structural settings for political mobilisation proposed by Kriesi et al. (1995: 37). Based on a systematic analysis of the formal institutional structures and the dominant strategy of authorities towards challengers, they characterised the four countries considered in our study as follows. Britain is a case of informal inclusion, characterised by a strong state (hence a closed opportunity structure on the formal side) and inclusive dominant strategy (hence an open opportunity structure on the informal side). France best represents the situation of selective exclusion (strong state and exclusive dominant strategy). Germany is an intermediate case insofar as it presents an intermediate degree of formal openness together with an exclusive dominant strategy. Finally, Switzerland is the best example of integration (weak state and inclusive dominant strategy). The hypotheses derived from these differences in the general structural settings for political mobilisations are discussed below.

To measure specific opportunity structures in the immigration political field, we refer to the procedure followed by Koopmans et al. (2005), who gathered systematic information on a series of indicators for each of their two dimensions of citizenship models (the formal criteria and the cultural obligations). A score between zero and one was assigned on each indicator, according to whether it moved in the direction of an ethnic or civic conception of citizenship (formal dimension), or a pluralist or monist view of the cultural obligations (cultural dimension). The results of this operationalisation of the specific opportunity structures for the mobilisation of migrants are shown in Table 7.1. The first line of the table refers to the individual equality dimension of citizenship models, the second to the cultural difference dimension, and the third shows the average score taking into account both dimensions. The four countries in this study are clearly distinguished in terms of their prevailing configuration of citizenship. Britain and France clearly are closer to the civic pole of the individual-equality
Bottom-up: civil society and voluntary associations

Table 7.1 Overall summary scores for the two dimensions of citizenship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Britain</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Switzerland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual equality dimension</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>-0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural difference dimension</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>-0.59</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
<td>-0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average score</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
<td>-0.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Results are expressed on a scale ranging from \(-1\) to \(+1\). On the individual equality dimension, code \(-1\) corresponds to the ethnic pole and code \(+1\) to the civic pole. On the cultural difference dimension, code \(-1\) corresponds to the monist pole and code \(+1\) to the pluralist pole. Average scores are computed by adding the scores on the two dimensions and then dividing by 2.

dimension, Germany and especially Switzerland are more ethnic-based. On the cultural-difference dimension, Britain is more pluralist than Germany and especially Switzerland, which have a more monist view. France is more or less stands in between. If we combine the scores for the two dimensions, we can see that Britain corresponds to the multicultural model of citizenship, France to the universalist model, and Germany and Switzerland to the assimilationist model.7

Unfortunately, we do not have at our disposal equivalent data for the employment political field. In the absence of primary data, for the time being we resort to existing characterisations of welfare states, such as the typologies of Esping-Andersen (1990), Gallie and Paugam (2000), or Berclaz et al. (2004). Our four countries differentiate only partly according to Esping-Andersen's typology. Specifically, Britain belongs to the liberal or residual model, while the other three countries (France, Germany and Switzerland) are all examples of the Bismarckian or insurance-based model. Similarly, our countries can only in part be separated on the basis of Gallie and Paugam's criteria. Specifically, Britain is a liberal/minimal regime (as in Esping-Andersen's typology), while France and Germany fall into the category of the employment-centred regime. Switzerland is not considered in their study. Finally, following the typology proposed by Berclaz et al. (2004), Britain can be characterised by a minimalist conception of the welfare state (restrictive eligibility criteria and strong constraints in terms of obligations required to benefit from social provisions; France and Germany follow a corporatist conception (restrictive eligibility criteria and relatively little constraint in terms of obligations required to benefit from social provisions); and Switzerland is also an example of a corporatist conception, but probably closer to a minimalistic conception.

Table 7.2 Average discursive positions towards migrants by issue field (1990–1998)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue Field</th>
<th>Britain</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Switzerland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immigration, asylum and alien politics</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority integration politics</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration and ethnic relations politics (all fields)</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Results are expressed on a scale ranging from \(-1\) to \(+1\). Code \(-1\) corresponds to anti-minority, racist and xenophobic claims. Code 0 corresponds to neutral, ambivalent and technocratic claims. Code \(+1\) corresponds to pro-minority, anti-racist and anti-extreme-right claims.

7.6.2 Discursive Contexts

To operationalise discursive contexts in both the immigration and employment political fields we can again use the data retrieved in the MERCI and UNEMPOL projects. In both projects we have a raw but nevertheless useful measure of the policy position of claims with regard to the constituency groups which are the ultimate object of the claims: migrants and unemployed people. In other words, we have a general indicator of the discursive position of actors in the two political fields. This indicator was computed as follows: all claims that imply an improvement of the rights and position of the constituency group or an enlargement of its benefits and opportunities received code 1; claims that imply a decrease of the duties of the constituency have also been coded 1; all claims that imply a deterioration of the rights and position of the constituency group or a restriction of their benefits and opportunities were coded \(-1\); claims that imply an increase of the duties of the constituency were coded \(-1\); all neutral, ambivalent, or technocratic claims have received a code 0.8

Table 7.2 shows the average discursive positions in immigration and ethnic relations politics in the four countries for each of the two main issue fields (immigration politics and integration politics) and for the entire political field. It is important to stress that we are more interested in the comparison across countries, that is, in the position of the four countries relative to each other, rather than in the absolute values. Such a position changes depending on the issue field (immigration or integration). However, if we look at the entire political field, we see that the general discursive context is clearly most favourable in Britain, as this country has a higher score, followed by France. Germany and, especially, Switzerland present a more hostile context in this respect.
Table 7.3 Average discursive positions towards unemployed people by issue field (1995–2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Britain</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Switzerland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Results are expressed on a scale ranging from -1 to +1. Code -1 corresponds to claims that imply a deterioration of the rights and position of the constituency group or a restriction of their benefits and opportunities. Code 0 corresponds to neutral, ambivalent and technocratic claims. Code +1 corresponds to claims that imply an improvement of the rights and position of the constituency group or an enlargement of its benefits and opportunities.

Table 7.3 shows the average discursive positions in employment politics in the four countries, for the two main dimensions relating to the debates on unemployment (economic and social) and for the entire political field. Again, the ranking of countries changes depending on the issue field (economic dimension or social dimension). Here cross-issue differences are minimal and the ranking of countries remains virtually the same on both dimensions. Most importantly, we see that, for the entire political field, France presents the most favourable discursive context, followed by Britain and Switzerland, with Germany appearing to be the most hostile context.

### 7.7 Hypotheses

Based on the comparative assessment of the general political opportunity structures, specific political opportunity structures and discursive contexts made above, we can now make predictions about the mobilisation of migrants and unemployed people or, more precisely, their presence in the public domain. Table 7.4 summarises the predictions about the extent of claim making by migrants in the four countries of our study. We make predictions separately for each of the three explanatory factors and then an overall assessment combining the three factors following a cumulative logic. First, concerning the general political opportunity structures, according to the typology of Kriesi et al. (1995), the most favourable opportunities for social movement mobilisation among our four countries are to be found in Switzerland. We therefore expect the extent of claim making by migrants to be higher in that country. Britain and France, in contrast, offer a more closed opportunity structure, which should limit migrants’ mobilisation. Germany is an intermediate case in this respect. Second, the predictions for the specific political opportunity structures that we can derive from the scores for the two dimensions of citizenship (see Table 7.1) are very different. Here we expect the highest level of mobilisation in Britain (multicultural model of citizenship), the lowest in Germany and Switzerland (assimilationist model), and France at an intermediate level (republican model). Third, as far as the discursive context is concerned, based on the average discursive positions shown earlier (see Table 7.2), we hypothesise a high level of mobilisation in Britain and France, a low level in Switzerland, and an intermediate level in Germany. Finally, the combination of the three explanatory factors (aggregating the hypotheses for each factor) yields the following overall prediction about the mobilisation of migrants in the four countries: a high level of mobilisation in Britain, an intermediate level in France, an intermediate-low level in Germany, and a low level in Switzerland.

Table 7.4 Predictions about the extent of claim making by migrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Britain</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Switzerland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General political opportunity structures</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific political opportunity structures</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discursive context</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
<td>intermediate-low</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** If we apply the logic followed to derive the overall prediction for Britain and Switzerland, we would have concluded that in Germany we expect an intermediate level. However, we characterise the latter case as intermediate-low in order to discriminate it from the case of France.
Table 7.5 Predictions about the extent of claim making by unemployed people

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Britain</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Switzerland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General political</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opportunity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>structures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific political</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opportunity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>structures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discursive context</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
<td>intermediate-low</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Again, if we apply the logic followed to derive the overall prediction for Britain, we would expect Germany to have intermediate level. Here too, the latter case is depicted as intermediate-low in order to distinguish between Germany and this time, France and Switzerland.

Switzerland is more restrictive in this respect. Therefore, we predict a low level of mobilisation for the unemployed in this country. Third, based on the average discursive positions shown earlier (see Table 7.5), we hypothesise that the discursive context will generate the highest level of mobilisation in France, the lowest in Germany, with Britain and Switzerland occupying an intermediate level. Finally, the combination of the three explanatory factors yields the following overall predictions about the mobilisation of unemployed people in the four countries: a low level of mobilisation in Britain, an intermediate level in France, an intermediate-low level in Germany, and an intermediate level in Switzerland.

7.8 FINDINGS

7.8.1 Migrant Mobilisation

The presentation of findings can be quite brief and straightforward, as we focus on a single aspect of claim making by migrants and unemployed, namely their level of mobilisation. Table 7.6 shows the share of migrant actors in claim making in immigration and ethnic relations politics (hence, excluding all claims that do not pertain to this political field, such as homeland-oriented claims). The table distinguishes between three broad issue fields (immigration politics, integration politics and anti-racist politics), in addition to an overall assessment of migrant mobilisation for the entire political field.

Table 7.6 Share of migrant actors in claim making in immigration and ethnic relations politics by issue field (1990–1998)%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Britain</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Switzerland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immigration politics</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration politics</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-racist politics</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration and ethnic relations politics (all fields)</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most important result concerns the entire field (last row). We expected the share of migrant claims to be highest in Britain, intermediate in France, intermediate-low in Germany, and lowest in Switzerland (see Table 7.4). These predictions are almost perfectly confirmed by our data. Britain is by and large the country in which migrants mobilise the most (19.7 per cent). At the opposite end, the mobilisation is the lowest in Switzerland (5.9 per cent). The other two countries are intermediate cases, but the level of mobilisation is higher in France (11.2 per cent) than in Germany (7.3 per cent).

If we look at the issues fields, we see that our predictions fit best the field of integration politics. This, in our view, strengthens our argument about the impact of configurations of citizenship on migrant mobilisation, insofar as integration politics most directly affects the life conditions of migrants in the host society. The other two issue fields, in contrast, present differing results. To be sure, in all four countries, migrants are more active on issues pertaining to integration politics relative to immigration politics. However, the difference between Britain and France virtually disappears when we look at issues relating to immigration politics. In addition, claims concerning anti-racist politics are more important in Germany and Switzerland than in France, although they remain lower than in Britain. In spite of these variations, the findings largely confirm our hypotheses about the combined impact of general opportunity structures, specific opportunity structures and discursive contexts.

7.8.2 Unemployed Mobilisation

Table 7.7 shows the share of unemployed actors’ claim making in employment politics. Again, we make a distinction between issue fields. Specifically, the data show the mobilisation of unemployed people addressing socioeconomic issues related to labour market and welfare systems, re-entry into the labour market and a residual category of other issues (which includes
protest activities by unemployed people that do not pertain to the employment political field. Once again, the most striking result concerns the entire field: the low level of mobilisation observed in all four countries. The unemployed have a low presence in the public domain. This is a result of several factors, including their lack of organisation, and demonstrates that the unemployed face many obstacles to political mobilisation (Faniel 2003). There are, however, also cross-national variations. We expected the share of unemployed claims to be lowest in Britain and more or less the same in the other three countries, perhaps with a higher level in France and Switzerland (see Table 7.5). Unlike in the case of migrants, our predictions are confirmed only in part. As expected, the share of claims is lowest in Britain (0.1 per cent), which presents the most unfavourable opportunity structures and also a relatively unfavourable discursive context. However, France displays a higher presence of the unemployed than expected (3.7 per cent), as compared to both Germany (0.8 per cent) and Switzerland (0.4 per cent). Furthermore, contrary to our predictions, unemployed mobilisation is higher in Germany than in Switzerland.

The gap between our hypotheses and the empirical findings can be explained in three ways. First, cross-national variations might simply be biased by the very small samples, as we are dealing with a few claims made by the unemployed in four countries. This holds especially for the differences between Britain, France and Switzerland. Second, on a theoretical level, our explanatory model might suffer from a specification problem. In other words, the variations observed might be explained by some other factors, most notably by the different unemployment rates in the four countries.

A third possible explanation deserves further elaboration because it is in line with our main argument. We suggest that, unlike other social movements, the mobilisation of minority groups such as migrants and unemployed people are only to a limited extent influenced by the general political opportunity structures, while they are much more sensible of the specific political opportunity structures. Both movements are composed of marginalised people who often lack basic citizenship rights, politically, socially, or both. As a result, political institutions are less important to them and have a minor impact on their political behaviour.

If we take a second look at our predictions about the mobilisation of unemployed people without taking into account the general political opportunity structures (see Table 7.5), we arrive at the following predictions: an intermediate-low level of mobilisation in Britain, intermediate-high in France, intermediate-low in Germany and intermediate-low in Switzerland. Thus, we expect the unemployed to have a higher presence in the public domain in France than in the other three countries. This is exactly what the findings indicate (see Table 7.7). Furthermore, the same argument holds for migrants. If we advance the hypotheses concerning their mobilisation only on the basis of specific political opportunity structures and discursive contexts, we arrive at the following predictions: a high level of mobilisation in Britain, intermediate-high in France, intermediate-low in Germany and low in Switzerland. Again, these expectations are confirmed by the findings. Thus, it seems that the political mobilisation of minority groups such as migrants and unemployed people is more affected by specific opportunity structures and discursive contexts than by the general opportunity structures stressed by political opportunity theorists.

### 7.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter we aimed to account for cross-national variations in the political mobilisation of migrants and unemployed people following a revised political opportunity approach. We have tried to show that the mobilisation of these minority groups largely depends on context-sensitive factors, for example, the general political opportunity structures of a country, the specific political opportunity structures of the policy or issue field, and the discursive context of claim making are all important. Using original data on claim making on immigration, ethnic relations and unemployment politics, we have shown that the level of mobilisation of these two underprivileged minority groups varies in important ways from one country to the other according to the institutional and discursive settings in which they are located.

The findings confirm our hypotheses most strongly in the case of the mobilisation of migrants, while the results for the unemployed are less
clear-cut. Several factors explain the differences. First, the immigration political field is a more contentious area compared to unemployment, which can be seen as more consensual. This makes the policy positions of collective actors closer to each other and therefore less likely to produce a varying discursive context for the mobilisation of the unemployed. Second, the higher obstacles to the mobilisation of the unemployed, as compared to migrants, make their mobilisation more difficult regardless of contextual factors. As a result, cross-national variations are somewhat flattened and become less visible. Finally, the mobilisation of the unemployed is probably influenced, at least in part, by the economic conditions and, most notably, labour market conditions. With these qualifications, our hypotheses remain robust and are largely supported by the empirical evidence at our disposal.

More generally, the analysis points to the need for more accurate definition drawing in the political opportunity structure field. More precisely, while in its original formulation the concept represents a general setting which is assumed to affect all movements in a similar fashion and to a similar extent, the evidence presented here suggests that the mobilisation of migrants and the unemployed also depends on a set of opportunities specific to an area or issue. We have further suggested that such specific opportunities stem from the institutional approaches to immigration and unemployment. In this perspective, claim making by collective actors in the immigration and ethnic relations political area is influenced in important ways by the configurations or models of citizenship, while in the unemployment political field it depends on the prevailing conception of the welfare state. In both cases, these specific opportunities enlarge or constrain the margin of manoeuvre for the action of collective actors and channel their interventions in the public domain.

NOTES

1. Historical examples of this model, which has sometimes translated into segregationist practices, are the millet system of the Ottoman Empire (organised along religious rather than ethnic lines) and, more recently, South Africa under apartheid.

2. The MERCI project includes five countries: Germany and Britain (study conducted by Ruud Koopmans, Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung and Paul Statham, University of Leeds), France and Switzerland (Marco Giugni, University of Geneva and Florence Passy, University of Lausanne), and the Netherlands (Thom Duyvendak de Wit, University of Amsterdam). See Koopmans et al. (2005) for a summary of the main results of the study.

3. The UENMPOL project includes six countries: Britain (study supervised by Paul Statham, University of Leeds), Switzerland (Marco Giugni, University of Geneva), France (Didier Chabanet, University of Lyon), Italy (Donatella della Porta, European University Institute, Florence), Germany (Christian Lahusen, University of Bamberg) and Sweden.

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