EUI FORUM ON MIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP AND DEMOGRAPHY

CONFERENCE ON THE INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

European University Institute

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THEMATIC OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

The Conference on the Integration of Migrants and Refugees is organized within the framework of the EUI Forum on Migration, Citizenship and Demography. The Forum provides a space to reflect on the issues emanating from the contemporary mass movements of refugees and migrants. Motivated by recent developments in Europe, the forum seeks to bring together academics, experts, stakeholders and practitioners both at the EUI and beyond in order to explore – and draw practical lessons from – unique new challenges that these developments pose for both Europe and the world. Beyond the immediate crisis, the Forum will concentrate on far-reaching impact in three domains: (1) demography, (2) integration management, and (3) the repercussions for Europe's fundamental premises.

The Conference on the Integration of Migrants and Refugees addresses the challenges the crisis poses to the 'traditional' integration mechanisms and processes employed by European countries. These challenges arise from a host of particular factors: the unprecedented number of migrants and refugees that have recently entered Europe; the mostly unregulated and uncontrolled nature of this new immigration; the burden that this puts on those European countries that have previously had very little experience with immigration and integration,

but also the opportunities it provides in terms of addressing the key social and economic challenges that Europe will be facing in the next 30 years; the desire of immigrants and refugees to settle in specific countries (particularly Germany or Sweden); the security concerns that have arisen in the aftermath of terrorist attacks. The conference will thus seek to explore the medium and long-term impact of these and other challenges on the debate and measurement of the success of immigrant integration. There will be four thematic panels, each of which will focus on a different aspect of integration: (I) citizenship and legal statuses, (II) education, (III) labor market integration, (IV) cultural integration.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Even before the current refugee/migrant crisis, population movements towards developed countries have been steadily increasing over time. Since 2000 the immigrant population in both the EU and OECD has grown by 30%.[1] Although research shows that the rise in immigration does not have a negative effect on the success of integration,[2] the specificity of the current crisis might pose altogether new challenges to 'traditional' integration mechanisms and processes.

There are many reasons for thinking that circumstances are different this time round. First, the number of refugees and migrants currently entering Europe is unprecedented. In 2014, around 219,000 people crossed the Mediterranean while this number grew to around one million in 2015.[3] There were almost 1.3 asylum applications in the EU countries during 2015.[4] The high number of refugees and migrants has already caused difficulties for both the transit and recipient countries, which are struggling to provide conditions for satisfying basic needs such as food, shelter and healthcare. But it is not only the numbers – the nature of immigration has also been transformed by becoming much less regulated and controlled, thus preventing the destination countries from predicting and planning the necessary

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[1] OECD (2015), 'Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2105: Settling In', available at: http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/indicators-of-immigrant-integration-2015-settling-in_9789264234024-en (last accessed August 22, 2016).

[2] Ibid.

[3] Hume, T. and Pawle, L. (205), 'Number of Migrants Reaching Europe this Year Passes 1 Million', available at: http://edition.cnn.com/2015/12/22/europe/million-refugees-enter-europe/ (last accessed August 22, 2016).

[4] Eurostat (2016), 'Asylum Statistics', available at: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics (last accessed August 22, 2016).

resources to host immigrants. The prospects for a persisting flow of refugees and migrants in the coming years makes integration a crucial issue for the future of Europe.

Second, demands as well as obstacles for burden-sharing between EU countries through redistributing refugees and forced migrants from overburdened Greece and Italy to other EU member states have both increased dramatically. Many countries that have so far not had much experience with immigration – and immigrant integration – have been asked to accept significant numbers of newcomers. This has already triggered negative reactions and explicit hostility in some Member States: for instance, Slovakia announced in August 2015 that it will only accept Christians,[5] while Hungary is altogether against resettlement and fears, in the words of Prime Minister Viktor Orban, that accepting immigrants will serve to spread terrorism.[6] The lack of experience of such countries with hosting and integrating immigrants, combined with the hostile attitude towards them, compounds the problems in countries that are currently overburdened and does not augur well for the integration of those refugees in the most reluctant host countries. Most refugees/migrants currently entering Europe aim resolutely for specific destinations and want to settle mainly in Germany or Sweden.[7] However, if the EU plan which aims at relocating and resettling 160,000 people across Europe by September 2017 is carried out as intended,[8] many people will be sent to countries other than those of their preference. Immigrant destinations will stop being a matter of personal choice, and while maybe necessary, this process will most probably influence negatively the capacity and willingness of immigrants to integrate into their new communities as well as public opinion in countries where refugee resettlement is seen to be imposed by "Brussels".

Third, the public debate on how to handle the crisis has steadily been shifting towards a debate about the security threat posed by the uncontrolled influx of refugees and migrants. In the wake of the Paris terrorist attacks in November 2015, Poland withdrew its earlier promise

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[5] BBC (2015), 'Migrant Crisis: Slovakia Will Only Accept Christians', available at: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33986738 (last accessed August 22, 2016).
[6] Feher, M. (2015), 'EU Migrant Distribution Will Spread Terrorism, Hungary's Orban Says', available at: http://www.wsj.com/articles/eu-migrant-distribution-will-spread-terrorism-hungarys-orban-says-1447698602 (last accessed August 22, 2016).
[7] Economist (2015), 'Germany, the EU Country which Takes the Most Asylum Seekers, is Straining', available at: http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21661941-wanting-burden-shared-germany-eu-country-which-takes-most-asylum-seekers-straining (last accessed August 22, 2016).
[8] European Commission (2016), 'Relocation and Resettlement: Positive Trend Continues, but More Efforts Needed', available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-2435_en.htm (last accessed August 22, 2016).

to accept 7,000 individuals as part of the EU plan.[9] Further terrorist attacks in Brussels and Nice have only deepened security concerns. The apparently organized massive sexual molestation and assaults on women on New Year's Eve 2015 in Cologne by Muslim background immigrants have dramatically soured the public mood and support for a "culture of welcome" for newly arriving refugees that had prevailed in Germany and Austria in summer 2015. Although civil society organizations continue to provide crucial support for newcomers, public opinion has shifted dramatically. While anti-migration rhetoric and the securitization of the crisis had previously been a domain of right-wing populist parties and politicians, the very real security anxieties arising from these events influence negatively the public attitude towards immigration and integration in all European states.

These problems are only the three most apparent and immediate obstacles to proactive integration policies for refugees and migrants in the host societies. In the absence of realistic prospects for ending the violent conflicts that are the cause of the current refugee crises, disputes about burden sharing and pandering of politicians to hostile public opinion cannot change the fact that Europe will become the new permanent home for most refugees. This makes it imperative to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past when integration policies were delayed in order to encourage return and deter potential migrants, or were ineffective in preventing social segregation and discrimination of first as well as second generations of immigrants.

The current debates on integration of refugees and immigrants thus need to consider how the new circumstances challenge conventional wisdoms. 'Traditional' immigrant societies have been exposed to immigration for many decades and have developed a set of normative ideas on how best to achieve integration and social cohesion. In the 1990s, the academic literature distinguished different national models or "philosophies" of integration, often categorized into exclusionary, laissez-faire, assimilationist or multicultural approaches. In the 2000s the internal consistency and practical relevance of such national models has been widely questioned. The uncontrolled influx of a high number of refugees and immigrants provides a new context for this debate confronting host countries with similar problems – even if the politics of immigrant integration still depend largely on national contexts such as previous

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[9] Wall Street Journal (2015), 'Paris Terror Attacks Transform Debate Over Europe's Migration Crisis', available at: http://www.wsj.com/articles/paris-terror-attacks-transform-debate-over-europes-migration-crisis-1447608944 (last accessed August 22, 2016).

immigration experiences or the electoral strength of right-wing populist parties. Instead of focusing on comparing national approaches, the conference will therefore be structured into different "sectors" of integration. Within each of these sectors, the nationally specific impact of numbers of new arrivals and of public attitudes should be taken into account as an important context that requires specific strategies and policy responses.

General questions that the conference will seek to address include the following:

- Do the definition and the requirements of integration change in the light of large population movements? What does it mean to be integrated in these circumstances? Is it necessary to modify existing indicators for the success of integration?
- Since integration is a two-way process, which policies can help to create and sustain over time a "culture of welcome" in the context of large population movements?
- How can the costs and the benefits of integration be measured and compared with the costs and foregone benefits for the host society if it fails to integrate those who come – in terms of economy, standard of living, security, social cohesion?
- How do past integration patterns and public discourse about immigrant integration shape present conditions for the integration of large inflows of refugees? Do we need common European minimum standards or flexible models adapted to national circumstances?
- What are the main building blocks of or preconditions for integration: decent housing, language acquisition, job integration? As a consequence, what is the best sequence of policy interventions and migrant support measures to facilitate their integration?

In line with the stated objective, the conference will cover four relevant domains.

1. CITIZENSHIP AND LEGAL STATUSES

Key issues:

- Integration policies during asylum procedures (restrictions on free movement, employment, language and job training, social assistance)
- Access to permanent residence and citizenship

- Alternative legal statuses and their implications for the integration process: temporary protection

Regarding the acquisition of status, in European migration-receiving countries the integration of migrants and – especially – refugees has been traditionally based on the assumption that their stay is temporary rather than permanent: as a result, integration policies have been ad hoc at best and lacked a focus on their comprehensive immersion into the host societies. One of the best ways to become a full and equal member of society is by securing a route towards citizenship through naturalization. Citizenship is an important measurement of integration because it extends rights to unconditional residence and political participation and because naturalization represents a deliberate choice by immigrants to link their future with that of the host country. Yet, citizenship acquisition rates in Europe remain relatively low – with significant variation between countries and between migrant groups– and policies outlining comprehensive pathways towards citizenship are the exception, rather than the rule. Recent comparative research on citizenship for immigrants has focused on issues such as: the conditions for acquiring citizenship of the host country, how they differ between countries, how they change over time and how they distinguish various classes of would-be citizens. Recent research has also examined the overall effect of citizenship policies and naturalization on various integration indicators.[10] The available evidence on the 'citizenship premium' for integration provides a mixed picture, both across domains, across migrant groups and across countries. Generally, however, permanent residence and ultimately citizenship are seen as crucial opportunities especially for those migrants who are most in need of a secure legal status and those who face the greatest hurdles towards building a new life in the host society.

In light of the long-term status of refugees that are currently entering Europe, the more immediately relevant question is what kind of legal statuses and protection the new refugees

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[10] Bauböck, R. et al (2013), 'Access to Citizenship and its Impact on Immigrant Integration', available at:http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/29828/AccesstoCitizenshipanditsImpactonImmigrantIntegration.pdf?sequence=1 (last accessed August 22, 2016); and OECD (2011), 'Naturalisation: A Passport for a Better Integration of Immigrants?', available at: http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/naturalisation-a-passport-for-the-better-integration-of-immigrants_9789264099104-en (last accessed August 22, 2016).

are offered. In the absence of EU-wide coordination, destination countries have envisaged reducing migration incentives by introducing temporary asylum also to those recognized as genuine refugees, by denying or delaying for a long time family reunification, by restricting access to labor markets and by lowering welfare benefits.

2. EDUCATION

Key issues:

- Immersion, separate school classes or early tracking for newly arrived children?
- Urban segregation or school system: what explains the lack of educational achievement of immigrant origin children?
- Access to pre-school and post-compulsory education for refugee children

Education is considered as one of the key tools for the integration of immigrants. Securing equal educational opportunities creates more equal access to job opportunities which, in turn, determines their socio-economic status. Research on education for immigrants has focused on a number of issues, such as: how well do the immigrant children do in school when compared to non-immigrant children; what is the highest educational level that they achieve; how well do their educational achievements transfer into acquisition of jobs. In the context of the current wave of immigration, two issues seem particularly pertinent. First, how should host societies deal with the challenge of educating the children of refugees and immigrants who have suddenly been exposed to a new culture and language much more dramatically than this is the case in regular migration where both immigrant families and host country education systems can prepare? One solution would be to organize education for groups of children of similar background, but this carries an inherent danger of permanent segregation. Does early tracking provide an alternative solution? Second, concentration of high numbers of newly arrived immigrant children in certain schools is likely to trigger 'native flight' by middle class parents who fear a lowering of educational standards, reinforcing a vicious circle of segregation and unequal educational outcomes. What are the policy tools and options to counter this trend? Third, considering the fact that host societies have less ability to control for the types of immigrants that are coming – in terms of the needs of their labor market – how can education, especially skills training, be made to work in favor of creating

qualification profiles that allow for successful labor market integration? Fourth, educational success of immigrant background children is increasingly seen to depend on early enrolment in pre-school education. What can be done to improve the participation of migrant and refugee children both in pre-school and in post-compulsory education?

3. LABOR MARKET INTEGRATION

Key issues:

- How to make use of human capital: certification and retraining of qualifications?
- How to prevent long-term unemployment: entry level jobs and deregulation?
- How to prevent labor market segregation and discrimination in employment?
- Which are the key factors facilitating labor market integration of refugees and migrants?
- How to link social benefits for refugees and unemployed migrants with access to the job market?
- What are the measures that can be taken in countries of origin and transit countries to facilitate labor market integration of refugees and migrants in countries of destination?

For both immigrants and native citizens, employment and upward social mobility in the labor market is the strongest indicator for a successful integration of newcomers. There are a number of issues that arise in the current context of massive inflows. First, how rigid or flexible are national labor markets and under which conditions can they expand and absorb large numbers of newcomers without condemning either the latter to structural unemployment or pushing out low-skilled natives and previous immigrant cohorts? Second, should prospects for employment play a role in selecting refugees for resettlement from crisis areas or for internal redistribution between member states from EU countries of first arrival or across the territory within hosting countries? Third, how can policies that aim at restricting secondary migrations of asylum seekers and refugees within and between EU member states that upset burden-sharing and redistribution schemes be reconciled with mobility that is needed to match supply and demand in labor markets? Fourth, is the reason why most of the new arrivals end up in low paying and precarious jobs due to their high

numbers, a skills mismatch, or language and cultural barriers and what public policies are most successful in overcoming skills and cultural barriers for employment?

4. CULTURAL INTEGRATION

Key issues:

- Immigrant languages in public services
- Accommodation of religious diversity and its limits
- Transformation of national identities through immigrant integration

For native populations, cultural matters are often at the core of what they understand as immigrant integration. European democracies that have received immigrants for a long time have at least officially abandoned the idea that immigrants whose cultural and religious background is distant to native traditions cannot belong and successfully integrate. Official cultural integration requirements have been reduced to learning a new language, becoming familiar with informal social norms and embracing the values officially supported by a country's institutions. This is still not the case in the more recently democratized member states with little experience of non-European immigration where ethnic nationalism is often articulated also in public policy reactions to the current refugee inflows. Even civic models of cultural integration can, however, become obstacles for integration when specific immigrant groups are targeted because they are regarded as more foreign than others. Since most of the new arrivals hail from predominantly Muslim countries, the response to the current massive inflows is strongly shaped by a widely perceived failure to integrate previous waves of Muslim background immigrants and by the recent escalation of terrorist attacks in Europe.

There are a number of issues that arise regarding cultural integration of the current immigrant populations. First, what should traditionally non-immigrant societies do to increase their cultural openness towards integration? Second, what challenges for immigration arise from the 'collective' nature of current immigration – from the fact that immigrants are arriving and (probably) being resettled as groups rather than individuals? How should this reflect on 'traditional' cultural integration mechanisms, such as language

teaching? Taking into account the size and collective nature of the new immigration, should one try to avoid the concentration of specific communities in urban settings where they have the capacity to reproduce much of their everyday culture of origin? Or should one rather regard these immigrant enclaves as sources of social capital for newcomers that can smoothen the integration process? Third, in addition to targeting individuals with language courses or civic integration programs, will the size and cohesiveness of newly arriving groups necessitate integration approaches that build on cooperation with group representatives and intensive community work in order to avoid the formation of new immigrant "ghettos"? Fourth, how will the public culture and institutions of the host society change and how can public opinion about the current wave of immigration be made to work in favor of integration, having in mind the reasonable security concerns which arise from events such as terrorist attacks and widespread fears about rising unemployment and economic decline?