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*Safety and immigration: the problem of immigration and the  
European union*

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**1. Approach to the problem.**

In recent years, international migration has made its way to the forefront of the security agendas of several states, particularly in Europe and North America. The perception of immigration as a threat to security has developed alongside the rapid increase in the number of immigrants worldwide: while there were approximately 191 million persons living outside their countries of origin in 2005, by 2010 this number had increased to an estimated 214 million (IOM 2010). In the most general sense of the term, security refers to the absence of threats. The traditional approach to international security has focused primarily on military concerns. From this perspective, the state is the referent object needing protection from threatening forces, particularly that of war (Krause and Williams 1996:230; Peoples and Vaughan-Williams 2010:23). However, security studies in the post-Cold War era has moved

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away from the state-centric approach, broadening the definition of security to include a number of potential threats (Krause and Williams 1996:230; Lohrmann 2000:5). Barry Buzan, founder of the Copenhagen School of security studies, argues that security studies should not only focus on the military sector, but should be further developed to encompass societal, environmental, economic, and political security (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams 2010:22-23). Due to the expansion of the concept of security, a multitude of issues such as those relating to the environment, poverty, and international migration have been labeled as security risks or threats (Krause and Williams 1996:230, Lohrmann 2000:5). Instead of the state as the referent object being threatened, non-state objects such as humanity, cultural identity, and the individual self are considered to be in danger (Huysmans 2006:20). This essay will focus on one particular aspect of the security debate: is immigration a threat to security? The following pages will investigate the claim that immigration is a threat to security by focusing on societal, economic, internal, and public security, arguing that immigration is a constructed and perceived threat rather than a real, objective danger. Every year approximately 120,000 immigrants attempt to reach Europe in unsafe and inadequate vessels. Such trips are often facilitated by human traffickers based on the North African coasts. In 2014 this figure reached 130,000. It is now estimated that one million individuals are waiting on the North African coast to embark on this journey. The journey across the Mediterranean is typically the last step of what is usually a harrowing trip to Europe. The countries of origin are usually tainted with conflict, economic and

structural problems, and inefficient governance. The decision to undertake such a journey is generally one of necessity rather than choice. The challenges facing the affected countries are three-fold. Firstly, the countries located in the Mediterranean littoral are facing with an unfolding humanitarian tragedy. Secondly, there are security concerns which cannot be ignored. Thirdly, a possible solution seems elusive. The vessels used to cross the Mediterranean Sea are often not seaworthy. Moreover, these trips are operated by human traffickers who have little regard for the safety and the security of the individuals concerned. Approximately 20,000 people are thought to have lost their lives in such circumstances over the past twenty years. The hopelessness of the situation is compounded by the fact that rescue missions have become less frequent and less effective. The European Commission's rescue mission, Operation Triton, was described by the UNHCR as being 'woefully inadequate'. It has no operational resources of its own and it is entirely dependent on individual voluntary contributions from EU member states. The Italian rescue Mission, Mare Nostrum, has registered some success and it can be credited with saving the lives of 100,000 refugees. However, with an operating cost of € 9,000,000 per month, this mission is placing a strain on Italy's finances. When reflecting on this situation, Pope Francis spoke on the need for international organizations to come together to encourage a common humanitarian solution. Political considerations must come second to humanitarian considerations. The respect for human life and the dignity of the individual must inform all discussions relating to this situation. The

immigration crisis is a by-product of a wider security concern; the situation is a result of insecurity which in turn leads to more insecurity. A cursory look at the country of origin of most migrants reveals that most are escaping from hopeless situations in their homeland. At present, the situation in sub-Saharan Africa is dire; the rise of Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram has displaced a number of individuals whilst other countries, such as Somalia, Eritrea and Djibouti, are plagued by lawlessness, inefficient governmental structures and flagrant human rights abuses. The region is torn apart by violent conflicts and instability.

The Mediterranean itself is also a source of instability; Syria and Libya are torn apart by civil conflicts, and the rise of ISIL has destabilised the region. Criminal groups are taking advantage of this situation and are trafficking individuals. All considerations must take into account the security and the dignity of the human being. This can only be met by adequate rescue operations and a relentless campaign to prevent human trafficking. Nonetheless, there are other security concerns which arise from time to time. The Italian media reported that approximately 50,000 migrants who had applied for asylum couldn't be traced. They are believed to have moved throughout the peninsula or attempted to reach other European countries. Health authorities also stated that there were two suspected malaria cases whilst a good percentage of migrants seen by the health authorities are believed to suffer from scabies. France has tightened border security as a result of these developments

An arrest in May 2015 has also raised some fears about possible extremist infiltration in Europe. Abdel Majid Touil, a 22-year-old

thought to be linked to the Bardo Museum attack in Tunis, was arrested in Milan. He is believed to have arrived in Italy on a migrant ship. Such developments have security implications on both a national and a regional level. The many reasons that many immigrants head to Europe is not as commonly believed to be caused by pull factors, those which attract people to a country, but push factor, those which push people out of their native countries, such as war or persecution. The economic and social pressures on many countries have necessitated that the rules are tightened up, and considering that once European citizenship is gained the ultimate aim of the European Union is free movement of trade, including labor, that the problem that one country faces may be passed on to others at a later date.

The potential problem is illustrated by the number of legal immigrants each year, currently standing at one and a half million per annum immigrating into Europe. In response to this European policy has been to look at designing foreign policy across the Union which is closed and looks inward rather than outward. All the nations are agreeing on this change of direction, with the only exception being Ireland, which does not have a problem with immigration anyway, partly due to its' location. The Maastricht Treaty was designed to promote unity between country members and their policies, and they accept publicly that that there is a common interest in immigration policies, but despite this all the discussions concerning polices concerning such things as asylum are still held as quietly and with as little publicity as possible.

The attitude taken by countries can be evidenced by the situation in Algeria a few years ago, where Charles Pasqua, the Interior Minister, who said he would refuse refugees if the Islamic extremists gained power. More recently the situation in Bosnia, which is a European country, was a demonstration of this reluctance. Many refugees fled for their lives, and eventually most European nations did take some refugees, but in comparison with the numbers fleeing the amount taken by each country were very small, and then only on the basis that they would be returned as quickly as possible, despite the condition of the infrastructure of the country. The cause of many of the fears regarding immigration come from 1989 when the Berlin Wall came down. When this occurred there was a mass migration from the east to the perceived prosperous west. In all in the first few months that the wall was down over one million people immigrated.

This number of people will have an effect on even the strongest of economies, let alone one that is also suffering the costs of unification and starting to support and integrate a former poor communist country. With all the changes occurring within the world one factor became evident for all the countries within the European Union that there had to be consensus within the Union on the immigration policy as different policies just did not stand up in isolation. However, the European Commission remains limited in its powers on this issue. The most common policy now for all countries (with the exception of Ireland) is that if the potential immigrant is seeking asylum and has come by a different European country they will be returned to that country to seek

asylum . To make matters worse most countries also have schemes where they can keep asylum seekers incarcerated in secure facilities such as prisons or camps. Most countries have also changed their state benefit system so that asylum seekers will not benefit from the generous payments that they would have received in the past.

If an asylum seeker does enter a country they may face a double problem, as in conjunction with the lower, if any, benefits they are also restricted from working whilst being assessed for asylum (Islam et al 10). Germany changed its asylum laws in 1993 so that any person seeking asylum in the country could be returned to their country of origin as long as the country was deemed safe (Islam! et al 10). It is not only asylum seekers that are seeing immigration rules being tightened up, but also the laws which allow international family reunions (Islam et al 10); The position of the United Kingdom is not that much different from the rest of Europe either. This country once allowed anyone from the commonwealth to come and settle in the country which was the reason that there was a mass migration into the county from the West Indies in the 1950s when the United States tightened up their own borders. Now even some classes of British citizens do not have the right to settle in the country.

The Conservative party who were in power when the legislation was passed which changed the immigration laws were criticized in the press, by the public, and by the Labor opposition party. However although the press and public opinion did not change immediately the position of the opposition did change quiet quickly, realizing what a difficult subject it

was. When the conservative party undertook interviews regarding the maintenance of the country's borders there was little if any criticism on this publicized subject from the opposition, a very unusual occurrence indeed. There was an incident with a FAX transmitted by Jack Straw to labor members of the European parliament to ensure that none would give any interviews through any of the media (television, radio or newspapers) where the position of the opposition was to be questioned over the maintenance of border controls in the United Kingdom. This is an approach that is still not in line with the rest of Europe as by the United Kingdom maintaining border controls of this nature as the European Union is designed as a borderless entity, with free movement of people within the borders. The European Union has tried to oppose the maintenance of the United Kingdom borders with regards to other European citizens, but so far has failed to make the British government back down on this issue, despite the fact that it is part of the agreements set out in the Single European Act. ; European external borders throughout the Union are also being strengthened due to the amount of illegal immigrants that are entering the union. The press has even nicknamed this move as 'Fortress Europe'. The controversy over this is not the strengthening of the borders, but what is actually happening to the individuals trying to cross these borders.

It has been argued that from a humanist point of view that this is immoral as the human rights of these people are being ignored, as there are thousands of these potential refugees being turned away each month according to The European Council on Refugees and Exiles. These



refugees are being turned away with no asylum hearings or other legal proceedings. However there is little disagreement being raised anywhere in the European Union regarding this policy, as all countries appear to be in agreement with each other, afraid of what problems may be brought into the country by the immigrants . Limited resistant has been seen in the Labor European members of parliament who disagree with this, and with the theory of Morgenthau that they seem to be following, one of non-intervention in the affairs of other countries. Neil Kinnock, the transport minister, and the leader of the socialist in the parliament Pauline Green, both have stated that they feel the amount of fear which exists over the possible problem with migrations taking place within Europe to be misguided and wrong, and therefore that this means that they believe the problems of each boarder should be dealt with by the nation state who has the boarder without interference from the European Union. The right wing parliamentarians all appear to be getting their own way when it comes to policy, but with little object form the left this is hardly surprising.

## **2. The Projected Problems of Immigration in Europe.**

Migration is a growing and permanent part of Europe's future. Two factors have led to pressure for a more effective EU strategy to promote the economic, social, cultural, and political integration of migrants and the next generation: recognition of the failure to integrate past migrants effectively, and concern about rising support for the far right. European

countries have differing views on both the goals of integration and the most appropriate strategies to achieve it. Nevertheless, the EU does have at its disposal several unique levers to make an effective contribution to the development of integration policy, complementing the primary responsibility of its member states. Some 13-14 million third-country nationals live in the EU, some four percent of the population. A number of patterns, however, make the issue more significant than this statistic would suggest. Immigrants remain concentrated in particular regions and cities, and may remain excluded even after they and their second-generation offspring have become nationals. EU nationals can themselves face barriers to integration outside their own countries but within the union (e.g., Portuguese immigrants in Northern Ireland). Net migration into Europe is increasing, and is now the largest component of population change. Migrants, moreover, come from a far wider range of countries, and bring a greater diversity of languages and cultures, than in the past. Some European states have only recently become countries of immigration, with no experience of integration strategies. Migrants bring significant economic and cultural benefits. Some newcomers are very successful in the labor market and enjoy positive relations with other residents. But there is substantial evidence that many face disadvantages on all the key indexes of integration: legal rights, education, employment, criminal justice, health, living conditions, and civic participation. Moreover, migrants and the second generation can be well integrated on one index (such as intermarriage), but not on others (such as high unemployment). One of the factors leading to an

increased focus on integration at the EU level is the belated recognition that migration will be a permanent part of Europe's future. The workers who come to fill skills and labor shortages, refugees, overseas students, and family members who arrive to join immigrant relatives will require a level of incorporation, whether they stay temporarily or permanently. If states are to compete for the "brightest and best," potential migrants must be confident that they will not face discrimination and exclusion. Moreover, EU states cannot afford to neglect the talents of migrants already in the workforce.

Ten new countries will join the EU in 2004, leading to greater mobility of migrants (including of Roma communities). A desire to ensure that their arrival does not provoke tensions, and that the new EU citizens experience equality of opportunity with other EU nationals, also needs to be expressed in policy initiatives. Public resentment of migrants and fear of difference leads to discrimination, community tensions, and occasional violence. In addition, it has contributed to the rise in support for far-right political parties, which successfully exploit people's fears and resentments. Public anxiety about Muslim minorities (in particular since the September 11 terrorist attacks), subsequent international conflicts, and vocal hostility towards Muslims in Europe all point to the need for a comprehensive integration strategy.

This need has yet to be addressed effectively at the national level. A minority of disillusioned, alienated migrants seeks an alternative sense of identity and purpose by joining fundamentalist groups, thereby further segregating themselves from mainstream society. The EU has long

recognized that integration is a necessary part of a comprehensive immigration and refugee strategy. The 1999 European Council in Tampere found a new willingness to cooperate in developing that comprehensive strategy, addressing integration under the heading of "fair treatment of third-country nationals".

Primary responsibility for integration lies at the national and local levels. But EU goals in relation to immigration, economic growth, and social cohesion all require a focus on integration. The EU has the ability to address a range of issues vital to integration through post-entry rules on immigrants and refugees (e.g., in its directive on family reunification); its laws on racial and religious discrimination; targeted efforts for migrants such as the "Equal" program; and its (currently marginal) attention to integration in mainstream strategies on employment, social inclusion, and health.

Since the Amsterdam Treaty of 1999, the EU has had a mandate to require member states to address discrimination on grounds of race and religion. Directives now require member states to legislate on racial discrimination in employment, goods, and services; to establish a statutory body to provide assistance to individual victims; and to ban religious discrimination in employment by December 2003. The JHA Council in October 2002 asked the European Commission to come forward with proposals for a more comprehensive integration strategy. A communication from the European Commission on immigration, integration, and employment was published in June 2003. An effective EU strategy will have to move beyond the provision of common

minimum legal standards and information-sharing to the use of its unique levers to promote integration, including:

1. Establishing a mechanism for dialogue and coordination among member states and across the Commission to develop and share good practice on essential elements of an integration strategy such as induction programmes for new migrants.
2. Reviewing existing and proposed EU immigration and asylum measures to ensure that they provide migrants with a secure legal status, rights and responsibilities that reflect their temporary or permanent status, and the maximum possible access to the rights that promote integration—including employment and family reunification.
3. Taking active responsibility for leading a balanced, informed, public debate about the reasons migrants are in Europe by putting into the public domain information about the contribution they make and barriers they experience, acknowledging public fears, and correcting misinformation.
4. Promoting contact between people from different religious and cultural backgrounds and building a consensus that racial prejudice is socially unacceptable.
5. Taking steps to promote a common understanding across member states of the barriers to integration and of effective steps to address them – within and beyond the labor market – through data collection, research, monitoring initiatives, and dissemination.

6. Ensuring implementation of the EU discrimination directives and establishment of effective bodies to promote and enforce them.
7. Engaging member states, the social partners, NGOs, and migrant organizations, learning from them, sharing ideas on good practice, and enabling migrants to contribute to decision-making, as an essential element of civic participation.
8. Conducting a review to identify which EU policies, programs, budgets, and policy levers are most relevant to integration, including strategies on employment, social inclusion, and health, and ensure that integration objectives are mainstreamed within them.
9. Reconsidering the bar on employment of third-country nationals within the Commission.

There have been three obstacles to securing agreement on a substantive, EU-wide integration strategy. The first is fear of public resistance to migrants, and to EU involvement in their conditions of stay. Second, the key levers for integration (such as employment policy and family reunification) fall under the authority of different directorates-general at the European Commission, different committees in the European Parliament, and different ministries at the national level—with the usual barriers thus created to developing a coordinated strategy. Third, views differ across Europe on the goal of integration and appropriate strategies to achieve it. In practice, however, no member state is pursuing any of these positions to its extreme. Their own models are not immutable, and

are evolving towards greater convergence. The European Commission, in its recent communication on integration, set out comprehensive measures which, if implemented, would make a significant contribution to the economic, social, cultural, and political integration of migrants across the European Union.

The fear of the problems that immigrants will bring to European countries which have been in recession and are only just coming out of that recession have are summed up by Waddle as the economic and social costs that they might incur . In response to this criticism and concerns Peter Crampton, another British Labor member of the European Parliament has said; "Wardle talks about Turkish workers in Germany moving to take British houses and British jobs. What political gibberish. Labor should be ramming home that Turkish workers in Germany are very often paid much more than many workers in low-wage Britain and that German social security standards are far higher than in the UK". However what he himself is criticized in this is that German citizenship is much harder to obtain than that of the United Kingdom, even after the rules and regulations have been tightened up. Many countries are very concerned about becoming the target of countries that have higher unemployment and lower wages, and cost the citizens of the nation state their jobs forcing hardship that would not occur without immigration. This may seem an extreme view, but when we consider that there are 1.5 million immigrants entering Europe legally ever year, then in 1991 it was estimated that illegal immigrants in Europe

totaled 2.6 million were living in Europe, with an additional 1500,000 to 300,000 entering each year.

When it is considered that there are 18 million unemployed people looking for work in Europe it becomes easier to see why this subject is so sensitive. The issue of foreigners taking jobs has always been an emotive subject, it was that which helped cause riots in the United Kingdom in the 1940's, and resulted in violence and deaths with immigration laws tightened up. That was in a time with less media coverage, and lower unemployment, so the social disruption that might follow mass migration may be severe. There are also additional costs associated with immigrants other than the opportunity cost of jobs. That is the cost incurred by the state of having them move to the country. The first cost is the cost to the state in benefits should they not have sufficient income to live on. This can amount to several hundred dollars a week if there are children. If the family are eligible for help in this way they will probably also get help in housing, or housing costs.

This means that they will either be provided with a home, or have their rent paid for them. This is further aggravated by the rules which say that if an asylum hearing is taking place then the individual cannot work whilst waiting for the outcome of the hearing. During this time, some of the benefits are limited, but they are still available, as without them people would starve and have nowhere to live. The moral obligation is obvious, but in practical terms it raises many questions, and the moral arguments get lost in the many cases of asylum seekers that are publicized, whether real or not, which are economic refugees rather than



refugees from danger. Although the estimate of economic refugees it is though is probably overstated but does the governments no harm when they are taking a hard line approach to immigration. The social cost is not limited to the immediate social security benefit costs, but the on going social costs. Unemployment amongst immigrants tends to be higher due to the language and cultural difficulties many face when moving to another country . Once within the country there may be additional family members who want access to the county, this again could compound the economic problems . Additionally there are also the costs associated with children, not just child benefit costs, but the costs of schooling and other social services provided for the family, and the family sizes of immigrants, although falling, are still higher than those of citizens of the nation state. It also appears that many of these arguments may be short term in their perspective, as studies have also shown that with second generation immigrants the position is remedied, with the individuals seeing themselves as truly citizens of that nation state, with over two third saying they would join the armed forces to protect the land in which they live . As already mentioned the fear of social unrest has also been considered by many states as a significant factor. The early 1990's saw the outbreaks of nationalism in many countries, and there was much social unrest in Germany that was struggling to cope with the large amounts of immigrants that were coming over from the former East Germany. III. Conclusion The fear of the unknown is a strong driving force, and against a united front of Europe and its legislation the Union of Europe starts more to look like the fortress that it has been

called in the press. When there are many people turned back without even a hearing the system has to be questioned for fairness in the way in which it is applied. The states that appear to be most paranoid about the invasion of countless immigrants appears to be Germany and the United Kingdom, others have slightly more relaxed immigration policies, with Ireland being the easiest to gain admission to, however it is also the most unlikely country for an immigrant to go to because of its location. The fears about the costs are also controversial, as although the majority of parliamentarians appear to agree in quiet collusion, there are some who feel that the potential problems have been overstated, and that as there is no evidence for large migrations within the European Union it should be down to the discretion of each country to enforce their own policies, and not be dictated to by the European Commission.

However it is very early days within the free movement of labor within the European Union, and it may be that these concerns are a reality, especially when we consider the amount of people within Europe who are looking for jobs, and the number of immigrants currently in the region. This would appear to support the view that the jobs may be being taken by the immigrants, which if it continued unabated, could then lead social and civil unrest, which as well as the inconvenience and social problems it causes would also increase other costs such as those of policing and property damage. The major objection is usually based of the cost of state benefits, and the unaffordability of the states to maintain their current level, let alone face further increases, and it is this reason that is the main driving force behind the issue, not only due to

the immediate cost, but due to the unknown future liability that may be brought about by the free movement of labor within the European Union.

The immigration is increasingly interpreted as a security problem. The prism of security analysis is especially important for politicians, for national and local police organizations, the military police, customs officers, border patrols, secret services, armies, judges, some social services (health care, hospitals, schools), private corporations (bank analysts, providers of technology surveillance, private policing), many journalists (especially from television and the more sensationalist newspapers), and a significant fraction of general public opinion, especially but not only among those attracted to "law and order." The popularity of this security prism is not an expression of traditional responses to a rise of insecurity, crime, terrorism, and the negative effects of globalization; it is the result of the creation of a continuum of threats and general unease in which many different actors exchange their fears and beliefs in the process of making a risky and dangerous society. The professionals in charge of the management of risk and fear especially transfer the legitimacy they gain from struggles against terrorists, criminals, spies, and counterfeiters toward other targets, most notably transnational political activists, people crossing borders, or people born in the country but with foreign parents.

This expansion of what security is taken to include effectively results in a convergence between the meaning of international and internal security. The convergence is particularly important in relation to the issue of

migration, and specifically in relation to questions about who gets to be defined as an immigrant. The security professionals themselves, along with some academics, tend to claim that they are only responding to new threats requiring exceptional measures beyond the normal demands of everyday politics. In practice, however, the transformation of security and the consequent focus on immigrants is directly related to their own immediate interests (competition for budgets and missions) and to the transformation of technologies they use (computerized databanks, profiling and morphing, electronic phone tapping). The Europeanization and the Westernization of the logics of control and surveillance of people beyond national polices is driven by the creation of a transnational field of professionals in the management of unease. This field is larger than that of police organizations in that it includes, on one hand private corporations and organizations dealing with the control of access to the welfare state, and, on the other hand, intelligence services and some military people seeking a new role after the end of the Cold War. These professionals in the management of unease, however, are only a node connecting many competing networks responding to many groups of people who are identified as risk or just as a source of unease. (1)

This process of securitization is now well known, but despite the many critical discourses that have drawn attention to the securitization of migration over the past ten years, the articulation of migration as a security problem continues. Why? What are the reasons of the persistent framing of migration in relation to terrorism, crime, unemployment and

religious zealotry, on the one hand, and to integration, interest of the migrant for the national economy development, on the other, rather than in relation to new opportunities for European societies, for freedom of travel over the world, for cosmopolitanism, or for some new understanding of citizenship? (2) This is the question I want to address in this essay. Some "critical" discourses generated by NGOs and academics assume that if people, politicians, governments, bureaucracies, and journalists were more aware, they would change their minds about migration and begin to resist securitizing it. The primary problem, therefore, is ideological or discursive in that the securitization of migrants derives from the language itself and from the different capacities of various actors to engage in speech acts.

### **3. Immigration and Societal Security.**

The concept of societal security primarily deals with the issue of collective identity. As explained by Ole Wæver (1993), societal security “concerns the ability of a society to persist in its essential character under changing conditions and possible or actual threats” (23). In relation to international migration, it refers to the ways in which members of a state perceive their cultural, linguistic, religious, or national identity to be threatened by immigrants. From this perspective, the national values of the receiving country is the referent object under threat (Weiner 1992-1993:103). It is immigration in general, whether voluntary or involuntary, legal or illegal, that constitutes this threat, as long as the immigrants pose

a challenge to the identity of the receiving state through their different language, culture, or religion. The supposed danger of immigration to the societal security of a state is not an objective and universal threat, but rather a subjective threat, dependent on the ways in which the receiving state defines itself (Weiner 1992-1993:110). For instance, while some states may view multiculturalism as undesirable, other states may pride themselves on their cultural diversity. As explained by Heisler and Layton-Henry (1993), in the post-war era, most European states have undergone a transformation from fairly homogeneous states, whose members have been generally bound by a common sense of cultural and ethnic identity, to heterogeneous states made up of several national groups (158). In these cases, immigration may be seen as a societal security threat as it challenges a state's traditional national identity and core values (Heisler and Layton-Henry 1993:158). Furthermore, the inability of immigrants to integrate or assimilate is argued to have a negative effect on the society and government's stability (Heisler and Layton-Henry 1993:162). On the other hand, a traditional immigrant-receiving state such as Canada may hold a different notion of national identity and thus may be more tolerant and accepting of different languages, cultures, and religions, supporting its policy of multiculturalism. In a study of immigration and national identity in Germany and Canada, Esses et al. (2006) write that while Canada has embraced immigration as essential to its development, Germany's growing immigrant population is an unintended consequence of its history of guest worker immigration as well as a large inflow of asylum

seekers and refugees (655). Each state's unique history affects their immigration policies as well as whether or not immigration is perceived to be a threat to society. For instance, while Canada has supported a multiculturalism policy since 1971, aimed at preserving the identities of its multi-national groups, in Germany there has been a trend to support the assimilation of its immigrant population (Esses et al. 2006:655). Furthermore, ethnic and cultural affinity is socially constructed; notions of which cultural and ethnic groups are threatening and which are not change over time (Weiner 1992-1993:105). What may be deemed as a societal threat to one state may be embraced in another, demonstrating that immigration is a subjective rather than objective threat to societal security that differs between states and can transform over time. The securitization of immigration as a threat to the survival of the national community is problematic, as it labels the foreign migrant as the "other," ultimately excluding them from society (Huysmans 2000:758). As argued by Huysmans (2000), discourse that frames immigration as a threat to societal security "reproduces the political myth that a homogeneous national community or western civilization existed in the past and can be re-established today through the exclusion of those migrants who are identified as cultural aliens" (758). The act of securitizing immigration is more threatening than immigration itself, as it often results in racism and xenophobia, ultimately leading to social disintegration.

#### **4. Immigration and Economic Security.**

Another way in which immigration has been argued to pose a threat to a state's national interest is through its impact on the state's economy. Immigration has, and will continue to have, a significant economic impact on both the receiving country and the country of origin. While immigration has economic advantages and disadvantages, the expansion of the definition of security to encompass the economic sector has brought increased attention to the economic challenges caused by immigration, and immigration has, as a result, been labeled as a security issue. It is economic migrants as well as refugees and asylum seekers that are perceived to threaten the economic security of a state. Labour migrants can be argued to pose a threat to the economic security of both the sending and the receiving state. According to this argument, the emigration of highly skilled and qualified workers from developing countries in the global South to developed states in the global North results in a "brain drain" in the sending country, as well as undesirable economic consequences in the receiving country (Guild 2009:134; Weiner 1992-1993:95). However, as argued by Carr et al. (2005), emphasizing the notion of "brain drain" on its own ignores the notion of "brain gain" (387). While developing countries may lose highly skilled workers through emigration, they often gain large numbers of people with greater skills back through the process of reverse migration (Carr et al. 2005:387-388). Furthermore, remittances transferred to migrants' countries of origin play a significant role in the economic growth and development of sending countries (De Haas 2005:1274). According to the World Bank, in 2012 remittances surpassed \$406 billion; it is



estimated that this number will continue to grow, increasing 8% by 2013 (World Bank 2012). Several studies show that remittances have a positive impact on poverty alleviation and financial development. In many developing countries, remittances have reduced the percentage of the population living below the poverty line: by 11 percentage points in Uganda, 6 in Bangladesh, and 5 in Ghana (Sharma 2009:8; Ratha 2007:p.5). In this sense, economic security overlaps with human security; this aspect of immigration has a positive impact not only on the sending country's economy, but also on the physical and financial conditions of the sending country's population. Labeling immigration as a security issue overlooks these advantages. Immigration can be argued to pose a threat to a receiving country's economic security through its impact on the labour market. Guild (2009) addresses this concern by highlighting some key issues: do migrant workers decrease wages in strong economies? And, in a strong economy, do immigrants take away jobs from native-born workers (135)? Public opinion often supports the notion that immigrants depress wages and take away jobs, contributing to economic problems (Somerville and Sumption 2009:3). This argument is often used to justify restrictive and exclusionary immigration policies. However, this perception is based on perception rather than empirical facts. According to Chomsky (2007), the theory that the number of people determines the number of jobs is a fallacy (7-8). Rather, population growth facilitated by immigration creates jobs while simultaneously providing people to take these jobs (Chomsky 2007:8).

While the economic impact of immigration differs in every state and depends on the economic conditions of the time, it can be seen that immigration often has a positive impact on the employment levels of the host state (Islam 2007:53). For instance, a study on the relationship between immigration and unemployment in Canada by Islam (2007) concludes that migration does not result in higher unemployment levels (63). While it may, in some cases, contribute to temporary unemployment, this effect dissipates over time, as the state's economy begins to adjust to the increase in labour supply (Islam 2007:63; Somerville and Sumption 2009:9). Islam (2007) finds that "in the long run, demand side effect takes place, wages adjust, labour demand is restored and thereby Canadian born workers are benefited" (64). Complementary to this study, a paper by Somerville and Sumption (2009) demonstrates that although the effects of immigration vary from state to state, immigration has a minimal impact on wages; in the United Kingdom, most workers remain unaffected or even gain from immigration (13-14). Evidently, economic immigration does not pose a threat to the host state's economic security. Other factors, such as education and demographic change, have a much greater impact on labour market opportunities in immigrant receiving countries (Somerville and Sumption 2009:3). Contrary to the common public perception that immigrants threaten job security, depress wages and lead to an increase in unemployment levels, immigration, in reality, can increase job opportunities and enhance the economy of the receiving state.

It has also been argued that immigrants, particularly refugees and asylum seekers, are threats to the receiving state's social security and welfare system. From this perspective, immigration is seen as a problem rather than an opportunity. Refugees and asylum seekers are presented as profiteers and free-loaders who illegitimately exploit the host state's welfare system, and the welfare system is presented as unable to sustain an influx of immigrants (Huysmans 2006:78-79). Immigrants are portrayed to be so numerous and poor that they pose a strong economic threat to the state, creating housing shortages and straining education, transportation, sanitation and communication services (Weiner 1992-1993:95, 114; Stivachtis 2008:17). As explained by Weiner (1992-1993), the provision of welfare state services to migrant workers and refugees often spawns resentment from within the local community (114). There is a widespread belief that immigrants not only take jobs away from native citizens, but that they also take away social benefits (Huysmans 2006:78).

The presentation of immigrants as a strain to a state's social services is produced and reproduced through discourse. As argued by Huysmans (2000), the use of metaphors referring to "floods" or "invasions" of refugees and asylum seekers create the perception that immigrants are threat to the host community's economic security, dramatizing the challenges posed by flows of refugees and asylum seekers so that the issue appears more threatening (769). A study on the media's portrayal of refugees and asylum seekers in London concludes that inaccurate and unbalanced reporting on this aspect of immigration, which often refer to

“overwhelming” influxes of asylum seekers and refugees, has resulted in a sense of fear and insecurity from the local native community and negative perceptions of immigrants (ICAR 2004). Furthermore, it is the visibility and noticeability of immigrants that cause them to be used as scapegoats for bitterness about wider socio-economic challenges and changes (Suhrke 2003:97; Heisler and Layton-Henry 1993:157). As written by Heisler and Layton-Henry (1993).

Economic stringency caused by recession, social changes perceived to be uncomfortable, institutional overload and other sources of difficulty occurred or were widely remarked after the advent of large-scale immigration; therefore these problems, which can be seen as threats to social security, are readily attributed to the immigrant presence and thereby elevated into problems of societal security (157). Societal and economic security are closely connected, as the view of immigrants as an economic burden is often caused by the perception of immigrants as “others” due to their visible differences.

Evidently, the argument that immigrants are a threat to a state’s economic security is heavily influenced by misconceptions prominent in discourse as well as widely held stereotypes about the foreigner. While an increased flow of immigrants, specifically refugees and asylum seekers, inevitably poses a fiscal challenge which the host state must manage, the effects of migration on social spending vary between states and can change over time. Moreover, the long-term economic benefits of refugee flows should not be overshadowed by the possible short-term costs (Stevenson 2005). For instance, studies on the impact of refugees in

Australia show that the initial costs of accommodating refugees through social security benefits are compensated in ten years (Stevenson 2005). Securitizing immigration and presenting immigrants as a danger to the survival of the welfare system consequently leads to the exclusion of immigrants by deeming them undeserving of social services.

### **5. Immigration and Internal Security.**

In addition to societal and economic security, internal security has also emerged as an aspect of security which is threatened by immigration. The notion of immigration as a threat to internal security has been present since the 1980s (Huysmans 2000:756). As highlighted by Huysmans, the Schengen Agreement and Convention of Dublin connected immigration to terrorism, international crime, and border control (Huysmans 2000:756; Huysmans 1995:53). Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, immigration has featured prominently on the counter-terrorism agenda; governments have tightened immigration policies, linking immigration with terrorist activities (Spencer 2008:1). In the United States, immigration immediately became a matter of national security. President Bush quickly put forth a strategy to combat terrorism through immigration policy, and the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service was included in the newly established Department of Homeland Security (Spencer 2008:2-3), institutionalizing immigration as a threat to internal security. Six weeks after 9/11, the USA PATRIOT Act was signed into law, strengthening border controls, heightening

surveillance of foreign nationals in the United States, and permitting the government to detain, prosecute, and remove foreigners suspected of terrorist behaviour (Lebowitz and Podheiser 2001-2002:876). Immigration policies and border control became instruments in the “War on Terror” (Adamson 2006:196). Several scholars support the notion that immigration policy must be restricted in order to protect the receiving state’s internal security. For instance, Stoffman (2008) argues that due to Canada’s high rate of immigration per capita, every newcomer cannot be screened thoroughly; consequently, dangerous people will enter the country (4). Thus, the most effective way of keeping out unwanted immigrants would be through a reduction in the annual immigration intake (Stoffman 2008:4). While terrorism is undoubtedly a real threat to the internal security of states throughout the world, its connection to immigration must be questioned.

Mueller (2006) persuasively refutes the argument that an absence of terrorist attacks in the United States since September 11 is a result of increased border control and stricter immigration policies (3). While terrorists may have a more difficult time entering the country, hundreds of millions of immigrants legally enter the United States each year, and 1000 to 4000 illegal immigrants each day (Mueller 2006:3). Mueller (2006) argues that the threat of terrorism by either national or immigrant terrorists has been highly exaggerated (4). Likewise, a study on immigration and terrorism in Spain by Saux (2007) maintains that the connection between illegal immigration and terrorism is a constructed rather than objective reality (p.63). Saux (2007) draws upon Moral-Panics

Theory, arguing that the perceived danger of terrorism caused people to blame a certain group of people, designating them as the enemy and creating a division between “us” and “them” (63). After the September 11 attacks, the 2004 Madrid train bombings, and the 2005 London bombings, immigrants and asylum seekers became labeled as the enemy (Saux 2007:63).

Just as political discourse and the media have portrayed immigrants as a threat to societal and economic security, hostile attitudes toward immigrants and the apparent connection between immigration and terrorism are prevalent in politics and the media. In the periods after September 11 and the Madrid bombings, Spanish newspapers emphasized a connection between immigration and criminal behaviour, influencing political action and public opinion (Saux 2007:62). In the days following the September 11 attacks, the urgent need to crack down on immigration laws was prevalent in the media and political discourse. As shown by Huysmans and Buonfino (2008), in parliamentary debates in the United Kingdom after September 11, asylum and immigration in general “featured significantly in the political framing of the problem of terrorism” (768). Evidently, the connection between immigration and terrorism has been reinforced and entrenched in public opinion through the practice of discourse.

As argued by Daniel Griswold of the Cato Institute (2001), immigration and border control are two separate issues: terrorist attacks by foreigners are not a result of open and liberal immigration policies, but are caused by the failure of keeping out the small number of foreigners that do pose

a threat to internal security. Similarly, Spencer (2008) points out the problems that arise from giving “immigration” the wrong meaning (9). Much scholarly writing fails to distinguish between “immigrant” and “foreigner” (Spencer 2008:9). In the case of 9/11, the terrorists were not immigrants; rather, they entered the United States on temporary visas (Spencer 2008:9). The concern of immigration, in general, as a threat to internal security disregards the fact that immigrants – those who enter a state to permanently settle – make up a small fraction of the entire number of foreigners in a state (Spencer 2008:9). Forming a correlation between terrorism and immigration is problematic as it has led to the alienation, exclusion, and racial profiling of immigrants, particularly those who identify as Muslim or Arab, which has a much more tangible effect on society (Adamson 2006:196).

## **6. Immigration and Public Security.**

Similar to how immigration has been connected with terrorism, immigration has also been related to increased criminality, resulting in the perception that immigration is a threat to public security. The issue of whether or not immigration actually results in increased crime rates is, again, an issue of perception versus reality. While the public has become increasingly concerned about high crime rates intensified by immigration and the threat that immigrants pose to public order, these concerns are empirically unsound (Wang 2012:743). Contrary to popular opinion, several studies on a number of states have found no strong correlation



between immigration and criminality. It cannot be denied that in some states, there has been a connection between increased immigration flows and increased crime rates. There is, indeed, a trend showing that cities and countries that have high crime rates tend to have a higher immigrant population. For instance, a study found that in 2001, “the proportion of the prison population born abroad in Spain was twenty five times higher than the proportion of immigrants in the population” (Westbrook 2010:101). However, as Westbrook (2010) insightfully argues, this has much more to do with demographic factors than it does with simply having an immigrant status (101). In the case of Spain, the majority of immigrants are those who have the highest incidence of criminal behavior: single men aged 18 to 35 (Westbrook 2010:101). Thus, in examining the relationship between immigration and criminality, demographic variables must be taken into account.

There is an abundance of evidence which demonstrates that the correlation between immigration and criminality is very weak or non-existent. A study of three American neighbourhoods concludes that in general, immigration does not lead to increased levels of homicide among Latinos and African Americans (Lee et al. 2001:559). Similarly, in another study, Butcher and Piehl (1998) conclude that the flow of migration has no effect on a city’s crime rate (457). Bell et al. (2010) investigate the relationship between immigration and crime during two particular periods of large migration flows in the United Kingdom: during the wave of asylum seekers in the 1990s and early 2000s, and the inflow of economic migrants from EU accession countries beginning in

2004 (1). The study reports that neither wave impacted rates of violent crime, and that immigrant arrest rates were no higher than native arrest rates (Bell et al. 2010:17). Evidently, while widespread public opinion holds that immigration is a threat to public security, it is a constructed threat, not founded upon empirical facts.

### **7. Some ideas as a conclusion.**

Undeniably, immigration poses a number of challenges to receiving states. Given the expansion of the definition of security to include societal, economic, internal, and public security, it is inevitable that immigration would be viewed as a threat to society and the economy, as well as to internal security and public order. However, as demonstrated in this essay, immigration is a perceived threat rather than an objective one. While immigration is argued to threaten the national identity of a state, the notion of identity is constructed; ideas of national identity and notions of which cultural and ethnic groups can be accepted into a community inevitably change over time (Weiner 1992-1993:105). In terms of economic security, labeling immigration as a security threat overlooks the advantages that immigration may have on the development of the sending country. Furthermore, immigration can increase employment opportunities and immigrants can have a significantly positive impact on the host state's economy. While immigration has been increasingly connected to terrorism, particularly since September 11, immigration and border control have been wrongly

placed in the same category, and the notion of immigration as a threat to internal security has been greatly exaggerated. Lastly, contrary to the widespread public opinion that immigration is a threat to public security, there is little to no correlation between immigration and criminality. The act of labeling immigration as a security threat does more to harm society than it does to protect it. It often results in xenophobic and racist attitudes, the exclusion of immigrant groups, and the perception of the immigrant as the undeserving “other” or enemy.

As already indicated, the development discussed above must be understood in direct relation to the diminishing scope of both social citizenship rights and human rights in the EU – a change that for obvious reasons has been particularly painful for labor migrants from poorer countries and asylum seekers. Substantial rights are considered costly and fit badly with the neoliberal doctrine (of liberalization, flexible labor markets and reduced welfare provisions) that has been the EU’s guiding norm for more than 20 years. Governments in the EU have thus become much more hesitant to commit themselves to social rights provisions for new labor migrants. This partly explains why governments do their utmost to avoid the granting of permanent residence to new labor migrants. As the Swedish Minister for Migration made clear at the Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development, held in Paris in 2008: “In this context, we must recognize that the old paradigm of migration for permanent settlement is increasingly giving way to temporary and circular migration.” Despite the continued hollowing out of national citizenship rights in the EU, permanent

residence – whether obtained through employment, refugee protection, for family reasons, etc. – still provides migrants and refugees with a set of basic social, civil, and political rights, and thus goes to make up the gateway to full formal citizenship. As Castles and Davidson underscore, “[t]he pivotal right [for migrants] is clearly that of permanent residence, for once a person is entitled to remain in a country, he or she cannot be completely ignored”.

When the Commission now undertakes to establish a common EU framework for labor migration it is easy to spot the compatibility between the member state reluctance towards migrants’ permanent residence and social incorporation, on the one side, and the concepts and arrangements around which the Commission suggests an EU framework be developed, on the other side. These concepts and arrangements include circular migration, temporary residence, seasonal labor and return migration. Even though specifically designed for high-skilled labor migrants, the EU’s Blue Card scheme also testifies to this development. At best, the Blue Card is very vague on the prospects of permanent residence for future card holders. What characterizes such arrangements, which all member states have individually adopted to a greater or lesser extent, is that they entail few social commitments on the part of the host state and thus leave little room for substantial rights for the migrants. Such rights are for the most part tailored exclusively for permanent residents. To migrate to the EU with one’s much sought-after labor has ceased to be synonymous with the simultaneous migration into a regime of social rights of citizenship, which eventually became the case

in Western Europe during the postwar period's great labor migration boom. This also means that the precarious and rightless position that has made "illegal" labor migrants so popular on the EU labor market in some important respects now forms the model for how the EU is to go about managing its great demand for new "legal" labor migrants. As a consequence, the very same people on whom the EU's future economic growth and prosperity are said to depend are offered nothing in return. It seems as if the EU wants the poor world's labor, but not its people, at least not in the form of prospective rights-bearing citizens. This points to an attempt to further disembody migration policy from policies of social incorporation, an attempt which is structurally interlinked with a simultaneous effort to capitalize even further on the international division of labor by way of establishing this division more firmly and tangibly in the heart of Europe itself. This course of action will not only risk exacerbating ethno-racial exclusion and adding further tiers to the EU's already multi-tiered labor market; with a militarized migration control serving as its ultimate regulator it will also risk worsening the migration crisis at the EU's external borders. If this demonstrates the importance of addressing how current migration policy expresses and feeds on the political economy of unequal global, regional and international relations, it should also highlight the importance of restoring the matter of social rights on the migration policy and research agenda. Pipe dreams about the arrival of a benevolent, post-political and self-regulating migration market just won't do the job.

Capital cities and others principal urban conurbations at the doors of Europe and of United States offer many opportunities and an infinitely diverse supply of legal and illegal services facilitating international mobility. These are strong pulling factors for migrants willing to reach their European or American dream with any possible mean. The risks of irregular migration are both minimized and fairly well understood by would-be emigrants, who weigh them up against their current situation. The rationale behind their decision to leave is a bid to improve their own living conditions as well as to strengthen the livelihoods of those who stay at home through remittances and their potential to broaden the asset base. International migration, once started, is a self-sustaining process. As such, it is bound to endure in the future unless effective distributive policies are implemented between richer and poorer countries, and between dynamic and stagnant or declining cities in different countries. The emphasis put on “the control against clandestine migration” in the EU and US political agendas, through an increasing pressure on transit countries’ authorities to stop migration flows, demonstrated to be an illusory and unrealistic strategy. With each new border closure, migrants have applied original tactics to get around the obstacles, and, what is even worse, migration has become criminalized with the expansion of smuggling networks.

Most of all, such an approach is having serious impacts in transit cities, where international migration takes place in the total absence of explicit policies for protecting migrants’ rights. Local authorities, without even having had the time to realise the challenge this phenomenon poses,

have been compelled to introduce new prohibitions, restrictions and controls, often with no other relevant result than worsening migrants' living conditions.

Forced by circumstances to spend longer and longer periods in transit cities, migrants live and work in precarious situations, de facto deprived of even the most fundamental rights such as to live in adequate housing, to be free to meet in public spaces, to access healthcare services, to work in safe and respectable conditions. The segregation of transit migrants is evident, and their vulnerability to iniquity and marginalisation is growing. Despite the increasing numbers of foreigners living in these cities, there is a great lack of data and research on the issue. Thus local governments are still not fully aware of it nor of the consequences, both negative and positive, the phenomenon brings with it. Policy makers, first of all, need evidence of the potential benefits of international migration as an important contribution to the social and economic dynamism of their cities. And they also need to understand the costs of failing to manage increasingly diverse societies, especially in terms of decay in civic values and in the cohesion of urban society as a whole. The arrival of new groups of migrants, many of whom settling permanently, might have strong impacts on the behaviour of urban population, fluctuating between solidarity (because this type of situation is felt so similar to that experienced by the many relatives and friends emigrated abroad) and rejection, which may sometimes be violent. Due to their limited legal, financial and institutional capacities, transit cities are generally unprepared to deal with these issues, and would need help for addressing

the situation and planning adequate actions. It is out of doubts that EU member states or US intervention, when foreseen, should be based on ethic and democratic principles, and on human rights respect and protection. Instead, national security rather than human security has been up to now the main concern of the developed world. Transit countries have exploited the situation to bring ahead their political objectives. From both sides, all the actions taken have not been directed to assisting local stakeholders in making informed choices, but rather to influence their policies with the only aim of curbing irregular flows, no matter if, at the end of the story, the cost of all this is mainly paid by migrants.

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