

MIGRATION DEBATES IN EUROPE: MIGRANTS AS ANTI-CITIZENS

This article tries to reveal the recent debates revolving around the issue of migration in Europe, and claims that migration has recently become securitized and stigmatized in a way that prompts the autochthonous societies to generate a set of migrant-phobic attitudes. This work further argues that this kind of fear does not really have material sources; it is on the contrary an artificial fear fabricated by the conservative political elite who are likely to use the politics of fear as a form of governmentality to sustain their power. Hence, this work will specifically concentrate on the processes of othering migrant origin individuals as anti-citizens.

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In his criticism of Thilo Sarrazin's highly polemical book *Germany Does Away With Itself* (*Deutschland schafft sich ab*, 2010), Jürgen Habermas states that German *Leitkultur* (leading culture) is recently being defined not by "German culture" but by religion: "With an arrogant appropriation of Judaism –and an incredible disregard for the fate the Jews suffered in Germany– the apologists of the *Leitkultur* now appeal to the "Judeo-Christian tradition", which distinguishes "us" from foreigners."¹ Referring to genetic arguments, Sarrazin claims that the future of Germany is threatened by the wrong kind of immigrants, especially from Muslim countries. Although his arguments are based on conventional racist rhetoric, he was highly credited by the German society for securitizing citizenship. His racist arguments were later followed by German Chancellor Angela Merkel's discourse on the end of multiculturalism in contemporary Germany, and Bavarian Prime Minister Horst Seehofer's hate speech against migrants coming from Turkey and Arab countries.

This debate has been roaming around in Europe for a long time. It seems that the declaration of the "failure of multiculturalism" has become a catchphrase of not only extreme-right wing political parties but also of centrist political parties all across the continent, although it is not clear that each attributes the same meaning to the term. Angela Merkel for the first time publicly dismissed the policy of multiculturalism as having "failed, failed utterly" in October 2010, and this was followed swiftly by British Prime Minister David Cameron's call for a "more active, more muscular liberalism" and French President Nicolas Sarkozy's statement that multiculturalism is a "failed concept". Geert Wilders, leader of the Freedom Party in the Netherlands has made no apologies for arguing that Christians "should be proud that our culture is better than Islamic culture", for example.² Thilo Sarrazin, a politician from the Social Democratic Party who sat on the Bundesbank board and is former Finance Senator for Berlin, has argued in his best-selling book that Germany is becoming "naturally more stupid on average" as a result of immigration from Muslim countries.³ These populist outbreaks contribute to the securitization and stigmatization of migration in general and Islam in particular. In the meantime, such interventions also deflect attention from constructive solutions and policies widely thought to promote integration, including programs for language acquisition and increased labor market access, which are already suffering because of austerity measures across Europe including Germany, Belgium, the UK, and the Netherlands.

¹ Jürgen Habermas, "Leadership and *Leitkultur*," *New York Times*, 28 October 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/29/opinion/29Habermas.html>

² "Merkel is afraid", *Der Spiegel*, 11 September 2010. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/0,1518,727978,00.html>

³ Thilo Sarrazin, *Deutschland schafft sich ab: Wie wir unser Land aufs Spiel setzen* [German Does Away with Itself: How We Gambled with Our Country] (Munich: DVA Verlag, 2010).

The debate is not only restricted to the critique of multiculturalism. Difference-blind republicanism, which is the other model of managing ethno-cultural and religious diversity, has also failed. The republican French experience has undergone a tremendous failure in the last decade. Although France set out to create politically equal citizens with no regard to religion, language, race, ethnicity and gender, it no longer recognizes the politics of identity developed especially by migrants, ignores the cultural, religious and ethnic differences emphasized by minorities, and adopts an assimilation policy, all of which serve to show that the Republican project and its values are under threat. These demands, voiced by migrants and minorities and left unsolved by the Republic, clearly show that the Republic at hand needs to be democratized. In other words, republicanism needs to be reformed along the egalitarian claims of migrant origin people who are affiliated with a true republican rhetoric underlining equality, justice and rights in all spheres of life including politics, education, labor market and culture.⁴ Let alone providing migrants and their children with equal access opportunity to political space and labor markets, France cannot also provide them with a venue where they can convert their cultural capital to economic capital upon graduation.

Securitizing and Stigmatizing Migration

During the Cold War period, the notion of “security” used to be defined in political/military terms as the protection of a state’s boundaries, its integrity and its values against the dangers of a hostile international arena.⁵ Nowadays, however, security concerns are not only reduced to protecting states against ideological and military threats: they are also related to issues such as migration, ethnic revival, religious revival (Islam), identity claims and sometimes, supranational entities such as the EU. Lately, migration has been presented in the Western public space as a security threat that must be dealt with. One could argue that modern states tend to extend the fear of “migrants” and “others” by categorizing, stigmatizing and coupling migration together with major problems such as unemployment, violence, crime, insecurity, drug trafficking and human smuggling⁶ This tendency is reinforced by the use of racist and xenophobic terminology that dehumanizes migrants. One can see this racist tone in the terms such as “influx”, “invasion”, “flood” and “intrusion”, which are used to mean large numbers of migrants.

Issues such as migration, Islam, poverty and isolation have recently become security issues through a process of social construction, namely “securitization”. As the main rationale of the security discourse seems to have shifted from protecting the state to protecting society, protection of society against any kind of “evil”

⁴ Ayhan Kaya, *Islam, Migration and Integration: The Age of Securitization* (London: Palgrave, 2009).

⁵ Roxanne L. Doty, “Immigration and the Politics of Security”, *Security Studies*, Vol. 8 No. 2-3, p.73.

⁶ Jef Huysmans, *The Politics of Insecurity* (London: Routledge, 2006).

has become the pillar of the security discourse in a way that has popularized the term security. The securitization of migration, or in other words stigmatization of migrants, became a vital issue after the September 11 attacks in the United States and related ones in other places, notably Madrid (11 March 2004) and London (7 July 2005). Much of the response to these attacks has focused on immigration issues, although the perpetrators of the bombings were mostly products of the “society” they attacked.⁷ The categorization of those responsible as migrants seems to be a systematic attempt to externalize the structural failures produced by the social-political structure. The security discourse conceals the fact that ethnic/religious/identity claims of migrants and their reluctance to integrate actually result from existing structural problems of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, xenophobia, heterophobia, nationalism and racism. To put it differently, the public perception of migration as the principal source of present disorder masks the actual causes of the globalized social-political discontent. It is likely that modern

states tend to employ the discourse of securitization as a political technique that can integrate a society politically by staging a credible existential threat in the form of an internal, or even an external, enemy, an enemy that is created by security agencies (like the police and the army) by categorizing migration together with drug trafficking, human trafficking, criminality and terrorism.⁸

“The way illegal migration has been perceived also shapes the public perception of regular migrants.”

Recent research on the securitization of migration rightfully draws our attention to the fact that, at the official level, modern state institutions address only an insignificant correlation between undocumented migration and the problems of global poverty, debt, health, environment and unemployment fostered by the neo-liberal economic model.⁹ The issue of the “illegal migrants” has lately been picked up by Western political elite and state administrations as the very source of some endemic problems such as unemployment, violence, terror and some other social and cultural problems. The way illegal migration has been perceived also shapes the public perception of regular migrants.

⁷ Michael Collyer, “Migrants, Migration and the Security Paradigm: Constraints and Opportunities”, *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (July 2006), p. 267.

⁸ Huysmans (2006).

⁹ Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998); Saskia, Sassen, “A Universal Harm: Making Criminals of Migrants”, *Open Democracy* <http://www.opendemocracy.net/debates/article-10-96-1444.jsp#>, 20 August 2003; Frank Düvell, “Crossing the Fringes of Europe: Transit Migration in the EU’s Neighbourhood”, Centre on Migration, Policy and Society Working Paper 33 (2006); Doty (2000); and Huysmans (2006).

Anti-illegal immigration activity operates as a technology of anti-citizenship portraying those to be excluded from citizenry, and implies crucial issues of belonging, identity, inclusion and exclusion. It is surely an arena in much need of such attention. Jonathan Xavier Inda addresses the following kinds of people as anti-citizens picked up by the state to be excluded: petty criminals, muggers, prostitutes, pimps, the homeless, gang members, drug offenders, murderers, illegal migrants, refugees, and the like.¹⁰ The archetype of this anti-citizen is the North African in France, the Turkish in Germany, Belgium or the Netherlands, and African-American or Latino in the United States. In this regard, one could argue that both securitization of migration and anti-illegal immigration activities, techniques and programs serve as a form of governmentality in the interest of the political authority. Governmentality refers to the practices which characterize the form of supervision a state exercises over its subjects, their wealth, misfortunes, customs, bodies, souls and habits. Foucault's modern "administrative state" is based on the idea of a "society of regulation" which differs from "the state of justice" of the Middle Ages which was built on the idea of a "society of laws".¹¹ Similarly, Didier Bigo eloquently explains the ways in which the act of governmentality operates in relation to foreigners:

Proliferation of border controls, the repression of foreigners and so on, has less to do with protection than with a political attempt to reassure certain segments of the electorate longing for evidence of concrete measures taken to ensure safety.¹²

Governmentality is the art of governing a population rather than a territory. Then, Roxanne Doty rightfully argues that the immigrant, the stranger, the excluded, the one who does not belong to the prescribed national unity is ideologically portrayed by the conventional and culturalist elite as the "enemy within".¹³ That line of thinking which excludes those who do not culturally, ethnically and religiously belong, presumes the immigrant against whom the nation, the population, should be re-defined. This is a kind of neo-racism, "which functions as a supplement to the kind of nationalism that arises from the blurring of boundaries and the problematizing of national identity that the deterritorialization of human bodies gives rise to".¹⁴ From late 1970s, the discourse on immigration focused on the immigrant as antithetical to the interests of the nation-state, and since the early 1980s it has become commonplace to hear that migration is a threat to national identity.

¹⁰ Jonathan X. Inda, *Targetting Immigrants: Government, Technology and Ethics* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), p. 53.

¹¹ Michel Foucault, "Governmentality", *Ideology and Consciousness* 6 (1979), p. 21. Michel Foucault, describes the concept of governmentality as a collection of methods used by political power to maintain its power, or as an art of acquiring power.

¹² Didier Bigo, "To Reassure and Protect after September 11th", *Social Science Research Council Essays*: 2 (2002), <http://www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/bigo.htm>

¹³ Roxanne L. Doty, "Racism, Desire, and the Politics of Immigration", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 28 No. 3 (1999), p. 597.

¹⁴ Doty (1999), p.597

The architects of the EU policies regarding justice and home affairs described first in the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 and then in the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 have indeed contributed to a “discourse of othering”. As is known, the European Union has created an area of “Freedom, Security and Justice” in order to protect the member states from the increasing “intrusion” of the so-called illegal immigration.¹⁵ Referring to Jacques Rancière and Slavoj Žižek, Walters (2006) states that the leaders of the European Union countries engage in a kind of “ultra-politics”, which frames anti-illegal immigration activities as a battle between “us and them”, with sometimes a struggle to death. Framing the issue as such puts it outside the space of dialogue and forecloses the possibility of politics and citizenship.

Fortress Europe: Ultra-Politics of Symbols

Given the importance of regional cooperation on migration control it is also worth briefly considering how the linkage between migration and terrorism was treated in political rhetoric at the EU level. The Council of Ministers in the area of Justice and Home Affairs held extraordinary meetings following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, as well as 11 March and 7 July 2005 in London. In their 20 September 2001 Declaration, the Council did state the need to “strengthen controls at external borders”; but the only explicit linkage to migration was the “risk of large-scale population movements as a result of heightened tensions following the attacks on the U.S.”.¹⁶ In the meeting held on 19 March 2004 in the aftermath of the Madrid bombing there was again a reference to “strengthening border controls”, and the initiative to create “an integrated borders management agency” was mentioned as relevant to counter-terrorism activities. But migration control was not otherwise mentioned, except in the context of the problem of support for religious extremism amongst members of EU countries,¹⁷ a theme that received greater attention in the statement following the London bombings. EU discussions on migration policy, meanwhile, continued to follow the timetable and goals set out in the European Council conclusions that pre-dated 9/11. Migration control remained high on the list of priorities, but the explicit rationale for this focus was the need to combat trafficking, and to better protect Europe’s external borders from unwanted immigration. Previously, the Schengen Treaty (1985) was signed by the European Union countries to abolish the internal borders within the Union, to reinforce the external borders against illegal migration, human smuggling, drug trafficking and organized crime, to create a buffer zone with the neighboring countries, to pursue a common visa policy, and to form an Information System amongst the contracting parties. Starting with five member states, Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and

¹⁵ For a detailed account of the ways in which the area of “Freedom, Security and Justice” has been created by the European Union see Buonfino (2004).

¹⁶ Extraordinary Council Meeting - Justice, Home Affairs and Civil Protection, Brussels, 20 September 2001 (12019/01, Presse 327).

¹⁷ Extraordinary Council Meeting - Justice and Home Affairs, Brussels, 19 March 2004 (7555/04, Presse 94).

Luxembourg, “the Schengenland” has now reached twenty-four countries including the two non-EU countries, Norway and Iceland. Similarly, the most significant European Council document emerging from the period after 2001, The Hague Program, again failed to draw a link between terrorism and migration control. It stressed the need for better-managed migration in order to prevent “humanitarian disasters” – but again, migration control was not defined as a means of excluding potential terrorists.¹⁸

The problem lies in the very nature of the EU, which is gradually becoming more like a territorial state over the last 20 years. In this regard, maps, media images and statistics become influential ideological tools contributing to the production of a sterile European space free of the others who are ethno-culturally and religiously different. For instance, maps displaying the routes undertaken by “illegal migrants” to get into the EU, have been employed as ideological tools in order to territorialize the European space in a way that permits the European subject to internalize territorial Europe easily. Maps can also frame others as enemies. This is the most cunning and radical version of “ultra-politics”. As Slavoj Žižek defines it, this is “an attempt to de-politicize conflict by way of bringing it to an extreme, via the direct militarization of politics: the “foreclosed” political returns in the real, in the guise of the attempt to resolve the deadlock of the political conflict, by its false radicalization, i.e. by way of reformulating it as a war between “us” and “them”, our enemy, where there is no common ground for symbolic conflict.”¹⁹

What is the difference between the two maps? The former displays the east-west and south-north migration routes while the latter shows the movement of armed

Map 1. Recent Migration Routes



Map 2. Armed Forces Routes in World War II

¹⁸ The Hague Programme: Strengthening Freedom, Security and Justice in the European Union, Annex 1, Presidency Conclusions - Brussels, 5 November 2004 (1492/04).

¹⁹ Slavoj Žižek, “For a leftist appropriation of the European legacy”, *Journal of Political Ideologies*, Vol. 3 No. 1 (February 1998), pp.63-78.

forces during World War II. Both maps present the direction of threats coming from somewhere and heading for another destination. Migrants and armed forces are perceived as identical challenges in the imagery of individuals. In other words, maps make objects visible. As Susan Bassnett contends, the map-makers are engaged in a process of manipulation rather than of objective and faithful representation.²⁰ Then, maps certainly offer powerful evidence of an ideologically motivated reorganization of geographical space. Maps are ideological installations. On the one hand, they portray accumulated modern understandings of how the world should be represented (i.e., the Arctic is on top and Antarctica on the bottom), but they also portray more specific ideological or cultural narratives. For instance, for European students, the maps they have on their walls of their classrooms, with the Europe front and center, are “correct” maps. These maps lead Europeans to construct an ethnocentric perspective, locating Europe in the very center of the world. On the contrary, the maps that Japanese students draw, have Japan front and center, and Europe on the far-left of the map.²¹ There are other tools operating in the same way: surveys, reports, newspaper columns, statistics, pictures, numbers, charts and graphs. All these routine tools render things into visible, calculable and programmable forms. These are all mundane tools operating to demonstrate the phenomenon of migration as a threat to national, societal and cultural security of a given territory.

Similarly, the dominant regimes of representation are performed in a way that migrant groups, or their descendants, are stereotypically perceived and represented by the majority media. To illustrate these dominant regimes of representation, a brief examination of some of the media and “scientific” works produced in Germany is quite revealing. *Der Spiegel* (14 April 1997), a prominent liberal weekly magazine, denounced the “foreigners” in the country as “dangerously alien” and as the cause of the failure of the “multicultural society”. In the magazine, Turkish youths in Germany were presented as “criminals”, “fundamentalists”, “nationalist” and “traumatic”. A similar trend to the media coverage of the Turks in Germany was also exhibited in academia. Wilhelm Heitmeyer, whose article was referred to in *Der Spiegel*, has become a polemical name after the publication of his book on the German-Turkish youth, *Verlockender Fundamentalismus* [Enticing Fundamentalism], in which he concluded that it is the Turks who are not tempted to integrate and incorporate themselves into the system.²² His main criterion in declaring the self-isolationist tendency of the Turkish-origin youths was their contentment to live with Islam and Turkishness.

²⁰ Susan Bassnett, “At the Edges of the World: Drawing NewMaps”, *Comparative Criticism*. No. 15 (1993), p. 43.

²¹ For further explanation on the ideological nature of maps see Anderson (1983: 163-186).

²² Wilhelm, Heitmeyer, Joachim Müller and Helmut Schröder, *Verlockender Fundamentalismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1997).

The process of “othering” of migrants in public imagery is also apparent in the “statisticalizing” of illegal migrants through the use of a variety of numerical technologies such as statistics, population, counts, demographic trends, economic forecasts, and the like. Statistical data on illegal migrants usually draws security forces’ attention to refugees and asylum seekers originating from Third World countries, who often travel in those “boats” and “trucks” that have become indispensable scenes in our daily news media. However, there have recently been some studies that have examined and decoded some of this data, and they reveal that most of the so-called illegal migrants are not actually those “boat people”, or “truck people” suffering inhuman conditions. Instead, the figures actually hide “overstayers”, who go on staying in countries even after their visas expire.²³ Interestingly enough, most of the illegal migrants in Australia are British overstayers, whilst it is the Americans in the UK, not the Africans or Asians. Frank Düvell cites studies that suggest that for all the media frenzy generated by images of boats emptying desperate travelers on Italy’s islands and shores, only 10 percent of the irregular migrant population arrived in Italy on boats.²⁴

Statisticalizing of migration has apparently given “illegal” immigration visibility as a phenomenon of “great” magnitude. Words such as “flood”, “invasion” and “out of control” have often been used to characterize the flow of “illegal” migrants all around the world. Politicians, journalists and sometimes scholars have picked up and reported on the enumeration of “illegal” migrants as a challenge to be tackled.²⁵

A comparative study of parliamentary discourse in various Western European countries (France, the Netherlands, Austria, Italy, Spain, and UK) it was revealed that:

“The problem lies in the very nature of the EU, which is gradually becoming more like a territorial state over the last 20 years.”

Refugees are (...) primarily seen as a financial burden, and virtually never as an opportunity for the country. They tend to be associated with illegality, if not with crime, and in many other respects are represented in negative ways. Politicians, in their parliamentary speeches, will thus on the one hand present themselves as tol-

²³ William Walters, “Security, Territory, Metagovernance: Critical Notes on Anti-illegal Immigration Programmes in the European Union” Paper presented at Istanbul Bilgi University on 7 December 2006.

²⁴ Düvell (2006), p.17.

²⁵ Richard D. Lamm and Gary Imhoff, *The Immigration Time Bomb: The Fragmenting of America* (New York: Truman Talley Books, 1985); Palmer Stacy and Lutton Wayne, *The Immigration Time Bomb*. Monterey (Virginia: American Immigration Control Foundation, 1985); and Pim Fortuyn, *De islamisering van onze cultuur* (Uitharn: Karakter Uitgevers, 2001).

erant and understanding, but more often than not their speeches will more subtly or blatantly convey the idea that refugees are not welcome in Europe. The same is true for debates about residing minority groups within the country. Except from a few notable antiracist voices, the discourse of the political elites thus confirms and reformulates the broader antiforeigner sentiments in the European Union.²⁶

Immigrant-bashing has become a popular sport by ministers, politicians, media specialists and even Prime Ministers in the European Union as well as in the other parts of the world. Today, hostile language, offensive language, racist statements, and anti-immigrant policy propositions or real measures take place everyday in the news. Conversely, aggressive language and threats directed against politicians who are perceived to be at fault, for whatever reason, have spread as well. The language of hatred replaces the language of dialogue.

Another important issue to be underlined with respect to the perception of migration by the public as a substantial threat is the way in which the phenomenon of migration is being discussed in international documents, basically highlighting statistics, the demographic deficit and the labor deficit of the West, rather than addressing the social, cultural and humanitarian aspects of migration. Referring to the UN Report on Replacement Migration (1997), one could argue that within these kinds of reports, migration is problematized and statisticalized through its probable impact on total fertility rates and potential support ratios against a space of demographic and social processes. Within this discursive space, the question of Europe's security is framed not in terms of dangerous flows transgressing its borders, but as the challenge of declining fertility rates and their consequences for economic productivity and the sustainability of welfare systems.

Table 1. Net migration in western countries (Source: 2009 Eurostat)

Country	Net migration (per 1000 people)	Country	Net migration (per 1000 people)
Netherlands	2.50	Belgium	5,10
Denmark	2.70	Spain	1,30
Germany	-0,20	Czech Rep.	2,70
United Kingdom	2.90	Finland	2,70
Italy	5,30	Cyprus	-4,00
Austria	2,50	Switzerland	8,50
Sweden	6,70	Poland	0,00
European Union	1.70	Latvia	-2.10
France	1.10	Estonia	0,00

²⁶ Ruth Wodak and van Dijk, Teun A. (Eds.), *Racism at the Top. Parliamentary Discourses on Ethnic Issues in Six European States* (Austria, Klagenfurt/Celovec: Drava, 2000), pp. 10-11.

One should also keep in mind that “immigrant-bashing” is becoming a social sport at a time when net migration is close to becoming negative in several countries, including France, Germany, Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands (Table 1). There are already some concerns in the UK, Germany and the Netherlands, for instance, which reveal that these countries are likely to face a remarkable demographic problem very soon due to the decreasing fertility rate, increasing emigration and rising racism and xenophobia. For instance, the figures display that the number of people immigrating to the Netherlands increased by 9,192 from 2005 to 2006. In 2005 the number of immigrants who settled in the country was 92,297. In 2006 the number was 101,489. The increase is attributed mostly to Dutch emigrants returning home, as well as the influx of new EU citizens coming from Eastern Europe, particularly from Poland. However, in 2005, the number of people who emigrated from the Netherlands was 92.297. In 2006, the number was 132.682 – an increase of 40.385 (Statistics Netherlands). One of the reasons of the rising emigration numbers could possibly be attributed to lower housing prices and attractive mortgage taxes in neighboring countries such as Belgium and Germany. Similarly, there is also an increase in the number of German citizens who have recently left Germany to settle in other countries. It is reported that in 2006, 155,300 German citizens emigrated, the highest number of emigrants since 1954.²⁷ This debate is likely to become heated soon as the German migration expert Klaus Bade has recently published a report indicating that Germany has experienced a net migration loss in 2008. Criticizing the recent migration phobia in Germany, he warned the public that Germany would lack three million workers by 2015 if this trend continues.²⁸

“Statisticalizing of migration has apparently given “illegal” immigration visibility as a phenomenon of “great” magnitude.”

The migration experiences of EU member states can be described by various categories. Dynamic immigration countries are those rapidly adding to their already elevated stock at net immigration rates of around eight per 1000 per year. As seen from the table above, recently there is no country as such in the European

²⁷ The figure in 2005 was 145,000. Popular countries of destination in 2006 were the following: Switzerland, 18,000 (12%), United States, 13,800 (9%) and Austria, 10,300 (7%). The age groups between 18 and 50 prefer to go to countries such as Switzerland, the USA and Australia, while the elderly people emigrate to the Mediterranean Riviera in Spain, or Turkey. For further detail see the official webpage of Statistisches Bundesamt, “Zahl der Woche Nr. 43 vom 30.10.2007”, http://www.destatis.de/jetspeed/portal/cms/Sites/destatis/Internet/DE/Presse/pm/zdw/2007/PD07__043__p002.psmi; and “Pressemitteilung Nr. 220 vom 30.05.2007”, Pressrelease, http://www.destatis.de/jetspeed/portal/cms/Sites/destatis/Internet/DE/Presse/pm/2007/05/PD07__220__125.psmi

²⁸ “German politics influenced by immigration fears” *Press TV*, 13 April 2011, <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/174675.html>

Union. Classic immigration countries such as Austria, Belgium, Sweden, and the Netherlands have low but positive immigration rates of around two per 1000 per year. And legacy immigration countries (Poland, Estonia, Latvia) have experienced a large influx of migrants in the historic (Soviet) past but are now experiencing modest net emigration of around one-three per 1000 per year.²⁹ Germany now has a negative net migration rate, and France also has a diminishing net migration rate. These are the two major countries where there is an ongoing popular migrant-phobic discourse. This fact also makes the securitization of migration a rather nonsensical process.

One can recall how conservative political circles raised the “Polish plumber” issue in France on the eve of the European Constitutional referendum on 29 May 2005.³⁰ The French Society of Plumbers revealed that the total number of plumbers of Polish origin in France was only 140 at that time, which was an insufficient number to challenge the domestic labor market.³¹ And one should also recognize that modern times make it possible that British or German plumbers prefer to operate in the Spanish or Turkish Riviera. Stereotypically casting migration and emphasizing its disruptive consequences, the media also plays a role in the securitization process of migration. Migration is often presented as an imagined alien enemy that undermines a society’s culture, saps its scarce resources, steals its jobs and introduces alien customs and religions.

Furthermore, recent scholarship aiming to contribute to the de-securitization of migration in the European space has become particularly critical of both the contemporary state of European studies and of migration studies. Scholars who are critical of the securitization of migration show disapproval of mainstream European studies because they happen to believe that European studies researchers have recently generated a clientalist relationship with the European Union Directorate General for Education and Culture, and have thus partially lost their objective and critical gaze. They also happen to believe that there is a similar clientalist relationship between migration studies researchers and the institutions of individual European nation-states, as well as European Union institutions. European studies and migration studies both seem to contribute to the securitization and statisticalization

²⁹ Herbert Brücker and Jakob von Weizsäcker, “Migration policy: at the nexus of internal and external migration”, André Sapir (ed.), *Fragmented Europe: Europe and the Global Economy* (Brussels: Bruegel, 2007), pp. 226-265.

³⁰ The phrase “Polish plumber” (Plombier polonais in French) was first used by Philippe de Villiers, a member of the European Parliament, and opponents of the European Constitution as a symbol of cheap labour coming in from Central Europe as a result of the Directive on services in the internal market during the EU Constitution referendum in France in 2005. For a further detail on the debates regarding the rejection of the European Constitution in the French and Dutch referenda respectively held in 29 May and 1 June 2005 see, Samuelsen (2005).

³¹ Cited in Krzysztof Rybinski, “Global Labour Market and its Limitations: Reasons and effects of the emergence of homo sapiens globalus”, Address of the Deputy President of the National Bank of Poland in the “Debate: WORKERS 2020 - a vision of the labour market and the labour environment in the forthcoming decades”, Gdansk 10 June 2006, http://www.nbp.pl/en/publikacje/lectures/Rybinski_gdansk.pdf

of migration, and thus to neglect the social, political, cultural and economic gains that migrants are likely to bring to receiving societies. Such studies have also become more stagnant and conservative in a way that underlines the notion of preventing the national, social, ethnic and racial body from becoming “polluted” and “contaminated”. It seems that the modern state is now more concerned with the protection of the social and cultural body of the nation in order to keep it “sterile” from contamination by cultural and religious differences.³²

To reiterate, migration has recently been framed as a source of fear and instability for the nation-states in the West. Yet, not so long ago it was rather a source of contentment and happiness. Several different reasons like deindustrialization, changing technology, unemployment, poverty and neo-liberal political economy can be mentioned to explicate the reasons of such a discontent. Furthermore, the enormous demographic change caused by the dissolution of the Eastern Block should not be underestimated. The period starting in 1989 signifies the beginning of a new historical epoch that ushered in massive migration flows of ethnic Germans, ethnic Hungarians, ethnic Russians and Russian Jews from one place to another. The mobilization of millions of people stimulated nation-states to change their migration policies in a way that encouraged the arrival of immigrants from similar ethnic backgrounds.

This period of demographic change in Western Europe went in tandem with the rise of discourses like the “clash of civilizations”, “culture wars” and Islamophobia that presented societal heterogeneity in an unfavorable light. The intensification of Islamophobia was made easier by al-Qaeda type violence and the radicalization of some segments of Muslim origin immigrant communities in several countries reinforced the societal unrest resulting from immigration. The result was the introduction of restrictive migration policies and increased territorial border security vis-à-vis the nationals of third countries who originated from outside the European continent. However, keeping in mind that demographic deficit and emigration in the European countries are now becoming the realities of everyday life, one could conclude that such a migrant-phobic and Islamophobic political climate is not sustainable, and that soon a common-sensical approach will have to become the mainstream.

³² Michel Foucault’s notion of “bio-politics” may be illuminating here in the sense that he coined the term to address the state’s regulating role of bodies through education and science. See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).