“Geo-political instability, economic recession and security fears: implications for the integration of past and future migrants”

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Introduction

Three simple ideas about integration

The financial and economic crisis

Austerity policies

Geo-political instability and the ‘refugee crisis’

Terrorist attacks and security fears

Is there anything that can be done?

Concluding remarks
Introduction

• Preliminary remarks
• Aim
• Turbulent times
• External shocks on immigration and asylum
• Rising anxiety
Three simple ideas about integration

- A couple of complementary definitions
- The context of reception and society’s acceptance
- A multidimensional process
- External shocks’ impacts on different domains
The financial and economic recession

- A marked rise in unemployment and increasing ethno-stratification
- Has it entailed an integration crisis?
- Austerity policies (not an automatic relationship)
- Impacts on native workers and feelings of relative deprivation
- Economic recession and rising populism and anti-immigrant feelings (another non-automatic relationship)
- An unfavourable context for integration
Geopolitical instability and the ‘refugee crisis’ (1)

• Vast, multidimensional, with multiple implications, and unresolved
• The collapse of the European asylum system and the failure of burden sharing (a widespread lack of solidarity among governments and towards refugees)
• Unilateral, nationalistic and restrictive responses: a worsening of the immigration climate
• The end of the willkommenskultur and the ‘death of the most generous nation on earth’?
Geopolitical instability and the ‘refugee crisis’ (2)

- ‘Economic migrants’ also affected
- Rising xenophobia and anti-immigrant feelings
- Integration in the labour market: grounds for concern
- Indications from the past
- Lack of predictability
- Many shadows, but also some lights
Terrorist attacks and security fears

• Not new, but intensified in recent times
• Unwarranted associations with the refugee crisis
• Security fears and public anxiety
• The securitarian excuse and its corollary
• Negative representations and processes of stigmatisation
Is there anything that can be done? (1)

• Hard to say
• Little about the economic recession, except to maintain or increase integration programs
• And not ignore native ‘losers’
• A vigorous European response to the refugee crisis
• Reform the asylum system
• “Fast processing times, fast access to the labour market, active integration programs” (Dustmann et al.)
Is there anything that can be done? (2)

- To assuage security fears: improve intelligence and police services, increase internal coordination and international cooperation
- Insist on separating immigration and terrorism
- Fight disinformation
- “Avoid facile securitarian slogans” (Johan Lehman)
- Avoid making mistakes
Concluding remarks (1)

• Turbulent times
• Challenges for structural integration
• Lack of solidarity
• Nationalistic, restrictive responses
• The context of reception is becoming less receptive
• The social and affective dimensions of integration are also affected
• The external shocks are likely to persist, and also the negative politicisation of immigration
Concluding remarks (2)

• The context for integration is anything but favourable and promising
• But this applies to the national and supranational context, much less to the local one
• And cities are crucial for integration
Thank you!