TransAtlantic Council on Migration

A Project of the ***Migration Policy Institute***

Understanding and Addressing Public Anxiety About Immigration

Council Statement

By Demetrios G. Papademetriou and Natalia Banulescu-Bogdan

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The 14th Plenary Meeting of the Transatlantic Council on Migration

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Executive Summary

Public anxiety about migration is an issue that is complex, dynamic, and far from self-contained. It has amplified the platforms of far-right and populist parties across Europe, become an animating theme of the U.S. presidential primary campaigns, and has even precipitated a referendum in which the United Kingdom decided to leave the European Union. Curiously, however, anti-immigration sentiment is not reliably correlated with either large-scale increases in the foreign-born population, high unemployment, or economic downturns, as is often assumed; the one possible exception is national security/terrorism. Instead, concerns about social, economic, and security issues ebb and flow, intersect, and—in certain contexts—become activated so they become intertwined with debates about which immigrants, how many, and under what conditions should they be admitted to a country. Understanding *how, where, and why* this happens is thus vital for policymakers to better address their publics' anxieties and the changes immigration can bring to a society.

Anti-immigration sentiment is not reliably correlated with either large-scale increases in the foreign-born population, high unemployment, or economic downturns, as is often assumed.

This Transatlantic Council on Migration Statement outlines and explores five contextual factors that can set the stage for public anxiety about immigration:

- ***Flows that outpace the preparation, and hence ability, of a country or local community to receive them.*** Sudden flows can be destabilizing even if the absolute number of immigrants is relatively small.
- ***Economic concerns that lead to the perception of immigrants as competition for scarce resources and opportunities.*** This tension can be particularly acute in areas less accustomed to migration and where segments of the native population are experiencing economic hardship.
- ***Shifts in public values or community identity.*** An influx of visibly or religiously different newcomers can be seen to threaten the norms and values that bind society together. Even if many of these changes predate immigration, immigrants are a much more tangible scapegoat than the more nebulous forces of globalization.
- ***Acts of terrorism, crime, and violations of immigration rules that become associated with an immigrant group.*** Security fears, even when clearly the result of the actions of a few individuals, can shape popular and media narratives that raise anxiety and mistrust of entire groups.
- ***Lost trust in the ability of policymakers to control inflows and deliver successful integration policies.*** When the public views the pace and/or scope of immigration as beyond government control (or in direct contradiction to stated policy goals) these fears may be heightened.

These factors are not unique to any one country, though national and local contexts (policy, labor market, demographic, and historical experience with migration) may color them and give certain factors added weight. They are also by no means new. While there is no universal formula for addressing all concerns about all immigrants in all contexts, policymakers should consider the following strategies:

- ***Being mindful of how immigration fits into national narratives.*** Countries that frame immigration as a core part of the national narrative—part of who "we" are, not just something happening "to" us—are more successful in defusing natural anxiety about the pace of change.
- ***Ensuring that new arrivals, immigrants already present in the country, and their descendants are positioned for success.*** Crucially, policymakers must be careful to avoid the appearance that immigrants are receiving more support than native-born individuals.
- ***Making the public feel its concerns have been heard.*** Acknowledging concerns and creating political space for members of the public to express doubts about immigration and migration policies—in mainstream rather than just far-right circles—can go a long way to tempering frustration.
- ***Finding a balance between accommodation, adaptation, and restriction in managing integration in a context of anti-immigration sentiment.*** Governments must strike a careful balance between ensuring new arrivals are given the means to succeed and are not marginalized while also ensuring the "losers" from immigration find adequate alternative economic opportunities.
- ***Involving a range of stakeholders in the immigration and integration process.*** Governments can improve immigration outcomes and ease social tensions by extending ownership of the immigration and integration processes to members of the communities that will be affected by them.

Anxiety is not an inevitable or universal public reaction. How governments manage the broader concerns about social change, economic opportunities, and security issues can shape both public anxiety about immigrants and the level of trust the public has in the ability of government to manage immigration.

I. Introduction

The drivers of anxiety about immigration are both complex and extremely dynamic. Mounting concerns about the size, composition, and form of current immigration flows have contributed to much of the skepticism seen around the globe, as chaotic flows continue with seemingly no end in sight and incomplete integration fuels many anti-immigration reactions. But immigration is by no means the only salient, or even the most prominent, driver of the broader social unease. Many factors have their roots outside of immigration policy *per se*, and are instead deeply embedded in the global, national, and local contexts within which migration occurs. Thus it is not only the characteristics of the flows themselves that determine whether they will induce anxiety or be accepted; specific economic, social, and political conditions may have already laid the seeds of frustration and are equally relevant.

Immigration is by no means the only salient, or even the most prominent, driver of ... broader social unease.

Rising anxiety about immigration overlaps with a variety of other concerns, including those about economic security, changing cultural norms, crime, terrorism, and the ability of government to effectively manage these challenges. However, none of these concerns *on their own* can explain what drives anxiety about immigration; rather, it is how they overlap and what triggers them in each context that determines public reactions.

This Council Statement seeks to analyze how these different concerns interact with one another and become activated in specific national contexts.[1] While it is impossible to develop a formula to predict how the skepticism about immigration that is nearly always present will become inflamed in some areas and be virtually absent (or less visible) in others, this report seeks to shed some light on the anxiety that often surrounds immigration and explore the conditions under which immigration can undermine and disrupt social cohesion and fuel extremist political views. Understanding what drives public concern about immigration—and what boosts or erodes public confidence in the ability of government to manage it—is a critical element of the successful management of migration and its associated policy domains.

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II. Understanding the Roots of Society's Anxiety over Immigration

Deep and prolonged instability in several world regions—driven by brutal ethnic and religious conflicts, political volatility, endemic poverty, oppressive authoritarian regimes, failed states, and vast opportunity differentials—has resulted in large, protracted mixed flows of migrants attempting to reach high-income countries. Reactions in many receiving countries have been strong, with increased support for anti-immigration parties and strong opposition to humanitarian policy initiatives, such as refugee resettlement programs. Yet, in some countries, the opposite has been the case: shows of generosity and warm welcome. At times, these divergent responses have occurred side by side within the same country, city, or community,[2] suggesting that reactions to immigration are both complex and dynamic—and deeply influenced by the rhetoric and behavior of political leaders.

Broadly, immigration tends to fuel societal anxiety under five conditions: (a) when flows outpace the preparation of a country or region to receive newcomers, even if the absolute numbers are relatively small; (b) when immigrants are seen to create competition for scarce resources, particularly in poorer areas that are also less accustomed to migration; (c) when newcomers (and their descendants) are perceived as isolating themselves in closed communities and challenging a host community's sense of identity; (d) when immigration is linked to security concerns (illegality, crime, and terrorism); and (e) when governments are seen as unable or unwilling to control incoming flows.

1 This Statement draws from the reports produced for the July 2015 meeting of the Transatlantic Council on Migration, and from discussions during the meeting itself. These reports examine public opinion on immigration and policy responses in Canada, Germany, and the United Kingdom, as well as the management of religious different in North America and Europe, and reflect the enormous changes in the immigration policy landscape that have taken place between the summer of 2015 and the spring of 2016. They can be found on the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) website, at www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/transatlantic-council-migration/building-and-maintaining-trust-governance-migration. The Council Statement also builds on the Council conclusions from its November 2011 meeting on national identity and immigration; see Demetrios G. Papademetriou, *Rethinking National Identity in the Age of Migration* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2012), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/TCM-rethinking-national-identity-council-statement#overlay-context=programs/transatlantic-council-migration.

2 For example, in 2015, before the refugee crisis had reached its peak, national surveys portrayed Germany as having the most positive views of refugee flows in Europe—even as it was becoming apparent that Germany might receive 1 million or more migrants and asylum seekers that year. Yet small towns showed a level of anxiety that was not reflected in national surveys at the time. The isolated village of Grillenburg—which, with a population of 114, was slated to accept 80 refugees in April 2015—raised the alarm about a spike in crime due to the influx of refugees, which foreshadowed the shift in the national debate by the end of 2015. See Anton Troianovski, "Refugees Surge in Germany Puts Pressure on Small Towns," *Wall Street Journal*, April 22, 2015, www.wsj.com/articles/refugee-surge-in-germany-puts-pressure-on-small-towns-1429706294.

A. Rapid Pace of Social Change

To better understand negative reactions to immigration, it is important to first examine when (and why) they *do not* happen. Several countries that had very small foreign-born populations two decades ago (such as Spain, Ireland, and Greece) became massive immigration destinations seemingly overnight. This sudden shift meant that legal and institutional preparations were often inadequate, yet in only one of these cases has a far-right party capitalized on this reality (Golden Dawn in Greece)—and this may have been as much a function of the politics and economics of extreme scarcity as of immigration per se. Spain and Ireland, despite their huge upsurge in immigration, have not experienced the rise of a major anti-immigration party to the national stage. While the reasons behind this are complex, this example serves to illustrate that organized reactions against immigration are not an *inevitable* consequence of large increases in the immigrant population.

Other countries, too, have successfully navigated sustained large inflows without adversely affecting public trust. Canada, for example, has consistently enjoyed high rates of public approval for immigration—even gaining support during extended periods of particularly high inflows.[3] This is despite Canada admitting nearly 260,000 permanent migrants each year, in addition to more than 100,000 temporary workers selected for admission by its provinces.[4] The foreign born now make up more than 20 percent of the overall Canadian population—considerably more than the 13 percent share in the United States—and nearly half of all residents in metropolitan areas such as Toronto.[5]

> *Organized reactions against immigration are not an inevitable consequence of large increases in the immigrant population.*

Germany, too, enjoyed considerable support for immigration for nearly a decade from 2005 into the first half of 2015,[6] even as it became the country with the second-largest immigrant population in the world.[7] Evidence of this remarkable consensus (especially in a country that for 40 years denied the fact that it had become a country of immigration) came through in the 2014 Transatlantic Trends survey conducted by the German Marshall Fund of the United States: only 21 percent of Germans surveyed said there were too many immigrants in their country (compared to more than 50 percent of respondents in Greece and the United Kingdom). Speaking specifically of humanitarian flows, nearly one-third of Germans surveyed

3 Daniel Hiebert, *What's So Special about Canada? Understanding the Resilience of Immigration and Multiculturalism* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2016), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/whats-so-special-about-canada-understanding-resilience-immigration-and-multiculturalism.

4 Government of Canada, "Canada - Permanent Residents by Gender and Category, 1989 to 2013," updated April 23, 2015, www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2013/permanent/01.asp; Government of Canada, "Temporary Foreign Worker Program Work Permit Holders with a Valid Permit on December 31st by Gender and Age, 1994 to 2013," updated December 31, 2014, www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2013/temporary/1-1.asp.

5 Statistics Canada, *Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada, National Household Survey 2011* (Ottawa: Minister of Industry, 2013), www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-010-x/99-010-x2011001-eng.pdf; Jie Zong and Jeanne Batalova, "Frequently Requested Statistics on Immigrants and Immigration in the United States," *Migration Information Source*, April 14, 2016, www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states.

6 Germany was able to create and sustain a pro-immigration consensus from 2005 to mid-2015 despite a significant rise in immigration; while new arrivals nearly doubled between 2011 and 2013, several public opinion surveys revealed a majority of respondents supporting *more* immigration. This was in part due to positive German economic growth and the narrative that linked immigration to continued economic competitiveness. While some cracks in this consensus have begun to appear with large-scale flows continuing into 2016, it is too early to predict the long-term effects of the refugee crisis on public opinion. See Friedrich Heckmann, *Understanding the Creation of Public Consensus: Migration and Integration in Germany, 2005 to 2015* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2016), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/understanding-creation-public-consensus-migration-and-integration-germany-2005-2015.

7 MPI Data Hub, "Top 25 Destination Countries for Global Migrants over Time," accessed July 7, 2016, www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/top-25-destination-countries-global-migrants-over-time?width=1000&height=850&iframe=true.

said they were willing to have *less-restrictive* refugee policies (the highest percentage of all countries surveyed),[8] despite being the country with the highest number of asylum applications for two years in a row.[9] The German public also displayed considerable support, embodied by "Refugees Welcome" and other such movements at the peak of these historic flows.

Meanwhile, many European countries receiving far fewer migrants and refugees—but at a very rapid pace and with much less warning (and hence preparation)—saw more extreme reactions. Hungary, the European Union (EU) Member State that enacted the earliest and most severe migration controls on these flows, saw a quadrupling of its refugee intake between 2014 and 2015, receiving more asylum applications per capita in 2015 than any other EU country—in excess of 177,000 applications, compared to 43,000 in 2014 and just 2,000 in 2012.[10] While in absolute terms these numbers were far smaller than those in Germany, what mattered more was the rate at which the flows arrived and the sense that the government had no control over them—all juxtaposed against the place of immigration in the national narrative.[11] The surge of new arrivals transiting through Austria on their way to Germany in 2015 (with 88,000 remaining and applying for asylum in Austria)—while also smaller in absolute terms than flows to neighboring Germany or Hungary—contributed to a spike in the popularity of Austria's Freedom Party,[12] while also prompting heightened border enforcement and a call for an upper cap on the number of refugees in the country.[13]

Many European countries receiving far fewer migrants and refugees—but at a very rapid pace and with much less warning (and hence preparation)—saw more extreme reactions.

8 German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMFUS), *Transatlantic Trends: Key Findings 2014* (Washington, DC: GMFUS, 2014), http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2012/09/Trends_2014_complete.pdf.

9 The five European Union (EU) countries to receive the most asylum applications in 2015 were Germany, Hungary, Sweden, Austria, and Italy. The top three countries each saw asylum applications rise by more than 100 percent from 2008-15. See MPI Data Hub, "Asylum Applications in the EU/EFTA by Country, 2008-2016 (Q1)," accessed July 7, 2016, www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/asylum-applications-euefta-country-2008-2015.

10 Ibid.

11 Whereas Germany and Sweden publicly welcomed refugees and framed their policies as reflections of their commitment to national and European values and obligations, Hungary tried to restrict immigration by virtually any means possible—including by closing its southern border with Serbia—even before the influx reached its peak. See Andrew Byrne, "Orban Basks in EU's Migrant Struggle," *Financial Times,* December 16, 2015, https://next.ft.com/content/ef697f24-a24c-11e5-8d70-42b68cfae6e4.

12 Alison Smale, "Far-Right Party Gains, but Falls Short in Vienna Election Seen as Refugee Test," *New York Times*, October 11, 2015, www.nytimes.com/2015/10/12/world/far-right-party-gains-but-falls-short-in-vienna-election-seen-as-refugee-test.html?_r=0.

13 In the United States as well, mounting anxiety surrounding refugee flows (and Muslim flows in particular) manifested itself in the U.S. presidential primary campaign—despite the country receiving only a fraction of the flows seen crossing the Mediterranean to Europe. Several leading Republican primary candidates called for greater restrictions on refugees, with Donald Trump going so far as to advocate an outright ban on Muslims entering the country. See Jenna Johnson and David Weigel, "Donald Trump Calls for 'Total' Ban on Muslims Entering United States," *The Washington Post*, December 8, 2015, www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2015/12/07/e56266f6-9d2b-11e5-8728-1af6af208198_story.html.

Box 1. Mass Immigration and Heightened Anxiety: An Unreliable Correlation?

Anti-immigrant sentiment does not reliably correspond to an increase in the volume of newcomers, either in absolute or relative terms. Sharp reactions—such as significant legislative changes, symbolic signs of exclusion (e.g., banning minarets), and (in extreme instances) anti-immigrant violence—have occurred in places *without* large or sudden increases in the immigrant population. Meanwhile, several countries and regions that have recently received sizeable unexpected inflows have *not* experienced social disorder.

Some of the sharpest reactions on both sides of the Atlantic have centered around managing large inflows of Muslim immigrants, notably Syrian refugees. Yet majorities of respondents in Germany and France—the two European countries with the largest Muslim populations (approximately 4.7 million each, comprising 5.8 percent and 7.5 percent of the overall populations)—reported favorable views of Muslims in their country in a 2015 Pew Global Attitudes Survey (69 percent and 76 percent). By comparison, only 31 percent of the Italian public (of which 3.7 percent is Muslim—among the smallest shares in any European state) responded favorably. And it is in the Netherlands, with a medium-sized Muslim population of 1 million that nonetheless comprises 6 percent of its population, that the Party for Freedom (PVV) has successfully campaigned on an anti-Muslim platform, eventually becoming the third-largest party in the country. In the same vein, during a 2009 Swiss referendum 57 percent of voters approved a ban on minarets in a country with fewer than 350,000 Muslims, though 5.1 percent of the population. At the time, only four Swiss mosques or prayer rooms had minarets, with two more planned, and none of them conduct the call to prayer—suggesting that visible cultural change, even without tangible effects on neighborhoods and communities, can have deep symbolic power.

Elsewhere, unprecedented rates of growth in immigration have not given rise to the kinds of anti-immigration reactions one might have expected. In Spain, the stock of foreign nationals soared from 4.9 percent of the total population in 2001 to 14.6 percent in 2011, and in Ireland this figure increased from 5.6 percent in 2002 to 11.7 percent in 2011. Yet, neither country has produced a political movement with an anti-immigration platform at the national level.

And some countries more accustomed to immigration, such as the United Kingdom where net migration levels have long been high, have seen persistent opposition to and even hostility toward immigrants—embodied by the swift rise of the UK Independence Party (UKIP) and culminating in the June 2016 murder of pro-immigrant British parliamentarian Jo Cox and the "Brexit" referendum in which 52 percent of voters supported leaving the European Union. Brexit had many roots, but the deepest was the desire to curb immigration. In fact, a majority of voters said they felt that the costs of free movement (increasingly blamed for the economic malaise, uncertainty, and loss of control felt by many) outweighed the benefits of EU membership. But it is important to note that skepticism about and opposition to immigration has long been simmering in the United Kingdom. According to Ipsos MORI, the British public has consistently agreed with the statement that there are "too many migrants" in the United Kingdom, regardless of migration levels. In fact, in 1978, 70 percent of the public said Britain was in danger of "being swamped" by newcomers (a year when net migration was negative) compared to an average of 69 percent between 2006 and 2013, when annual net migration averaged 230,000. The lessons of Brexit, therefore, point to the the critical role political leadership plays in either channeling or alleviating the concerns of those "left behind" by globalization as such tensions can flare up independently of the volume of immigrants in a country.

As a general rule, the rate of change is often more influential than its absolute size. This is because change that marks too rapid a departure from the recent past and that runs counter to stated public policy (for example to cap inflows at a certain number) will appear more threatening than large flows that are in line with public expectations. Even many European publics who showed overwhelming support for refugees in the summer and early fall of 2015 have been pushed to their limits as their governments have struggled to keep up with the (until recently) unrelenting pace of new arrivals. And in many countries, anxious or intolerant reactions to immigration tend to be strongest in regions or localities that have not historically experienced much new immigration, where an increase in the pace and relative size of immigration flows upends public expectations and preparedness.

Sources: Pew Research Center, *A Fragile Rebound for EU Image on Eve of European Parliament Elections* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2014), 31, www.pewglobal.org/files/2014/05/2014-05-12_Pew-Global-Attitudes-European-Union.pdf; Conrad Hackett, "5 Facts about the Muslim Population in Europe" (Pew Research Center Fact Tank blog, November 17, 2015), www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/11/17/5-facts-about-the-muslim-population-in-europe; Office fédéral de la statistique, "Population résidante permanente âgée de 15 ans ou plus selon la religion, 2010-2014," accessed May 6, 2016, www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/fr/index/news/01/nip_detail.html?gnpID=2016-021; Nick Cumming-Bruce and Steven Erlanger, "Swiss Ban Building of Minarets on Mosques," *New York Times*, November 29, 2009, www.nytimes.com/2009/11/30/world/europe/30swiss.html?_r=0.

B. Competition for Scarce Resources

The current global refugee crisis comes on the heels of the most severe economic downturn in decades, making national publics wary of increased competition for scarce resources, and—in some cases—jobs. As certain countries cope with a painfully slow economic recovery, massive youth unemployment, job insecurity, stagnating wages, and the belief that public policy is proving systematically unequal to the task of moving the economy forward, many citizens see their prospects for upward mobility constrained. Against this backdrop, immigrants are often depicted as fiscal burdens on the host society, contributing to the un- and underemployment of native-born persons with similar skillsets and qualifications—in other words, taking more out of the system than they are contributing. While it is almost impossible to quantify all the economic contributions of immigrants, it is far easier to count fiscal expenses. In the short-to-medium term these can be large—especially for refugees and other beneficiaries of international protection. Moreover, it is often easy to confuse fiscal costs with broader economic effects, particularly as the latter become obvious only over the longer term. Whether (and how quickly) newcomers are seen as economic assets or liabilities are thus critical drivers of public opinion. Analyses of the effects of immigration must also be sensitive to and incorporate another difficult issue: the simple fact that benefits generally accrue to the broader economy and the country as a whole (through growth in the gross domestic product [GDP] and federal tax revenue), yet costs are typically felt locally (in school and health-care expenses, for example). These complexities become exacerbated, and the cost picture sharper, when one moves from orderly immigration flows to substantial admissions of spontaneous asylum seekers and mixed flows.

While it is almost impossible to quantify all the economic contributions of immigrants, it is far easier to count fiscal expenses.

Indeed, some restrictionist impulses seen across Europe (from bans on burqas to increasing curbs on certain welfare benefits) are in part driven by local concerns: the effects of newcomers on neighborhoods and cities, especially on education, health, transportation, and public safety systems. While politicians in national capitals make the decisions about how many immigrants or refugees to accept, it is local areas that must provide housing and services, and adapt their way of life to accommodate newcomers. EU Member States receiving large numbers of asylum seekers have seen national governments strike hard bargains with local communities, even in the countries with the most generous humanitarian systems. Sweden, for example, passed a controversial 2016 law that makes it compulsory for municipalities to accept a certain number of refugees. And it has been shown that a high rate of immigrant *turnover* has a major local impact, including rising costs as new arrivals receive introduction and integration services (and in the case of asylum seekers, time- and resource-intensive processing and adjudication procedures), but may depart before the cost of those services has been recovered by growing local tax revenues.[14]

Questions about the contribution of immigration to various forms of inequality may also become more relevant as flows continue to grow, often in poorly managed (or unmanaged) ways, such as illegal immigration or uncontrolled flows of would-be asylum seekers. Unease over the unequal distribution of the benefits of migration (wealth creation) and the use of public goods and resources can sometimes be attributed to the often grossly uneven outcomes for the "winners" and "losers" of technological change and the various forms of globalization (from trade to the ease of moving internationally). These

14 The Central London Authority makes the point that it is the high turnover in London (in addition to high net migration) that makes it particularly costly to provide public services, as it is more complex to anticipate and address the needs of a transient population—even if high levels of new immigration to London have produced substantial economic gains at the national level. See Ian Gordon, Tony Travers, and Christine Whitehead, *The Impact of Churn and Migration on Population Estimates for Central London* (London: City of London, 2007), www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/business/economic-research-and-information/research-publications/Documents/2007-2000/The-impact-of-churn-and-migration-on-population-estimates-for-Central-London.pdf.

faces of "openness" to international migration, when relatively unchecked, have placed new strains on communities, particularly those unprepared to accommodate substantial shares of immigrants and minorities. Therefore while there is a near consensus in the academy that migration is a net positive to the economy, this argument brings little comfort to those who lose (or feel they lose) from immigration,[15] such as native workers or earlier immigrants whose education and skills put them in direct competition for jobs with similarly endowed newcomers. The growth in intra-EU migration—itself partly a result of the aftershocks of the recession, the ensuing fiscal crises, and the opportunity differentials between countries of origin and attractive destination countries—has also been perceived as unfair in some quarters. Unsurprisingly perhaps, German, Dutch, and UK politicians have argued in favor of curbing access to benefits for intra-EU migrants for certain periods of time, despite the relatively low incidence of so-called benefit tourism.

While there is a near consensus in the academy that migration is a net positive to the economy, this argument brings little comfort to those who lose (or feel they lose) from immigration.

Yet while these concerns can be triggered under certain circumstances, they do not in and of themselves result in anti-immigration sentiment. Research does not bear out a substantial correlation between unemployment rates or relative economic scarcity and anti-immigration sentiment. One study of Islamophobia drawing from the longitudinal European Values Study (EVS), for example, found that neither GDP per capita nor unemployment rate had any significant influence on anti-Muslim attitudes in 16 European countries.[16] Stubborn narratives, nonetheless, live on in the public imagination. The proliferation of information itself adds to the challenge, as publics are bombarded by multiple (and often conflicting) "fact- and evidence-based" messages at once—whether from politicians, media, or researchers. And rational arguments often do little to refute messages with high emotional resonance.

C. Threat to Public Values or Norms

One of the principal fears associated with immigration—and one that is particularly difficult to address effectively—is that it erodes the norms and values that bind societies together. This fear is exacerbated when newcomers are perceived as not adapting to the host-country language, culture, and identity—or worse, as bringing and retaining cultural norms and practices that are seen as fundamentally in conflict with the cultural ethos of the majority.[17] Communities that are seen as living apart from the mainstream—whether religiously, ethnically, or linguistically segregated—reinforce these fears and make publics wary of systematic difference.

15 A 2014 paper in *The Economic Journal*, for example, showed that contributions to the UK economy from nationals of countries that joined the European Union in 2004 (such as Poland) were strong. Yet in the 2008 European Social Survey, 44 percent of UK respondents thought that immigrants took more in social benefits than they contributed in taxes. This is just one of many examples that reveal a disconnect between expert consensus and public perception. See Christian Dustmann and Tommaso Frattini, "The Fiscal Effects of Immigration to the UK," *The Economic Journal* 124, no. 580 (2014): F593-F643, www.cream-migration.org/files/FiscalEJ.pdf.

16 The European Values Study (EVS), produced by Tilburg University and European partners, is a large-scale, cross-national, and longitudinal survey produced every nine years in various European countries. For more, see EVS, "About EVS," accessed July 12, 2016, www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu/page/about-evs.html. See also Serdar Kaya, "Islamophobia in Western Europe: A Comparative, Multilevel Study," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 35, no. 3 (2015): 450-65.

17 See, for example, Demetrios G. Papademetriou, Richard Alba, Nancy Foner, and Natalia Banulescu-Bogdan, *Managing Religious Difference in North America and Europe in an Era of Mass Migration* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2016), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/managing-religious-difference-north-america-and-europe-era-mass-migration.

As immigration flows become more complex, no country has yet figured out how to succeed in all aspects of immigrant integration. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries have experimented with various models that range from accommodating (and even facilitating) difference, to restricting or even prohibiting cultural practices seen as incompatible with the values and norms of the majority society.[18] Policymakers and national publics continue to disagree about which approach along this continuum is most effective. Public anxiety is therefore driven in part by this uncertainty: the sense that governments do not have an effective strategy for integrating newcomers.

Against this backdrop, there are four categories of flows that appear to provoke more unease than others:

- ***Visible and, in particular, religious difference.*** Even when they comprise a small share of the foreign-born population, substantial numbers of ethnically and culturally distinct newcomers can challenge closely held notions about who the "we" is in society. Moreover, visible markers of these differences can feed into security concerns. In Europe, reports of radicalized youth (often second- or third-generation immigrants) leaving to become foreign fighters underscore *the perception* that those with a strong Muslim religious identity have a tenuous connection with the host society.[19] In the United States, the strong opposition in some quarters to resettling Syrian refugees is linked to similar security fears.

- ***Large national or religious subgroups.*** The concentration of seemingly homogeneous populations of "newcomers" is often seen as more troubling than multiethnic waves of immigrants.[20] This fear is generally rooted in concerns that larger minority groups may emphasize their own subculture over integration into the mainstream (e.g., Mexicans or Central Americans in the United States, or Muslims in Europe—particularly in places such as France, where most Muslims hail from one or two national backgrounds).

- ***Unauthorized immigrants.*** Spikes (or *perceived* spikes) in illegal immigration can spill over and harden attitudes toward immigration writ large, particularly when substantial shares of both types of flows originate from the same country or subregion. These perceptions are hard to counter with evidence; anti-illegal immigration sentiment continues to persist in some countries, such as the United States, even in the face of evidence of dramatic reductions in illegal entries.[21]

- ***Groups perceived as difficult or particularly costly to integrate.*** The sheer volume of new arrivals, combined with the perception that they will need substantial assistance over extended periods, can raise concerns about the cost, the timeline, and the ultimate outcome of integration

18 Examples of accommodating or facilitating difference include permitting the building of mosques, allowing ritual animal slaughter, or—as in the United Kingdom—recognizing the practice of sharia law when it does not conflict with national law. Examples of restricting practices include laws against the wearing of the veil in schools or public institutions (which is seen to contradict the principle of separation of church and state), building mosques and minarets (which change the visual landscape of cities), or pushing back against restrictions on the depiction of the prophet Mohammed in print (which is seen as a form of self-censorship that goes against the principles of free speech). Even more controversial are practices (typically only held by a small minority of Muslims), such as female genital mutilation or honor killings, that are in direct violation of laws in many Western liberal democracies regarding the rights of women and children. See for example Richard Alba and Nancy Foner, *Strangers No More: Immigration and the Challenges of Integration in North America and Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

19 For a discussion of why this fear is not as prevalent in the United States, where minority religions are not seen as a significant threat to American identity and values, see Papademetriou, Alba, Foner, and Banulescu-Bogdan, *Managing Religious Difference*.

20 In fact, some countries that receive large numbers of new immigrants every year, such as the United States, make a deliberate effort to diversify these flows. Success in this endeavor, however, is limited because of entry formulas that privilege family reunification, which, in turn, leads to further chain migration.

21 The number of apprehensions at the U.S.-Mexico border in fiscal year (FY) 2015 was one-fifth the rate seen in FY 2000—331,333 versus 1.64 million. See U.S. Border Patrol, "Southwest Border Sectors: Total Illegal Alien Apprehensions by Fiscal Year (Oct. 1st through Sept. 30th)," accessed July 12, 2016, www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/documents/BP%20Southwest%20Border%20Sector%20Apps%20FY1960%20-%20FY2015.pdf.

efforts.[22] For example, the arrival of unaccompanied minors in overstretched school systems or refugees resettled in rural or economically disadvantaged areas ill-equipped to handle their special needs have made narratives about the crises in the Mediterranean and in various parts of the United States even more highly charged.[23]

How well newcomers will integrate is a dominant concern in all advanced societies, especially in view of the large-scale immigration that occurs outside of legal channels. But the concerns do not end with the newly arrived (who are the focus of most integration efforts). While there are robust debates as to their long-term effectiveness, mechanisms *do* exist in many countries to compel new immigrants to adapt to legally sanctioned host-country civic norms. Some countries with large immigrant inflows, for example, require newcomers to complete cultural orientation courses, which might discuss gender equality or behavior toward family members, in addition to linguistic integration as part of citizenship acquisition. There are, however, very few comparable mechanisms to assist the second and third generations find their place in society. Continued marginalization (and its pernicious effects) has thus become a very real challenge, often undermining public support for future flows.

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D. Crime and Security

Other undercurrents—such as fear of crime, terrorism, and various forms of globalization—play an outsized role in the reactions of many to newcomers, and to immigration-related change more broadly, in their communities. The 2015 and 2016 attacks in Paris, Brussels, San Bernardino, and Orlando set off new rounds of security fears in both Europe and the United States. Several Central European governments resolved not to accept refugees for relocation, and in the United States, more than half the nation's governors called for a stop to the resettlement of already vetted Syrian refugees in their states. The chaotic manner in which migrants and asylum seekers entered Europe in the second half of 2015 and the first few months of 2016 fueled concerns that terrorists could infiltrate these streams[24]—anxieties that had the strongest effect not in Europe, but in the United States. The result was a huge backlash against the U.S. resettlement program (which resettles the most-vetted refugees in the world), despite it bearing little resemblance to the EU situation, which is contending with mass spontaneous arrivals of mixed flows.[25] Nonetheless, many Americans opposed President Obama's proposal to resettle an additional 10,000 Syrians during fiscal year (FY) 2016. The terror attacks also lent fuel to an already toxic campaign for the Republican nomination in the lead-up to the November 2016 U.S. presidential election, in which the two

22 Some among the public tend to overestimate the share of immigrants they see as particularly problematic relative to overall immigration. In an Ipsos MORI survey conducted for the Migration Observatory in September 2011, members of the British public were asked what type of groups they had in mind when thinking of immigrants. Sixty-two percent of respondents mentioned refugees, despite this group accounting for the smallest volume of inflows to the United Kingdom. See Migration Observatory, *Thinking Behind the Numbers: Understanding Public Opinion on Immigration in Britain* (Oxford: Migration Observatory, 2011), 9, www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/migobs/Report%20-%20Public%20Opinion.pdf.

23 See, for example, Sarah Pierce, *Unaccompanied Child Migrants in U.S. Communities, Immigration Court, and Schools* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2015), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/unaccompanied-child-migrants-us-communities-immigration-court-and-schools.

24 While there was clear evidence that no legitimate asylum seekers were involved in any of the terrorist attacks, several EU citizens who traveled to fight in Syria (so-called foreign fighters) are believed to have re-entered Europe through its maritime borders amid the refugee and migrant influx.

25 The U.S. resettlement program has the most robust security checks of any migration stream. See, for example, Amy Pope, "Infographic: The Screening Process for Refugee Entry into the United States" (infographic, The White House, November 20, 2015), www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2015/11/20/infographic-screening-process-refugee-entry-united-states.

leading Republican candidates voiced radical ideas about Syrian refugees and Muslims more generally.[26] In Europe, fears that refugees were among the perpetrators of the Paris and Brussels attacks proved unfounded: all identified attackers turned out to be Belgian or French nationals. In the United States, too, the Orlando perpetrator was a U.S.-born citizen.[27] Yet this has not dampened anxieties about Muslims. Rather, it has shed light on another, even more serious, security concern: home-grown radicalization and terrorism.[28]

Refugee flows have been linked to broader narratives about crime as well. In the wake of the December 2015 robberies and sexual assaults in Cologne,[29] anti-immigration voices were quick to attribute the actions of a few to entire groups—to all incoming refugees and all Muslim immigrants. The fears induced by such events are exacerbated by a polarized media culture, which at times sensationalizes bad news about immigration, providing wind to the sails of populist parties, and at other times becomes hampered by political correctness and an abundance of caution when reporting migrants' misdeeds. The erosion of a "middle ground" has reduced the space for thoughtful debate. On one hand, unless media, policymakers, and public authorities at all levels are vigilant about the rhetoric they use, one crime perpetrated by a refugee can fuel latent suspicions in many quarters that newcomers and refugees from certain backgrounds are criminals—a notion that can be very hard to counter. In fact, data on immigration and crime (which consistently show that immigrants *as a group*[30] are less likely to engage in criminal activity than the native born)[31] appear to be ineffective in countering fear-driven emotions. This is especially true when prominent politicians and some political parties poised to benefit from fueling such fears are both persistent and adept at their messaging. At the same time, if the public believes that policymakers and/or the media are deliberately sweeping these issues under the rug, they may assume that the "real" story is far more negative.[32] What is most often missing are trusted mediators—public figures that capture the views of both sides without demonizing either and truly independent analysts that take a 360-degree

26 Trump, the presumptive Republican nominee, renewed his call for a ban on Muslims entering the United States after the Orlando mass shooting. Erstwhile Republican rival Ted Cruz, a U.S. Senator from Texas, called for enhanced surveillance of Muslim neighborhoods and mosques after the Brussels attacks. See Johnson and Weigel, "Donald Trump Calls for 'Total' Ban on Muslims Entering United States:" Scott Detrow, "Trump Calls to Ban Immigration from Countries with 'Proven History of Terrorism'," National Public Radio, June 13, 2016, www.npr.org/2016/06/13/481910989/trump-expands-immigration-ban-to-countries-with-proven-history-of-terrorism.

27 While the perpetrators in both sets of attacks share an immigrant background—for example, one set of brothers in the Paris attacks was of Algerian descent, while the U.S. perpetrator was of Afghan descent—all were native born and not recent immigrants.

28 Fears about terrorists posing as refugees or otherwise infiltrating the chaotic maritime flows into Europe have been inflamed by the Paris attacks, and seem to have been borne out with the June 2016 arrest in Germany of four Islamic State fighters who posed as migrants. Another concern, the connection between refugees and crime, is also found to be weak despite opportunistic criminal behavior in large public events, such as concerts, in several Central and Northern European countries. See Anthony Faiola, "Germany Arrests 3 Suspected Syrian Terrorists, Foils Possible Islamic State Plot," *The Washington Post*, June 2, 2016, www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/germany-arrests-3-suspected-syrian-terrorists-foils-alleged-islamic-state-plot/2016/06/02/31e29767-6df7-496b-aa47-5b8911459f13_story.html?tid=a_inl.

29 German officials and media were widely criticized for keeping silent on the robberies and sexual assaults that took place on New Year's Eve in Cologne (and a handful of other German cities), in which as many as half of the perpetrators appeared to be recently arrived immigrant men. This silence backfired, resulting in increased anxiety about the link between the large-scale influx of refugees and crime; Germany has since passed new sexual assault legislation that in part makes it easier to deport refugees if they are convicted of such crimes. See Rick Noack, "Leaked Document Says 2,000 Men Allegedly Assaulted 1,200 German Women on New Year's Eve," *The Washington Post*, July 11, 2016, www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/07/10/leaked-document-says-2000-men-allegedly-assaulted-1200-german-women-on-new-years-eve/.

30 This is an important qualification in that all averages hide variations among immigrant groups (on this and many other issues).

31 See, for example, Brian Bell, *Crime and Immigration: Do Poor Labor Market Opportunities Lead to Migrant Crime?* (Bonn: IZA World of Labor, 2016), http://wol.iza.org/articles/crime-and-immigration-1.pdf; Bianca E. Bersani, "An Examination of First and Second Generation Immigrant Offending Trajectories," *Justice Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (2014): 315-43, www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/07418825.2012.659200; Walter A. Ewing, Daniel E. Martínez, and Rubén G. Rumbaut, *The Criminalization of Immigration in the United States* (Washington, DC: American Immigration Council, 2015), http://immigrationpolicy.org/special-reports/criminalization-immigration-united-states; Matthias von Hein, "Study Contradicts Efforts to Link Migrants to Crime," Deutsche Welle, July 9, 2016, www.dw.com/en/study-contradicts-efforts-to-link-migrants-to-crime/a-19390414.

32 See, for example, the backlash in Sweden. See Lee Roden, "Why Sweden Is Talking about Immigration More Than Before," *The Local*, July 6, 2016, www.thelocal.se/20160706/sweden-is-talking-more-about-immigration-now-than-ever-before.

look at the evidence—that reflect people's lived experience of the changes in their communities and are willing to tell the more nuanced truth about these difficult issues.

E. Lack of Control and Loss of Confidence in Governments and Elites

The social, economic, and security concerns outlined above have gained increased salience due to an additional factor: Many people no longer trust that governments are capable of managing the migrant flows and the impact immigrants have on public services and the civic space. Publics around the world want their governments to demonstrate that they can stabilize migration flows; maintain order and legality; and ensure that newcomers learn the local language, play by the rules of the receiving society, and respect the values and institutions of the host society.[33] Yet across many immigrant-receiving societies, publics instead feel that immigration is happening in a chaotic, lawless, and unplanned manner that runs counter to the stated goals of government and that politicians are making promises they cannot keep. There is the perception in many quarters that economic and social elites (including those in media, civil society, and government) have become advocates for newcomers rather than thoughtful supporters of the interests of the overall society that elects governments and supports, through their taxes, the social infrastructure that is responsible for the quality of life that benefits all—including newcomers. In this context, members of the public may feel that the room for discussion and dissent is deeply constrained. The result is rather predictable: dissenters are thrown into the open arms of opportunistic right-wing parties, and the gulf continues to widen between them and the political, economic, and social elites in much of Europe and the United States.

There is the perception in many quarters that economic and social elites ... have become advocates for newcomers rather than thoughtful supporters of the interests of the overall society.

As noted, one of the most destabilizing aspects of any migration crisis is when public expectations of how much—and what kind of—immigration to expect diverge dramatically from reality. It is this divergence that leads people to think that an immigration system is out of control. The increased number of unaccompanied minors arriving at the southern border of the United States—rising from 16,000 in FY 2011 to nearly 69,000 in FY 2014—may not have been particularly destabilizing in and of itself.[34] It did, however, have an enormous impact on dissolving an emerging consensus that the enormous investments in "hardening" the southern border were bearing fruit. That concern, together with heightened fears that there was no concrete plan to manage those flows—and that *government policy itself was becoming a pull factor*[35]—was a significant driver of anxiety. This concern is echoed in the European Union, where the public perception that there was no end in sight to flows coming through the Aegean (from mid-2015 to the first quarter of 2016) became a key factor in preventing solidarity in redistributing refugees across EU countries.

33 Demetrios G. Papademetriou, *Maintaining Public Trust in the Governance of Migration* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2016), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/maintaining-public-trust-governance-migration.

34 Between FY 2011-14, the number of Central American unaccompanied children (and children traveling within family units) arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border grew exponentially, reaching 137,000 in FY 2014. The dramatic pace of arrivals in spring and summer 2014 overwhelmed already strained adjudication capacity in the United States, resulting in wait times of up to two years for minors to appear before an immigration judge, during which time most were reunited with family members (creating a powerful "pull" factor). See Marc R. Rosenblum, *Unaccompanied Child Migration to the United States: The Tension between Protection and Prevention* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2015), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/unaccompanied-child-migration-united-states-tension-between-protection-and-prevention.

35 Muzaffar Chishti and Faye Hipsman, "Increased Central American Migration to the United States May Prove an Enduring Phenomenon," *Migration Information Source,* February 18, 2016, www.migrationpolicy.org/article/increased-central-american-migration-united-states-may-prove-enduring-phenomenon.

In addition, public sentiment tends to turn more negative when people feel the rule of law is not respected. Evidence that many unaccompanied minors and family units abscond during the (often long) lag time between their arrival in the United States and their immigration court hearing has only cemented concerns that the government is not in control.[36] Similar concerns exist in Europe, as publics watch the Dublin system that ought to determine the EU Member State in which an individual applies for asylum—a system that was substantially revised in 2014—become completely irrelevant. In a remarkable deviation from how decisions about refugee and other humanitarian protection systems are supposed to, and have actually, operated, most recent arrivals have taken control of where and when to apply for asylum, with mass onward movements occurring in defiance of the rules set out by the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). Regaining trust in this or any system will only begin when the public can see and understand the rules governing immigration *and* be confident that they will be enforced.

Public sentiment tends to turn more negative when people feel the rule of law is not respected.

Immigration flows that contradict stated government policies can also fuel further public skepticism and even hostility. In Australia, for example, where immigration has been a key part of economic growth and competitiveness—and of the nation-building process itself—spontaneous asylum seekers have long been viewed with a great deal of public concern. Dramatic boat arrivals[37] exacerbate these sentiments.[38] In the United Kingdom, Prime Minister David Cameron's Conservative Party announced the government would reduce net migration to less than 100,000 per year by 2015—and then missed that goal by a wide margin, with net migration in 2015 more than double that in 2013.[39] One important lesson from this experience is that when mainstream politicians announce an immigration measure and then fail to deliver—either because they do not actually control the policy levers needed to bring about the change[40] or because they lose public support—this creates optimal conditions for radical-right, anti-immigration parties to flourish. Many of the parties that have seen the greatest success in recent European elections have succeeded on the following approach: simply take advantage of the government's failure to keep its promises rather than being responsible for proposing and enacting policy prescriptions, which bring with them a great deal of responsibility and a higher chance of failure.[41]

Underlying dissatisfaction with policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic both fuels and reflects broader anxieties about migration. Even publics with favorable views of immigration in general often

36 Access to legal representation dramatically increases the chance of unaccompanied minors appearing in court; the vast majority of children who are not represented by attorneys fail to show up for their hearings. And of those ordered removed from the United States, the majority remain in the country without authorization. For example, in FY 2014, although 13,204 minors were ordered removed, only 1,863 were actually deported. See Pierce, *Unaccompanied Child Migrants*.

37 There have been virtually no landings of boats carrying the typical mix of migrants and asylum seekers since Australian government policy has successfully intercepted all such boats and funded offshore processing of asylum seekers in Nauru or Manus islands. This policy, while loudly opposed by activists in Australia and elsewhere, has been declared legal in a recent decision by Australia's highest court. See Nicole Hasham, "High Court Finds Offshore Detention Lawful," *Sydney Morning Herald*, February 3, 2016, www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/high-court-finds-offshore-detention-lawful-20160202-gmk5q6.html.

38 Speech by Michael Pezzullo, Secretary, Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP), "Sovereignty in an Age of Global Interdependency: the Role of Borders," to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Barton, ACT, Australia, December 4, 2014, www.border.gov.au/newsandmedia/Documents/sovereignty-age-interdependency-04122014.pdf.

39 See Sunder Katwala and Will Somerville, *Engaging the Anxious Middle on Immigration Reform: Evidence from the UK Debate* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2016), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/engaging-anxious-middle-immigration-reform-evidence-uk-debate.

40 As is the case in the United Kingdom, where approximately half of immigrants are EU nationals with an absolute right to move and work there. See Ibid.

41 See Cas Mudde, "Three Decades of Populist Radical Right Parties in Western Europe: So What?" *European Journal of Political Research* 52, no. 1 (2013): 1-19; Timo Lochocki, *The Unstoppable Far Right? How Established Parties' Communication and Media Reporting of European Affairs Affect the Electoral Advances of Right-Populist Parties* (Washington, DC: GMFUS, 2014), www.gmfus.org/publications/unstoppable-far-right.

have negative views about those in charge of managing it, considering them either unaware of or, more to the point, indifferent to the effects of immigration on local communities and on those left behind by the "openness" that is a hallmark of globalization. This is made worse by the fact that politicians in many countries are deeply reticent to hold regular conversations with constituents about immigration—only engaging the issue when things go wrong. For example, while the June 2014 Transatlantic Trends survey shows Sweden as a relative outlier in Europe in terms of public approval of government handling of immigration (60 percent approved),[42] the anti-immigration Sweden Democrats received nearly 13 percent of the vote in the September 2014 national elections, and polling data suggest the party may be the largest in Sweden today.[43] One possible explanation for the success of the Sweden Democrats is that mainstream parties have not acknowledged openly the importance, let alone legitimacy, of expressing doubts about the rather open-door government policy toward newcomers. In 2015, Sweden received more asylum applications per capita than any other European country with the exception of Hungary (which served primarily as a transit point rather than a destination and has since seen most asylum applicants move on).[44] Moreover, more than two-thirds of applications were received in just a four-month period between August and December 2015, placing extreme strain on national systems. Meanwhile, mainstream politicians have urged citizens to "open their hearts to refugees" while criticizing those who raise concerns about this policy. Is it possible that closing the space for debate has backfired?

Finally, the steady loss of sovereign control over migration issues to seemingly "unaccountable" supranational bodies further fuels popular concerns. Passport-free movement within the Schengen zone—a project requiring enormous trust among participating states—has come under extreme strain due to legitimate concerns about the effects of uncontrolled migration at the external borders of an internally borderless Europe. This anxiety has caused citizens to question the extent to which they are willing to cede further control over immigration and asylum policy to Brussels. The always simmering euroskepticism has morphed and spread to a large number of EU Member States, partly as a result of this tension, with the Front National in France, the Party for Freedom in the Netherlands, the Danish People's Party, the Austrian Freedom Party, the Alternative for Germany, and the UK Independence Party—among others—campaigning on an anti-EU platform. The successful effort to unite many of these different platforms into a far-right euroskeptic alliance (the "Europe of Nations and Freedom" coalition in the European Parliament) simply capitalizes on the perceived failure of Europe to manage migration and gives such skeptics far greater resources, a more prominent platform for voicing their views, and, inevitably, greater legitimacy (see Box 2).

The steady loss of sovereign control over migration issues to seemingly "unaccountable" supranational bodies further fuels popular concerns.

Lack of trust in government has created fertile ground in which anecdotes and negative media narratives in some countries have incredible power to shape public attitudes about immigration and related issues. When these anti-immigrant narratives intersect with growing skepticism about globalization and the speed and direction of social change, public confidence can become caught in a vicious cycle. Real and perceived failure of asylum, border control, and community–building policies harden existing anti-immigrant attitudes.

42 Compare this to 73 percent of British respondents saying they *disapproved.* See GMFUS, *Transatlantic Trends: Mobility, Migration and Integration* (Washington, DC: GMFUS, 2014), 5, http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2014/09/Trends_Immigration_2014_web.pdf.

43 Richard Milne, "Anti-Immigration Sweden Democrats Become Country's Largest Party," *Financial Times,* August 20, 2015, www.ft.com/cms/s/0/d144b594-4703-11e5-b3b2-1672f710807b.html#axzz4ECciZHaY.

44 In 2015, Sweden received 16.7 asylum applicants per thousand residents (second only to Hungary) and a significantly larger proportion than Germany at 5.9 applicants per thousand residents. See MPI Data Hub, "Asylum Applications in the EU/EFTA by Country."

Box 2. The Rise of the Radical or Populist Right: A New or Old Trend?

Debates over the recent electoral gains of anti-immigrant parties in EU Member States betray a general feeling that anxiety about immigration is on the ascent in Europe. But to what extent is this trend truly new, as opposed to cyclical? And to what extent are these gains likely to be either sustainable or transformational on the policy front?
The runaway success of the Danish People's Party (DPP)—which came in second in the June 2015 elections in Denmark with 21 percent of the vote, and exerts enormous influence over government policy on immigration—marked a historic gain for a far-right party on the European stage. Other countries have seen surges of support that have yet to translate into governing power at the national level. In December 2015, polls suggested that the right-wing Sweden Democrats had gained the support of nearly 20 percent of voters, becoming the most popular party in Sweden. In the same month, the National Front seemed poised to make an electoral breakthrough in France, leading in six regions after the first round of voting, before failing to make any gains in runoff elections as the socialists and conservatives cooperated with each other, both formally and informally, to deny the frontrunner candidates the majority in any region. This trend continued into 2016, with the nationalist Alternative for Germany (AfD) making huge gains in regional elections. Receiving more than 10 percent of the vote in two *Länder*, and 24.2 percent in a third, AfD became the second-largest party in the eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt, but once more, cooperation among the other parties denied AfD a seat in the governing coalition. And in May 2016, Norbert Hofer of the Austrian far-right Freedom Party lost the national presidential election by a razor-thin margin (just over 30,000 votes, or less than 1 percent), although the Austrian courts subsequently invalidated the result and ordered a new election in fall 2016.

Some aspects of this trend are new, but others are cyclical. First, populist political parties—or more accurately, opportunistic protest movements typically defined by historical disagreements over power-sharing with their capitals, euroskepticism, and opposition to immigration—are not new in Europe. Such movements have been active on the continent since the 1980s, if not longer, though their popularity has ebbed and flowed over the past four decades. In the late 1990s, for example, far-right parties in Austria, Belgium, France, Italy, and Switzerland won 10 percent or more of the vote. And more recently, several right-wing populist parties obtained dramatic gains in the 2014 European parliamentary elections—winning 20 percent or more of the vote in Austria, Denmark, France, and the United Kingdom, and nearly 15 percent in Hungary and the Netherlands—while other populist parties actually lost support. Second (with the notable exception of Denmark, and in less obvious ways, the Netherlands), even parties that have gotten more than 10 percent of the vote have a mixed record in influencing immigration policy (primarily because these parties rarely become part of governing coalitions). For example, while the UK Independence Party (UKIP) received nearly 27 percent of the British vote in the 2014 European Parliament elections, in the UK national elections a year later it only managed to secure 12.6 percent of the vote and only one seat in Parliament because of the British "first past the post" system. This trend was mirrored in France and Austria as well (as noted earlier), with initial far-right gains eventually blocked by mainstream parties.

However, failure to secure entry into government does not mean that these growing parties have not influenced political discourse and, less directly, government policies. The more notable trend, therefore, may be the gradual shift in mainstream parties' immigration stance and relationship with Brussels. While the UK referendum to leave the European Union is perhaps the most extreme recent example, many mainstream parties (both in and out of government) have felt pressure to embrace some populist party positions and rhetoric, or have even had to build coalitions with formerly fringe parties in order to maintain power. This is a classic repositioning of mainstream parties regardless of state, issue, or time period. As a result, the immigration debate has already tilted toward the right in many countries. Nonetheless, it is up for debate whether the rising popularity of right-wing parties is the driver of these changes or merely a symptom of broader shifts in the views of the electorate on many sensitive issues.

Sources: Cas Mudde, *The Relationship Between Immigration and Nativism in Europe and North America* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2012), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/TCM-relationship-between-immigration-nativism; Demetrios G. Papademetriou, *Rethinking National Identity in the Age of Migration* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2012), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/TCM-rethinking-national-identity-council-statement; Adam Nossiter, "National Front Party in France is Dealt a Setback in Regional Elections," *New York Times,* December 13, 2015, www.nytimes.com/2015/12/14/world/europe/france-regional-elections-national-front.html?_r=0; Judy Dempsey, "The Alternative Germany," Carnegie Europe, March 14, 2016, http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/?fa=63027; Alison Smale, "Austrian Far-Right Candidate Norbert Hofer Narrowly Loses Presidential Vote," *New York Times*, May 23, 2016, www.nytimes.com/2016/05/24/world/europe/austria-presidential-election.html.

III. Conclusions and Recommendations: What Can Policymakers Do to Assuage Public Fears and Rebuild Trust?

There is no single formula to explain negative reactions to immigration or, on the flipside, to explain the relative absence of anti-immigration rhetoric and policies in places that have seen high immigration. But five observations about this anxiety—many of which may go against the prevailing wisdom—shed some light on the extraordinary variation in reactions to immigration among advanced democratic societies:

1. ***Anxiety about immigration does not automatically increase with more immigrants.*** Anxiety is associated less with numbers per se than with the manner in which newcomers enter and the associated pace of social and economic change. Even small inflows can fuel resentments if they seem to occur overnight or if the government seems unprepared to manage the consequences. By contrast, many examples exist of large-scale migration *not* giving rise to anti-immigration sentiment when policies and resources are in place to manage it (for example in Spain and most traditional countries of immigration).

2. ***Increased economic insecurity does not in and of itself cause anti-immigration sentiment, but it can exacerbate it.*** Evidence shows that high unemployment rates, and even sky-high youth unemployment, do not reliably correlate with anti-immigration sentiment, but that these contextual factors can be harnessed to support populist messages.

3. ***Fears about crime and terrorism associated with some migrants inevitably spill over into opposition to all immigration.*** While such fears typically focus on Muslim immigrants and their descendants in Europe and the United States—and are clearly fueled by a sense that too many newcomers are arriving in a disorderly manner, are insufficiently vetted, and fail to integrate—such concerns can easily evolve into skepticism about many forms of immigration and many categories of immigrants.

4. ***Anti-immigration sentiment is highly intertwined with low confidence in government and elites writ large.*** The impression that no one is in charge and that social and economic elites are out of touch with the concerns of common people can result in toxic responses to even relatively small inflows.

5. ***Immigrants can become convenient scapegoats for things people already felt were under threat.*** Many of the concerns people raise about immigrants are not always the result of immigration, per se. Newcomers are at times painted as undermining national identity, values, and norms, even if other factors (such as technological change making certain jobs obsolete, globalization, or political elites out of touch with the public) are the primary culprits. A society's newest arrivals are a more concrete and visible target than the nameless institutions or global trends over which the public has very little control.

Irrespective of these challenges, public opinion is actually quite responsive to external cues—whether from politicians, communities, or the media. Governments that have been successful in managing public anxiety about migration have therefore embraced a mix of the following strategies:

- ***Framing immigration as a core part of the national narrative.*** Countries such as Canada, the United States, and, in recent years, Germany have successfully presented immigration as a boon to broader economic growth and competitiveness (including, as appropriate, as an antidote to skill imbalances, regional labor deficits, and demographic decline), while also

meeting humanitarian obligations via family unification and refugee protection. And even when countries are (or become) acutely aware of security issues, they can still promote more inclusive attitudes and avoid painting entire groups with broad brushstrokes if their leaders are mindful about using language that associates immigration with security concerns. Part of Germany's strategy in the decade preceding the refugee crisis of 2015 was to portray humanitarian flows as a positive economic asset—focusing on the potential opportunities for refugees with substantial human capital to fill labor market gaps. However, the refugee crisis demonstrates the limits of this approach. Significant shares of the public in many European countries are pushing back against activists' calls for relatively open-ended acceptance of all newcomers. This is particularly the case when as many as half of asylum seekers may not receive permission to stay, and evidence accumulates that the levels of human capital among those granted protection is highly uneven.

- ***Ensuring that immigrants succeed by investing smartly in both selection and integration—and constantly adapting and recalibrating migration systems.*** Governments that tend to be successful in managing migration over the long term do two things particularly well. First, they are selective in the admission of newcomers and use immigration as a key tool to promote economic competitiveness and to address labor market shortfalls—thus positioning immigrants for successful integration into society. Crucially, policymakers are able to communicate the reasoning behind their policy decisions to the public and, then, have the flexibility to adapt the selection formula whenever necessary. Second, the ability of a country to regularly evaluate critically and adapt its immigration systems to address new priorities and emerging challenges reinforces the idea that immigration is being managed well; the very ability to make carefully considered, deliberate changes shows that the government is in control. On the other hand, overpromising and failing to deliver on stated immigration goals undermine the perception of control. Of course, public confidence will also be stronger when policymakers consult regularly with the public and civil society in both making and implementing immigration policy. And when crises arise, governments must both lead decisively *and* remain attuned to public concerns.

- ***Acknowledging concerns and creating political space for expressing doubts about immigration.*** The worst thing that governments can do during crises is to dismiss public anxiety about immigration (and related issues) as illegitimate or as signs of intolerance, xenophobia, or racism. Doing so only inflames anxieties and fuels extremism. The dismissal of such concerns can have just as detrimental a governance result as gross pandering to those who express them. Managing anti-immigration reactions thoughtfully has proven particularly difficult in the current European crisis, with skeptics who voice legitimate concerns accused of going against European values and humanitarian obligations. Yet attempts to openly question and engage difficult issues do not have to be in conflict with legal and humanitarian obligations—governments that protect free speech, encourage robust debate, and craft narratives that reflect people's lived experiences will find they have more room to explore varied and innovative policy solutions.

- ***Striking a balance between accommodation, adaptation, and restriction.*** Marginalizing newcomers by withholding support can backfire, while targeting significant resources to the newly arrived can reinforce feelings of unfairness among citizens. Similarly, restricting cultural practices tends to make minority identities more salient—not less. Studies find that restricting access to citizenship, for example, increases the likelihood of prejudice against immigrants. New concepts of "mainstreaming"[45]—targeting sets of circumstances, such as poverty and lack of education, for instance—can foster successful immigrant integration

45 Mainstreaming represents an effort to reach people with a migration background through needs-based social programming and policies that also target the general population.

while avoiding the appearance that investments are solely benefiting immigrants when a state's own citizens may face similar challenges.

- ***Involving all members of the community in shaping the new "we."*** One way to overcome concerns that large-scale immigration has eroded national identity is to involve all members of the broader community in shaping the identity of the new "we." Such inclusion gives a wider group of stakeholders a sense of ownership in the integration process and its outcomes. A government should signal, both with words and actions, that it is in the best interest of society for immigrants to be full, productive, and engaged members of the communities in which they live. This can be further strengthened by encouraging and creating space for high-quality interactions between members of the community.

Anxiety about immigration is not an automatic or an inevitable outcome of immigration shocks. Instead, it matters greatly how governments handle both routine and emergency immigration matters, and whether or not they are able to maintain the confidence of the public in their management of migration. This is what sets apart countries that merely survive crises and those that are able to manage crises effectively *and* transform them into opportunities.

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About the Authors

Demetrios G. Papademetriou is Distinguished Senior Fellow and President Emeritus of the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), a Washington-based think tank dedicated exclusively to the study of international migration, which he cofounded. He is also President of MPI Europe, a nonprofit, independent research institute in Brussels that aims to promote a better understanding of migration trends and effects within Europe. He is a member of the MPI Board of Trustees.

Dr. Papademetriou is convener of the Transatlantic Council on Migration, which is composed of senior public figures, business leaders, and public intellectuals from Europe, the United States, and Canada, and convened (2012-15) the Regional Migration Study Group, an initiative that has proposed and promoted multi-stakeholder support for new regional and collaborative approaches to migration, competitiveness, and human-capital development for the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Central America.

Dr. Papademetriou co-founded *Metropolis: An International Forum for Research and Policy on Migration and Cities* (which he led as International Chair for the initiative's first five years); and has served as Chair of the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on Migration (2009-11); Founding Chair of the Advisory Board of the Open Society Foundations' International Migration Initiative (2010-15); Chair of the Migration Group of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); Director for Immigration Policy and Research at the U.S. Department of Labor and Chair of the Secretary of Labor's Immigration Policy Task Force; and Executive Editor of the *International Migration Review*.

He has published more than 270 books, articles, monographs, and research reports on a wide array of migration topics; lectures widely on all aspects of immigration and immigrant integration policy; and advises foundations and other grant-making organizations, civil-society groups, and senior government and political party officials, in dozens of countries (including numerous European Union Member States while they hold the rotating EU presidency).

Dr. Papademetriou holds a PhD in comparative public policy and international relations (1976) from the University of Maryland, and has taught there and at Duke University, American University, and the New School for Social Research.

Natalia Banulescu-Bogdan is Assistant Director of MPI's International Program and also a Nonresident Fellow with MPI Europe. Her work focuses on social cohesion and integration, migration management, and international cooperation on migration.

Since she joined MPI in 2008, Ms. Banulescu-Bogdan has managed the Institute's Transatlantic Council on Migration and supported MPI's President in advising governments on various aspects of migration management. This has included technical support to countries holding the rotating presidency of the European Union, support to the annual Global Forum on Migration and Development, and private briefings and memos to help European countries think through changes to migration-related legislation.

Prior to joining MPI, she worked at the Brookings Institution, helping to develop public policy seminars for senior government officials in the Institution's executive education program. Ms. Banulescu-Bogdan obtained her master's with distinction in nationalism studies from Central European University in Budapest, Hungary. Her master's thesis focused on the political mobilization of Roma in Romania. She received her bachelor of the arts degree with distinction from the University of Pennsylvania in international relations, where she was a University Scholar.

The Migration Policy Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank dedicated to the study of the movement of people worldwide. MPI provides analysis, development, and evaluation of migration and refugee policies at the local, national, and international levels. It aims to meet the rising demand for pragmatic and thoughtful responses to the challenges and opportunities that large-scale migration, whether voluntary or forced, presents to communities and institutions in an increasingly integrated world.

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1400 16th Street NW
Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036

Tel: 001 202-266-1940
Fax: 001 202-266-1900