Vision Europe Summit

Exploring the Current Migration/ Integration 'Crisis'.

What Bottom-up Solutions?

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Executive Summary

The goal of this paper is to analyze the current migration/integration 'crisis' from a bottom-up perspective by considering three different sets of responses: (1) public opinion perceptions of crisis; (2) narratives and frames proposed by political groups and the media; and (3) (good) practices undertaken by local authorities and civil society organizations. Political and social actors have responded to these ongoing crises in a variety of ways. On one end of the spectrum, we find groups that are highly hostile to immigration and immigrants and reassert the need to protect national identities and values. On the other end, we find groups that look at the crisis from a humanitarian perspective and promote solidarity in line with the idea that it is the duty of European democracies to comply with international law and protect refugees. Between these narratives we find more or less polarized positions. We lay out the main aspects and the most recent developments of what we call the 'immigration/integration crisis' in order to understand the roots of the recent conflicts, and find alternative ways to construct a common ground for social and political consensus on these issues. This study also acknowledges that political responses have been slow and have often reinforced the negative perception of the ongoing 'crisis.' Indeed, political leaders from across the political spectrum have often fueled public anxieties around the issue of immigration, thereby contributing to a climate of fear and intolerance. We argue that discursive constructions of immigrants and ethnic minorities as 'threats' are not helpful if we are to build the basis for cohabitation and viable conflict resolutions. On the contrary, these narratives should be seen as contributing towards the polarization of the European public, the marginalization of migrant communities, and the radicalization of Muslim youth. In particular, these increasingly hostile narratives often hide the key structural causes (such as economic marginalization and systematic discrimination) that have de facto contributed to the 'integration crisis.' Among other things, these types of narratives reinforce the Us/Them distinction and silence immigrants and ethnic minorities, who are considered to be second-class citizens and who are very rarely included in the debates about immigration, integration and terrorism. We conclude by arguing that actors in the receiving societies—and particularly politicians, the media, local authorities and civil society organizations—should work responsibly towards a more balanced and informed understanding of the current 'crisis.' We argue in favor of strong cooperation among actors in society. To support our approach we offer examples of positive responses to the main conflicting issues raised in this study.

1. Introduction

The goal of this research is to analyze the current migration/integration 'crisis' from a bottom-up perspective by considering three different sets of responses: (1) public opinion perceptions of crisis; (2) narrative and frames proposed by political groups and the media; (3) (good) practices undertaken by local authorities and civil society organizations. On the one hand, the recent arrivals of thousands of forced migrants from Asia, Africa and the Middle East through the Eastern and Balkan route (and not only through the more peripheral Southern European routes) has fueled the perception of a 'refugee crisis' striking directly at the very core of continental Europe; on the other, the spreading of religious radicalization among second generations born in Europe and dramatic episodes of terrorism have raised continuous concerns about an ongoing 'integration crisis.' In this study, we lay out the key dimensions of the migration/integration crisis in order to understand existing conflicts and find alternative ways to construct a common ground for social and political consensus.

As the migration/integration crisis is unfolding, a great variety of responses from the public, political actors and the media can be observed. On one end of the spectrum, we find groups that are highly hostile to immigrants and immigration reasserting the need to protect national identities and values. On the other end, we find groups that look at the crisis from a humanitarian perspective and promote solidarity in line with the idea that it is the duty of European democracies to comply with international law, protect refugees and foster the integration of second generations. We acknowledge that political responses have been slow and have in many cases also reinforced the negative perception of the ongoing 'crises.' Political leaders across the political spectrum have often fueled public anxieties by contributing to a climate of fear. We argue that these discursive constructions of immigrants and ethnic minorities as threats do not help to build the basis for cohabitation and the viable solution of conflicts. These types of narratives, by reinforcing the Us/Them distinction, are silencing immigrants and ethnic minorities, who are considered second-class citizens and who are very rarely included in the debates about immigration, integration and terrorism. We conclude by arguing that actors in receiving societies, and particularly politicians, the media, local-level authorities and civil society organizations, should work responsibly towards a more balanced and informed understanding of the current 'crisis.' We argue in favor of strong cooperation among actors in society by offering examples of positive responses to the main conflicting issues raised in this study. We also argue in favor of a greater commitment to democratic values, of which the promotion of pluralism and the inclusion of the voice of all members in society, represent key elements.

This text is divided into four main sections. Section 1 presents a brief reconstruction of how the integration and migration 'crises' have emerged and intersected over time. Section 2 presents the different reactions on the part of the European public to issues of immigration, integration and migration policy. It further examines perceptions that minorities have of the discrimination, racism, and Islamophobia that they encounter in their everyday lives. Section 3 examines the responses of political actors (such as mainstream political leaders, anti-immigrant parties and social movements)

and the media to the recent migration/integration crisis. Finally, Section 4 presents positive ways in which local level administrations in Europe and civil society organizations have responded to the current migration/integration crisis.

2. The Migration/Integration Crisis. Exploring the Nexus

With the term 'European migration and refugee crisis,' we refer to the recent massive and unplanned inflow of 'economic' migrants from poor countries (mainly Africa) and asylum seekers and refugees from countries currently unsafe (such as the Middle East—especially Syria and Iraq—and Afghanistan) into Europe. This 'crisis' developed between 2011 and 2014 in the Mediterranean Sea (as people attempted to reach Europe by boat, landing mostly in Italy and Greece) and worsened in 2015, when, in addition to immigrants, an unprecedented number of asylum seekers reached South-east Europe crossing the Mediterranean Sea and the Balkans by boat or foot. In 2015, over one million migrants and asylum seekers reached the EU via the Mediterranean through Eastern Europe and the Balkans. According to Eurostat, EU member states received over 1.2 million applications for asylum in 2015 (more than double the number of the previous year). Four states in particular (Germany, Hungary, Sweden and Austria) received around two-thirds of the EU's asylum applications in 2015, with Hungary, Sweden and Austria receiving the highest number of applications per capita.[1]

First and foremost, these developments speak to a major 'humanitarian crisis,' as people who are coming to Europe are escaping war or famine. Furthermore, these people are facing several challenges as their crossing is made more difficult by the closure of borders, the construction of fences and the increasingly hostile attitude of the local population, political leaders and the police (police that are working both within the receiving societies and at the European borders). As a result, many refugees are dying in the attempt to reach Europe. According to the International Organization for Migration (2015), between 2000 and 2014, over 22,000 migrants died trying to reach Europe by crossing the Mediterranean Sea (3,072 of those deaths took place in 2014 alone). In 2015, the number of people who drowned in the Mediterranean Sea was even higher. In the month of April alone, for instance, five boats carrying almost 2,000 migrants to Europe sank in the Sea. Moreover, despite numerous documents and reports by international organizations that predicted major 'migration flows,' before the refugees crisis became obvious in 2015, the EU institutions and state members ignored them and failed to plan ahead. The gap, in most cases, has been filled by civil society volunteers and local people who offered food, water, shelter and rides to help refugees reach their destinations.

The current 'migration and refugee crisis' has also contributed to a major political and social 'crisis of Europe.' A great polarization between the EU and its nation-states, between the West and

1 - According to the UNHCR (2015), the top three nationalities of the over one million arrivals between January 2015 and March 2016 were Syrian (46.7%), Afghan (20.9%) and Iraqi (9.4%). Of the refugees and migrants arriving in Europe by sea in 2015, 58% were men, 17% women and 25% children. See in particular the following webpage: http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/regional.php.

the East, and among different political and social groups within each nation-state can be observed. Additionally, anti-immigrant sentiment has been on the rise. Political leaders have conjured up images of 'swarming' or 'mass invasion by illegals,' as former British Prime Minister David Cameron did in July of 2015.[2] These developments have also contributed to growing support for right-wing nationalist movements and anti-immigrant parties all across Europe. The exponential rise of far-right parties and social movements has also resulted in increased violence and discrimination towards the migrant population. The media has also played a key role in depicting the crisis in irresponsible ways (see further in this study). Not surprisingly, these developments are strongly affecting the debate on how immigrants and ethnic minorities will be integrated into the receiving societies, and they are furthermore fueling racism and xenophobia towards ethnic minorities and particularly Muslims. All of this poses a great threat to the vitality of pluralism and democracy.

These developments intersect with another ongoing crisis: the 'integration crisis.' As a number of scholars have pointed out, Europe over the past 15-years has seen not only the growth of xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment, but also the rise of a new era of restrictive integration policies (d'Appollonia, 2015). This trend is also reinforced by the same trend in the US, where these developments are also particularly pronounced since the 9/11 attacks in New York. The rise of anti-immigrant sentiment and widespread xenophobia, combined with the financial crisis that started in 2008, has contributed to the emergence of an increasingly powerful discourse in the West that constructs immigrants and ethnic minorities as 'social threats' and a 'security problem' for European countries (d'Appollonia, 2015). This framing of immigration as a problem, combined with current fears about refugees coming to Europe, has resulted in politicians, especially (but not only) those on the far-right, connecting the recent humanitarian crisis with 'security issues' and the fear of Islamic terrorism. Western democracies, in short, have proven fertile ground for the emergence of a new, anti-immigrant narrative that brings together the issues of migration, 'radical Islam' and 'terrorism'—what we call the 'immigration-terrorism nexus.'

This trend is commonly known among scholars as the failure of multiculturalism, or the 'multiculturalism backlash' (Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010). This expression refers to the end of multiculturalism policies in Europe. According to Moodood (2007, p. 2), 'multiculturalism' denotes "the recognition of group difference within the public sphere of laws, democratic discourses and the terms of a shared citizenship and national identity." Put differently, it refers to the efforts by states to accommodate the cultural differences of 'ethnic' groups. At the same time, the idea of the failure of multiculturalism has been used by European countries, such as the UK and Germany, as a further justification for the introduction of restrictive immigration policies, and as a means of raising the number of requirements for immigrants who want to settle in European countries. Starting at the end of the 2000s, these policies were considered by many politicians and policy-makers as 'too soft,' and unable to ensure the integration of immigrant groups into the receiving societies. As a result, the dominant discourse in recent

2 - 2015. David Cameron criticised over migrant 'swarm' language. *BBC News.* July 30, 2015. Retrieved from http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-33716501.

years has depicted immigrants and ethnic minorities (and particularly Muslims) as unable to adapt to 'Western' ways of life. Some have argued that Islam is fundamentally illiberal, oppresses women and is incompatible with democracy. Debates on freedom-of-the-press and self-expression have been at the heart of recent concerns about the new inflow of immigrants and refugees.

Recent terrorist attacks perpetrated by Islamic extremists (many of whom are European-born citizens who adhere ideologically to ISIL, or the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) have only reinforced the growing perception that Muslims are not able to 'integrate' and are indeed a 'security threat.' This has led to the increasing surveillance of well-established Muslim communities in Europe, triggering an unprecedented rise of Islamophobia and anti-Muslims acts, including attacks directed at mosques (Bayrakli & Hafez, 2016). Moreover, there is a growing fear among Europeans that allowing refugees from Syria and Iraq into the EU will lead to an increase in terrorism (Pew Research Center, 2016; see our analysis below).

Table 1 presents a summary of the key events that have brought about the emergence of the 'integration crisis.'

Table 1. Timeline of Events Contributing to the Perception of an 'Integration crisis'

Dates	Events
11 Sep 2001	New York: The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington. Al-Qaida claims responsibility for these attacks.[3]
11 Mar 2004	Madrid: Ten explosions occur in four commuter trains. 191 people are killed. Al-Qaida claims responsibility for these attacks.
2 Nov 2004	Amsterdam: Film director Van Goghe is murdered by a Dutch-Moroccan Muslim, for reasons having to do with his production of a film, titled *Submission,* on the conditions of Women in Islam.
7 Jul 2005	London: A series of coordinated terrorist suicide bomb attacks target public transport during rush hour. 57 people are killed. There were four bombers. Their ages ranged from 18 to 30. Three of them were British-born sons of Pakistani immigrants and one was a convert to Islam, born in Jamaica.
20 Sep 2005	The Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* publishes 12 editorial cartoons that depict the prophet Muhammad. The newspaper later declared it was an attempt to contribute to the debate on censorship in Islam. Muslims in Denmark and abroad protest. Some violent demonstrations take place in Muslim countries. The controversy sparks a debate on the role of self-expression in Denmark and in other countries in Europe.
27 Oct 2005	France: The beginning of three weeks of French riots. Protests by second- and third-generation immigrants take place in the suburbs of Paris and other cities against discrimination, economic and social marginalization, and police harassment.

3 - These terrorist attacks had a negative impact on European countries perception of Muslims.

17 Oct 2010	Chancellor Angela Merkel declares that, "Multiculturalism has utterly failed" in Germany. Her party calls for a halt of Turkish immigration into Germany. In previous years, Merkel had talked about being tough on integration but also accepting mosques. Facing pressure from her own political party, she adopted a harder line on immigrants who showed resistance integrating into German society. A few days later, taking his cue from Merkel's new approach, Prime Minister David Cameron expresses similar views in the UK.
7 Jan 2015	Paris: ISIL agents storm the offices of *Charlie Hebdo* and kill 6 journalists, while also attacking a Jewish supermarket. In total, 17 people are killed and 22 are wounded, including police officers. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) claims responsibility. The people who committed the attacks were second- and third-generation migrants of Arab origin.
13 Nov 2015	Cologne (and other German cities): Hundreds of women are sexually assaulted on New Year's Eve. Police report that these assaults were perpetrated by groups of men of 'Arab' or 'North African' background.
1 Jan 2016	Cologne (and other German cities): Hundreds of women are sexually assaulted on New Year's Eve. Police report that these assaults were perpetrated by groups of men of 'Arab' or 'North African' background.
22 Mar 2016	Brussels: Two coordinated attacks at the Brussels Airport and one at the metro station. The attacks result in the deaths of 32 people, including three of the perpetrators. ISIL claims responsibility for these attacks.
14 July 2016	Nice: 84 people are killed and hundreds are injured after a Tunisian man drives a truck into a crowd watching Bastille Day fireworks. ISIL claims responsibility for the attack.

3. Public Opinion

In recent years, public attitudes towards immigrants, asylum seekers and ethnic minorities have increasingly worsened in Europe (Berry, Garcia-Blanco & Moore, 2015). Several factors—including an increase in the number and visibility of migrants and ethnic minorities, the ongoing economic crisis, austerity policies and greater competition over access to employment—have contributed to the growth of anti-immigrant and xenophobic sentiment in Europe (Berry, Garcia-Blanco & Moore, 2015, p. 4). Nonetheless, Europeans have different opinions on which 'migrants groups' are welcome and which represent a 'problem' for their own country. In this section we look at recent developments in European public opinion and provide a brief summary of the perceptions that Europeans have on three main issues: (1) the inflow of 'economic' immigrants and asylum seekers; (2) integration issues; and (3) immigration policies. For this analysis, we rely on a recent survey conducted by Eurobarometer—a survey commissioned by the European Commission in the fall of 2015—and on the two Transatlantic Trends on Immigration (TTI) surveys carried out in 2011 and

2014. We complement these three main surveys with the surveys conducted in 2014 and 2016 by the Pew Research Center. We further integrate these findings with the perceptions that ethnic minorities have of the discrimination, racism, and Islamophobia that they encounter in their own lives.

3.1 Perceptions of 'Economic' and 'Forced' Migration to Europe

The surveys we analyzed show that immigration concerns have been growing among Europeans. According to Eurobarometer (2015), in the fall of 2015, immigration was considered to be the most important issue facing the EU: it was mentioned by 58% of Europeans (a 20-point increase since the spring of 2015).[4] The recent refugee crisis has generated a good deal of discomfort with immigration, especially in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). 25 countries (up from 23 in the spring of 2015) in particular were 'highly concerned' with immigration, including Slovakia (where 86% of respondents reported that they were 'highly concerned'), Latvia (86%), Hungary (82%), the Czech Republic (81%) and Estonia (81%). Furthermore, according to Eurobarometer, in the fall of 2015, Europeans expressed the desire to have less immigration, especially from non-EU countries. While the immigration of people from other EU Member States evoked a positive feeling in 55% of the respondents, 59% of Europeans had negative views about immigration of people from outside the EU, and these feelings had gained ground since the spring of 2015 (Eurobarometer, 2015, pp. 27-29). In addition, according to the 2013 TTI survey (2014, p. 9), Europeans largely overestimate the percentage share of immigrants in their countries. For instance, British respondents, on average, estimated a foreign-born population of 31.8%, while just 11.3% of the population is actually foreign born. This was consistent with findings in previous years.

Moreover, in 2013, 'irregular' immigration was a major concern in most European countries, with 67% of respondents expressing their concern with this phenomenon. 'Legal' immigration, on the other hand, was not a concern for 69% of those who responded. Only 26% of Europeans expressed worry about 'legal' immigration (TTI, 2014, pp.16-17). As far as asylum seekers are concerned, according to the TTI survey conducted in 2011, respondents were mostly empathetic to immigrants who were forced to flee their homes to avoid persecution, armed conflict, and natural disasters. Fewer were in favor of accepting immigrants seeking to escape poverty. Respondents in Spain (76%) and Italy (68%) were the most supportive of those fleeing poor economic conditions, compared with the European average of 58% (TTI, 2011).

The survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2016, however, shows that this support is changing as refugees continue to enter into the EU in large numbers. In the ten European countries surveyed, 59% of respondents expressed their belief that incoming refugees would increase the likelihood of terrorism. These beliefs are strongest in Hungary (76%) and Poland (68%), followed by the Netherlands (61%), Germany (61%), Italy (60%), Sweden (57%), Greece (55%), the

4 - Immigration concerns were followed by terrorism (25%), the economic crisis (21%), unemployment (17%) and the state of Member States' public finances (17%) (European Commission, 2015, pp. 13-17).

UK (52%), France (46%), and Spain (40%). Curiously enough, the belief that immigration poses a 'security threat' is stronger in those countries that have not yet been the target of terrorist attacks (this is the case, for instance, in the Central and Eastern European countries of Hungary and Poland). Many also worry that refugees are becoming an economic burden on the EU and its various national governments, and that they will take away jobs and social benefits from 'native' Europeans. Respondents from Hungary, Poland, Greece, Italy and France were the most likely to hold these beliefs. Sweden and Germany are the only countries where more than half of the respondents said that refugees make their nation stronger because of their work and talents (62% and 54% respectively) (Pew Research Center, 2016, p. 31).

Finally, the surveys we examined suggest differing views on the economic effects of immigration. According to the TTI survey conducted in 2011, most respondents (with the exception of those surveyed in the UK) did not think that immigrants take jobs away from native workers. What was most worrying for respondents was the possibility that immigration would place a burden on public services, with 63% of respondents believing that immigrants do indeed represent a burden to the state. Opinion was split on the effects that immigration is having on wage levels and on the ability of immigrants to create new jobs through their businesses. Additionally, most respondents (about 62%) declared a strong preference for highly educated immigrants. Only 29% of those surveyed agreed that immigrants with low-levels of education should be admitted into the EU. However, most respondents expressed their preference for lower-educated immigrants with standing job offers in Europe. Having a cultural background similar to that of Europeans was not generally seen as a precondition for immigrants entering into the EU (only 19% of respondents were of this opinion). Providing needed skills was seen as more important (36%). A fairly high number of respondents also expressed their belief that immigrants should not be allowed to use the social benefits available to 'native' Europeans (26%) (TTI, 2011).

3.2 Perceptions of Integration Issues

As far as perceptions about integration are concerned, according to the 2011 TTI survey, 52% of Europeans believe that immigrant integration has been successful. The findings show that many Europeans were optimistic about the level of integration of ethnic minorities—including Muslims—and that they were willing to grant more rights to immigrants. They were even more positive about the integration of the 'second-generations,' or the children of migrants (74%). The TTI (2014) survey carried out in 2013 shows a change in opinion. In this survey, many Europeans saw Muslim immigrants as less integrated than immigrants in general. 58% believed that Muslim immigrants were poorly integrated. Children of Muslim migrants, however, were seen as more integrated than their parents. More generally, views on minorities are divided. According to the survey carried out by the Pew Research Center in 2014, views on minorities varied widely, both between countries and about specific minority populations. The Roma were viewed unfavorably by about 50% of respondents, with Italians (85%) holding particularly negative sentiments. An average of 46% of respondents held

anti-Muslim views. Italians (63%) saw Muslims in the most negative light. And people of Jewish background were seen negatively by a median of 18%, with Greeks (47%) harboring the strongest anti-Jewish sentiment.

The survey conducted by Pew Research Center in 2016 confirms these general trends. Negative opinions about Roma were still very strong with 48% of respondents. These were followed by negative opinions about Muslims (43%). It is moreover remarkable that negative attitudes toward Muslims have increased in the last 12 months in countries such as the UK (+9 percentage points), Spain (+8) and Italy (+8). In France, where the ISIL-led terrorist attacks of November 2015 killed 130 people, negative opinions about Muslims went up by 5 percentage points compared with the previous year.

Finally, according to Pew Research Center (2016), "While most Europeans think the recent surge of refugees could lead to more terrorism, there is less alarm that Muslims already living on the Continent might sympathize with extremists. The percentage of the public saying that most or many Muslims in their country support groups like ISIL is less than half in every nation polled." Nonetheless, some respondents were of the opinion that Muslims living in their countries are more favorably inclined towards extremist groups than are Muslims living elsewhere in Europe. This is the case for Italians (46%), Hungarians (37%), Poles (35%) and Greeks (30%). In general, the survey reveals that people from Greece, Hungary, Italy and Poland express the greatest concern and the most negative views about refugees and minority groups.

3.3 Perceptions of Immigration Policies

According to the 2013 TTI survey (2014, p. 5), Europeans' perceptions of national governments' performance on immigration policy issues were mostly negative. 58% of Europeans believed that their governments were not "doing a good job." Support for a greater European Union role in shaping national immigration policies increased since previous years (see also Eurobarometer, 2015), with rising numbers of European respondents opting for the EU rather than their national governments to set immigrant admission numbers for member countries. According to the Eurobarometer survey (2015), in the fall of 2015 more than two-thirds of Europeans said they were in favor of "a common European policy on migration" (68%). Close to one quarter were "against" (24%), while 8% of respondents said that they "don't know."

In the surveys, we find two other topics relevant for our analysis: the perceptions of policy measures taken in response to 'irregular' immigration and the inflow of refugees. As far as 'irregular' immigration is concerned, the 2011 TTI survey reveals disagreement among Europeans on how to reduce 'irregular' immigration. Some were in favor of development aid (32%), considered the most effective tool. Particularly high support was registered in Italy (44%), France (42%) and Spain (41%). The UK respondents preferred border controls and tougher penalties on employers who hire 'irregular' immigrants (34%). The public was also divided on how to address the presence of 'irregular' immigrants in their countries. They were asked whether they preferred legalization over deportation.

According to the 2011 TTI survey, 52% of European respondents thought that 'irregular' immigrants should be required to return home, with respondents from the UK exhibiting the most support for this position (70%). 35% were more inclined to grant legalization. The strongest support for legalization was in Germany. Findings from the survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2014 suggest that views on legalization have a strong connection to individuals' partisan leanings. As far as measures to fight 'irregular' immigration were concerned, the 2015 Eurobarometer survey shows that around nine in ten Europeans think that additional measures should be taken to fight the 'irregular' immigration of people from outside the EU (89%). Just over a fifth of respondents would prefer these measures to be taken at the national level (21%), while 32% would prefer such action to be taken at the EU level. Another 36% spontaneously answered that such measures should be taken "at both levels (EU and national)." In total, more than two-thirds of Europeans would like these additional measures to be taken at the EU level (68%). Only 7% of Europeans think that there is no need for additional measures. Finally, according to the 2013 TTI survey (2014), public opinion was divided on policies towards refugees: 40% of Europeans thought that policies toward refugees should be restricted, while 34% thought they were "about right now" 21% felt that their country's policies toward refugees should be less restrictive (TTI 2014, p. 8).

3.4 Ethnic Minorities' Perceptions of Discrimination, Racism and Islamophobia

In Europe, racism, discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, and Islamophobia have become major problems for many minorities. Here we examine the perceptions of immigrants and ethnic minorities on these issues. According to a survey conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in 2011, immigrants and ethnic minorities in Europe felt they were highly discriminated against for their ethnic background across all of the nine areas of everyday life identified in the survey.[5] Roma were discriminated more than any other group and Sub-Saharan Africans were the most discriminated against after the Roma (with 41% of the respondents having encountered at least one experience of discrimination), followed by people from North Africa (36%), Turkey (23%), and Central and Eastern Europe (23%). Respondents from Russia and the former Yugoslavia experienced the lowest levels of discrimination (14%). Different perceptions in discrimination across European Member States could be also observed. According to the FRA, in 2011, the highest levels of discrimination over a 12-month period were felt by the Roma in the Czech Republic (64%), Hungary (62%), Poland (59%) and Greece (55%). Perception of discrimination was also high among Africans in Malta (63%), Sub-Saharan Africans in Ireland (54%), North Africans in Italy (52%), Somalis in Finland (47%) and Denmark (46%), and Brazilians in Portugal (44%). North Africans living in Italy said that they experienced, on average, the highest number of discrimination incidents over a 12-month

5 - These nine areas are: (1) when searching for work; (2) when at work; (3) when looking for, renting, or buying a place; (4) when dealing with healthcare personnel; (5) when dealing with social service personnel; (6) when at school or dealing with education personnel; (7) when at coffee shops, restaurants or bars; (8) when entering into a shop; and (9) when trying to open an account or secure a loan from a bank (FRA, 2011, p. 18).

period (9.29 incidents for every person of this group interviewed), followed by the Roma in Poland (6.81) and in Hungary (6.69).

Furthermore, Islamophobia in particular has become a major problem in Europe and has a relevant impact on the integration of Muslims (Open Society Foundation, 2015). In the 2015 European Islamophobia Report (EIR), Bayarkli and Hafez (2016, p. 8) point out that "Islamophobia poses a great risk to the democratic foundation of European Constitutions and social peace as well as the coexistence of different cultures throughout Europe." Nonetheless, these same authors (2016) observe that Europeans have been denying for many years the very existence of racism against Muslims. For this reason, they stress the impellent necessity to monitor Islamophobia and hate crimes (Bayarkli & Hafez, 2016). In interviews with the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EMCRX, 2006), a high number of Muslims indicated that Islamophobia, discrimination, and socio-economic marginalization have played a primary role in generating disaffection and alienation among Muslims living in Europe (EMCRX, 2006). Muslims feel that their acceptance in society is increasingly premised on 'assimilation' and the assumption that they should lose their Muslim identity. This sense of exclusion is of particular relevance in the face of the challenges posed by terrorism. Muslims feel that since 9/11 they have been put under a general suspicion of terrorism. In addition, they are vulnerable to manifestations of prejudice and hatred in the form of anything from verbal threats through to physical attacks on people and property. Many Muslims, particularly young people, face limited opportunities for social advancement, as well as social exclusion and discrimination, all of which could give rise to hopelessness and alienation (EMCRX, 2006, p. 8).

Box 1/ Summary: Public Opinion

- In recent years, public attitudes towards immigrants, asylum seekers and ethnic minorities have increasingly worsened in Europe. Europeans are also greatly concerned with immigration. They are also more and more concerned with the ability of immigrants, particularly Muslims, to integrate into society. Indeed, in response to the 'refugee crisis' that began in 2015, a growing number of Europeans have expressed the belief that accepting refugees into the EU increases the likelihood of terrorism. Many also worry that refugees will become an economic burden to the EU and its national government and that they will take away jobs and social benefits from 'native' Europeans.
- Nonetheless, the attitudes of Europeans vary from country to country, and they differ as well in terms of which 'migrants groups' are welcome and which represent a 'problem' for their own country. In particular, they are concerned with 'irregular' immigrants and people coming from non-EU countries.
- One major concern is that immigrants might represent a burden on the welfare state. Another important finding is that Europeans tend to have a negative perception of the policies that their national governments have implemented in response to immigration. As a result, there has been growing support in recent years for an 'EU intervention' on immigration policies.
- Finally, an analysis of the perceptions of migrants and ethnic minorities (including Muslims) show

that discrimination, racism and Islamophobia are pervasive in Europe. Among others, growing Islamophobia is engendering greater alienation of many Muslims in Europe. All of this highlights the need for greater intervention in the area of combatting anti-immigrant attitudes and promoting a more tolerant society.

4. Responses by Political Actors and the Media

4.1 Political Responses

The massive inflow of refugees arriving since 2015 was a major breakthrough in terms of political responses to the ongoing migration/integration crisis all across Europe. An overall increase in political hostility towards immigration, immigrants and ethnic minorities can be observed (Győri, 2016, p. 10). In 2015, German Chancellor Angela Merkel was the only European leader to promote an open-door policy to welcome Syrian refugees. In order for her policy to succeed, she asked for the support of other countries in order to adopt common strategies and make common decisions at the European level. But the support she was hoping for did not come. At first, 13 EU countries supported her, but this support lowered very soon and she was eventually left alone (Győri, 2016, p. 10). Leaders from Central and Eastern Europe did not agree on the underlying principle of helping refugees, and this triggered a major conflict between Western Europe and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Moreover, the refugee crisis also increased hostilities in countries where there was a certain tolerance towards immigrants such as Poland, Sweden and Spain (see, for instance, Bachm, 2016 for the case of Poland).

These developments have been exacerbating internal national political conflicts, and polarizing countries across Europe on the issues of immigration and integration. In Germany, for instance, after the first wave of refugees entered the country as a result of Merkel's open-door policy, thousands of voters turned their support to the far-right. Following the example of the CEE countries, these far-right populists pushed for western countries to tighten their borders and adopt more restrictive immigration policies. They praised the Prime Minister of Hungary, Viktor Orban, for the hardline positions he took on immigration, as well as for his often-racist commentaries on migrants and ethnic minorities. Orban found support among populist parties in Western Europe, such as the Austrian Freedom Party (FPO), the German Alternative for Germany (AfD), and the French Front National (FN). Marine Le Pen, the leader of the FN, declared Viktor Orban the "sole protector of the external borders" (Győri, 2016, p. 10).

An increase in support for anti-immigrant parties and movements can also be observed. Historically, anti-immigrant parties capitalize on major economic and social crises (Kriesi & Pappas, 2015). Van der Brug, Fennema and Tillie (2000) note that voting for anti–immigrant parties is largely motivated by ideological and pragmatic considerations (just like voting for other parties). Negative attitudes towards immigrants have a stronger effect on preferences for anti–immigrant

parties than for other parties. The growth of these parties must also be read as an anti-establishment vote and the direct result of dissatisfaction with policy-makers and traditional political parties (Guibernau, 2010).

As the scale of the refugee crisis has become apparent, and in the wake of the Paris attacks, populist, anti-immigrant parties have been growing all across Europe. Although growing since the 1990s (Greven, 2016), support for these right-wing parties has been surging since the 2014 European elections and has reached its peak during the refugee crisis that began in 2015 (Boros, 2015). Boros (2015, p. 6) observes that there is a growing support for populist parties (mostly but not only from the far-right), and that "2015 definitely marks a 'breakthrough'" for their increasing success. In his research, he compares the European Parliamentary elections of 2014 with more recent survey data on party preferences in the individual member states of Europe. He shows that the electoral gains made by populist parties are no longer an isolated phenomenon, but are rather "pervasive" (Boros, 2015, p. 25). There are, of course, important differences from one country to another. For instance in Romania, the anti-immigrant party, the Greater Romania Party, attracts only 1% of voters. By contrast, in Hungary, almost three quarters of respondents said they would vote for a populist party. As Boros explains, opinion polls conducted in European countries show that populist parties are receiving significant support across the EU (with the exception of Malta and Slovenia) (for a complete analysis see Boros, 2015).

Furthermore, even though populist parties assume different forms depending on specific national factors, in recent years we have seen many similarities between the different anti-immigrant parties in Europe (Boros, 2015; Greven, 2016).[6] Indeed, recent anti-immigrant populism has some central narratives, such as nativism and anti-Islamic attitudes. In recent years, these anti-immigrant parties have been particularly successful in reproducing and reinforcing the Us/Them dichotomy by constructing immigrants and ethnic minorities alike as external and internal 'threats.' Moreover, one key aspect of their success is related to their strategic use of political communication. According to Bayrakli and Hafez (2016), these parties often use negativity as a key strategy, and this earns them a good deal of attention from media organizations intent on selling newspapers and web subscriptions. For this reason, it has been observed they also receive lots of media coverage.

The growing hostilities towards immigration and Islam in Europe are also reflected in another important trend: the rise of new anti-immigrant movements. One of the most notorious is the German group, Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West (German: Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes, PEGIDA). This movement is an openly nationalist, anti-Islam political movement founded in East Germany in October of 2014. It represents a clear example of hostilities against refugees, particularly those of Muslim origin, as they are considered a threat to German culture. In the past two years, PEGIDA has also influenced other movements, supporting protests across European cities and encouraging the creation of other networks beyond Germany. In particular, in the protest organized in February of 2016, thousands of PEGIDA supporters mobilized

6 - On the definition and the variety of populism see Boros (2015) and Gidron and Bonikowski (2013).

in several European cities, in countries such as the Netherlands, Austria, Ireland, Poland, France, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.[7]

4.2 Responses by the Media

In the past two decades, mainstream media in European countries have had the tendency to produce a narrative that associates immigration with negative threats, such as illegality, crisis, crime, etc. (Fitzgerald, Curtis & Corliss 2012). In recent years, a greater coverage of Islamic terrorism and an association between European of Muslims origin and terrorism can be observe. For this reason, media are often believed to be "an additional factor" in shaping hostile public attitudes and in producing negative narratives that construct immigrants as 'threats' to receiving societies (van Klingeren, Boomgaarden, Vliegenthart & de Vreese, 2015, p. 269). Media coverage varies across time and space and is strongly affected by the tone and the framing of specific issues as well as by variations in national contexts. Thus, just like political responses, media responses toward the refugee crisis have been various and often highly polarized. As Bunyan (2015, p. 12) notes, the European media "have provided widely contrasting national perspectives, often driven by governmental and political policy objectives." Nonetheless, media coverage on the current 'crisis' has been on the whole quite negative and alarmist (White, 2015). Hate-speech has increased in the media, not only in marginal tabloids but also in leading national media (Bunyan, 2016, p. 11). Studies also emphasize the under-representation of migrant and ethnic minority voices (Cooke & White, 2015).

In 2015 and the first half of 2016, migration was a dominant topic of mainstream news coverage (Berry, Garcia-Blanco & Moore, 2015; The Finish Institute in London, 2016). Bunyan (2015) notes that the refugee crisis became 'real' in Europe with the image of three-year-old Aylan Kurdi, a Syrian child who drowned in the Mediterranean while trying to reach Europe with his parents. Bunyan (2015, p. 11) explains that the "story was there to be told, but media failed to alert their audience or to challenge the readiness of the European Union and its member states to deal with the crisis that was about to break upon their shores." He adds that, "in most European countries the media have strived to use the appropriate language and to set an informed debate on the unfolding crisis" (Bunyan, 2015, p. 12). According to a 2015 report by the Ethical Journalism Network on how media have covered the 'migrant and refugee crisis,' (Cooke & White, 2015, p. 6), "In most countries the story has been dominated by two themes—numbers and emotions. Most of the time coverage is politically led with media often following an agenda dominated by loose language and talk of invasion and swarms. At other moments the story has been laced with humanity, empathy and a focus on the suffering of those involved." Nonetheless, the report also highlights that, even though less numerous, "there have been inspiring examples of careful, sensitive and ethical journalism that have shown empathy for the victims" (Cooke & White, 2015, p. 6).

7 - Worley, W. (2016, February 6). Thousands take part in anti-Islam Pegida protests across Europe. *Independent*. Retrieved from http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/thousands-take-part-in-anti-islam-pegida-protests-across-europe-a6857911.html.

Box 2/ Campaign in Favor of Refugees

"We Help" campaign — Launched by *Bild,* a leading daily tabloid in Germany, the "Wir helfen" campaign came in support of the positive message sent by the Chancellor, Angela Merkel, who announced that Germany would open the door to Syrian refugees. The newspaper openly expressed its own support for Merkel's approach, and sought to help in welcoming refugees into the country.

As mentioned before, differences in national contexts can also be observed. Mainstream media in particular play different roles depending on contextual factors and differences in the saliency and tone of the topic in each national environment (van Klingeren, Boomgaarden, Vliegenthart & de Vreese, 2015, p. 278). A good example of these contrasting national perspectives is to compare the coverage of the refugee crisis by media in the UK and Germany in 2015. In a piece published in The Guardian, Harding, Oltermann and Watt (2015) explain that, while the UK media responded with great hostility towards immigrants, reflecting the unfriendly political environment in that country, the German media, following Angela Merkel's more open policies towards refugees (policies that contributed to a more tolerant political atmosphere in Germany), offered "more balanced critical coverage of migration into Germany with sympathetic reportage on the plight of refugees" crossing EU borders.[8] At the same time, as Bunyan (2015, p. 13) notes, in the UK the negative "narrative changed dramatically in favor of a more human approach with the Aylan Kurdi story." This change, however, didn't last long. On this point Bunyan (2015, p. 13) observes that media coverage in the UK almost immediately turned its focus back to "refugee numbers rather than human interest." Overall, in contrast with Germany, the coverage of the crisis in Britain has often been politically driven and characterized by a lack of balance (see also Suffee, 2015).

The more positive approach by many mainstream media outlets in Germany contrasted even more sharply with the media coverage of the 'crisis' in the Balkans, Hungary and Eastern Europe, where the hostility of both politicians and the local populations was particularly strong. In these regions, newspapers opted almost exclusively for sensationalism and hate-speech rather than ethical and balanced reporting (Bunyan, 2015, p. 13). As Cook and White (2015, p. 6) note, for instance, "In Bulgaria, as in much of the region, media have failed to play a responsible role and sensationalism has dominated news coverage." What is more, although major international news organizations such as the BBC banned the term 'illegal migrant' from their internal ethical codes, it is still broadly used in Bulgaria (Bosev & Cheresehva, 2015, p. 22). Reporters there refer to 'fugitives,' 'immigrants' and 'refugees' without any clarity or distinction (Bosev & Cheresehva, 2015, p. 22). Furthermore, in Bulgaria, the crisis opened up space for a surge in hate-speech by politicians, which journalists for the most part failed to critique.

8 - Harding, L., P. Oltermann & N. Watt (2015). Refugees Welcome? How UK and Germany Compare on Migration. *The Guardian*. September 2, 2015. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/02/refugees-welcome-uk-germany-compare-migration.

Box 3/ Example of Ethical Journalism

Bulgaria — One of most popular evening shows in Bulgaria, *Slavi's Show*, made a documentary series dedicated to the Syrian refugees with a focus on the perspectives of the refugees themselves. Also, a reporter from *Nova TV* produced a documentary, *Nobody's Kids*, with a focus on the situation of unaccompanied minors in the country.

Media coverage in Southern Europe has been different from most CEE countries in that it is a mix of sensationalism and solidarism (Cooke & White, 2015). In Italy, for instance, widespread alarmism about immigration and the presence of hate-speech has been counterbalanced by the ethical attachment that many journalists have to anti-discrimination legislation (Maccannico, 2015). Maccannico (2015, p. 25) comments that the mainstream media coverage of migration in Italy "has seen a range of approaches reflecting a complex political context amidst a cascade of events and circumstances which have produced markedly different editorial biases in newspapers."

Box 4/ Reactions to Increasing Discrimination and Hate-speech in the Italian Media

Charter of Rome — Launched by the Italian Ethical Journalism Initiative in 2008, this charter aims to prevent or discourage discrimination by journalists in Italy and calls for "maximum care when dealing with information concerning asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants." It also calls for appropriate legal terminology, for accurate, verified information, and for safeguards for those who speak to the media. It recommends that the different media outlets consult experts in order to provide context for their reporting. The charter also led to the creation of an observatory to monitor media coverage, to provide analysis on these issues, and to offer training programs for journalists.[9]

"No Hate Speech Campaign" — This campaign was launched on September 7, 2015 by the Charter of Rome Association (Associazione Carta di Roma) with support from the European Federation of Journalists. It involved an online petition that calls on journalists not to be passive in cases of hate-speech, arguing that, "Discrediting racist statements and clarifying why they are misleading constitutes a duty for journalists. Readers are invited to isolate promoters of hate-speech and not to engage in dialogue with them, while media, publishers and social network administrators are invited to remove messages of hate and ban their authors."[10]

Finally, it is important to recall here that, in addition to mainstream media, a crucial role is also

9 - This Charter is available online at: http://www. cartadiroma.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/ CoDE-anD-glossarY-EngIIsh.pdf.

10 - See link: http://europeanjournalist.org/blog/2015/09/07/nohatespeech-sign-our-petition-now/.

played by social networks and blogs (Sakki & Pettersson, 2015). In many cases, social networks can represent a fertile ground for the expression of xenophobia and racism (see Sakki & Pettersson, 2015 for an analysis of the cases of Sweden and Finland). One report states that the Internet and social networks in particular are often the "bastions of Islamophobia." There is indeed evidence of growing racism and xenophobia on the net (Bayrakli & Hafez, 2016). Unfortunately, this field is still largely unregulated and few newsrooms bother to moderate online comments and discussions (Bosev & Cheresehva, 2016). Nonetheless, social media are also widely used by supporters of immigrants and refugees. Bunyan (2015, p. 16), for instance, explains that when the refugee crisis was unfolding, civil society used social media extensively, "recording history as it happened and servicing a growing network of ways to help, sending money, clothes and volunteering." Social media are also widespread among organizations who work to prevent the spread of racism and Islamophobia (White, 2015).

Box 5/ Summary: Responses of Political Actors and Media

The massive inflow of refugees into Europe that began in 2015 was a major turning point in terms of political responses to the ongoing migration/integration crisis. An overall increase in political hostility towards immigration, immigrants and ethnic minorities and a further polarization between anti-immigrant and pro-immigrant groups can be observed. The growth of internal national political conflicts and an increase in support for anti-immigrant parties and movements can also be observed.

In the past two decades, mainstream media in European countries have had the tendency to produce a narrative that associates immigration with negative threats, such as illegality, crisis, and crime. In recent years, a stronger association between Muslims and terrorism can be observed.

In 2015 and the first half of 2016, migration was a dominant topic of mainstream news coverage in most European counties. Nonetheless, media coverage varies across time and space and is strongly affected by the tone and the framing of specific issues as well as variations in national contexts. During the refugee crisis, sensationalism and alarmism have often prevailed. Nonetheless, media responses are often influenced by the political context, and there are a number of promising examples of ethnical journalism.

5. Bottom-up Initiatives: 'Good Practices' of Civil Society Organizations and Cities

Civil society organizations (CSOs) and cities can be crucial actors in the search for short- and long-term solutions to the challenges posed by the current migration/integration crisis. Even though cities are often regarded as being in charge of the implementation of national policies, evidence from many studies shows that they have been highly proactive with respect to the integration of immigrants and the reception of refugees. Indeed, cities have often acted in contradiction with the more

restrictive approaches to immigration and integration implemented by national governments (see for instance Penninx, 2015; Zapata-Barrero, 2015). By getting involved directly in the immigration and integration processes, and by engaging different levels of governance, both public authorities operating at the city-level and CSOs can play a key role in promoting integration and in tackling major humanitarian crises.

5.1 Responses from Civil Society Organizations

As far as CSOs are concerned, studies show that they have for many years engaged in social rights advocacy, campaigned to promote greater inclusion, and played a key role in shaping public debate, formulating policy, and practicing bottom-up methods of decision-making (Ambrosisni & Van der Leun, 2015, p. 105). They have also responded to a number of the social and economic concerns of immigrants, such as service delivery, health care, language learning and bureaucratic integration—and they have done this not only for 'legal' immigrants, but also for undocumented immigrants and asylum seekers (Ambrosisni & Van der Leun 2015, p. 105). CSOs have also worked in the direction of limiting or counterbalancing the effects of the sorts of exclusionary national policies that so negatively impact immigrants and asylum seekers in receiving countries. Among other things, they have played a key role in fighting against racism and xenophobia, and in raising awareness about discrimination towards immigrants and ethnic minorities (Guariso, 2013).

Box 6/ The Efforts of CSOs to Combat Racism, Xenophobia and Islamophobia

European Network Against Racism (ENAR)[11] — Created in 2008, ENAR is an anti-racist network of grassroots organizations that promotes advocacy for racial equality in all EU states and encourages cooperation among CSOs in Europe. The platform is active in 26 EU countries as well as in Iceland.

Collectif Contre l'Islamophobie en France (C.C.I.F.)[12] — The C.C.I.F. is a bottom-up association for the defense of human rights. It was created in 2000 and since 2003 it has been on the frontline in the fight against Islamophobia in France. It is an independent, self-funded organization. It works on collecting data on verbal and physical acts carried out against Muslims and offers legal support to the victims. International and European institutions, including the Council of Europe, the FRA, the OSCE, and the UN, use its data as it is considered a reliable source on Islamophobia in France.

In recent years, in the face of increasing racism and xenophobia, CSOs have offered several strategies for tackling the current integration and migration challenges. They have done this, in part,

11 - See page: http://www.enar-eu.org.

12 - See: http://www.islamophobie.net.

by distinguishing themselves in the emergency phase of the reception and by finding viable, long-term solutions to the challenge of integrating refugees into Europe (Bojovic, 2016). In response to the 'immigration crisis' that began in 2015, for instance, volunteers mobilized to welcome refugees, and to provide water, food, clothing and advice on where to go. They gave lifts where possible (Bosev & Cheresehva, 2015, p. 19). CSOs were also very active in those countries that were most heavily hit by the crisis: Greece, Macedonia, Serbia, Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia, and then Austria, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway. At the borders, railway stations and bus terminals, volunteers were there to provide help. CSOs also criticized the actions of governments. For example, the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, a human rights organization, mentioned that, "The right of asylum has practically vanished in Hungary" (Bosev & Cheresehva, 2015, p. 19). In short, CSOs across Europe have mobilized to support the arrival of refugees in the face of national governments that are reluctant to welcome them.

Box 7/ CSO Interventions that Aim to Respond Directly to the Refugee Crisis

International Network Welcome Refugee[13] — This international network was created in 2014 in Berlin by private citizens. Its goal is to create foster homes for asylum seekers. The idea is to offer an alternative to refugee camps by connecting asylum seekers with people who are willing to host them in their home. Today, there are networks in 20 countries. In Spain in 2015 for instance, 969 homes were opened up for refugees in only three months. In Poland, where the political environment is much more hostile, the organization struggles to match immigrants with homeowners as they receive many threats, especially online (Zugasti, 2016).

The Refugee Support Platform (Plataforma de Apoio Aos Refugiados, PAR)[14] — The PAR is a national network of civil society organizations in Portugal, the goal of which is to host refugees. The network welcomes other organizations to join the platform. The platform has been recognized by the Portuguese Government through a cooperation protocol and it is part of the Working Group for the Migration Agenda.

The examples presented in this section testify to the immense potential of CSOs in responding and finding creative solutions to the challenges of the immigration/integration crisis in general and the refugee crisis in particular. Nonetheless, the literature also stipulates that CSOs must meet certain key requirements in order to be effective. Most importantly, CSOs shouldn't be reduced to filling gaps left empty by the state and other institutional actors; nor should they be consigned to the role of watch-dog. It is moreover crucial to support these initiatives at all levels of governance, without at the same time co-opting these organizations, which often work best if they remain independent (Banulescu-Bogdan, 2011).

13 - See: http://www.refugees-welcome.net.

14 - See: http://www.refugiados.pt/home-en/.

CSOs today face a number of challenges, including the growth of anti-immigrant sentiment among large sections of the European public, and the increasingly restrictive immigration policies imposed by the different national governments (and the blindness of those governments more generally). Sweden is a case in point. For a long time, Sweden was considered one of the most welcoming countries in Europe, and in many respects it still is. However, the government there has recently been working in the direction of hindering the ability of CSOs to promote the integration of immigrants. As the government is restricting access to permanent legal status, CSOs are finding it more and more challenging to promote long-term solutions to the challenge of integrating new arrivals into European society (Azevedo, 2016). Finally, Marijsse (2016) points to the importance of including diaspora groups in the solidary movement to welcome refugees and, more generally, to favor the integration of immigrants. Although these groups are largely overlooked in the receiving societies, their role should be taken into account and supported. Marijsse explains that, "refugee groups and individuals can support long-term development in the countries of origin, as well as immediate support for other displaced populations." In Germany, for instance, these groups help those who are coming from Syria by promoting humanitarian admission and private sponsorship programs. Marijsse adds that intervention of the state in this regard would be crucial to strengthening the impact of these initiatives. He explains: "One way both central and local governments can trigger this is by taking an empowering stance towards refugee diaspora groups." The author sees it as "a necessary step in changing public opinion and perceptions of these groups and the refugees themselves."

5.2 Good Practices Promoted by Cities

In the literature, various authors have underlined the role of cities in promoting greater social, cultural and religious integration and in finding creative solutions to major immigration challenges (Penninx, 2015). In many cases, civic authorities have developed, often in collaboration with CSOs at a local level, pragmatic strategies in the absence of more inclusive national policies (Ambrosini & Boccagni, 2015). In the UK, for instance, a movement developed under the pressure of some CSOs to respond to the basic needs of immigrants without documents and refugees. Cities such as Sheffield and Bradford became 'Sanctuary Cities,' offering basic services and housing for people who were excluded from national programs (Allen & Rosenfeld, 2013).

Box 8/ 'Sanctuary Cities' in the UK

Sheffield — In 2005, the national 'City of Sanctuary' movement began in Sheffield. In 2007, with the full support of the City Council and over 70 local community organizations, this city became the first official City of Sanctuary in the UK. In 2010, this civil society network in Sheffield includes 100 organizations, at least 11 of which are refugee community organizations (Allen & Rosenfeld, 2013, p. 153).

In the last decade, local authorities across Europe have been active in fostering inter-group

dialogue and in finding creative solutions to the sorts of inter-group conflicts that emerge in cities (Zapata-Barrero, 2015). In particular, with the end of national multicultural policies, "interculturalism" has emerged as a new integration policy paradigm at the local level. Zapata-Barrero (2015, p. ix) explains that, "interculturalism is essentially viewed as a set of diversity policies driven by one basic idea: "that the interaction among people from different backgrounds (including immigrants and citizens) matters." Intercultural policies are thus policy strategies aiming to promote "interaction, community-building and prejudice reduction" (Zapata-Barrero, 2015, p. ix). The author (Zapata-Barrero, 2015, p. viii) further explains that interculturalism has become "a new way for cities to deal with diversity dynamics" (Zapata-Barrero, 2015, p. viii). The initiatives that go under the label of 'interculturalism' are various and some are more effective than others (Caponio & Riccucci, 2015). More work still needs to be done to further assess what practices work best (Penninx, 2015). Generally speaking, these initiatives have worked in the direction of facilitating interaction between immigrants and the receiving communities. Many strategies have been adopted to counteract the isolation of migrant communities and to avoid the radicalization of second- and third-generation migrants (see CLIP, 2010). Many of the initiatives that work in this direction aim to make immigrants more visible in the city, by encouraging the formation and growth of immigrant associations, for instance. At the same time, by promoting a positive image of cities, intercultural policies are also strategies for supporting the 'adaptation' of immigrants and for lessening the intolerance of the native-born population.

Box 9/ 'Good Practice' undertaken by Cities

Reggio Emilia — Reggio Emilia has been recognized as an "example of best practices" by the Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities group (see below). Some of the initiatives that have been undertaken in the city include: (1) *Mondo tra i fornelli:* an intercultural cooking laboratory that the group itself describes as a meeting of Italian and Foreign Women around an oven; (2) *The Centro per la mediazione dei conflitti*: an intercultural center of conflict mediation with a variety of ethnic and language backgrounds; (3) *Learn Arabic!*: an Arabic-language school for non-Arabic speakers promoted by the Center Mondinsieme; (4) *Mondinsieme: together with the world*: an initiative to support diaspora groups through active intercultural policy; (5) *Neighborhood Pact*: an initiative with a strong emphasis on civic values that proposes a pact outlining obligations for the city and citizens in order to diminish conflicts and to build trust and social cohesion among residents (Cappiali, 2015).

Amsterdam, Arnsberg, Breda, Malmö, Newport, Stuttgart, Sundsvall, Turku and Vienna — These nine cities have helped to institutionalize a dialogue between the police and the migrant organizations with the intention of building up their reciprocal trust and cooperation. As a part of this approach, cities have invested in intercultural education for police officers and information

campaigns for migrants. Among their stated goals, these nine cities list a desire to increase the openness of ethnic and faith-based migration organizations towards local institutions and society as a whole. They also aim to help immigrant communities overcome isolation by encouraging their involvement in activities promoted by the city. To achieve these goals, a number of cities have promoted regular meetings between the police and the migrant organizations (see CLIP, 2010, pp. 102-103).

National and EU-wide networks of cities have also developed in order to facilitate the horizontal exchange of 'good practices' (Penninx, 2015). The Council of Europe has been a particularly important actor in encouraging these exchanges, especially as far as intercultural policies are concerned (see Council of Europe, 2008). In addition, the Eurocities network includes a permanent working group on 'Migration and Integration' that gathers together practitioners from more than 30 cities.[15] This working group has developed the 'Charter on Integrating Cities', which lays down "the duties and responsibilities of European cities in their roles as policy-makers, service providers, employers and buyers of goods and services to provide equal opportunities for all residents, to integrate migrants, and to embrace the diversity of their populations that is a reality in cities across Europe."[16] More recently, the same working group has mobilized on the refugee crisis, as we shall see below.

Box 10/ City Networks

Intercultural Cities[17]**—** In 2008, the Council of Europe, supported by the European Commission, launched a project to create networks and exchanges among cities that were experimenting with "best practices" of intercultural integration. By 2014, 12 EU cities were involved in the program. The network, still active today, develops tools such as the Intercultural Cities Index for cities to develop and evaluate their policies.

Italian Network of the Intercultural Cities[18]**—** Designed to promote the exchange of intercultural practices in Italy, this network was created in 2010 thanks to the initiative of the city of Reggio Emilia. In 2004, the administration of Reggio Emilia decided to participate in the project launched by the Council of Europe. In continuity with this project, in May 2010 the city of Reggio Emilia became the promoter (in collaboration with the Council of Europe) of 'The Italian Network of Intercultural Cities.' Composed of 23 cities, the network aims to create collaborations on the themes of integration and governance and to share 'good practices' of integration in Italy (Cappiali, 2015).

15 - See: http://www.eurocities.eu/eurocities/working_groups/Migration-and-integration-&tpl=home.

16 - For details see: http://www.integratingcities.eu/integrating-cities/integrating_cities_charter.

17 - See the official site of the Council of Europe dedicated to the program of the Intercultural Cities: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/Cities/origin_en.asp.

18 - See: http://www.municipio.re.it/retecivica/urp/retecivi.nsf/PESDocumentID/7CFDFA965DF504DDC1257FA100323D8A?opendocument&FROM=Pltchdlg.

Furthermore, cities have also mobilized during the recent refugee crisis to respond to the needs of asylum seekers and to pressure national governments to open up and welcome refugees (FRA, 2016).[19] These developments are indicators of a new trend in which cities are shaping not only integration policies in opposition to national governments but also immigration and asylum policies. National policies have even changed as a result of these city-led initiatives. Garcés-Mascareña (2016, p. 1) explains that during the current refugee crisis, "While most states became increasingly reluctant to welcome refugees, several European cities not only set up specific programmes for their initial reception and accommodation but also presented themselves as 'cities of refuge' and lobbied together at the EU level for more welcoming asylum policies." The city of Barcelona, for instance, forced the Spanish government to adopt a policy of welcoming more refugees into the country and was proactive in creating a network of cities in Spain. At the European level, in May 2015, the Migration and Integration Working Group, a part of the Eurocities network, launched "The Eurocities Statement on Asylum in Cities."[20] The document stresses the important role that European cities play in receiving and integrating asylum seekers, refugees and other beneficiaries of protection, and calls for a comprehensive EU migration policy recognizing both the challenges faced by cities and local-level solutions. In a more recent report published in March 2016, Eurocities explicitly advocates for direct and faster access for cities to EU emergency assistance and to the Asylum Migration & Integration Fund (AMIF), which is currently accessible only by EU member states (p. 16; see box below).

Box 11/ Interventions by Local Authorities Aiming to Respond Directly to the Refugee Crisis

Spanish Network of Refuge Cities[21] **—** This network was created by the Mayor of Barcelona, Ada Colau, in September 2015. She supported the role of cities in managing the refugee crisis. The network was created in response to the Spanish national government's policies of exclusion with respect to immigrants and refugees. In Spain, several cities joined the network in order to oppose the government's positions. The network worked to develop a narrative on the right to asylum and on the duty of Europeans to welcome immigrants and refugees. It also pushed the government in Spain to reconsider its restrictive position on welcoming refugees. The Barcelona City Council promoted also bilateral city-to-city relations on this specific issue, in particular with Leipzig, Munich, Lampedusa, Athens and Lesbos.

19 - This year the FRA has published a report on the impact of the refugee crisis on local communities, including the challenges of offering housing and education. The repost also presents examples of good practices and potentials of local communities in tackling the crisis. The report highlights the growing awareness of the crucial role of the involvement of cities and local actors in long-term integration of immigrants and refugees.

20 - See: http://www.eurocities.eu/eurocities/allcontent/EUROCITIES-statement-on-asylum-in-cities-WSPO-9WFNGE.

21 - See the pages: http://ciutatrefugi.barcelona/en/inicio and http://www.eurocities.eu/eurocities/news/Cities-of-refuge-EUROCITIES-members-take-leadership-WSPO-A28BTU.

Eurocities Report on 'Refugee Reception and Integration in Cities' — In March 2016, Eurocities published a report based on the findings of a survey carried out among its members at the end of 2015. The report included information from 34 cities in 17 EU member states and Norway. In addition to presenting the results of the survey, the report also recommends that cities play a greater role in the reception of refugees, and it calls on the EU to allocate funds directly to the cities for this purpose. We summarize here some of the issues and recommendations addressed to the EU by the cities of the network: (1) "Cities must be able to determine their priorities and target groups as they know exactly what is needed in terms of integration"; (2) "Recognized refugees will need to be integrated for the most part in large cities"; (3) "Dedicated and adequate financial support should be available to cities to offer asylum seekers fast and effective access to language training"; (4) "Asylum seekers must have the right to be gainfully employed and are entitled to equal and fair treatment, pending a definitive decision on their asylum claim"; (5) "Recognition of their qualifications and entrepreneurial potential should also be facilitated"; (6) Since housing is a crucial tool for creating socially sustainable and cohesive communities, "refugees should be housed in socially mixed communities" in order to "avoid the creation of ghettos and marginalized communities" (Eurocities, 2016, p. 16).

Finally, cities today face major challenges in promotion the reception and integration of newcomers. The Council of Europe has in certain respects helped cities to move beyond their respective national governments by promoting exchanges and 'good practices' among cities. However, the growing lack of support coming from national governments, combined with the financial crisis, has strongly diminished the potential of cities to welcome immigrants and to address the main social, economic and cultural aspects that are required for successful integration (FRA, 2016). At the same time, in order to combat the isolation, marginalization and radicalization of migrants and ethnic minorities, as well as the increasing hostilities of 'native-born' citizens, greater coordination from above is needed, as are more resources to support the efforts of local authorities (FRA, 2016). Supporting the efforts of cities to promote inclusive policies and to counter the hostile and xenophobic narratives of the far-right and other political actors should be one of the top priorities of national governments and European institutions.

Box 12/ Summary: Responses from Civil Society Organizations and Cities

By getting involved directly in the immigration and integration processes, and by engaging with different levels of governance, civil society organizations (CSOs) have often been key in promoting integration and in tackling major humanitarian crises.

Nonetheless, CSOs today face a number of challenges, including the growth of anti-immigrant sentiment among large sections of the European public, and the increasingly restrictive immigration policies imposed by the different national governments (and the blindness of those governments more generally). Supporting CSOs organizations in their initiatives should be one of the priorities of governments and European institutions.

Cities are crucial actors in promoting integration by promoting strategies to include immigrants and to undermine the conflicts that can emerge in the interaction of groups in highly diverse cities.

However, they also face major challenges as they are lacking economic resources and national support. The Council of Europe has in certain respects helped cities to move beyond their respective national governments by promoting inter-city exchanges and 'good practices.' The growing lack of support coming from national governments, combined with the financial crisis, has strongly diminished the potential of cities to welcome immigrants and to address the main social, economic and cultural aspects that are required for successful integration.

In order to combat the isolation, marginalization and radicalization of migrants and ethnic minorities, as well as the increasingly anti-immigrant attitudes of native-born citizens, greater coordination from above is needed, as are more resources to support the efforts of local authorities. Supporting the efforts of cities to promote inclusive policies and counter the hostile, anti-immigrant narratives coming from the far-right should be one of the top priorities of governments and European institutions.

6. Conclusions

In this study we have presented an overview of the main responses to the current situation of a perceived 'migration/integration crisis' in Europe. We first considered public reactions to the crisis. We then briefly presented the responses of political actors and the media, as these actors play crucial roles in the framing of both the 'integration/migration nexus' and the 'perceived crises.' Moreover—and as we sought to show—both political actors and the media are crucial in building specific narratives around these issues. In the final part of this paper, we offered examples of the kinds of bottom-up responses and 'good practices' promoted by civil society organizations and cities.

We are aware that this is just a part of the story. Along with these responses, top-down initiatives have also been deployed in the form of legislative interventions and policy measures. Actually, most of the debate around how to deal with the migration/integration crisis revolves around which policies should be enacted by which level of government(s), with particular attention paid to the role of the EU. However, in order to build a new consensus on the idea and the reality of an increasingly multi-ethnic European society, we deem it necessary to focus also on the contradictions and potentials within European civil societies. For this reason, we consider it crucial to focus on those actors that can play a key role in overcoming the crises, and that can respond in a proper manner to public opinion anxieties.

As a way of conclusion, we summarize our findings and observations on the actors considered.

Public Opinion: In recent years, public attitudes towards immigrants, asylum seekers and ethnic minorities have increasingly worsened in Europe. Europeans are also greatly concerned with

immigration. They are also more and more concerned with the ability of immigrants, particularly Muslims, to integrate into society. Indeed, in response to the 'refugee crisis' that began in 2015, a growing number of Europeans have expressed the belief that accepting refugees into the EU increases the likelihood of terrorism. Many also worry that refugees will become an economic burden to the EU and its national government and that they will take away jobs and social benefits from 'native' Europeans. Nonetheless, the attitudes of Europeans vary from country to country, and they differ as well in terms of which 'migrants groups' are welcome and which represent a 'problem' for their own country. In particular, they are concerned with 'irregular' immigrants and people coming from non-EU countries. One major concern is that immigrants might represent a burden on the welfare state. Another important finding is that Europeans tend to have a negative perception of the policies that their national governments have implemented in response to immigration. As a result, there has been a growing support in recent years for an 'EU intervention' on immigration policies. Finally, an analysis of the perceptions of migrants and ethnic minorities (including Muslims) show that discrimination, racism and Islamophobia are pervasive in Europe. Among others, growing Islamophobia is engendering greater alienation of many Muslims in Europe. All of this highlights the need for greater intervention in the area of combatting anti-immigrant attitudes and promoting a more tolerant society.

Political Actors: The massive inflow of refugees into Europe that began in 2015 was a major turning point in terms of political responses to the ongoing migration/integration crisis. An overall increase in political hostility towards immigration, immigrants and ethnic minorities and a further polarization between anti-immigrant and pro-immigrant groups can be observed. The growth of internal national political conflicts and an increase in support for anti-immigrant parties and movements can also be observed.

Media: In the past two decades, mainstream media in European countries have had the tendency to produce a narrative that associates immigration with negative threats, such as illegality, crisis, and crime. In recent years, a stronger association between Muslims and terrorism can be observe. In 2015 and the first half of 2016, migration was a dominant topic of mainstream news coverage in most European counties. Nonetheless, media coverage varies across time and space and is strongly affected by the tone and the framing of specific issues as well as variations in national contexts. During the refugee crisis, sensationalism and alarmism have often prevailed. Nonetheless, media responses are often influenced by the political context, and there are a number of promising examples of ethnical journalism.

Civil Society Organizations: By getting involved directly in the immigration and integration processes, and by engaging with different levels of governance, civil society organizations (CSOs) have often been key in promoting integration and in tackling major humanitarian crises. Nonetheless, CSOs today face a number of challenges, including the growth of anti-immigrant sentiment among

large sections of the European public, and the increasingly restrictive immigration policies imposed by the different national governments (and the blindness of those governments more generally). Supporting CSOs organizations in their initiatives should be one of the priorities of governments and European institutions.

Cities: Cities are crucial actors in promoting integration by promoting strategies to include immigrants and to undermine the conflicts that can emerge in the interaction of groups in highly diverse cities. However, they also face major challenges as they are lacking economic resources and national support. The Council of Europe has in certain respects helped cities to move beyond their respective national governments by promoting inter-city exchanges and 'good practices.' The growing lack of support coming from national governments, combined with the financial crisis, has strongly diminished the potential of cities to welcome immigrants and to address the main social, economic and cultural aspects that are required for successful integration. In order to combat the isolation, marginalization and radicalization of migrants and ethnic minorities, as well as the increasingly anti-immigrant attitudes of native-born citizens, greater coordination from above is needed, as are more resources to support the efforts of local authorities. Supporting the efforts of cities to promote inclusive policies and counter the hostile, anti-immigrant narratives coming from the far-right should be one of the top priorities of governments and European institutions.

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