Image of migration in Western Europe in 1990s

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A general attitude in Western Europe has been that it is a continent greatly affected by migration. The aim of this article is to compare migration in Western Europe to other parts of the world and then to examine what has been the image of migration in the 1990s. This article gives a short overview to the history of migration in Western Europe and compares it to migration in other continents. This article examines the public opinion of migration through media and political life. Lastly, it deals with action against xenophobia and racism taken by European Union.

Slowly, at the same pace with economical downwards the attitudes towards migration have changed. In the 1990s migration matters have been regarded as true and huge problems, especially illegal immigration. Migration has been linked to the criminal activities and seen as threat to the state. (Niessen 1996, 60)

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Looking at the history of migration intercontinental movements are not unprecedented. Actually, Europe as a plus net migration area is quite new. The peak of migration in Western Europe was during 1845–1924. Nevertheless, then 50 million people, mainly Europeans moved to another continents (Widgren 1990, 751). The turnaround in the migration patterns did not happen until 1970s.

Compared to the United States and Canada the contribution of net migration has hardly changed over the decades, except in the years 1979 and 1981 and between 1992 and 1993. In Western Europe, the net migration grew from 1967 to 1987. Between 1987 and 1991, the relative contribution of net migration grew rapidly following an acceleration in migration flows. Then the trend started to be reversed. The relative migration has remained more important than natural increase. That has been a key difference between North America and Oceanic. However, in Southern Europe and in Nordic countries, natural increase has been more important than net migration. Since 1991 the net migration has become more important factor in Southern Europe and is now the principal component of

population growth. Nevertheless, over the long term, natural increase is more important in total population growth than net migration in OECD countries. (Continuos Reporting System on Migration SOPEMI 1996 1997, 23–25)

The United States and Canada have had strong migration interaction with countries around the world. The United States has been the world's major recipient of unwanted immigrants. (Martin 1997, 27–29) In South America the migration takes place from neighboring countries (Zlotnik 1992, 27–29). Both in South Pacific and in Asia there is lot of migration. Especially African continent has experienced large population movements induced by economic conditions and political instability (Richmond 1990, 4–15). The table shows that numbers of migrants are almost equal in all the five continents, North America having the most migrants and Middle East, South and East Asia having the most refugees.

Image of migration

The image of migration has been negative in Europe. Racism has characterized the European cul-

Table 1. World's migrant population: distribution of stocks by major regions (in millions)

Africa	21–25
(refugees)	(5.3)
Middle East, South and East Asia	19–23
(refugees)	(7.2)
North America	25–27
(refugees)	(1.0)
Europe (excl. former USSR)	24–25
(refugees)	(4.3)
Central and South America	8–13
(refugees)	(0.8)
Overall total	97–111

Sources: UN (1989), ILO (1994), UNHCR (1993) and Bimal Ghosh's calculations. (Ghosh 1997, 148)

ture over several centuries, being manifested differently at different times, according to the context. Migrants have been blamed for depression and unemployment (Molle & Zandvliet 1994, 103). Actually migration has been one of the most widely perceived threats in Western Europe after the post-Cold War era.

There have been assumptions that Western Europe cannot cope with the migration. The term mass migration has been used although there has not been such a phenomenon since the Second World War. (Collinson 1993, 6) There have been common reasonings that immigration has been caused only by push factors. Immigrants have easily become scapegoats when difficult decisions have had to be taken in the public section finance. (Cross and Waldinger 1997, 10)

There have been three sets of conditions which have affected the rise of racism in the present day Europe. The first set has been the social nature and how the society structures itself. Racism has found fertile ground when social movements fragment and the labour market shrinks. The second set of conditions refers also to the State. The policies, the ways in which the state ignores the principles of equality and social redistribution or the direction which it gives to the judiciary, police and state education have an influence on racism. States have been acting in two ways, by enforcing both cultural pluralism but also by "positive discrimination". The third set of conditions has been the issues of national identity. (ibid., 37)

In the recent years, the cultural homogeneity has been under attack in the whole Western Europe. Countries have struggled with questions, like should their assimilate the new migrants. Multicultural policies have been introduced but there has been a debate, if assimilation policy is a way to induce the minorities back to their countries of origin. (Weiner 1995, 47)

The European Union and the identity

Countries in the European Union have lost part of their sovereignty but still, there is a strong opinion that the basic unit of social organization at the aggregate level is a nation-state. Europe has become more international but still both in national-state level and in the EU-level there is call for distinction between "us" and "them". This distinction can also be seen in EU-treaties concerning migrants and asylum seekers. In the treaties, people have been divided to two groups: to members and aliens. (King 1995, 55) In today's Europe, racism is reproduced through and within education, advertising, propaganda, political manipulation, economic pressures and the ordinary common sense. In the harmonized Europe, the racism is also developing a common form, "Euro-racism".

According to Schmid, xenophobia and racism are not only reactions to European opening but have also to do with the loss of identity and the loss of possibilities for participation. Western European countries struggle with the new kind of identity of European Union. European citizenship has not developed in the same speed with economic harmonization. Integration should also be done in the area of identity, if the racism and xenophobia are to decrease. (Schmid 1991, 39)

Diverse immigrant societies

Receiving societies have been more concerned about cultural, racial and religious differences than immigrant status. Some immigrant societies have been more visible and, therefore, got more attention from the public. (Collinson 1993, p. 20) In the 1960s and in the 1970s immigrants came from culturally close areas, mainly from Southern Europe. Their

manners and cultural habits were quite close to the habits of the recipient countries. However, in the last decades, the 80s and the 90s migrants have come from more distant countries and are ethnically and culturally more diverse. Minority groups have increased and diversified. This has led to some ethnic and religious tension. Countries have had difficulties in deciding how to handle the diversity. Especially the increased threat of Islam and in the same time increased Muslim populations in Europe have led to a situation where immigration remains policy priority for Western European governments and for the EU. (Castles & Miller 1993, 243–244)

Public perceptions of migration and racists attacks

Public perceptions vary but tend to be influenced by particular events and press reports. In many countries press exaggerates the issues and news about migrants. Tabloid press have tended to be negative in a more direct way. The so-called "qualitative" newspapers bring the negative attitude more discretely up. In Austria the tabloid media is xenophobic when quality newspapers are not. (Walkobinger 1995, 23) In Denmark some newspapers started already in the 1980s to publish articles that created threats about migrants and asylum seekers. (ibid., 89–105)

There tend to be a certain collective paranoia, rather than a useful analyze of the migration topic (Papademetriou Demetrious

1991, 4). There are variety of ways to dislike foreigners and non-Europeans. One of the forms has been direct violence towards immigrants and asylum seekers.

In the 1990s and after the reunion of the eastern part, Germany has experienced attacks by skinheads and extreme rightists against immigrant housing. Before the reunification the racism existed in Germany in a more subtle level. People often used deliberately simple language, not the third forms (sie). Officials and service people treated migrants in an impolite manner. (Del Fabbro 1995, 132–147) Migrants in Finland have been experiencing small verbal insults and physical violence. (Saukkonen 1995, 108) In the United Kingdom the racist violence is an every day occurrence in many inner-city areas. (Favell & Tambini,148–160)

Xenophobic feelings seem to occur most among the unemployed, the less-skilled, the elderly and the working people in the whole Europe. Usually, racist opinions are concentrated on the poorer areas, both in the countryside and in the cities.

Even not being racist, more people are satisfied to the stricter legislation. For example one survey showed that 20% of Austrians are xenophobic. (Walkobinger 1995, 23) In Italy xenophobia and racism have increased in few years. After 1990 Italy has experienced, for example, racist publications and beating of blacks. These things have happened especially in the areas of high unemployment and poverty. (Mura 1995, 208–214) In the Netherlands, the public opinion has got stricter and

since 1992 the xenophobic violence has increased dramatically. (Ter Wal, Verdun & Westbeek 1995, 228–247) In Portugal, xenophobic attitudes have not played significant part in mainstream politics but xenophobia has existed as skinhead groups, extreme right organizations and public glorification of Portugal's past dictatorship. (Santos 1995, 272–279)

Migration and politics

Politicians have especially used illegal immigrants to increase xenophobic feelings. Immigration issues have been an entry for right-wing politicians to main stream politics across the Europe. (Castles & Miller 1993, 244–245) The popularity of the right wing politicians has increased. There have been extreme right wing campaigns against asylum seekers because asylum seekers have been perceived as economic immigrants. (Castler & Miller 1993, 86) Often other politicians have been afraid that small but loud participants of the right wing get more votes with anti-immigrant opinions. (Weiner 1995, 198)

In France, the immigration issues have been in the political agenda for a long time, partly because of the big numbers of Islamic minorities. In the beginning of the 1990s, anti-immigrant parties emerged in many European countries. Many of the political anti-immigrant movements have had precedents in history. However, after the Second World War those movements were viewed as illegal until the 1980s. (Castles & Miller 1993, 244–245) The emergence

of right-wing parties have had anti-immigrant effects across the political spectrum. Other parties, like the French Socialist Party have also shifted towards anti-immigrant opinions. (ibid., 245)The silence of political movements in migration matters can also be marked as implicitly to the direction of segregation.

In Austria, party with xenophobic ideas has been the Freedom Party (FPO). It has had connections to German right-wing organizations. (Walkobinger 1995,14–18) In Belgium the most important racist party, the Vlaams Blok holds 18 seats in parliament. With the two last national elections in the 1990s the racist parties started to get significant proportions of votes. Another party, The Front National Belge has grown quickly with the support of French Jean-Marie Le Pen. (Cools 1995, 35–40) In France, the right has become radicalized in the political field and the Front National has been successful and openly xenophobic. (Ubbiali 1995, 118–225) In Germany three organizations have got through in the local level, but have received relatively small support from the public. (Del Fabbro 1995, 132–147) In Switzerland, during the last ten years the political scene in the extreme right has changed under the pressure of new populist parties. Italian right wing has gained more power in politics. The coalition "Polo della Liberta" including three parties has won power with clear parliamentary majority. (Mura 1995, 208–214) In Netherlands, different right-wing organizations have organized campaigns against e.g. Islamic culture

Table 2. Xenophobic Parties vote in percent at last national election (Baumgartl & Favell 1995, 390)

Austria	Freedom Party	22.6%	(1994)
Belgium	Vlaam Blok, Front National	13.1%	(1991)
Denmark	Progress Party	6.1%	(1994)
France	Front National, Other Europe	23.0%	(1994 EP)
Germany	Republikaner	1.9%	(1994)
Great Britain	National Front	0.9%	(1992)
Luxembourg	National Bewegong	2.4%	(1994)
Netherlands	Centrumdemocraten	2.0%	(1992)
Sweden	Sweden Democrats	0.1%	(1994)
Switzerland	National Action, Swiss Democrats, Federal Democratic Union	4.3%	(1991)

and minimizing the social costs of migrants. (Ter Wal, Verdun & Westbeek 1995, 228–247) Swedish racist organizations have concentrated on pointing to religion and religious differences. (Westin 1995, 332–343) In the United Kingdom, racist parties have existed mainly in local politics. (ibid., 148–160)

Attempts made to correct negative perceptions by the European Union

In the European Union there has been no specific clause establishing a Treaty basis to combat racial discrimination, nor has there been a specific provision enabling legislative action to promote equal treatment of third-country nationals. (Niessen 1996, 49)

Not until the outbreaks of racial violence, did the Justice and Home Affairs Council (JHA-council) react with a report which in-

cluded several suggestions. It suggested multi-agency approach involving different actors, like school and social service. It called for more training and better data collections of the violent acts of racism and xenophobia. One year later, the K.4 Committee prepared a draft report on racism with same recommendations. (Niessen 1996, 57)

In 1986 the Council of Ministers, the Commission and the European Parliament adopted a Joint Declaration against Racism and Xenophobia. It condemned all forms of intolerance, hostility and the use of force against persons on the basis of racial, religious, cultural, social or national differences. In 1990, the Council Resolution emphasized action to be undertaken by individual member states. However, the Commission was not given substantial power to act on racial discrimination. In 1992, comparative study was published on anti-discrimination leg-

islation in the member states. European Commission's White Paper and European social policy in 1994 included some issues related to xenophobia and racism.

The Commission has sought to promote and facilitate debate at the Union level. It has undertaken a comprehensive assessment of the legal instruments implemented in the various Member States to combat all forms of discrimination, racism and xenophobia. The result was "Legal instruments to combat Racism and Xenophobia". It urged the states to develop legal systems against racism. (Communication from Commission to Council 1994, 38)

The Commission has also sought to cooperate with NGOs to organize anti-discriminatory and integrative campaigns. (ibid., 39) The commission has believed that the comprehensive approach is needed and it should involve multi-agency approach, a number of different elements and improved data collection.

International obligations to combat racism

The international obligations to combat racism have been the International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention 111; the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly's recommendation 1134 in 1990 on the Rights of the Minorities; Committee of Ministers' Recommendation no. R(92)12 on Community Relations; the recommendations of the Committee of Inquiry into Racism and Xenophobia of the European Parliament; 1991 Resolution 90/C 157/101 on the fight against racism and xenophobia of the EC and Representatives of the Governments of the member States and the Document of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe, in Copenhagen 1990. (Tackling racism and xenophobia-practical action at the local level, 17–18)

Many human rights instruments talk about discrimination. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights consists on the articles to aim non-discrimination. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination deals only with non-discrimination. Parts concerning especially migrants are article 1(1) and article 1(4).

"*This Convention shall not apply to distinctions, exclusions, restrictions or preferences made by a State Party to this Convention between citizens and non-citizens.*" (International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, art. 1(1))

"*Special measures taken for the sole purpose of securing adequate advancement of certain racial or ethnic groups or individuals requiring such protection as may be necessary in order to ensure such groups or individuals equal enjoyment or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms shall not be deemed racial discrimination, provided, however, that such measures do not, as a consequence, lead to the maintenance of separate rights for different racial groups and that they shall not be continued after the objectives for which they were taken have been achieved.*" (International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, art. 1(4))

The Covenant of Civil and Political Rights includes also prohibition to " Any *advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence... by law*". (The Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, art. 20) European Convention on Human Rights mentions also the non-discrimination. Many other Conventions and Protocols also emphasize implicitly that all the people should be treated in same way.

Conclusion

The attitudes towards migration have been negative in the whole Western Europe. Those attitudes have been fed through the media affecting public and politicians. Finally these attitudes has become a sc. truth that has influenced on the restrictions made in migration policies. This negative attitude has included the exaggeration of the problem of migration. The migration in Western Europe has not always been immigration but actually emigration away from Europe. Migration has been and continues to be a larger problem in several other areas than in Western Europe.

Although there have been several international legislative instruments to protect the rights of minorities and migrants, the action themselves have lacked. Not until serious violence attacks in Europe, have the EU and its or-

gans started to act. The European Union has produced several papers to address the problem of negative attitudes and xenophobia. However, the effects of those instruments have not been reported. Tolerance towards a more diverse society is needed. Especially, the problems of correct attitudes towards migrants and asylum seekers, coming from very different cultures is a problem of the next millenium.

(UNHCR = United Nations High Commission of Refugees)

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Kosovon pakolaiset pääsivät takaisin
Kosovo refugees going back home

Tiranan lähistöllä Albaniassa Camp Mulletin leirillä elävät Kosovon pakolaiset olivat helpottuneita, kun serbijoukot lupasivat lähteä Kosovosta ja NATO lopetti pommitukset. "Ensi viikolla olemme jo kotona". – *Taimi Sainio 20.6.1999.*

Refugees from Kosovo in Camp Mullet near Tirana, Albania, felt relieved in June, when NATO stopped the bombing and the Serbian troops promised to leave Kosovo. "Next week we are back home again". – *Taimi Sainio 20.6. 1999.*