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*Migration from Central and
Eastern Europe and Societal
Security in the European Union*

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12. Russia: a member of the European Union? Who would be interested in this association?

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**Migration from Central and Eastern Europe and
Societal Security in the European Union**

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MIGRATION FROM CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND SOCIETAL SECURITY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Following the end of the Cold War, terrorism, cross-border crime, drug-trafficking, and immigration have replaced traditional frontier disputes as main sources of insecurity for the countries of the European Union. The main debates surrounding the movement of people have focused on the strict control of immigration and minimizing the number of asylum seekers – the creation of a so-called “Fortress Europe” – and the links made between security, criminality and migration. No longer associated solely with labor market dislocations, humanitarian reasons, and social integration concerns, migration has become part of the new national security agendas of the receiving and transit countries. Thus, the perceived threats to economic well-being, social order, cultural and religious values, and political stability have placed migration policies within a framework intended to protect the societies of Western Europe.

The spotlight in the public discourse has been on asylum and illegal immigration from the developing countries. Immigration from the Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs), most of them soon to become members of the Union, remains sidelined by the more conspicuous cases of racially, ethnically, or religiously charged immigration from developing countries, who are perceived as a challenge to the identity of the recipient societies as well as to their social and economic well-being. This paper will attempt to discuss how immigration to the European Union from the CEECs is securitized and will argue that this process takes place primarily along the dimension of social welfare, rather than cultural identity.

Migration and Societal Security

The issue of migration touches upon central concepts, such as borders and border politics, security, sovereignty, citizenship and identity, the nature of which has been changing under the pressure of globalization and integration. Over the last 50 years, net migration in the European Union peaked in 1992, reaching 1,350,000 persons, then steadily declined until 1997 to 530,000, and again in 2000 to 680,000. Inward migration is the main component of population growth in the European Union, accounting for approximately seventy percent of its increase.¹

While immigration is not a new phenomenon, during the last two decades there has been an incremental shift toward the politicization and securitization of the issue. This has taken place in a context in which growing foreigner populations have gradually given rise to public perceptions of cultural, economic, and security threats to West European societies. Although not a threat to the state itself, during the 1990s, migration has become one of the perceived dangers to domestic public order, i.e., it has come to be seen as a security problem along with drug-trafficking, organized crime, and terrorism.

¹ Eurostat. News Release: Population of the EU in 2000. No.86/2001 – 10 Aug 2001; Eurostat. News Release: As a Result of Net Migration EU Population Slightly Up in 1999. No.96/2000. 11 Aug 2000; Eurostat. New Release: Faster Growth of EU Population in 2000. No. 4/2001 – 8 Jan 2001.

The concepts of societal security and securitization are linked to the wider definition of security that emerged after the end of the Cold War, two of the most prominent proponents of which are Ole Wæver and Barry Buzan. They argue that security is about survival in the face of an existential threat to the referent object, whether it is the state, sovereignty, or the nation, among others. Wæver maintains that security is a speech act; an issue becomes a matter of security when it is presented as such, not necessarily because in reality it exists as such. This threat to society requires a specific response and perhaps even emergency actions. Both the perception of the threat and the necessity of express measures have to be accepted by significant portions of society, who, in their willingness to take action, become security agents. Since society consists of various groups, someone has to speak for society, or as is most often the case, in the name of society, a task usually done by political actors or other community leaders. The elites play a critical role in turning an issue into a security problem, i.e., securitizing it, as it also enables them to claim the right over how to handle it.²

Existential threats differ according to the character of the referent object, which vary within the different sectors, society being one of them. In the societal sector the referent objects are large-scale collective identities, which evolve in conjunction with internal and external developments. Hence, the framing of an issue as a societal security problem depends upon how members of these groups see the creation and maintenance of their collective identities. Societal security, then, is about the preservation of traditional patterns of language, culture, association, and religious and national identity, within acceptable conditions for evolution. In other words, societal security is about “large, self-sustaining identity groups.”³ Society, which according to Wæver is about identity, its self-conception as a community, and the individuals who identify themselves as members of this society, begins to see itself as a security agent under threat. Although this does not mean that society’s identity is at the core of the concept of international security, it can nonetheless be a referent for security action – it is the defining point for existential threats for societies because it determines whether the group has been able to sustain itself. Hence, identity is a powerful concept, the appeal to which makes security discourse possible.⁴

Within this framework, immigration represents a threat to society’s identity. While Buzan and Wæver do not address identity formation in a detailed manner, they refer to the importance of the “other” in creating, maintaining, and reinforcing identities. Since security is a socially constructed concept, groups in part “create” each other in an intersubjective relationship, projecting their fears onto the “other” in the process.⁵ Immigration helps provide the new “other” in West European societies, legitimizing the need for restrictive measures as a response to the perceived danger. The formulation of any immigration policy is thus contingent upon the political debates to define the identities of large ethno-religious and political groups and their boundaries.⁶

² Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, Security: A New Framework for Analysis. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998: 24-27; Ole Wæver, “Securitization and Desecuritization,” On Security, ed. Ronnie D. Lipschutz (New York: Columbia Press University, 1995): 54-55.

³ Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 119.

⁴ Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, “Slippery? Contradictory? Sociologically Untenable? The Copenhagen School Replies,” Review of International Studies 23 (1997): 242-9.

⁵ Ronnie D. Lipschutz, “On Security,” On Security. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995): 10.

⁶ Andrea Grove, “Immigration and Refugee Policy as a Debate Over Identity: A Choice Between the Inclusionist Normative Order and the Exclusionist Knee-Jerk Reaction?” International Politics 38 (2001): 583.

Securitization refers to a process during which “the issue is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure.”⁷ Securitization follows politicization, in other words, an issue first has to become the subject of political debate and governmental action. Therefore, whether an issue is the focus of more or less intense form of public debate and urgent governmental action depends upon the context within which these developments take place. Political or economic uncertainties, and even more importantly, the efforts of political actors to set the agenda, usually facilitate the shift from politicization to securitization.⁸

As European integration deepens and the member states pool their sovereignties in a growing number of areas, there is a growing perception that the member states cannot adequately protect their societies as a result of their borderless frontiers, resulting in an increasing societal insecurity. In other words, significant groups in society feel threatened, and immigrants as well as refugees are often seen as having no legitimate right to social assistance and welfare provisions. The calls for curtailing the social rights of immigrants is linked to the idea that immigration is a threat to cultural homogeneity as well as to the preservation of the welfare state.⁹ Hence, within the EU context, the issue of migration has been securitized along the dimensions of cultural identity and welfare provisions as part of the overall societal security of the internal market.

The Securitization of Migration in the European Union

It has been argued that the European integration process is implicated in the social construction of migration as a security question as well as in the development of restrictive migration policies. The securitization of migration does not take place in isolation, but is part of the wider politicization of immigrants and asylum seekers as destabilizing for society’s collective identity and welfare, in which professional agencies and political agents decide the criteria for legitimate membership in a society. In other words, the securitization of migration is a structural effect of the multiple practices of various actors involved in policy-making.¹⁰

Jef Huysmans argues that in the EU the securitization of migration has occurred mainly along two dimensions: identity and welfare provisions. This view appears to agree with Wæver’s argument that immigration threatens the collective identity of a society, and by association, the welfare state. He argues that as immigrants are not part of “us,” therefore, they should not benefit from the welfare state, which rightfully belongs only to nationals. In other words, the notions of social solidarity and distribution of welfare become intertwined with notions of nationality and citizenship. Since immigrants and refugees are not citizens of a member state, they are not seen as members of that community, and therefore, should not fully share the benefits of the internal market, such as

⁷ Buzan, Wæver, and de Walde 23-4.

⁸ Ibid.; Grove 590.

⁹ Jef Huysmans, “The European Union and Securitization of Migration,” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 38.5 (2000): 756-8.

¹⁰ Ibid. 758.

free movement and welfare provisions. This linkage between nationality and welfare entitlements is what Huysmans refers to as “welfare chauvinism.”¹¹

Most often this process takes place within the political discourse, where the securitization of an issue enables actors to propose means for finding a solution for the security problem.¹² Since security is constructed through language, the way an issue is discussed determines the structure of the discourse, which potentially can affect political and social life. A particularly important factor in this process is the role of the media, which often facilitates the definition of “us” and “them,” by highlighting the cultural and religious differences in memorable sound-bites. In addition to its role in the construction of political questions, the media act as a mediator between the public and the political establishment. Media representations of immigrants and asylum seekers is frequently referred to by political actors, especially during electoral campaigns, which enables them to propose restrictive measures as a solution to the problems that immigrants and asylum seekers present to the host societies.

Perhaps the most famous example of presenting immigration as a threat to society has been Jörg Haider. He has stated that “Austria has no need of any artificially induced multicultural society,” and that “everyone has a right to a dignified existence, but in their own country.”¹³ His frequently expressed anti-immigrant position, expressed as concern for the preservation of Austrian identity and scarce jobs, contributed to his rise in popularity and enabled his Freedom Party to achieve electoral success. Anti-immigrant sentiments have been articulated by community leaders and political actors at both regional and state levels, and can also be detected in international conventions. Most recently, for example, after the deportation of more than 1,300 illegal immigrants from Eastern Europe and North Africa, Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi declared that “citizens’ security is a top priority for the government,” and that “being free from fear is every citizen’s first right and the government’s goal is to cut back on crime.”¹⁴ While in past decades, primarily right-wing politicians resorted to immigration, in the 1990s, political and economic circumstances favorable to anti-immigrant rhetoric has made it a subject for public debate even in countries which have long been considered to have the least anti-immigrant and xenophobic attitudes, such as Denmark and the Netherlands. On a European level, one of the best examples of the securitization of migration is the 1990 Convention Applying the Schengen Agreement of 14 June 1985, which connects migration and asylum with terrorism, transnational crime, and border control, and locates it in a framework regulating the security of the internal market.¹⁵ On a global scale, the Smuggling Protocol of the 2000 UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime, for example, states that “the ‘migrant’ should not be viewed as a blameless victim but, rather, as partly complicit in the act of ‘illegal migration.’”¹⁶

Although for almost three decades after World War II Europe had relatively liberal immigration policies, justified by the need for workers, the 1970s marked the beginning of

¹¹Huysmans, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 38.5 (2000): 768; Jef Huysmans, “Contested Community: Migration and the Question of the Political in the EU,” *International Relations Theory and the Politics of European Integration: Power, Security and Community*. Routledge: London and New York, 2000: 161.

¹² Wæver, “Securitization and Desecuritization,” 54-55.

¹³ “No Place for Mr. Haider,” *The Guardian* 8 Nov 2000. <http://www.guardian.co.uk>; and “Haider Rouses Italy Against Immigrants,” *The Guardian* 18 Dec 2000. <http://www.guardian.co.uk>.

¹⁴ “Italy Deports 1,300 Immigrants,” *The Guardian* 20 Feb 2002. <http://guardian.co.uk>.

¹⁵Huysmans 756.

¹⁶ See Liz Fekete, “The Emergence of Xeno-Racism,” *Race and Class* 43.2 (2001): 26.

a gradual shift toward stricter policies. This trend continued, necessitated by other developments such as the Latin American debt crisis of the 1980s, and especially the opening up of the former Eastern bloc and the wars in former Yugoslavia. The following section will briefly discuss some of the explanations for the upcoming eastern enlargement of the European Union and the challenges it presents to the identities and welfare of West European societies.

Enlargement and Societal Security

Traditionally, the idea of Europe has been linked to three main elements: liberty, Christendom, and civilization.¹⁷ Historically, these concepts developed separately, coming together only at the end of the eighteenth century, to be challenged again by the violence and destruction of the two world wars during the twentieth century. Perhaps just as important in the development of the concept of Europe and European identity has been its creation through its relation to significant “others.”¹⁸

The search for the elusive European identity has benefited considerably through its juxtaposition to the “other,” which throughout history has usually been “the Turk,” or alternatively, Russia. In addition to the fact that during the Cold War, the political and security discord over Europe was couched in East-West terms, liberal democracy, the European social model, and anti-communism were the focal points for distinguishing Western Europe from the *other* Europe to the east, where the concept of Europe did not carry any significant connotation, nor had any particular utility.¹⁹ The blocked social, cultural, and popular transactions in Eastern Europe served to contrast sharply and even define the social exchanges in Western Europe, forging commonalities, which facilitated integration.²⁰ During this period there was little interaction between Europe’s two halves, giving Eastern Europe only a peripheral place in the West European public consciousness, aside from the status of Cold War adversary. This lack of interaction led many Western Europeans to consider Central and Eastern Europeans as not one of “them.”

During the 1980s, the recourse to “Europe” in Eastern Europe became more frequent, led by Gorbachev’s notion of the “common European home” and the call for a “return to Europe.” It was during this period that security became linked to culture, history, and geography, with the purpose of reinforcing political arguments.²¹ Following the end of the Cold War, the Eastern European countries undertook a process of political and economic transformation, in some cases accompanied by state-building. With this came their drive to join western clubs, led by the European Union and NATO, and simultaneous distancing from Russia. While for the CEECs joining the EU entails substantial economic and political benefits, and indicates belonging to the Western community of liberal values, the reasons for the European Union to enlarge are more complex.

¹⁷ Pim den Boer, “Europe to 1914: the Making of an Idea,” The History of the Idea of Europe. Kevin Wilson and Jan van der Dussen, eds. (London and New York: 1995): 13.

¹⁸ Wæver, “Europe Since 1945: Crisis to Renewal” 203; See also Anthony Smith, “National Identity and the Idea of European Unity,” International Affairs. 68.1 (1992): 55-76.

¹⁹ Wæver, “Europe Since 1945: Crisis to Renewal” 160.

²⁰ Helen Wallace, “Whose Europe is it Anyway? The 1998 Stein Rokkan Lecture.” European Journal of Political Research 35 (1999): 293-5.

²¹ Wæver, “Europe Since 1945: Crisis to Renewal” 179.

Enlargement holds the possibility of very tangible political and economic benefits, namely, increased stability, security, and prosperity. As some studies show, however, the expected costs of eastern enlargement exceed the immediate potential benefits. Although the enlargement will increase the size of the internal market and thus benefit the European economies in the aggregate, at the time being these gains can and are being extracted from the candidates without the benefits of full membership for them.²²

Along with the political and economic gains, there are strong arguments of historical and moral obligation towards Central and Eastern Europe. Normative theoretical approaches emphasize the values and traditions that are seen as constitutive of European identity. These approaches use arguments such as belonging to the European community, duty and solidarity towards those seen as “one of us,” as well as inclusion in the club of those who adhere to the same liberal values and norms that are part of the EU’s postnationalist, liberal identity to explain enlargement.²³ The sense of historical responsibility is supported by the so-called “myth of Yalta,” namely, the abandoning of Eastern Europe – “the kidnapped West” - to the Soviet Union, one of Europe’s “others.”²⁴ While the European Union’s claim is that the rules that govern the enlargement process are universal, the officially stated aim of the EU’s relations with Eastern Europe is to overcome the division of the two parts of the same entity. The underlying argument is that Eastern Europe is a part of “us” that now must be returned, a kinship duty that is not detected in the case of Turkey, for example.

The criteria for accession that the candidates have to meet reflect liberal values and norms, suggesting that their adoption by the candidate countries will determine the membership and territorial boundaries of the European Union. In other words, rather than looking at the balance sheet of material costs and benefits, the European Union appears to grant membership to those countries that come to share the values that lie at the core of its liberal collective identity, namely, liberal human rights as expressed in individual freedoms, civil liberties, and political rights.²⁵ By insisting on accomplishing and internalizing these values, the project of enlargement also serves to fulfill the EU’s foundational myth of ensuring peace and prosperity, thereby enhancing the Union’s legitimacy.²⁶ The enlargement to the east, then, can be seen as a decision made in accordance with the normative ideas of the liberal community of the European Union and its historical responsibility toward the former Eastern bloc.

²² See, for example, Michael J. Baun, A Wider Europe: The Process and Politics of European Union Enlargement. Lanham and Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000.

²³ Helene Sjørnsen, “Why Expand? The Question of Justification in the EU’s enlargement policy,” ARENA Working Papers. WP 01/6. <http://www.arena.uio.no/publications/wp01-6.htm> 2 July 2001.; Frank Schimmelfennig, “Liberal Identity and Postnationalist Inclusion: The Eastern Enlargement of the European Union,” Constructing Europe’s Identity: The External Dimension. Ed. By Lars-Erik Cederman. (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001):165-173; Michael J. Baun, A Wider Europe: The Process and Politics of European Union Enlargement. (Lanham and Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2000): 8-11.

²⁴ Sjørnsen 14-16.

²⁵ Schimmelfennig 172, 182-3.

²⁶ Lykke Friis and Anna Murphy, “And Never the Twain Shall Meet?” The EU’s Quest for Legitimacy and Enlargement.” International Relations Theory and the Politics of European Integration: Power, Security, and Community. Ed. Morten Kelstrup and Michael C. Williams. (London and New York: Routledge, 2000): 235-6.

The actual process of negotiations, however, has been marked by rationalist, self-maximizing tendencies in the behavior of the current member states.²⁷ The bargaining process showcased the divide among the current members toward enlargement and the only reluctant acceptance of the demands of Central and Eastern European countries for full membership, especially by those countries least likely to gain from enlargement. Progress in the negotiations has been incremental, with the EU members conducting a very self-interested bargaining at the internal decision-making on the opportunity-cost distribution of the effects of enlargement. These two tendencies of self-maximizing behavior and normatively-driven outcome are also evident in dealing with the following two issues: immigration from the CEECs and the free movement of labor after accession.

The official EU emphasis on the unification of the continent and on common values and traditions indicates that there is an affinity – or at least a serious attempt to forge one – between the Europe’s two parts, whether it is defined historically or culturally, or as adherence to the same liberal democratic ideas. Yet cultural considerations often appear as points of potential discord, or as an explanation for some of these countries’ difficulties with their transitions. As evidence suggests, the public in the current member states of the Union are reluctant receivers of their Eastern and Central European “kin.” Even though the contacts between East and West Europeans have increased considerably since 1989, public support for enlargement in the current member states remains mediocre. This outcome is reinforced by the fact that this has been and remains an elite-driven project, where the feeling of belonging to the same community does not appear to be widespread, nor does the prospect of sharing the largess that comes with EU membership receive much support.²⁸

One of the main reasons for this reluctance is the fear of a “flood” of immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe, who as cheap labor would displace local workers, thereby causing economic and social dislocations.²⁹ Again, Jörg Haider is a good example. He has long opposed eastern enlargement arguing that “from the moment we open our borders, 200,000 people will come here, settle, and look for jobs,”³⁰ and the equally telling statement that “enlargement is a declaration of war on all industrious and other hardworking people in Austria. We demand that the question of enlargement be removed from the EU’s agenda,” made as late as 1998.³¹ Haider is not so much concerned with enlargement’s effects on Austrian identity, rather than with the welfare factor. This tendency is supported by the assumption that since all the Central and Eastern European candidates have a majority of Christian population, the social tensions that Islam could generate would be avoided. In general, it appears that whenever cultural differences with

²⁷ Frank Schimmelfennig, “The Double Puzzle of EU Enlargement: Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action, and the Decision to Expand to the East,” ARENA Working Papers WP 99/15. http://www.arena.uio.no/publications/wp99_15.htm. 9 July 2001.

²⁸ Even though support for enlargement among the member states’ citizens has grown by 8% during the second part of 2001, the average level of support throughout the EU is only 51%, with the highest being in Sweden (69%), and the lowest in France (39%). For more detailed data, see Eurobarometer56 (Autumn 2001). Annex B1. Brussels: European Commission Press, 2002.

²⁹ For example, in 1997, an average of 57% of EU citizens thought that there were too many foreigners living in their country, with the highest rate in Greece with 84% and the lowest in Ireland – 17%. An average of 66% thought that people coming from Central and Eastern Europe who wish to work in the EU should be accepted with restrictions, compared to 17% who thought that they should be accepted without restrictions, and 14% percent who thought that they should not be accepted at all. European Commission. Results of “Continuous Tracking” Surveys of European Union (September 1996 to January 1997). <http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg10/epo/eo/eo10/eo10gra.pdf>.

³⁰ “Jörg Haider, Austria’s (and Europe’s) Border Guard,” The Economist 11 July 1998:55.

³¹ Jörg Haider, qtd. in Lykke Friis, “Eastern Enlargement, Schengen, JHA and All That...”, 1.

the CEECs are invoked, they refer to the infusion and strengthening of liberal values, something that is not a given, but rather a continuing process. This is quite different from the cultural fundamentalism through which immigration is rendered a threat to the identity of EU societies.

Culturalist discourses emphasize that relations between cultures are inherently hostile and mutually destructive because ethnocentrism is innate to human nature. In order to avoid conflict between different cultures, it is best to keep them apart. Thus, cultural fundamentalism legitimizes the exclusion of foreigners,³² which is particularly evident in the case of Muslim immigrants and asylum seekers. In the case of the Central and Eastern European countries, this kind of discourse has been largely absent, with most of the emphasis on the legacies of communism, including political culture.

The development of political culture is intimately linked to the internalization of liberal democratic values, as required by the accession criteria. The conditionality of accession is the primary instrument through which the candidate countries are becoming more like “them”, that is, the current member states. The desire of the current members to see not only the candidates, but also the near abroad, become more like “one of us” is understandable.³³ The successful transmission of liberal norms to Central and Eastern Europe is in the interest not only of international organizations and entities, such as the EU, but beneficial for the member states of the European Union as well, since it could bring material benefits by creating a zone of peace and stability with consolidated democracies. The choice of countries to be admitted by 2004, and perhaps more importantly, the exclusion of Bulgaria and Romania from this round, are telling of the strategy of privileging those countries that have internalized the values constituting the liberal collective identity of the EU with full membership. The *acquis communautaire* takes on the role of a blue print for the domestic political development of the candidates, and on building identities based upon civic values rather than ethnicity or religion. The paradox that emerges is that the exclusion of Bulgaria and Romania due to problems they experience with establishing market economies, contradicts the foundational myth of the EU in view of the fact that these are the countries that are located in a geographically volatile region and in need of support for their democracies, as was the case of the Greek and Iberian accessions in the 1980s.

The perception of threat from Central and Eastern European migration after enlargement is thus rooted mainly in the fear of large inflows of cheap labor. The rationale behind the fears from an influx of immigrants is not without merit: the economic situation following the democratic revolutions of 1989 was rather bleak, and the wage differentials between the most prosperous CEECs and poorest EU members still remain significant. Furthermore, there was the apprehension that the fragile processes of democratization and marketization could collapse, leading to instability in the region. The possibility that ethnic conflicts might explode and spread materialized in the former Yugoslavia, leading to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, some of whom sought refuge in Western Europe, particularly Germany. For countries such as Spain, Portugal, and France these threats were mirrored in the fear of immigration from the Maghreb countries, which presented an even higher perceived threat in identity terms. The fear of trans-border crime

³² Verena Stolke, “New Rhetorics of Exclusion in Europe,” *International Social Science Journal*. 59: (1999): 25-27.

³³“Enlargement of the European Union: Impacts on the EU, the Candidates and the ‘Next Neighbors,” *ECSA Review* 14.1 (Winter 2001): 2-7.

came from the supposition that the newly democratic countries in Central and Eastern Europe, experiencing deep economic crises and having relatively inefficient judicial systems, would become breeding grounds for organized crime, which could then be exported to the European Union.³⁴

Indeed, following the securitization rhetoric of EU officials, and especially member states' leaders, the opening up of the Eastern bloc was seen as threatening to the security of the internal market primarily through immigration and crime. Although instances of crime by themselves present threats to individuals and not to society at large, rising crime rates are perceived as destabilizing to the domestic public order. For instance, separate crime incidents committed by illegal immigrants in Italy provide opportunities for right-wing groups to argue for stricter immigration laws, giving them wide public exposure, and a rise in electoral fortunes.³⁵

Immigration from the East

Migration studies show that labor movements depend on a variety of factors, broadly grouped as “push” and “pull”, which interact in complex ways, making it difficult to reliably estimate the flows of labor across borders. Generally, these factors include the income gap between the sending and receiving countries, the situation of the labor markets and the demand for services in these countries, proximity, tradition and networks, ethnic and political problems, cultural and linguistic barriers, and expectations.³⁶ Combinations of these factors determine the patterns of migration from the East as well as the geography of migration.

The number of migrants from the candidate countries constitutes a relatively small portion of the overall third-country migration to the EU. In 1999, the number of candidate country nationals who were legally employed in the EU was approximately 290,000 out of a total 5,280,000, or 6% of all foreign workers and 0.2% of the labor force. The majority of these workers – almost 70% - are in Germany and Austria, where they account for approximately 10% of all foreign workers, and 0.4 and 1.2% respectively of the total labor force. The number of undocumented workers and migrants is estimated at approximately 600,000, most of whom engage in short-term work while abroad (“working tourists”) or cross-border trading (“trading tourists”). The latter group are generally low-cost and flexible alternatives to local labor, in other words, the feared cheap labor competing with the local workers for scarce jobs, but some of them are engaged in areas already abandoned by the local labor, such as household tasks, care, and other personal services. During the 1990s, the total number of legal immigrants from the candidate countries to the European Union was approximately 830,000, or 15% from all legal immigrants from third-countries, and 0.2% of total EU residents. Hence, clearly the Central and Eastern European countries have not been a major source of immigration to the EU³⁷, and in fact, have fallen short of the expectation. The prevailing pattern of migration from the East appears to be short- or medium-term, with the goal of short-term or seasonal work, and concentrated in Central Europe.

³⁴ Friis, “Eastern Enlargement, Schengen, JHA, and All That,”4.

³⁵“A Few Bad Apples,” *The Economist*, 13-19 Jan 2001: 50-51.

³⁶ European Commission. Information Note: The Free Movement of Workers in the Context of Enlargement. Annex 1. Brussels. (6 March 2001): 26-28.

³⁷ *Ibid.* 29-30.

The Securitization of Migration and Policy Implications

Despite the empirical reality, immigration remains a contested issue, allowing for the resurgence of right-wing parties and groups in some EU countries. Anti-immigrant groups ranging from labor organizations to right-wing political parties and organizations, advocate more restrictive immigration policies, and are particularly opposed to the free movement of persons from some Central European countries after their accession.³⁸

The introduction of security into the discourse of migration further affects policy-making in this field. The convergence of restrictive measures at the European level has been made possible by presenting immigration as uncontrollable and thus a potential security threat. As a result, policies of stricter border controls are seen as a response to security problems and instruments for protecting society and the internal market as a whole. Scholars have explored how political elites try to manipulate certain cultural or political attributes in order to exclude immigrants.³⁹ For example, Haider has called for a total halt to immigration during an election campaign speech: “There are far too many illegal immigrants, crimes and drug dealers – none of them have a place here in Austria. This has to be our priority, to eliminate them uncompromisingly.”⁴⁰ At their core, these statements contain Haider’s particular ideas about the boundaries between “us” and “them.” They also hint at the kind of immigration and asylum policies that he considers necessary. The particular position of Austria as one of the major recipients of immigrants from the East created a particular economic and cultural setting, which contributed to the rise of the Haider’s Freedom Party to power in the late 1990s. More importantly, his position resonated with a significant portion of Austrian society, which saw itself as the door for Eastern and Central Europeans to the European Union.

At the EU-wide level, the position of political parties in the European Parliament along the left-right ideological continuum is linked to their attitudes toward immigration as well as policy positions.⁴¹ Within the member states, overtly anti-immigrant political parties fuel and perpetuate fears of undesirable economic and social impacts caused by the unchecked flows of immigrants. Based upon the appeal of their stringent anti-immigration and anti-asylum platforms, right-wing parties in Austria and Italy, for example, have been elected into federal and regional governments. Even more troublesome is the use of anti-immigrant rhetoric by mainstream parties. In Denmark, the new government, led by the Liberal Party and supported by the far-right Danish People’s Party, raised concerns when it made anti-immigrant pledges during a parliamentary campaign. The campaign waged by the Liberal Party focused on an ad, which featured a rape case after which the immigrant offenders received relatively light sentences. The picture showed the young men leaving the courthouse, with the caption “It’s time for a change.” In power, the new government has promised improvements in the welfare state and pegging taxes, and presented cuts in

³⁸ Stratfor (Strategic Forecasting). “The Return of ‘Fortress Europe?’”
<http://www.stratfor.com/home/0110312230.htm>.

³⁹ See, for example, Mehmet Ugur, “Freedom of Movement vs. Exclusion: A Reinterpretation of the ‘Insider’ – ‘Outsider’ Divide in the European Union,” International Migration Review 29.4 (1995): 964-999.

⁴⁰ Kate Connolly, “All Illegal Migrants Out, Says Haider,” The Guardian 25 Oct 2000.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk>.

⁴¹ See Gallya Lahav, “Ideological and Party Constraints on Immigration Attitudes in Europe,” Journal of Common Market Studies. 35.3 (1997): 377-406.

immigrants' benefits as the means to accomplish these objectives, along with the curtailment of their right to bring in foreign spouses, and tightening of asylum policies.⁴² Recent polls in the Netherlands show that more than a third of young Dutch plan to vote for an openly racist far-right politician in this year's general election who has promised to drastically cut down the number of immigrants and asylum seekers, and who has also been credited with turning immigration into an acceptable topic for political debate, i.e., politicizing it.⁴³

The overriding objective of the migration policies is a spillover from the creation of the single market, which required lifting of internal controls. To compensate for the lifting of these controls, external border controls have to be strengthened and standardized, and are accompanied by an array of measures designed to improve coordination within the Schengen area. Since the mid-1980s, when freedom of movement was recognized as a key element of the internal market, cooperation among the member states on migration issues gradually increased, culminating in the integration of the Schengen *acquis* into the supranational first pillar of the European Union.

These efforts to formulate common policies to deal with the anticipated problems, including the "flood" of immigrants from the former Eastern bloc, were spurred by the perception of a common threat. For example, the eastern enlargement was arguably the most important factor behind the Justice and Home Affairs reform and its incorporation into the Treaty of Amsterdam. The Europeanization of policies in this area, and particularly the partial communitarization of the JHA pillar, enabled the member states to reinforce their restrictive policies and law-enforcement approach to immigration and to impose their security agenda on the candidates for enlargement as well.⁴⁴

Enlargement itself can be seen as one such policy. Lykke Friis argues that by enlarging the EU its borders would move to the east, effectively creating a *cordon sanitaire* between the member states and the near abroad, where the problems governments face are even more severe, while simultaneously giving the CEECs incentives to reduce the permeability of their borders and strengthen their judicial systems. At the same time, however, by taking in these countries without preparing them to adopt and implement the JHA *acquis*, the EU would in fact be internalizing the very same problem against which it was trying to protect itself, facilitated by the visa-free regime, and the free movement of labor after accession. By insisting that the candidates adopt the JHA *acquis*, the EU could postpone enlargement, and minimize the import of security problems once the CEECs became members. In the meantime, growing stability in the region and resumed economic growth would reduce the number of immigrants.⁴⁵

⁴² Stephen Castle, "Neighbors Wary of Danish Voters' Move to the Right," The Independent 22 Nov 2001. <http://www.independent.co.uk>; See also Andrew Osborn, "Dutch Youth Back Far-Right Immigration Policy," The Guardian 23 Feb 2002. <http://www.guardian.co.uk>. "Editorial Comment: Danish Welcome," Financial Times 6 Feb 2002. <http://www.ft.com>.

Andrew Osborn, "Dutch Youth Back Far-Right Immigration Policy," The Guardian 23 Feb 2002. <http://www.guardian.co.uk>.

⁴³ Andrew Osborn, "Dutch Youth Back Far-Right Immigration Policy," The Guardian 23 Feb 2002. <http://www.guardian.co.uk>.

⁴⁴ See Theodora Kostakopoulou, "The 'Protective Union': Change and Continuity in Migration Law and Policy in Post-Amsterdam Europe," Journal of Common Market Studies, 38.3 (2000): 497-518.

⁴⁵ Friis 5-7.

As it stands now, the European Commission's proposal stipulates a seven-year transition period for the free movement of labor after the accession of the CEEC, the same restriction that the Iberian countries were subjected to. A number of factors, however, make the situation more complex than it may appear, namely, both immigration and the free movement of labor are essential if demographically aging Europe is to grow economically in the long run. The problem of a declining working population along with a growing aging population⁴⁶ will make it even harder to sustain Europe's welfare state without immigrant workers to help pay for it. Many leaders are recognizing that the policy of "zero immigration" is no longer sustainable and the calls for the relaxation of immigration policies are growing. Some governments are suggesting the possibility that they may open their doors immediately after accession or limit the transition periods to only a couple of years. For instance, last fall the state premier of the *länder* of Saxony called the transition period "unrealistic and unsustainable," and that "Western Europeans' fear that cheap laborers from eastern Europe will flood their countries and take away their jobs are mainly due to ignorance."⁴⁷ The estimates of potential migration into the EU from the candidate countries varies widely, ranging from 120,000 in the first year and declining to 50,000 over the first 10 years, to 380,000 in the first year and declining to 200,000 over ten years.⁴⁸ Not only has the anticipated flood of immigrants not materialized, but the CEECs are no longer expected to be a major source of immigration capable of meeting the demographic needs of European markets.

The events of September 11 and the crackdown on terrorist cells in Europe have given further legitimacy to the calls for curtailing immigration, which could influence the debate over the free movement of labor from the Central and Eastern European countries after their accession. The European Union's security is intimately linked with the way cooperation in the areas of immigration and asylum with the candidates for membership and, equally importantly, with its new near abroad. Successful and effective regulation of these issue areas is key in preventing illegal immigration and perhaps trans-border crime.

Conclusion

The securitization of migration shows how political actors define the political debate on the issue, which can then be translated into policies that ultimately bear upon the criteria for membership in a particular group. The possibility of large-scale migration from Central and Eastern Europe following the fall of the Berlin Wall led the EU to react by tightening its immigration and asylum policies. These developments took place in conjunction with connecting immigration to terrorism, organized crime, and drug-trafficking, and thereby including it within the regulatory framework that dealt with issues of national security. Migration was thus transformed from a managerial issue into a security one, with policy implications. This transformation was facilitated by the particular historical context as well

⁴⁶ The European Commission estimates that the EU's working population will decline to 223 million people by 2025 from 225 million in 1995, whereas the over-65 year olds will reach 22% of the population by 2025, up from 15% in 1995. Deborah Hargreaves, "Europe Reinvented Part One: Demography is Destiny for the Old World," *Financial Times* 15 Jan 2001. <http://www.ft.com>.

⁴⁷ "Premier Say Transition Periods Are Unrealistic," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 4 Oct. 2001. <http://www.faz.com>.

⁴⁸ European Commission. *Information Note: The Free Movement of Workers in the Context of Enlargement*. Annex 3. Brussels. (6 March 2001): 34. The main recipients of these immigrants would be Germany with 65%, followed by Austria with 12%. "Will Western Europe Receive the Great Unwashed – One Day?" *The Economist* 2 May 2001. <http://www.economist.com>.

as by the desire of political elites to set the political agenda, which would then enable them to propose means for solution. The securitization of migration also blurs the boundaries between legitimate governance and political exploitation of the issue.

The debate on immigration and asylum is also about the criteria for legitimate belonging in a particular group. Cultural identity is considered the most important factor in the survival of society as the sets of ideas, customs, and practices which large groups share indicate the perseverance of these identity groups. The right to welfare provisions is also linked to membership in a group - in this case, citizenship – and reinforced by identity in the political discourse. This paper has argued that the securitization of immigration from Central and Eastern Europe has occurred mainly along the latter criteria, as it was seen as a danger to the socioeconomic welfare of West European societies in general. This concurs with the European Union's official argument that enlargement is about ending the division of the continent to ensure peace and prosperity.

Migration has taken on a new importance following the events of September 11th. The focus on combating terrorism, while vitally important, carries the risk of an increased selectiveness of the applicability of the right to asylum and immigration in the name of national security. That is why the seemingly inevitable eastern enlargement necessitates further efforts in assisting the Central and Eastern European candidates to strengthen their borders. Cooperation with its new buffer zone of candidate countries and especially with its new near abroad, without creating a new dividing line on the continent is thus vital for the European Union.