



PAPERS BARCELONA 2018 CONFERENCE

■ **Panel 33: Integration in times of economic decline. Migrant inclusion in Southern European societies: trends and theoretical implications**

Chairs: Irene Ponzio (FIERI) and Claudia Finotelli (Complutense University of Madrid)

Discussant: Tiziana Caponio (FIERI and University of Turin) and Blanca Garcés-Mascareñas (CIDOB)

Panel Abstract:

Despite the large amount of literature on migrants' integration, little is known about integration in times of economic decline. In fact, as it happened after the oil crisis in 1973, also after the Great Recession that began in 2008 research on immigrants' integration patterns has been limited compared to the literature produced on the effects on migrants' mobility. This panel is aimed at contributing to fill this research gap by exploring the nexus between the Great Recession and integration processes in Southern Europe. With this purpose in mind, we will present some results from the JEMS Special Issue 'Integration in times of economic decline' stemming from the work of the IMISCOE Research Initiative 'Integration crises. Analysing integration processes in an age of global instability'. The questions we are going to address are the following: What happened to immigrants' integration in Southern European countries in the years of crisis? And, more generally, what can Southern Europe, regarded as an observatory of crucial relevance, tell us about immigrants' integration in times of economic decline? Considering different dimensions of migrant integration, i.e. the socio-economic dimension and the cultural dimensions meant as perceptions of migrants in politics and society, the presented papers will show that in Southern Europe the cultural dimension of integration has apparently been more resilient to the crisis than the economic dimension. In this respect, they will not only shed light on integration dimensions' different responsiveness to economic downturns, but also contribute to further develop the theories on migrant integration by testing both acknowledged and innovative hypotheses, and refining conceptual tools.

Paper 1:

Authors: Sebastian Rinken (Institute for Advanced Social Studies (IESA), Spanish Council for Scientific Research (CSIC) and Manuel Trujillo-Carmona (CSIC)

Title: The 'intergroup paradox' in Andalusia (Spain): an explanatory model

The widely renowned theory of group-threat predicts antiimmigrant backlash when immigration societies experience economic downturns. However, despite skyrocketing unemployment and widespread misgivings about immigration's impact, no discernible wave of anti-immigrant sentiment has emerged in Spain; the ensuing puzzle accentuates in the southernmost region of Andalusia, where

jobless rates surged beyond 35%. This study examines why anti-immigrant animosity remained stable at low levels, even receded, amidst such inauspicious conditions. Our explanatory model expects increasingly adverse pressures of perceived group-threat on natives' sentiment toward immigrants to be compensated by increasingly benign impact of various benevolent predispositions and situational perceptions. To test these assumptions, we compute a repeated logistic regression model, discern coefficient from sample effects and examine time-trends among vulnerable populations; data were collected at the crisis' onset (2008) and nadir (2013). Defying expectations, neither perceived group-threat nor principled pro-immigration credos (Universalism; pro-diversity) were found to affect the evolution of anti-immigrant sentiment appreciably throughout the economic downturn; however, ideological polarisation and elite-bashing yielded increasingly benign impact. These findings suggest that intergroup tensions were kept latent by a dynamics of political competition that has side-lined immigration as salient social issue: the prevalence of anti-austerity, anti-corruption political rhetoric contributed to pre-empting anti-immigrant sentiment.

Paper 2:

Authors: Simon McMahon (Coventry University)

Title: The politics of immigration during an economic crisis: analysing political debate on immigration in Southern Europe

Since 2008, dramatic economic crises have brought falling GDP, rapidly rising unemployment and pressure on government to limit public spending to Spain and Italy. These are two countries with similar experiences of migration but quite different politics of immigration over the past two decades, with public order and security concerns coming to the fore in Italy during the 1990s and 2000s, whilst there was a general avoidance of the issue in Spain. Spain and Italy therefore provide a useful opportunity to examine the interaction between the economic crisis and political debates on immigration. Examining political debates on immigration in the parliaments of both countries from 2008 to 2011, this paper finds that during the crisis there was not a mainstream negative politicisation of immigration in these countries, despite high migration flows, rising high unemployment, aggressive austerity from government and uncertainty regarding the economy. This is explained by showing how the political debate in each country is mediated by different configurations of public opinion, institutions and discursive structures.

Paper 3:

Authors: Lucinda Fonseca, Jorge Malheiros and Alina Esteves (IGOT, University of Lisbon)

Title: Labour market integration of immigrants in Portugal in times of austerity: resilience, in situ responses and re-emigration

The austerity regime implemented in Portugal to face the financial and economic crisis caused readjustments in the country's productive structure and labour market with an impact on immigrants' life worlds. This paper aims at analysing the consequences of the crisis in the lives of third-country nationals living in Portugal, reflecting particularly on the impact on their integration process, understood as economic incorporation, in a context of increasing work precariousness. Special attention will be given to the resilience of immigrants visible in their responses to the labour market constraints, namely through their choices of geographic (im)mobility and also the implementation of strategies to

‘normalise’ their lives. Starting with a brief reference to the meaning of integration in Portugal in a context of crisis, we draw on data from two research projects, arguing that despite the increased hardship, the resilience of foreign workers is considerable and they still think it is worth coming to Portugal. The strategies adopted may be either in situ or implying onward migration, resulting from the combination of context opportunities and individual agency. Factors like legal status, education and having relatives abroad play a moderate role in this process.

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