The Immigration Issue in the Field of Sociological Research

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ABSTRACT

Concerns about continuous migration flows in recent decades have been politically adequately communicated globally by European politics. However, no European country has developed a social policy with appropriate precautionary measures to address logistical and political-cultural problems arising from the movement of large numbers of displaced people, problems that concern not only the host countries but also the countries of origin of immigrants. And although discussions at the level of studies on the immigration problem and its effects on the dominant culture have started too early, there is still a lack of research on the cultural side of migration and its implications for the political cultures of the host countries. Only isolated cases of reactions and discussions about the immigration policy of countries that welcome immigrants can be found in the literature. The present study first describes the situation that has been developed in Greece and Europe in the last five years by the increased number of refugees and migrants, which began to arrive, mainly through the Mediterranean, in Greece with a distant destination in the countries of Central and Northern Europe. Moreover, the study focuses on the areas of research that science needs to explore and study, in order for European policy to draw the necessary elements to formulate a strategic policy for the integration of migrants in host countries.

Keywords: immigration issue, problems, refugees, research.

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I. REFUGEES - IMMIGRANTS: CONCERNS ABOUT SOCIAL COHESION AND CULTURAL VALUES

Since 2015 an increased number of refugees and immigrants, mainly through the Mediterranean, began to arrive in Greece with a distant destination in the countries of Central and Northern Europe. In Europe and at the center of political debates, European immigration or the refugee crisis was recorded as a global event [1], [2].

Greece and especially the islands with the largest numbers of refugees (Lesvos, Chios, Samos, Kastelorizo) have faced and continue to face unfamiliar images, such as overcrowded boats that do not even meet the rules of navigation, makeshift camps and caravans of refugees from infants up to elderly underprivileged, corpses of people of any age and various forms of memory and gaze of people who were necessarily displaced from their homes. These images went around the world and invaded through the media in every home and every family, often provoking a public debate about the horror experienced by the displaced but also about the indignation of the natives in the face of the weaknesses of the European political system to receive and implement policy strategies to address the issue.

In 2015, there was a large increase in the number of refugees worldwide, reaching 1.8 million people. In the field of politics in Germany in particular and in Europe in general, there are constant controversial political debates on issues related to homelessness, asylum, immigration, making them the main issues on the agenda. The political problem of how the number of asylum seekers across Europe will be processed overlaps with all other policy issues in Europe [3]. However, the issue of immigration is constantly widening as inflows into Europe increase and overcome moral dilemmas in the face of logistical or political-administrative problems, which transnational Europe has failed to resolve, resulting in conflicts often accompanied by violence. All these new social and political developments in recent years have led to an increase in the number of immigration studies. For Greece, which is primarily a country of reception and support for refugees and immigrants, a key issue is their proper reception and recognition among those arriving of illegal immigrants and their return to their country.

II. THE REFUGEE AND THE ASYLUM. BRIEF HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The first International Refugee Organization (IRO) was founded in 1947 and focused on the registration, repatriation and relocation of refugees after World War II. The Agency is

dissolved four years later due to financial problems. The work of the IRO is undertaken and continued by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), providing international humanitarian assistance to refugees and seeking solutions to their problems [4]. The international protection provided by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is aimed at ensuring the fundamental human rights of every human being, especially those who are forced to flee their country or expelled from it.

Regarding the legal status of refugees, the predominant international binding text is the Geneva Convention of 1951, which defines the rights of refugees as a necessity arising from World War II. This Convention includes the definition of a refugee, the type of legal protection, the rights and obligations of a refugee, groups of persons not entitled to refugee status (e.g. terrorists) and the definition of non-repatriation of a refugee to a country where there is a fear of persecution [5].

According to the Convention *refugee* (now in force) is considered any person who, due to a justified fear of persecution due to race, religion, nationality, social class or political beliefs, is outside his country and cannot or does not want to enjoy the protection of his country, because he is afraid [6]. Therefore, the refugee is separated from the immigrant, who leaves the country of his / her choice and for reasons that do not coincide with the above. He can return to his country whenever he wishes, in opposition to the refugee [7].

The European Union has a common policy on asylum, subsidiary protection and temporary protection for all asylum seekers in need of international protection and the principle of non-refoulement. Formal EU policy is based on the Geneva Convention (1951), the 1967 Protocol with reference to refugee status and other formal conventions [8]. In the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (since 2009 with the Treaty of Lisbon it has become legally binding) Articles 18 and 19 refer to the Right to Asylum, group deportations and the principle of non-refoulement [9].

The Common European Asylum System (CESA) was established by a decision of the Tampere European Council in 1999 with a view to establishing a common asylum procedure and framework for granting asylum or subsidiary protection on equal terms [10]. The establishment of KESA strengthened the legal framework for the examination of asylum seekers with equal criteria and the provision of the necessary living conditions [11] (see Asylum Procedure, Recognition, Reception Conditions Directive, Dublin and Eurdac Regulations, but also financially with the European Refugee Fund (Council Decision 2000/596 / EC) and the European Asylum, Immigration and Integration Fund [12] on emergency funding and refugee crisis management (2014-2020). The implementation of the Common European Asylum System is overseen by EASO, an independent expertise center (EU Regulation No. 439/2010) which also provides further support, such as in the areas of information, emergencies, etc.).

Furthermore, the European Union with various regulations and agreements to date (Dublin II, Dublin III) is making efforts to better address the problems arising in the reception and asylum conditions of each country or even to reduce migration flows to Europe through decision-making. on the issue of migrant trafficking [13],[14].

III. IMMIGRATION AND DILEMMAS. THOSE INCOMING IN GREECE

Observing the situation from 2015 until today, migrants and refugees are trapped on Greek islands or in inland reception centers, living in miserable conditions, with insufficient medical care and in facilities that cannot serve such a large number of people. Women complain of sexual and physical abuse, insecurity prevails, a large percentage of guests have symptoms of depression and anxiety, there are many cases of people with post-traumatic stress disorder and children with many psychological problems [15], [16], [17].

Refugee / immigration has been reduced as the most important problem in our country since September 2019 and after according to a recent survey by Metron Analysis (AM ESR 4) (18-20 / 11/2019) [18]. However, an end, as a point in time when the immigration issue ends, does not seem to be possible. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees [19] in 2015 the number of refugees-displaced worldwide increased significantly due to a) the civil war in Syria, b) the conflicts in countries such as Iraq, Libya, Nigeria and Burundi c) of the oldest conflicts in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, Yemen and Afghanistan (1.8 million refugees worldwide). Since 2015, there has been an increase in refugee flows by sea and land in Greece, a fact that has made it necessary to comply with the regulations of the European Union, regarding the practices for the reception of refugees, their access to the asylum application process, the care for the coverage of the basic needs, their installation in reception centers, the planning of the education of minors, etc. The Reception and Identification Service (Law 3907) has been established since 2011 under the General Reception Secretariat of the former Ministry of Immigration Policy, with the main task of recording, supporting and providing appropriate reception conditions for immigrants arriving in our country. The project is provided, in addition to the Central Service, by the Regional Reception and Identification Services, such as the mobile reception and identification units (K.M.Y.T.), the reception and identification centers (K.Y.T.), the open structures of temporary reception or temporary accommodation of persons who are applying for asylum or wish to return to their country respectively [20]. In Greece, in addition to the official accommodation structures, informal accommodation structures with poor living conditions for refugees, such as in Eidomeni, Piraeus and Elliniko (no longer exists since 2017). Refugees are also housed under the auspices of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (2017) in both hotel units and safe areas (separate areas for special protection) in temporary accommodation facilities for unaccompanied minors (maximum stay 3 months) [21].

Following the signing of the EU-Turkey Joint Declaration [22], refugee flows to Greece decreased, while the closure of the borders in the Balkans [23] significantly reduced the arrivals of refugees and migrants crossing the Mediterranean to Europe. This has resulted in thousands of refugees being trapped on the islands, without even being able to enter the hinterland. At the same time, it is pointed out that the number

of deaths in the Mediterranean has increased dramatically, with an average of six people dying in the Mediterranean every day [24].

The accumulation of large numbers of refugees and migrants in reception centers and structures creates living conditions without adequate ventilation, accumulation of waste and waste, shortages of drinking water, miserable sanitary conditions, dangerous living conditions dependent on quality and climate quantity of food [25],[26]. To all of the above are added racist attacks [27], conflicts between which violent outbursts or even racist reactions of indigenous people who lurk for a long time projecting latent problems both to the population living in and around the reception centers. [28], [29].

IV. CONCERNS ABOUT THE INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS: THE FIELD OF RESEARCH

Concerns about the ongoing migratory flows of recent decades have been politically communicated globally by the European Union. However, no European country has a social policy that has taken precautionary measures to address both the political and administrative problems that have arisen due to the displacement of such a large number of displaced people, both in the host countries and in other countries. origin of immigrants [30], [31]. As Pickel, Röder & Blätte [32] point out, discussions at the level of studies on the immigration problem and its effects on the dominant culture have started very early, for example in the works of S. Huntington [33] *Clash of Civilizations*, by P. Collier [34] *Exodus. How Migrations is changing our World* or even by Th. Sarrazin [35] *Deutschland schafft sich ab*. Thilo Sarrazin's latest study discusses the problems that arise at the cultural level (culture and identity) but also the consequences of the influx of immigrants into the political, economic and social life of the host country in both jobs and to successful integration into the labor market. In particular, there is a special discussion in the case of immigrants of Muslim origin regarding, mainly, their ability to integrate into a democratic, modern, Christian Europe with a different cultural background. The scientific debate extends to hypotheses and arguments linking the migration of Muslims to the spread of right-wing popular social groups and parties in Europe, the negative attitude and xenophobia and Islamophobia of citizens. In fact, the fact that far-right parties in Europe are on the rise and showing success shows the ability of their supporters to exploit, on the one hand, the immigration issue in terms of the consequent "alienation" of indigenous culture and, on the other, religion and the controversy over religious rights (headscarves and minarets) and the role of Islam in mobilizing the population for right-wing and far-right populist positions [36], [37], [38], [39].

The field of sociological research at least for the treaty that has been formed in Greece and in Europe in the last five years should be the will of the citizens regarding the integration of immigrants, their attitudes towards immigrants, refugees and Muslims, the practices with regard to the reception, housing and integration of refugees, as well as the prevailing attitudes and expectations of immigrants [40], [41]. It is noteworthy that political socialization or adaptation to political values in Western European democracies seems to be different for immigrants born and raised in non-democratic systems than for immigrants from democracies [42].

Also, an important area to study is the social conditions that develop after immigration to the host countries (as researched by Foroutan, et. al. in Germany in terms of religion and identity [43]), and in particular the social and cultural interactions (friendly attitudes, attitudes of rejection and acceptance, tolerance of various elements, etc.) between immigrants and the indigenous population. This field for Greece is a particularly difficult research condition, given that our country is an intermediate destination for immigrants / refugees and is even more difficult in the perspective of creating closed reception centers.

It should not be overlooked that the formulation of a policy of integration strategy lacks research on the cultural side of migration and its implications for the political cultures of the host countries. Studies are noted in the literature, but they compare individual cases of reactions and discussions about the immigration policy of countries that receive immigrants.For example, we mention the following: Polly J. Diven & S. Immerfall (2018), Hospitality or hostility? Explaining the German and U.S. Responses to the Syrian Refugee Crisis, *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft*, Vol.12, Issue 1, pp 189–209 with reference to Germany and the USA; S. Münch (2018), Integrationsdiskurs in Deutschland und Großbritannien zwischen Dichotomisierung und Super-Diversität, *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft*, Vol. 12, Issue 1, pp 173–188, with reference to the United Kingdom. U. Hunger & S. Krannich (2018), Vor- und Nachteile einer punktebasierten Zuwanderungssteuerung für den Arbeitsmarkt. Learn from an international Vergleich der Zuwanderungsregelungen klassischer Einwanderungsländer, *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft*, Vol. 12, Issue 1, pp 229–245, with reference to Canada, Australia and New Zealand in order to draw policy conclusions in Germany. D. Kubiak (2018), Der Fall „Ostdeutschland" „Einheitsfiktion" als Herausforderung für die Integration am Fallbeispiel der Ost-West-Differenz, *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft*, Vol. 12, Issue 1, pp 25–42 with reference to the East West Germany. R. Böhme (2018), Ausbildungsintegration von Geflüchteten zwischen politishen Rahmenbedingungen und professellen Erfordernissen. Eine vergleichende Analysis von policy gaps, *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft*, Vol. 12, Issue 1, pp 59-73 with reference to refugees in recent years in Germany. B. Glorius & A.-C. Schondelmayer (2018), Perspectives on Refugee Migration in the East and West. Ein vergleichender Blick auf kommunale Integrationspraxis, Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft, Volume 12, Issue 1, pp 75–92, with reference to the reception of refugees in the rural areas of Saxony and Baden-Württemberg.

In connection with the above, the essential question is how migration can affect social cohesion and the long-term existence of democracy. The question is how and when the social integration of immigrants in a democratic Europe can

be considered successful. Certainly, there are multiple processes of adaptation of all participants to a social context, as history has shown, since complete homogeneity in modern societies is not realistic. Cultural pluralism is based on the acceptance of a common basic consensus on common cultural values, if we aim to preserve the social edifice [44]. The existence of cultural relativism ensures the acceptance of the value of all cultures without prioritizing cultures and their achievements [45]. But is that enough to maintain social cohesion and the stability of a political community? According to Lipset [46] for a society to thrive, it needs a system of values that is supported by both legitimate institutions (political parties, the press) and a set of political leadership in power. On the other hand, stabilizing the functioning of society requires a certain level of economic development and an effective and legally acceptable political system. Therefore, to avoid the collapse of the social edifice, the legitimacy of some of its foundations is required. Such foundations in modern emerging societies are the democratic political culture and the tolerance for the diversity and diversity of all members of the social context. Both the new members added to the existing social condition and the previous ones must recognize these foundations. The interaction of immigration and the existing social / political culture and its outcome will determine the functioning of modern democracies in the long run. A decisive role in this process seems to be played by the degree of acceptance of the questioning of the dominance of national culture by the previous members and the positive disposition of all to build new cultural standards in a democratic social environment.

The fact that countries, mainly in Eastern Europe, have a negative attitude towards immigrants is also evident from their refusal to allow immigrants to enter their country. In the literature, the discussion focuses on the possibility of a group prejudice against Muslim immigrants with substantial references to cultural differences, forming a defensive stance on changes in postmodern society caused by the conditions of globalization [47], examine whether there is a general tendency for skepticism and defense against Islam and its members in Europe and what could be the reasons for such an attitude in the population. In making a comparison, they find a very broad sense of identity threat that leads to fear of Islamic citizens and Muslims. Paraphilosophical organizations and the media have a significant influence in this direction. This creates an increased potential for conflict in European societies that threatens social cohesion and political beliefs in the future].

Differences in values are the main issue of discussion. These differences also signal the refusal of the acceptance of immigrants in the European area even when the risk is high or when it results in sanctions of large organizations, e.g. of the European Union or even its possible division or dissolution (cf. P. Berger's [48] study on the European Refugee Distribution Mechanism (EVM) in September 2015 and the Visegrád Regional Group (V4) which opposed the Council decision and refused to implement it). In this context, the scientific debate raises a variety of questions about the integration of immigrants into a different culture for them, immigrants in whom religious identity plays a decisive role in their lives. How will groups with different values or standards be integrated or integrated in a shaped social

context and on what basis will the rights of different social groups be secured or, finally, what mechanisms of action will ensure the order and organization of the social system (such as and how easy lawlessness will be at all times (Durkheim) [48] (Koopmans et al. 2005). From what common values will the democratic political system derive its legitimacy and effectiveness and how will it survive? To answer these questions requires a lot of empirical studies that will give a clear picture of the mechanisms of action, the resulting social interaction, and ways to ensure social cohesion, in order for integration to be successful.

In conclusion, in the field of sociological research, it is appropriate to focus on the attitudes of immigrants towards their political participation and on the attitudes of citizens towards these immigrants in the host country, in order to investigate whether and how the gradual acceptance and the building of new cultural constants (standards).

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