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Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria of Migrant Populations in Europe: The examples of local communities in Chios and Lesbos

Position Paper by
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Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria of Migrant Populations in Europe: The examples of local communities in Chios and Lesvos

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Abstract

Political instability around European borders has triggered a long-term, vast influx of immigrant population seeking asylum within the European Union. Hence, the main European institutions have placed this phenomenon as a top priority on their agenda so as to diminish the inflows, determine the future integration policies and resolve the semantic conflicts and differences. This paper is addressing those issues by attempting a bibliographic review of the existing working papers and resources. In addition, the working team has conducted a series of personal interviews with both residents and migrants so as to examine the opposing views and the criteria applied regarding social acceptance and rejection. The current reflection, may be used as a conceptual framework for understanding the social circumstances and the underlying dynamics of insular populations at the edge of the European frontier regarding immigration.

Keywords: Migration, Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria, EU Policy, Greece

1. Introduction

The set of reflections you are currently holding is trying to approach the question of the migration influx which has been aggravated within the past quinquennial, with an ample inflow of migrants arriving to Europe. This research tackles the case of the Greek islands and how migrants are viewed by the permanent residents this territory. The working team examines the case of Chios and Lesvos, two islands which have received a large proportion of the disfavored populations.

The analysis begins with a semantic analysis of the notional difference between the concepts of “border” and “frontier” and is extended to the notion of the “walls”, a term vastly used nowadays, within and outside of Europe. The paper continues with the **criteria** used subconsciously by the Greek residents

in order to choose between **inclusion and exclusion** of these populations and then follow the deductions made by a qualitative set of queries that was realized with the participation of 20 residents of these two islands in order to extract real-time opinions over the matter. Apart from these, an individual interview with a migrant was conducted in order to achieve a holistic view of the problem. As the paper advances, the four essential aspects that migration has impacted are discussed and analyzed, the current policy of the European Union, the social background of each migrant which plays a significant role in this integrating into the new society, the new demographic status of the European space after the arrival of the migrants and how the economy and the social insurance funds are affected and inflict them too.

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In the end, it was chosen to propose an active procedural framework which will boost executive effectiveness within the Union while soothing the hazardous effects of the current situations for all the stakeholders involved.

2. Semantic Clarification

The notions of *border* and *frontier*, etymologically are synonyms. However, nowadays people tend to use them in different contexts. Border is talking about a specific edge of a country or area and clearly marks the enclosed peninsula. Hence, it's an official property line that marks where one country/area begins and another ends. On the other hand the word "frontier" is far more general.

Therefore, it does not address to a specific edge but to a more broad territorial area. It is usually a district near the border line which can often be used as an index to a certain limit.

Moreover, it is crucial to understand that migration is often managed as a domestic concern marked by the responsibility held by interior ministries and associated agencies for the regulation of immigration. The European Union is the first international institution to address such an issue via a transnational effort. The common strategic alliance in such crucial issues giving meaning to international migration in its various forms can strongly influence the way minorities of contradictory political beliefs perceive the national efforts. This section further explores these territorial, organizational and conceptual borders. But how do the European perceive the notion of 'Border'?

At the heart of this question lies the attempt to reformulate the stereotypical image of the border as "wall" and its corresponding concept of the "exclusion" of the migrant. As it is widely known, such kind of literal "walls" have been built multiple times across the centuries, thus obstructing the movement of the universal civilization and the world. Certainly, the governmental proponents of physical walls do not dispute the stark fact that walls have and are often violent and exclusionary.

Quite the opposite: they seek to utilize such techniques and technologies of control within broader logics of governmentality and management, to understand the logics that drive states to construct walls in response to the displacement of the

migrants. By rethinking the concept of borders at a European level, it is possible to identify a common external frontier which will act as a filter of selective inclusion rather than a denying exclusion hurdle. Nowadays, globalization has both deepened and extended these dynamics and altered the effects they have. Thus, far from flattening the world and reducing the significance of borders, the contemporary diplomatic regime has erected exogenous 'walls' that boost discrimination. As a result, these changing forms of regulation, management, and control have in turn generated negative patterns of knowledge production both at national and European level. Yet, in order to understand this discrimination against individuals of non-European origin, it is crucial to enumerate the criteria that determine the acceptance/ rejection of a migrant.

Figure 1: *Chios' and Lesvos' location*



3. Inclusion and Exclusion criteria

Today, in ways that were taken-for-granted in the past, we must ask serious questions about the kinds of distinction that are being drawn between an "economic migrant" and an "asylum seeker," or between someone with legal papers and someone without, as these norms are more and more formalized but also marked by greater incoherence. However, past extensive research has defined the criteria of social inclusion/ exclusion.

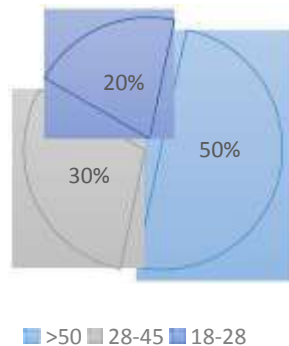
Briefly the criteria used by all past researchers can be categorized as follows:

- a) *Ability to speak the local language (or a globally accepted language)*

- b) *Respect towards national political institutions and laws.*
- c) *Feel a sense of gratitude to the hosting nation*
- d) *To share common religious beliefs*

These four main pillars were used during the personal interviews so as to extract the dynamics of the examined local communities.

Figure 2: Sample distribution per age group



4. Interview analysis and comparison

In order to take a closer look to how migration is viewed today, we conducted personal interviews with residents of remote islands located in the Greek – Turkish frontier. In particular, the main volume of subjects questioned reside in the islands of Chios and Lesbos.

These islands have received 65% of the total arrivals in Greece since 2014². In this paper, the working team used a bi-part approach by attempting a parallel examination of both local residents and migrants so as to provide a 360^o view to the current situation.

The islands mentioned are closely located to each other. Also, their distance from Turkey is 10 kilometers for Lesbos and 7 kilometers for Chios rendering them a possible refuge for migrants even during the winter tides. The map of northeastern Aegean Sea given in Figure 1 better illustrates the arguments exposed above.

I. Local Resident Interviews

The selected sample population totaled 20 individuals of different demographic, social and economic backgrounds. During the analysis of the results 3 main age groups have emerged. The reader may observe the distribution of the questioned subjects on Figure 2. Furthermore, Figure 3 demonstrates the occupation of the sample.

The structure of the interview had a methodic orientation towards the circumstances under which local residents would accept a migrant to live among them and on the other side, under which conditions they would reject them.

First of all, the first question posed, examined which are the prerequisites for the acceptance of a migrant. The answers given by the subjects may be categorized as follows:

- i) *Social Activity*
- ii) *Respect towards customs and traditions (including religion)*
- iii) *Talents that will grant employment*
- iv) *Healthy social interaction and education*
- v) *Truthful asylum need*

By those first findings the majority of the past research guidelines are validated. Albeit, another factor has emerged. According to the people questioned, the current economic crisis requires careful filtering in order to allocate the scarce resources to those in need (escaping political, social and religious violence).

The second question was of qualitative nature. It was formulated in such way so as to bias the subjects towards a negative comment and validate/ cancel their first response. During this process the majority of the subjects remained stable on their previous arguments and comments. All of them admitted to accept in a friendly manner each migrant that is not of radical beliefs and illegal background.

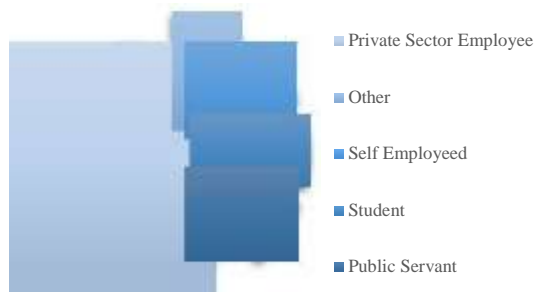
To sum up the findings the first two questions, the indigenous populations requires from new entrants to be respectful to their property, law, culture, customs, beliefs and religion. The reasons for not being accepted by local communities are consist of inappropriate behavior, delinquent habits,

² Global Migration Analysis Centre, International Migration Organization

refusal of compliance and the inability of encountering a job position on a long term basis.

Such factors indicate that the individuals have problems integrating into the society. Besides, finding difficulties in becoming productive in small societies like Moria of Lesvos can disrupt the regular course of the daily life.

Figure 3: Sample Distribution per profession category



Finally, the subjects were asked to express their preference towards active individuals or families. The majority of the opinions expressed were aligned stating that both may be integrated in the society.

“Whether it is individuals or families who migrate to Greece and Europe, they can both make equal efforts of being integrated.”

The local communities also make their best to help them adapt to the new state of being, welcoming migrant children to school and adults to the everyday life. Both mentioned clusters may positively contribute to the well-being of the community.

Yet, there is a small minority of residents who believe that families are more easily adapted to the new data, as parents have the highest motivation to provide their children the easiest way possible to adapt and to be suckled in the accession in the new society.

Whereas there is a belief that individuals may act more opportunistically and superficially, in order to cover their personal needs and expenses.

These were the deductions made by the data extracted from the queries. In the second part of this section a series of findings are exposed regarding the experiences of a migrant currently inhabiting in Lesvos Island, who got displaced there a year ago and has now achieved to find a job thanks to the help of the local organizations and consequently may express the perspective of both sides.

II. Immigrant Interviews

During this part of the selected approach, due to technical restrictions, the number of subjects was merely limited to one single individual. Yet, the conclusions mined are quite useful. For safety reasons the details of the interviewee should remain confidential. However, it’s harmless to say that the interviewee originates from Damascus, Syria and is of male sex. Furthermore, he admitted that the island of Lesvos provides approximately the same conditions as his homeland did before the initiation of the Syrian civil war. The fact that Orthodox Greek culture is a hybrid between Eastern and Western beliefs, helped him a lot to adapt to the Greek reality.

First of all, when the subject was questioned about the hospitality of autochthonous populations, he mentioned that residents who retrieve migrants on shore, do not tend to be friendly with the newcomers as they consider them as invaders.

The second question targeted the reasons which led to the selection of Greece as a final destination. The subject constructed its arguments by saying that “there were no other choices”. Especially, considering the fact that most of the neighboring nations around Syria are also involved in the disastrous warfare.

Also, a population exceeding 50.000 migrants was isolated in Greece due to the complications with the Schengen treaty. A large amount of this migrants initiated a new life in the Receiving Centers located in targeted areas. Such areas include several hotspots in Lesvos and Chios.

As expected, during the interview there was a broad reference towards the bureaucratic procedures that render the daily life much more stiff and difficult.

Ultimately, as expected, the subject illustrated that social tolerance is much more developed in Greece than in Syria and Turkey where extremists require Islamic uniformity and obeisance.

5. Primary aspects of migration

During the primary research the main sectors where migration has visible effects are:

- I. *Common European Policy*
- II. *Social Cohesion and Integration*
- III. *Demography*
- IV. *Economy and Social Insurance funds*

The sectors enumerated above are further analyzed in the following section.

I. Common European Policy

Migration and borders and how these notions are dealt has become a task of primary importance for the administration and management within the European Union. It has been observed that the policies and practices used around border and migration management have been identified in three different ways as a “crisis” phenomenon which affects the authority of border and customs management.

Firstly, migration individually is viewed as a new kind of reality which needs to be managed in a special way in order to be directed properly in the Greek communities. Furthermore, the case of migration and borders is a question which will not stop troubling the heads of the European Union, as it concerns a phenomenon which obstructs the beforehand social “balance” of the European communion. It is also the multiplication of the several legal statuses of migrants which has provoked new augmented demands for the administration and institutions of migration and border management. Third and final perspective of this case is the fact that the financial crisis which initiated the years 2007-2008 has evoked an extra layer of austerity policies towards the Greek people and inductively to the European Union members, conducting to the configuration of special patterns of migration. This has led to the fact that migrants perceive their entrance to Europe as more difficult.

All these manifest the difficulties responded by the constructed nature of the border regimes.

II. Social Cohesion and Integration

The social and legal context of a migrant who is considered to be highly-skilled differs markedly from that which an asylum-seeker is facing towards with crossing the European borders.

All kinds of social and economic statuses have been welcomed to Europe, beginning from higher skilled migrants, lower-skilled labor migrants, seasonal workers, full- family migrants and migrants who asylum. They all in the end experience a different kind of relationship between the territorial borders of each European country where they seek to enter and the organizational borders that impose them to make some claim (which could involve welfare state benefits) and tackling reciprocal responsibilities (which could be to start working or learning the language of the land where they arrived) in the new society to which they have moved. Though, this is a balance between their rights and responsibilities as migrants which can shift between different migrant types.

For example, many migrants move from their country with the intention of finding work. It is highly important to examine the particular forms of economic activity that they initiate and the structural economic characteristics of the sectors to which they move after their migrating.

While European societies in their majority are quite multicultural, it has been argued that the attitude with which the migrant “crisis” is being handled through the policy responses has become much more assimilatory with a greater emphasis on the social, economic and their linguistic adaptation on the new state-of-the-art. This pressure centered on the notion of “integration” of the migrants has been particularly prominent and evident within European welfare states where the attempts to “regulate the contradiction” between facing with openness or closure this particular phenomena are vastly observed. It has been particularly indisputable that migration resulted to a so-called “negotiated pragmatism” at the borders of these welfare states that has been manifested in tensions between permanent residents of these lands and the up-comers over the access to scarce resources.

III. Demography

The arrival of a noticeable number of migrants in a certain country in a small period of time is a phenomenon which is considered likely to affect the demographic structure of the specific country's population and social and economic state. On average, migrants who arrive within the European lands are younger than natives as an average, and so they have contributed to the rejuvenation of the entire population.

For example, the percentage of people over the age of 65 would have been 16.7% without the migrants against 15.8% that is the percentage after the migration influx (after latter surveys carried out the past year). Long-term effects of this phenomena are likely to depend on how many of the migrants will choose to stay permanently in Greece or will proceed to their migrating to another European country or to the U.S (as it is often viewed that way).

IV. Economy and Social Insurance Funds

It has been quite renown that the impact of the migration influx has been vast not only concerning the demographic structure of each European country but also each social security system followed. Based on all previous researches and data gathered, the migrants who have achieved to obtain legal papers concerning their stay in the foreign country have to pay special social security contributions. So, they are insured. What is actually positive is the fact that both migrants and native people have similar social security benefits.

Nevertheless, migrants are subjected to being paid a significantly lower income than natives, and so subsequently the social security contributions that they pay are quite lower (on average, €2563 annually vs. €3414 for Greeks), a matter which signifies that ultimately the current situation will lead to them receiving pensions which are lower than the natives'.

Furthermore, migrants currently contribute a big percentage of their income in the social security contributions (37.8% vs. 43.1), probably because of the special contributions that people who work in heavy-duty positions have to pay. In the short run, integrating the immigrants in the working market is beneficial, as they contribute more to the local community than their local "counterparts". But in

the long run, migrants too will retire and will be able to receive their adequate pensions.

In particular, what the state can do is that it may either rely on the fact that the strong family networks will take in the aspects of elderly poverty and will help their relatives continue their lives with dignity after retirement or it could directly construct a certain security mechanism to aid the migrants who are subjected to very poor pensions.

Finally, the phenomenon that is mentioned above could be prevented if migrants, after a long productive stay to a foreign land, were to return to their countries of origin. Even in this case, though, they will be entitled to their pensions, due to the taxes they will have paid until that moment to the certain country, (unless they do not have the minimum contribution record required).

6. Future guidelines

The high political salience and public interest in all aspects of immigration in recent months across Europe, has rendered public officers quite attuned to the growing numbers of migrants and asylum seekers crossing the Mediterranean, and the constant displacement of millions of Syrians.

Firstly, at a time when even the smallest immigration policy amendments are highly contested, the delivery of recent guidelines has been a critical success. But have the challenges been tackled successfully? Humanitarian crisis is aggravating within the European family, and public insecurity towards both the European construction and national approaches to immigration has grown, as the recent European parliamentary elections illustrated.

Against this backset, the proposed guidelines seem unfeasibly insulated from today's realities and the deep challenges that EU policy has so far failed to resolve. The guidelines make swallow reference to "instability" across the globe and comment that there are "demographic dynamics," with no pragmatic approaches and proposals.

Moreover there is no mention towards migrants currently residing within the European territory. Public attitudes towards these specific populations is hardening and the far-right politic schemes are using the explosive atmosphere to yield votes. It should

also be added that the public opinion towards Brussels and Strasbourg smacks of an elitist Brussels “they don’t know any better” attitude that has become commonplace within many discourses on migration. The current initiatives not only fail to address public’s needs but also sideline them.

Why is it important to take into account the opinion of the voters when deciding at a multinational; almost federalist level? The growing insecurity and unrest of European residents has shed the spotlight on the status quo of the European decision making process with respect to shared border management and asylum systems which are constantly insufficient to resolve the various tangible challenges faced by the European Union. This assumption invalidates the view that as long as EU legislation is properly implemented and in good faith, all will be well.

Albeit, for numerous reasons, a growing number of European gurus doubt that vital outcomes can be found through implementation alone. The proposed framework may be efficient while welcoming further legislations. Yet, the maintenance of the current border and asylum policy might not demand further amendments. Consequently, the strategic guidelines offer little actual assistance for a way out of the future crises.

Would a Commissioner for Migration, as indicated from within or outside EU institutions, be sufficient? Such a role would have to incorporate tools from various existing portfolios, from Development to Education, and find a way to link External Action Service priorities to the Home Affairs agenda more efficiently, and “act” among portfolios.

It is arguable that to do this effectively, a leadership position should be defined in the European Council: an effective politician capable of speaking publicly about immigration, as well as engaging in active diplomacy both within and outside the EU space. Such bespoke positions have been of varying success in the past, but a visible focal point for migration issues, with sufficient mandate and maneuverability to act, is now necessary (E. Collet, July 2014) .

Given all the above, EU Member States will have to sit around the table and decide the nature and extent of their mutual solidarity in the break of a variety of emerging humanitarian crises. EU asylum policy has been paralyzed because of the need to satisfy each state’s individual needs. The major challenge for the Union’s states will be to accept compromises, and understand that nowadays, each nation’s borders are not strictly defined by its own borderline. Free movement of goods, capital and people have replaced national borders with broader federal frontal areas. Every member state should understand that rights demand comprehension. Isolation and rejection should never be used as diplomatic tactics around the “family” table where the decisions are taken.

7. Conclusion

Given all the dimensions of the topic presented within the document that you are currently holding, it is obvious that the Migratory Problem will remain present in the European Community for many years. Its presence, may not be direct but its aftermath will be visible in the demography of the Union. However, lots of opportunities arise with the arrival of diverse populations. If exploited efficiently, they might constitute the moving force of the European Economy.

Consequently, the European Institutions should act towards a more efficient and executive approach which will ensure the creation of a prosperous cultural mosaic between the locals and the newcomers. Respectively, the continuation of current policies will reinforce radical beliefs within the European borders.

Ultimately, readers should always remember: “*No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark.*”. Let the islands of the EU be the entrance to a better future not a golden cage

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