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JIMS - JOURNAL OF IDENTITY AND MIGRATION STUDIES
Research Centre on Identity and Migration Issues - RCIMI
Department of Political Science and Communication Science
University of Oradea
Address:
Str. Universităţii nr. 1
Oradea, 410087
Romania
Tel./Fax: +40 259 408 167
E-mail: jims@e-migration.ro; contact@e-migration.ro
Website: www.jims.e-migration.ro

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THEMATIC ARTICLES: IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION POLICIES

Policies on Immigration and Integration in France: An Analysis of Political Decision Makers Ideas and Perceptions

Menéndez ALARCÓN

Abstract. This article examines policy makers rationale for the establishment of immigration and integration policies, and their assumptions and reasoning to decide on a given policy. The article is based on in-depth interviews conducted with policy makers in Paris in the executive and legislative branches of the government (Senators and Members of the National Assembly) and leaders of the parties involved with immigration policies. The article reveals the complex, fluid, and different conceptualizations, and understandings of the political agents, as well as the commonalities and confrontations among the French political class regarding immigration and integration policies.

Keywords: *immigration, integration, public policies, policymakers, France*

Background/Conceptual Framework

Immigration and immigrants' integration have become fundamental social issues internationally and in the major debates in political campaigns in France in the 21st century. Therefore, it is necessary to examine conceptualization and understandings of the political agents who decide policies on immigration process and integration of immigrants.

Immigrants' integration implies an interrelated process at the individual and societal level. Esser (2006: 7) refers to integration as "the inclusion (or exclusion) of actors in an existing social system" as well as to the cohesion of the social system. In other words, which policies are favored to promote the co-existence of people from different background and cultures in the same territory. The vast research on integration identifies several models/patterns of integration often related to government policies: assimilation, multiculturalism, segmented assimilation, hybridization, and transnationalism in the context of transmigration (Pries 2000), and marginalization.

Since the foundation of the republic France had very much espoused the assimilationist approach, which implies the expectation that the immigrants will adapt to the dominant culture and all spheres of life of the host society, including language acquisition, civic participation, naturalization and cultural identifications with the dominant values. However, recently among several political actors there is an acceptance of a multicultural perspective, allowing for the coexistence of diversity (Amiraux and Simon, 2006, Maisonneuve and Testé 2007). This perspective also called pluralistic, suggest that engagement in both: the heritage culture and the larger society, as well as bilingualism and ethnically mixed networks, is beneficial to the social integration of immigrants. Both perspectives do coexist within French Political actors and creates frequent confrontations within the society.

This study draws upon an array of research findings and data. The research by Citrin and Sides (2008) provide insights on the question of immigrant integration in relation to boundaries within these societies, including religion, ethnicity, and location. Another relevant framework for our study related to the work of Sam and Horenczyk (2012) on the identification with the receiving society according to the size of the immigrant population in a given city. Finally, the research by Haller, Portes, and Lynch (2011) suggests that the process of integration among immigrants suggests a pattern of segmented assimilation, and therefore this should be taken into consideration when deciding policies.

Objectives

This article examines policy makers rationale for the establishment of immigration and integration policies, and their assumptions and reasoning to decide on a given policy. By analyzing policy-makers beliefs as part of a larger political-cultural framework, it is then possible to identify and explain the adoption of a given policy.

Policies regarding issues of immigrants' integration offer an array of models and paths as several works have demonstrated (INSEE 2012, OCDE/EU 2015). Recent debates on immigration and integration in France concerns above all immigrants from the Maghreb, and from South Saharan Africa. An important part of immigrants' integration relates to the reconfiguration of national communities, including what legitimately can be considered common cultural grounds.

Methodology

Two major research techniques were employed to study policy making: semi-structured individual interviews and document analysis. (a) In-depth interviews were conducted with policy makers in Paris in the executive and legislative branches of the government (Senators and Members of the National Assembly-MNA) and leaders of the parties involved with immigration policies. The people interviewed were from the following parties: La Republique en Marche-LREM [The Republic on the Move], this party which is a composite of moderate right, center and left politicians, supports the executive branch and has the most seats in the French National Assembly; Les Republicains-LR [The Republicans], this is the moderate conservative right-win party; Rassemblement National-RN [National Rally] a far-right political party; Union des Démocrates et Independants-UDI- [Union of Democrats and Independent], a center right party; The Movement Démocrate-MoDem [Democrat Mouvement], a center right political party that tend to support the present government in most issues; Parti Socialiste-PS [Socialist Party], center left in the tradition of European social democracy; Europe Ecologie les Verts-EELV [Europe Ecology the Greens], mostly on the left of the political spectrum;La France Insoumise-FI (France unbowed), left of the political spectrum; Parti Communiste Français-PCF, [French Communist Party], this party is also on the left and in many issues agrees with France Unbowed; Lutte Ouvrière-LO [Workers'Struggle], this is a small far left party from Trotskyist inspiration. In the text I will use the French initials of the parties.

Twenty-eight interviews were conducted in November-December 2019. The sample size of 28 persons is derived from the following methodological concerns: (1) considerations about project goals, available research time, and resources for a successful completion of this study; (2) the need to allow for sufficient respondent variation to capture diversity; (3) recommendations discussed in the ethnographic methods literature about standard validity/reliability criteria (Brady and Collier 2004; Steinmetz 2004); and (4) contemplations about the 'saturation' point of a qualitative sample (Small 2009, Russell and Ryan 2010). Anonymity was ensured from the beginning (no names would be published, only the political affiliation and the roles they played, such as Senator, Member of the French National Assembly, Leader of a party, etc.).

(b) A secondary data analysis from documents was undertaken to complement the individual interviews.

The coding process followed the procedure of the “grounded theory” suggested by Charmaz (2003). The objective was to extract "ideal typical" frames of how respondents rationalize their decisions. The task included to establish a map of patterns of commonalities and differences that define policy-makers beliefs on issues of immigration and integration policies, and to identify markers of cultural mindsets that point to different interpretations and/or the application of values concerning immigration and integration policies. The analysis was framed in terms of contextual factors, such as a country’s political culture, history, and the role it plays in immigration policies. Based on our document analysis and interviews, and following the grounded theory method, I have (1) coded observations from the interviews, (2) created categories of issues and patterns of perception, (3) looked for relationships and links, and (4) developed conceptual frameworks.

Results

The issue of immigration in France has enormous political repercussions. The predominant feeling among the French population and many of the politicians interviewed is that immigration is out of control (Observatoire 2020, Ifop 2018). A large part of the population feels that the French government does manage properly the situation of immigration, and there is a widespread belief in myths like that of the “great replacement”. As this senator from the governing coalition LREM argues:

> The sentiment that immigration is out of control is felt psychologically well beyond the real phenomenon, but which is reinforced by the fact that all the governments that preceded us did not do anything about immigration. And I believe that the present government is attempting to provide the means to ensure effective control of immigration.

It has been 40 years since the most recent policies on immigration were put in place. The legislation on immigration has been modified piecemeal, tweaking some tests on existing texts, but this process did not produce a coherent policy. As this senator (LR) asserted: “We have the result of 40 years of laxity on issues of immigration and integration of immigrants.”

However, the existing legislation regarding the right of asylum seems to have been applied very strictly, because some estimates of the interviewees and documents, reveal that more than 80% of asylum request are rejected in the last 4 years. The great mass of immigration came illegally or as part of the family reunification act, because legal economic immigration is very restricted:

> France, like other countries, brought in masses of people from the Maghreb with the somewhat absurd idea that they were here temporarily and that they would leave. Except that we did not realize that we people will not spend an entire professional career of 40 years without taking root and without bringing their family. (Leader the Republicans)

The Family reunification policy was put in place just after the 1973 oil crisis and the economic impact of that crisis, under the administration of Valerie Giscard D'Estaing in 1975. “At first, France accepted workers and then afterwards for the sake of humanity, they were allowed to bring their families. And consequently, we ended up with too many immigrants, and with young people who did not integrate as expected.” (MNA LR)

The position on immigration is not monolithic even within the same parties. However, it is possible to identify four major tendencies among the politicians interviewed. The far-right current wants a closed society. Based on ethnic and nationalist reasons they do not think that France should allow the entry of immigrants, except in exceptional and very specific cases. For many people within the French society this is a discourse that they want to hear. It is a very effective lever given the large numbers of people opposed to immigration as the already cited surveys suggest (Observatoire 2020, Ifop 2018.) and the support for anti-immigrant parties in the 2022 presidential elections reveals. The moderate right-wing parties, and in particular The Republicans-LR are also in favor of a strong control on immigration but are willing to accept refugees. However, a minority within this party express views very similar to the extreme right: “A temptation of demagoguery does exist, including in my own political party. I see that we want to win votes in the overbidding on this subject, abandoning a certain number of humanist principles by twisting the reality of the facts.” (Senator LR). Then, several small parties in the center of the political spectrum such as MoDem are calling for a more efficient and orderly control on immigration but are not opposed to all immigration.

The moderate left such as the PS, and the EELV, are also divided on this issue, even within the same party. The predominant stances include some controls of immigration, and above all to reach international agreements to transfer resources to those countries who produce emigrants. This position is also generally held by the leaders and representatives of France Unbowed-FI and the Communist Party-PCF. In fact, on this issue the center right agrees with the left, revealing some consensus among the interviewees from the center right and the left (MoDem, LREM, FI, PS, EELV, and PCF) on the need to co-develop agreements with immigration

countries: "we should have an active policy that promotes exchanges and the movement of people, but with the objective of the development of the countries from which they come." Senator PS.

Finally, there is a small minority, in the far left that consider that there should be free movement of people in the world. The far left argue that people should be free to move without any immigration control. As this leader from LO states: "Borders exist only to protect the interests of the rich. Those who control the wealth need borders to keep their wealth. Our fight is humanity, we are internationalists."

The predominant political movement who controls both Executive branch and the National Assembly, LREM, which is a composite of diverse political parties from the moderate right, the center and the moderate left, is constantly in turmoil over the issue of immigration. Indeed, left-wing cultures and right-wing cultures coexist based on a vague republican base. There are many debates within this coalition regarding immigration, and the only aspect they seem to agree on is to preserve the right of asylum for individuals threatened with death or persecution and allow students to come to France. In this view students "can contribute to the cultural influence of France and also that to the development of their country when they go back." (Senator LREM). But there is much skepticism about economic immigration coming specially from the right, creating tensions within the Presidential majority, as reflected in the following statement:

> As Michel Rocard once said: France cannot receive everyone. We cannot effectively welcome all those who live badly in their country because it is insufficiently developed or badly governed. I think that we need a controlled migration. We believe that the answers must be provided in terms of development aid, and cooperation to reduce immigration. (Senator MoDem)

Interviewees from all parties (except the far-right) agree that the issue is not necessarily legal immigration (asylum). The number of legal immigrants, mostly refugees, is estimated around 200,000 per year. The main issue of contention relates to illegal immigration: "Those people who arrive by air, by road, sea. etc. in the Schengen area, which is very poorly protected at its borders," as this MNA from the RN asserts. The estimates on the number of illegal immigrants in France varies from one party to the other. The Republicans estimate around one million, others from LREM or EELV estimate it at less than 500,000. Both the RN and LR argue that the generosity of the French state, which pays the hospitals or the costs of illness and the

welfare system in general is what attracts illegal immigrants.

> Why we have more than elsewhere? Because the family allowance system. We have a social system that is extremely favorable to immigrants. I am talking to you about state medical aid, this is perhaps the biggest scandal. A foreigner who arrives in France after fifteen days is taken care of by state medical aid. They have the right to be reimbursed 100% of everything he will do in terms of health. And that' is what we call suction pumps that affect the health economy in particular, allowances that are given to foreigner who are entitled to receive help. It's not large sums, but they are also housed and fed, hosted by associations. Don't be surprised that they all want to come here." (MNA LR)

Most interviewees from all parties deplore the conditions in which the illegals are living. And one senator from the LR justify her party opposition to immigration based on that situation: "Because they arrive in large numbers, the French state cannot welcome them as it should. That is why our party wants to create legal mechanisms to control immigration" Senator LR. Indeed, many of the illegal immigrants live in slums, and they are often victims of unscrupulous people who get rich on their backs. For example, at their arrival in France (after having paid large sums of money to cross the Mediterranean), they are victims of what are called "sleep merchants." The so called "sleep merchants" rent slums to immigrants for a relatively high price. It is common that in a studio for one or two people, about twenty people will leave there with mattresses everywhere, and each would pay 100 euros to the landlord. When they work, as they are not declared, they are exploited:

> I know farmers who make them work illegally, and who pay them a pittance. It is kind of modern slavery. Therefore, in the name of humanism, we must stop that, and organize things better. We must be ruthless with all those who profit: the smugglers, the sleep merchants, the employers, etc. Leader LR.

The perception that there are too many immigrants is not unique to France. It is sentiment that seems to be widespread across Europe according to media reports, but, in truth, many European countries are losing population. For instance, country members of the EU such as Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, Romania, Estonia, Greece, Poland, Portugal and Italy are experiencing a decline in their population in the last 10 years, and in certain cases, if they are no losing more, it is due to immigration. Germany and Spain are barely reproducing themselves. France is still growing, although slowly, 0.33% a year. In short, Europe's problem is more a drop in population than increase of population. At some point, Europe will be in such a demographic state that they will have no other solution than to open the borders to more immigrants, and the same goes for France. The economic survival of this

space will be at stake. In the opinion of a senator from the socialist party:

> I think that instead of barricading ourselves behind walls we should look for other alternatives. I am a specialist in the Roman Empire, and I know that the walls were never a solution. All governments in recent years have had an increasingly restrictive immigration policy and the current government is not an exception. Because a very tough government policy regarding all asylum applications the number of immigrants is relatively stable or even decreasing. A large part of immigration is due to family reunification. In short, there is much agitation in political debates on this issue when in truth there is nothing to be alarmed about.

In the same tone, the representative from FI explains that perhaps it would be necessary to start considering opening the doors to legal economic immigration. This point of view, defended by several interviewees from the left, argue that if there is illegal immigration and so many asylum seekers it is due to the lack of opportunities for legal economic immigration:

> We wonder why there are so many asylum applications from countries that do not have a dictatorship. They come from safe countries where there is no political threat. They are economic immigrants who try to use this alternative. That is why there are so many rejections in these applications. They do not qualify as refugees. The same goes for illegal immigration. The more we close the doors, the more restrictive we are, the more there is illegal immigration by mechanical reaction.

France, in response to illegal immigration has often deported a proportion of illegal immigrants. A Member of the National Assembly from LREM estimates that in 2019 they departed around 30.000. This is a small proportion of those who stay, but according to this interviewee and two others from the FI and UDI the numbers of legal and illegal emigration are not affecting negatively the French economy:

> We remain in proportions that are not unbearable for the country, quite the contrary. France has always known how to make all waves of immigration a source of wealth. I think there are quite a few jobs in France for immigrants who do not compete with the French. There are plenty of companies that cannot find workers. Especially in the hostelry. (MNA FI)

Other interviewees on the left such as the MNA of EELV consider that even though illegal immigration is a problem "it could be solved by legalizing those who work and who behave as good citizens." These ideas reflect a sharp difference with the people I interviewed from the right-wing parties LR and RN, who are opposed to any form of legalization of immigrants or even opening the doors to legal economic migration.

In short, the solution from the right of the political spectrum is mostly closing the doors to further immigration with some exceptions. For the politicians from the

center right and left that I interviewed, given the reality of increased movement of people in the world due to poverty, climate change, wars and so on, France should adapt and facilitate the movement of people, for the mutual development of emigration countries and France. As the representative from FI said: “Given the situation of the world and the consequences of globalization, with an increased circulation of people, we also need to change our view on immigration”. However, the fear of immigration is not only tight to number on immigrants, but to how well they integrate into French society as we will examine in the following section.

INTEGRATION

Until the 1950s France was a relatively homogeneous country, predominantly white, with a large rural population strongly influenced by Catholicism, relatively integrated and accepted religious minorities of Protestants and Jews, and with a large population of atheist. There was a considerable social cohesion and very strong sense of uniqueness based on the acceptance of a secular society. From the 1950s on large numbers of immigrants from south Europe and North Africa started to come to France and brough with then different cultures and habitus. The European immigrants (Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish and other Europeans) had some major common points of integration, be it by religion, or by trade unionism or the communist party, who played an important role in the lives of the workers at that time. The immigrants who came in that period from North Africa, despite encountering more difficulties than the Europeans to adapt to a secular France, ended up integrating to a large extent.

For centuries, France has been a land of immigration, and has incorporated numerous ethnic groups into a unique blend, which was at the very core of French identity. This process of rapid assimilation was the result of a strong centralized power in order to domesticate otherness and to generate the prototype of good citizenship. The French republic since its foundation was strongly unifying, standardizing. French education was strongly oriented towards a single nation and towards uniformity. For example, at schools, children who spoke Breton or Alsatian were punished. The “French Dream” of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity for all, relied on the assumption that regardless of social class, religion, and ethnicity, all citizens were granted the same rights and duties. However, this integrative strategy no longer functions today, as the distance between “us” and “them” appears to be insurmountable for a large segment of the new immigrants, mostly from the

Maghreb and reflecting a Muslim background (Troian et al. 2018), as their numbers have increased substantially. Religion appears to be a dividing marker, which some ultranationalists quickly conveyed into a narrative involving a clash of civilizations (Safi 2006). Similarly, the socioeconomic barriers often lead to exclusion of significant parts of the population.

Then, in the sixties France experienced a general questioning of the established order, as reflected in the youth revolt of May 68. The concept of eternal France started to be questioned, and traditions were shaken up, casting doubt on the fundamentals of society.

For some of the interviewees this change was too radical: "society went to the other extreme. Everything goes." (MNA RN). Indeed, the predominant discourse in intellectual and academic circles in the 1970s and 1980s was the apology and the exaltation of difference, perhaps in reaction to an extreme standardization from the past. For several people interviewed on the moderate right and the extreme right the exaltation of the differences tended to excuse everything and to question even basic rules of society, as exemplified in the following quote from a leader of The Republicans interviewed:

> I must say on a cultural level in post-May 68 it was forbidden to forbid. It seems to me that everything was acceptable. The school deviated more and more from its original purpose of creating a republican and secular vision of the world. I would even say libertarian. When I was a kid, we were taught self-discipline. I have to say that after 68 the school was no longer the mold it had been in previous decades. Therefore, the kids of immigrants who arrived without reference, except the reference of their parents who were no longer in touch with today's society could not understand the codes of life of the society in which they lived, and even less the norms.

In this view the non-respect of the rules governing society and the dominant permissiveness was translated to the process of integrating immigrants:

> In this atmosphere of contestation of the authority, there is a mass immigration of families with children who were born in France or arrived at an early age. These children were brought up, educated much less strictly than before, in a general atmosphere of contestation of authority. And on a cultural level, we move to the apology of the multicultural society, of difference, more than that of resemblance. We went from one extreme to the other. (Representative National Rally [Rassemblement national-RN])

> We have cultivated the difference to the point of not integrating. And when we talk about populations from Muslim cultures, we did not want to look at the elements that could pose a problem in French society. (Senator the Republicans.)

The main argument presented by these right-win politicians was that in this atmosphere of questioning the traditional French cultural makeup, the new immigrants from the Maghreb, who come with a very distinct culture, in the 1970s and later, did not feel that they needed to adapt. A situation perceived as different with previous immigration in the 1950s. A Senator from The Republicans describes it as follows:

> The immigrants that arrived in France from Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria after the war, most of them integrated. That is no longer the case for their children and grandchildren, because we have allowed a rebirth and influence of the Muslim religion, which gives them a separated identity.

Indeed today, large contingents of immigrants from Africa, live, socialize, marry and some even work in ethnic communities. In other words, they reproduce their own subculture, which are viewed by many observers and scholars in France as hindering integration and as a major threat to cultural cohesion. These developments have created tensions—anti-immigrant resentment, including discrimination and hostility.

One UDI senator deplores the cuts on education in the last thirty years, undermining the role that education has been playing in social integration of the descendants of immigrants. “The key word for integration is republican education and if we do not have the means, we end up with this terrible situation of people who do not believe in the republic and are against France.”

For interviewees from the moderate and the far right the issue of immigrants’ integration has to do with a new environment of change and questioning of the traditional order in French society since the mid 1960s to the present. That is, it is due to a cultural shift and the development of a new paradigm, in which the difference is accepted and even celebrated. These views are shared by a considerable proportion of the population, resulting in a division among the French population, including a generation gap, rural/urban differences, and cultural clash between social classes. Indeed, in working class areas formerly pro-left and pro-communist party, people are starting to support the far right because of their anti-immigrant stance. At the present, France is facing a deep identity crisis, which fuels the growth of identity ideology, expressed more forcefully by extreme right of the political spectrum, but the sentiment of loss of identity is felt well beyond these circles, as reflected in recent survey already mentioned (Ifop 2018, Observatoire 2020) and media reports.

Most of the people I interviewed consider that given this environment, it is

more necessary than ever to reaffirm the basic values of the French republic and in particular secularism and the unity of France. This sentiment is reflected in the following statements: “For me it is unthinkable that any group could create a distinct community. It does not matter if it is Catholic, Muslim, or Jewish. So, I would fight this with all my strength.” Senator LREM. A senator from UDI reinforces this idea: “We shouldn't give in. It is our weakness that will make their victory. We must set the limits, and the limits are the republic and its secularism. We must at any cost apply the laws of the republic. Zero tolerance. Those who break the rules out.”

All interviewees agree on the importance of secularism as one of the fundaments of French identity. However, on the left there is less preoccupation for people not accepting all the cultural characteristics of French society. Two of the interviewees (Member of the National Assembly FI and Leader PCF) address the question of immigrants’ adaptation to French culture in terms of integration versus assimilation. In this view, integration allows the coexistence of the immigrant’s original cultures along with the key elements of French culture, including secularism. It implies the acceptance of diversity. Assimilation is the expectation that immigrants will adapt to the French culture, and the obliteration and disappearance of the culture of origin:

> I think what we cannot ask people to abandon everything from their own culture as the right-winners demand. However, there is a minimum requirement such as accepting the common rules, in particular the laws and regulations of France. Muslim or not Muslim must respect the rules of the country. MNA FI.

> Assimilation, as the RN and some people in the LR promote is the disappearance of the culture of the country of origin in favor of the culture of the host country. It is a form of denial or amputation for the assimilated individual. I do not think it is reasonable or even realistic to require that from anyone. (Leader PCF)

The question of integration versus assimilation were already debated in France under the third republic. The debate then focused on the Jewish community, which refused the assimilation that would have made them disappear. At the end the notion of integration predominated in theory, but in practice most policies were made with the assumption of assimilation as the main guide. At least until the 1970s. Since then, there was no longer a pressure to adapt. Today, the official approach is that people are not required to deny what they are, but, on the other hand, they must respect the laws, standards, and some customs of French society:

> We believe that all people, immigrant and no immigrants, should follow basic rules that allow us to live together, to have a social life, which is not only the legal rule. It

> is also related to everyday interactions. For example, the dress code of Muslim women is a major point of contention right know. Representative LREM.

The dress code issue is not new to France. A major debate on the dress code took place during the adoption of the law of 1905 on secularism. The most anticlerical sector wanted to ban the habit, the outfits of nuns in the public space, and some even the cassock, but the majority had decided that everyone was free to dress in the public space as they wanted, except full nudity, which was prohibited. However, France has gone from the ban on ostentatious signs in schools for civil servants and the use of uniform until 1968, to the ban on the full veil, such as the Burqa or the niqab, in schools since 2004, and in public spaces for security reasons. And there is a considerable push to ban the veil, even light, in the public space, as it is interpreted as a promotion of Salafism, which is viewed as the most radical anti-French Muslim current.

For most people interviewed on the left (including people from the socialist party to the far left) the economic environment is fundamental for the integration of immigrants and their descendants. After WWII France had experienced a continuous growth of the economy with full employment until mid 1970s. The Oil crisis of 1973 ended all that, and since them there have been many economic crises. For these interviewees, because France started to experience mass unemployment, it created in turn more difficulties for integration of the immigrants and above all for their sons and daughters. As a senator from the Socialist Party states, “an important part of immigrants’ integration happens through work, and this was very much the case for the first wave of North African immigration in the 1950s when we had jobs for everyone.” Furthermore, interviewees from the PCF, LO, and the EELV suggested that people from Arab origin experience some discrimination in the job market. They argue that these people who have not found their place in society “will create a parallel society with parallel political conceptions rejecting the bases of our society and finding refuge in communitarianism and religious fundamentalism.” (MNA EELV). Similar views were expressed by one MNA of FI:

> If the sons and daughter of immigrants feel alienated, it is fundamentally because of their economic situation. A society that only benefits a few do not create a sense of belonging, on the contrary. If we feel bad, we try to explain things with reference to the other French people that they perceived as privileged. Or explaining their situation because of racism. Or the former colonization of their original country.

In many suburbs in France, dominated by descendants of immigrants, there is unemployment, delinquency, and a growth of communitarianism. There is a

recognition among most of the interviewees from different political parties that the French state has contributed unintentionally to create ghettos in most towns: “All these HLM [Habitations à Loyer Modéré- Low-Cost Housing], those overcrowded towers have contributed to create a concentration of people from the Maghreb, therefore creating communitarianism and delinquency” (Senator UDI). Many people from different parties on the left and the right agree with that assessment and suggest that a change in housing policies is necessary. In fact, in recent years there have been some efforts to eliminate those towers and move people away from those forest of concrete, “where Islamist radicals find their inspiration and where the Imams who influence them reside,” as one leader of the LR stated.

Because most of the young people in those high-level delinquency neighborhoods come from an old immigrant background, and are of the Muslim faith, many political leaders and some media qualify the problems of these suburbs as created by foreign emigrants, contributing thereby to feed the anti-immigrant sentiment even though these people are not immigrants. Many of the terrorist attack in French soil and other parts of Europe were perpetrated by Europeans from Muslim background, but not always recent immigrants. This is denoted by the MNA from the MoDem: “It's not the same thing these people who come to harvest or pick fruits, and these people from the ghettos who have never seen their parents work and have lived most of their lives on unemployment benefits and other help.” However, the solution to that situation for the political right is to change the law in order to curtail the people who can obtain the French nationality. A child born in France of foreign parents could obtain the nationality when it reaches the age of 18, if he asks for it. Interviewees from the LR consider that part of the issue is that France is giving too easily the French nationality, and that there should be more requirements to obtain French nationality: “I think like my group that It should not be enough to be born in France to obtain la nationality. A person to become French should above all respect the values of the republic. If a person does not love her country, she can go somewhere else.” (MNA LR).

The establishment of Islam in France is relatively recent and directly linked to successive waves of immigration from the 1950’s to the present. As a result, Islam has become demographically speaking the second religion of France. As it has been said many times, Islam like all other religions, can promote the best as well as the worst depending on how people interpret the message or how the messengers, such as Imams, etc., disseminate it to

their believers. For instance, regarding Christianism, if one reads the Old Testament literally, we can justify the greatest obscurantism, dictatorship, and even genocide. On the other hand, if we take the decalogue, (in particular 2, 5, 6, 8,9 and 10) it is the revelation to the world and the sacred character of the human person. But even if the gospel seems a little more pacifist than the Old Testament, it produced the inquisition and many religious wars and violence. It is the same for the Quran. Most currents of Islam advocate contextualization, but many recent interpretations have produced more violence than any other contemporary religions, and in the case of France many currents of Islam seem to be less accommodating to the strong secularism dominating French culture. Since the terrorist attacks of September 2011 in the USA and all the attacks in France and other countries of Europe in the name of Islam, the relations between the French republic and Islam have been very difficult.

There are so call Islam fundamentalists such as the Salafists which have a considerable following in France and other countries of Europe and incite acts of terror and Jihadism. A representative of the MoDem explains it in this manner: "I think that France did not make itself loved by its children. Our major failure is that we have allowed to cultivate too much hatred of France in these young Muslims. I think that we have accepted too much without requiring a counterpart."

What is worrying in France at the present is the fracture of the society. There is a retreat from a search for common ground. This leads sometimes to brutal reactions and violent debate among political parties, but also within the society at large. Instead, of bringing the points of view closer together, it seems that it is the opposite that is happening. Judging by several surveys in the last ten years France has become more Islamophobic. In one opinion poll published in 2014, France was the least Islamophobic country of Europe (Pew Research Center 2014) but since then, perceptions have changed to a large part due to the numerous terrorist attacks in the name of Islam starting with the Charly Hebdo atack in January 15, where two Islamist militant gunmen shoot dead 12 people at the Charlie Hebdo's offices. Then, in November of the same year gunmen and suicide bombers launched multiple coordinated attacks on the Bataclan concert hall, in Paris, leaving 130 people dead and hundreds wounded. Eight months later in July 2016, a terrorist, tied to the Islamic State group, drove a large lorry into a crowd celebrating Bastille Day in Nice,

killing 86 people. The same month two attackers killed a priest, seriously wounded another person after storming a church in a suburb of Rouen, in Normandie. More recently, in October 2019, a radicalized police computer operator stabbed to death three officers and a civilian worker at Paris police headquarters. And in September 2020 two people were stabbed and seriously hurt in Paris, near the former offices of Charlie Hebdo. The most recent terrorist act happened in October 2020. A French teacher was beheaded outside a school in a suburb of Paris. Not to mention the multiple terrorist acts in neighboring countries such as UK, Netherlands, Spain, etc….

Most of the interviewees recognize that Muslims tend to resist the predominant secularism in French society, and many even suggest that they have difficulties to adapt to modernity and all that it implies, such as women equality for example. According to an article by Bowen (2009) based on opinion polls, 74% of Muslims in France acknowledge that there is a conflict between living in devotion to their religion and living in France.

In addition, several foreign governments dominated by religious Islamist do intervene in French internal affairs indirectly and sometimes openly, such as the president of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan, calling for a boycott of French goods over France attempt to fight Islamist separatism. Indeed, these foreign countries do play a major role whether by providing ministers of religion, financing, organization of the halal sector, or the national representation of the cult. They also attempt to influence French elections. A senator from the PS interviewed suggested that unfortunately there are external agents playing a role in undermining the basis of the French republic:

> I know that in the Muslim currents there are reactionary anti-secular, anti-republican forces largely financed by Turkey and the Petromonarchies, whose political objective is to undermine the foundations of the republic. I'm not blind to that. I see them, they are present in the municipal elections.

The interviewees from the right, such as the LR the RN, and even centrist parties, such as MoDem criticize the left for having ignored the problem for years and for avoiding the debate and imposing political correctness in the media:

> If some of us would dare to say something negative about difficulties our society encounter with Islam, we will be accused of being xenophobes and racists. The truth is that we are experiencing an enormous growth of this rather negative religion for the well-being of the republic. (Leader LR).

The data suggest a considerable growth of Islam in France and, in particular, the more fundamentalist interpretations, such as Salafist and those who support the Islamic State. In the last ten years more women than ever are wearing the veil, including women who were born in France. This in the view of right-win politicians interviewed is a rejection of French way of life, and secularism, which they see as the foundations of French society:

> I'm not saying that all Muslims are terrorists and not all Muslims are people who don't like France, but there are Salafist currents, and other Islamists who have a will to conquer, and to impose their culture on territories which are not their territory of origin. And that is what creates tension in the French society. (Leader LR)

There is not consensus on the left, but some believed that in the name of secularism the government should not be controlling religious expressions and that it should not intervene in affairs of religion, and particularly on the issue of how people dress: "In the name of the absolute principle of freedom of conscience I do not imagine myself intervening in the way believers decide what to do with their bodies" (MNA PS). Two other interviewees from left parties expressed similar views:

> It's not up to me to tell young Muslim women whether they should wear the veil or not. It is certainly a tool in favor of a male patriarchy, but it is up to them to become aware of that from the inside. It is a dialogue among them. This is my position as an Atheist. Leader PCF.

The MNA from FI echoes the same approach: "I believe that we must put religion in the modest place where it is and stop considering that we have religious problems when today what we have above all are social problems. And we do not treat social problems with either secular or religious recipes."

However, most interviewees from different political ideologies including on the left suggested the need for some centralized mechanism to contextualize Islam within French society. In France there is a sharp separation between religion and state, while in Muslim countries the state contributes to the organization of Islam. However, Islam of France lacks a source of interpretation to contextualize it. This is recognized by this representative from the PCF: "When we look for rather moderate interpretations of Islam, we look for them on the other side of the Mediterranean such as in Morocco or Algeria. It is maybe better than in the Gulf countries, but it is not an Islam that interprets the context of French society." In the same tone, the representative from LR state: "Why we will not form our own imams in France. Given their discourse, you must be demanding. These people could be dangerous."

A report by two senators from the center right (Goulet and Richard 2016)

identifies the existing links with foreign Islamist countries and suggest paths for transition towards an Islam of France, adapted to the French context, "compatible with the values of the French Republic and supported by the community itself: renewal of representation, training in France of Imams, compulsory secular training of Imams and Chaplains, and increased transparency of funding, especially foreign funding." Indeed, many Mosques and their Imams are financed by South Arabia, Turkey and other countries. According to them these measures would facilitate decision making on concrete aspects that have created confrontations and misunderstandings, such as "should women be allowed to wear the veil in school and other official places," how she should behave. "Can a Muslim women see a male doctor?" "What should we recommend to her children? Is it normal to make them practice Ramadan and fasting in Ramadan before they finish growing?" "Should prayers be allowed when they are not compatible with the professional framework?" They suggest that these situations were not thought out, and the answers came from elsewhere, "from sources not anchored in our society and with rather malicious interpretations vis-à-vis our republic."

However, this proposal would require a reinterpretation of the law of 1905, which established a clear separation or church and State, and this included no financial support for worship, and no interference of the state in the cults as Goulet and Richard (2016) reproduce in their report:

> The State is the guardian of the principle of secularism to which Article 1 of the Constitution confers constitutional value. The law of December 9, 1905, sets out the terms: freedom of religious expression and freedom of organization for religions, neutrality regarding the latter for the State. Guarantor of the freedom to be able to practice - or not - the religion of one's choice, the State is also the guarantor of the maintenance of public order. In other words, the State is not called upon to intervene in the settlement of religious affairs, except when there is a threat to public order.

Conclusion

There is a consensus among all interviewees from any political party on a rejection of communitarianism and the support for a strong secular state. The key framework is that the French republic does not recognize communities. In their view no religious group constitutes a community that could be the intermediary between the citizen and the State. They all affirm intransigeance in the defense of the republic and secularism, and that is it is up to religions to apply the well-established law on secularism, and not the law to adapt to religions.

However, there are major differences on how to approach both immigration policy and integration policies. Most people interviewed from the left and the center of the political spectrum acknowledge the emergence of a new hybridity in the context of globalization and see the spread of multiculturalism and diversity in all areas of life as unavoidable. On the other hand, most right-wing and some center right politicians as well as large proportions of the French population are attached to the traditional assimilation concept according to which immigrants should adopt the culture of the majority. This division exists even between the liberals and the more conservative wing of the political party who controls de government, LREM.

Two major narratives influence the debate on immigration and integration. For the left the cultural aspect itself is not enough to explain the issues of integration and Islamic terrorism. Although most recognize that there is a religious problem, the fundamental argument is that there is a social problem because the vast majority of Muslims belong to the most disadvantaged social classes and live in deprived neighborhoods. For several interviewees from left parties, socio-economic reasons marginalize these people and consequently they find refuge in a radicalized Islamism and commit terrorist acts. This might be true only to a certain extent, because many of the people who embrace a fundamentalist Islam and several of those who have committed acts of terrorism in France and other countries of Europe were not economically marginalized.

Much of the French population tend to support the argument that immigration should be limited, and that Islam poses a threat to the French way of life, as reflected in recent polls cited in previous pages and opinion polls for the 2022 presidential election. Indeed, in these polls the most anti-immigrant right-wing candidates together obtain close to 50% of the vote's intentions and all the left together reach less than 25% (not considering the moderate left people who are part of the LREM).

The propositions about immigration and integration policies were expressed more forcefully by the interviewees from the right. The interviewees from the right parties such as LR and RN only accept at the most some refugees, and their views on integration is that immigrants should assimilate to the French way of life. The interviewees from the left were vaguer. They were not opposed to economic immigration and considered important to establish agreements with the emigration countries. Regarding integration, they were more tolerant in accepting some cultural differences of descendants of immigrants (but not separatism or

communitarianism). But above all, the interviewees from the left parties emphasized the need to address barriers to social progress among immigrants and their descendants to create more cohesion and reduce the potential for extremism, as well as to strengthen anti-discrimination laws to ensure that the immigrants and their descendants are treated fairly.

Over the past ten years instead of making progress in understanding each other, there has been a greatest divide. The polls show that non-Muslim French people who were not racist, intolerant or anti-Muslims became intolerant, and now believe that Muslims pose a problem of public security and that most Muslims do not want to integrate. On the other hand, even non-radical Muslims now consider themselves misunderstood and mistreated by the rest of the French population.

Given this situation several interviewees from the right and the left suggested that the state should fully exercises its prerogatives of public power in the areas linked to integration. However, the extent that state integration policies could substantially influence immigrant's integration is an open question. Neither assimilationist nor pluralist perspectives seem to have been effective in reducing tensions within the society.

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Challenges and Barriers to the Social Integration of Newly Arrived Immigrants in Sweden

Marja SCHUSTER, Mia KRAFT, Ann HÄGG-MARTINELL, Henrik ERIKSSON, Joacim LARSEN, Per EKSTRAND

Abstract. Sweden, like many other European countries, has received a large number of immigrants in the past few years. To tackle the challenge connected with this, a policy for integration including an establishment programme was adopted by the Swedish Government which speeded up the introduction of newly arrived immigrants into the labour market and social life. The implementation of the programme is performed by various stakeholders in the fields of the labour market, language education and non-governmental organisations. The aim of this study was to investigate challenges and barriers to integration from the perspective of stakeholders' experiences of encounters with newly arrived immigrants. The study used open-ended data collected in a Delphi project targeting civil servants and volunteers working within the policy establishment programme, and a thematic analysis was conducted. The results indicate that focus on organisational structures, issues concerning resources and competence, and a more holistic approach to new arrivals' existential situation are key areas to address to move towards successful integration.

Keywords: *integration, core domains of integration, newly arrived immigrants, stakeholders, thematic analysis*

Introduction

Like other countries in Europe, Sweden has received many immigrants within the past few years, affecting the whole society and actualising different aspects of integration. The goal for integration policy in Sweden is to achieve equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for all, regardless of ethnic and cultural background. To tackle some of the challenges, a policy was adopted to provide a framework for integrated action in various sectors (Government Bill 2016). This establishment programme (EP) aims to speed up the introduction of newly arrived immigrants, in this paper also referred to as new arrivals, (i.e., individuals that have been granted a residence permit) into the labour market and social life. An establishment plan should always include Swedish for immigrants (SFI), work preparation and community orientation. The key to the successful implementation

of the policy requires a considerable participation in society within the transition to a more pluralistic community. In this paper, we explore challenges presented by this implementation as described by different stakeholders, and the barriers to the integration of new arrivals.

From a broader perspective, the integration of new arrivals relates to sustainable development goals (SDG) adopted by the member states of the United Nations (2015). Sweden was one of the countries to start early on governmental work towards sustainability (Swedish Government 2018). In connection to SDG, stakeholders working within establishment programmes need to follow the goal addressing sustainable cities and inclusive communities, making demands for good governance with basic human rights as a point of departure (goal 11). The action plan also highlights, among other things, SDG goals with a focus on good health and well-being, quality education with lifelong learning opportunities and decent work for all, and economic growth (goals 3, 4 and 8). Sustainability in everyday practice means utilising the skills and knowledge of new arrivals and emphasising human rights. In other words, empowering immigrants through social participation in inclusive communities with equal life conditions and enhanced democratic participation is vital in developing a sustainable social sector.

The interconnectedness of these goals can be further explained and operationalised by the conceptual framework itemised by Ager and Strang (2008). Their framework includes ten main domains as presented in figure 1 below.

Figure 1. A Conceptual Framework Defining Core Domains of Integration

The framework specifies ten core domains to describe different aspects of the concept of integration. The domains cover the key issues of employment, housing, education, and health. These domains can serve as markers for achievements, but also as means for integration. The three domains of social connection and the two domains of facilitators mediate between the domains of markers and means and the foundational domain of rights and citizenship. According to Ager and Strang (2008) they work as "connective tissue" between the domains.

Social bridges in Ager and Strang´s (2008) framework aim at illuminating the relationships between new arrivals and host communities relating to social harmony and to new arrivals' participation in the host society. Social bonds are about proximity to family and about sharing cultural practises and maintaining familiar patterns of relationships. This plays an important role when it comes to the feeling of being settled in a society. Social links refers to the connection between individuals and structures of the state when it comes to access to services. Connecting new arrivals to relevant services is essential for establishing integration.

Processes in all the different domains relate to facilitators referring to language and cultural competencies, as well as safety and stability. Ager and Strang (2008) believe that learning the language of the host community is not enough; you also need a broader cultural knowledge of national and local procedures for successful integration. The domain of safety and stability refers to the local environment. Not feeling safe or lack of stability due to being forced to move somewhere else act as barriers to the processes of integration.

The foundational domain of rights and citizenship is about a shared understanding of what integration is. The concept can be interpreted in different ways. It can be associated with assimilation based on ethno-cultural political exclusion. Ager and Strang (2008) relate the concept to the notion of the pluralist society and the right to maintain cultural and religious identity and practices. They emphasise that ideas of nationhood, citizenship, rights, and responsibilities are fundamental to understanding the principles and practice of integration.

In connection to sustainability through inclusive communities, experiences from Norway reveal that the meaning of inclusive communities has different goals for the stakeholders, and the primary aims for social participation are dictated mostly by priorities concerning administration of the daily practice or controlling dilemmas (Hagelund 2009; Hagelund and Kavli 2009). Furthermore, Reynolds and Sariola (2018) argue that the effects of community engagement activities are

established in several pathways in which the concept of community engagement itself is defined and legislated. It is important to scrutinise stakeholder-oriented aspects of governance, even at a conceptual level (Hajer et al. 2015). Research may assist in analysing the processes of integration that affect the social inclusion of new arrivals and put the focus on existing inequalities in different life stages. Because inclusive communities are socially, environmentally, and economically beneficial, it is essential to investigate stakeholders' everyday practice from this perspective. In connection to the overall concept of sustainability, McMillan (2014) states that the concept is fragile and dependent on the processes and the stakeholders who create its content. Therefore, their experiences of encounters with newly arrived immigrants in existing establishment programmes can teach us about current flaws and deficiencies in the process of integration. The aim of this study is to investigate challenges and barriers to integration from the perspective of stakeholders' experiences of encounters with newly arrived immigrants.

Method

Design

The study has a qualitative approach. It is a part of a wider Delphi project with the aim of describing the attitudes, perceptions and experiences concerning refugees' mental health and social participation among employees and volunteers in the fields of the labour market, language education and non-governmental organisations in Sweden (Larsen, Eriksson et al. 2021). By 'refugees', this study means newly arrived immigrants that have been granted a residence permit. A two-round Delphi was chosen as a strategy for the collection of data (Hägg-Martinell, Eriksson et al. 2021). This includes an initial overview of existing knowledge to construct items and questions for a two-round sequential questionnaire communication with participating experts.

Setting and sample

The data for this study consists of answers to 15 open-ended questions included in the questionnaires from the first and second rounds (Hägg-Martinell, Eriksson et al. 2021). A total of 238 informants participated in the study. Fifty-five percent of the informants had worked with newly arrived immigrants for one to five years and 39% for more than five years; 46% worked with immigrants in the labour

market, 37% worked in language and education, and 17% worked with social activities. Twenty-one percent of the informants had refugee or migration experience.

Informants and data collection

Informants were recruited by using certain key persons who were asked to contribute and to recommend other suitable persons. These key persons also had the opportunity to distribute the questionnaire to other relevant participating experts. Our definition of an expert was a person who was an employee or a volunteer working in the field of establishment efforts for new arrivals and who had been in that position for more than a year.

The informants recruited for the study represented three different areas within what we define as "establishment efforts for new arrivals". Namely: 1. Social activities: mainly volunteers who organise various social activities for immigrants, such as language cafés, wellness and sports activities, cultural activities, and friendship-building activities within municipalities and organisations. 2. Language and education: mainly SFI teachers and persons responsible for the social orientation for new arrivals. 3. Labour market: actors in labour market establishment such as employees of the Swedish Public Employment Service or similar private alternatives.

Data analysis

The analysis of data was performed with the six-step model for thematic analysis described by Braun and Clarke (2006).

The first phase involved reading the answers to the open-ended questions several times to become familiar with and get a first impression of the data. The second phase was more structured, aiming to identify passages that appeared to represent experiences related to the aim of the study. In this phase an initial coding was performed. These two phases were performed by the first and second authors separately.

The coded passages were sorted into potential preliminary themes in phase three. This was done by the first and the second authors and discussed with the last author. In phase four the preliminary themes were critically scrutinised. Was a theme really a theme, was there enough data to support it? Could two preliminary separate themes form one theme? Could the themes be linked meaningfully to each other,

and still be distinctively different? This critical reading was done by the first author and discussed with the last author.

Phase five was about naming the themes by capturing the essence of each one. This more abstract reflection had the ambition of describing stakeholders' experiences of encounters with newly arrived immigrants and deficiencies in today's establishment programmes at a more general level. The naming of the themes was performed by the first author in discussion with the second and last authors, and finally with all the authors. The last phase was about producing the report with a set of fully worked out themes, and with data extracts to support the analysis. This final analysis was done by the first author in dialogue with the last author, and then discussed with all the authors.

Ethical considerations

Ethical approval to conduct the study was granted by the Ethical Review Board in Stockholm (2018/871-31/5) and data was gathered between October 2018 and March 2019. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) has been applied. All participants were given written information on the study by letter, and their consent was assumed if they proceeded to complete the questionnaire. In addition, the participation was voluntary. To ensure confidentiality, information that might reveal informants´ identities, such as working place, names, etc. was concealed (WMA 2013).

Results

Three main themes emerged from the data as follows: organisational structures and individual needs; allocation of resources and competence development; and health and existential vulnerability

Organisational structures and individual needs

Achieving a person-centred focus in encounters with newly arrived immigrants was described as a goal. At the same time, this goal was perceived as challenging in the daily practice. There was a lack of attention to individualised adjustments in activities and processes for this. Furthermore, the impact of leadership was argued to hinder quality improvement of daily routines. The

problems with leadership were described as lack of proper information in the organisation and lack of insight into the employees' workload. Still, engagement associated with the daily work was argued to be high and the informants received support from their team. Nevertheless, at times with large numbers of new arrivals, a shortage of support from the management was reported to make the workload substantial and tough to cope with. The following quotation illustrates this aspect:

> "… it was a real challenge that almost broke me and my willingness to help as I did not get help either from managers or others, except the closest colleagues."

The daily practice seldom included face-to-face encounters with the newly arrived immigrants. Lack of the face-to-face interaction could lead to confusing and problematic situations for the newly arrived due to language barriers. Usually, they might manage their administrative affairs by themselves, but consultations by a mobile phone being the norm they might feel perplexed and require more assistance. Furthermore, due to the anxiety caused by their life situation they had a need for face-to-face encounters. An informant described this:

> "The participants feel very bad and often want to meet. We do not have the capacity for physical meetings and a lot is done by phone, which worries the participants."

Another challenge in the EP process has to do with external factors such as various authorities with different routines regulating newly arrived immigrants' everyday life. For example, educational activities follow national laws and regulations, with small margins for individual solutions.

Organisational and collaborative challenges could be actualised when various stakeholders needed to co-operate concerning different issues and problematic situations with new arrivals. The informants described poorly organised coordination between different actors and how the newly arrived immigrants directed here and there without concern for what would be best for them:

> "Different activities around the new arrivals should work better together to create a more favourable situation for them. Sometimes they are dragged here and there, and no one seems to think about what is best for the person."

The EP is a joint venture between several community actors with different responsibilities. A lack of collaborative efforts with different stakeholders and community actors may shatter the adjustment process for an individual. A problem described was not about responsibilities for specific aspects of the EP, but about gaps between organisations with non-existent systems for collaboration. This gap between organisations could have a negative impact on the progress in the EP for

the newly arrived immigrant. Furthermore, it was described as complex to proceed within the EP due to challenging time limits which were not always aligned with the opportunity for joint work processes.

Lack of shared methods and systems for collaboration between organisations, as well as tough regulations and time limits were described as troublesome for the EP processes. However, contacts with humanitarian organisations appear to have been easier. Support in contacting humanitarian organisations is offered to the newly arrived immigrants and innovative collaboration with volunteers characterises the involvement of humanitarian groups.

Allocation of resources and competence development

A distribution and mobilisation of resources was considered as an important conditioning factor for EP processes. Positive mobilisation of assets was exemplified when newly arrived immigrants were given several opportunities to complete a course introducing them to the Swedish society and how it works.

To engage new arrivals in different activities to support them in their unfamiliar and often problematic situation is one thing. Another challenge has to do with mental health issues among them, which were described by the informants as widespread. At the same time, the resources within the organisation to help and back them were limited. The same also applies to the healthcare sector with its long waiting times, and there was also adequate information on treatment and support, as an informant illustrated:

> "Mental health problems are widespread and the resources to meet it both within the organisation and outside are limited."

The system lacks capacity, and a low quantity of employees was described as the greatest problem and as a growing issue today. Beyond this, deficient strategies for competence and skills development were described by the informants as a challenge for their practice. They were faced with the complexity of the newly arrived immigrants' situation they were not prepared for. An informant illuminated this:

> "The job is so complex; it would be presumptuous of me to claim that I have sufficient knowledge in these matters."

A challenging factor described by the informants regarding their

competence is related to different aspects of the newly arrived immigrants' health. Beyond the lack of resources, they pointed out a need for competence development in mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Another area with a need of competence development concerned methods for investigating mental disorders that work across language and cultural barriers.

Health and existential vulnerability

In their daily work, the informants encountered new arrivals with traumatic experiences of war and escaping. They described that severe mental problems while you must cope with other consequences of a changed life situation make it hard to learn the language and establish yourself on the labour market and in the society. They also said that knowledge of health-related concerns in this group is generally low in the society. Expectations of them to educate themselves while suffering from mental health problems might just increase if they were not offered proper health care:

> "I am convinced that the general knowledge of newcomers' mental well-being is lacking in society at large. They are expected to educate themselves quickly and adopt a new language at the same time as they often have severe anxiety and PTSD."

Prolonged and inadequate actions to get families together were described as endangering EP processes. Not having knowledge of the family members' health situation or if they were alive impacted on how the process within the EP proceeded. An informant described a common existential situation for the newly arrived:

> "Persons who are separated from their family or do not know what happened to a close family member often feel very bad."

Furthermore, the fact that where the work is there might be no housing, and vice versa, complicated and put more pressure on the EP process, as one informant described:

> "The housing situation is very stressful for many, but especially for the new arrivals, and does not provide the peace needed to cope with establishing oneself"

Safety aspects were described as of the highest importance, and if feelings of security were noticeable in the daily life the new arrivals might connect with new people and improve their social networking. The opposite situation was illuminated by an informant:

> "If you don´t feel safe, you will not be able to take the steps needed to create your networks, either inside or outside your own group."

Segregation was pointed out as a structural problem in the society that affected new arrivals' possibilities to adapt to everyday life in the new country. To counteract this was considered a responsibility for everyone, not only for different stakeholders in the society. Openness and a will to get to know persons with different backgrounds was described as essential, but to create conditions for this was claimed to be a question of politics. Furthermore, the importance of tolerance was underlined regarding differences between people.

Discussion

So, what can stakeholders' experiences of encounters with newly arrived immigrants teach us about challenges and barriers to the integration in today´s establishment programmes? The results indicate that a focus on organisational structures, issues concerning resources and competence, and a more holistic approach to new arrivals' existential situation are key areas to address to move towards successful integration. The results are discussed in relation to previous research and Ager and Strang´s conceptual framework of integration, as described in the background of this paper.

To find a balance between a substantial workload with many new arrivals and the overall goal of achieving a person-centred focus in encounters with them was problematic for the informants, partly due to issues connected to leadership. The impact of leadership and lack of proper information in the organisation was argued to hinder quality improvement of daily routines. Achieving the overall goal of the person-centred approach was made more difficult by the fact that the informants seemed to have little influence over planning and structuring their work. A major barrier described was the growing problem of the EP system´s lack of capacity, with far too few employees. These aspects taken together have negative consequences for the EP processes, resulting in challenging and time-consuming procedures without opportunities for individual solutions for new arrivals.

Beyond these internal factors the situation of the immigrants is complicated by problems connected to collaboration with external stakeholders and authorities. These structural barriers affect the processes of integration connected to Ager and Strang´s (2008) domains of employment, housing, education, and health. Disparities

in routines and poor coordination between different actors make the new arrivals' already problematic integration into society even harder. Furthermore, the bureaucracy with time pressures and lack of continuity in the immigration process can be a challenge (Larsen, Eriksson et al. 2021; van Loenen et al. 2018). What is needed is shared fostering actions by different stakeholders and joint accountability to achieve social justice and equal opportunities for new arrivals (Kraft et al. 2017). The importance of this more holistic approach with integrated partnership is also described by Murphy et al. (2021) in their study of African asylum-seekers in Ireland.

The impact of structural barriers connected to the organisation is exemplified in this study in relation to the domain of health. Lack of resources and competence when it comes to new arrivals with mental health problems was described as a problem, both within the organisation and the healthcare system. Previous research shows that traumatic incidents from war and escaping, combined with experiences of social hardship in the host society, meaning social exclusion along with the loss of social significance and networks, increases the individuals` vulnerability (Sengoelge et al. 2020; Nordling et al. 2020). For stakeholders, these aspects of vulnerability of new arrivals requires both increased knowledge and practical skills training in identifying trauma-related stress and depression at an early stage of the establishment programme as well as a heightened ability to provide information about health-related illnesses (Tinghög et al. 2016). To tackle the complexity of the new arrivals' health-related conditions the need for resources, competence development and collaboration between stakeholders must be highlighted. With Ager and Strang (2008) a connection can be made to the domain of social links. To connect new arrivals to relevant services is essential for establishing integration. Furthermore, it is crucial from the perspective of empowering new arrivals by encouraging self-care and thereby alleviating human suffering. Ager and Strang (2008) emphasise the interdependence between the domains in their framework. This means that we can understand the impact of the new arrivals´ health, especially their existential health, on the other domains, and vice versa. From the wider perspective of sustainability, the need for intersectional collaboration to link health with other areas of sustainability is also described in previous research (Waage et al. 2015).

Another important issue to deal with concerns the domains of employment and housing. Employment can be related to education by vocational training and further education (Ager and Strang 2008). Employment means economic safety and

the possibility to plan for the future. It also means to have the opportunity to connect with members of society and thereby build social bridges (Ager and Strang 2008). This in turn has an impact on the facilitators in the framework, namely learning the language and the acquisition of cultural competence. A recent study by Cetrez, DeMarinis et al. (2020) shows that despite a comprehensive establishment programme and the strong motivation of newcomers, they had a hard time integrating into the labour market. The researchers attributed this to the lack of communication between multiple levels of government and a failure to coordinate language learning and job-training in accordance with individual skills. Language and lack of information were important barriers to integration, as well as the nature and type of work offered, often with temporary contracts and short hours. Finally, discrimination seems to be a major obstacle, preventing newcomers from obtaining a permanent occupation. When it comes to the domain of health, having an employment with income means that you can provide for yourself and your family. This is important in relation to a person's self-esteem and development of self-reliance (Ager and Strang 2008).

The new arrivals' possibilities to be integrated into a community are complicated by the fact that where the work is there might be no housing. The fragmented existence can have a negative impact on the continuity of the different levels of social connections (Ager and Strang 2008), but it even actualises problems when it comes to new arrivals' already vulnerable existence. Social connections relate to social participation, such as being an active member in a social environment. Social participation plays a key role in physical and mental health and protects against poor psychological health outcomes (Yildirim, Isik et al. 2020; Fiorillo, Lavadera et al. 2017; Webber & Fendt- Newlin 2017). Furthermore, previous research by Beirens et al. (2007) shows that social relations promoted a sense of belonging and community, a stronger cultural identity and increased confidence among refugees and asylum-seeking children and families, which helped them in their interaction and engagement with their wider social environment.

An important issue to address is family reunification and with reference to Ager and Strang (2008) the domains of social bonds and health. The proximity to family and one´s own ethnic group with the possibility to share cultural practices and maintain familiar patterns of relationships plays an important role when it comes to the feeling of being settled in a society. Previous research shows that family provides the strongest meaning-giving for newcomers, alongside with religion, children, and

work (Cetrez, DeMarinis, et al. 2020). In this study, the informants said that not having their family with them, or worse, not knowing if they were alive, severely affected the new arrivals' health and well-being. The connection between health and the presence of family is also shown in previous research (Hägg-Martinell, Eriksson et al. 2021). This existential anxiety due to the lack of social bonds can make it hard to connect with new people and establish social bridges, and further, social links in the society. Therefore, actions to get families together should be a priority in the EP processes. Previous research also stresses the importance of family reunification for social support (Sengoelge et al. 2020). This has an impact on how the process within the EP continues towards integration. Again, the interconnectedness of the domain of health with the other domains is apparent.

The overall structural problem of segregation was described as an obstacle to new arrivals' possibilities to adapt to everyday life in the new country. Even in the study by Cetrz, DeMarinis et al. (2020) segregation was a major issue connected to geographical segregation areas with a high concentration of immigrants. Among other things, not being able to make social contact with Swedish speakers slows down language learning. Regarding discrimination and segregation, the Swedish government has set the explicit goals of equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for all, regardless of their ethnic or cultural background (Cetrez, DeMarinis, et.al. 2020). In this context it is interesting to discuss Ager and Strang's framework with language and cultural knowledge as facilitators of integration. They think that learning the language of the host community is not enough; you also need a broader cultural knowledge of national and local procedures for successful integration. Daley (2007) stresses the importance of active community engagement and education to challenge stereotypes and misconceptions and to prepare existing communities for contact with new members. Cetrez, DeMarinis et al. (2020) relate citizenship to a general feeling of belonging. They make a connection to a variety of factors such as geographical location, language skills, existential meaning-making, and value systems.

Feelings of belonging are also related to cultural understandings. We consider this as a joint responsibility for everyone, not only for politicians and different stakeholders in the society. Are we open to getting to know persons with different backgrounds? What about our tolerance when it comes to allowing a person to keep his or her origin while at the same time building a life in a new country? Segregation and aspects of it are connected to the foundation of Ager and

Strang´s (2008) framework with human rights and citizenship, as well as to shared understanding of what integration is.

Strengths and limitations

Given the design of the study, we did not perform any interviews regarding the experiences of stakeholders in the fields of the labour market, language education and civic organisations in Sweden. The results are based on stakeholders´ written descriptions of their experiences of encounters with newly arrived immigrants. Some of the written descriptions were rather short and this could therefore be a limitation. To increase trustworthiness and transferability, we have included qualitative data from different stakeholders. All themes were discussed with the research team and the data from participants was cross-checked when contradictions occurred. It was important to tackle the problem of pre-understanding that may lead to important aspects remaining unnoticed. This investigator triangulation was applied through the whole research process, and all researchers engaged in the analysis contributed different perspectives to strengthen credibility and mitigate the risk of bias (Patton 2015). Although we studied the stakeholders´ experiences in a Swedish context, the results might be transferable to similar settings.

Finally, we consider using the conceptual framework defining core domains of integration by Ager & Strang (2008) as a strength. The discussion of the results of the study in relation to several of these domains provides a deeper and more holistic understanding of different aspects of integration and their interdependence.

Conclusions

Several barriers to successful integration of newly arrived immigrants were identified. Organisational structures connected to leadership and the employees' lack of influence over planning and structuring of their work made it difficult for the informants to reach the goal of implementing a person-centred approach. A major barrier was the growing problem of the EP system´s lack of capacity, with far too few employees. Beyond these internal barriers the collaboration with external stakeholders appeared to be a problem. Disparities in routines and poor coordination between different actors make the new arrivals' already problematic

integration into society even harder. Lack of resources and competence when it comes to new arrivals with mental health problems was described as a problem, both within the organisation and the healthcare system. To tackle the complexity of the new arrivals' health-related conditions due to their existential vulnerability, the need for resources, competence development and collaboration between stakeholders must be highlighted

The new arrivals' possibilities for integration into a community are complicated by the fact that where the work is there might be no housing. This fragmented existence has a negative impact on the continuity of different levels of social connections. Another important issue to address is family reunification and its impact on new arrivals' health and existential well-being.

A major barrier for integration into inclusive communities is the structural problem of segregation. To tackle different aspects of this is a huge challenge that we need to address on all levels for peaceful and sustainable societies. Furthermore, our results suggest that a more holistic approach when it comes to integration processes would facilitate new arrivals' path to a meaningful everyday life.

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Urban Citizenship: Enhancing Non-citizen Settlement and Integration in Global Cities

Afag JAVADOVA

Abstract. From Toronto to Milan, London to Barcelona, and San Francisco to Istanbul, major metropolitan centers have witnessed increased population movements in the last few decades. Various academic and non-academic studies indicate that a growing number of foreign nationals live within the territories of nation-states of which they are not citizens (Stahl 2020; de Graauw 2014). The presence of both undocumented and legal immigrants has led to a situation that Varsanyi (2005) has described as "an emerging urban political crisis" Using Toronto as a case study, this article explores the contemporary tensions caused by the disconnect between individuals' country of physical presence and the place of their political and civic membership. By unpacking the exclusionary and discriminatory aspects of nation-state membership, the article critically examines how citizenship has been used to construct "insiders" and "outsiders". Furthermore, surveying the academic and grey literature, the article contextualizes the problem of disenfranchisement and describes the different integration strategies designed by global cities specifically for their non-citizen populations. By interrogating such strategies and aspects of newcomer integration pursued at the local level, the paper seeks to understand whether global cities could adjust to increasing human mobility by accepting residence as a primary principle for membership. The article identifies the uses and limits of the increasingly widespread discourse on subnational forms of membership, with a particular focus on urban citizenship, as a way to create alternative spaces for claim-making and access to rights in Canada and beyond.

Keywords: *newcomers, political incorporation, urban citizenship, right to the city*

Introduction

The twenty-first century has witnessed a growth in the number of documented and undocumented resident non-citizens in cities worldwide. A recent International Organization for Migration (IOM) report revealed that the number of international migrants now exceeds 272 million globally, of whom 181 million are labor migrants (IOM 2020). While it is hard to provide an accurate estimate of undocumented migrants globally, the number of individuals without legal status had reached 10.5 million in the United States in 2017, according to the same report. In

Canada, according to various estimates, there are between 20,000 to 500,000 undocumented migrant residents (Villegas 2018). Unlike the United States and European countries, where unauthorized border crossings account for most undocumented migration, the majority of undocumented individuals in Canada originally entered through legal channels: for example, rejected refugee claimants, expired student permit or work visa holders, and sponsored immigrants (Magalhaes et al. 2010; Morehouse and Blomfield 2011). Both overall admissions, and admissions of various categories of migrants through legal channels, have significantly increased in the past few years. In 2019 alone, Canada admitted over 341,000 permanent residents and issued 402,000 student permits and 404,000 temporary work permits (IRCC 2020).

Research on immigration has also found that most international migrants reside in urban areas. Along with urbanization and population growth, such movements have contributed to social and cultural transformations in urban neighbourhoods (Stahl 2020; Siemiatycki 2015; Tossutti 2012). Regardless of the immigration category or stream, once new migrants arrive in their destination countries, they tend to settle in urban centers because of the higher likelihood of finding employment and suitable accommodation and better access to ethnic, social, and cultural networks (Lee 2017). Evidence drawn from a qualitative study conducted in Vancouver and its suburbs indicated that, while the concentration of newcomers in certain suburban neighbourhoods increased in the past years, the quality of newcomer settlement services funded by the federal and provincial-level governments in these suburban areas "lagged behind" compared to the urban centers (Zuberi 2018, 450).

Major Canadian cities Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal have become the places of initial destination and permanent residence for over half of all immigrants and recent newcomers to Canada (Paquet et al. 2022). Whereas such groups are in most cases welcomed into labor markets and socially invested in their respective neighborhoods and communities, they are excluded from civic and political membership in their host societies due to the exclusionary nature of the national political system. In addition to the lack of access to electoral decision-making and other channels of claim-making, in most cases, migrants do not feel confident accessing services or speaking up against discrimination and injustices because they fear legal consequences. A growing proportion of these urban residents continue to be deprived of adequate socio-political inclusion,

representation, and participation in the municipalities to which they have moved owing to various push and pull factors. Not surprisingly, visible minorities residing in Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area are underrepresented in elected bodies (Davidson et al. 2020; Siemiatycki 2016; 2011).

Siemiatycki and Saloojee (2002), who examined the implications of the civic and political disenfranchisement of non-citizens on domestic political structures in Toronto, argued that underrepresentation of visible minorities and declining degrees of electoral turnout indicated low and "declining public confidence" (270). Non-citizen disenfranchisement has significantly contributed to lower voter turnouts in Canadian metropolitan centers. For instance, Toronto's 2018 voter turnout fell sharply to 41 percent, compared to 60 percent in the 2014 municipal election (Toronto Star 2018). A population roughly the size of London, Ontario, did not participate in the 2018 municipal elections in Toronto due to lack of Canadian citizenship status. The local voter turnout was 33 percent and 39.36 percent in Vancouver, respectively (CBC 2018). Almost twenty years later, the restrictive regime that institutionalizes exclusion and discrimination in urban populations is still in place. The 2020 report developed by the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) revealed that, while Canada's policies concerning family reunification, education, anti-discrimination, and access to nationality were generally favorable toward migrants, voting rights and participation in local consultative structures were not accessible for non-citizens, unlike other major immigrant destinations (MIPEX 2020). Even in the local elected offices such as school boards, racialized and visible minority candidates are significantly underrepresented compared to their share of the population. The study by Davisdon et al. (2020) has discovered that the representation gap in Ontario's school boards is linked to a broad array of structural and social factors, including but not limited to the underrepresentation of female and racialized candidates in professions that enable access and networks to political activism, perceptions towards the different aspects of minority integration, and the higher number of incumbent white and male trustees compared to those of their racialized counterparts.

Non-nationals' political incorporation has a number of benefits, including stronger cohesion, commitment to principles of democracy, empowerment, a sense of belonging, and direct participation in decision-making processes (Lee et al. 2006). Remarkably, New Zealand was the first country among the established democracies to grant non-citizens full voting rights at national and

local elections after one year of legal residency. New Zealand's initiative not only enforced the principles of non-discrimination and diversity but also contributed to the establishment of an "inclusive political community" (Barker and McMillan 2014, 63). As the immigrant population in liberal-democratic states grows, non-citizen groups are increasingly being granted access to voting and other possibilities associated with citizenship. Typically, local governments and advocacy groups have been at the forefront of these initiatives. Stahl (2020) argued that in the United States, several cities, including San Francisco and Detroit, have granted voting rights to non-citizens in certain elections. While the question of non-citizen enfranchisement is yet to be legally and practically defined, many municipalities across the country are actively exploring the possibility of extending such rights to their non-national residents.

Using a qualitative exploratory research approach, the article examines the different integration strategies designed by cities specifically for their non-citizen populations. Situated within a critical perspective, the present study contextualizes the problem of alien disenfranchisement in the context of global migration through the lens of intersectionality. Kimberlé Crenshaw coined intersectionality in 1989 with the purpose of critiquing the structural inequalities based on the individuals' class, race, gender, and sexual identities in relation to racialized women. While all forms of critical research interrogate the expressions of power in relation to marginalized groups and communities in one way or another, intersectionality is characterized by challenging asymmetrical power relations embedded in societal and institutional structures and provides "the means for dealing with other marginalizations as well" (Kimberlé 1991, 1299). Consistent with the methodology, the systematic review and analysis of the literature involved the relevant peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed publications.

Unpacking, Conceptualizing and Criticizing Citizenship

Contemporary citizenship is a complex concept that encompasses a range of rights, responsibilities, and values held by individuals. Also referred to as nation-state membership, citizenship was conceived as a contract between an individual, territory, and state and regarded as a "democratic form of political membership" (Schinkel 2008, 15). From this perspective, the emphasis of formal nation-state citizenship remained primarily on rights, duties, and participation in the polity.

However, formal avenues of participation, such as voting, which is at the heart of democratic participation, remained accessible only to citizens.

Why does citizenship matter so much? The British sociologist Thomas Humphrey Marshall's essays on citizenship have been highly influential in conceptualizing this phenomenon. Marshall stated that citizenship comprised three core elements: civil, political, and social rights, which collectively implied "full membership of a community" (1950, 49). By civil rights, Marshall refers to the rights associated with individual freedoms, such as freedom of speech, thought, conscience, and religion; the right to own property and conclude contracts; and the right to justice. Social rights denote the rights to economic security and welfare. Among such rights, access to education and social services are the most noteworthy. Finally, political rights enable individuals to participate in the exercise of political power. The promises of citizenship can be fulfilled once an individual has direct and unconditional access to those rights (Marshall 1963). While Marshall's conceptualization of citizenship has made a crucial contribution to scholarship on citizenship, it has been criticized for focusing mainly on white, male, and bourgeois British communities and dismissing the complex and evolving nature of citizenship (Turner 2009).

For Bloemraad (2000), dimensions of citizenship such as legal status, rights, identity, and participation are intertwined and mutually reinforcing. Elsewhere, Bloemraad and Sheares (2017) underlined that, while such formal status may be less practically significant in poor or non-democratic states, citizenship in Western liberal democracies offers many benefits and privileges. While responsibilities such as obeying the law and paying taxes apply to all individuals regardless of their legal status, benefits such as electoral participation and representation apply mostly to formal members (Lee et al. 2006). At the same time, nation-state citizenship is the most obvious source of categorical inequality in modern liberal democracies, which has contributed to the production of inequality (Brubaker 2015). The transmission of citizenship as a legal status through blood or soil has been described as "inherited property" (Hoover 2013, 26) and "exclusionary practice" (Bloemraad and Sheares 2017, 830).

As mentioned previously, conventional nation-state citizenship has been criticized on several counts, including its failure to ensure the freedoms and rights of non-nationals and marginalized groups. Moreover, citizenship has been used to endorse inclusion and exclusion based on individuals' nationality, race, gender, and

class. Historically, various population groups, such as women and racialized communities, were deprived of suffrage rights (Glenn 2002). Critics argued that allowing those who were privileged by virtue of their parents' nationality, place of birth, or status to become full members, while rejecting non-members' access to equal participation, reinforces the hierarchy of individuals within wider society. Proponents of alien enfranchisement have stated that by excluding non-citizens from the electoral process, nation-states deprive them of the capacity to hold elected officials accountable to all constituents (Hayduk and Koll 2018; Garcia 2011).

Supra- and Sub-national Forms of Citizenship

As various models and frameworks of membership have emerged in recent decades, the academic and grey literature has witnessed growing interest in supra-national citizenship. As Auvachez (2009) suggested, the link between political authorities and individuals is not necessarily exclusive. Referring to European Union (EU) citizenship examples, which coexist with national citizenship, Auvachez indicates that membership frameworks can be multiple. In their elaboration of citizenship, Kivisto and Faist highlighted two central themes: dual citizenship and post-national citizenship. Dual citizenship recognizes the possibility of having formal membership status in more than one country (2007, 103). Drawing on empirical data from different states, the authors claim that dual citizenship practices and norms have been established in over 60 states, including Canada. Post-national citizenship implies the emergence of various models and forms of citizenship. The literature is rich with studies examining global, urban, environmental, sexual, social, intimate, economic, cultural, and cosmopolitan models of citizenship (Anderson 2014; Hampshire 2013).

Along with the articulation of supra-national membership, various expressions of urban-level membership have been observed. In the face of global mobility, some social science and urban scholars have developed convincing arguments in support of territorial citizenship and made calls to acknowledge residency as the primary criterion for formal membership (Bauder 2014; Birnie 2020). Increasingly popular discourse on "the right to the city" has been viewed as one of the ways of establishing alternative political spaces in which disenfranchised groups of urban residents seek opportunities. One of the pioneers of the idea of the right to the city was a French sociologist and philosopher Henri Lefebvre. Lefebvre's

conceptualization of space has become widely acknowledged in urban geography and urban studies, and has resonated with migrant rights advocates. In particular, Lefebvre's famous elaboration on space (2000 [1974]) involved three complex and intertwined levels at which people produce space: physical, mental, and social. Rafesstin (1980, 129) indicates that by the production of physical space, the author suggests that space is a "pre-existing reality which is subsequently transformed into territory through various political mechanisms" (as cited in Brennar and Elden 2009, 363). During the transformation process, the state and city have developed a relationship where the state "has the city as its center" (Lefebvre 2009, 224). Lefebvre's account of mental (cognitive) space is constructed around the "knowledge and logic, of maps and mathematics, of space as the instrumental space of social engineers and urban planners" (Elden 2001, 815). The social process of production of space involves "hierarchically ordered institutions, of laws and conventions upheld by "values" that are communicated through the national language" (Lefebvre 2009, 224).

In Lefebvre's vision, social space is a dynamic realm where relationships can be produced and modified over time. While the state is viewed as a main political actor in which the powers of control were nested, the author points out the challenges the states encountered as a result of *autogestion* of urban life or "a movement for self-management, or workers' control —a revolt against control and management from above" (Elden 2004, 157). In general terms, Lefebvre argued that urban inhabitants should have the right to participate centrally in all decisions that produce urban space. The powers embedded in the given territorial and bounded structure, i.e., the nation-state, are being challenged and reconfigured by popular debates about circulations of people and the right to the city framework. Nevertheless, Lefebvre's theorization of the right to the city did not follow a clear and straightforward definition, and hence, was open to many interpretations. Urban geographer Mark Purcell (2002) indicates that Lefebvre's ambiguous definition has given rise to a range of different interpretations in writing on citizenship, urban studies, human rights, and development. Purcell argues that the right to the city is to be exercised in the most immediate sense, as a right to configure the urban space in all its manifestations. In its institutionalized form, this right would involve, for example, the participation of urban residents in the board meetings of a corporation when the latter involves making decisions that are to affect life in the city.

Scholars who drew parallels between ancient Greek city-states and modern

urban citizenship movements have argued that urban citizenship is not a new idea but has resurged due to global human movements (Stahl 2020; Foerster 2019). In "Reinventing Urban Citizenship," Bauböck (2003) argues that restricting citizenship to nationals of the state is unjustifiable. As political communities, cities need to emancipate all residents by granting full local citizenship to all residents within their jurisdiction after a specified duration of residence. Considering that immigrants generally have specific interests in local politics, granting them the franchise at the local level may ensure a political voice in decisions that affect their most immediate interests. Some scholars have expressed their disagreement with the discourse on supranational and subnational citizenship in the wake of predictions about the devaluation or erosion of nation-state citizenship. Hansen (2009), for instance, attaches great importance to national citizenship and argues that only those foreign nationals who deserve to become members should be naturalized by the nation-states. With regard to the identity dimension of citizenship, Hansen argues that "[c]itizenship … plays a role in fostering solidarity" (13), whereas liberal multiculturalism weakens cohesion among members of the host country and newcomers.

Urban citizenship has been viewed as a practice that can address the democratic deficit in destination countries. Despite the views that urban citizenship undermines national citizenship, Bosniak (2006) suggested that national citizenship is being supplemented by other forms of citizenship practices. Bauböck (2020) claimed that urban citizenship should not be an alternative to nation-state membership. Regardless of scope and scale, urban-level membership could complement or replace national citizenship. As Rodríguez (2010) puts it, the extension of the franchise in national and subnational elections to non-citizens in New Zealand hardly seems to reflect an undervaluing of the vote and, in fact, reinforces the nation's conceptualization of its political culture.

The Canadian Context

Toronto, the largest Canadian city, has been "a majority-immigrant city" since the early 2000s (Landolt 2020, 78). The city has become "a remarkably diverse ethnocultural, linguistic and religious community" (Siemiatycki and Isin 1997, 75). Presently, avenues for formal political participation in Toronto and other Canadian municipalities are largely based on national citizenship. Despite the surge of support

for non-citizen voting at the local level, mostly from immigrant labor and social justice organizations (Siemiatycki and Marshall 2014), and growing scholarly interest in recent years, proponents have faced significant backlash. Moreover, the Canada-Ontario-Toronto Memorandum of Understanding on Immigration, despite being seen as a significant step toward creating "more effective collaboration between federal, municipal and provincial governments" in relation to immigrant settlement and integration, has limited the Toronto municipal authority to a consultative role (Rose and Preston 2017, 29).

As many have witnessed, some immigrant-receiving countries have gone further and provided voting rights to third-party nationals, such as in Ireland, New Zealand, and parts of the United States. Some immigrant-dense cities in the Americas and Europe have pursued various initiatives that contribute towards establishing good practice in empowering non-citizen urban habitants, for example by improving equitable access to city services. While most policies concerning migrants are made and regulated at the federal and regional levels, sub-national forms of membership are expressions of policy interventions that emerged as a response to past or emerging social injustice that affects communities at the local level. Drawing on the case studies of Barcelona, Milan, and other European cities, Garcia (2006) argued that urban citizenship hence encourages the formulation of policies and instruments to respond to local communities' and people's needs, notwithstanding their legal status:

> Urban and regional forms of citizenship develop when: policy instruments are introduced locally and regionally in order to maintain and/or create social entitlements as a result of citizens' demands or as a result of local institutions' innovative practices; and when the mechanisms for political integration provide an open sphere for participation and contestation not only for established citizens, but also for denizens (754).

In the context of the increasing legal and political weight of American cities, "don't ask, don't tell" policies with regard to immigrants have been gathering momentum since the late 1980s. The claims of urban inhabitants have been diverse, ranging from affordable housing to healthcare, better job opportunities, and fair and equal pay (Blokland et al. 2015). One common aspect of these claims and mobilizations is that urban inhabitants use local spaces, i.e., cities, to access services and make claims. Among the diverse migrant-friendly and human-rights-based initiatives, sanctuary city movements have been the most noteworthy ones. While a precise definition or conceptualization of "sanctuary" does not necessarily exist in

legal glossaries or scholarly works, it may refer to "public and private safe spaces for unauthorized immigrants because sanctuary policies, for the most part, are still implemented by local governments and private groups such as churches" (Villazor 2008, 135). O'Brien, Collingwood, and El-Khatib (2019) defined a sanctuary city as "a city or police department that has passed a resolution or ordinance expressly forbidding city or law enforcement officials from inquiring into immigration status and/or cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement" (4).

Sanctuary movements vary significantly between states and localities by scope and scale. Nevertheless, they share common characteristics of promoting urban centers as a space of belonging for all residents regardless of migration status and challenging exclusionary "national policies and practices regulating migration and belonging attitudes and practices" (Bauder 2017, 175). Toronto became the first sanctuary city in Canada in 2013. Other immigrant-dense Canadian cities adopted similar sanctuary policies: for example, Hamilton and Vancouver in 2014 and 2016, respectively. The primary goal of this policy was to ensure that all residents, regardless of immigration status, could access social services without fear of detention or deportation. While the symbolic significance of this initiative was high, in practice it did not produce many recognizable results (Hudson et al. 2017).

Notably, global cities often act as "first responders for migrants' well-being" (Paquet et al. 2022, 86). Some migrant cities have already adopted space- and issue-specific local bureaucratic membership models, with the objective of facilitating undocumented migrants' access to local services. According to de Graauw (2014), local bureaucratic membership is a pragmatic concept because it acknowledges national authority over immigration and citizenship. The city is understood to be the lowest administrative level, and local bureaucratic membership capitalizes on cities' discretionary administrative powers over their non-citizen populations. By introducing urban or municipal identification cards, such cities have enabled irregular migrants to identify themselves to relevant local authorities and frontline staff, including municipal authorities, police, schools, hospitals, libraries, or local businesses. These identification papers are valid in the jurisdictions that issue them, but do not confer legal status on the holder. Empirical evidence from the United States indicates that, in navigating jurisdictional restrictions imposed by the Constitution, cities such as New Haven

and San Francisco developed local identification cards to enable undocumented migrants to access city-run services (310).

As the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the disadvantages faced by non-citizen populations in global cities, urban-level governments and stakeholders need to create more inclusive and equal conditions to integrate their marginalized communities into the public and political realms. In light of the ongoing pandemic, evidence drawn from Canada suggested that the COVID-19 outbreak has taken an unequal toll on racialized communities and migrants. Federally-funded settlement support programs are not accessible to undocumented individuals, refugee claimants, temporary foreign workers, and study permit holders (Praznik and Shields 2018). While social inequality is not a new phenomenon, the pandemic has disproportionately impacted the health of minority communities and diminished their access to health services, housing, employment, and financial support (ICES 2020). In the context of the pandemic, migrant groups were exposed to increased levels of racism and xenophobia (Lee and Johnstone 2021). Likewise, unemployment and economic challenges have disproportionately impacted migrant populations and racially marginalized groups in the United States and Europe. Despite entitlements to healthcare and other public services, some minority communities and migrant groups across the European states were excluded from the COVID-19 response as a result of administrative, linguistic and cultural barriers (Kumar et al. 2021; Berntsen and Skowronek 2021; Perry et al. 2021; OECD 2020). The citizen/non-citizen division has been particularly concerning with regard to urban residents' access to healthcare (Landolt 2020).

While research on responses to COVID-19 driven inequalities is still ongoing, some positive ad-hoc initiatives have been documented at the subnational level. As noted by Paquet et al., three Canadian provinces - Ontario, British Columbia, and Quebec - have adjusted their policies to accommodate the Covid-19 related healthcare needs of all individuals regardless of their immigration status (91). While local municipalities across Canada are nearly powerless in relation to immigration policy-making, they continue to be primary responders for the needs of citizens, permanent residents, temporary residents, and undocumented migrants alike. Ultimately, cities with larger immigrant populations should advocate for greater non-citizen empowerment and incorporation using the right to the city framework.

Conclusion

One of the ongoing dilemmas of the contemporary nation-state has been the desire to define its territory and members, while providing rights and privileges to all populations within its boundaries. Unfortunately, national citizenship has come under scrutiny for not being able to balance these needs. Subsequently, in some European and American municipalities, urban citizenship has been seen as a means to address the democratic deficit. Worldwide, a number of global cities have already pursued various strategies toward reinstating urban-level citizenship, primarily by providing access to city-wide services and - to a lesser degree - recognizing voting rights for permanent residents in local elections and consultative bodies. In addition, some urban centers have introduced permanent and temporary policy responses and targeted support mechanisms to ensure non-citizen inhabitants could access city services on par with the citizens.

The purpose of this article was to review the literature on the urban citizenship framework and present recent empirical findings on its practical benefits. Integrating an intersectionality lens and a critical perspective, the article discussed the issue of alien disenfranchisement in the context of Canada. The literature suggests that non-citizens, especially undocumented migrants, continue to be disadvantaged based on their legal status. In the case of Canada, major metropolitan centers such as Toronto have not been able to create a truly equal and fair environment for all community members, despite being committed to the principles of diversity, equity, and access and promising equal rights and access to all urban residents, regardless of their racial characteristics, place of origin, or immigrant status[1]. The evidence highlights how the oppressive national policies and practices, coupled with the individuals' race and identity, have created asymmetrical power relations between citizens and non-citizens.

As evidenced by the 2021 Annual Report of the Canadian Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to Parliament, the federal government has set the newcomer intake to 1.3 million in the years 2022-2024 (Government of Canada 2022). As the number of immigrants needed to address the country's labor market needs and population growth will continue to grow, the question of the right

[1] City of Toronto. (n.d.). Equity, Diversity & Inclusion. Accessed February 12, 2002, https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accessibility-human-rights/equity-diversity-inclusion/

to the city remains highly relevant. In line with the literature on urban citizenship, the paper argued that the urban citizenship debate could offer an important framework for developing more inclusive and progressive policy frameworks, including that of non-citizen voting, in an era of increased human mobility. Urban citizenship holds the potential to ensure equal access to local services and facilities for all urban inhabitants. Hence, by embracing the principles and practices of urban (local) membership, Canadian municipalities like Toronto should offer policies and programs specific to the needs of their large non-citizen populations.

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The Interpretation of Migration in the Family Reunification Jurisdiction of the European Court of the Human Rights

Réka FRIEDERY

Abstract. Family reunification or family reunion became a key form of migration towards Europe. Because there is no definite mention regarding the right to family reunification in the European Convention of Human Rights, the Court has the task to give guidelines in its judgements. The author argues that the Court's jurisprudence turned out to be very limited in its protection of migrants, and tried to conform the Member States' own migration policies with the right to respect for family life. The author highlights that the case law of family reunification developed with contradicting cases and this underlines the sensitive issue of migration in the immigration policy of the states.

Keywords: *family unity, family member, migration, children, European Convention on Human Rights, European Court of the Human Rights*

Introduction

Although the European Convention on Human Rights and its protocols have no provisions that express directly a right to family reunification, several articles constitute the ground for this right. If we look at article 8, it contains the protection to family life, namely the right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence. The article also imposes negative and positive obligations to public authorities who either cannot interfere with the exercise of this right, or only when it is in accordance with the law and when necessary in a democratic society. Also, the article lists issues like the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, the prevention of disorder or crime, the protection of health or morals, or the protection of the rights and freedoms that shall be taken into consideration when a public authority makes steps to interfere with this right. I shall emphasise that the CJEU pointed out the essential object of this article, which is to protect the individual against arbitrary interference, where there

are positive obligations regarding an effective "respect" for family life though the notion's requirements will vary considerably from case to case.[1] Beside article 8, article 14 can be seen as another element when we try to define the right to family reunification as it prohibits discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status. This is particularly relevant in terms of the different treatment between family unity conditions for beneficiaries of international protection and refugee. The third article that can be seen as the ground for the right to family reunification next to the above-mentioned two articles is article 25 as this article contains the provision about the right to bring individual claims to the Court and its decisions are binding on the states.

The documents and conventions born under the aegis of the Council of Europe and the judgements of the European Court of Human Rights offer directions regarding the application and interpretation of the Convention and the Protocols. Although the Council of Europe adopted several recommendations on family reunification, the soft law nature of the recommendation means these are non-binding.

Member states of the Council of Europe are obliged to respect the human rights of the Convention with regard to everyone, to ensure that all rights laid down in the Convention are respected and accessible on its territory but they have margin of appreciation to interpret and implement the Convention. That is to say although there are minimum boundaries within they have to approach family life but are also allowed to give more extensive rights than the ones set out in the convention. The provisions on family reunification are subject to the limitations imposed by the ECHR and Union law on national law restrictions on family reunification rights of international protection beneficiaries.[2]

The life situation of family reunification occurs when a family member joins another member of his/her family with the latter already living and working in

[1] See ECtHR, Marckx v Belgium, Application no 6833/74, Judgement of 13 June 1979, para 31.

[2] See Helene Lambert, "Family unity in migration law: The evolution of a more unified approach in Europe" in Vincetn Chetail and Celine Bauloz (eds.), *Research Handbook on International Law and Migration* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2014), 194-215; Anne Staver, *Family Reunification: A Rights for Forced Migrants?* (RSC Working Papers No.5) (Oxford: Oxford University Presss, 2008); James C. Hathaway, *The Rights of Refugees under International Law* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005) 533-560; Bernadette Rainey, Elizabeth Wicks and Claire Ovey, *The European Convention on Human Rights* (Oxford: OUP, 2014) 335-338.

another country habitually. But family reunification is often seen as the only option to guarantee respect for a refugee's right to family unity followed by separation caused by forced displacement, such as from persecution and war.[3]

According to the case-law, article 8 applies when a family member aims to join another member abroad, generally the breadwinner, with the aim of family reunification, or in case a member of the family is expelled or threatened with expulsion – often as a result of sanctions resulting from criminal proceedings – from the country where he/she and the family live.

In recent decades we could observe that a number of cases arose where the parties concerned have complained about a member state that efused the admission or residence, or expelled a person because the person wan not a national of the concerned state. Conventions concerning the status of migrants and migrants' families adopted under the frame of the Council of Europe apply to migrant nationals of States that are parties of these convention and but I shall point to out that there is no system of enforcement in cases of breach of obligations by parties. In the following we will analyse the elements of migration in the jurisdiction of the Court.

Existence of a family: the migration aspect

We can observe that the Court built up the notion of family life gradually. Article 8 presumes the existence of a family[4] and when married, family life normally involves cohabitation. This premise is strengthened by the existence of article 12 for it is scarcely conceivable that the right to found a family should not encompass the right to live together.[5] Though the cohabitation element is important but it is not an unconditional criterion[6]. Family life is rooted in real connections, not only in formal legal relationships. Family life exists in the case of relationships between married couples and non-married (stable) partners thus marriage is not a prerequisite to the

[3] UNHCR, *Family Reunification in Europe* (Brussels: UNHCR, 2015) 1.
[4] ECtHR, Marckx v Belgium, Application No. 6833/74, Judgement of 13 June 1979, para., para. 31.
[5] ECtHR, Abdulaziz, Cabales and Balkandali v UK, Application no 9214/80, 9473/81, 9474/81, Judgement of 28 May 1985, para. 62.
[6] ECtHR, Berrehab v the Netherlands, Application no 10730/84, Judgement of 21 June 1988, para. 21; Kroon and others v The Netherlands, Application no 18535/91, (27.10.1994).

enjoyment of family life, and an unmarried cohabiting couple may enjoy family life[7] and informal, religious marriages also fall under article 8. The ECHR institutions have, however, demonstrated a willingness, in more recent years at least, to construe these criteria more liberally to bring parents who have never married or even cohabited within the protective realm of article 8.[8]

The Abdulaziz, Cabales and Balkandali v the United Kingdom case[9], which was the first family reunification case, also strengthened that informal, religious marriages also fall under the scope of article 8. The Court has acknowledged that same-sex couples, even without cohabiting but in stable relationships enjoy family life together,[10] and this shows a more wider approach to its previous view that stated that the emotional and sexual relationship of a same-sex couple could not constitute "family life".[11] Instead, these couples have been given the lesser protection under "private life".[12]That is because the ECtHR established that sexual orientation is one of the grounds covered by Art. 14 ECHR,[13] which approach continued later on.[14]

Regarding refugees' spouses who married post-flight, the Court pointed out that refugees with post-flight spouses were similarly situated to migrant students

[7] ECtHR, Marckx v Belgium, Application no 6833/74, Judgement of 13 June 1979; ECtHR, Berrehab v the Netherlands, Application no 10730/84, Judgement of 21 June 1988; ECtHR, Keegan v Ireland, Application no 16969/90, Judgement of 26 May 1994; ECtHR, Kroonand others v The Netherlands, Application no 18535/91, Judgement of 27 October 1994; ECtHR, X, Y and Z v The United Kingdom, Application no 21830/93, Judgement of 22 April 1997; ECtHR, Al-Nashif v Bulgaria, Application No. 50963/99, 20 June 2002; ECtHR, Schalk and Kopf v Austria, Application no 30141/04, 24.05.2010.

[8] Helen Stalford, "Concepts of Family under EU law – Lessons from the ECHR", Int. J. of L., Pol. and the Fam. 16, (2002):417

[9] ECtHR, Abdulaziz, Cabales and Balkandali v UK, Application no 9214/80, 9473/81, 9474/81, Judgement of 28 May 1985, para. 63.

[10] ECtHR, Pajić v Croatia, Application No. 68453/13, Judgement of 23 February 2016 citing ECtHR, P.B. and J.S. v Austria, Application No. 18984/02, Judgement of 22 July 2010, paras. 27-30; ECtHR, Schalk and Kopf v Austria, Application No. 30141/04, 24 June 2010, paras. 91-94. See also ECtHR, Taddeucci v Italy, Application No. 51362/09, (30 June 2016, paras. 94-98

[11] ECtHR, X and Y v UK, Application no. 9369/81, 3.05.1983; ECtHR, S v UK, Application no. 11716/85, Judgement of 14 May 1986 and ECtHR, Mata Estevez v Spain, Application no 56501/00, Judgement of 10 May 2001.

[12] ECtHR, WJ and DP v UK, Application no 12513/86, Judgement of 13 July 1987; ECtHR, ZB v UK, Application no 16106/90, Judgement of 2 October 1990. See also ECtHR, C and LM v UK, Application no 14753/89, Judgement of 9.10.1989.

[13] ECtHR, Da Silva Mouta v Portugal, Application no 33290/96, 21.12.1999; ECtHR, Fretté v France, Application no 36515/97, 26.02.2002 and ECtHR, Karner v Austria, Application no 40016/98, Judgement of 24 July 2003.

[14] ECtHR, Schalk and Kopf v Austria Application no 30141/04, 24.06.2010.

and workers, who were entitled to family reunification irrespective of when the marriage was contracted.[15] The similarity was rooted in the fact that as students and workers, whose spouses were entitled to join them were usually granted a limited period of leave to remain in the United Kingdom, the Court considers that they too were in an analogous position to the applicants for the purpose of article 14 of the Convention. Key elements in the Strasbourg court's assessment of whether such a couple enjoys this protection are the stability and intention of the parties.[16]

Requirement of family life: the migration aspect

The case-law formed the principal factors of family life which consists of effective and strong links between the family members concerned and the host country, the actual existence of family life, and the impossibility to reunite the family elsewhere. This was furthermore detailed in cases with migration elements such as the extent to which family life would effectively be broken and the extent of the ties in the host Member State[17]. The immigration control (for example, a history of breaches of immigration law), or considerations of public order weighing in favour of exclusion from the host state were taken into consideration, too. In cases concerning children, the best interest of the child is of utmost importance. Also the intention or knowledge of the family members involved in family reunification is taken into consideration: whether family life was created at a time when the persons involved were aware that the immigration status of one of them was such that the persistence of that family life within the host State would from the outset be precarious.[18] There is a change in the Court's direction that family life shall be taken into consideration before the principle of state sovereignty in case of significant

[15] ECtHR Hode and Abdi v the United Kingdom, Application No. 22341/09, Judgement of 6 February 2013

[16] See Helen Toner, Partnership Rights, Free Movement and EU Law (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2004).

[17] Jeunesse, paras. 107-109 and 120.

[18] See Abdulaziz, Cabales and Balkandali v UK, Application no 9214/80, 9473/81, 9474/81, Judgement of 28 May 1985, para. 68; ECtHR, Mitchell v the United Kingdom (dec.), no.40447/98, 24 November 1998; ECtHR, Ajayi and Others v the United Kingdom (dec.), no. 27663/95, 22 June 1999; ECtHR, M. v the United Kingdom (dec.), no. 25087/06, 24 June 2008; ECtHR, Rodrigues da Silva and Hoogkamer v the Netherlands, cited above, para. 39; ECtHR, Arvelo Aponte v the Netherlands, cited above, paras. 57-58; ECtHR, Butt v Norway, cited above, para. 78 and ECtHR, Nunez v Norway, para. 70.

difficulties obstructing family life in the country of origin.[19] When migrants must demonstrate that family life cannot be enjoyed "elsewhere" in order to show that the refusal of family reunification will violate article 8 of the Convention, there is a difference between refugees and non-refugees. While earlier judgments set an extremely high standard for family reunification, requiring applicants to demonstrate that reunification was the only way to (re-)establish family life, the standard now is that applicants must show that reunion is the "most adequate" way to family life.[20]

According to the case-law, there is no guarantee for family reunification in a given country, but the Court guarantees in general the right to continue family life wherever this can be realised, and there is no general obligation to respect the immigrants' choice regarding the country of residence and to permit family reunion in its territory, as it depends on the particular circumstances of the persons involved as well as the general public interest[21], with the emphasis put on the circumstances.

Admission and residence

While article 8 was more or less successfully invoked by family members in line of expulsion, the Court does not appear to be generally lenient in matters relating to admission. In Abdulaziz the application of article 8 was a significant milestone. The Court's decision confirmed that the immigration rules of the states and their specific application need to be thoroughly examined, but stated that no general obligation arises from the article for states regarding the admission of a foreign spouse in the light of the free choice of family residence.

Therefore, there is no presumption that under article 8 the state should ensure the residence of the spouse or the family member in the territory of the state

[19] Philip Czeck, "A right to family reunification for persons granted international protection? The Strasbourg case-law, state sovereignty and EU harmonisation", 17 Friday Jun 2016. http://eumigrationlawblog.eu/a-right-to-family-reunification-for-persons-under-international-protection-the-strasbourg-case-law-state-sovereignty-and-eu-harmonisation-2/#comments

[20] The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Realising the right to family reunification of refugees in Europe. (Council of Europe, June 2017), p. 21

[21] See ECtHR, Gül v Switzerland, Application no. 23218/94, Judgement of 19 February 1996; ECtHR Hode and Abdi v the United Kingdom, Application No. 22341/09, Judgement of 6 February 2013 and ECtHR Tuquabo-tekle v the Netherlands, Application no. no. 60665/00, Judgement of 1 March 2006.

concerned. The Convention does not in itself guarantee the right for individuals to reside and settle in the territory of another state. Nor does it provide a level of protection for family life which allows family members to choose freely which Member State they wish to live in.

The economic interests of the host state may be a legitimate consideration, both in defining the principles of the general immigration policy and in considering individual applications. The burden of proof is on the applicant to point out that family life cannot be reasonably expected to be continued in another country.[22] In Sen and Boultif, the Court's position appears to be somewhat relaxed regarding the entry and establishment of family members. In the Sen case, a 12-year-old child settled in the Netherlands when joining his family. Five years later, he married a Turkish citizen in Turkey and his started a family. The wife then moved in with her husband in the Netherlands, and their daughter was left in Turkey, raised by the wife's relatives. In 1990, already in the Netherlands, another child was born, and in 1992 they applied for their firstborn child to join them. Their application was rejected on the grounds that the family bond between the 12-year-old girl and her parents was broken. The parents explained with spousal disagreement the late date of their submission. However, a third child was born in 1994, before the rejection decision was made. The parents then lodged a complaint, alleging the violation of their right to family life under article 8. The ECtHR decision was based on the argument that it would be unreasonable to expect children born and raised in the Netherlands to move to Turkey and to continue there their family life and decided in favour of the family's further residence in the Netherlands. In the present case, the Court further emphasized that the obligation on member states under Article 8 is not only to refrain from expulsion but also to allow entry, even if this obligation is not accepted as a general rule.[23] This change of approach is also reflected in the Boultif case, which, although not one of the classic admission cases, carries such elements, given that Mr Boultif, an Algerian national, applied abroad for an extension of his Swiss residence permit, but the request has been denied due to previous crimes. Important to the case is the fact that Mr Boultif's wife was a Swiss national living in Switzerland who had no other connection to Algeria than her husband. Referring to the violation of her family rights, Mr Boultif turned to the Court. It decided that it would be disproportionate to expect a Swiss wife to move to Algeria with her

[22] See Abdulaziz et al.
[23] ECtHR Sezen v. NL, Application no. 50252/99, Judgement on 31 July 2006.

husband and gave importance to the husband's low degree of danger to public order. The Sen and Boultif cases show a new direction and it seems to be put less emphasis on expectations that families shall settle in 'another country'.

Admission and expulsion

It must be underlined that the ECtHR made clear distinction between cases concerning admission or expulsion. Respect for family life presupposes primarily the protection of family unity. In other words, this a fundamental right is to ensure primarily the effective coexistence of family members. The expulsion from the territory or the ban on entry may lead to the separation of spouses or parents and children and such decisions have been subject to a review for decades under article 8.

In the case of Abdulaziz among others, the ECtHR explained the different approach of admission and expulsion cases. Expulsion has in principle been found to be an interference with family life where a state seeks to expel a person who has established family life there. This was in Boultif v Switzerland, where the Court held that the state had a negative obligation not to expel non-nationals,[24] and a positive obligation, seen as in Gül v Switzerland and Ahmut v Netherlands, that is stricter. Couples arguing that a Member State has an obligation of admission have been much less successful than in cases where a member of a family stands the risk of expulsion.[25] The ECtHR follows the principle of international law that a sovereign state has a right to control the entry of non-nationals into its territory and states that there is no general obligation to respect the married couple's choice of residence for the family and to accept the non-national spouse to settle in that country.

Member states have a wide margin of appreciation and a state's obligations to admit family members will vary according to the particular circumstances as seen

[24] ECtHR Boultif v Switzerland, Application no 54273/00, Judgement of 20 December 2001.

[25] ECtHR Gül v Switzerland, Application no 23218/94, Judgement of 19 February 1996, ECtHR Ahmut v Netherlands, Application no 21702/93, Judgment of 28 November1996.

in Abdulaziz. That is to say, the Court's case by case analysis can lead to the right to family reunification regarding the admission, and the Court as well require member states to apply a balancing test in cases where expulsion threatens the continuation of family life.[26]

The Court reiterated the ruling of the Boultif case in several other cases that concerned again the violation of article 8. In the Amrollahi case, the ECtHR decided that the Danish wife and children of an Iranian drug dealer expelled from Denmark, cannot be expected to follow him to Iran,[27] while in Sezen it was also found that family members of third-country drug traffickers were not expected to settle in a foreign country. Moreover, the Yildiz case brought a new element, namely, that the court imposed the burden of proof on the state. This all shows the progressive move from Abdulaziz, where applicants had yet to prove on reasonable ground that family reunification is not possible in another country.

Controversial cases with migration aspect

The contradictions in the case law of the Court can be seen in two cases, namely, in Tuquabo-Tekle v the Netherlands and in Gül v Switzerland. In Tuquabo-Tekle v the Netherlands, a daughter was left behind when her mother fled Eritrea to seek asylum, following the death of her husband. She did not receive refugee protection, but rather another form of (less secure) humanitarian protection. The Court held that the authorities' allegation that she left her daughter on her own free will was questionable, and decided that the state was obliged under article 8 to admit her daughter to the territory, so that to ensure family life.[28]

However, in Gül v Switzerland, the Court found no violation for refusal to grant admission to a son to re-join his father in Switzerland. The father had sought asylum, but was merely granted a residence permit on humanitarian grounds and

[26] See more Peers et al.: *The Legal Status of Persons admitted for Family Reunion. Comparative Studies of Law and Practice in some European States*. Centre for Migration Law, University of Nijmegen (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2000), and Kees Groenendijk, Guild Elspeth and Dogan Halil, *Security of Residence of Long-term Migrants. A comparative study of law and practice in European countries* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1998)

[27] ECtHR Amrollahi v. Denmark, Application no. 36811/00, Judgement of 11 July 2002.

[28] ECtHR Tuquabo-tekle v the Netherlands, Application no. no. 60665/00, Judgement of 1 March 2006

after some time the father made several visits to his son in Turkey. The Court held that there were no longer "strong humanitarian grounds" for the father to remain in the state, thus rebuilding family life in Turkey would be possible and found no violation of article 8 because in view of the length of time the parents have lived in Switzerland, and there were no obstacles preventing them from developing family life in Turkey, in the cultural and linguistic environment of the child.[29]

In line with the above case, in Ahmut and Ahmut vs. the Netherlands the Court held that the decisions of the authorities to refuse to admit a 9-year-old child who lost his mother in Morocco - to live with his father - a well-established immigrant who at the time of application had acquired Netherlands nationality - did not constitute a violation of article 8 of the Convention. The Court stated that the extent of a State's obligation to admit to its territory relatives of settled immigrants will vary according to the particular circumstances of the persons involved and the general interest and where immigration is concerned, article 8 cannot be considered to impose on a State a general obligation to respect immigrants' choice of the country of their matrimonial residence and to authorise family reunion in its territory, article 8 does not guarantee a right to choose the most suitable place to develop family life.[30]

Concluding Remarks

The Convention does not guarantee the right to reside and establish for individuals in the territory of another member State. Nor does it provide a level of protection for family life which would allow family members to choose freely the member state they wish to live in. This is confirmed by the ECtHR's decades-long practice: there is no breach of article 8 where there can reasonably be expected from a family to settle elsewhere in order to preserve the unity of the family. It is important to emphasize that the economic interests of the host state may be a legitimate consideration both when defining the principles of the general immigration policy and when considering individual applications. In a complaint regarding a violation of family life, the ECtHR considers more than one factor, thus

[29] ECtHR Gül v Switzerland, 53/1995/559/645 Court's judgment of 19 February 1996, Reports of Judgments and Decisions 1996-I, p. 159 Gül vs. Switzerland, 53/1995/559/645, para. 42.
[30] ECtHR Ahmut and Ahmut vs. the Netherlands 21702/93, Judgement of 17 May 1995, paras. 67 and 71.

of the person's relationship with the host country or country of origin, possible criminal lifestyle and the country's general immigration policy. Also, it does not guarantee family reunification in a given country, but guarantees in general the right to continue family life wherever this can be realised. With regard to the latter, it should be pointed out that a series of measures relating to expulsion or refusal to admission on the ground of economic well-being of a country could be deemed necessary, when these measures are taken simply in the context of the country's immigration policy. As for the member states, cases with similar issues show the states unwillingness to follow good faith, whereas the Court will certainly move in a more permissive direction in the field of immigration policy as seen in cases like Boultif and Yildiz.

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RESEARCH ARTICLES

Migration and Crime in Greece: Implications for Entrepreneurship, Financial Literacy and Social Marketing Initiatives

Christos LIVAS, Nansy KARALI, Vasiliki TZORA

Abstract. In recent years, European nations have received increasing volumes of migrants. However, significant numbers of local residents remain skeptic towards migration, often because of the association of migrants with increased delinquent or criminal activity. In view of the previous, the present study aims at examining the evolution of crime activity in Greece, the crimes committed by Greek and foreign perpetrators, and the potential effects of undocumented migration inflows and economic conditions on criminal activity. Data for the period 2009-2019, suggest that although increased migrant inflows appear to contribute to a moderate rise in criminal behaviour of foreign individuals, their overrepresentation as perpetrators of crime is likely to be the result of poor living conditions and lack of integration into the Greek society. Apart from stricter border controls, a holistic approach of migration management is hypothesized to require the use of social marketing initiatives and the advancement of migrant entrepreneurship and financial literacy.

Keywords: *migration; crime; migrant entrepreneurship; social marketing; financial literacy; Greece*

1. Introduction

Forces of the macroenvironment, such as globalization, armed conflicts, population growth, poverty and inequality, have been the catalysts for large waves of documented and undocumented migration on a global level. As a result, citizens of mostly developed nations are required to coexist with increasing volumes of migrant populations. To regulate migration flows into the European Union (EU), the latter has introduced a number of interventions and policies. The existing European Migration Policy was driven by the 2014-2015 migration crisis, during which high numbers of migrants crossed into the EU, particularly through its Mediterranean and

Southeast borders (European Parliament, 2021). Consequently, the EU developed an action plan against migrant smuggling, by placing emphasis on law enforcement, judiciary capacity and cooperation with non-EU countries (European Parliament, 2019). To alleviate pressure in certain European counties, such as Greece, the EU also assigned migrant quotas to member states based on several socioeconomic indicators (Friedman, 2015). Gradually, the European Migration Policy focused on providing financial support to countries under increased pressure from migration flows, collaborating with Turkey to control the influx of migrants, and establishing stricter border controls (European Commission, 2016; Directorate General for Internal Policies of the Union, 2018). Arguably, the introduction of said policies has been effective in reducing the number of migrants crossing the European borders, by suppressing attempts to enter into the EU and increasing the preventive capacity of member states.

From an economic point of view, inflows of migrant populations are often considered beneficial to developed economies. Being predominately young and low-skilled, migrants can renew an ageing workforce and are often willing to work in professions deemed undesirable by local populations (Ram, Jones & Villares-Varela, 2017; Vézina & Bélanger, 2019). Furthermore, given that the effective integration of migrants into host countries also depends on how well they adapt to existing socioeconomic and financial systems, access to financial products and services is of particular importance (OECD, 2016). On the other hand, significant numbers of local residents are not welcoming towards migrants (e.g., Dimakos & Tasiopoulou, 2003; Facchini & Mayda, 2008), whom they regularly associate with increased criminal activity.

In view of the previous, the present study aims at examining the relationship between migration and crime in Greece, over the 2009-2019 period. Taking into consideration the country's severe and prolonged economic recession, as well as its strategic geographic position as an eastern gateway to the EU, the case of Greece may provide useful insights about the migration – crime relationship. To assess whether migrant populations are linked to increased crime activity, the present study proceeds to investigate the evolution of crime activity, conduct a comparative examination of crimes committed by Greek and foreign perpetrators, and assess the hypothesized relationship of criminal activity with undocumented migration inflows and economic conditions.

Given the complex and sensitive nature of the issue being examined, it should be noted that the present study does not attempt to argue for or against

migration, nor to recommend strategies for regulating migration flows. The principal objective is to examine the extent to which the presence of migrants is associated with increased criminal activity in Greece, and consequently to propose measures targeted at the socioeconomic integration of migrants in the Greek and European communities. Association of foreign (i.e., non-European) individuals with criminal behaviour significantly contributes to the development of negative attitudes and hostility towards migrant populations, and holds a central position in far-right argumentation and nationalist ideology.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Factors affecting criminal activity

Existing literature has examined and identified numerous factors affecting criminal activity, all of which have led to the development of various socioeconomic theories of crime (Buonanno, 2003). Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to present an exhaustive list of all factors affecting every type of criminal activity, past research has emphasized the relative importance of economic, sociocultural, personal and psychological factors. Regarding the economic antecedents of crime, income inequality has been associated with violent crime, such as robberies (Fajnzylber, Lederman & Loayza, 2002; Kelly, 2000). Because crime appears to be countercyclical (Fajnzylber, Lederman & Loayza, 2002), and despite the established relationship between poverty and property crime (Kelly, 2000), existing literature has paid particular attention to the role of unemployment. Data from diverse national and sociocultural contexts, such as Sweden, Britain and the United States of America (USA), indicate that unemployment has a significant and large positive effect on most types of property and violent crimes (Carmichael & Ward, 2001; Edmark, 2005; Raphael & Winter-Ebmer, 2001). Such effects are found to be significant particularly for men, regardless of age (Carmichael & Ward, 2001).

Financial exclusion of migrant populations may be also driven by the lack of access to, and use of, formal financial services, lack of documentation, language barriers and distrust of the financial sector (Atkinson & Messy, 2013; Orozco, 2015). As a result, financially excluded individuals are more likely to have worse economic circumstances and therefore engage in delinquent or criminal behavior. Even though most transactions among migrants are undertaken in cash, it is vital for them to know how to calculate exchange rates, manage their budgets, keep records of income and expenses, and properly use financial resources (OECD, 2016).

Despite the view of criminal behavior as a largely economic choice, prior research has also identified the importance of certain personal attributes and circumstances, such as cultural and family background, level of education, age and biological sex (Buonanno, 2003). Men have been found to be more likely to engage in criminal activity than women, although their propensity to commit crime is significantly reduced when they transition to monogamous relationships (Seffrin, 2017) and have children (Kanazawa & Still, 2000). From an evolutionary psychology perspective, men commit violent and property crimes in their attempt to gain reproductive access to women and overcome perceived social deficits relating to their physical traits or socioeconomic circumstances (Kanazawa & Still, 2000). In view of the large volume and complexity of the determinants of criminal activity, numerous studies have examined the effect of migration on crime levels.

2.2 Migration and crime

Although findings about the impact of migration on criminality are, to a certain extent, contradictory, said impact appears to be overestimated due to negative assumptions and predispositions among local communities and media (Hooghe & De Vroome, 2016; Reid *et al*., 2005; Zatz & Smith, 2012). These negative perceptions often result in a '*fear of crime*' from foreign ethnic groups among local populations (Hooghe & De Vroome, 2016; Nunziata, 2015). A growing body of research, which extends to various national contexts, suggests that migration does not increase the incidence of crime in host countries. For instance, data regarding the migration flows into western European countries suggests that an increase in migration does not affect crime victimization, contrary to predominant misconceptions among European natives (Nunziata, 2015). In the USA, several studies have shown that there is no association between the size of migrant populations and incidence of violent crimes (Green, 2016; Reid *et al.,* 2005), as well as between undocumented migration and overall crime activity (Gunadi, 2021; Light & Miller, 2018).

Recent research suggests that '*sanctuary city*' policies have no effect on violent crime, rape, or property crime rates (O'Brien, Collingwood & El-Khatib, 2019). Furthermore, available data indicate that youth born abroad appear to be significantly less likely to engage in criminal activity (Butcher & Piehl, 1998), and that migration may serve as a crime reducing function in society (Zatz & Smith, 2012). All

in all, although a few studies posit that cities with high crime rates tend to have large migrant populations (Butcher & Piehl, 1998), the overreaction of local authorities, as expressed by legislative interventions and enforcement practices, is often considered unjustified and unsafe for migrant communities (Zatz & Smith, 2012).

In view of the prolonged and severe economic recession facing Greece over the past decade, the local population had to allegedly manage a significant increase in crime activity by migrant populations (Hadjimatheou, 2012). Overall, the scarcity of studies examining the migration – crime relationship at the macro level (Reid *et al*., 2005), is perhaps one of the main reasons behind existing perceptions among Europeans.

3. Method

Being primarily of exploratory nature and to fulfil the research aim, the present research accessed publicly available data on criminal activity, economic conditions and material deprivation in Greece, as well as data regarding the illegal border-crossings to the European Union (EU) over the Eastern Mediterranean route, for the period 2009-2019. To ensure secondary data reliability and validity, data were compiled from credible sources, namely the Hellenic Police, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Hellenic Statistical Authority and Frontex.

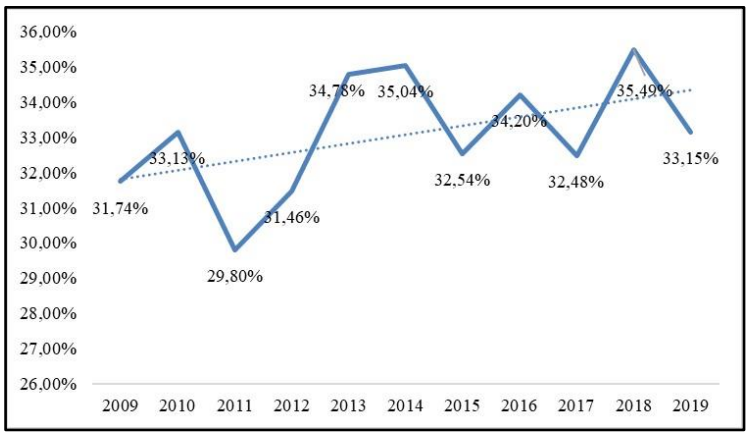

Figure 1: Per Cent of Crimes Solved by the Hellenic Police
Source: Hellenic Police (2020)

Given the study's emphasis on the relationship between migration and crime, the research method attempted to control for potential fluctuations in policing effectiveness. Data obtained from the Hellenic Police indicated that over the

2009-2019 period (Figure 1), there was a slight increase in the percentage of solved crimes, indicating that the police force is gradually becoming more effective in solving crimes. However, because said percentage ranges from a minimum of 29,8 per cent (2011) to a maximum of 35,49 per cent (2018), observed differences were deemed insignificant for the present study's purposes.

Furthermore, although Greece has been receiving large numbers of documented and undocumented migrants over the past three decades, data suggest that during 2014 and 2015, the volume of illegal border-crossings was significantly amplified (Table 1). Thus, from a methodological point of view, it would be useful to examine whether criminal activity and crimes committed by foreign individuals in Greece increased during and after that period.

Table 1: Illegal Border-Crossings to the EU over the East Med Route

Source: Frontex (2020)

Year	#	Per Cent Change
2009	39.975	-
2010	55.688	39,31
2011	57.025	2,40
2012	37.224	-34,72
2013	24.799	-33,38
2014	50.834	104,98
2015	885.386	1641,72
2016	182.277	-79,41
2017	42.319	-76,78
2018	56.561	33,65
2019	83.333	47,33

4. Results

Regarding the absolute numbers of perpetrators (Figure 2), it appears that after a sharp increase in 2010, the volume of total perpetrators remained practically unchanged (i.e., approximately 52 thousand in 2010 vs. 51 thousand in 2019). However, a more careful examination of fluctuations in the numbers of Greek and foreign perpetrators are more revealing of specific trends. During 2010-2015, the number of Greek perpetrators showed signs of increase whereas the number of foreign perpetrators was reduced. The following two years (i.e., 2016 and 2017) saw the numbers of both Greek and foreign perpetrators rise simultaneously. Lastly, although the number of Greek perpetrators declined in 2018 and 2019, the number of foreign perpetrators rose in 2018 and fell in 2019.

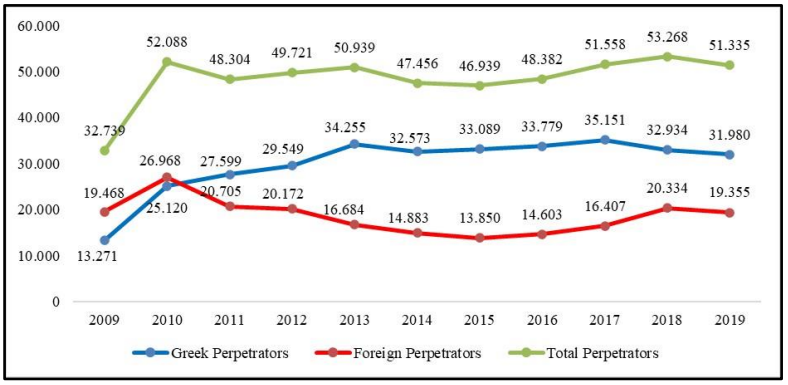

Figure 2: Volume of Perpetrators in Greece (in thousands)
Source: Hellenic Police (2020)

Examination of said fluctuations during the 2009-2019 period suggests that following the introduction of the first economic adjustment programme in 2010, which aimed at assisting Greece with its severe debt-crisis, criminal activity rose significantly. The deteriorating economic and living conditions, as well as the persistence of high unemployment, appear to have played a significant role in the increase of Greek perpetrators between 2010 and 2017. On the other hand, the number of foreign perpetrators rose gradually from 2016 to 2018, following the explosive increase in illegal border-crossings that occurred during 2014 and 2015. Thus, it is likely that individuals with a propensity to commit crime were able to join the large masses of undocumented migrants and cross the Greek borders.

The relative shares of Greek and foreign perpetrators (Figure 3) indicate that although the former is the majority, the latter are overrepresented in crime statistics. Considering that the migrant population in Greece was estimated to approximately 11,34 per cent of the total population in 2015 (Macrotrends, 2021), migrants commit more crimes than expected based on their population size. Although overrepresentation could be partly attributed to racial profiling or strict police enforcement practices aimed at migrants, it appears that foreign individuals residing in Greece are disproportionately more likely to commit crimes. Nevertheless, the ongoing economic adversities appear to have contributed to an ongoing rise in the relative size of Greek perpetrators. Assuming that the Hellenic Police is not purposely arresting more Greek or foreign perpetrators, it seems that economic and living conditions are a crucial factor affecting individuals' propensity to commit crime.

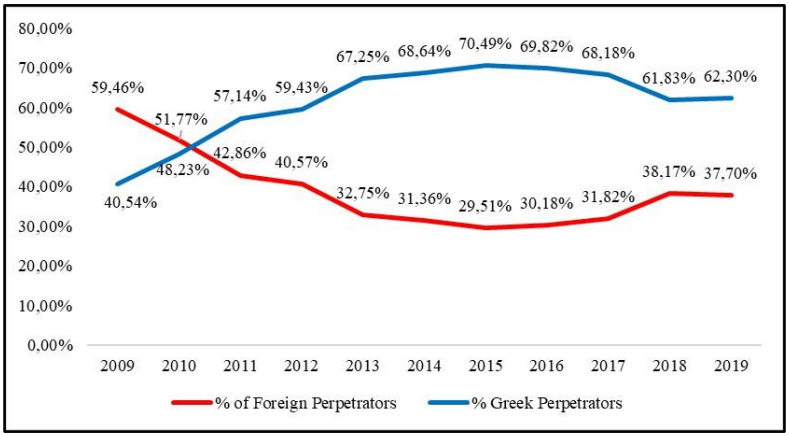

Figure 3: Per Cent Share of Greek and Foreign Perpetrators
Source: Hellenic Police (2020)

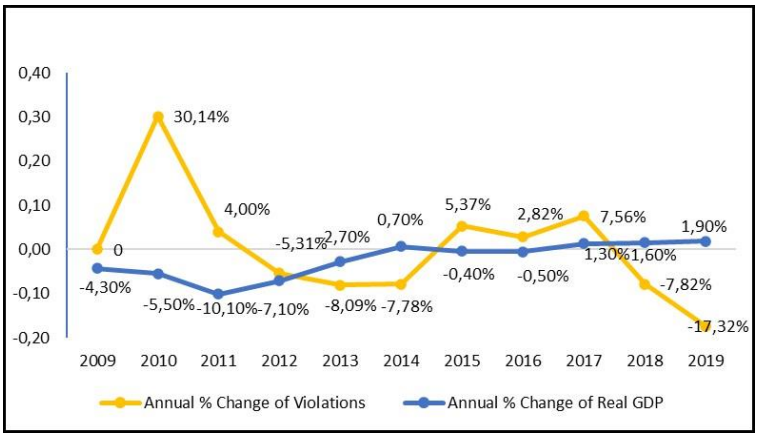

Figure 4: Annual (Per Cent) Change of Real GDP and Volume of Violations
Sources: Hellenic Police (2020) & IMF (2021)

In line with the sharp increase in the number of perpetrators, the growth rate of total violations (i.e., attempted and committed crimes) experienced a dramatic increase in 2010 (i.e., 30,10 per cent) (Figure 4), almost simultaneously with the first economic adjustment programme for Greece. Although the percentage change of violations appears to fall between 2011 and 2014, perhaps partly due to slow economic recovery, 2015 marked the return to positive growth rates in violations. This turn of events coincides with the sociopolitical turbulence in 2015 and the resulting economic stagnation of the following period (i.e., up to 2017). In

addition, the rise of criminal activity concurs with the large influx of undocumented migrants and refugees during 2015.

To assess the relationship between economic conditions and criminal activity, Figure 5 illustrates the cumulative percentage change of Real GDP in Greece against the percentage share of Greek perpetrators for the period under review. It is evident that the more real GDP contracted, Greek perpetrators took up a larger share of total perpetrators of crime in Greece, thus providing evidence to support the economic circumstances and criminal behavior relationship hypothesis.

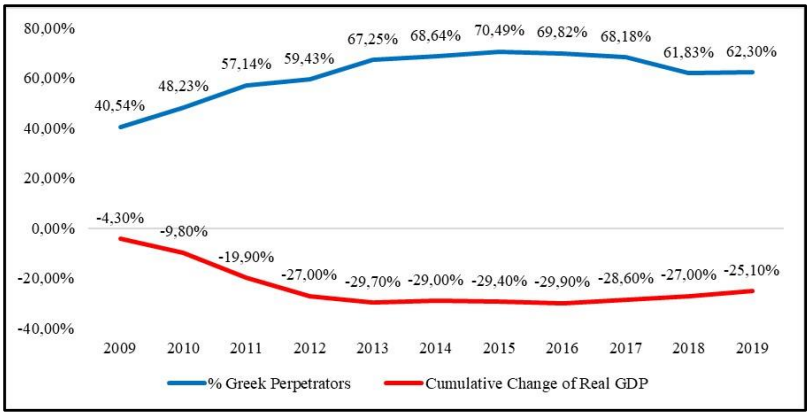

Figure 5: Per Cent of Greek Perpetrators and Cumulative (Per Cent) Change in Real GDP

Sources: Hellenic Police (2020) & IMF (2021)

Because, in the case of Greece, deteriorating economic conditions led to the introduction of austerity measures (Vasilopoulou, Halikiopoulou & Exadaktylos, 2014), large parts of the Greek population experienced poverty and material deprivation. Figure 6 clearly illustrates the positive relationship between the percentage share of Greek perpetrators and the percentage of the Greek population with material deprivation on an annual basis, for the period under review. It appears that as larger parts of the local Greek population were faced with material deprivation, the percentage of Greek perpetrators rose accordingly.

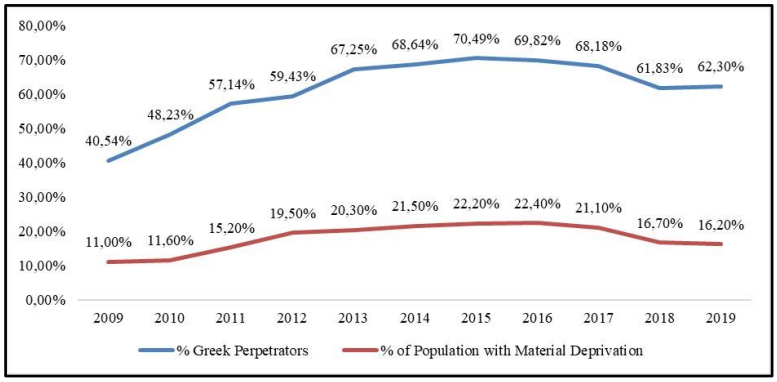

Figure 6: Per Cent of Greek Perpetrators and Per Cent of Population with Material Deprivation

Sources: Hellenic Police (2020) & Hellenic Statistical Authority (2020)

5. Discussion and Implications

The first objective of the present study involved examining the evolution of crime activity in Greece from 2009 to 2019. Data for the period suggest that criminal activity radically increased during 2010, at a time when Greece received a bailout loan from the European Commission (EC), European Central Bank (ECB) and IMF, to avoid sovereign default (IMF, 2010). The following four years (i.e., 2011 to 2014), which were characterized by relative and temporary stability of the Greek economy, saw a decrease in criminal activity. In 2015, sociopolitical and economic conditions worsened, leading to a referendum about a proposed new bailout program and lengthy negotiations among European leaders. The deterioration of economic conditions, increasing sociopolitical turbulence and large influx of undocumented migrants in 2015, coincided with a new rise in criminal activity, which persisted until 2017. Overall, observed fluctuations in criminal activity over the 2009-2019 period appear to correspond to the adverse sociopolitical and economic events that occurred in 2010 and 2015. Furthermore, the increase in criminal activity during 2015 appears to be also fueled by the migration crisis and rise in illegal border crossings.

With respect to the volumes of Greek and foreign perpetrators, data suggest that over the 2009-2019 period, the total number of Greek perpetrators was on the rise. On the other hand, the number of foreign perpetrators remained relatively stable, after a sharp increase in 2010. However, although Greek perpetrators were the majority of perpetrators from 2011 to 2019, foreign individuals appear to be

significantly overrepresented as perpetrators of crimes, as they represent approximately 37,8 per cent of perpetrators over the 2009-2019 period and only 11,34 per cent of the total population (Macrotrends, 2021). Thus, foreign individuals appear to be more likely to engage in criminal activity than Greeks.

Regarding the relationship of criminal activity with migrant inflows and economic conditions, data suggest that economic adversity and sociopolitical turbulence play an important role in criminal activity. In accordance with existing literature (e.g., Carmichael & Ward, 2001; Edmark, 2005; Fajnzylber, Lederman & Loayza, 2002; Kelly, 2000; Raphael & Winter-Ebmer, 2001), rising unemployment, poverty and material deprivation, which were accentuated by the prolonged economic recession in Greece, are perhaps the main reasons behind the increase in the number of Greek perpetrators during the period under review.

Additionally, there is evidence to suggest that the observed fluctuations in the share of foreign perpetrators of crime in Greece may be also linked to the large inflow of undocumented migrants in 2015. It is very likely that by blending into large migrant and/or refugee populations, deviant individuals with criminal records are easier to move across borders. Moreover, a substantial share of migrants' criminal activity may be attributable to the lack of appropriate financial education and employment opportunities. In agreement with the previous argumentation, existing research reveals that students with migrant backgrounds score lower levels on financial literacy (OECD, 2014).

In summary, the analysis suggests that there is a significant positive relationship between adverse economic conditions facing individuals and criminal behaviour. Although, increased migrant inflows appear to have contributed to a rise in the volume of foreign perpetrators in Greece, their overrepresentation as perpetrators of crime is hypothesized to be the result of poor living conditions and lack of integration into the Greek and European society.

Apart from measures relating to border control and enforcement, the development of a comprehensive European Migration Policy should incorporate the introduction of appropriate 'soft' initiatives, aimed at improving the economic circumstances of migrants and facilitating their social integration into Europe. Regarding the former, the EU could focus on promoting formal migrant entrepreneurship and equal pay for migrants (Baycan-Levent & Nijkamp, 2009). Among other, European institutions should aim at aiding migrant entrepreneurs to exit the low value '*business ghettos*' and combating phenomena of racist exclusion (Ram *et al*., 2017). European institutions and organizations could also harness the

power of social marketing messaging across traditional and digital media, to promote the benefits of social inclusion and challenge negative preconceptions regarding migrant populations. Prior research posits that socially inclusive marketing communications may improve the perceived social inclusion and welfare of vulnerable individuals (Licsandru & Cui, 2018). If European countries emphasize on the cultural engagement of migrants residing in Europe, the latter are more likely to be able to simultaneously maintain links with their home culture and integrate with local communities (Le, Polonsky & Arambewela, 2015).

6. Conclusion

Positioned at the EU's southeastern border with Asia Minor and Africa, Greece has been required to effectively manage large migration inflows despite its economic hardships. The case of Greece provides useful insight in assessing the relationship between migration and crime, and examining common beliefs about migrant criminality. Contrary to existing misconceptions, available data suggest that individuals engage in criminal activity primarily because of their adverse socioeconomic circumstances, rather than due to their racial, cultural or ethnic backgrounds. Besides existing measures and policies, aimed at improving border control and preventing illegal border crossings, a comprehensive migration policy for Europe should consist of additional initiatives with the purpose of improving migrant employability and facilitating social inclusion. The support of formal migrant entrepreneurship, advancement of financial literacy and introduction of socially inclusive marketing messaging may contribute towards this direction. Lastly, because uncontrolled and large migrant flows are often the result of armed conflicts and imperialist ideologies, Europe should concurrently aim at the source of the problem and take appropriate action to safeguard world peace and assist suffering populations, either at their home countries or abroad.

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Chasing the Past: Homeland Nostalgia and Return Aspirations in Divided Cyprus

Laura BRODY

Abstract. The purpose of this article is to explore how restorative nostalgia for an imagined homeland among second and later generations of displaced groups may create a barrier to conflict resolution. This idea is explored through the specific case of members of the Greek Cypriot diaspora who were displaced from north to south Cyprus due to the 1974 Turkish invasion of the island. Through the consideration of how restorative nostalgia for a time or place that no longer exists might interact with present-day aspirations for refugee return, the article discusses how some postgeneration Greek Cypriots who self-identify as refugees also envision a nostalgic restoration of pre-1974 north Cyprus in the event of a conflict resolution. Since their idealized visions of north Cyprus in the island's pre-1974 era are unattainable, the article also raises the question of how these nostalgic aspirations might manifest as resistance to conflict resolution. In turn, the article argues that on both the political and community levels, restorative nostalgia for pre-1974 north Cyprus may be one factor that has contributed to the current status of the Cyprus Problem as one of the most protracted conflicts in the Eastern Mediterranean region.

Keywords: *nostalgia, post memory, refugee, diaspora, conflict*

In north Cyprus, the abandoned ruins of a once-thriving Mediterranean resort tower above the tourist-crowded beaches of Famagusta. Nearly 50 years ago, this ghost district - known as Varosha (*Βαρώσια* in Greek and *Maraş* in Turkish) – was home to a majority-Greek Cypriot population. That population, along with most other Greek Cypriots who resided in north Cyprus at the time, was displaced to south Cyprus during the Turkish invasion of the island in 1974. Since this time, Varosha has remained largely uninhabited and inaccessible to the public.

For nearly half a century, the haunting remains of this luxury resort have survived in the cultural memory of Greek Cypriots as a powerful symbol of Cyprus' pre-1974 era. Nostalgia for this era shapes not only the worlds of many Greek Cypriots who experienced it firsthand, but also of many born after 1974 and for whom it only exists in imagination. Although they did not experience displacement

firsthand, many members of post-1974 Greek Cypriot generations whose families were displaced from north Cyprus in 1974 today self-identify as refugees.

This article has multiple purposes. In the first section, the present discontent of members of post-1974 Greek Cypriot generations is explored through the specific theme of restricted freedom of movement on the island. In the second section, the idealized imagination of pre-1974 north Cyprus as a lost homeland in which both spatial restriction and other sources of present discontent are perceived as being absent is also explored. Through the lens of 'restorative nostalgia', the third section questions how desires and aspirations among some postgeneration Greek Cypriots to reclaim their family's former homes and other properties in north Cyprus may pose a barrier to resolving the Cyprus Problem at both the political and community levels.

Nostalgia and Forced Displacement

Henri Raczymow (1994) has written of his place in the Jewish diaspora, "The world that was destroyed was not mine. I never knew it. But I am, so many of us are, the orphans of that world" (103). Greek Cypriots born after 1974 are also the orphans of a destroyed world. In their case, it is that of pre-1974 Cyprus, one in which no spatial barriers existed, and in which north Cyprus is the rightful home that many feel they have been deprived of knowing. This world being metaphorically – and in some ways literally - reduced to ashes, Nadine Fresco's (1984) phrase *le diaspora des cendres* – or the diaspora of ashes – may be an appropriate application to the Greek Cypriot diaspora (423).

The notion of nostalgia from which these imaginations derive originates from two Greek words: *nostos*, meaning to return home, and *algia*, or feelings of pain (Davis 1979; Hirsch and Spitzer 2002). In its original sense, the presence of nostalgia denoted an incurable illness - one borne primarily by soldiers or individuals in exile –identifiable by the intense "languishing for home" (Hirsch and Spitzer 2002, 258). Having since shed its medical definition, nostalgia today refers to the deep sense of loss prompting one to gaze back towards a time or place that has either ceased to exist, or in some cases, never existed at all.

While the term nostalgia is today applied to a wide variety of phenomena, the fact that it retains its original relevance regarding a sense of longing for home, as well as aspirations for the reclaiming of that home, is inarguable. Although a

thorough review of literature on the intersection between nostalgia and forced displacement is outside the scope of this article, it is for this reason that nostalgia has long served as a crucial lens through which to study the relationships of refugee diasporas to their ancestral homelands (e.g. Graham and Khosravi 1997; Lagoumitzi 2011; Petra 2021). In a transgenerational context, this has also rendered the concept of postmemory inseparable from that of nostalgia.

Marianne Hirsch (2008) defines postmemory as the understanding of postgenerations, or members of generations born after instances of collective trauma, to "powerful, often traumatic experiences that preceded their birth but were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right" (103). Studies on the intersection between postmemory and nostalgia have proven particularly useful in understanding the relationships of postgeneration members of refugee diasporas to their ancestral homelands (e.g. Davidson 2013; Hirsch 2008; Zembylas 2014). This article contributes to this literature through an empirical focus on the nostalgia of postgeneration Greek Cypriots whose families were displaced from north Cyprus in 1974.

Nonetheless, it must be acknowledged that nostalgia takes a variety of different forms. In his widely-cited book *Yearning for yesterday: A sociology of nostalgia*, Fred Davis (1979) introduced the concepts of simple, reflexive and interpreted nostalgia (1979). The notion of 'simple nostalgia' in particular is useful for understanding the linkages between all forms of nostalgia, especially in comparative contexts of forced displacement among refugee diasporas. 'Simple nostalgia' merely constitutes positive thinking about the past and negative thinking about the present. In other words, it derives from the "largely unexamined belief that things were better (more beautiful) (healthier) (happier) (more civilized) (more exciting) *then* than *now*" (Davis 1979, 18).

Research has also demonstrated that nostalgia culminates in longings for an idealized past or place in which the sources of present discontent are perceived as being absent. As characterized by Pickering and Knightley (2006), nostalgia is thus at-once utopian and melancholic, prompting desires for "re-enchantment" in the midst of frustrations with "disenchantment" (936). A feeling of nostalgia therefore does not merely entail gazing fondly upon a past time or alternative location, but is also characterized by a sense of temporal or spatial preference – either for the past or for 'somewhere else' – that is driven by, and in some ways even reliant on, discontent with present circumstances. This interplay between present discontent

and longings for an idealized past are explored in the first two sections of this article.

These themes also beckon the question of how longings for a past time or place might engage with present aspirations and actions. In this regard, Svetlana Boym (2001) has described 'restorative nostalgia' as a particular form of nostalgia that not only invokes positive associations of another time or place as opposed to those of present circumstances, but also the desire – or in some cases an actualized attempt – to recreate or a restore destroyed pasts (41). In the specific case of Greek Cypriot schoolteachers, Zembylas (2014) has described a similar notion of 'defiant nostalgia' characterized by the idea "that Greek Cypriots should defy any attempts by internal or external forces in Cyprus to make the people forget the 'occupied territories'" of north Cyprus (11). As will be explored in the third section of this article, it is the transition between simple and restorative forms of nostalgia that may have broader implications on conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes.

Methodology

The contents of this article are the latest culmination of insights gained during several ethnographic field visits to Cyprus between 2015 and 2018. Together, these ethnographic visits to Cyprus form part of a years-long reflection on various aspects of the Cyprus Problem and its profound impact on individuals who identify as Greek or Turkish Cypriot.

On my visits to Cyprus, I engaged in participant observation and partook in informal conversations with members of both the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities, scholars researching the Cyprus Problem, and non-Cypriot residents of the island. Between May and August 2015, I also gained insight into the topics discussed in this article by working as an intern at the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research, which at that time was located in the Home for Cooperation inside Cyprus' buffer zone. Since 2015, I have also maintained contact with both Greek and Turkish Cypriots, and have in turn made personal visits to the island that have further facilitated the development of my insight into the themes presented in this article.

As an outsider to both the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities, it is nevertheless crucial to note that on my visits to the island I was granted a degree of spatial freedom that, as will be discussed in the first section of this article, is lacked by many native to the island. While ethnographic observation has indeed played a

key role in my development of an understanding of spatial divisions on Cyprus, my interactions with Greek and Turkish Cypriots - and in particular the recording of their testimonies when possible - were thus an invaluable and necessary piece of understanding how these divisions impact social relations on the island for those who call it home.

In addition to the results of these ethnographic observations, this article includes excerpts from 4 recorded interviews selected out of those that I conducted during the course of my field research with both Greek and Turkish Cypriots. These particular interviews were selected to support the content in this article because they took place with postgeneration Greek Cypriots whose families were displaced from north Cyprus in 1974. These testimonies have been complemented with excerpts deriving from the work of other scholars who have carried out research on the Greek Cypriot postgeneration. In order to protect their identities, each individual quoted in this article has been assigned a pseudonym.

History of the Cyprus Problem

Cyprus' coveted positioning at the crossroads of continents brought about centuries of its foreign domination by major empires. Throughout most of the island's history, Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities co-existed peacefully in ethnically-mixed villages. Polarisation between the two communities began to deepen under British rule in the 1950s, when right-wing nationalists in the Greek Cypriot community launched an irredentist campaign for *enosis*: Cyprus' union with Greece. In response, the Turkish Cypriot community campaigned for *taksım*: Cyprus' partition between Greek and Turkish Cypriots (King and Ladbury 1982, 2).

Notwithstanding these opposing aspirations, the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) was established in 1960 as an independent and sovereign state comprised of 80% Greek Cypriots, 18% Turkish Cypriots and 2% minorities such as Armenians, Latins and Maronites (Papadakis 2008, 130). Under the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee, the island's political or economic union with another state, alongside its division into two parts, was banned. The treaty also established Britain, Greece and Turkey, the key negotiators of the treaty, as guarantor powers that would ensure the territorial integrity and security of the RoC.

Nonetheless, since independence was the objective of neither community, simmering tensions between Greek and Turkish Cypriots throughout the 1960s

continued to challenge the stability of the young state, and eventually erupted into a decade of extreme inter-communal violence. By the early 1970s, the additional emergence of intra-communal violence between Greek Cypriots who continued to campaign for *enosis* through militaristic means and those who preferred the route of diplomacy culminated in a coup on July 15th, 1974 against then-president Archbishop Makarios. Five days later on July 20th, 1974, the Turkish army invaded Cyprus under the premise of protecting Turkish Cypriots from Greek Cypriot violence.

The Turkish invasion forced an estimated 250,000 Greek Cypriots in north Cyprus to flee south, and an estimated 40,000 Turkish Cypriots in south Cyprus to flee north (Charlesworth and Calame 2009, 141). This ultimately resulted in the island's division into two parts: the majority-Greek Cypriot south, which is recognized internationally as the Republic of Cyprus (RoC), and the majority-Turkish Cypriot north, which occupies 36% of the island and declared itself to be the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) in 1983, albeit to this day it is recognized only by Turkey (King and Ladbury 1982, 4; Ker-Lindsay 2011, 49). For the purpose of simplicity, I will refer to the lands of the RoC as south Cyprus and those of the TRNC as north Cyprus throughout the remainder of this article.

Since the events of 1974, south and north Cyprus have been separated by a 300-kilometer long Green Line encompassing walls on each side of a buffer zone that is patrolled by the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). Between 1974 and 2003, south and north Cyprus remained entirely isolated, although checkpoints have facilitated crossing between the two sides since 2003. Nevertheless, decades of political negotiations between RoC and TRNC officials have led virtually nowhere, and the Cyprus Problem has yet to be resolved (e.g. Psaltis et al. 2020).

While both Greek and Turkish Cypriots were displaced and have suffered greatly due to the conflict, this article focuses solely on the experiences of the Greek Cypriot community. One practical reason for this is that compared to a smaller percentage of Turkish Cypriots, nearly 40% of the entire Greek Cypriot population was displaced due to Turkey's invasion of Cyprus in 1974 (Zetter 1994, 308). For this reason, while enough Greek Cypriots vacated their homes in north Cyprus for displaced Turkish Cypriots fleeing north to live in them, the majority of displaced Greek Cypriots were forced to amass in makeshift camps in south Cyprus.

A second motivation for focusing on the Greek Cypriot community is that while Turkish Cypriots tend to insist on the permanence of the island's division,

Greek Cypriots tend to stress its impermanence (e.g. Dikomitis and Argyrou 2020; Papadakis 2005; Psaltis et al. 2020). Consequently, displaced Greek Cypriots have not ceased campaigning for their right to return to lost homes and property in north Cyprus since 1974. While it must be acknowledged that some postgeneration Turkish Cypriots also self-identify as refugees, it is therefore also true that postgeneration Greek Cypriots exhibit much stronger tendencies towards doing so.

Postgeneration Refugee Identity

Before moving to the empirical sections of this article, it is necessary to briefly clarify what is meant by the self-identification as a refugee among postgeneration Greek Cypriots. It is crucial to note that this article is not concerned with the legal definition of a refugee outlined in the Geneva Convention and upon which asylum seekers are evaluated for legal refugee status. Rather, it is concerned with how nostalgic memories of a lost homeland inherited through the postmemory of forced displacement might prompt postgeneration Greek Cypriots to *feel* as if they are refugees.

This is furthermore crucial to understand in the case of Cyprus because the sovereignty of the TRNC is not recognized under international law. As such, even those Greek Cypriots who were displaced first-hand from north Cyprus in 1974 – and indeed those Turkish Cypriots who were displaced from south Cyprus - fall under the legal category of internally displaced person (IDP) rather than that of refugee. Nevertheless, due to what has been deemed their "refugee-like situation", many Greek Cypriots of all generations who consider north Cyprus to be a lost homeland self-identify as – or express the *feeling* of being - refugees (Zetter 1994, 308; Dikomitis and Argyrou 2020, 107).

This first became visible during my visits to Cyprus when some postgeneration Greek Cypriots answered the question of 'Where are you from?' not with the place of either their birth or residence in south Cyprus, but rather with the village or district in north Cyprus from which their family members were displaced in 1974. In some cases, Greek Cypriot individuals also directly described themselves as refugees. As Vaso (2017) declared, "Of course I am a refugee, because I left my house. In Cyprus, refugees are people who were born on the other side or their children. My father and mother are refugees, and I also feel like that, because when I went to the other side I felt it was my home." On a similar note, Panagiotis (2017)

shared, "Yes, I am a refugee, I am jealous of others who have a village (on Cyprus) to go to for Christmas, Easter and summer holidays. They get to gather with their villagers and catch up. My folk are scattered across the island and the world." As is demonstrated in the two above excerpts, some postgeneration Greek Cypriots retain emphasis on their feelings of having been displaced from north Cyprus – despite in some cases never even having visited this part of the island – through the use of the first-person tense in their narrations of the historical events in 1974. Although not the specific focus of this article, this tendency is also reflective of the power of postmemory among the wider Greek Cypriot postgeneration, many members of whom recount the experiences of their displaced elders as if they were their own.

Nevertheless, it is equally crucial to note that not every postgeneration Greek Cypriot clearly self-identifies as a refugee, or even self-identifies as a refugee at all. For some, there is a sense of confusion regarding personal roots: "I have this feeling of bitterness and anger in my heart because the roots I have in my parents' village have been destroyed…I am not from Nicosia, where I live now, but I also have a sense that I am not really from Kyrenia, where my parents lived until we became refugees…I always have dreams of images from my occupied village and I feel that a part of myself is left there, awaiting for me to go back" (Zembylas 2011, 13). In other cases, as in that of Martina (2017), the refugee identity is outright rejected: "I consider my dad as a refugee, but I don't feel like a refugee. However, it does upset me when I see older people reminisce or see Kyrenia from a distance on a boat and I know that we can't go onto that beach. It leaves me feeling unnerved, in a sense frozen in time." As the above excerpts demonstrate, and as will become clearer in the following sections, 'Where are you from?' may often constitute a much more complicated than simple question in contexts of forced displacement.

Present Discontent: Excavating the Roots of Nostalgia

Just as positive spatial practices may breathe life into the community, negative spatial practices may suffocate its expression. As Amira Hass (2002) has written, "Space and time together make room in one's world – not only materially to accomplish one's tasks and activities, but at the level of the spirit, enabling both the individual and the community to breathe, to develop, to prosper, to create" (9). While many factors contribute to the discontent of postgeneration Greek Cypriots with Cyprus' current state of affairs, this section zones in on the specific theme of restricted freedom of movement.

Along the Cyprus Green Line, amalgamated concrete, barbed wire, oil barrels, sandbags, brick and iron fashion a seemingly makeshift yet long-prevailing wall obstructing visual contact between north and south Cyprus (Charlesworth and Calame 2009, 123). Reaching five meters in height, the structure's material diversity and disorderly consolidation reflect the scrambled nature of its 1974 fabrication. In Nicosia, the wall bifurcates streets once connecting north and south, the abruptness of its presence communicating a sense of spatial incompleteness.

Known to Greek Cypriots as the 'Dead Zone', the wall's accompanying UN-patrolled buffer zone approaches Nicosia from the northwest, narrows from nearly seven kilometers to just one meter in width within the city, and widens again reaching towards Cyprus' northeast. Within Nicosia, Greek and Turkish Cypriots may thus stand only meters apart, yet still remain separated on either side of the Green Line. Outside of Nicosia, the buffer zone runs primarily through agricultural lands, but has nonetheless absorbed hundreds of paralyzed buildings within its perimeters (Charlesworth and Calame 2009, 123).

Although mindsets are certainly variable, the walls and buffer zone in Cyprus are overwhelmingly perceived in a negative manner by displaced and postgeneration Greek Cypriots alike. Nearly every Greek Cypriot I have encountered on Cyprus has referenced the lack of spatial freedom on the island as a driving factor in their negative evaluations of post-1974 Cyprus, which is also a key factor in their nostalgic imaginations of pre-1974 Cyprus. As will be outlined below, the very presence of walls, the buffer zone and checkpoints between south and north Cyprus imbue the island with a perpetual sense of incompleteness that for some postgeneration Greek Cypriots mimics the spatial disorientation of their families' actual displacement from north Cyprus in earlier decades.

A 2009 UNDP study on Greek Cypriot youth reported the desire for spatial "freedom" to be one of the primary objectives of postgeneration Greek Cypriots open to negotiations for conflict resolution (Peristianis and Faiz 2009, xv). One postgeneration Greek Cypriot interviewed by Tasoulla Hadjiyanni (2002) commented, "People in my family talk to me about the village, but I didn't live there. Everyone in the world can travel in their *topos* [home] without barbed wire blocking the way, and I can't do that" (53). Correspondingly, restricted access to north Cyprus and the inability to choose where one wants to live also featured as a prime grievance among postgeneration Greek Cypriots I encountered in the course of this research.

The political writer Marcello Di Cintio (2013) has described the walls in Nicosia in the following manner: "The walls impose a simplified identity on those who cannot cross them. You are either from here or from there. You are either one of Us or one of Them. The walls allow for no nuance, no mutually agreed upon story" (149). As Dikomitis and Argyrou (2020) have explained, the barriers therefore serve as "both a physical and symbolic divide" (113). Indeed, within the context of ongoing inter-communal tensions between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, the experience of merely encountering the walls and buffer zone reinforces the shared identities and traumas of each community.

For Greek Cypriots in particular, the structures communicate a devastating and controversial message: that they no longer belong in north Cyprus. Although never having lived in north Cyprus, this message angers many postgeneration Greek Cypriots who feel that it should have been their home. From the perspective of Eleni (2017), "It's extremely sad seeing the buffer zone. The feelings that are evoked going through the checkpoints are of frustration and sadness…the buffer zone is an attempt to legitimise the illegal occupation and re-enforces the idea of a separate state. It also serves as a reminder to Greek Cypriots that their homes have been occupied and they're no longer welcome there."

For decades after the wall's construction, nearly no contact occurred between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Moreover, since a small population of Greek Cypriots remained enclaved in north Cyprus after 1974, Cyprus' division into two parts also engendered several cases of family separation within the Greek Cypriot community. As Panagiotis (2017) recalls, "I had Greek Cypriot relatives enclaved in the Karpasia Peninsula. I visited once in 2001 with UN convoys, which was a weird and intense experience - not utterly pleasant to be honest. I only could communicate with them when they sent letters through the UN." Since family isolation is integral to the experiences of refugees worldwide, the exposure to such barriers has for some postgeneration Greek Cypriots been a key factor contributing to their self-identification as refugees.

In April 2003, checkpoints enabling pedestrians to cross between north and south Cyprus opened with the authorization of then-TRNC president Rauf Denktaş. When crossing between north and south Cyprus, it is required to show ID at two checkpoints: one controlled by TRNC officials and the other by ROC officials. Crossing through the first checkpoint enables one to exit the part of the island from which they are travelling and enter the buffer zone. Crossing through the second

checkpoint subsequently enables entry to the opposite side of the island. While the checkpoints have now become a daily part of life in Cyprus, their normalisation is also indicative of the normalisation of the Cyprus Problem itself.

In opposition to the large concrete structure of the Turkish Cypriot checkpoint, the Greek Cypriot checkpoint is a small temporary structure. This pattern is also echoed in the construction of the wall on the Greek Cypriot side, which features barbed wire and makeshift roadblocks that are seeming temporary and easy to tear down, while the wall on the Turkish Cypriot side is constructed out of concrete blocks appearing in the middle of roads (Papadakis 2005, 86). As Yiannis Papadakis (2005) has pointed out, the contrast between the construction of the wall and checkpoints in north and south Cyprus mirrors the desired permanence of the division on the part of Turkish Cypriots and the desired impermanence of the division on the part of Greek Cypriots (86).

After nearly 30 years of isolation, the opening of the checkpoints in 2003 reportedly came as a "shock" to both Greek and Turkish Cypriots (Di Cintio 2013, 140). Fearing the wall's imminent resealing, many displaced and postgeneration Greek Cypriots rushed to visit their former homes, passing through newly-installed structures featuring the message "Welcome to the TRNC. You are now entering the sovereign Republic – Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus FOREVER" (Di Cintio 2013, 140). Nevertheless, a UNDP report indicates that by 2008, five years after the opening of the checkpoints, only 15% of Greek Cypriots had visited north Cyprus (Peristianis and Faiz 2009, xv). Although these numbers have certainly increased, as of 2019 an estimated one-third of Greek Cypriots had still never visited north Cyprus (Psaltis et al. 2020).

As these figures suggest, general attitudes among Greek Cypriots towards the opening of checkpoints were both positive and negative. In some cases, it engendered excitement and curiosity. As Panagiotis (2017) described, "I felt excited. It was a finally a chance to see 'home' and discover the rest of my island, especially the part I am from." For others, such as Eleni (2017), this sense of excitement was accompanied by a sense of ambivalence. "It evoked curiosity to see where I'm from, but also frustration. Opening the checkpoints means that Greek Cypriots are free to visit yet not able to live in their native homes. It also means that Turkish Cypriots are free to benefit from their rights as Cypriot citizens and live wherever they choose, yet Greek Cypriots are unable to exercise the same rights in the north."

Indeed, this points to a resurfacing theme in my research regarding the

perspective that checkpoints free Turkish Cypriots but not Greek Cypriots from the spatial restrictions imposed by the existence of the walls and buffer zone. Many Greek Cypriots perceive that the act of adhering to the entry restrictions of the TRNC via passing through its checkpoints would lend legitimacy to the TRNC's very existence, which has been outright rejected by both the Greek Cypriot community and international community at large. As a consequence, some have entirely refused to pass through them. Nonetheless, refusal to cross through the checkpoints among both Greek and Turkish Cypriots since 2003 has also perpetuated decades of isolation between the two communities, in turn enabling mistrust and fear of the other to multiply.

Among those postgeneration Greek Cypriots who chose to pass through the checkpoints, many described their experiences to me in an overwhelmingly a negative manner. For example, Martina (2017) expressed a significant sense of claustrophobia: “This is very weird and I don’t like it. It feels strange to be a small island that has to share so much of its geography with other people who don’t like us and forbid us from travelling freely. We should be free to travel where we want on our small island.” Expressing a similar sense of disillusion, Panagiotis (2017) comments, “There are days I barely notice the procedure, then there are days it angers me how such a reality can exist...this is beyond unacceptable and insulting. I just want to live in a normal country.”

In some ways, the experience of navigating restricted space on Cyprus echoes the spatial disorientation experienced by displaced Greek Cypriots who since 1974 have been unable to access their homes and other properties in north Cyprus. Di Cintio (2013) interviewed a postgeneration Greek Cypriot named Katerina who claimed that repeatedly encountering the wall in Nicosia’s dead-end streets is “the reason for my poor sense of direction” (146). His interpretation of her testimony models this argument: “Perhaps the act of dividing itself confounds. The fact that a road ends in a heap of sandbags is nonsense. Even though she grew up with the walls, there is a part of Katerina that knows the streets have been robbed of their equilibrium. The city is out of order, and she is infected with the vertigo born of its division” (Di 2013, 146).

As this suggests, restrictions on the freedom of movement in Cyprus facilitate a sense of spatial claustrophobia shared by both displaced and postgeneration Greek Cypriots alike. For postgeneration Greek Cypriots in particular, both the walls and checkpoints serve as constant reminders of the lives they might

have lived if Turkey not invaded Cyprus decades earlier. In some part due to their navigation of the "spatial tragedies" described above, some thus not only *feel* as if they are refugees, but also embody the spatial disorientation that accompanies it (Caner 2015, 578). In turn, the force of their present discontent is also a driving factor in the development of nostalgia for north Cyprus in the pre-1974 era, which will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

Utopian Escape: Imagining North Cyprus

Whereas the previous section analysed the discontent of postgeneration Greek Cypriots with Cyprus' current state of affairs through the example of restricted freedom of movement, this section explores nostalgic imaginations of north Cyprus and the island's pre-division era as a place and time absent from spatial restrictions. Within this frame of mind, north Cyprus in the pre-division era – and indeed Cyprus as a whole – is idealized not only as a place without walls and checkpoints, but as is often the case in diasporic imaginings of a lost homeland, as one drenched in overstated positivity.

In the minds of postgeneration Greek Cypriots, the lands of Turkish-controlled north Cyprus are "less like real places and more like ideas or abstracted concepts," writes Argyro Nicolaou (2017), a Greek Cypriot writer and filmmaker who is herself a member of the postgeneration. Images of north Cyprus are "constructed solely in one's imagination, with the help of parents' or grandparents' stories and memories, some fond, others bitter," she continues (Nicolaou 2017). North Cyprus as the *virtual homeland* – to borrow a term put forth by Tonya Davidson (2011) – of postgeneration Greek Cypriots whose families were displaced during the Turkish invasion of the island in 1974 is therefore "defined not by its materiality, but rather through its loss of materiality" (41).

Storytelling is one crucial mechanism by which families who were displaced from north Cyprus in 1974 pass down this imagination. According to philosopher and storyteller Walter Benjamin (1969), a listener's internalization of both a story's intricacies and the emotions expressed by the storyteller is enhanced by a sense of relaxation or boredom (91). Since a sense of banality is prevalent in family contexts, family storytelling about north Cyprus in the island's pre-division era produces what Davidson (2011) refers to as "metaphoric bridges across time and place", enabling postgeneration Greek Cypriots not only to imagine, but also to deeply feel the

emotions associated with displacement as they are being expressed and processed by their elders who tell the stories (47).

For many postgeneration Greek Cypriots, family storytelling therefore creates "transferential spaces" in which to piece together nostalgic family narratives about north Cyprus and the island's pre-division era, in turn aiding in their endeavors to orient themselves within a spatial and temporal past they have never known (Landsberg 1997, 66). As one postgeneration Greek Cypriot attested in an interview with the UNDP, "A parent may tell his child that 'we' lost everything, they have taken our house and our possessions' and the child may have to hear this all his life" (Peristianis and Faiz 2009, 72). Family memory thus acts as an "idealized mirror" through which postgeneration Greek Cypriots not only adopt the refugee identities of previous generations, but also envision utopian alternatives to their dystopian perceptions of Cyprus' current state of affairs (Zetter 1994, 311).

In my conversations with postgeneration Greek Cypriots whom I encountered in the course of this research, nostalgic imaginations of both north Cyprus and the island's pre-division era arose as a repetitive theme. Although never having experienced it firsthand, their exceedingly positive descriptions of pre-1974 north Cyprus stood in stark contrast to the overtly negative manner in which they described to me the island's post-1974 era. In some cases, the former was directly attributed to the lack of spatial division on Cyprus before Turkey's 1974 invasion of the island, which as described above, has now divided Greek and Turkish Cypriots for nearly five decades.

In the absence of the walls, buffer zone and checkpoints, emphasis on positive relations between the two communities emerged as one key theme in narratives of north Cyprus. In her portrayal of life in pre-1974 north Cyprus, Martina (2017) explains, "It was underdeveloped but simple. People worked in the fields and were a community. I know that the relationship between most Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots was friendly, they didn't really distinguish the differences. Instead they focused on the similarities." Martina's statement on friendly inter-communal relations reflects a common sentiment among many Greek and Turkish Cypriots alike, which was also expressed by both Eleni and Vaso, that spatial separation has only fostered rather than mitigated tensions between the two communities.

A strong tendency also exists among postgeneration Greek Cypriots to emphasize the natural beauty of north Cyprus as compared to other places across the island. This pattern can be observed among Greek Cypriots from different

generations, and also among those whose families were not displaced from north Cyprus in 1974. Nonetheless, for members of the postgeneration whose families were displaced from north Cyprus, their family's former villages often serve as the object of this idealization. As one postgeneration Greek Cypriot interviewed by Hadjiyanni (2001) described her family's former village in north Cyprus, "I love Morphou, it is so beautiful. Whenever we drive back from Kalopanagiotis [in south Cyprus], I see the lights across [the buffer zone] and I imagine how beautiful it is" (51-52).

Although atypical of formerly rural and currently urban communities, higher economic security and abundance in both urban and rural contexts also featured as key themes in postgeneration Greek Cypriot's descriptions of north Cyprus in the pre-division era. For example, Panagiotis (2017) explained that prior to visiting north Cyprus, "I imagined it as a place on the eve of great things, but with a dark and sinister underbelly that rumbled disastrously to the surface in 1974, in fact from 1963 to be fair … when I see the ghost city of Varosha, Famagusta, I can see the island was doing well. Kyrenia was a blossoming district and the island had intense potential." As described by Eleni (2017), "The people there [in north Cyprus] were affluent, mainly earning money from farming." Taken together, these descriptions of pre-1974 north Cyprus also allude to existing sentiment among some Greek Cypriots who blame Cyprus' current economic stagnation – and in turn the lack of economic opportunities for younger generations – on the island's 1974 division.

Panagiotis' testimony also alludes to the fact the opening of checkpoints between north and south Cyprus in 1974 proved to be a crucial turning point in many postgeneration Greek Cypriots' imaginations of north Cyprus. For the first time, the opening of the checkpoints in 2003 created an opportunity for postgeneration Greek Cypriots to reconcile the imaginations of north Cyprus they had developed through the internalization of nostalgic family narratives with its current reality, and for those whose families were displaced from north Cyprus in 1974 in particular, to visit their families' former homes and other properties. The experiences of those that took advantage of this opportunity have been diverse, serving at times to reaffirm and at others to challenge their pre-existing imaginations.

Forced to confront the reality of their imaginations being merely such, one theme that has nonetheless repetitively surfaced is disillusionment upon arrival. As Martina (2017) recalled of her family's former village, "I have visited once. There was a huge discrepancy between the descriptions of it [Morphou] and its current reality.

My family describes the bustling, thriving town pre-1974, but since then there has been little development, and most of the development which has occurred has taken place very recently since the Greek Cypriots voted to not accept the last solution. Hence it currently seems stuck in a time warp." Indeed, a more pervasive viewpoint among Greek Cypriots who regard north Cyprus' temporal continuity to have simply ceased after 1974 has in some cases manifested as active resistance against attributing any sense of positivity on the Turkish-controlled TRNC. As Panagiotis (2017) attests, in the minds of Greek Cypriots, north Cyprus under Turkish control "seems to be seen through the ugliness of the derelict buildings and evidence of war."

Despite the opening of the checkpoints, which as described in the previous section has been viewed as another form of spatial restriction rather than its lifting, several postgeneration Greek Cypriots continue to be restricted from entering their former homes, many of which are now occupied by Turkish Cypriots or Turkish migrants. Due to the presence of British and Turkish military zones on the island, some have been entirely barred from even seeing their homes from the outside. As Vaso (2017) recalled, "We went to the other side, but we couldn't see our house in Tymbou because Ercan Airport is there, and all the military from Turkey is now staying now in our village. So we can't visit." Nonetheless, in some cases positive relationships have been formed between the former and current residents of each property. Despite never having visited herself, Martina (2017) explained that some members of her extended family "visit annually now and are good friends with the current tenants. The tenants had preserved and kept my aunt's photo albums and gave them to her."

Although some postgeneration Greek Cypriots indeed faced disillusionment upon arrival in north Cyprus, in other cases visits to north Cyprus have served as somewhat of a therapeutic experience. For Panagiotis (2017), visiting his family's different villages in north Cyprus aided in transforming his notion of home from an abstract concept into a more tangible reality:

> "My maternal side is from Lapithos, Karmi, Trachona and Ayios Loucas, and my paternal side from Yialousa…I have been literally hundreds of times to see my villages...now when I cross over I am immune to it all and it feels like home. The first times though was an intense experience, seeing home for the first time, putting images to the family stories and making sense of my family history. It was incredibly emotional, but rewarding. I felt like a glass wall I couldn't pass had finally cracked and I felt I was reclaiming my island."

Most postgeneration Greek Cypriots have not adopted a similarly high frequency of visitation to north Cyprus, many having visited only once or never at all. Nonetheless, Panagiotis' testimony illuminates a pattern among some postgeneration Greek Cypriots who desire – both symbolically and in reality – a reclamation of their family's former homes and other properties in north Cyprus.

Although an extended discussion is outside the scope of this article, the right of return has indeed remained a key priority for the broader Greek Cypriot community throughout decades of failed peace negotiations on the island (e.g. Psaltis et. al 2020). The nostalgic aspirations of some postgeneration Greek Cypriots to return to north Cyprus in the event of a conflict resolution is therefore the focus of the following section. While the imaginations of pre-1974 north Cyprus explored in this section constitute nostalgia in its simplest form – i.e. past is better than present - the manner in which aspirations to reclaim these idealized images may transform into a restorative form of nostalgia with implications for peacebuilding efforts will also be discussed.

Reaching for Nostalgia: Postgeneration Attitudes Towards Return

Alluding to the unbreakable bond between a given place and the events that unfold in that place, Toni Morrison (1987) has written, "If a house burns down, it's gone, but the place - the picture of it -stays, and not just in my rememory but out there, in the world… If you go there -you who never was there - if you go there and stand in the place where it was, it will happen again; it will be there for you, waiting for you" (36). This suggests that mere presence in a place beckons a renascence of its past.

Indeed, some postgeneration Greek Cypriots continue to hold out hope for a recreation of the past, desiring the impossibility of spatial and temporal return to the idealized imaginations of north Cyprus and the island's pre-division era discussed in the previous section. Although this return is only accessible through imaginative portals, to abandon this desire would also force the acknowledgment of its imagined possibility itself. This would in turn force an unmuting of the muted negativities from which nostalgia derives, therefore beckoning an unwanted sense of permanence regarding Cyprus' current state of affairs.

As idealized constructions of north Cyprus provide an escape to the discontent of postgeneration Greek Cypriots described in the first section, the

acknowledgment of the barriers associated with return to north Cyprus would also induce the loss of this escape. For those who imagine return to an idealized version of north Cyprus the sole source of resolving present negativities, a key component of restorative nostalgia, such a loss would activate a seeming sense of permanence in much of Cyprus' current situation. In order to avoid the harshness of confronting such a reality, some postgeneration Greek Cypriots cling to their nostalgic images of north Cyprus described in the previous section, and thus the aspiration to return in the event of a conflict resolution.

Regardless, as David Lowenthal has written, "If the character of the place is gone in reality, it remains preserved in the mind…formed by historical imagination, untarnished by rude facts" (Lowenthal 1975, 7). In this case, the rude fact of the matter is that north Cyprus as it exists in the imagination of postgeneration Greek Cypriots is an inaccessible homeland that has ceased to exist in reality. There are many factors that might serve to further disorient rather than stabilize the current realities of postgeneration Greek Cypriots who return to north Cyprus. However, economic practicality, the impossibility of recovering lost social dynamics and the presence of Turkish settlers may play a particularly significant role.

For many postgeneration Greek Cypriots, the agrarian lifestyles of members of pre-1974 generations who were displaced from north to south Cyprus are entirely unknown to them. On a practical note, their return to their family's houses and other properties in the rural lands of north Cyprus could prove particularly problematic for postgeneration Greek Cypriots who grew up in south Cyprus' urban centers such as Nicosia and Limassol. Since the majority of Greek Cypriots displaced from north Cyprus in 1974 hailed from agrarian lifestyles, this complication may apply to most potential returnees among the Greek Cypriots postgeneration aside from those who envision a return to now tourist-centric cities in north Cyprus such as Famagusta.

The temporal impossibility of reconstructing the social networks of displaced generations may also pose a significant barrier to the desire of many postgeneration Greek Cypriots to restore their imaginations of pre-1974 north Cyprus in the event of a conflict resolution. As community and village life are essential characteristics of both Greek and Turkish Cypriot culture, and indeed featured prominently in nostalgic family stories about the pre-1974 era in north Cyprus, many postgeneration Greek Cypriots envision the reactivation of their elders' pre-1974 social networks in their imaginations of return to north Cyprus. Yet as Loizides (2011) has noted, these social networks have over time faded and been replaced by those in south Cyprus,

rendering their restoration a near impossibility (395).

The presence of Turkish settler communities in north Cyprus may also prove to complicate the return of postgeneration Greek Cypriots to north Cyprus should their desire become reality. After 1974, incentives for Turkish settlers willing to move to north Cyprus bolstered the island's settler population. While reliable census data is lacking, estimates of the community's size have varied between 16-18% of the Turkish Cypriots electorate to an estimated 50% of the entire population of north Cyprus as of the early 2000s (Zetter 1994, 319). Rooted in awareness that the presence of Turkish settlers in north Cyprus – some of whom now reside in the former homes of Greek Cypriots who were displaced from north Cyprus in 1974 – would complicate an eventual Greek Cypriots return to north Cyprus, a survey conducted in 2015 indicated that 61.7% of Greek Cypriots view Turkish settlers as a significant barrier to conflict resolution (Loizides 2011, 395).

In spite of these realities, many postgeneration Greek Cypriots continue to express the desire to return to north Cyprus in the event of a conflict resolution. One eighteen-year old postgeneration Greek Cypriot interviewed by Hadjiyanni (2002) insisted that his desire to return to north Cyprus intensifies daily: "I have heard so much about Lysi and its people that day by day my longing for freedom and return grows. We must always be ready and available to fight, even to give our life, for our grounds that we lost so unjustly. My dear Lysi, be patient and your people sooner or later will be with you again" (54). This excerpt not only reemphasizes the importance of storytelling in constructing idealized versions of north Cyprus for postgeneration Greek Cypriots, but also suggests that there is potential for temporal continuity once that return does take place. As such, life as it is imagined to have ceased in 1974 may simply be continued upon return from where it left off, reflecting the previously discussed resistance to acknowledging both temporal and spatial impossibilities.

For many postgeneration Greek Cypriots, return to north Cyprus is not conceptualized in terms of its current reality, but instead rooted in the nostalgic imaginings discussed above. For example, when asked if she envisioned herself returning to north Cyprus, Vaso (2017) emphasized its natural beauty: "Yes, of course. We have a house in Tymbou, but anyway if I don't have a house I will buy one. It's the most beautiful place in Cyprus the other side…home is where your heart is, and my heart is in Tymbou and Famagusta. I feel like a tourist in this side, like my parents. Okay I was born here, but if someone loses their house, when they go to the other side, they feel that it is their home, not here." Having lived her whole life in

south Cyprus, Vaso nonetheless distances herself from south Cyprus by self-identifying as a tourist. In doing so, she also alludes to the sense of disorientation felt by tourists in a new place, reemphasizing the importance of spatial disorientation discussed in the first section of this article.

One twelve-year old girl interviewed by Hadjiyanni (2002) offered multiple reasons for her desire to return to her family's village in north Cyprus. In her description, idealized imaginations of north Cyprus and the belief in temporal continuity – that she can pick up where her family left off - upon return are present:

> "I know where everything is, where my mother's house is, my aunt's house, the ice cream place, the olive oil factory, the coffee shop…also, we would be with the family of my aunt and my cousins and I wouldn't need to travel far to see them …I would like to see the sea, how the caves were, how the apricot trees were, the flowers, how all the pots with flowers were, how the farmers worked the fields and cultivated the earth, what kind of tools they used. I would like to see how my village and house were" (53).

Through the imagined restoration of social and village relations, along with the temporal context of the village's beauty, the above excerpt reflects the desire to believe – especially among younger postgeneration Greek Cypriots - that their return to north Cyprus will simply reactivate life as it ceased to exist in 1974.

Growing up in the shadow of mourning, some postgeneration Greek Cypriots also feel they have a communal duty to 'fix' or 'restore' the losses of previous generations. In the words of Maria, who was interviewed by Zembylas (2011), "I remember vividly the church of my village … I saw the church, how these Turkish barbarians turned it into a barn for sheep, my heart ached... I became even more adamant about returning to my occupied village and doing everything to make it look like the way it used to." (12).

Nevertheless, inevitable variation in attitudes towards return to north Cyprus exist. Albeit some still emphasized a desire to restore north Cyprus' pre-1974 status in the event of a conflict resolution, several Greek Cypriots whom I encountered throughout the course of my ethnographic research exhibited more practical approaches to return. While emphasizing the natural beauty of the north, Eleni explained that although she wouldn't return permanently to north Cyprus, "I would probably go on holiday in the north because there are areas which are largely unspoiled and I have not visited many places there." Panagiotis (2017) provided a similar response, explaining that "I have a house in Nicosia and it is near my work. I would love to have a property in the north for weekends though. And who knows, in

the future, if all goes super well and I get a job in the north, then maybe I would seriously consider it, but no more or less than a job in a southern town." As these testimonies exemplify, even in the event of feelings of uncertainty or a clear lack of desire to return, many postgeneration Greek Cypriots nonetheless envision a resolution to the Cyprus Problem through their ability to exercise greater freedom of movement in an idealised version of north Cyprus.

Concluding Remarks

Recalling Boym (2001), restorative nostalgia illuminates both desires and attempts to recreate pasts long gone in reality (37). As this article has shown, the identities of many postgeneration Greek Cypriots are largely governed by an "irreparable nostalgia" which facilitates the self-identification as refugees among some members of the community (Fresco 1984, 423) Although the restoration of idealized imaginations of north Cyprus upon return is infeasible, the resistance of some postgeneration Greek Cypriots to accepting anything less than these idealizations in terms of a solution to the Cyprus Problem may serve as a barrier to conflict resolution, not only in a political sense, but also at the community level.

Overall, the patterns discussed in this article are not meant to constitute a thorough analysis of either decades of failed negotiations regarding the Cyprus Problem. Rather, they are meant to raise the question of how the intergenerational transmission of nostalgia, and especially its transition from simple to restorative form, may exercise significant impact on the intergenerational nature of any conflict in which forced displacement constitutes a major factor. Further research in the context of the Cyprus Problem, including with both Greek and Turkish Cypriots born after 1974, and also in the contexts of other protracted conflicts worldwide, is thus necessary and recommended in order to further explore these ideas.

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Sectarian Identity and Reconciliation in Post-Conflict Syria: Survey Research among Syrian Migrants

Ebru COBAN-OZTURK

Abstract. The conflict in Syrian sectarianized promptly. To have a factual base for intensifying sectarianism, a survey research was conducted with Syrian migrants. Key insights were utilized in the evaluation of research findings in terms of persistence of sectarianism, sectarian identity, sectarian leadership, and reconciliation in the post-conflict Syria. However, an emphasis on sectarianism in the functioning of state or in the society denies the essence of resolution and reconciliation. In the future of Syria, the effective peace settlements and reconciliation will need to diminish the divisive role of sectarianism to prevent a cycle of violence. Constructivist approach may offer insights.

Keywords*: sectarian identity, Syrian migrants, post-conflict Syria, reconciliation, constructivism*

Introduction

The domestic and international politics of the Middle East region are unique in terms of the power of identity. The identity is two-sided, it provides cooperation within the group but also it is the source of the conflict and the locomotive behind the mobilization and opposition movements. Especially religious and sectarian identities are powerful source of identity in the region. This type of identities or membership to religious organizations may offer non-religious material or social benefits including economic opportunities, educational resources or psychological support. In addition to material gains, individual religious identification may result in enhanced group solidarity and collective identification.

In sectarian societies, most of the ruling class may not be sectarian nor even religious. The sects may be easily instrumentalized through politics to remain power. The sectarian identity may become the way of accessing political representation, economic benefits or positions in the army and bureaucracy.

The Syrian society divided along religious and sectarian lines and sectarian identities existed from the beginning of Syrian history. The Assad regime tried to

incorporate cross sectarian and cross class coalitions. Sectarian differences and grievances did not turn into a civil war despite of strong awareness of them. Besides, at the beginning of the conflict the main mobilizer were not ancient and unchanging sectarian hatreds, instead ideological, nonsectarian, sub-state, class and economic motivations prevailed. However, the conflict quickly became sectarianized and the existing sectarian identities are mobilized both by the regime and opponents into a violent civil war. The regime's violent response to opponent groups, manipulation of sectarian identity both by the regime and opponents, external powers' manipulation and intervention were all deepened the intensity of sectarianism. Since sectarianism had been implanted in Syrian society long time before the conflict, it was a quick response under the challenging circumstances of uprisings. Even at the beginning of the uprisings, we admit that incidents were not sectarian, but now sectarian identities have a pivotal role in the conflict. Sectarianism in the country seems highly possible to persist in the foreseeable future.

While the regime started to take control of the territories of opposing groups with the help of external powers, an important question comes into mind whether it is possible to restore such a polarized society along sectarian lines or by different solutions. Sectarian preferences of both the parties to the conflict, migrants and exile communities will likely remain as default. Besides, Syrian exile communities have to be taken into consideration to build up new political parties and movements after the violence ends. That is why survey research designed to understand the views of migrants and exile communities who may have a contribution to construct post-conflict order in Syria. The survey research with Syrian migrants in Turkey and Turkish-Syrian border shows us that the emphasis on sects, sectarian leadership, discourse of religion are the most significant forms of expression of identity. According to the results of the research, sectarian identity cannot be eliminated from consideration in the post-conflict Syria. This type of strong attachment may undermine all peace initiatives and reconciliation among groups if it is not handled precisely. The regime's discourse of reconciliation is exclusionary on the ground of loyal and disloyal citizens (Abboud: 2020). This type of discourse and a peace settlement add a new split to the existing sectarian polarization in the society.

In post-conflict Syria, resolution and reconciliation processes are better to consider construction of new identities in the very part of the processes themselves. It would be idealistic that the construction of new identities could be achieved. Nevertheless, religious, and sectarian attachment in politics is not seen as the core

element of democratic political culture and reconciliation and construction of new identities instead of exclusionary identities are necessary part of processes to prevent a future conflict.

The field research based on the interview schedule, which we will explain in detail below shows that the emphasis on religious identities is an omnipresent phenomenon. However, religious attachment is not seen as the pivotal component of democratic political culture. This is the sign of the mismatch between democratic discourses produced by the al-Assad regime and the citizens understanding of the very ideal of democracy. Sectarian identities had been implanted in Syrian society historically and these are tried to be illustrated in a historical context below.

Sects and Sectarianism in Syria

The religion and sects always correlated with the identity formation. Syria is the state where religious and sectarian identities are one of the key determinants of the ongoing conflict. Besides, the current conflict and order of identities have also deep roots in Syria's history. Ottoman rule lasted nearly four hundred years in today's Syrian territory and it had two implications for different groups and sects. First, although the communities divided along religious and sectarian lines, various communities lived together without a great fight broke up among them. Second, Sunni families and groups had the privileged positions in Arab territories of the Empire which truly cooperated with them. For much of their history, under the rule of Ottoman Empire and before, Alawi groups had been politically and economically deprived and geographically isolated (Robinson, Connable, Thaler, Scotten, 2018: 75). The privileged position of Sunnis did not change in Syria after the Ottoman Empire.

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Arab territories of the Empire turned over to colonial administrations and arranged into zones of influence between Great Britain and France. The territories subsequently known as Syria and Lebanon were allotted to France. The mandate regime arbitrarily divided Syria into a number of administrative units and continued their policy of separating Syria and Lebanon. At the same time, the French rule discouraged political responsibility and experience since they did not grant independent decision-making authority. The top bureaucratic positions were held by the French bureaucrats and French advisors could veto the decisions of Syrian officials (Cleveland and Bunton, 2009: 222). All

these policies set out nationalist aspirations and Sunni notables led opposition movements against French regime.

The most of local notables had the monopoly over politics from the time of Ottoman Empire and enhanced their power more with new commercial activities and new commercial routes (Ismael and Ismael, 2010: 243). The Syrian local notables possessed the same economic and religious characteristics; they were mainly composed of Sunni and urban segments of the society (Ismael and Ismael, 2010: 226). The monopoly of urban centers and Sunni local notables grew at the expense of underprivileged Shi'a rural segments. The rural Shi'a population continued to be impoverished and marginalized. The marginalization resulted in searching of avenues for social upward mobility.

The main source of upward mobility was the military academy founded by the French mandate in 1920. The academy, with higher standards of education, shaped the new generation of Syrian students and provided a new social network. The most of Sunni population and Sunni urban notables did not prefer or regard the military education and did not enroll their sons in the academy. Besides, they were not in need of upward mobility that the academy unintendedly provided. However, underprivileged Shi'a sects (Nusayris/Arab Alawis, Druzes and Ismailis) with rural and poorer background seek a career in the army and encouraged their relatives to enroll in the army. The military academy became a place for social advancement and upward mobility for those underprivileged parts of the society. After their education, the military produced new secular Syrian elite who were mainly from the Shi'a sects and changes in social strata started from the time of military academy. The new officers of Shi'a elite, (mainly Nusayris/ Arab Alawis) would have long-term implications for Syrian politics and governments. The French mandate elevated the Alawi's economic, social and political status. The upward social mobility of Alawis did not abandon the centuries of awareness and marginalization of the sectarian identity. It resulted in a new kind of hierarchy among Sunnis and Alawis and Sunni resentment of Alawis.

Sectarianism under the Rule of Ba'ath Party and Hafez al-Assad

After the independence in 1946, the country was weak in terms of necessary institutions and manpower to establish a state. The independence was accompanied by a period of instability. The ethnic and religious divisions, rivalries between urban

centers, the social and economic gap between the urban and rural areas, tension between the Western and traditional way of thinking, lack of courage and confidence to rule the new state and the absence of a uniting power resulted in a very weak and unstable state and society (Cohen, 2014: 159-160).

The Syrian society had long been characterized by strong sectarian divisions although Sunnis tried to forge unity in terms of social and religious discord. However, Sunnis had already contentious conflicts among themselves. While Sunni Muslims and Christians are dispersed, Nusayris, Druzes and Ismailis are compact minority communities forming regional majorities (Cohen, 2014: 244). In addition, Shi'a minority increased their power by recruiting the army after 1920s and it was easier for them to unite because of their connections in the army and strong local ties rather than the Sunnis.

The involvement of the army in politics was considered almost appropriate since it was the only organized institution. There were factions and rivalries within the army in terms of political affiliation or ethnic/sectarian divisions. The Ba'th Party and Alawis were able to eliminate other factions and sects and eventually came to dominate the political life and the army. The Ba'th revolution in 1963 was an important event that changed the old pattern of Sunni rule which had been the same from the time of Ottoman Empire (Cleveland and Bunton, 2009: 222). The Sunni urban elite was replaced by the coalition of new social forces led by the army and the Ba'th Party. Eventually, military officers dominated the Party and removed ideological constraints after 1966 (Hinnebusch, 2015: 22). Hafez al-Assad rose to among these social forces with different agendas. After this date, all developments inside Syria made the position of the army, the party, and the state weaker and Hafez al-Assad stronger (Cohen, 2014: 161).

Hafez al-Assad removed urban oligarchical Sunni notables controlling Syria for generations. A new ruling class, mainly young army officers from rural areas, replaced these notables and the core group of which were Alawis. Still, al-Assad tried to present his rule with the image of popular democracy not a military dictatorship or the regime of a minority. Also, he improved the life conditions of the Sunni rural majority, broadened education system, economic and social infrastructure (Cohen, 2014: 171). Moreover, he incorporated a cross-sectarian and cross-class coalition. The Damascene Sunni bourgeoisie, Sunni and non-Sunni villages started to support his regime. By the help of rural support and bureaucratic, co-opted bourgeois elites, he won a relative success to defeat fundamentalist uprisings of 1978-1982 and to

defeat opposition of Sunni Nasserites and Muslim Brotherhood. According to Hinnebusch, his personal authority was 'semi-institutionalized in an office partly bureaucratic, partly patrimonial, a virtual presidential monarchy' (Hinnebusch, 2001: 5).

Despite of cross sectarian coalition, the Alawi minority dominated the army-party symbiosis for the time of his rule. At the core, his family members, clan and close followers headed the regime. The public sector employment was mostly concentrated in the hands of Alawis and regime's supporters (Wimmen, 2017: 65) For some authors, the very nature of the Syrian ruling system does not lie on confessional or ideological factors, but the ruling system's true essence is Assad family and their strategic alliances (Alvarez-Ossorio and de Teran, 2013: 186) with the support of co-opted bourgeoisie and bureaucrats. Very small minority took the advantages of political representation and domination of the economy. The sects were instrumentalized as a key ingredient of the regime (Hinnebusch, 2019: 50), but Ba'th Party and Hafez All Assad's policies of inclusion of different segments of society helped to preserve the regime based on class with crony capitalism (Donati, 2013; Lawson 2018).

Moreover, the 'revolutionary' language and the authoritarian practices were one of the main discourses of the regime. For some authors, 'the Syrian society has not been atomized or disciplined in the same way as Western societies' (Sottimano, 2009: 34). The disciplinary practices, constant indoctrination of the society and the cult of Hafez al-Assad (Wedeen, 1999) in daily life resulted in docile subjects and a disciplined society (Sottimano, 2009: 33-34). Assad's cult provided guidelines for appropriate behaviors and the Syrian society were 'not required to believe but they are required to act as if' (Wedeen, 1999: 30-31). The authoritarian regimes and constant exposure of disciplinary practices often led cynicism, suspicion, fear, pretending acts, and self-censorship distinctly visible in the society.

Sectarianism under the Rule of Bashar al-Assad

Many people from the various sects took part in the military, governmental positions, and economic initiatives during the rule of Hafez al-Assad and some Sunni notables from the urban areas benefited from the trade. However, this co-optation and inclusion strategies started to change in the era of Bashar al-Assad. The regime sought to decrease the power of Sunni notables to consolidate the central power of

Bashar al-Assad. At the same time new business opportunities were provided at the framework of neoliberal polices (Hinnebusch, 2011). The large segment of Alawis did not actually benefited from the al-Assad rule, instead presidential family gained much of the new investment (Matar, 2016; Ababsa, 2015) and this situation enhanced the perception of Alawi dominance under the rule of Bashar al-Assad. Besides, reduction of subsidies in food and fuel, decreasing the welfare state programs due to neoliberal policies and drought of recent years resulted in decrease of support to the regime (Matar, 2016; Ababsa, 2015) and increase in vulnerability of the regime to conflicts.

When the uprising began in 2011, the language of the protestors was not sectarian. There is evidence that the very reason for the uprising was the economic policies of Bashar al-Assad. The regime's mismanagement of economic transformation, poverty and social inequalities resulted in great resentment among majority of the population (Conduit, 2016; Phillips, 2015). Opposition represented a struggle against an oppressive, authoritarian regime with its crony capitalists and the regime's response to protestors was violent. The conflict at the beginning was too complex to explain with ancient hatreds and theological disagreements of sects.

Although there is no evidence that the regime coordinated a sectarian strategy and sometimes government forces worked at cross purposes (Bishara, 2013), sectarianism was an advantageous and a powerful tool to manipulate by the regime and regional actors as proxy conflict organized along ethno-sectarian lines (Heydeman, 2013). The news about the attacks on Sunni mosques, which were sanctuaries for protestors, or the alleged assassinations of Alawi security officers were all perceived as expressions of sectarian hatred of both protestors and the regime (Wimmen, 2017). Sects were always one of the primary expression of identities in Syria and such kind of perceptions turned the conflict easily into a sectarian one. Before the war many Syrians refused to define their identity belonging to a sect (Stolleis, 2015: 8), nevertheless this strong resistance may imply how strong these identities were.

The common perception is that all Alawis support al-Assad family was not true until the violence peaked. However, when the violence escalated in 2011, Alawis closed ranks behind Bashar al-Assad and ascended to the inner circles because of fear, loyalty or personal gains. In addition, the regime's violent response to opponents and domination of hardliner politicians at the core of the regime accompanied to the transformation of identities of opponents. Many Sunni activists

turned into Islamist jihadists; millions of Syrians became migrants within the borders of other states.

As in the civil war studies, identity groups are most likely to rebel when they are excluded from political power (Gurr, 2000, Cederman et. al., 2010; Roessler, 2011) And discrimination creates motives for violence based on grievances to obtain access to benefits of political and economic power. In Syria identity groups, mainly sects are systematically excluded from representative institutions. Identification of economic and political opportunities with Alawis, existing communal divisions before the conflict (Wimmen, 2017:65-67), regional and non-regional external actors, played significant roles in escalation and sectarianization of the uprising. Following the months of the uprising, the rhetoric of protestors changed, and sectarian identity became one of the most important elements in the conflict. Nowadays Syrians are permanently reminded of sectarian identity and emphasis on sects would continue in a foreseeable future.

Constructivist Approach and Reconciliation in Post-Conflict Syria

Sectarianism associated with strong particularistic solidarity within a group and potential enmity towards the other may be politically divisive and may lead to exclusionary governance practices (Hinnebusch, 2019: 42). In many cases, ethnic, religious, linguistic differences may be a deterrent to democracy. According to Brubaker, it is easier to compromise rival claims of ethnic groups than those of divinely sanctioned religious edicts (Brubaker, 2015). If the regimes represent one group of religion or sect, as in the case of Syria, it may automatically exclude others.

Like many people, Syrian society have multiple layers of identities as family, tribe, ideology, nation, and region, but sectarian identities are facet of identity one asserts and inseparable from identity formation despite of fuzzy character. Once the sectarian identities were always there to assert and intensified during the conflict, Syrian society and the regime cannot eliminate sectarianism after the conflict ends and a post-conflict regime is established. That is why despite of different reasons of the war, once the sectarianism hardened, intensified, and mobilized, it is difficult to turn back and impossible to ignore in post-conflict order.

Understanding the power of identity and the origins of sectarianization are necessary when the conflict ends, and the time of reconciliation efforts of the society comes. All conflicts in the world demonstrate us that identity politics is so powerful

and has to be dealt in conflict resolution and reconciliation processes. If it is not the case and fundamental changes are absent there is always a potential for renewed hostility and violence.

By the possible help of outside powers Syrian conflict will end eventually. It will be simplistic to depend all solutions on Assad's power. Whether he leaves or stays in power, it will mean Syrian society will have to revert to the tradition of multi religious tolerance. Perhaps aided by external peace offers, by reintegrating opponents, reconciliation measures have to be taken. As Jouejati says what do Syrians want 'the right for all Syrians to live in peace and dignity, to freely practice their religious and political beliefs, to be equal citizens before the law' (Jouejati, 2015). This may mean a reconciled society with a democratic system.

Identity is not something visible or tangible, but its very presence is so prevalent. There is profound disagreement on whether identities are primordial, constructed, singular or multiple. However, there is very rare disputes whether identities exist or not (Malesevic, 2006: 16). According to Brubaker and Cooper these understandings of identity range from strong to weak uses of the concept of identity and social constructivist approach prefers to work with identities (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000: 10- 14). Identity is itself a historical product of modernity and has worldwide popularity and one of the central concepts in social sciences. Multiple disciplines expand literature on types of identity as class, ethnic, national, religious, gender, and other identities and their roles in political, social, and economic areas (Abdelal, Herrera, Johnston, and McDermott, 2009: 17). R. Smith stated that identity is 'among the most normatively significant and behaviorally consequential aspects of politics, yet the literature has remained diffuse' (Smith, 2002: 302). Although for many social scientists the concept of identity is overused (Dolon and Todoli, 2008: 3) in contemporary societies it may still lead to conflicts or even civil wars. It has a history in social sciences (Weigert, Smith-Teitge, and Teitge, 1986) but in this global age, it is ubiquitous and current popularity is unique (Verkuyten, 2005: 40).

After wars and mass atrocities, former adversaries of each conflict have to take measures of resolution and reconciliation so that former hatreds and grievances no longer block the development of new and cooperative relations. In post-conflict societies as will be in Syria, structural conflict resolution measures will be the first step since parties in the conflict have to establish mutually accepted structural and institutional mechanisms including security, economic and political matters to resolve disagreements (Kacowitz, 2000). After structural measures, reconciliation

processes may underlie socio-psychological perspectives. It offers psychological process of cognitive and emotional aspects (Bar-Simon-Tov, 2004). This type of reconciliation necessitates transformation of identities, establishment of basic level of trust and rapprochement between former adversaries (Bar-Tal, 2007; Kelman, 2004). The last approach of reconciliation mentions collective healing, rehabilitation of victims and offenders, apology and forgiveness (Staub, 2011; Nadler and Shnabel, 2008; Tutu, 1999). The process of reconciliation is not composed of linear stages. Measures which are related with security, economic and political matters, mutual acknowledgement, justice, truth telling, apology, reparation, and forgiveness may not follow in any set order (Rosoux, 2009). In post-conflict Syria, if a permanent peace among society is the ultimate goal, resolution and reconciliation processes have to be started by taking sectarian sentiment and vulnerability into consideration in each stage. Any failure to reintegrate all sects into post-conflict order may mean storing up sectarian hatreds for future new conflicts.

The constructivist approach to conflicts, conflict resolution and reconciliation can contribute and complement understanding of the conflict and afterwards. Constructivist approaches emphasize both structural and discursive transformations (Jackson, 2009). Resolution, reconciliation, and constructivist theory are interrelated that both suggest reconstructing structures, interests, and identities. In post-conflict Syrian case as well as other conflicts, structural conditions have to be transformed first obviously. If economic deprivation, discrimination, political injustice, and allocation of these resources based on sects, exclusionary identities remain; these conditions neither allow reconciliation nor prevent a new conflict. Especially by the help of constructivist approach to identities, it is possible to draw some conclusions for the sectarian identities in Syria. The Constructivist approach take identities not preexisting, fixed to society and culture; rather they are context dependent and continuously evolving and open to transformation (Jackson, 2009).

The experience of violence not only remained present in individual and collective memories, but it also effects how Syrians imagine their future in their homeland and their relationship to each other (Wimmen, 2017). In most of the post-conflict societies reconciliation is hindered by those kinds of memories of violence. These memories propagating by the elite may make sectarian identities and polarization hardened, then reconciliation measures cannot be achieved if polarization and sectarianization continue after the conflict. To enable reconciliation

hostile attitudes and polarization have to be eased, intergroup attitudes change, and more inclusive identities should be developed (Kelman, 2004).

Democratic political culture has its own social and sociopolitical preconditions. For Almond and Verba the political culture of a society means the political system as internalized in the cognitions, evaluations, and feelings of citizens (Almond and Verba, 1989: 13). The first and foremost is the pluralistic culture based on a culture of consensus, diversity, active citizen participation and moderation, inclusive attitude toward other groups, capacity for sharing values with others, and multivalued orientation (Almond and Verba, 1989: 6-34). Besides, individuals are expected to develop a sense of common political identity which implies common commitment primarily to the political system (Almond and Verba, 1989: 371).

After the violence comes to an end in Syria, the main concern will be restructuring and reconciliation processes in the country. First, the reconciliation processes necessitate to establish a new political system having democratic political values. Nevertheless, the development of a stable and effective democratic government depends upon more than the electoral processes (Almond and Verba, 1989: 366). The political culture should support the system for the success of it. 'The civic spirit of the early uprising' (Wimmen, 2017:64) without a sectarian character is expected to reveal again and allow a new political culture with the help of reconciliation measures. After the violence ends, absence of change of political culture and sectarian emphasis may end up politicized sectarian rifts again. Our research tries to illustrate the internalized cognitions and religious attachment among Syrian migrants and exile communities.

Research Design

Methodology

The survey research was conducted over a four-month period. The purpose of the research is mainly explorative and descriptive. That is, the research aims at examining migrant Syrians ideas and thoughts about the political leadership and such related concepts as the sources of identity, the perception and awareness of identity, the relationships among contending groups and the moderation of these relationships. Since the circumstances in the region are politically sensitive and complex, a conventional sample of 202 Syrian migrants was purposefully selected. The sample includes those migrants living around Kirikhan, Iskenderun, Reyhanli, Samandag and Yayladagi sites of Turkey-Syria border. Informed consent from all

participants was obtained and responses were collected anonymously to ensure that the information gathered was kept secure.

Data Collection Process

The interview schedule (Neuman, 2011: 312) as the main research instrument containing the set of questions tapping on the abstract concepts was designed in a way to keep questions as simple and understandable as possible. The questions were read and asked to the participants, and responses were written down on the interview schedule form by the interviewer herself or himself. The interview schedule was administered by two interviewers, one who is a native Syrian speaker asking and explaining questions whenever a confusion arose over what was actually intended. The other interviewer who is fluent in both Turkish and Arabic interviewer recorded the responses. Interviews were conducted in places where respondents felt secure in order to get their genuine ideas and thoughts and eliminate the outside intervention as much as possible.

Some important observations on the data collection process deserve attention. Although the anonymity was guaranteed, Syrian migrants were generally reluctant to accept the participation in the survey research. Some seemed to have a tendency to give socially desirable responses and 'self-censorship' on some questions. And some of those who were initially willing to participate, rejected to give responses to some questions, therefore not completed the interview schedule. Missing or biased data were eliminated during the data cleaning based on interviewers' assessments on the interviewing process.

Interview questions were prepared in Turkish. Then they were translated into Arabic and Turkish back by two competent translators. The syntactical and semantic errors were corrected, and the final interview form were constructed in Arabic.

Data Analysis

Variables included in the interview schedule are mostly categorical measured at nominal or ordinal levels. Due to the categorical nature of the variables, Frequency and percent distribution tables are the main statistical analysis tools. The frequency distributions allow descriptive univariate analyses, conforming to the explorative and descriptive purposes of the survey. It must be noted that the present

research has no inferential goal. That is, the aim is not to generalize to the population of Syrian migrants. The sample drawn allows only descriptive hypothesis-generation, because it is not a random sample in which each population element has an equal or pre-known chance of being selected to the sample. Since the sample is not randomly selected no inferential statistical technique of data analysis can be employed.

The data entry and analysis were carried out by IBM SPSS 22 statistical software (IBM Corp. Released, 2013). Data cleaning concerning missing responses and material recording errors was done in cooperation with the interviewers. After the data cleaning, the data were entered by the interviewers themselves who were trained by the statistical expert.

Table 1
Frequency distribution of the most important identification sources

	Frequency	Percent
Humanity	140	70.0
Religion	34	17.0
Sect	4	2.0
Ideology	5	2.5
Family	9	4.5
Tribe	4	2.0
Political party	3	1.5
Other	1	0.5
Total	200	100.0

Table 1 contains the frequency distribution for the question 'what do you identify yourself most with?'. Table shows that the great majority of respondents (%70) choose 'humanity' to describe themselves most often. Religion is the second most frequent category as the identification source (%17). Other factors such as ideology, family, tribe and political party are treated relatively less important by participants.

Although the humanity seems to be the most distinct category for the respondents who attach their identities most, it is rather abstract and idealistic group, as the respondents would readily see themselves as part of the humanity. Most of the respondents after answering the question, named the second category,

religion. It comes to particularistic categories unlike humanity, religion seems to provide the most important identity anchorage.

Table 2
Political party leaders should be those local notables of a sect you belong to

	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	73	36.14
Undecided	25	12.38
Agree	104	51.49
Total	202	100.00

Table 2 present findings reflecting participants' opinions on the social status of the political party leaders. More than half of the respondents (%51.49) seem to be in the same page on the opinion that political party leaders should be notable members of the respondents' religious sect. Those who are undecided about the party leaders being sectarian notables' amounts to only %12.38. Table provide the finding that only the minority of Syrian migrants disagree on the idea that political party leaders should not be one of those who are notables of respondents' religious sect. This finding brings up the issue of the relationship between the sectarian leadership and the reconciliation of the sectarian conflict, which is the landmark of the political turmoil in Syria today. A politics mostly driven by the leadership in Syria and the perception of the participants bears the germ of future conflicts, unless the leaders adopt political cultural values of moderation and tolerance in the reconciliation process of post-conflict Syria.

Table 3
Political party leaders should be those who are opinion leaders representing the common ideology of your group.

	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	66	32.67
Undecided	34	16.83
Agree	102	50.50
Total	202	100.00

Table 3 reflects the parallel findings to what table 2 provides. Almost half of

the participants (%50.5) agree on the idea that the political party leader should be the opinion leader at the same time. 'The opinion leader' concept was operationalized as the one who represent the shared beliefs and the common ideology of a group. It is clear that the leadership representing the shared values of a group is what the majority of respondents adhere to. This may be interpreted as a natural tendency among member of a group that is homogenous in terms of the ideology. However, perceived group homogeneity embodied in the opinion leadership may pose a threat to other groups, may prolong conflicts, and may turn the existing conflicts to intractable conflicts. Therefore, it may make reconciliation hard to achieve. That is, this finding latently indicates an indirect, negative attitude hold by half of the respondents towards one of the inseparable values of democratic political culture, the pluralism.

Table 4
A member of the contending group or sect may persuade you on reasonable grounds to vote for his or her own political party.

	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	86	42.79
Undecided	41	20.40
Agree	74	36.82
Total	201	100.00

Table 4 presents information about the respondents' views on openness to persuasion. Basically, the majority of respondents (%42.79) seem to be resistant to the idea that a person from an unwanted group or sect would persuade them, even if he or she yields admissible reasons, to vote for the political party pursuing the interests of that unwanted group. It means that the majority of the respondents tend to downgrade the dialogical aspect of the democracy for mutual persuasion at present. Such a situation would nevertheless form a barrier against reasonable consensus and hence moderation in a democratic polity (Kegley and Skowronski, 2013). From the view of democratic political culture, if the dispute and controversy of various kind do not result in consensus on sensitive issues relevant to political integrity, the result would be destructive, which would therefore separate the contending groups further.

Table 5
If a regime change occurs in Syria, the reconciliation among opposing groups can be achieved.

	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	58	29.15
Undecided	29	14.57
Agree	112	56.28
Total	199	100.00

The results presented in table 5 below show that more than half of the respondents (% 56.28) set a precondition for the reconciliation among opposing groups in Syria on a change of the current regime. Moreover, nearly one third of the respondents (%29.15) are still pessimistic about the reconciliation, even if the regime change actually happens. Based on the findings it can be argued that the regime change is assumed to create favorable conditions for the respondents, not for the advocates of current regime. Therefore, it is highly questionable whether advocates of the current regime would want reconciliation at all after the presumed regime change.

Table 6
If the regime change occurs in Syria, the moderation of the relations among opposing groups is likely to begin.

	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	61	30.65
Undecided	27	13.57
Agree	111	55.78
Total	199	100.00

Findings supporting the argument above can also be obtained from Table 6. Table 6 presents the frequency distribution of the response categories of the statement 'If the regime change occurs in Syria, the moderation of the relations among opposing groups is likely to begin'. It is clear from the table that %55.78 of the participants with valid answers agree on the statement above. In other words, more than half of the respondents see the possibility of the moderation of currently conflictual relations among contending groups only dependent upon the regime

change. Still, Table 6 gives an indirect insight in that more than half of the respondents conceive the current regime in Syria as the main culprit of the situation, and without its change moderation is impossible. Furthermore, again nearly one third of the respondents (%30.65) do not hold any hope for the moderating discourse on the relations with the opposing groups. It must be noticed that respondents view themselves as disadvantaged and powerless against the current Syrian government. The moderation, however, implies mutual relations between equal and free parties.

From the other side, we should mention that almost half of the respondents (answers of 'disagree' and 'undecided' in table 5, 29+14 % and in table 6, 30+13 %) do not believe moderation or reconciliation among opposing groups after the regime change occurs. It may be implied that disagreement between the contending groups are penetrated in the very part of the culture. The grievances deepened through time and regime change may not be enough to reconcile.

We may emphasize some significant point s about the survey. For instance, the results related with the question of the identification of the self in table 1 shows that majority of respondents answered humanity. After answering the humanity, majority of the respondents named the second category, religion. It is a particularistic category and religion seems the primary identity source.

In addition, Syrian migrants agree on the idea that political party leaders should be one of the notables of any sect. However, sectarian based political party leadership and confessional politics are not welcome by democratic political culture. Although the conflict may have not start with sectarian reasons, allocation of political and economic resources based on sects are already the very reason of the conflict. In spite of the fact, respondents are akin to choose sectarian leaderships.

We also remind that significant part of respondents (with answers of 'disagree' and 'undecided' in table 5 and table 6) do not believe moderation or reconciliation among opposing groups after the regime change occurs. It may be implied that grievances and disagreement between different sects are penetrated and implanted in the very part of the culture. The grievances deepened through time and regime change or stay will not be enough reconcile.

Conclusion

Multiethnic or multi sectarian communities are composed of different groups, which may have grievances between themselves and in these circumstances,

in-group attachments may strengthen. Multi sectarian groups give their primary loyalty to their sects and rather than the broader community, nation, polity or political system. Besides their political behaviors are a reflection of their concerns with matters of politics, security or welfare of their sectarian group rather than those of the country as a whole. Syria is also divided into parochial communities where the strongest identities are with the clan, tribe, sect and sectarian cleric or family. All regimes in Syria undermined social cohesion whether it is religious or secular type of rule. From the early times, social community was confined by religious identity and the main discourse was religious and sectarian.

The literature about the Syrian civil war emphasizes the beginning of the conflict was not sectarian, instead anti-regime, anti-discrimination and anti-oppression of a closed circle government. Although it is conventional to accept this statement, it is also easy to see how quickly the conflict turn into a sectarian one and a few violent instances were enough to trigger the identity politics. Involvement of regional and outside actors in the conflict by taking sectarian sides is one of the reasons that helped sectarianization of the conflict. However more importantly, in a long period of time, allocation of scarce resources, jobs, government job opportunities were shared along sectarian lines and ineffective and oppressive governance intensified sectarian identities. Sects were and are always the primary expression of identity and emphasis and existence of sectarian identities remained constant in the country.

The conflict of Syria today became related with these identities. Once it is stated that the conflict did not start with theological sectarian claims and old hatreds, the conflict sectarianized. Sectarianism continues to define and dominate Syrian's lives and becomes almost the basis for entire political claims. All political and social contexts inform the primacy of sectarian identity and prevalence of sectarianism since sectarian affiliation is based on combination of communal political and economic interests rather than religious heterodoxy.

The society which is divided into parochial communities of sects and sectarian groups giving their primary loyalty to their sects rather than the society or political system as a whole. This implies us that priority of sectarian identity among the hierarchy of identities that compose the self cannot be eliminated from consideration in post-conflict Syria. It may also be a barrier to achieve peace and reconciliation, develop democratic values of political participation, electoral processes, and tolerance.

Thus, whether an actual mutuality and reconciliation among conflicting groups can be achieved after the conflict ends and/or change is open to discussion. What can

indirectly be inferred from above findings purport that the regime change is understood as a shift of the political power from one group to another, which does not imply the inauguration of a new and democratic regime as it is supposed by the most respondents.

In this study, with the help of survey research with migrants and exile communities, it is tried to illustrate that the sectarian identity is the key to understand Syrian society. It has a great role getting primary expression in forging identities in the country. It provides political and economic benefits for the communities. Therefore, it is almost impossible to reconcile Syrian society after the conflict without considering sectarian identities and their role in politics, economy, and social matters.

When the violence comes to an end resolution and reconciliation processes are supposed to begin. In this expected long period of reconciliation, the degree of sectarian attachment should be marginalized so as to be normalized part of democratic political culture side by side other equally important democratic values. Diminishing role of sectarian emphasis in societal, political and economic structures and discourses is the main pillar of new political order and constructivist approach may have a contribution in this identity construction. Besides reintegration of Sunnis into post-conflict Syria is a necessary step to prevent future sectarian hatred. This research tries to help to explain that strong sectarian attachments may undermine reconciliation in post-conflict Syria and democratic values in terms of expectations about political party leaders, moderation, and tolerance.

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A Case Study of Personal Experiences of Undocumented Eastern European Immigrants Living in the United States

Titanilla KISS, Shaki ASGARI[1]

Abstract. Existing research on undocumented migration has focused predominantly on Latin American and Mexican immigrants and largely overlooked the experiences of immigrants originating from other parts of the world. As such, very few studies have considered how the lack of legal residency status can influence life opportunities of undocumented immigrants from Eastern Europe. The overarching aim of the present study was to explore the personal experiences of unauthorized Eastern European immigrants in the United States in order to: (a) augment research on undocumented migration, and (b) highlight the experiences of undocumented Eastern Europeans who remain an under-studied group of immigrants. Comprehensive personal interviews were conducted with a small group of unauthorized immigrants to explore: (1) reasons for immigration and prior expectations, and (2) psychosocial experiences (i.e., status related anxiety, experience with prejudice and discrimination, job satisfaction, sense of belonging, family relations, and future plans). Some of the results are presented in terms of similarities and differences between the current study's sample and the undocumented immigrants from other regions of the world, namely, Mexico and Latin America.

Keywords*: Eastern European immigrants, immigrant assimilation, immigrant psychosocial adjustment, migration, undocumented immigrants*

1. Introduction

It is difficult to pinpoint the exact beginning of undocumented Eastern European migration to the United States. However, it is well established that the immigration quotas determined by the laws of 1921, 1924 and 1929, by greatly restricting open Eastern and Southern European immigration (Ngai 2003; Robila 2008; Sadowski-Smith 2008) marked the beginning of a massive flow of unauthorized Eastern European immigrants to the U.S. (Sadowski-Smith 2008). The Eastern

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European emigration then dramatically declined between the Great Depression and World War 2 (Sadowski-Smith 2008) and continued to decline between 1945 and 1991 as Eastern Europe became subject to Soviet control. During this time period, communist authorities exercised restrictive exit policies that severely limited the ability for Eastern Europeans to travel internationally (Robila 2007; Robila 2008). The fall of the Eastern European communist regimes in the late 1980's and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 brought forth a new surge of both legal and illegal Eastern European immigrants into the United States (Robila 2007; Robila 2008; Sadowski-Smith 2008). Due to this influx, the Eastern European-born population in the United States nearly doubled from 1,231,372 in 1990 to 2,171,906 in 2011 (Migration Policy Institute 2013a), representing approximately 5.4% of the total immigrant population in the United States (Migration Policy Institute 2013b).

The Eastern European-born population includes four distinct groups of immigrants: naturalized citizens, legal permanent residents, legal nonimmigrants, and undocumented immigrants, all of whom differ greatly in terms of their rights and privileges (Massey and Bartley 2005). Although it is difficult to determine the exact number of undocumented Eastern European immigrants, reports indicate that there were approximately 300,000 undocumented European natives residing in the U.S. as of January 2011 (Hoefer, Rytina, and Baker 2012).

Despite the increasing number of undocumented Eastern European immigrants in the United States, there is relatively little known about this population (for exceptions see: Gozdziak 1999; Ngai 2003; Sadowski-Smith 2008). Previous research exploring undocumented migration has predominantly examined the struggles and/or everyday experiences of Mexican and Latin American immigrants (e.g., Abrego and Gonzales 2010; Belliveau 2011; Campbell 2008; Cleaveland 2010; Cleaveland and Pierson 2009; Gomberg-Muñoz 2010; Perez et al. 2009; Perez et al. 2010; Sternberg and Barry 2011; Walter, Bourgois, and Loinaz 2004). This research interest may be explained and warranted by the fact that 58% of unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. are Mexican natives and 23% are other Latin American natives (Passel and Cohn 2011). However, an unintended consequence of such research focus can undermine the diversity of the unauthorized immigrant population currently residing in the United States (Rivera-Batiz 2001) and may feed into the stereotypic portrayal of the unauthorized immigrant as a Mexican border crosser (Ngai 2003). Reports indicate that a large percentage, perhaps as many as 45% of the total unauthorized immigrant population, have entered the United States legally and

have become unauthorized residents by overstaying their visas (Pew Hispanic Center 2006). Reports also indicate that visa overstayers and border crossers seem to differ on several dimensions (Rivera-Batiz 2001). For example, on average, visa overstayers compared with border crossers seem to have more years of schooling (11.6 years compared to 7.1 years), are more likely to hold technical or professional jobs (28.2% compared to 8.3%), and have higher family income per person ($9,054 compared to $6,218) (Rivera-Batiz 2001). Furthermore, the socio-demographic make-up of visa overstayers (i.e., educational attainment) seems to be more similar to the U.S. general immigrant population than to the border crossers' population (Rivera-Batiz 2001). These statistics seem to typify the undocumented Eastern European immigrants, the majority of which happen to be visa overstayers (Pew Hispanic Center 2006). A direct comparison of the demographic characteristics of undocumented Latin American and Eastern European immigrants in metropolitan Chicago showed that undocumented Latin Americans experienced higher rates of unemployment and earned lower hourly wages compared with their Eastern European counterparts (Mehta et al. 2002). Furthermore, while securing white-collar jobs presented a challenge for both, Latin American and Eastern European immigrants, undocumented status limited the access to these jobs only for Latin American immigrants (Mehta et al. 2002).

The combined outcome of the research outlined in this paper provides an account of socioeconomic and demographic differences between undocumented Eastern Europeans and Mexican and Latin American immigrants. This work might also suggest that Eastern European natives are less likely to encounter the negative impacts of an undocumented status than Mexicans and Latin Americans or in general non-White immigrants. Undoubtedly race compounds the difficulties experienced by non-White undocumented immigrants. For example, race clearly played a significant role in a series of immigration raids in Chandler Arizona in 1997, where Latino immigrants became the direct target of scrutiny, whereas "persons who passed for white or Black were never questioned about their citizenship or for proof of their immigrant status" (Romero 2008, 147). However, a recent investigation suggests that although the racial makeup of Eastern European immigrants allows them to more easily blend in with the general population of the U.S. and can protect them against ethnic discrimination, these immigrants, nevertheless, experience psychological stress (i.e., fear of deportation) and daily struggles that are similar to the experiences of their Latin American counterparts (Gozdziak 1999).

Although investigators have begun to highlight the heterogeneity of the U.S. immigrant population, they have primarily focused on the demographics and socioeconomic trends associated with each subpopulation within the undocumented immigrant population. As such, in our study, we were interested to further augment the existing research by exploring the relationship between undocumented status and everyday personal experiences of Eastern European immigrants. Our interviews with a small number of undocumented residents enabled us to gather first-hand accounts of the participants' experiences as they tried to work, raise a family and navigate life in their adopted country. Practical difficulties limited our access to a large sample of undocumented immigrants, thereby making it difficult to formulate any inferential conclusions and/or any meaningful comparisons between our sample and other samples of undocumented immigrants. However, when possible, the results are presented in terms of similarities and differences between our sample and undocumented immigrants from other parts of the world, namely, Mexico and Latin America.

2. Method

2.1 Participants

In this study, we refer to all of our participants as Eastern European, although we feel this description needs some clarification. Some of the participants, such as those from Hungary and Slovakia, are technically Central Europeans due to the geographical location of their countries within Europe. However, many Eastern European as well as Central European countries (e.g., Slovakia, Hungary, etc.) remained under the control of the former Soviet Union's communist regime after World War II up until the late 1980's. Due to this shared historical past, we have referred to Central European participants as Eastern European throughout our paper.

In recruiting vulnerable research participants from what is considered to be a hidden population (Faugier and Sargeant 1997; Lahman et al. 2011), we faced crucial methodological issues, including random sampling. We were able to recruit nineteen participants by using snowball sampling as a referral method, where a few initial contacts generated further contacts (Atkinson and Flint 2001; Browne 2005). Previous research provides convincing arguments that when studying hard to reach populations where random assignment is not feasible (Faugier and Sargeant 1997)

and when the aim of the study is exploratory or descriptive (Hendriks and Blanken 1992), snowball sampling presents an acceptable and commonly used non-random technique. Although our non-random sampling design raises issues regarding generalization from our results, this method was congruent with our research goal of investigating a social process (Faugier and Sargeant 1997), in this case the psychosocial experiences of undocumented Eastern European immigrants.

Of the 19 interviews conducted, one of the interviews was discarded because the individual's tourist visa had not yet expired, therefore he couldn't be considered an undocumented immigrant. The other 18 participants included in this study reported being undocumented immigrants. Most of the participants (17) arrived in the United States legally holding either a temporary work or travel visa, but lost their legal status after the expiration of their visas. Only one of the participants arrived in the United States by crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. Our data is in line with previous reports indicating that the majority of undocumented Europeans are visa overstayers (Pew Hispanic Center 2006). Of the 18 participants included in our study, 7 were men and 11 were women, all of whom had immigrated to the United States between 1991 and 2010. Nine participants came from Hungary, 5 from Slovakia, 3 from Poland and 1 from Lithuania. The participants ranged in age between 25 and 40 with a mean age of 34.40 (*SD* = 4.25). Seventeen participants resided in Connecticut and one resided in New Jersey. Eight participants were married, 5 were in a romantic relationship, 4 were single and 1 was divorced. Of those in a marital or romantic relationship, 11 had partners of the same national origin and 9 had either one or two children. All of the children resided with their parents and held either an American or a dual citizenship.

Relevant reports indicate that only a small percentage of Mexican undocumented immigrants establish U.S. bank accounts during their residency in the United States (Amuedo-Dorantes and Bansak 2005). In contrast, all participants in our sample had various forms of bank accounts. In addition, contrary to misconceptions that undocumented immigrants try to avoid paper trails, most (15) of our participants, in addition to bank accounts, held various forms of traceable U.S.-issued identification documents: 11 had U.S.-issued driver's licenses, 10 had tax IDs and 5 had social security cards. Many of our participants also owned various assets in the United States. Fourteen participants owned a car, 2 owned a house, 2 owned income generating businesses and 1 had life insurance. Most participants also currently owned assets in their countries of origin: 6 owned a house, 4 owned income generating properties, 2 owned a car, 2 had a life insurance and 2 had a retirement plan.

2.2 Measures

The survey instruments utilized in this study included an in-person interview and a demographic questionnaire. In depth interviews were chosen as the primary method of research to allow participants the flexibility of describing their personal experiences in their own words. The interview consisted of 45 structured and semi-structured questions organized into the following two themes: (1) reasons for immigration and prior expectations, and (2) everyday personal experiences (i.e., status related anxiety, experience with prejudice and discrimination, job satisfaction, sense of belonging, family relations and future plans). In addition, participants completed a demographic questionnaire containing 69 open ended and multiple-choice questions about educational, family, and employment background.

2.3 Procedure

Participation in this study was voluntary and no tangible incentives were offered. Participants were recruited using snowball sampling. While recruiting participants, we openly stated that we were looking for undocumented Eastern European immigrants. At the beginning of each session, each participant was given a brief explanation of the general purpose of the study and was informed that the interview was being audiotaped for later transcription. In order to protect participants' identity, a written consent was not administered. Instead, the interviewer read the consent form out loud and asked: "Do you agree to participate?" By answering "yes", participants gave consent to take part in the study. This procedure was approved by an Institutional Review Board.

All interviews were conducted in English and the conversations lasted an average of fifty minutes. If a participant did not understand a question, the interviewer paraphrased or clarified the question. After the completion of the interview, participants completed the demographic questionnaire.

3. Results

We focused on two emerging themes while analyzing the results. First, we explored participants' reasons for immigration and prior expectations about life in the U.S. and whether those expectations had been fulfilled. Second, we attempted to examine participants' personal experiences with discrimination or maltreatment,

status-related fear and anxiety, employment background, family relations, sense of belonging and plans for the future. Some of the data are presented in terms of similarities and differences between our sample and undocumented Mexican and Latin American immigrants.

3.1 Reasons for immigration and prior expectations

Even though most participants (17) immigrated with the clear intent of working in the United States, only three arrived with temporary work visas, while the majority (13) entered the United States holding tourist visas. Subsequently, all of these respondents became undocumented by overstaying their tourist or working visas. Only one individual reported crossing the U.S.-Mexico border illegally. Previous research indicates that fleeing poor economic conditions (Cleaveland 2011; Hernandez 2009), reunification with family members (Hernandez 2009), and escaping political turmoil in the country of origin (Chavez 1998) are among the common reasons specified as reasons for migration by Mexican and Latin American immigrants. For our sample of participants, the two most common reasons for choosing the United States as a destination were: (a) to make money (9 participants) and/or (b) to go on an adventure (9 participants). It is not surprising that many of our participants described traveling to the U.S. as exciting and adventurous, since prior to the fall of the communist regimes severe restrictions were imposed on free travel in most Eastern European countries. As a Slovakian participant described:

> "It was forbidden for us [to travel] for a long time. . . . I was very curious. . . I just wanted to come and see."

Most participants (10) had no clear expectations about life in America prior to their arrival and simply came to "explore", "learn English" and "have fun". Others (7) expected to find a better life, but most of them (5) were disappointed to discover the difficulty involved in finding well-paying or meaningful work and obtaining legal residency. This disappointment resonates with the voices of undocumented Mexican women who express the perceived American prosperity as difficult to attain (Campbell 2008). Regardless of previous expectations, all our participants believed that life in the U.S. was at least somewhat easier, in terms of making a living, than life in their countries of origin. They explained that hard work in Eastern Europe did not necessarily translate into a comfortable life style.

> " If you work, if you study. . . you can get your goal easier than in my country. If you study in my country and you want some job, it's so hard to get it." (Slovakia)

> "If, on [sic] Hungary you have a job, you just survive, but here if you have good job and you have good money, you can do things and go further." (Hungary)

> "Financially, you can do a lot better in this country. . . people in my country struggle to travel. . . do not dine outside. . . you know everybody cooks. . . there just isn't enough money to go outside and eat in a restaurant. . . like we do here." (Slovakia)

In contrast, relevant reports indicate that for undocumented Mexican immigrants residing in the United States does not seem to ease socioeconomic difficulties. Some undocumented Mexican immigrants, for example earn low wages in exchange for working long hours and are forced to make personal sacrifices for their family and children (Campbell 2008; Cleaveland 2011).

In our sample, 4 participants stated that they came searching for a better life suggesting that they had originally intended to remain in the U.S. for an indefinite period of time. None of the participants stated that they traveled to the U.S. for the purpose of permanent resettlement.

The majority (12) of participants sampled intended to return to their countries of origin after living and working in the U.S. for a few months up to a maximum of 4 years, whereas the rest had come without any clear plans about their length of stay. However, all of our participants indicated that they stayed longer than they had originally intended because they became accustomed to the life style and/or settled down and established families.

> " I start [sic] to have a life which I never had before. . . I was able to afford to live on my own, have my own TV, have my own room, have my own car, go on vacation around the States." (Hungary)

> "I did the internship program for the 18 months. . . I had friends. . . I was like stay a little bit longer, little bit longer. . . then you have kids and then it's like what are we gonna do?" (Slovakia)

Similarly, Mexican migration to the United States has always been circular in nature until the militarization of the border (Massey, Durand, and Pren 2014). Most undocumented Mexican immigrants have no intentions of permanent settlement in the United States, rather they plan to work, earn money, and in some cases allow their children to complete their schooling before they return to their native land (Campbell 2008; DeLuca, McEwen, and Keim 2010). Many undocumented Mexican and Central American immigrants also report having stayed in the United States due to having adapted to the American life style (Chavez 1991).

Many of our participants (12) stated that they enjoyed the quality of life and high standard of living that the U.S. offered. They reported enjoying the diversity of the United States' population (6), its natural resources and beauty (6) and employment opportunities (6). Overall, the majority of participants (13) were happy with their decision to migrate and those who experienced reservations about their decision to migrate (5) did so primarily due to their inability to obtain legal residency.

3.2 Psychosocial experiences

3.2.1 Status related anxiety

Many everyday tasks such as opening a bank account or getting a driver's license placed the participants at risk of detection and potential deportation. Most of our participants (16) reported stress-related experiences, including daily fear of being detected by authorities, continuous feelings of anxiety and a generalized sense of vigilance or uneasiness.

> "If you are an illegal resident, then it's not easy at all. . . everywhere you go they ask you for the social security number and without the social security number you can do really nothing. So, I'm talking about school, I'm talking about getting like credit for the car. . . even applying for the debit card at the bank." (Poland)

> "You can't drive, you are always under stress. . . someone can pull you over. . . you don't have what is required. . . but you can't really get it." (Poland)

> "When you see the police car. . . your heart starts to beat like ten times faster. . . to think about what can happen when I have my son in the car. . . it's just stressful.'' (Hungary)

> "I remember once someone whispered that there's immigration in town and they are looking for, you know, illegal immigrants. . . I remember the entire restaurant leaving. There was only the manager left and one cook that was legal. All the other employees left. . . that was scary as hell. . . I remember running in the street and changing my clothes, so nobody can see me in black [uniform]." (Poland)

While fear of deportation is a common theme in the accounts of undocumented Mexican and Latin American immigrants as well (Chavez 1998; Simon and DeLey 1984; Sullivan and Rehm 2005), deportation may become a reality more often for Mexican and Latin American immigrants than their Eastern European counterparts (e.g., Romero 2008). Some of our participants were well aware of the difficulties compounded by the influence of race on the lives of undocumented Mexican and Latin American immigrants.

> "I'm a white person, so no one really can tell if I'm legal or not by looking at me. . . if you're driving a car and you're me, no one is gonna suspect that you are illegal. If you look Hispanic, the first thing they are gonna ask is for your identity." (Poland)

3.2.2 Experience with discrimination and/or maltreatment

Most participants (14) have had interactions with the police due to traffic violations or car accidents. The majority (13) evaluated these interactions positively and felt that they were treated fairly by police officers. This is a sharp contrast with the interactions of non-White undocumented immigrants with the law enforcement. Many undocumented Mexicans and Central Americans fear public officials, including police officers who often work in conjunction with immigration authorities. These immigrants avoid calling the police at times of need for fear of repercussions including the very real possibility of deportation (Menjívar and Bejarano 2004).

All participants have had interactions with health care providers and the majority (16) described their overall experience as mostly positive. Only 2 individuals described their experience with health care providers as negative. One was refused services due to lack of insurance and unwillingness to pay in advance of treatment and the other had concerns about unnecessary and costly medical tests ordered by his doctor.

All participants with American-born children received financial assistance from social service agencies in the form of food supplements and/or health insurance for their children. These participants evaluated their experience as positive.

Most participants (15) did not have any interaction with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Only 3 participants reported personal interactions with the INS. In one case the participant was pulled over at a checkpoint and after stating that she was not a legal resident, she was allowed to leave without any further consequences. In two other cases, the individuals were trying to change their visa status and described their experience as disappointing or unfair.

Most participants (16) had interactions with educational institutions through ESL classes, college courses or participation in their children's school programs. More than half of these participants (10) reported their experience as positive and were happy with free ESL classes, helpful teachers and small classes. The remaining (6) participants had either mixed or negative comments in terms of their interaction with educational institutions. These individuals viewed the American education

system as less rigorous compared to the European education system. In addition, the high cost of a college education was mentioned as a negative characteristic of higher education in the U.S.

3.2.3 Work experiences

All male participants and 8 of the female participants were gainfully employed. Although some of the participants (8) had two or more years of college education and some (5) had professional training in cosmetology, culinary arts, etc., the majority (12) worked in fields that traditionally employ undocumented workers (i.e., construction, unskilled restaurant work, housekeeping, and babysitting). Only 2 individuals held skilled or semi-skilled jobs (i.e., sales). Seven of these participants expressed that given the opportunity they would most likely further their education, seek vocational training and most of them (13) expressed the desire to change jobs.

> "I have motivation, I wanna do something. . . First you have to learn the language, you have to get used to living over here, then after a while I think every normal people has some kind of motivation to do more." (Hungary)

> "I do have a degree from the business [sic], the hotel management so I might look into that field. . . I don't wanna end up. . . babysitting for another thirty years. . . I would go back to school and start something." (Slovakia)

Limited employment options (i.e., cleaning, farm work, landscaping, babysitting, etc.) was more of a concern than the salary associated with these positions. Furthermore, our participants believed that most Americans would not be interested in the type of hard and low-skilled jobs undocumented immigrants held.

> "You started from scratch. . . . After you get to a point. . . you don't move anywhere. . . you don't improve. . . you just stay the same, doesn't matter if you make money. . . Money doesn't make you happy after a while." (Poland)

> "Americans don't like to go to the fields and do, you know, pick up vegetables or fruits and stuff like that. I work in a restaurant, no American would go to the kitchen or the dishwasher. . . In restaurants you can see American do like server and bartender. . . but wouldn't just cut up the veggies. You don't get that much money for that job and it's not a fun job or a job who [sic] requires any knowledge. . . . You can just step in the kitchen and you can do this, and you not gonna get that much money. . . . The busboys in my restaurant, they get for one full day, starting ten o'clock till ten at night, they get 53 dollars." (Hungary)

Participants also expressed job dissatisfaction due to their inability to open or extend their own businesses (6) and the lack of employment benefits (6).

> "My business is small. . . I don't want to make anything big. . . I don't want to leave everything here." (Hungary)

> "We don't have any benefits. . . We cannot get money from government. . . We are illegal, then we need to work harder. . . sometimes we need to work double hard than the regular Americans." (Slovakia)

3.2.4 Sense of belonging

Most participants (13) believed that they contributed to the social and economic infrastructure of the U.S. society by working, paying taxes, raising children, participating in social and educational events and developing friendships and social connections. Despite this belief, an impeded sense of belonging was a recurring theme throughout the interviews.

Eight of the participants felt they were not a part of U.S. society, didn't belong and used the words "temporary" and "additionally" in self-reference.

> "I feel I don't belong here. . . I'm not an American citizen. . . I don't even have a Green Card. . . I'm here just temporary." (Hungary)

Marginalization and feelings of isolation are major stress factors for undocumented Mexican immigrants as well (Sullivan and Rehm 2005). Legal status is often cited as a major reason for feelings of isolation and detachment from the community by Latin American undocumented immigrants (Chavez 1991).

Ten participants felt that that they were not equal to others due to their very restricted rights, with some expressing that their fundamental human rights to freedom and equality were being violated.

> "We are kind of like locked here. . . We cannot go out, we cannot travel. . . . We cannot enjoy that freedom like everybody talking about [sic]. . . There is a freedom, but not a real freedom." (Slovakia)

> "You are just a nobody here. You have no rights, you have nothing. Anybody can do anything to you. You are not even here, don't even exist." (Hungary)

Due to reported difficulties in obtaining legal status, some participants (5) had already decided to leave the U.S. in the near future, but the remaining individuals did not have any clear future plans. The majority (16) felt that obtaining permanent residency or citizenship would make them at least partly feel more like an American. Five believed that having legal residency would make them feel as if they belonged and would provide further motivation to assimilate. The relationship between being a legal resident and feelings of "belonging" and "citizenship" was

expressed in the following manner:

> "You have the right just as they do. . . . Nobody can mess with you anymore. . . . You are accepted already by the country." (Hungary)
>
> "What can make me American? Truly, just a piece of paper, because in my heart, I am American already." (Slovakia)

3.2.5 Freedom to travel and family relations

All participants (15) who had immediate family members living in their countries of origin kept in touch and as many as 13 reported talking to their family members at least once a week. Seven participants have been visited at least once a year by a family member since their arrival to the U.S., however none of them have been able to visit their country of origin. Even though none of the participants were separated from their children, they nevertheless experienced painful separation from parents and family.

> "I miss my parents and it's really hard on me. . . My mom was here, my dad was not. . . He is not able to make it here. . . . This is the hardest part of it. You want to go so badly and you just cannot go." (Slovakia)
>
> "Basically when you move that far and you can't visit back and forth, they split up family. . . You don't really have foundation here. . . no foundation there anymore." (Hungary)

Negative psychological outcomes of painful separation from children and family members among the undocumented Latino/a parents have been well-documented (Sternberg and Barry 2011; Walter, Bourgois, and Loinaz 2004). Restricted mobility and inability to visit family and children is also a major source of stress and emotional hardship for undocumented Mexican immigrants (Sullivan and Rehm 2005).

3.2.6 Future plans

Finally, we asked our participants about their plans for obtaining legal residency. Four participants were hoping to be sponsored by family members or employers in order to obtain a Green Card. The remaining participants (14) believed that under the current immigration laws, their chances of obtaining legal residency were quite slim. Among these, 11 participants viewed marrying a U.S. citizen as the only option toward legal residency.

> "I could just get married. . . but it's really. . . not working for me. . . . This is not like really me. . . but there is no other way. . . I didn't think about this, but now sometimes I think about that too." (Hungary)

> "Last year we [my husband and I] got divorced, hoping that we can find someone [an American citizen] to marry us. . . . We also talked to the lawyer about. . . the options and at this moment, there is nothing really you can do. . . The only option is to get married." (Poland)

All participants believed that their lives would be much improved if the U.S. government was to institute new immigration laws or policies that allowed illegal immigrants to obtain some form of legal residency or work permit. They believed such laws/policies could generate tax revenues and utilize untapped talents and skills of the undocumented population.

Even though participants emphasized the benefits of legalization, most (17) were not in favor of granting general amnesty to all unauthorized immigrants. They believed that employed and tax-paying immigrants who have been living in the U.S. for some time and those with no prior criminal record and a certain level of education and English proficiency should be given priority for receiving U.S. permanent residency. Most (13) emphasized that drug and human traffickers, those hiding in the U.S. to avoid criminal prosecution in their native countries and individuals who abuse the American social services are harmful to the U.S. socio-economic infrastructure.

4. Discussion

Our study's attempt was to contribute to the existing immigration research by exploring the personal experiences of the unauthorized Eastern European U.S. residents. By highlighting the personal experiences of this under-studied immigrant group, we hoped to highlight the diversity of the U.S. undocumented residents. Adopting a target perspective in studying undocumented immigrants (Lee 2012) enabled us to report first-hand accounts of motivational forces behind migration and psychosocial ramifications of living as undocumented residents.

Our interviews revealed that the majority of the participants in our sample had entered the United States legally, holding a tourist or a work visa. This is in stark contrast with reports of undocumented Mexican immigrants who enter predominantly through crossing the U.S.-Mexico border (Rivera-Batiz 2001). All our participants had entered the United States between 1991 and 2010 after the fall of

the communist regimes to take advantage of their newly-found freedom, mainly to explore America and/or to work temporarily with the intention of returning to their countries of origin within a relatively short period of time. In contrast, economic hardship and family reunification have been reported as some of the main reasons for Mexican migration (Cleaveland 2011; Hernandez 2009). Once in the U.S., most (17) of our participants had allowed their tourist or work visa to expire and had consequently become unauthorized residents. All participants expressed that they remained in the country because they either started a family or experienced a better quality of life in the U.S. compared to their countries of origin. Most participants had at least 12 years of formal education and a small number had college degrees. All participants owned U.S. bank accounts and most had some form of U.S. issued identification card such as a driver's license, tax ID, or social security card. Many of our participants owned assets both in the U.S. and in their countries of origin.

Although most of our participants did not experience any direct form of discrimination or maltreatment while interacting with various institutions, they reported emotional and socioeconomic stress in connection with their residency status. Fear of deportation, limited employment opportunities, inability to travel outside of the United States and impeded sense of belonging were among the most difficult challenges reported. Similar accounts are echoed in Gozdziak's (1999) study showing that although the racial makeup of undocumented Polish immigrants allows them to blend in with the general population of the U.S., these immigrants, nevertheless, experience daily stressors similar to their non-European counterparts, including fear of deportation, uncertainty about the future, and difficulty assimilating into the mainstream culture. Although fear of deportation seems to be a common theme among undocumented immigrants, due to their racial makeup, Eastern Europeans are less targeted by discrimination (Gozdziak 1999) and immigration raids (Romero 2008). Historically, European immigrants have been able to more easily assimilate into the American culture than other non-White immigrant populations (Smart and Smart 1995).

One of the biggest sources of frustration for our participants, especially women, was the realization that their legal status did not allow them the ability to move away from low-skilled employment despite their previous training, education and motivation. Relevant research indicates that Latino immigrants also express "being forced to accept low-paying jobs" and experience difficulties in terms of obtaining "desired employment" and job promotions (Cavazos-Rehg, Zayas, and

Spitznagel 2007, 1130). Low wages did not seem to be a great concern among our sample of participants.

Most of our participants stated that legalization would facilitate socioeconomic and emotional assimilation by allowing them to explore job opportunities more in line with their interests, education and training. Furthermore, similar to Mexican and Central American immigrants (Chavez 1991), our participants indicated that legalization would enable them to feel more as a part of their adopted country and more accepted by their community. Our participants indicated that they experienced major challenges in terms of assimilation into their adopted country. Recent studies suggest that unauthorized immigrants tend to remain marginalized regardless of their willingness to assimilate (Chavez 1991) and can at times encounter what Chavez (2007, 193) calls a "schizophrenic context" of reception, experiencing both inclusion and exclusion in the adopted country. On the one hand, these immigrants develop strong connections to the United States through establishing families, raising their American-born children and working (Chavez 1994) and on the other hand, as described by McGuire and Georges (2003, 191), they have "no official right to exist within the political-legal-geographic boundaries of the country in which they live." They are stripped of many of their basic human rights and neither benefit from nor feel protected by governing laws and policies (De Genova 2002). Most of our participants stated experiencing a peripheral existence and believed that their basic human rights of equality and freedom were ignored. In describing themselves, they used terms such as "temporary", "additionally", or "under" American citizens. This suggests that even though the racial make-up of Eastern European undocumented immigrants may allow them to more easily blend in and/or to be accepted by American society (Gozdziak 1999; Smart and Smart 1995), their race does not provide them with a sense of belonging.

Another major difficulty encountered by undocumented immigrants is reunion with family members (Sullivan and Rehm 2005). For example, many Latino/a immigrants are forced to leave children and spouses behind (Sternberg and Barry 2011; Walter, Bourgois, and Loinaz 2004). Although, none of our participants had to leave behind a spouse or children, most had immediate family members still remaining in their own native countries. The inability to visit family members was reported to have caused strained family relationships.

Finally, many of our participants reported experiencing or having had

experienced chronic stress, as well as sleep-related problems including nightmares, generalized feelings of apprehension and vigilance associated with fear of detection and deportation. For the undocumented immigrant, fear of apprehension and deportation can not only make relatively routine activities like driving to work challenging and precarious (De Genova 2002), but it could also adversely influence the immigrant's cognitive functioning and social and emotional livelihood (Arbona et al. 2010). Lack of legal status can also have far-reaching psychological consequences that have not yet been adequately measured or understood (Sullivan and Rehm 2005). We suggest that research involving focus groups or individual interviews might enable investigators to develop measures and techniques to better understand some of the psychological consequences of undocumented status.

It is difficult to generalize the findings of our study for several reasons. Due to the nature of our research, we were not able to access or randomly select a large number of Eastern Europeans for participation in personal interviews. The participants were recruited from two U.S. states, Connecticut and New Jersey, which does not necessarily render our sample representative of the unauthorized Eastern European population of the U.S. Experiences of unauthorized immigrants in other states (i.e., Alabama, Arizona etc.) may be quite different in comparison to that described by our participants.

In addition, our sample was restricted to subjects who spoke English well enough to be interviewed. Relevant research draws a nexus between lack of fluency in English and lower earnings for both Mexican and non-Mexican unauthorized immigrants (Rivera-Batiz 2001). We suggest that unauthorized immigrants with less English proficiency may face even more difficult circumstances in terms of emotional, social and economic adjustment.

Finally, while there are similarities between the experiences of undocumented immigrants from Eastern Europe and Mexico or Latin America, the added component of race poses an additional challenge for undocumented Latino/a immigrants compared to that of Eastern European immigrants. Undocumented status clearly limits job opportunities, strains family relationships, influences assimilation and results in fear of deportation for all immigrants, but the degree of these effects seem to be different for Eastern European and Latino/a immigrants.

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FOCUS

Projected Europe: Understanding the Meanings Associated with European Identity from Erasmus Citizens' Point of View

Daniel NOVERSA

Abstract: The purpose of this article is to contribute to the analysis of the European identity's narrative. Drawing on a range of focus group interviews with Erasmus students, it is aimed to understand how they perceive European identity and the meanings of Europe in these students' representations. In the light of the empirical findings, it is considered that Europe is more an adjective condition than a substantive one on their representative anchorages. The outcomes also point to the ambivalent and ambiguous character of the meanings associated with Europe's project. Besides, the significance they attribute to their exchange experiences does not always have implications in their ideas about a united Europe.

Keywords: *European identity; European Union; Meanings; Erasmus students*

Introduction

What to expect of the European identity? This has still been a central question for many European intellectuals, who go back to the past of the continent in search for narratives that give internal coherence and a new symbolic meaning to Europe's identity borders (Eder 2006). Historical memories of a common European experience are being mobilised by social scientists and several intellectuals looking for European unity and trying to answer the questions "Who are the Europeans?" and "What is it to be European?". In order to collective experiences and narratives might be articulated to generate a cosmopolitan-*habitus* or a master cultural discourse for Europe that make sense in its supranational, postnational, and transnational narrative levels (Eder 2009). However, in a task like this, one must bear the complexity that arises from the fact that Europe is a polyhedric object where too complex and ambiguous meanings are inscribed, an arena where countless conflicting visions are exalted. Paradoxically, there is also a common cultural

background that all Europeans have access to. For many European citizens, Europe does not go further than a territory with a troubling history, mostly from the memory of the twentieth century. For several scholars who have dedicated themselves to think this subject, Europe represents a symbolic space with cultural significance, where memories, values, and collective experiences might be projected. Democracy, social justice, human rights, citizenship, freedom, critical thinking, and solidarity, constitute the uterine sphere where the reason for being Europe takes root. The search of an identity for Europe alludes at large to this cultural model, which assumes an important commitment to the future of Europeans. Nevertheless, shaping this cultural unity does not consist of universalising these values, but rather drawing on reflexive practices that might create a political and civic culture in Europe (Delanty 2002, 355; Kantner 2006).

Europe is not only a geographical idea, but also an object of thought, an analytical, and practical category where multiple variables reverberate. So far, Europe has been considered a lab for theoretical imagination and "more than ever before, (…) is taking on a strongly ideological character" (Delanty 1995, 6). Recently, the use of the concept of Europeanisation in academia is seen, on the one hand, as a narrative that justifies a process of social change and integration; on the other hand, as a theoretical object, it emerges as a way of imagining a future transnational European society. Found the right motto – "unity in diversity" – the path has been paved by imagining a social and cultural unity for the map of the European Union looking for mechanisms of social cohesion and intercultural dialogue.

The theoretical approaches about Europe as a social and cultural unit are still insufficient because Europeanisation is too hard to conceptualise. Insofar, theorising a European identity represents an overwhelming task due to the web of meanings that moves and acts around it. Europe's project represents a continuum of readjustments and questioning at every moment, which includes dealing with more and more multiple points of view, and contentious demands. Seen in its dynamic, Europe appears to be a polysemic, ambiguous, contingent, and ambivalent concept, not only because it is a mosaic of cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity, but also because its history was not a linear narrative – it was shaped by more ruptures than confluences (Delanty 1995; Goddard, Llobera, and Shore 1996; Jenkins 2008; Malmborg and Strath 2002; Stråth 2002).

This paper sets out to contribute to the analysis of the European identity's narrative, providing an understanding of the practical relationship of the Erasmus

students with the European political project, analysing critically the narrative meanings of Europe that emerge from their discourses. However, it is important to clarify that this essay does not attempt to know the causal inference of the Erasmus Programme in the European integration, as some studies have been done (e.g. Jacobone and Moro 2015; Mitchell 2015; 2012; Sigalas 2010; Van Mol 2018; Wilson 2011). It is intended to understand how Erasmus citizens conceive their ideas about Europe as an identity category, in its cultural and political dimensions, exploring whether they identify with Europe and which idea of Europe they identify with. The questions that guide this article are the following:

- What does the European Union mean to Erasmus students?
- What representations do Erasmus students have of this political entity?
- If the European Union has an institutional identity, how do Erasmus students perceive it?

Therefore, this sociological analysis seeks to understand the ways of feeling and thinking of Erasmus citizens about Europe and the European Union. In other words, to analyse the frame of identification and cognitive representation of the Erasmus students regarding Europe, namely to understand which specific meanings constitute their representative anchorages.

Methodology

This article draws from a research study conducted at the University of Minho (Northern of Portugal) that aimed to analyse the European unification from the point of view of Erasmus students. Its main purpose was to understand how they perceive European identity and analyse the narrative meanings of their practical relationship with the European Union's political project.

The choice to study European integration through Erasmus students lies in the fact these students benefit from European Citizenship, as well as because they have been the opportunity to experience other cosmopolitan settings, and develop there their European awareness. If the experience may be understood as an individual disposition in several socio-cultural settings of action (Bourdieu 1999), the academic exchange Erasmus means thereby an intersubjective experience that might promote a dynamic and ongoing process of reconfigurations of the subjective dispositions of these students regarding Europe. In this regard, some studies have

concluded that the Erasmus Programme contributes positively to the attitude changes about Europe, identifying more as Europeans those who participate than those who do not (Mitchell 2012; 2015; Jacobone and Moro 2015). Besides, this kind of mobility can promote a pro-social experience that supports the development of cultural comprehension, tolerance for others, and civic consciousness (Papatsiba 2005) because Erasmus students become receivers and carriers of culture within the Europeanisation process (Noversa 2018).

The analysis presented below uses data gathered from focus group interviews. In total, four focus groups were held: two constituted by Portuguese Erasmus students who had been abroad in other European universities and two with foreign Erasmus students in course of their academic exchange at the University of Minho. It was constituted a sample of sixteen[1] respondents, using the snowball procedure. Despite a very small sample, the contributions of the interviewees showed to be very heterogeneous in terms of their perceptions about both political and cultural dimensions of the European project.

The recruitment of the participants was made in two autonomous processes. Foreign Erasmus students were recruited by contacting the members of the group Erasmus Students Network of the University of Minho. The Portuguese Erasmus students were recruited by email or through a Facebook group of students and former of the University of Minho. The selected corpus of interviewees is justified by the criterion of the diversity of the cases instead of saturation of the information. The focus groups were deliberately heterogeneous based on the following variables: time abroad, nationality, major of the academic degree, and host country/university.

Prior to discussion, the objectives of the study were explained to the participants, in order to obtain their informed consent. Therefore, all names used in this paper are fictitious to ensure the respondents' anonymity. The interviews were conducted in the university's facilities, such as meeting rooms and classrooms, between May 2016 and February 2017. On average, the interviews were about eighty minutes long. In all focus group sessions, the moderator has often taken an active role to overcome the insufficient answers to the topics that have been in discussion.

The interview script focused on the following topics:

- European identity: identifying representations and meanings;

[1] This number is also justified by no attending of some students to the scheduled focus group interviews.

- Identifying representations and meanings about the EU and its flag;
- Identifying elements of perception and feelings about the performance of EU institutions;

All the focus group interviews were recorded and transcribed entirely and subsequently treated using content analysis, following the axial codification procedure (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 124–26). That is, the categories and subcategories suggested by the students' narratives were organised, synthesised, and compared according to the theoretical dimensions of the analysis. Regarding the interpretation stage, the information was compared and discussed through an iterative and inductive process (Weed 2008) within which the empirical data would determine the conceptual linkages with the theoretical and ideological background about Europe, European identity, and European Union.

Projected Europe: A Layered Analysis

The meanings of Europe's identity

When we think about Europe a lot of meanings reverberate in this entity. Europe's history, in its manifold cultural, political, and social revolutions, has had a profound relevance in the construction of a European common background, where ideas, values, and beliefs are widely shared by many of the peoples of Europe. However, European history was not just about unity, but also about successive topographic fragmentation and distinct ideological contention (Jenkins 2008). In addition, Europe is a space of cultural pluralities at the levels of national, regional, and local belonging. Thus, we cannot think about European identity without assuming national belongings as a specific lens through which Europe's meanings are fabricated. European identity encompasses a common historical-cultural heritage, as well as a plural cultural, ethnic, and linguistic map with variable interests and boundaries. Accordingly to sociologist Ulrich Beck (2017, 191), "Europe is not a fixed condition, is not a territorial unity, is neither a State nor a nation. In fact, there is no 'Europe'; there is the metamorphosis of Europeanisation, a process of continuous transformation." So, in the current context, it is necessary to question the place of Europe in the cognitive frameworks of European citizens. What do they think Europe is today? Do Europeans identify with such Europe? Can Europe represent more than geography? Particularly, for young Europeans who have been under the Exchange Erasmus program, how do they think the *idea* of a united Europe? How has *European*

identity been shaped in the *habitus* of Erasmus citizens? How do their representations of Europe set up the identification with *European Union*?

In all focus groups, Europe as a theme unfolds in multiple meanings shaped by ambivalences and overlappings. Despite a European cultural model is being manifested, the identification is focused on a *historical Europe* and meanings are anchored in the memory of a recent past of conflicts and its overcoming after World War II:

> Vasia [Greek] – Throughout history, all European countries have had many bad moments. Greece, Germany, Italy, Spain, England, all had bad moments and we must not forget them, as we say that "we are Europeans, we have culture, but how do we gain that culture? How we are thus? I think that in all ages, people knew the story and read about it, at least the rich, and somehow after World War II all came together, because of Italy and Germany everyone else suffered and then peacefully with them we were all together. (…)
>
> Adrían [Spanish] – Same as Vasia, I think. For the same reasons.

Furthermore, the identification with Europe occurs at the economic and geographical levels, as well as in cultural diversity, regardless of a sense of unit:

> Rebecca [Italian] – Now it's the economy. The first thing I think about is economics, because every day we hear on television, everywhere, people talk about the economy, in law, in Europe that controls the economy. So stop me, the first thing is the economy and I don't think the culture and the history… we are part of the same world, but with different weight and we had a different story. I think I have a story completely different from Spain when confronting Spain or Yugoslavia and the Czech Republic and many others. So, I don't think about history, I don't think about culture because I have a culture completely different from the others. But now, I think about the economy, because if you listen to "European Union", I think about economics and also as the Erasmus… I know, for example, that my university tries to send many students because they bring money from Europe. For us, it is a good experience and, for us, it is to know different cultures, but [at the base] at my university is to bring money from Europe.
>
> Katja [Gernan] – Yes, I agree with you and I also think that the first thing that comes to mind it's just the geographic area, it's not really about history or ... It's more diversity than even unity or something.

In another group, all participants have stated that currently, they do not identify themselves with any dimensions of Europe. Their idea of Europe is strongly shaped by the image they have of the European Union:

> Moderator – Thinking a little bit about the continent, but moving away a bit of the geographical idea, I would like you to talk a little about… Europe is, in addition to geography, associated with its values such as citizenship,

democracy, freedom, equality, cultural diversity, acceptance of differences, solidarity ... Do you identify Europe with these values?
João – It is like that, I… from what I studied the European Union, I think it was a
very interesting project in theory [laughs]
Carolina – It was not achieved.
Pedro – A little too ambitious.
João – (…) in the character of democracy I think so, I think it works relatively well, we may have countries like Spain, Italy continue a little with nationalism and a little repudiation with the European Union, but in general, I think it was a completed goal, now in terms of citizenship, identity, puff … solidarity, even of solidarity and acceptance of peoples ...
(…)
Carolina – There it is.
Pedro – The problem of the current European Union ...
Carolina – It's just paper.
Joana – Exactly.
Pedro – … is that the strongest pulled a lot towards them and the weakest did not survive.
Moderator – So, no one identifies with any of the dimensions of Europe mentioned?
Pedro – At the moment, no.
Carolina – Exactly, not at the moment.
João – I think they [short pause] ... they don't even exist.
Pedro – Because the initial idea [
Carolina – Democracy is going on, kinda.
Pedro – … this European Union no longer exists.
João – What do we have, we have a common economic space, we have the Schengen area that is collapsing thanks to Brexit and we have democracy. Whatever else we have, we have a Germany in charge… we have a *Troika*.

From the quotations transcribed, is possible to point out some positions: if for some students there are cultural differences, at the same time, they perceive also a continental unit; for others, Europe is united by the economy because there is no other place for the logic of unity. These positions allow us to sum up: if, on the one hand, there is a unity conception of European, on the other, there is no clear recognition that there is such thing as European identity. This *paradoxical logic* found in the discourses of the interviewees about the idea of Europe foster itself on the antinomies that exist at the heart of the discourse of European identity since its inception. This idea comes up with more clarity in the words of the Polish student, Ursula, that expressed an *ambiguous feeling.* She does not what to think about and what to expect from European identity, but even so, she considers that differences

are not relevant enough to prevent her from feeling part of Europe and part of her country.

> Usually, you don't think about it. For me, as I said at the first place, I feel Polish and maybe if I leave Europe, I could say: 'OK, I'm European like polish 'but you don't see these great differences. Okay, even if ... I can see many differences here in Portugal, I can still say: 'it's Europe'. I don't see many differences, so I can really divide myself (…). (Ursula, Polish)

Moreover, we can see a theoretical clue in the question of identities in this statement. That is, the *ability to choose*. When the context of action changes the response might be different, depending on several circumstances. Therefore, with the excerpt above, Europe can be, in fact, a choice along with national loyalties because this does not block both levels of belonging; they can coexist mutually (Kohli 2000).

It is also in this dispute that the logic of European unification is played. The idea of a united Europe is not and has never been a consensual idea. Marked by ambiguity as well as antagonism, the idea of united Europe has been declined by multiple variations. So, the positions that emerged in the interviews still reveal this dispute for the definition of the concept of European identity. Moreover, we may identify a handful of superficial ideas and vague phrases that have been proven these subjects are alien to them or poorly thought through. In this sense, it is possible to conclude that for most interviewees, Europe appears as “an abstract category, conceptually vague and experientially intangible” (Armbruster, Rollo, and Meinhof 2003, 888–89). Therefore, it is evident here the essentialist myth in the discourse of the identity construction of Europe. According to Delanty (1995, 132), “Europe is simply too large and too abstract to be imagined in a meaningful sense”, since the process of building a collective European identity does not depend upon the creation of a specific community, like a nation-state, but communities where narratives circulate, creating overlapping and concentric identity belongings (Eder 2009).

Finally, from the content analysis of the narratives also stems the non-differentiation between Europe and the European Union for the interviewees. Any reading about Europe is based on what they think the EU is today. In other words, some students make no distinction of Europe as a continent with a historical and cultural heritage and Europe as a political and economic project of unification. Thus, this often overlap between Europe and European Union confuses what is, on the one hand, a cultural project of identity and, on the other, what are the institutional

practices to mobilise the citizens to a project of Union with common economic and political interests. However, this category is not very new. There have been some studies that specifically have detected this one; Europe is often synonymous with the European Union in everyday life narratives (Armbruster, Rollo, and Meinhof 2003; Ribeiro 2011; Noversa 2017)

European identity as an identity-project: European Union and instrumental identifications

Identities are the result of symbols and narratives that are given to us in historically contingent contexts of communication and which serve as a catalyser for collective identities (Eder 2009). In this process, boundaries emerge from cognitive processes and institutionalised cultural discourses, represented by symbols that serve as codes of communication and identification among the members of such a group or community (Elias 1992). Identities thereby delimit spaces of action and normalise regimes of belonging through communication networks and symbols. In this sense, post-war Europe reveals itself not only as a phenomenon of *deterritorialisation,* but also as a *territorial institutionalisation* project (Eder 2006, 260) with the opening of borders[2].

The integration process started by producing and reproducing a European-*habitus*. On the one side, by operationalising a performative narrative of redemption of a traumatic past (Ribeiro 2013) and, on the other, through a policy carried out by the EU institutions, translated into the official discourse of self-celebration, which began to produce an imagined cultural community (Sassatelli 2002) under the motto – "unity in diversity" (Lähdesmäki 2012). Also, European political culture was embodied through the creation of institutions, such as a Parliament, a Commission, a Council, and courts. All these institutional arrangements have had a normative impact on the perception and political legitimacy among the European citizens and member-states. In Michael Bruter's words, "European integration has transformed the very nature of the borders between member-states, and also those between the European Union and its neighbours, modifying the 'other' to which we might expect

[2] Its borders have shaped by a new meaning as a result of the successive enlargements, such as the borders created when was founded the Single Market and the succeed endoveour of the "Schengen Area", creating then a interconnected space for the circulation of European citizens among Member-States. This led the European Union to conquer a concrete space for its governance and border control.

citizens to oppose their own identity" (Bruter 2004, 22).

Another process that has come from the Europeanisation enterprise was the creation of symbols and initiatives that have materialised a European project in the everyday life of millions of Europeans, producing in analogy to the expression of Michael Billig (1995), a *banal Europeanism*. According to Hans-Jörg Trenz (2014, 10) "banal Europeanism" is a way of socialisation Europeans who implicitly accept a change in European society instead of an explicitly consented process. Also, it could be seen as a subconscious process that normalises the European Union as a polity. In this sense, how are these symbols being incorporated and which meanings emerge from the discourses of the Erasmus generation?

To analyse *Europeanness* among the Erasmus citizens was chosen the EU flag as a concrete element to evaluate the Erasmus students' belonging identifications with Europe. According to those who have studied the nation (Anderson 1991; Smith 1991), the flag is one of the symbols that represents the unity of a national community where several meanings are embedded and inscribed from shared historical memory. The blue flag with the twelve golden stars, created by the European Council in 1955 and officially adopted as a symbol of the European Community in 1986, is now recognised by all: it systematically follows the national flag in official events and we can see it every day in posters and documents announcing the European Union's support for diverse projects, as well as on driving licenses, on car license plates, and passports. When asked in the context of the focus group interview what European Union's flag stands for, the meanings emanated were multiple and ambiguous.

Starting with those who identify with the EU's flag. It either represents an experience of peace, freedom and mobility or represents a symbol of sharing a common culture:

> Jessica – I like the European flag because I like the European Union and it shows that we are united stuff [
> Moderator – But as a symbol of the European Union, do you feel connected with the flag?
> Jessica – Yes.
> Moderator - In an emotional, affective way or in a rational way?
> Jessica – Also emotional way. For me, the European Union is also a symbol of peace because we can be sure that it won't be a war again. Maybe it will happen, you can't say never, but is also a symbol of peace, for example, we have the same currency, we wouldn't be so stupid to attack a country that has the same currency because it would affect us as well. So, it's like a symbol of peace, also of freedom, that I can travel everywhere and that's why I feel also

> emotionally. It's something that my grandparents never experienced, for example. When they were young never experienced that was so easy to go everywhere in Europe and that we have the guarantee, at least, a Europe of peace. (Jessica, German)
>
> Para mim neste caso representa bastante (…) Mobilidade, ideias comuns… (Miguel, Portuguese)
>
> Eu também concordo com a mobilidade (…) num certo aspecto é mesmo a nossa identidade, porque nós realmente dizemos que somos europeus (…). (Catarina, Portuguese)
>
> Para mim a bandeira da União Europeia representa uma partilha de culturas e identidades (…). (Carolina, Portuguese)

For those who do not identify, the flag can either represent the European Union in an economic sense or a symbolic representation that forges a certain unit, which delimits the "us" of "them":

> Rebecca [Italian] – I think now this flag doesn't mean a lot because we have a lot of problems inside Europe. (…) For me, it doesn't mean anything because is based on economics, not on culture (…).
> Adrián [Spanish] – I agree with Rebecca. I know that in some ways this flag represents us but in the end, I don't think like… the perception I have, it's… like Rebecca said, is a superior economic authority we have, more than like symbolism Union between Europeans.
> (…)
> Vasia [Greek] – I agree with him. I think it's not a European Union. Since it came, after, everyone is separated, there is a kind of "wars" between Greece and Germany or Spain and Germany. (…) I think it's not about the Union. It offers many great things, sometimes cultural, but is mostly about economic sense.
> Katja [German] – (…) I agree with them most of the things that you said, I don't really identify with it but for me it represents Union.
>
> Moderator – The flag of the European Union, what does it represent for you?
> João – Unity, communion, sharing of values, Schengen space… [
> Joana – Yes, Schengen area.
> João – Single currency… and cultural space. [
> Pedro – Let it be a flag shows… our European flag… I don't know how to explain it, that shows that we are all united, that it is a single flag for all [
> Joana – Yes.
> Pedro – Later, it turns out that we are just one, I don't know…
> Joana – That demonstrates unity.
> Pedro – This is also a bit… the European Union scene.
> Moderator – So, for everyone, this flag means Unity?

Joana – Yes.
Pedro – Yes.
João – At least the idea of… [
Carolina – It may be the idea they [european elite] want to show [
Joana – Exactly.
Carolina – …because in fact this is not happening.
Joana – Exactly.
Moderator – Yes, but what does it really represent for you?
João – Nothing.
Joana – Exactly.
João – … personally nothing.
Carolina – Nothing in particular, when I went on Erasmus, we were all from the European Union and I didn't feel union, we weren't all the same.
João – The national character is still very present.
Joana – Yes.
João – Fortunately.
Carolina – Yes, I think so too. We cannot *lose* our identity just to show that we have one.

This last excerpt highlights and allows us to understand that their knowledge about the symbols of the European Union is surrounded by a lot of doubts. Mainly, in the last intervention performed by Carolina, is emphasised the verb "to lose" our (national) identity. This reveals that for some European citizens the perception they have of the European symbols remains a sign of an "anti-national" plan (Bruter 2004, 30). That is, it would involve a certain loss of sovereignty over national symbols. Overall, the European Union flag for most respondents does not play an affective bond of belonging, because only a German student, Jessica, expressed explicitly that emotional bond with the flag.

In short, the flag either serves the function of representing a certain unit of Europe from the outside or is purely the representation of an economic bloc. From here is just possible to state which are the primordial meanings associated with the Union. The European Union can be understood as a space of freedom, economic cooperation or prosperity, etc. All of these categories could be part of the frame of identification that Erasmus citizens interviewed have to the Union project, less than is a truly political association. This latter dimension has always been silenced in all focus group sessions. This is already a relevant conclusion. Showing us how the European identity project is being imagined.

According to Michael Bruter (2004, 26), "understanding political identities implies a need to understand what those formalised communities might predominantly represent in the imaginary of an individual." In this sense, it is needed

to look into the meanings that the Erasmus citizens attribute to the European Union's political project. What represents the European Union for Erasmus students? Overall, the results are the same: the EU either represents an economic bloc or an entity that gives them material and practical advantages for crossing borders easily among member-states:

> For me it's like: 'of course, I can work abroad'. I can work I don't know where because we don't need a visa and it's easy to stay, I don't need to care about anything (…). (Jessica, German)

> The positive thing is that you travel in Europe without a passport and is simpler. (Rebecca, Italian)

> João – (…) Europe has two very strong points I think the Euro, which is the Schengen Area and the common economic space. These are, these were where Europe managed to be happy and managed to really implement itself and the European Union managed to make its project assert itself. Now, when talking about such social and specific concepts as citizenship, cultural identity…
> Carolina – I think, basically, sorry to interrupt you, the European Union project is an economic project essentially they don't think about the social side as much as it should be, because if the European Union collapsed we would have a big problem of currency, for example.

In the focus group, the European Union was never mentioned explicitly as a federal project that has had the purposes of a political ideal of peace and sharing sovereignty among democratic states in Europe. For most respondents, the European Union is synonymous with the economy, a sign of benefits and a metaphor for freedom to travel, study and work without having to show a passport.

An explanatory hypothesis could be given for this Erasmus students' perception. At the beginning of the European unification, the idea of a united Europe has arisen, above all, as a political ideal of peace and democracy rather than an economic one. But throughout the following decades of profound economic prosperity, along with a global capitalist ambition, made European elites forget about the Union's political mission in the middle of the economic priorities. Also, it is relevant to notice that *Social Europe* has an inconspicuous presence in the discourses produced in the context of focus group interviews. The categories most mentioned were the *economic* narrative and Europe with its material and practical advantages, namely the easy way they can move throughout the space of the European Union without strict cross-border control procedures:

> For me, the thing that is most important is that we can work and we can go anywhere you want without the visa. (Kenan, Bosnian)
>
> I'm really happy I don't have to use it [passport]. (Michele, Italian)

Taking on the empirical data as a whole, the EU's ideals as a project with a mission of peace, defence of democracy, cohesion and social protection were undoubtedly steamed up from their discourses. As it was able to verify previously, the European Union has taken on the representation of an association for the fulfilment of economic cooperation, rather than a reference at the cultural, social or political levels. That is, the meanings that have repeatedly emerged in the focus group interviews were those associated with economics and mobility more than the cultural or political categories. To sum up, the findings have suggested that the discourse about European Union is more focused on economics and material identifications, which leads us to bring up the statement delivered by the Greek student, Vasia, who said: "[being] European is mostly about economics."

Meanings of the practical relationship as citizens of the EU

European identity depends on the political success of the European Union institutions. So, in the context of the European crisis is necessary to ask if they do feel like members of the European Union. What does it mean to be a citizen of the EU? Is important to be part of this political community? What kind of European citizen? If the mobilisation of Erasmus students' meanings for the European Union is made in the formula of *benefits* and *advantages*, their perceptions about the practical relationship of the European political community are negotiated in the same formula: *we are European citizens because becoming a European citizen implies advantages in cross-border mobility.*

However, being a citizen involves identifying with citizenship, and feeling member of a political community. Beyond they identify the practical advantages of being citizens of the European Union, nonetheless implies that they foster a feeling of belonging. The excerpt transcribed below is embedded with ambiguous and ambivalent meanings. Concretely, in the interventions of Adrían and Vasia, we may realise that there is no feeling of European Citizenship. Furthermore, both alleged that something affects them but the practices of EU institutions do not appear decoded for them, as well as they manifest difficulties in defining which limits of what classifies them as European citizens.

> Katja [German] – (…) it's a good thing for me, I have many good things from it but happens by choice so it's something I'm thankful for because I think I have many things that are easier for European people. But it's nothing I would be proud of or I would identify myself like a present I received.
> Moderator – Ok. The rest of you, European citizenship…
> Rebecca [Italian] – (…) just for that reason I think that we don't feel like citizens of Europe because we didn't know anything about parties, the Europe government. Only a small part of the Italian people votes in European elections. I remember that and just for that reason, I don't feel like a citizen of Europe.
> Adrián [Spanish] – Well, it's a bit the same thing they said and to add something new I feel a European citizen in the way that the stuff that is decided in the parliament affects us. As Katja said before, it's a nice thing to take your car from Madrid and you can drive to Berlin, and you can do it without borders. It's a good feeling but I wouldn't say it's a citizenship feeling, I don't know how to explain it. I feel part of it because things affect me but it's not a belonging feeling. I can't describe it.
> Vasia [Greek] – I think like it's not a good or a bad feeling. It depends on the country that you come from in Europe because someone that doesn't know maybe "You're European. How do you feel good?" It's not the same for an Italian or a Spanish or a German or a Swedish. It's not a feeling that we share, to be Europeans, and I don't think that we feel that we belong to the European Union. Europe ok, just a continent, but just a continent.

These opinions appear in the students' discourses because the logic of the European practices is still made without the classification systems that clarify the practices for the individuals. In fact, European identity is a non-institutionalised identity in the sense that still missing the classification systems that order the social experience of the individuals in the field where they act or identify (Bourdieu 1999). Thus, it is clear that the European-*habitus* that the interviewees carry up is still very limited, since the symbolic capital they hold about the European political body does not offer either a frame of reference or an ability to deal with the multiple situations that make up the field in which they move and interact (Goffman 1986). In this regard, a reason could be pointed out. As it is the political experiences in Europe continue to be interpreted exclusively through national affairs (Sierp 2014). Overall, it seems to be that the feeling among Erasmus students interviewed and laconically expressed in the words of the Greek student, who said:

> I think that being European is not like being part of Europe, but you just stay back, you can't do things so you just watch things going. But you're a kind of part of the history, you can say: "I was born there", but you didn't fight for anything, you weren't involved in anything, you didn't vote. (Vasia, Greek)

What has been the role of the European Union institutions in building this political community? From the interviews with Erasmus citizens, there is an idea that becomes very evident and that expresses so well the meanings that we have been arguing: the European institutions are not working hard enough to make Europeans feel closer to the European Union and are not being strong enough to integrate and communicate with its citizens. As the arguments highlighted in the excerpts below, the respondents take a very critical stance on the direction that the European Union has been tracking. In this respect, the words of Carolina and Rebecca were very eloquent, recognising the erosion of values such as *social protection* and *political solidarity*:

> In general, It[EU] is not responding well to them [your problems], because the *group* of the European Union is weakened, above all now because of *Brexit* and all that, I think that they are not keeping the values of the European Union safe, they are failing to respect what it means to be European even for the way they are treating, for example, the refugees in Greece and other countries as well. I think you're losing a little bit of that, and how we are going through a crisis… I think of identity too. Now, as we are about in a crisis of values. I think that the European Union is failing to keep its values safe (…) losing legitimacy (…) because the European people identify themselves as being a multicultural people, a people of solidarity and we are not respecting that. (Carolina, Portuguese)

> I would like to have equity in Europe because, for example, about refugees, in Italy, we have a problem because we are the first country that they meet when they arrive sometimes. So, I think if we have more equity in an organisation it could be useful. I say refugees only as an example, but I think that if we can help each other it would be useful. Now, I don't know. Sometimes they change, they hide, they close the borders. So, borders are built again. I don't think that Europe one time in the future will be broken, I don't think… but I really hope that something can be changed, more equity inside, between us, between our country because, now, it's obvious that there is a pyramid and we can't decide in an equity way, I think. So, maybe one day I can feel myself a European citizen. (Rebecca, Italian)

Although the European unification process has created new types of powers and has achieved great political accomplishments, namely the institutionalisation of European Citizenship, the last two decades of crises (e.g. the 2008 economic-financial crisis, the 2015 refugee migration crisis, and Brexit) have revealed the antinomies of the European political project. In concrete, from the last excerpts transcribed, the Erasmus students were able to perceive the differentiated solidarity that has been installed in the political practices of the European institutions.

Concluding Remarks

This study shows that the Erasmus Programme has a positive impact on the way how students perceive Europe, although it only manifests a modest effect on cultural and political levels of the European identity. The meaning that was given to the process of Europeanisation by the Erasmus students interviewed outlined in the economic narrative and the benefits associated with being in a united Europe, advantages that they recognise themselves that benefit, for example, the Erasmus Programme and the Schengen Area.

Despite they see practical advantages of being European citizens that did not imply any sense of European belonging or identification with European Citizenship. The students of this study accept positively the benefits of European integration, but that does not imply adherence to an ideal of the European project, because what was observed in their discourses were pragmatic, utilitarian, and instrumental reasons more than an idea of Europe as a historical project of political solidarity and social cohesion to the future. In this regard, the Europeanism of the Erasmus students interviewed manifests itself in superficial and utilitarian identifications (see Fuchs 2011).

Although some features of European cultural background have been mentioned, yet is not an indication that they are the primary categories, because what prevailed throughout the interviews was the issue of the practical benefits. In the narratives of the Erasmus students, Europe was mostly enunciated as an emblem of possibilities to easily travel and work on the European scale. Thus, their narratives highlight a kind of *interested Europeanism*, shaped by their personal interests.

The European Union's political project was repeatedly inscribed in instrumental elements and practical features more than in the affective or volitional conditions. This was evident in the focus groups: a poor capacity to reflect upon European issues where were emphasised a lot of doubts. To summarise, the empirical findings pointed out the practical and instrumental aspects that have come with the European unification, such as the Erasmus Programme, as explanatory flagships to justify the institutional bond or not with the EU. In other words, the Erasmus Programme in this study takes thereby on an only adjective role within the Europeanisation endeavour rather than a substantive one.

To conclude, the outcomes point to the ambivalent and ambiguous character of the meanings associated with Europe's project. We had the opportunity

to see that when were analysed the meanings of Europe and the European Union: "when two individuals claim to 'feel European', they might mean totally different things in terms of both the intensity of the feeling they describe and the imagined political community they refer to" (Bruter 2003, 1154). Furthermore, the empirical data suggest that there is an evident crisis of awareness and a lack of "European collective memory", since the meanings and the social representations that were produced around the EU project are very distant from the ideas of peace, democracy, social solidarity, and political cooperation sedimented sixty years ago.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Mike Amezcua, Making Mexican Chicago. From Postwar Settlement to the Age of Gentrification, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022, ISBN-13:978-0-226-81582-4

Review by Ioana ALBU

Making Mexican Chicago is a journey in time in which the author, Mike Amezcua, set on exploring his own becoming as both a Yale graduate, writer and historian, overcoming self-doubts, finding his right place in the unfamiliar *milieu* and learn to value his continuous effort for self-fulfillment and education with the help of his mentors, to whom he feels largely indebted.

Both dedicated to his parents, immigrants and community members and makers and stemming from the stories of his mother, to the collective racounteurs that span distance and time, as the author retells, Mike Amezcua underlines the contribution of his mentors to the interpretative range of Mexican American history and the way professors and researchers have introduced the young graduate to the world of history that he grew to be so passionate about. The study of the city, as well as the classes in architectural history, was revealed to the author as a passionate student of history, with all its intriguing challenges and opportunities, followed by the interpreted history of Mexican Americans. For all the countless source materials, the assistance provided by dozens of specialists who provided invaluable knowledge, consulting the special collections and archives and the years put into this research, and last but not least turning to people and their neighborhoods in order to conduct oral histories for the book, the author acknowledges the fact that Latinx Chicago remains '*severely undercollected and underarchived*'(Mike Amezcua, p.250). What came to be the point illustrated by Mike Amezcua throughout his interpreting peoples stories is the keypoint of his work, i.e. working-class immigrant communities are often the best reflection of their struggles, success and failure, aspirations and

dreams that spiced with their own emotions often are not in line with more conventional sources and it is this particular dynamic that the author sets forth to show throughout his story picked up from the very core of the community.

The book, which tells the becoming of Chicago into a Mexican metropolis in the second half of the XX-th century, opens with referral to a 1950's case, Villarreal, a real estate merchant, (*case U.S. vs. Villarreal, 1957)* who helped ensuring housing for numerous Mexican immigrants, at a time when an estimated seventy-five thousand immigrants – both Mexican and Mexican Americans – found Chicago their home (study by McPharlin, 1955, Chicago History Museum). The *stage* displayed a racial system of forcing Mexicans and non/US citizens to continuous alienation. Postwar Mexican settling in Chicago was undesirable by the white majority, though their labour force highly needed to build US capitalism. The struggle between Mexicans and Mexican Americans building new communities and the confrontation with the resistance of the white population, facing segregation, exclusion, poverty and gentrification reveals the origins and endurance of urban inequality. The role played by both Anita Villarreal and the real estate brokers in the transformation of the city into *Mexicanization* (Amezcua, M.) is brought to light, and the way Villarreal extended the area of the Mexican settlement into the all-white neighbourhoods, demanding the Mexicans' immigrants inclusion into the property ownership post-war *American dream,* fuelling and forging the migrants' sense of belonging, yet 'submersing' them into the American capitalist regime of the time, highly exploitative and racialized, on the basis of the post-war growth of, particularly, the city of Chicago, as the city of Chicago was not the only city in the U.S. where the wave of Mexican immigration expanded, throughout the successive waves occurring between the 1940s and 2000. This the book places Mexican immigrants, from all the other immigrants (European-Southern and East-Europeans ('undesirables'), African Americans) at the core of the modern history of Chicago, a city where the Mexican immigrant-built environment took shape, transforming the white neighborhoods in what was coined as the conservative revolution. Central to the book is the racial politics devolving from the European American ethnics' attitude and feelings towards the Mexican/Americans as they gradually transformed the city and its landscape. The author thereby examines the various manifestations of propertied white ethnics, on the one hand, who felt a sense of resentment and loss, being exposed to external hostile sources further to the mass arrival of migrants and the Mexican settlement on the other, who was driven by ambition, seeking equity and

pursuing their dream, the aim of the white ethnics being to prevent property devaluation, degradation of their neighborhoods and unwanted diversity that the transformation triggered. The ensuing local violence is rendered by having a close look at the city's power brokers, real-estate business, building managers using all their might and means in order to shape the urban infrastructure in a way that enclaves were created, wherein Mexican families and African Americans alike were forced to substandard public housing conditions. *Fraudulence* and *concealment* are central to the Mexican settlement in the US metropolitan areas, involving a whole array of smuggling, illegal border crossing, clandestine recruitment, fake documentation and hiding all the above acts. All Mexicans were portrayed as '*racially inferior and unassimilable outsiders*' whose place was not for the urban society.

The book sets forth to reconstruct the history of post-war Mexicanization of Chicago viewed from two sides, containment of Mexicans due to restrictionist policies and community forces and their efforts to become community builders inscribing empowerment onto the cityscape. Revising the collective perception of modern US conservatism is also the vista for understanding the intricate reality of political categorization. Last but not least, the book views how conservatives and moderates within the community reacted to the new political landscape. All in all, it is a book about the formation of a community and the building of a city by migrants for all the hindrances and injustice confronted with, hostility, state violence, political disenfranchisement and inequality, to mention but a few, while highlighting the poignant antithesis of the Latino community being highly essential, yet erasable and undesired that can be encountered in a society imprinted by neoliberal multiculturalism and racial capitalism, as Mike Amezcua masterfully, yet bitterly depicts in his incursion.

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Constantin Schifirneț, *Tendential modernity,* Chișinău: Lambert, 2021, ISBN 978-620-4-72546-8, 368 pages

Review by Gabriela GOUDEHOOFT

Modernity and modernization, the national public space versus the European public space, a recurring theme is the main topic of the book. Mass media reflections of the social actors, both -people and institutions - actioning in this space, religion and education are relevant phenomenon in approaching this topic, but especially for finding a model, a specific pattern of the dynamic of the public space.

Analysing Romanian society, Constantin Schifirneț uses the concept of *tendential modernity* as a conflate expression of a weak economy in a society eager to achieve a European profile aiming a modernisation which remain always in progress but not really finalised (p.9). The issue of modernity as an aspiration, as an intention never fully accomplished has many explanations and is hard to fit any Western or Northern countries as a development paradigm.

The issue of mass communication and media metamorphoses contextualized by the evolution of the economic and social dimension is one of the most addressed topics in this book, and the way the author presents the problems of modernity in Romanian society makes the volume in question a theoretical tool necessary for understanding the very idea of building the Romanian national identity and the possibility of achieving or asserting a European identity. The concept of tendential modernity, an original idea and also an useful explanatory mechanism in the study of societies in transition, is one of the essential reading keys of this book and contributes in structuring the integrative vision of Romanian society.

Romanian's elites, vacillating "between cosmopolitanism and localism" (p. 32) play a captious role in edifying special structures very alike and sometimes precise as governance network, adopting European values. Parts of those elites, especially the intellectuals are advocating for a new beginning, denying any tradition in order to surpass the communist's legacy disregarding the week capitalist foundation and the precarious democratic development in Romania after the fall of the communism. The lack of a theoretical vision of the Romanian society

development and the very fast building of an institutional system similarly to the Western countries imprinted the modernisation process as a tendential one, with many stops and rhythm changes and speed alterations.

Although tendential modernity is not a unique but a universal phenomenon (p. 38) it is successfully applied as an instrument of studying various stages of Romanian History: the emergence of national state, the Interwar period, the communist period and the post-communist one (from late 18th century until today) it is used by the author in order to explore Romanian society particularities.

First section of the book comprises several meanings of tendential modernity from mainly two perspectives: a Eurocentric one, representing "a way of emancipation through reason" (p.42) and as a provincial, regional or peripheral concept. Industrial Revolution, economic development associated with social and values changes, including cultural and religious traditions and legacy have shaped modernity in various paradigms and patterns.

Second section observes types of modernity as an inlaid concept: classical modernity, reflexive modernity, liquid modernity, late modernity, and multiple modernity. A prominent role it is been played by those types of modernity accompanied by the idea of transnationalism and cosmopolitanism, as reflexive and liquid modernity. Nevertheless, multiple or alternative modernity highlights the non-uniform essence of very modernity itself, because one cannot speak about one face of modernity but of alternate versions of it.

In a third section, the author tackles modernity as a tendential state of affairs in critical societies.

The fourth section describes causes and premises of tendential modernity with a special focus on the Romanian case where, despite almost 200 years of preparation for modernity – creating the settlement for political and judicial institution – "modernity has not reached the profound Romanian society, in all components of the social life" (p.46). An imported modernity succeeded to be not a reality well founded but a "*tendency*" with a not enough real force of action of a fragile civil society, keeping in mind that civil participation and civil solidarity are prerequisite conditions for modernising the society. A "form without substance" has been for a long time the characteristic of the Romanian society resulted from a "transplantation of capitalist institutions within a patriarchal, rural, internal context" (p.48), from the "democratic deficit" and the lack of civic participation, from the permanent need for an external referent and the constant spirit to follow Western

models and to get others' validation.

Societies with tendential modernity have specific features: values in transition from traditional to modern, a strong rural civilisation, the lack of a uniform development in territory including infrastructure, tensions between civilisation models and difficulty in implementing the European one, social issues like poverty and migration, an agricultural economy but with low productivity and commercial benefits for farmers' production. Briefly Romania is a society more eager to modernise political and institutional settlement, triggered mainly by the need of building the nation-state, but not the appropriate economic framework. Even the nation ah been functioning alike the entire Eastern space as a "fictive superfamily, whose members put a great price on their origins and genealogy" (p.55).

With respect to Romanian identity facing modernisation and Europenisation, Constantin Schifirneț is making a review of the most compelling theories paying a special attention on the idea of fluidity, because identity is an ambiguous, fluid, constantly negotiated term and tries to present the concept in the light of two combined theories: essentialism and constructivism. Collective and national identity are challenging forms to describe; they are strong forms of identity, expressing attitudes, mentalities, collective behavior questioning both ethnicity and globalization as opposite but not exclusive trends. The author came to the conclusion that national identity "is defined by its own (we say unique) features of a nation, - such as language, culture, religion, - but, also by respecting the traditions and the customs specific to the national community" (p.91).

European identity, on the other hand, implies transnational processes, a manifest orientation to supranational. But are Europeans perceiving themselves as Europeans or rather they are still perceiving themselves as subjects of nation-state they belong to. One can say they are aware of the European economic and legal space, where they benefit from several freedoms, but are they really committed to the idea of being Europeans? Even European identity has lately increased, national loyalties are not required because between the two citizenships and identities, European and national one there is no adversity but complementarity. A scarce European solidarity is although still observed whereas the national sentiment is still strong. Romanians are struggling with several identities and avatars: Euro Commuters, post-modern consumers, members of "deep" Romania etc. These different types of individuals of a multifaced Romania reflect a society defined by tendential modernity, with a heterogeneous development, a mainly middle-class a

bourgeois mentality, a "balance between idealism and fear, between attitudes of bravery and cowardice, between initiations of big projects and self-imposition of limits" (p.96). The fear of losing ethnic identity through modernization is one of the factors of failing to achieve a modern foundation of the state and explains the "duality of thought and action".

Asserting modernity is mirroring on public space also. Constantin Schifirnet proves to be a clear thinker of the Romanian society showing that modern Romania was constituted based on an establishment of political and legal institutions not enough evolved similarly to real situation from Romania, resulting in an "incoherent legislative system", "a kind of ostrich-camel. Meaning a joint between Romania law and European law", "a national space evolved as a place where values, ideas, myths, beliefs, theories, mentalities, and symbols circulate (p.101), but with gaps, or subordination to a dragging, conservatory national culture. Adhering to the European space, Romania faces the integration not only of rules and institutional framework, but the axiological dimension too. European public space derives from European institutions, from European identity, a post-national, a supranational one. The Europeanisation is not an easy step to make for Romania since a "national public spirit was built", a two hundred years of national identity affirmed and structured as a specific way of think and act.

Romania's integration into European Union increased the population mobility and affected social landscape, young generation specially, with bad effects on children situation, plastically expressed by the author: "from the generation 'with the key to the neck' to the generation 'gone abroad'" (p.111). Left alone by busy working parents, the generation 'with the key to the neck' grown up more alone, learning on the go, without much attention from parents, this generation is the one who left for work abroad after 1990, leaving behind another generation of children forced to grow up without parents, only in the care of their grandparents. Effects on socialization are to be seen long time from now. An important part of Romanians adopted the European way for a better living condition, meaning, working abroad for better wages, scarifying family relations, endangering social solidarity, even migration it is admitted to be a strong factor of modernization.

In the end Romanianism and Europeanism remain as two forms of identity whether Europeanisation is, for Romanian people at least a difficult and abiding process. Maybe the innovation, the transfer of capital, technology and know-how from Europe to Romanian society would be a step forward in the modernization of

a tendential society, but for sure not enough one. There are internal conditions interfering with globalization and Europeanisation. One of the important ones is the religion, the Orthodoxy and its influence on national identity. For Romania church was an institution "embedded in the process of modern change" derived and deriving ambiguities and ambivalences like the dynamic state/church, nation/religion etc. The author thesis is that "the specific nature of contemporary Romanian society and culture cannot be understood without analyzing the historical context, namely the way in which national identity and religious identity have conditioned modern social and cultural changes" (p.128). For the Romanian public sphere religion is an important and quasi permanent occurrence, persisting in the same time with modernization as a life style or o philosophy of life, even Orthodoxy has not been part of Western modernity as other denominations of Christianity were. Tendential modernity supported the role of Orthodoxy in a quasi-agrarian society and the church is not essentially separated from the state, disclosing an imprecise secularization. Nevertheless, Romanian people perceive religion and church, and the thesis is well documented by author's research, determinants of preservation of tradition. Social and spiritual life in Romania is dominated by religion as a priority and as an expression of traditional value, "an organic component of the Romanian national identity" (p.166).

The Romanian status, a "society in transition", doesn't mean necessary that will place this society at the periphery of Europe. There is a possibility of development in terms of participation in the structures of the European Union and not an undesirable "Westernization". The author noticed a certain de-synchronisation between the democratization process and the evolution of society, including the dynamic and requirements of the market economy in post-communist societies from the Eastern Europe. The Romanian situation has its own specificity due to the fact that a number of modernization steps were not finished yet, many objectives were not accomplished and the stakeholders and leaders prioritised national construction at the expense of the economic development and social issues of a society in transition. A tendential modernity is characteristic for Romania whiles Western developed countries have had a different path: modernisation followed by second modernisation or postmodernism. Also, a lack of cosmopolitanism al elites' level didn't help in term of communication in a public space where elites play a prominent role in Europeanisation. A troubled bureaucracy, a low visibility of reforms and reformers, the permanence of the rural civilisation and culture in a

society full of gaps, contradictions and discrepancies made the effort of Europeanisation and endless endeavour. Romania has now, through the adherence to the European Union the chance to accomplish the purposes of transitions and to leverage its values and national characteristics not through a mimetic process of obeying Brussels rules, adopting directives (p.222) but making efforts of changing mentalities and behaviours of Romanian people according to the ideal of European citizenship. These values and norms aren't promoted enough by intellectuals and mass media. In fact, an important part of mass media in Romania serves political and economic groups, manipulating information and misinforming citizens (p.261). Mass media, in particular televisions, should take more serious its role in promoting European integration and modernity. The studies reveal that" the national media are European to the extent that European issues are part of their editorial policy" (p.278). Elites are more flexible and able to express EU requirements and to communicate on EU strategies and politics. The public have to read between the lines and to understand and to interpret beyond manipulation what happens in their society. Public opinion plays a captious role in communication and in the social development.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Menéndez Alarcón, PhD, is a comparative sociologist whose research and scholarship have examined issues of ethnicity, cultural identity, media and power, and the process of European integration using multiple research methods. He has published seven books on these issues, and many articles in English, French, and Spanish in professional journals, such as Research in Political Sociology, International Journal of Cultural Studies, International Review of Sociology, International Journal of Contemporary Sociology, and International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society as well as in edited volumes. Menéndez's current research interests lie in analyzing ideologies of nationalism and transnationalism, particularly as these issues relate to the process of immigrants' integration in Europe and the United States. Contact: amenende@butler.edu.

Ioana Albu, PhD, is a senior lecturer (with tenure), at the University of Oradea, Romania, Department of Political Science and Communication Sciences. E-mail: ialbu@uoradea.ro.

Laura Brody is a Marie-Sklodowska-Curie fellow participating in the European Joint Doctorate 'MOVES': Migration and Modernity – Historical and Cultural Challenges' at Charles University and Paul-Valery University. Contact: laura.brody@alumni.duke.edu

Ebru Coban-Ozturk, PhD, focuses on conflicts, genocide, conflict resolution, reconciliation, and relevant case studies from the Middle East and Africa. She is currently associate professor at Cankaya University in Ankara and vice dean of the faculty. Coban-Ozturk is the author, co-author of the books and various articles related to her research areas. Contact: ebrucoban@cankaya.edu.tr.

Per Ekstrand, Associate professor, Department of Health Sciences, The Swedish Red Cross University College, PO Box 1059, SE-141 21 Huddinge, Sweden. Email: per.ekstrand@rkh.se.

Henrik Eriksson, Professor, Department of Health Sciences, University West, SE-461 32 Trollhättan, Sweden. Email: henrik.eriksson@hv.se.

Réka Friedery, PhD, research fellow at the Department of European Union Law and International Law, Institute for Legal Sciences, Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre for Excellenceat the Centre for Social Sciences. Her fields of excellence include European law. She gained experience in studying the governance, processes and consequences of mobility (free movement, migration), accountability, citizens' participation in the EU. Friedery's recent research focuses on aspects of migration and populism; AI in migration policies and free movement in crises. Contact: friedery.reka@gmail.com.

Gabriela Goudenhooft, Ph.D., is Associate Professor, Head of the Department of Political Science and Communication Studies, University of Oradea. Her research focuses on inter and cross disciplinary studies in areas such as philosophy, sociology, law, social psychology, media studies, discourse studies, social imaginary etc. Contact: gabrielagoud@gmail.com.

Ann Hägg-Martinell, PhD, Department of Health Promoting Science, Sophiahemmet University, PO Box 5605, SE-114 86, Stockholm, Sweden. Email: ann.martinell@shh.se.

Afag Javadova is a Ph.D. candidate in Policy Studies (Immigration, Settlement and Diaspora Policies stream) at Ryerson University, Canada. She completed her MA degree in Global Citizenship, Identities, and Human Rights at the University of Nottingham, United Kingdom, and her Master's and Bachelor's degrees in English at Azerbaijan University of Languages. Her research interests lie in the area of immigration and settlement, with a particular emphasis on the civic and political integration of newcomers. Currently, she is working on doctoral research examining the concepts of urban citizenship and the right to the city and their practical applications from a comparative perspective. Contact: afag.javadova@ryerson.ca.

Nansy Karali, PhD, is an Adjunct Lecturer of Entrepreneurship at the University of Piraeus, Department of Economics. She holds a PhD in Entrepreneurship from the University of Piraeus, an MBA from the University of Piraeus, and a BSc in Business Administration. Dr. Karali has participated in numerous business research and

consulting projects on behalf of private organizations and public institutions. Her current research interests include entrepreneurship and business strategy.

Mia Kraft, MSc, MEd, MA Nursing, Department of Health Sciences, The Swedish Red Cross University College, PO Box 1059, SE-141 21 Huddinge, Sweden. Email: mia.kraft@rkh.se.

Joacim Larsen, PhD, Academic Primary Health Care Centre, Stockholm County Council, PO Box 45436, SE-104 31 Stockholm, Sweden. Email: joacim.larsen@regionstockholm.se.

Christos Livas, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Marketing at the University of Patras, Department of Business Administration. He holds a PhD in Advertising from the University of Piraeus, an MBA in Marketing from Cardiff University Business School, a BSc in Economics from the University of Piraeus and a PGDip in Taxation from ALBA Graduate Business School. Dr. Livas has participated in numerous marketing research and business consulting projects on behalf of private organizations and public institutions. His current research interests include societal advertising, advertising message strategy and mobile marketing communications. Contact: clivas@upatras.gr.

Daniel Noversa is PhD Student Fellow at the Communication and Society Research Centre, University of Minho, Portugal, Institute of Social Sciences. Contact: daniel.noversa@ics.uminho.pt.

Marja Schuster, Associate professor, Department of Health Sciences, The Swedish Red Cross University College, PO Box 1059, SE-141 21 Huddinge, Sweden. Email: schustermarja@gmail.com.

Vasiliki A. Tzora, PhD, is an Adjunct Lecturer of Finance at the University of Piraeus, Department of Business Administration. She holds a PhD in Financial Literacy from the same academic department. She also holds an MSc Ex in Financial Analysis from the University of Piraeus, Department of Banking & Financial Management, an MSc in International Banking and Finance from the University of Greenwich, Department of Accounting & Finance, and a BA in Business Administration from London Guildhall University Business School. Dr. Tzora has many years of professional experience in the financial sector and is currently employed at a private banking institution in

Greece. She has taught quantitative methods and statistics at the University of Piraeus, and her current research interests include financial literacy, knowledge, inclusion, well-being and education.

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