



Transnational Solidarity and Good Governance: Is the 'Refugee' Phenomenon an Extremist Threat for the Eu?

Matilda Likaj¹

Alketa Marku²

¹Dr., Department of Sociology, Faculty of Education,
University of 'Aleksander Moisiu' Durres,
Durres, Albania

²Dr., Center of Research and Excellence,
University of 'Aleksander Moisiu' Durres,
Durres, Albania

Received: 16 October 2023 / Accepted: 2 November 2023 / Published: 23 November 2023
© 2023 Matilda Likaj and Alketa Marku.

Doi: 10.56345/ijrdv10n315

Abstract

After two decades of refugee waves from post-communist countries, Europe has been facing again this phenomenon in the three last years. During the Syria wars, residents from the Middle East escaped to Jordan, Libya and Turkey. By the extension of these waves refugees' destination was European countries. By the side of the Middle East refugee wave, last two years European countries have been facing refugees from African countries. These waves are identified as the current European refugee crisis. In the European country's public opinion (even though this phenomenon was not new), sometimes it is evaluated as a threat that contains extremism. This phenomenon may not seem extraordinary in itself, but considering that it happened in European countries characterized by extreme xenophobic attitudes, where the societies have low levels of trust in general, exploited by the Government's anti-immigration campaign. The different aspects of anxiety and fear connected to the refugee waves, perceived by the receiving society are worth analyzing in today's Europe, especially in light of the recent terror attacks and other incidents in which immigrants play a significant role worldwide. Xenophobic attitudes, discriminations, social exclusions etc., bring out the clashes between newcomers and residents. Regarding the above explanation, this article will focus on the descriptive analysis of the refugee phenomenon in Europe and whether is it an extremist threat to European society or just the public opinion perceives it like that.

Keywords: Refugees; European countries; Extremism; Threat; Transnational Solidarity and Good Governance

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of emigration has been characterized as one of the oldest social phenomena (since the beginning of human history) of various groups and societies in the world. Throughout the history of humanity, for thousands or millions of years, individuals have migrated in search of food, survival, colonization or conquest, escape from colonization or conquest, to leave the war or to political authorities to seek new and useful opportunities for their livelihood. "This movement can be for a short or long term stimulated by economic, political, cultural or social reasons. Movement of

people may be regular/legal or irregular/illegal¹.

After the Second World War, due to the Arab Spring in the Middle East and Africa, the world faced the largest refugee stream. Especially with the internal war in Syria, immigrant refugee flows originally headed to countries like Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. Since 2015, Syrian refugee flows have been directed to European countries, especially Germany, France, Sweden and so on. The facing of European countries with the Syrian refugee stream triggered all the political and institutional mechanisms to include this phenomenon as one of the most controversial issues today. Today, Syrian refugee migration flows and other countries in the Middle East are defined as the greatest in human history and as a crisis to cope with, in European countries, especially in Germany.

This article focuses on the analysis of emigration, refugees, today's crisis, transnational solidarity and good governance by analyzing the European Union country's opinion and policies in this field.

2. Emigration, Refugees and Today's Crisis

In social sciences, there exist a lot of debates about the terminology of emigration, immigration, refugees etc. To make a better understanding of these terms/definitions is very important to discuss recently and scientifically approved today sociological emigration theories.

'Migration is a multidimensional phenomenon which, through stimulating and driving factors, influences the dynamics of the population, regional, economic, social and political development. This phenomenon includes the aspect of economic development and social change at the local and global level'². Stimulation and driving factors of the migration phenomenon in the sociology of emigration have been defined as push and pull factors. The movement of individuals from one country to another continues to be an important factor in economic development, social change, cultural change and political organization of the country of origin and host.

Explanation and definition of the term 'migration' and 'emigration' has several forms, which have often resourced and triggered numerous discussions. Some of them focus on the explanation that "migration is the movement of individuals from one geographic area to another due to demographic, social, political, cultural changes etc." and the others focus on "emigration is a universal phenomenon that some of the social researchers speculate and interpret as if it were instinctive like the human being emigrating.

Unal and Demir, referring to Fitcher's emigration studies, defined the phenomenon of emigration as a cause of 'social movements', which are developed by the 'physical and social movements of individuals'. Thus, emigration is presented as a process involving several phenomena influenced by demography, economy, socio-politic dimensions of society, and movement from one country to another for a certain period or during all life.³

In today's world order, the inequality of financial income between developed, developing and underdeveloped countries leads individuals and groups of different social strata in search of new opportunities to leave the country towards other countries. Usually, individuals leave their country of origin for a better life. The emigration of a social actor is the movement from one place to another, aiming to continue life with a permanent or temporary residence in the host country. As in social sciences and everyday life, this movement is known as emigration or emigrant phenomenon. According to the definition used extensively in social sciences, emigrants are persons who live abroad in their country of birth for a long time and stay there for various reasons (economic, political, social, cultural, etc.). On the other hand, an immigrant is a person who moves from one place to another in the country of origin. So, both concepts and definitions such as emigrant and immigrant, present the person who moves for a specific reason from the place where he was born to another place within or outside the country of origin. Both concepts have as a base the phenomenon of migration (that includes emigration and immigration flows).

In recent discussions across academics, media presenters, or random people, there exists confusion about the concepts of 'emigrant' and 'refugee'. From a sociological perspective, both of these terms are parts of the emigration phenomenon. Furthermore, both of them have different dimensions in this phenomenon.

'Migrant is a person who, voluntarily or not, for various personal reasons, moves from his country of origin to a special destination, whether or not bound. This includes persons moving regularly or irregularly. This implies that not all of

¹ Robert Lucas, *International Migration and Economic Development: Lessons from Low-Income Countries*. USA: Edward Elgar Publishing. 2005, p. 71.

² Lucia Athenosy, *Migration in Europe: The CEB's Experience*. Council of Europe Development Bank Press. 2008, p. 17.

³ Serdar Ünal, & Gülşen Demir Göç, *Kimlik ve Aidiyet Bağlamında Türkiye'de Balkan Göçmenleri*, 6 Ulusal Sosyoloji Kongresi. Toplumsal Donusmeler ve sosyolojik Yaklaşımlar. Aydın: Adnan Menderes Üniversitesi Basın Evi. 2009.

these individuals have the necessary documentation as a visa, residence permit or work permit, to be included in this definition⁴. On the other hand, refugees are a huge number of people, that flow as a movement, from one country to another, as a cause of an emergent reason such as war, or natural disaster etc, While they arrive in the country of destination they are requested to apply for asylum. 'Asylum seekers are individuals who seek to be admitted to another country as refugees and are awaiting a decision on their application for refugee status under the relevant international law instruments⁵. An asylum seeker is defined as an individual who crosses international borders due to war, misfortune, fear of persecution etc. in his country of origin. An individual is named as an asylum seeker as long as no response has been received or a decision on his claim. As long as the petition is handled, asylum seekers have the right not to return to their country of origin.

To focus on the objective of this article, what exactly is the refugee crisis that European countries are facing? Regarding the crisis influenced by the refugees and emigrants flow, there exists a lot of political, economic, social and cultural debates (local, regional and international).

The Arab Spring, besides Tunis, is shrouded in many Middle Eastern countries such as Libya, Yemen, Syria, and so on. These places are mentioned because they are the main sources where the largest civil wars in the region are taking place. Civil warfare has been the main driving force of individuals to migrate through refugee currents seeking asylum in different countries. These wars have influenced the formation of compulsory or forced emigration of individuals. Forced emigrant is a person's involuntary or desirable motion for reasons of conflict, violence or violation of individual rights, natural disasters or other events of such nature. Forced emigrants form the wave of refugees.

On the one hand, the Middle East faces the persistence of civil warfare over the years; while on the other hand, the world faces for the first time such a huge refugee crisis. The main cause of the departure from the countries of these individuals is for the safety of their lives and family members. To reach the planned destination before leaving the country of origin, Syrian refugees are forced to choose illegal routes through the Mediterranean and Aegean.

Till November 2015, 868,282 refugees entered the European countries illegally through the sea routes⁶. According to EUROSTAT data, in the first ten months of 2015, have been requested form asylum 1,061,060 people⁷. This is a considerable number to be treated as a phenomenon that causes a crise to host countries. Crises as a phenomenon have different dimensions, such as economic, political, social, and cultural. Starting from the political dimension, the phenomenon of immigrant emigration flows of the Middle East is treated as a 'threat' to the preservation of the social stabilization, solidarity and social cohesion of Western societies. Some negative behaviours or situations formed by the behaviours of a refugee or a small group of refugees are used as a label for all refugees (influence of cultural dimension too). Regarding to economic dimension, Germany took the responsibility to maintain refugees' needs, which in the latter years in collaboration with Turkey has been the only country that hosed economically and residentially refugees from the Middle East, especially from Syria. The overflows of emigrants, from the Middle East and northern African countries overload Germany, which is in the position of a hosted crisis country. All the dimensions of this situation influence the increase of crisis, located in Germany but all the European Union countries are responsible. These waves are identified as the current European refugee crisis. In the European country's public opinion (even though this phenomenon was not new), sometimes it is evaluated as a threat that contains extremism. This phenomenon may not seem extraordinary in itself, but considering that it happened in European countries characterized by extreme xenophobic attitudes, where the societies have low levels of trust in general, exploited by the Government's anti-immigration campaign. The different aspects of anxiety and fear connected to the refugee waves, perceived by the receiving society are worth analyzing in today's Europe, especially in light of the recent terror attacks and other incidents in which immigrants play a significant role worldwide. Xenophobic attitudes, discrimination, and social exclusions act. bring out clashes between newcomers and residents.

Regarding that, the hypothetical question is how to combat this crisis, help Germany and respect the human rights of refugees in Germany. The next chapter of this article is going to be discussed and present some recommendations based on refugee crisis management, through transnational solidarity and good governance, based on the reformation of new policies.

⁴ Pozdorovkin, Olga. *Handbook on Migration Terminology (Russian-English)*. Russia: IOM Publications. 2011, p. 13.

⁵ Pozdorovkin, Olga. *Handbook on Migration Terminology*. Cit., p.13

⁶ *Mediterranean update, Missing emigrants projects*, p.2

⁷ Enes Bayrakli, & Kazim Keskin,. *Türkiye, Mülteci ve AB Ucgeninde Mülteci Krizi*. SETA. Sayı 143 (2015), p. 9.

3. Transnational Solidarity and Good Governance: Eu Policies on Emigration and Refugee Policies

Nowadays, emigration as a phenomenon continues to be one of the most discussable topics in political affairs in European countries. Recently one of the most debatable topics from the emigration perspective of political affairs is the refugee phenomenon. Regarding the above explanation, this article will focus on the descriptive analysis of the refugee phenomenon in Europe and whether is it an extremist threat to European society or just the public opinion perceives it like that.

Regarding the international and national laws of the European Union and its countries, it is very important to stress out, what exactly this phenomenon reflects in hosted society. 'A basic premise of state sovereignty is that the state has the power to control its borders, determine the foreigners it will accept, and in certain situations deter foreigners from its territory'⁸. Also, it is quite acceptable from international human rights to point out that 'emigrants, like all human beings, have the right to enjoy the human rights provided in international instruments'⁹.

'The Refugee Convention is the primary source of the framework of international refugee protection. As a post-Second World War instrument, the Convention was originally limited in scope to persons fleeing events occurring before 1 January 1951 and within Europe. The 1967 Protocol removed these limitations to give the Convention universal coverage. It has since been supplemented in the European Union ('the EU') and other regions by a subsidiary protection regime, as well as via the progressive development of international human rights law'¹⁰. 'The Refugee Convention provides the framework for international refugee protection but contains specific provisions to exclude certain individuals from those benefits. Article 1F states that the provisions of the Convention do not apply where there are serious reasons to consider that an individual:

- a. has committed a crime against peace, a war crime, or a crime against humanity, as defined in the international instruments drawn up to make provision in respect of such crimes;
- b. has committed a serious non-political crime outside the country of refuge before admission to that country as a refugee;
- c. has been guilty of acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.¹¹

So, the formal perspective of the Refugee Convention influences issues on developing transnational solidarity through accepting refugees in European Union countries. But in everyday life, some extraordinary situations, cannot generalize the public opinion to understand that refugees are a real threat to European countries. It is true, that living in a community and cohabitating with foreigners (in this case foreigners are refugees) is not always easily acceptable by the locals. This is reflected also in the 'European Social Survey, Round 7 data are available for 21 countries: Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK. Nearly all of these countries (except Estonia and Lithuania) participated in ESS Round 1. Over 40,000 face-to-face interviews were conducted across the 21 countries with questionnaire translation and fieldwork carried out to a rigorous specification provided by the ESS Core Scientific Team'¹².

⁸Luljeta Ikonimi, *E drejta Emigratore; Manual Trajnues; IOM; p. 28* <https://www.scribd.com/document/366967717/4-Migration-Legislation>,

⁹ Ikonimi; *E drejta Emigratore; Manual Trajnues; IOM; p. 28*

¹⁰ *Asylum policies instruction: Assessing credibility and refugees status; Version 9.0; 6* (<https://www.refworld.org/docid/54e487b14.ht ml>)

¹¹ *Exclusion (Article 1F) and Article 33 (2) of the Refugee Convention; Version 6.0, 8*<https://www.refworld.org/docid/58b017e4391.html>

¹² *Rory Fitzgerald, and al.t, Attitudes towards emigration and their antecedents: Topline results from Round 7 of the European Social Survey, UK: University of London, 2014, p.3.*

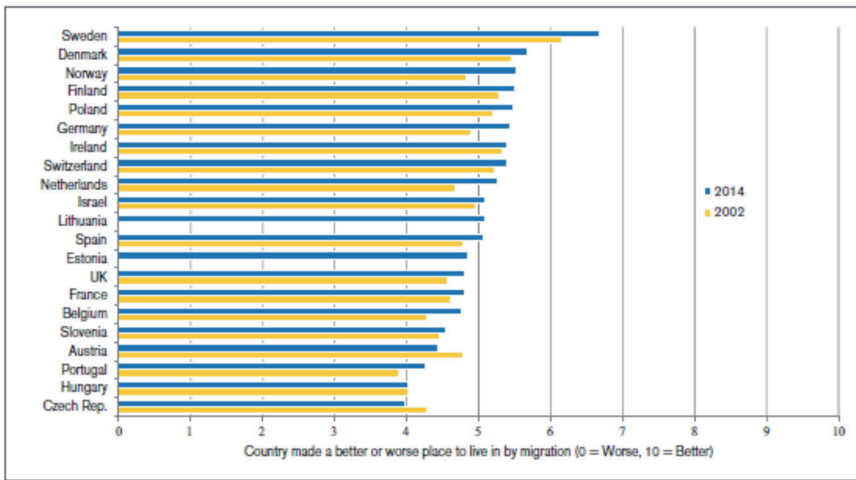


Figure 1: Evaluation of whether the country is made a better or worse place to live in as a result of migration in 2002 and 2014 (0-worst 10-better) (European Social Survey Round 1, 2002 and Round 7, 2014 (all countries participating in both rounds)¹³

'European publics have become slightly more positive, not negative, about the effect of migration on their societies. In 2002, the balance of opinion was slightly negative, thirteen of the countries had a mean score less than 5 (the midpoint of the scale)¹⁴ So, according to the data of figure number one, responders changed their opinion about emigrant and refugee, after twelve years that they have cohabitate, share the same social sphere and live together in the same social condition.

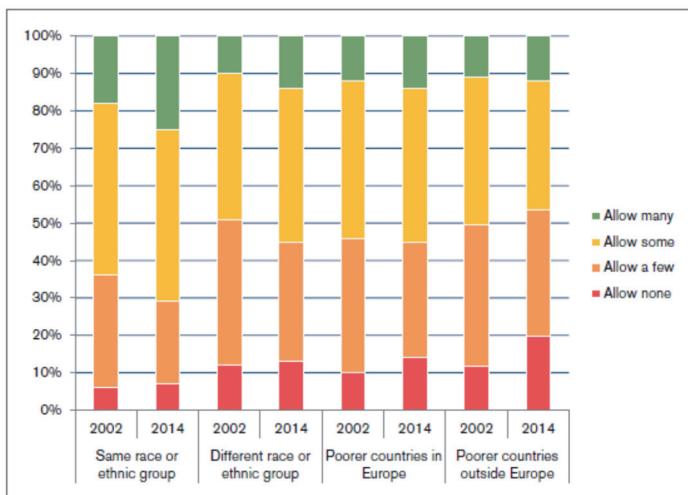


Figure 2: Attitudes towards different sorts of migrants in 2002 and 2014 (European Social Survey Round 1, 2002 and Round 7, 2014 (all countries participating in both rounds)¹⁵

¹³ Fitzgerald and al.t., Attitudes towards emigration and their antecedents: Topline results from Round 7 of the European Social Survey; cit., p. 5
¹⁴ Fitzgerald and al.t., Attitudes towards emigration and their antecedents: Topline results from Round 7 of the European Social Survey; cit., p. 4
¹⁵ Fitzgerald and al.t., Attitudes towards emigration and their antecedents: Topline results from Round 7 of the European Social Survey; cit. p. 6

'In the case of all four types of migrants, those attitudes became more polarized between 2002 and 2014. This is most striking in the case of attitudes towards migrants from poorer countries outside Europe: the proportion of the European public who felt that none of these migrants should be allowed to come increased from 11 % to 20 %.¹⁶ It is in human nature to accept the similarities easier than differentiations. This is shown in figure number two, where responders are more likely to accept the emigrants from the same race or ethnic groups than the others. However, this does not reflect that the responders are likely to exclude the emigration from different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

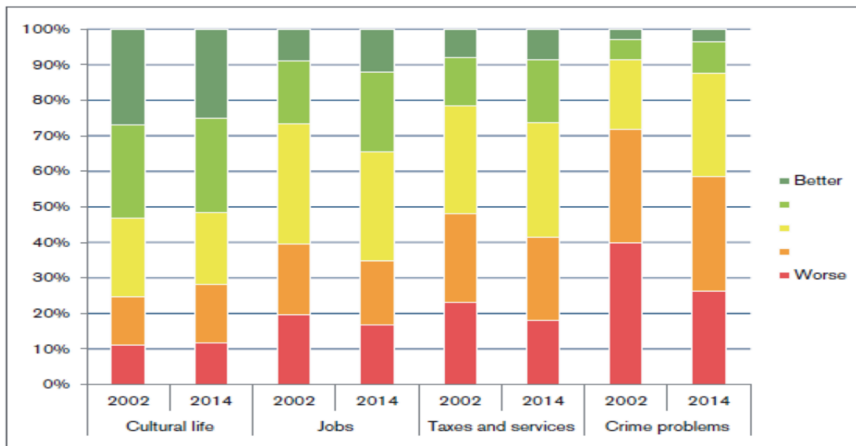


Figure 3: Perceptions of the effects of migration on cultural life, jobs, taxes and services, and crime in the country in 2002 and 2014 (European Social Survey Round 1, 2002 and Round 7, 2014 (all countries participating in both rounds)¹⁷

'Perceptions about the impact of migration on crime are heavily weighted towards the negative pole. A clear majority in 2014 (60 %) felt that migration made crime problems worse. Perceptions were also quite negative on taxes and services. People who felt that migrants put in more than they took out (26 %) were outnumbered by those who felt migrants take out more (42 %)¹⁸. In contrast, people were less negative about the impact of migrants on jobs and least negative about the cultural impact of migration. This suggests that practical and immediate issues to do with crime and pressure on services are particular concerns of the European public.¹⁹

Consequently, the data analysis of the European Social Survey, demonstrates that despite the increasing of positive opinions and attitudes of individuals toward the migrants, they still believe that the migrants influence more negatively than positively in the public sphere, especially in job markets, cultural impacts and crimes.

To conclude, the formal aspect of emigration and refugees, welcoming and respecting them in the hosted society. So laws and policies are in favor of the minorities. But in everyday life, based on public opinion these policies are not extended enough to be practicable and acceptable in society. Maintaining migrant and refugee policies, preventing discrimination policies and respecting human rights may influence positively the cohabitation of locals and newcomers.

4. Conclusion

Creating a transnational solidarity among states (European countries and emigrant countries), through international migrant and refugee policies and international diplomacy, will influence the forming a good governance of this

¹⁶ Fitzgerald and al.t., *Attitudes towards emigration and their antecedents: Topline results from Round 7 of the European Social Survey; cit. p.7*

¹⁷ Fitzgerald and al.t., *Attitudes towards emigration and their antecedents: Topline results from Round 7 of the European Social Survey; cit. p.8*

¹⁸ Fitzgerald and al.t., *Attitudes towards emigration and their antecedents: Topline results from Round 7 of the European Social Survey;cit., p. 9*

¹⁹ Fitzgerald and al.t., *Attitudes towards emigration and their antecedents: Topline results from Round 7 of the European Social Survey;cit. p.10*

phenomenon.

Also, these policies will influence on development of social solidarity, and exclusion and decrease xenophobic attitudes and opinions. Tolerance toward minorities will influence acceptance of diversities (in this case emigrants and refugees) and will influence the respect and security of them as human beings, based on human rights.

For good governance is very important to focus on the development of refugee phenomenon policies, across sending and receiving countries. Respect and implication of human rights is the base of the development of good governance in host societies or receiving countries. This is reflected also in: On 15 May 2018, the Council of Europe Coordination Group on Migration held its first meeting. The Group, which operates under the stewardship of the Special Representative, is a platform for joint and complementary action of the secretariats of relevant Council of Europe bodies and services. It aims to ensure a coherent and holistic approach to all migration-related activities of the Organization and to identify strategic priorities for the future. The Office of the Special Representative on Migration and Refugees (SRSG) is looking for up to four experts to work with the office on a compilation of good practices on migration-related child-friendly procedures. The examples will facilitate states' implementation of their obligations concerning migration-related procedures involving children and will thus encourage the modification of procedures to make them more child-friendly²⁰.

To conclude, it is very important to form transnational solidarity and good governance, to manage the discrimination and racism that emigrants and refugees phase in hosted European Union countries.

References

- Athenosy, Lucia. *Migration in Europe: The CEB's Experience*. Council of Europe Development Bank Press. 2008
- Bayrakli, Enes & Keskin, Kazim. *Türkiye, Mülteci ve AB Üçgeninde Mülteci Krizi*. SETA. Sayı 143 (2015)
- Pozdorovkin, Olga. *Handbook on Migration Terminology (Russian-English)*. Russia: IOM Publications. 2011
- Mediterranean update, Missing emigrants projects*. 27 November 2015 (<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/mediterranean-update-global-overview-missing-migrants-project-27-november-2015>).
- Migrants Newsletter, Council of Europe Action plan on protecting refugee and migrant children (2017-2019) (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/special-representative-secretary-general-migration-refugees/newsletter-may-2018>)
- Asylum policies instruction: Assessing credibility and refugees status; Version 9.0*; Home office publication; January 2015 (<https://www.refworld.org/docid/54e487b14.html>).
- Exclusion (Article 1F) and Article 33 (2) of the Refugee Convention; Version 6.0*; Home office staff , 2016 (<https://www.refworld.org/docid/58b017e4391.html>).
- Fitzgerald, Rory and al.t, *Attitudes towards emigration and their antecedents: Topline results from Round 7 of the European Social Survey*, UK: University of London, 2014
- Lucas, Robert. *International Migration and Economic Development: Lessons from Low-Income Countries*. USA: Edward Elgar Publishing.2005
- Ikonomi Luljeta, *E drejta Emigratore; Manual Trajnues*; IOM; <https://www.scribd.com/document/366967717/4-Migration-Legislation>,
- Ünal, Serdar & Demir, Gülşen. *Göç, Kimlik ve Aidiyet Bağlamında Türkiye'de Balkan Göçmenleri*, 6 Ulusal Sosyoloji Kongresi. Toplumsal Donusmeler ve sosyolojik Yaklaşımlar. Aydın: Adnan Menderes Üniversitesi Basın Evi. 2009

²⁰ Migrants Newsletter, Council of Europe Action plan on protecting refugee and migrant children (2017-2019) <https://www.coe.int/en/web/special-representative-secretary-general-migration-refugees/newsletter-may-2018>