

AN EUROPEAN SOCIETY AND MIGRATION: THE CHALLENGE OF TRANSCULTURAL DIVERSITY

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Abstract

This study attempts to examine why European policy does not address the issue of migration of people from non-European countries to Europe with sufficient recognition of the impact of migration on European society. Irregular migration, as the term preferred in European policy circles, has been the subject of increasing and ongoing public debate in Europe in recent years. Each year about 250 000 people apply for an asylum in the EU. However, the number of applicants is not equally distributed among EU countries. Global migrations present a fundamental challenge to European society, so this study address issues related to the impact of migration on European society, especially from non-European countries into Europe, with sufficient recognition of the major impact it has on European identity. Migration is one of the major influences to challenge traditional conceptions of Europe structured on nations. Therefore, this study points out the problems of the EU cultural policy and its rise in profile and issues of social cohesion. This paper joins a growing number of calls for a change in the perspective of policy-making to reflect the transnational reality of migration and its impact on the European society. This study is driven by an interest to research how European policy can address the demographic, social and cultural changes brought by the migration of people from non-European countries into the EU.

Keywords: migration, European policy, culture, nations, society.

1 INTRODUCTION

Within European Union Member States, national governments define and respond to irregular migration in very different ways. The new European Commission has, for the first time, a specific portfolio on "migration", and it is very crucial for the stable European Union because of many reasons such as the dangerous geopolitical situation at the EU's external borders, terrorist threats, the economic crisis and demographic ageing. The EU must respond through openness and security, not by building a fortress. According to this there is the need to implement the Common European Asylum System; there is the question of solidarity within, but also beyond Europe with countries that bear the burden of refugee crises; there is the need to respond to irregular migration through a framework for regular migration; it also makes sense to attract migrants to fill gaps in EU labour markets.

Regular migration also give the possibilities migrants to participation in political life in the host country. Participation in the political decision-making process also promotes integration. The granting of political rights is a democratic means of expression and at the same time gives responsibilities to voters. The right to vote at the municipal, regional and European level should be granted to all immigrants and refugees who have resided regularly for a specific period of time in the country. To this end, political parties also have a responsibility to more actively attract immigrants and offer training in political processes. In general, necessary mechanisms should be put in place to inform immigrants and refugees of their entitlement to vote and stand in certain elections. Migrants are directly or indirectly affecting political discourse. Migration can also lead to an exchange of political ideas between countries of origin and destination. Furthermore, migrants contribute to forging friendships and links between countries, with many foreign leaders being educated in Europe.

European cultural policy (article 151 of the Treaty of the European Union) addresses itself to the 'flowering of

the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore'.¹ This policy is ostensibly concerned with existing member states and their citizens. Cultural initiatives already being run within the framework of European Union cultural policy and address issues related to migrant cultures and European citizenry. This analysis leads to suggestions and recommendations, the aim of which is to foster a greater recognition of the importance of recent developments in EU policy on controlling irregular migration and managing asylum at the EU's borders. The law defines immigration status in a binary way as either legal or illegal, but in practice irregular immigration status can involve a wide spectrum of violations of immigration and other laws.

2 IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION AND ACCESS TO CITIZENSHIP IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The assumption in this paper is that the access to citizenship can be seen as indicator of integration, in the sense that it closes an important legal gap between immigrants and natives. From the perspective of 'becoming accepted into society' is not seen as the endpoint of the process of integration. Hence, political actors in origin countries, such as legislators who determine the rules of dual citizenship as well as government officials linked to diplomatic representations who may reach out to the emigrant community, are expected to be able to play an important role in the process of integrating migrants in destination countries, in terms of stimulating (or not) the acquisition of citizenship. Therefore, the access to citizenship is viewed as a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for full integration of immigrants in the destination country. In Europe, where citizenship policies differ substantially (Vink and De Groot, 2010), some research see large differences in citizenship take-up rates, with around 80 percent of the foreign-born population naturalized after at least ten years residence in the Netherlands and Sweden, around 65 percent of a comparable group in the UK, 50 percent in France and only around 35 percent in Germany and Switzerland (Liebig and Von Haaren, 2011: 28; Vink, 2013). At the beginning some conceptual clarifications should be made from the start. First, an 'immigrant' is defined as a person born in a third country and residing in the European Union. While immigrants can be understood more generally as all foreign-born persons residing in a country, we restrict our discussion in this paper to immigrants from non-EU. Until the 1990s, immigrants were understood as merely workers for the dark, dirty and dangerous jobs that the autochthonous populations no longer wished to perform. The employment of highly-qualified immigrants in health services, for example, was understood as an exception to this rule (EMN, 2006).

Second, 'integration' as understood as the process by which immigrants become accepted into society, both as individuals and as groups (Penninx 2003). Thirdly, 'citizenship' is a legal status and relation between an individual and a state that entails specific legal rights and duties countries (EUDO CITIZENSHIP 2013a).

The paper argues that the access to citizenship can be viewed as an important factor in the process of integration of immigrants in the destination country. The benefits of citizenship are manifold for immigrants, while taking citizenship for immigrants' means that they take their rights and responsibilities seriously, and they are recognized as full members of the community. On a practical level, providing a citizenship for immigrants and their children, EU member countries give access to the same opportunities for immigrants as their native citizens. Countries do not give citizenship to anyone who has some of the basic criteria. There is some logic to the various requirements for people who would like to be citizens are asked to fulfill. First, there are practical considerations: individuals need to be vetted thoroughly to ensure they meet certain standards and are not a security threat before being granted permanent access to a country. Also, governments want to be confident that newcomers acquire the tools needed to integrate quickly and efficiently, which has fueled the rise of language and civics tests (often accompanied by government-supported training programs). Next are the emotional considerations. Citizenship is meant to symbolize a greater level of belonging to society: new citizens and their families will be able to shape the laws and norms in their communities for generations to come, thus policymakers establish guidelines to be certain of their character and commitment to the country. In some cases, anxiety that national identity is being eroded by newcomers is thought to have placed pressure on policymakers to enact greater restrictions. These have various permutations. Certain countries have increased the difficulty of naturalization requirements, some have restricted the categories of migrants eligible to access citizenship, and others have sought to restrict the behaviour of immigrants during the naturalization process itself. Primarily citizenship gives certain formal, legal rights to new members of

¹ <http://www.migrationpolicycentre.eu/event/mpc-workshop-understanding-migration-integration-and-cultural-policy-in-europe/>

society — such as full access to public benefits, voting rights, protection from deportation, and the right to run for public office. But it also has an important symbolic function. Citizenship helps create and cement a sense of belonging to one's adopted country, and in this way can be an important tool for immigrant integration. Because citizenship is the most important marker of an immigrant's full and equal membership in a national society, countries have typically set requirements deliberately high for acquiring it. In recent years, these requirements have been getting even tougher, with lengthy in-country waiting periods, higher fees and standards, and a widespread adoption of citizenship tests. Many countries see redesign of their citizenship policies and practices as a way to improve the integration of society's newest members, the rationale being that more rigorous requirements ensure that new members of society have the tools needed to succeed (Banulescu-Bogdan, 2012). The access to citizenship can be seen as indicator of integration, also. Integration is a concept used to describe social, political, cultural and economic processes that occur when migrants arrive in a new society. There still is no common understanding of what the concept of integration actually refers to, and it has lots of debates about these question. One of the many definitions of integration is that it is a normative category, also. The various “models of integration “available throughout the European Union do not describe and explain a process developing when migrants arrive into a new society. Rather, these models present an ideal situation, the desirable result of a process that needs policy stimulation. Each EU member state has its own model of integration forged over the years. Each nation-state strives to at least to defend and preserve its model, sometimes to export it and to transpose it at the European Union level. In other words, there is no consensus on a shared thick definition of integration either in academia or in the European policy-making world. There is no consensus on the ideal integrated European society for tomorrow either. To put it differently, there is no consensual European Union model of immigrant integration. Without a clear definition of integration and without a clear vision of EU policy-making of integration process, all policy debates, discussions and policy-making on integration develop couldn't give a result. Global migrations present a fundamental challenge to European social and cultural policy. The impact achieved by European cultural policy is the development of a common European identity. This is attempted by those actions often defined as symbolic such as the European capitals of culture. Although the EU Commission aims at combining cultural policy with other policies in order to contribute towards achieving fuller social cohesion and a shared sense of citizenship which is not based on cultural divisions but a common aim to flourish together.

European researchers used the American theoretical framework regarding migrants' integration. While taking into account the particularity of the American context in which this kind of theoretical framework was built, European research tested if it was relevant in the European context (see e.g. European Forum for Migration Studies 2001; Esser 2003; Martiniello and Rath 2010; Penninx, Berger, and Kraal 2006). Migrants entering the EU clandestinely via land and sea routes, or those who have acquired false travel documents, often put themselves at the hands of criminal organisations. Moreover, most irregular migrants originally entered the EU legally on short-stay visas, but remain in the EU for economic reasons once their visa has expired. Effective and credible external borders are essential. The EU is therefore developing an integrated border management strategy which aims to maintain high levels of security.

However, although from the perspective of 'becoming accepted into society' acquiring destination country citizenship is likely an important step in the integration process that it closes an important legal gap between immigrants and natives.

3 PATHWAYS INTO IRREGULARITY AND POLITICAL CONNOTATIONS

The terms unauthorized migrant, illegal, irregular or undocumented can have different connotations in national policy debates, and these terms depend on political agendas. The term 'irregular migration' typically refers to the cross-border flow of people who enter a country without that country's legal permission to do so. In contrast, the term 'irregular migrants' typically refers to the stock of migrants in a country who are not entitled to reside there, either because they have never had a legal residence permit or because they have overstayed their time-limited permit.

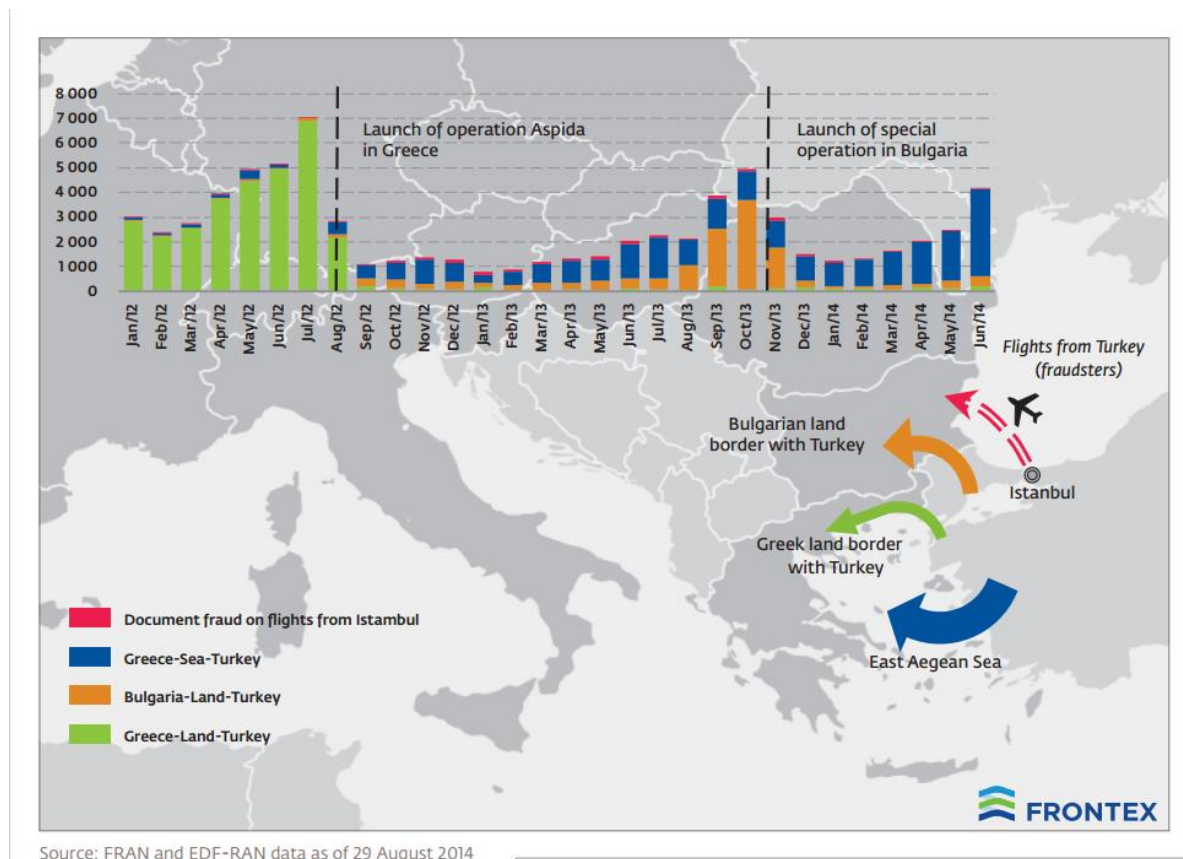
The total population of the EU28 stood at 505.7 million in 2013.² In 2012, the EU27 received a little less than 1.2 million immigrants each year, while at the same time a total of 0.6-0.7 million of non-EU citizens have left the EU annually.³ There are several principal ways in which non-nationals become unauthorized

² Eurostat, *Population on 1 January 2013*, <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?language=en&pcode=tps00001>.

³ Eurostat, *Immigration in the EU*, April 2014, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/multimedia/infographics/index_en.htm#0801262489e0e61e/c_.

migrants: entry using false documents, or using legal documents, but providing false information in those documents; illegal entry which include mostly illegal border crossing, absconding during the asylum procedure of failing to leave a host state after a negative decision The different parameters of European Union's immigration systems are in the process of harmonization, while considerable cooperation has been established in other areas, such as border management. Due to increased entry at certain points along the European Union external border, the trend of increasing irregular migration into Europe has often been marked by localized surges. It is estimated that 1.9 million to 3.8 million unauthorized immigrants resided in the European Union. The borders between the Schengen Associated Countries (Liechtenstein, Norway, Iceland and Switzerland) and third countries are also considered as external borders. The borders between the Schengen Associated Countries and Schengen Member States are considered as internal borders (Frontex, 2014:9). The nature of irregular immigration into the EU makes it a phenomenon that is difficult to quantify. However, certain indicators provide guidance. In comparison with the first quarter of 2014, the second quarter saw an increase in all of the indicators of irregular migration and asylum exchanged under the Frontex Risk Analysis Network⁴ (Frontex, 2014). The number of irregular migrants detected on the Eastern Mediterranean route in the second quarter of 2014 was almost twice as high as in the second quarter of 2013 (Frontex, 2014:5).

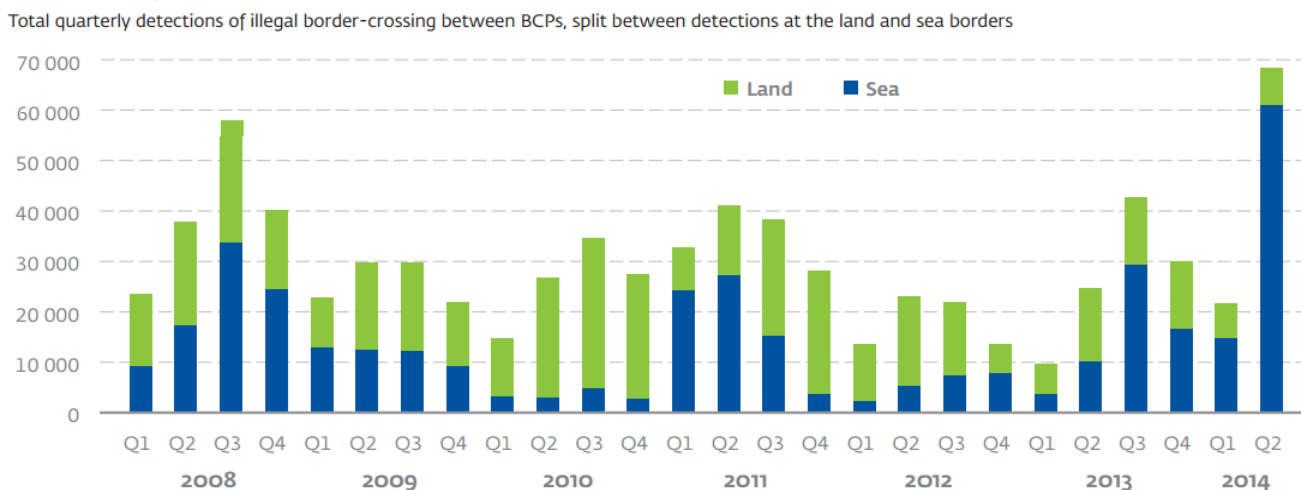
Figure 1. Increased operational activity reduced the detections of migrants at the Greek and later at the Bulgarian land border with Turkey. Numbers also show substantial displacement to the eastern Aegean Sea. Monthly detections of illegal border-crossing in the Eastern Mediterranean region by border section and the detections of migrants arriving with fraudulent documents on flights from Istanbul since the beginning of 2012. (Frontex, 2014:17).



⁴ FRAN Quarterly reports are prepared by the Frontex Risk Analysis Unit and provide a regular overview of irregular migration at the EU external borders, based on the irregular migration date exchanged among Member State border-control authorities within the cooperative framework of the Frontex Risk Analysis Network (FRAN) and its subsidiary, the European Union Document-Fraud Risk Analysis Network (EDF-RAN). See Frontex (2014: 7).

The Eastern Mediterranean route has traditionally been a major hotspot for irregular migration into the EU, predominantly associated with illegal border-crossings from Turkey. As can be seen in Figure 1 some operational activities led to reduced detections of illegal border-crossing in the eastern Mediterranean region. Hereby we are going to mention some of these activities responsible for this reduction. The marked decrease in detections observed since August 2012 at particular border sections is due to a range of operational activities taking place in the region. In August 2012 the Greek authorities launched operation *Aspida*, deploying additional manpower, assets and equipment to the Evros region in order to curb and tackle illegal migration. As a response to the increased pressure at the Bulgarian-Turkish land border, the Bulgarian authorities decided to implement an Integrated Border Surveillance System (IBSS) to conduct enhanced air surveillance, a special police operation and to construct a 30 km long fence along vulnerable parts of the border (Frontex, 2014:16). Italy strengthened its maritime presence in the Central Mediterranean through a specific operation named *Mare Nostrum October 2013*. It aims at controlling migrant flows through increased surveillance and search-and-rescue (SAR) activities. Under *Mare Nostrum* the Italian Navy deployed a number of ships and other assets to the waters of the Sicily Channel between Italy and Libya. Italy together with Germany, which according to Frontex analyze reported the largest number of applications in the EU, and Sweden, which registered a record asylum figure since FRAN data collection began in 2007, account for 60% of all asylum seekers reported by Member States (2014: 26). The largest share of asylum (according to Frontex, 2014) seekers reported by Italy was Malian (22%), followed by Nigerian (16%) and Pakistani nationals (10%). According to the Frontex (2014) report since the beginning of 2014, detections of illegal border-crossing have increased continuously, from 4 195 in the first quarter to 8 767 in the second quarter in 2014. Because of seasonal reasons, the number of migrants grew from 2 030 in April to 4 231 in June, around 85% of whom were detected at the sea border. Almost two thirds of the reported detections were related to Syrian nationals, whereas 20% and 5%, respectively, of irregular migrants Afghan and Somali citizens.

Figure 2. Detections of illegal border-crossing at the sea borders have been on the highest level since FRAN data collection began. According to this figure the second quarter detections at the sea borders were significantly higher. (Frontex, 2014:11).



Source: FRAN data as of 18 August 2014

Detections of illegal border-crossing are frequently classified into major irregular migration routes according to Frontex: 1. Central Mediterranean Route - there are several reasons that contributed to increased migration along this route: improved weather conditions made the Central Mediterranean more navigable; the presence of a large number of sub-Saharan Africans in the coastal areas of Libya increased the migratory pressure and the increasingly unstable situation in Libya led to a deteriorating security situation and increased violence, especially against sub-Saharan migrants. 2. Apulia and Calabria route - southern Italian regions, detections of illegal border-crossing tend to be associated with two different kinds of irregular migration depending on whether the migrants entered the first time in the Schengen area or they to retry. Also the number of detections in Q2 2014 was closer to the average over the past few years. 3. Eastern

Mediterranean Route - detections of illegal border-crossing have increased continuously because of seasonal reasons and grew more than twice in the same year. (Fronteks, 2014: 11-15).

The complexity of migration across the Mediterranean is a result of conflict, poverty and inequality, lack of support or violation of basic human rights in the countries of emigration. These factors cause new inflows of people on the shores of the Mediterranean despite the many risks they face while traveling. Crossing the Sahara leading to high mortality due to starvation and lack of water, while those who cross the Mediterranean are in the hands and the mercy of smugglers and are exposed to the risk of sea storms and drowning. The fact is that enhanced border control in transit countries that are on the edges of the Mediterranean and other restrictive measures have not yielded results in reducing the number of immigrants arriving in South Europe. On the contrary these measures are only lead to counter effects, immigrants have started to look for alternative routes and use more dangerous routes, and it also increases the network of smugglers and traffickers of people.

6 CONCLUSION

To conclude, traditionally, in many states dual citizenship was perceived negatively and such states provide accordingly in their national legislation that citizenship is lost automatically upon the voluntary acquisition of another citizenship. The role of relevant actors in sending countries, such as legislators and diaspora group representatives, will be crucial to understand how this interaction plays out. Integrating immigrants, allowing them to participate in the host society at the same level as natives, is an active, not a passive, process that involves two parties, the host society and the immigrants. Building on existing research to investigate the impact of origin countries on the integration of migrants in the host country remains to be done. As regards the links between the integration of immigrants and possible links with the countries of origin, the literature has two main questions: (a) about the nature and the determinants of so-called "citizenship premium"; and (b) about the impact of the country of origin citizenship laws on the propensity to naturalize (Unterreiner, Weinar, 2014). Dual citizenship is a fact of life in a globalized world. In observation about European migration policy we should highlights the importance that around 25 million persons born in a third country are currently living in the European Union, representing 5% of its total population.

The results of a recent comparative study by Vink, Prokic-Breuer and Dronkers (2013) on the effects of citizenship policies in European countries on the propensity to naturalist, taking into account not only characteristics of individuals, but also their origin country features including: finding some form of movement success, failure, co-optation of leaders, repression by larger groups (e.g., government), or even the establishment of the movement within the mainstream.

European societies have changed under the influences of immigration and various factors such as laws, regulations and political rights, access to the labour markets, welfare state regimes and provisions, health services, housing conditions, education and language politics, integration strategies and forms of exclusion and discrimination. Immigration clearly has an impact on the political discourse in European societies. This includes creating institutions of participation, including advisory instruments for migrants, a wide variety of civil society institutions and migrant self-organizations. Dealing firmly and effectively with irregular immigration is a precondition for a credible migration policy.

The number of illegal immigrants in the European Union is growing due to the crisis in the Middle East and many years of crisis in Afghanistan. Walls or techniques will not solve the problem, but solutions must be found through cooperation between countries of emigration and destination countries, mainly Western countries where illegal immigrants wanting to find a better life. It is necessary to strengthen regional cooperation in combating networks that belong to serious organized crime and make some kind of abuse of difficult situations in life. Illegal immigration is often carried out through organized criminal networks involved in smuggling of people, drugs, and such occurrences should be suppressed. Areas of well-being and safety of any will always be in the EU is likely to still attract people from less fortunate parts of the world. Problems arise however when the destination countries closed their doors to immigration. With Schengen in Europe this door is not closed on the borders of each state, but at the external borders of the Union. In the meantime, some Member States within these boundaries have enjoyed greater prosperity and stability, making the EU more attractive to potential immigrants. It seems that the only real solution lies in long-term political strategies whose aim is directed to the fact that inequality of wealth and stability of all the countries in the world diminish and allow more legal immigration to the EU.

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