



Investigation of the Migration and Refugee Phenomenon in Greece

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Abstract: The phenomenon of the refugee crisis, which in recent years has gained uncontrolled dimensions, has also affected Greece to a great extent, mainly because of its geographical location as the south-east “gate” of the European Union. Thus, a large number of immigrants are in Greece, trying to join the community. From the period 2015-2016 onwards, large inflows of migrant populations were observed in Greece, which caused severe problems for local communities, which together with the relevant authorities were called upon to address the problems that arose with the management of the reception and accommodation (temporary or permanent) of a continuously increasing number of migrants and refugees. In this article, we analyze the definitions and categories related to migration and the refugee phenomenon. Then, we make a historical review of migration in Greece and the situation that prevails today. Finally, we describe the terms for vulnerable social groups, to which both refugees and migrants belong, as well as investigate the social exclusion that they experience.

Keywords: Migrant, immigrant, refugee, obstacles, exclusion, Greece.

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INTRODUCTION

According to the United Nations report [1], in the year 2000 there were approximately 175 million migrants, meaning 1 in 35 people was a migrant, while in 1960 there were approximately 79 million migrants. Also, female migrants constituted 50%, while 10% were refugees, in the year 2000. Today, the number of these migrants, according to the United Nations, is estimated at approximately 185 to 190 million. Within this population, there are those who migrated voluntarily, as well as those who were forced. Although today most host countries have set very strict conditions and restrictions on the entry of migrants, this does not seem to work, since an increase of approximately 2% per year is recorded in the population of foreigners.

For a person to migrate there are many different reasons that lead them to this act. Usually, however, when we talk about migratory flows, we

divide them into two basic categories, depending on the reasons that caused it. Thus, firstly, we have economic migrants, who are mainly related to the movement of labor, but also their family who may follow later. Secondly, migrants who are forced to move due to various circumstances, such as persecution, wars, ecological disasters, etc. The second category, namely those who migrate because they are forced to, mainly concerns those who apply for asylum and refugees. However, even when they arrive in the host country, they are faced with significant problems, such as communication, inclusion, survival, accommodation, food, etc [2].

Finally, major problems arise not only in the countries of origin of immigrants, which are weakened by the migration of young people and the lack of labor, but also by families who are separated without knowing if and when they will be reunited. Significant problems also appear in the transit and

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reception countries, which are called upon to deal with all the problems that arise, such as hospitality, food, medical care and various other needs that arise daily [3].

TERMINOLOGY

The migratory movement of a population, according to the Hellenic Ministry of Education & Religious Affairs [2], is divided into the following nine basic categories, depending on their individual criteria. These criteria are as follows:

1. The “place”, namely, from which country a person moves to the host country. In this criterion, we distinguish two types of migration: *Intracontinental* (within the borders of the same continent), and *Intercontinental* (from different continents).
2. The length of stay, i.e., whether the stay is permanent or temporary. For the Hellenic National Statistical Office, if a Greek resides abroad for at least one year citing work reasons, his/her stay is considered permanent, while if he/she resides for less, it is considered temporary.
3. The size of the population that moves; it is distinguished into: mass movements (e.g., movement of Pontians to Greece), group (family) and individual.
4. The organization of migration: It is divided into organized, if the host country has an organized response plan for the residence or work permit, and unorganized if there is no organized response plan.
5. The change in lifestyle: It is divided into conservative, when there are no significant changes in lifestyle, and innovative, when migration is accompanied by major changes in lifestyle.
6. Human dependence on nature: It is divided into modern, which is mainly due to economic but also social reasons, and archaic, which is mainly the nomadic movements of livestock breeders.
7. Periodicity – intention: It is divided into periodically regulated, that is, seasonal migration that is repeated, and irregular, where the migrant does not know when he/she will return to his/her country.
8. Intention – decision; it is divided into three subcategories: Voluntary or Autonomous or Self-willed, when a person's migration is purely by their own decision; Forced, when migration is forced or even violent (e.g., deportation, persecution, colonization) or due to very poor living conditions; Dependent, when, for example, children follow their immigrant parents.
9. The State; two categories are distinguished: Internal, when the movement takes place

within the territory; External or international, when the movement takes place from one state to another. A migrant who leaves his/her country is called an emigrant, while one who returns at some point is called a resident, who is further distinguished into those who return and those who repatriate [4].

The term “Immigrant”

The term “immigrant” is not translated the same way in every country and may differ due to the legislation and policy of each country, regarding immigration, or the procedures followed, regarding the acquisition of citizenship or nationality in that country. For these reasons, the data presented by these countries regarding immigration are not always completely representative and comparable. However, in recent years, two directions regarding the definition and counting of immigrants have prevailed. The first direction describes the immigrant in relation to the country of birth, while the second is based on his or her citizenship [2]. According to the United Nations (UN), persons who leave their country to settle in another, for at least one year, are called “international migrants”. Based on UN data, this type of migration accounts for approximately 2.5% of the world's population [5].

The reasons that can lead a person to migrate are various, such as: the search for a better job (not only for graduates), the political instability of a country or even the case of an ecological disaster. However, the most basic reason is the economic issue and links the migration or survival of the individual with the search for better living conditions. In the texts of European legislation there is no reference to the term “migrants”, but generally to foreign nationals of other countries of the European Union or countries that are not part of the European Union (third countries). For this reason, the countries of the EU, regardless of whether they have established a definition for the migrant, distinguish it from the definition of “Third Country Foreigner” and this is due to the migration policy it follows and its history [2].

For example, in France, an immigrant is defined as a person born in another country and holding foreign citizenship, who has moved to France with the intention of staying for a long period of time. However, an immigrant, according to French law, can acquire French citizenship during his/her stay, but will remain officially an immigrant forever [6].

For Greek legislation, the term that has prevailed in the texts is “Third-Country Foreigner”, which is accompanied by certain rights and obligations that differentiate him/her from a citizen

of Greece or a member state of the EU [7]. The reality is that in the Greek language and scientific terminology, there are no corresponding words for the English and French terms for immigration, such as: “emigrant/emigration, immigrant/immigration, migrant/migration”. This also shows Greece’s inexperience in various forms of immigration and particularly in the process of welcoming immigrants from other countries. For example, an “immigrant” is a Greek who left the country for another foreign country, but it is also a foreigner who left his/her country to come to Greece. Furthermore, it may be the person who is in the process of migrating or has already migrated and is in the host country [8].

The term “Foreigner”, for Greek legislation and the services that adopt it, is generally used to describe the “immigrant” or “refugee”, in general anyone who is not Greek. We encounter it more often in the media, either as “foreigner” or as “xenos”, instead of refugee or repatriate, who is mentioned very rarely. For example, when on television or the internet, they want to describe a repatriate for a crime they refer to him as “foreigner”; on the contrary, when they refer to an Olympic weightlifting champion from Northern Epirus, they refer to him as “repatriate” [2].

According to the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population [5], it described in the Demographic Dictionary the term “migration” as the set of movements that ultimately result in a change of residence, due to the transition of individuals or groups from their place of origin to their country of destination. However, migration is not only the movement of people from one region or country to another, but it is also group movements of people who transfer to the country that welcomes them socio-cultural experiences, memories and representations from their country of origin [6].

The term “Refugee”

The term “refugee” is legally defined, which is why most of the time it prevails over the term “immigrant” or “foreigner”. According to the Geneva Convention, article 1 (28-7-1951), a refugee is: “any person who has well-founded fear of being expelled due to his/her ethnic origin, nationality, religion, political beliefs or association with a particular group, and is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or unwilling to avail him/her-self of the legal protection of that country”. Furthermore, a refugee can be defined as any person who does not have a nationality and now lives outside the country of his/her residence, due to the events mentioned above and is unable or unwilling, due to fear, to return to that country [2].

In general, the definition of a refugee describes three basic conditions:

- 1) Forced flight;
- 2) Well-founded fear of persecution;
- 3) Persecution due to religion, race, nationality, political beliefs and social class.

Legally, the designation “refugee” implies the possession of a residence permit, through which the individual acquires certain rights, such as the right to work, the right to medical care, and the ability to participate in the educational system and the community of the country.

Basic Definitions of Migration

To recap, we give the basic definitions around the migration issue, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [2]:

- **Asylum seeker:** Is a person who, while having submitted a request for recognition as a refugee, his/her request has not been definitively assessed. The term includes the total period of time that lasts from the day he/she submits a request for asylum until the final decision, regardless of the outcome of the decision, since not all asylum seekers will succeed in being classified as refugees.
- **Stateless person:** Is a person who cannot be considered a citizen of any state, based on its legislation, and who does not have access to the fundamental rights to which other citizens have access in their country of origin. Because they live in a situation where they do not officially exist, stateless people do not have access to rights. Stateless persons may be refugees but may also be in the country of their birth.
- **Internally displaced person:** A person who is forced to leave their home place due to natural disaster or persecution. The difference between refugees and internally displaced persons is that internally displaced persons remain in their own country.
- **Mixed migration:** It is common for large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers, trying to reach Europe to use the same dangerous routes as irregular migrants. Although they have the same goal, the protection needs of refugees and asylum seekers are different from those of migrants.
- **Migrant:** When a person freely decides to move to a foreign country for their own reasons and without knowing whether it will be for a specific or permanent period of time, they are called a migrant. The migrant usually seeks better economic or social conditions for him/her-self and his/her family.
- **Economic immigrant:** A person who moves from his/her country of origin with the main purpose of improving his/her economic and

social level. An economic immigrant can be a legal or illegal immigrant.

- **Illegal immigrant:** The most widespread form of immigration occurs when a person enters or attempts to enter a country without having the necessary documents (travel documents) and without meeting the legal requirements for entering or leaving a country.
- **Repatriates:** The people of this minority speak a different language, come from different places and have differences in the reasons for repatriation and immigration. They are usually not treated as a single group, since their cultural differences are great. Also, their relationship with Greek culture is different in how they use the language and how they perceive traditions. In their personal lives they speak their own language, while in their workplace or in education they try to speak Greek. Like the Albanians, they also simultaneously maintain the culture of their country of origin and try to adapt to Greek culture [9].
- **Labor migration:** When migration is related to reasons of professional employment, it is called labor migration. The interested countries that attract labor usually apply strict professional criteria, based on their professional requirements. In the European Union, many countries practice immigration policies that encourage highly qualified employment.
- **UNHCR:** It is the agency under the United Nations Organization and is responsible for refugees. After the end of World War I, the League of Nations, the predecessor of the United Nations, began the process of implementing a body of international law to deal with refugees. Thus, in 1950, after World War II, the UN General Assembly established the UNHCR and began its full operation in January 1951. When World War II ended and the incalculable devastation it left behind, the desire of states was to create an effective organization that would take care of the protection of refugees for their interests. In addition, the UNHCR would support governments so that there would be permanent solutions for refugees [6].

3. HISTORICAL REVIEW OF MIGRATION TO GREECE

Before the Greek state was recognized as independent from the Ottomans, the governments of the revolution were faced with the phenomenon of refugee movement. According to Andriotis [10] and what is recorded in his texts, the "Community of the Island of Aegina", in the year 1825, to the "Respected Executive Body", several dozen Greeks, from the areas of Psara and Chios, which had not yet passed into Greek ownership, gathered in Aegina, the capital of the then rebellious nation, to escape from the

Ottoman shackles. This excessive concentration of population on the island created a problem, since there were not enough houses to accommodate them.

Later, Ioannis Capodistrias (the first Governor of the free Greek state), in order to deal with this phenomenon, proceeded to build new houses and donate land to citizens. These tactics of dealing with refugees were continued by subsequent governments, but problems arose between the locals and the foreigners, who refused to accept them in their place [10].

Similar phenomena continued during the 19th century, with Greeks constantly fleeing Ottoman territories towards Greece, until the great persecution after the "Catastrophe of Smyrna" and the compulsory population exchange (1922-24) from all over Asia Minor and the arrival of 1,230,000 Greek Christians and 45,000 Armenian refugees in Greece [11].

At this point in history, the Greek state was faced with the management and rehabilitation of this large refugee population. The difficult and demanding task of including and embodying the Asia Minor refugees was faced by the Refugee Resettlement Committee, settling these people in former Muslim areas, such as Thrace and Macedonia, or in settlements created around large urban centers. The whole task proved to be particularly difficult in practice, due to both the large population (1,250,000 people) and the cultural differences between natives and immigrants, which were often reinforced by the different language. In order to eliminate these phenomena and reduce the suspicion of the citizens of Greece, the first schools were established, which had as their ultimate goal complete linguistic Hellenization. This was because most of the refugees who came from Asia Minor coasts and Pontus were Turkish-speaking Christians [12].

Following all this, in the late 1930s, the Metaxas (Prime Minister) regime decided to engage in adult education. Thus, as part of its government actions to eliminate the use of many and different languages, it established night schools, mainly in Turkish-speaking areas. The attendance of adults in each area was mandatory, in order to eliminate the phenomenon of multilingualism and to make them feel proud as Greeks [12].

FOREIGNERS LIVING IN GREECE

In the late 1980s and onwards, the phenomenon of the inflow of immigrants to Greece appeared strongly and uncontrollably. The largest percentage of these immigrants came from Albania (after the opening of the borders), Bulgaria, Poland and Pontian immigrants from countries of the former

Soviet Union. The specific flows of this period were mainly illegal, since the majority of them lacked the necessary documents, which is why the term “illegal economic immigrants” prevailed [8].

In recent years, several surveys and studies have been carried out on this group of people, either by the Hellenic Statistical Agency or other organizations, without distinguishing the individual differences between immigrants, refugees and returnees, or their subcategories. This results in an overall picture of the “foreigners” residing in Greece, without knowing in essence how many are refugees, how many are immigrants and how many are returnees, etc [2].

From the 2001 census data, from the Hellenic National Statistical Agency, it was recorded that the foreign population residing in Greece was just over 762,000. Of these, 47,000 were nationals of other EU countries, and another 3,000 were refugees, i.e., approximately 7% of the total population of Greece. Of all the foreigners in Greece, approximately 2/3 are of Albanian nationality, 5% are Bulgarians, 3% Georgians and 3% Romanians. Furthermore, Greece is the only country in the EU in which more than half of its foreigners come from a single country (Albania).

Of the refugees who have applied for asylum, most come mainly from Iraq (2300 people) and constitute 45% of all refugees who applied for asylum in 2002. Also, in 2003 their percentage was the highest with 35.2% [13]. Foreigners in Greece also come from Iran, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Congo, the countries of the former Soviet Union, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Egypt, Turkey, China, Kurdistan, etc.

Meanwhile, from the 2011 population census by the Hellenic Statistical Agency [5], the following data emerged:

- 9,904,286 are Greek citizens,
- 199,121 are citizens of other European Union countries,
- 708,054 are citizens of other countries and
- 4,825 people are stateless or have unspecified citizenship.

The percentage of these nationals is divided as follows:

- 52.7% Albanians,
- 8.3% Bulgarians,
- 5.1% Romanians,
- 3.7% Pakistanis,
- 3.0% Georgians.

Based on the recorded data, a number of approximately 850,000 immigrants and refugees arrived in Greece in 2015 (up from approximately 41,000 in 2014), mainly via Turkey (by sea and land). Of these, 59% were from Syria, 24% from Afghanistan and 8% from Iraq. In particular, in 2015, there was an increase in refugee flows, which peaked in October, when they reached 210,824, while in the following months they decreased to 136,827 in November and 103,338 in December. The average daily arrivals of migrants and refugees for the year 2015 ranged from 4,560 in November and 3,333 in December, mainly on the island of Lesbos. For the year 2016, according to data [5], the arrivals of refugees and migrants reached 156,150, of which approximately 58% were recorded on the island of Lesbos. Of these, 40% were men, 21% women and 38% children [4].

SOCIAL EXCLUSION OF IMMIGRANTS AND VULNERABLE SOCIAL GROUPS

In recent years in Greece during the crisis, the term Vulnerable or Vulnerable Social Groups has been mentioned more and more frequently. These are groups of people who, while often given the opportunity and the ability to have free access to spiritual and material goods, fail for various reasons to take advantage of it and therefore do not benefit from the goods enjoyed by other social groups. These population groups fall into a state of social exclusion or on the verge of it [14].

According to the Ombudsman, “Vulnerable Population Groups”, or High-Risk Groups, usually refer to those groups that have no access at all or have limited access to social and public goods. Law 4019/2011 [15], on the Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurship, defines in article 1, paragraph 4, “Vulnerable Population Groups” as follows:

In general, by the term “Vulnerable Population Groups”, we mean those social groups of individuals who face obstacles in their efforts to participate in the social and economic life of the place. This can happen for various reasons, such as:

- Social problems,
- Economic problems,
- Due to a disability (such as physical, mental, intellectual, sensory),
- Due to some unforeseen events, which affect the functioning of the regional economy.

According to this law, Vulnerable Population Groups are divided into two categories:

- a) In the “Vulnerable Population Groups”, whose attempt to integrate into social and economic life is hindered by various physical and mental causes or due to some delinquent behavior. This category includes people with

disabilities (physical, mental, intellectual), people who are addicted to substances or are recovering, people who are HIV positive, people who have recently been released from prison or are still in prison, juvenile delinquents.

b) In the “Special Population Groups”, which include population groups that cannot easily integrate into the labor market, due to economic, social and cultural reasons. These population groups include:

- Refugees, immigrants and returnees;
- Young unemployed and long-term unemployed;
- Unemployed women and unemployed people over fifty;
- Single-parent families;
- Members of large families;
- Women who have suffered some form of abuse;
- Illiterate people;
- Residents of remote areas (islands & mountains);
- People with cultural differences;
- Lawbreakers or those whose behavior deviates;
- People who have just been released from prison;
- Women, mainly, who have been victims of human trafficking;
- People with physical or mental disabilities;
- People from ethnic minorities;
- People who have left school early.

Also, a term that has been directly linked to Vulnerable Social Groups is “inclusion”, which describes the process of including these individuals into society, mainly through education and employment.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, in this article we referred to the refugee issue and the reasons that lead a person or a group of people to migrate from their homeland. Then we analyzed the categories of migration and provided a historical review in relation to migration in Greece. We recorded that migration is distinguished into 2 basic categories, that which has as its ultimate motivation economic reasons and that which is forced due to various unfavorable conditions or situations for the person. Then we analyzed the terms related to migration and gave definitions such as refugee and immigrant. We also talked about socially vulnerable population groups, that is, those groups that have no access at all or have limited access to social and public goods, which includes

refugees and immigrants and the social exclusion they suffer.

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