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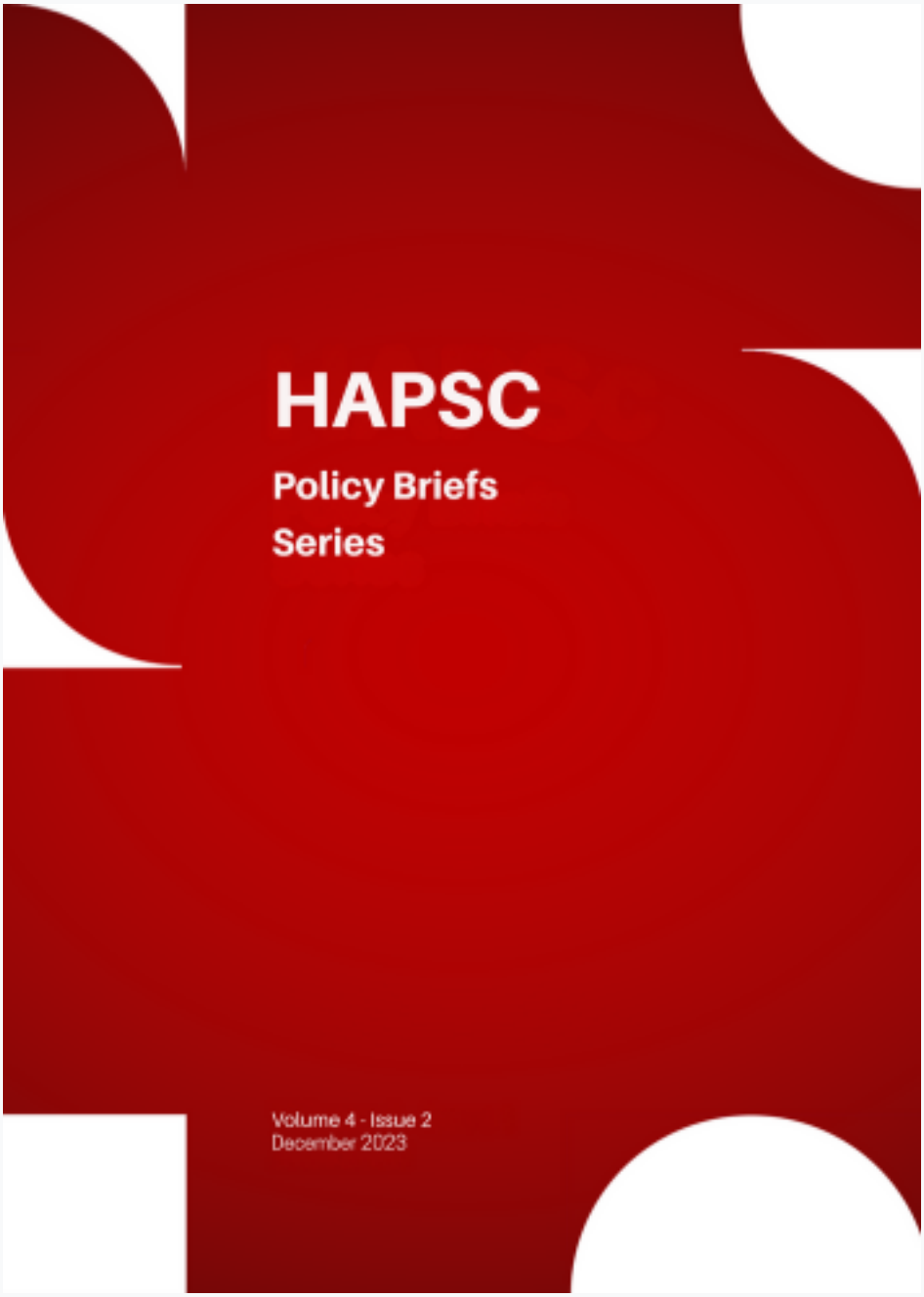

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Topic 1

Health Politics and Policies

Water Pollution and Children's Health[1,2]

Aikaterini Ntokou[3], Sofia Kapeni[4], Armandos Papadimitriou[5],
Katerina Lefkidou[6] & Sofia-Ioanna Tsalopoulou[7]

Abstract

Water is the basic element for human survival and plays an important role to sustainable and socio-economic development, energy and food production, the preservation of healthy ecosystems. However, it is neglected, misused and undervalued as society does not protect it from various threats, climate change and pollution. The latter has affected freshwater sources, followed by an impact to children, as they are extremely sensitive to pollution. Most relevant water contaminants that affect are lead, pesticides, arsenic, perchlorate and nitrates. Addressing the problem and its components, the next step is to give answers to the issue outlining best practices and useful policy recommendations.

Key Words: water pollution, water scarcity, water contaminants, children's health, climate change.

Introduction

One of the most basic human rights is access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene, which is, also, an important need for health and well-being. Factors, such as rapid population growth, urbanization and increasing demand for water from all sectors (agriculture, industry, energy) are influencing the exacerbation of the rising water demand (UN, 2023). According to UNESCO, one in three people don't have access to drinking water (WHO, 2019) and 1.8 million deaths are caused by water pollution annually. Environmental pollution is an underrecognized threat to children's health (Suk et al., 2016).

In spite of the size of the problem, international development and global health agendas do not address it with the same value (Landrigan et al., 2019). The purpose of this policy brief is to address the issue of water scarcity and pollution to children's health and to share and promote the best practices and recommendations from the experts.

Water Scarcity and Water Pollution

Water scarcity is a constantly growing problem and it can be defined relatively as the amount of water that cannot be physically accessed easily as supply, therefore its demand for population changes,

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increases and/or as water supply is affected by decreasing quantity or quality (UN, n.d.).

On the other hand, water pollution is when water is contaminated by different sources, mostly polluted substances such as chemicals, trash, bacteria, and parasites, which make the water unusable for drinking, cooking, cleaning, swimming, and other activities. It is notable that pollution in any form eventually ends up in water. Pollutants from air might settle onto lakes and oceans and from land could make into an underground stream, following a river, and finally to the ocean. As a consequence, waste materials can eventually contaminate the water nearby (Last, 2007).

Why is water scarcity an issue?

On the one hand, the efficiency of water use has risen by 9% and between the years 2015 and 2022, access to safe drinking water increased from 69% to 73%. However, many countries still face problems with water stress -2.4 billion people lived in those in 2020 (UN, 2023)- and water scarcity -half of the world's population is already threatened at least one month a year (WMO, 2022). Therefore, the UN concerns that this number will quadruple unless effective actions are made to tackle these tremendous results of climate change (UN, 2023). Respectively, limiting global warming from 2°C to 1.5°C would approximately decrease by half the percentage of the world population expected to suffer from water scarcity (Douville et al. 2021).

Freshwater, essential for humans and ecosystems, is menaced by the sea-level rise, therefore the extended salinization of groundwater (Bates et al. 2008). Furthermore, food supply would suffer from water scarcity, as agriculture uses about 70% of global freshwater on average. To understand the impact of water in food supply in numbers, FAO estimates that 1kg of cereal requires 1 and 3 tons of water to grow, a kilogram of beef takes up to 15 tons and the production of daily food needs between 2.000 and 5.000 liters. In the last 30 years, there has been an enormous increase (more than 100%) of food production and by 2050 the need for food will rise up to 60% (FAO, 2017).

Why is water pollution an issue?

Clean water is not something to take for granted considering the fact that climate change is affecting the supply of water on Earth, which only 0.5% is usable and available freshwater (WMO, 2021). In the previous year, 2.2 billion people didn't have access to safely managed drinking water, 703 million people didn't have a basic water service, 3.5 billion people were living in environments that lacked safely managed sanitation and 1.5 billion of those were without basic sanitation services. Moreover, 2 billion couldn't wash their hands in a facility and 653 million didn't have a handwashing facility at all (UN, 2023).

Climate change has aroused extreme and severe weather events that impact the water supply and quality (Caretta, et al. 2022). Rising global temperatures affect the moisture of the atmosphere, resulting on the one hand in storms and heavy rains, followed by floods, which in that case remote rivers are not safe as water resources (FAO, 2017; World Bank, 2021). Since 2000 rain-generated floods have increased by 134%, with most of person and economic losses recorded in Asia (WMO, 2021). On the other hand, global warming provokes drought risk because of the intense dry spells and water evaporation (World Bank, 2021). The number and duration of droughts also increased by 29% compared with the two previous decades, with most drought-related deaths in Africa (WMO, 2021). Water quality is affected by frequent floods and droughts and it is projected to exacerbate many forms of water pollution – from sediments to pathogens and pesticides (Bates et al. 2008).

Sources of water contamination are runoff from farms, ranches, animal feeding operations (large industrial animal farms), manufacturing operations, excessive use of fertilizers, pesticides and chemicals that can impact the water quality of rivers, lakes, water and groundwater (Etzel & Balk, 2019), sewer overflows, storm water, rocks and soil that naturally have chemicals and minerals such as arsenic, radon, and uranium, cracks in water pipes or other problems in the distribution system (CDC, 2022).

Who is vulnerable to water pollution?

Among the most vulnerable population to get sick from germs and chemicals in water are infants and young children (CDC, 2022). Children consume more food and water in proportion to their body weight and thus, they are more likely to be exposed to contaminated water (Galvez & Balk, 2017). In addition, since their metabolic and organ systems are still developing, they are at risk of coming in contact with or ingesting chemicals when they are eating, putting objects in their mouth or crawling (Paulson & Council on Environmental Health, 2011). In 2016, pollution in air, water, soil and from chemicals caused 940,000 deaths in children worldwide, two-thirds of them in children under 5 years old. Main reasons were respiratory and gastrointestinal diseases caused by polluted air and water (Landrigan et al, 2019). Every year, 297.000 children under the age of 5 years die because of diarrhea linked to inadequate handwashing. Diseases such as cholera, dysentery, hepatitis A, and typhoid are associated with poor sanitation and contaminated water, too (WHO, 2019).

People familiar to children, healthcare professionals and parents, should be informed about the possible pollutants and their effects for the purpose of protecting the health of their children. As follows, it is important to explain the most relevant water contaminants that affect children's health,

which are lead, pesticides, arsenic, perchlorate and nitrates (Bantol et al., 2020), their health effects, with the intention of suggesting policy recommendations.

Water Contaminants

Lead exposure

First of all, lead exists in various sources, such as drinking water, playing with toys, jewelry, antiques or in fields with contaminated dust or soil, getting in contact with paint chips and dust from lead paint in buildings and homes built before 1978 and in some candy and candy wrappers (National Center for Environmental Health, 2022). Drinking water contaminated with lead is due to plumbing materials that contain lead corrode (in pipes, faucets, fictures). Lead absorption is associated with low levels of calcium, iron, and zinc in blood among infants aged 6 and 12 months and in adults during periods of calcium deficiency stored lead into blood is affecting both maternal and fetal blood lead levels (BLLs) (National Toxicology Program, 2012). If the level of lead in a child's blood is at or above the CDC action level of 3.5 micrograms per deciliter, it may be due to lead exposures from a combination of sources (EPA, 2023).

EPA estimates that up 20% or more of one's total exposure to lead can be drinking water and for infants who consume mostly mixed formula, the percentage reaches 40% to 60% of their exposure to lead from drinking water (EPA, 2023). Children in school and child care settings might be exposed to lead as, unfortunately, in most facilities, lead testing in drinking water is not required by law, thereby protecting them from lead in water varies across countries (GAO, 2020). Some of the serious dangers of lead exposure are damage to the brain and nervous system, slowed growth and development, learning and behavior problems, hearing and speech problems. Additionally, even low levels of lead in the blood of children can result in behavior and learning problems (Shadbegian et al. 2019), lower IQ and hyperactivity, slowed growth, hearing problems and anemia (EPA, 2023).

Pesticides

Pesticides are reagents for protecting crops against harmful pests, insect-borne diseases in humans and increased the quality and quantity of food. However, their excessive use raised issues on affecting the environment, including water resources. Pesticides occur in soils and streambed sediment, groundwater and surface water due to agricultural activities, urban use and pesticide production factories (Syafrudin et al., 2021). 1 billion pounds of pesticides is applied annually to agricultural land, non-crop land, and urban areas throughout the United States (Water Science School, 2018). People may be exposed to pesticides from food (insecticides, herbicides, fungicides) and in some

water supplies where there are still running by conventional drinking water treatment technologies (Bantol et al., 2020).

Pesticide contamination in acute ratio might lead to symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, eye irritation, coughing, shortness of breath (Galvez & Balk, 2017) and long-term exposure to low concentration has results in non-carcinogenic health risks (Syafrudin et al., 2021). Exposure to pesticides during pregnancy is associated with miscarriages, birth defects, such as gastroschisis (Shaw et al., 2014), urogenital and nervous systems' malformations, childhood cancer (risk of lymphomas, leukemia, bone tumor), neurobehavioral disorders (Matysiak et al., 2016), musculoskeletal development, poor cognitive function in school-aged children, lower scores on tests that require working memory, reasoning, comprehension and low IQ among agricultural families (Bouchard et al., 2011).

Arsenic

Arsenic is a widely metalloid found in soils, rocks, food, water and air that can be released through natural (volcanic eruptions, groundwater) and human (mining, commercial use) processes (CDC, 2018). Exposure to inorganic arsenic could cause cancer in skin, lungs, urinary bladder, kidney and, possibly, liver. Symptoms of acute poisoning are vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhea, followed by numbness, tingling of the extremities, muscle cramping and death, in extreme cases. Moreover, effects after a long period of time could be skin pigmentation changes, skin lesions, hard patches on the palms and soles of the feet (hyperkeratosis), and adverse health effects may be developmental effects, diabetes, pulmonary disease and cardiovascular disease. Regarding children, arsenic is associated with adverse pregnancy outcomes, infant mortality (Quansah et al., 2015), increased mortality in young adults due to multiple cancers, lung disease, heart attacks and kidney failure (Farzan et al., 2013), problems with cognitive development, intelligence and memory (Tolins et al., 2014).

Perchlorate and Nitrate

Perchlorate and nitrate are common environmental pollutants in daily life. The former appears in military operations, explosives, fireworks, and notably high in drinking water and food (Nizinski et al., 2020). The latter is used as agricultural fertilizers, preservatives in processed meats and in contaminated water and leafy vegetables (Ward et al., 2018). Consequences of exposure to perchlorate and nitrate are perturbed thyroid homeostasis by lack of iodine uptake (Pleus & Corey, 2018), reproductive problems as urinary perchlorate and nitrate levels may relate to serum total testosterone levels in specific sex-age groups (Han et al., 2023). Evidence also showed that mothers

with thyroid problems due to perchlorate levels had high risk of having a child with lower IQ at 3 years old (Taylor et al., 2014).

Policy Recommendations and Conclusions

The quality and adequate quantity of water is one of the principal challenges our world face that threatens human health, limits food production, disturbs ecosystem functions and menaces economic growth. Water scarcity along with pollution of freshwater resources have a greater impact that might lead to an untreated situation. Pollution has a tremendous impact on children's health and the global burden of pediatric disease is still unknown. Also, chemical exposure and potential toxicity is underestimated. In order to understand the occurrence and association of pediatric NCDs and pollution, as well as the health effects, it is essential to invest in research to define new chemical pollutants, their characteristics and their associations to diseases (Landrigan et al. 2019).

Prevention is the key to pollution and it can be an opportunity to ameliorate children's health and prevent possible diseases (Landrigan et al. 2019). Collectively and individually, we have the duty to diminish this problem by taking the right actions, widely known from the professionals. Some solutions that can manage the danger from climate change are:

- Plan, implement and evaluate water management policies for healthy aquatic ecosystems aiming at lower greenhouse gas emissions and protection against climate hazards (Water and Climate Coalition).
- Nature based solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect from extreme weather events, such as wetlands (mangroves, seagrasses, marshes, swamps) which are highly effective at absorbing and storaging of CO2, excess water from storms and precipitation (UNEP, n.d.)
- Invest in early warning systems for floods, droughts and other water-related hazards to reduce disaster risk (30% less damage after a 24-hour warning of a coming storm) (WMO, 2022).
- Invest and use of water supply and sanitation systems (ex. filter certified to reduce chemicals, lead, reverse osmosis or anion exchange for perchlorate and nitrates treatment) and facilities that can withstand climate change (Mountford et al., 2018; Maffini et al., 2016).
- Use of climate-smart agriculture means (drip irrigation) (UNEP, n.d.).
- Invest in implementing programs for the protection and restoration of water-related ecosystems and hygiene education (EPA, 2023c)

- Regarding children's protection from chemicals' exposure, healthcare professionals (pediatricians, specialized nurses, health visitors) could play an important role in the prevention of drinking contaminant water, with regular recommendations, consultations and providing educational resources to children's parents (EPA, 2023b).
- National, local and community leaders should strengthen communication systems to improve access to information regarding water pollution and quality with civil society (Scharp et al., 2019).
- Water-service providers (public and private) could develop and manage drinking-water safety plans to meet drinking-water standards and safeguard supplies against potential risks (Scharp et al., 2019).
- Construction services should cooperate with water-service providers and public health specialists with the aim of investigation, surveillance and management of water utility services in buildings constructed before 1978, especially schools, due to high risk of lead and pesticide pollution (National Center for Environmental Health, 2022).
- Educate and engage the community members to understand the risks of chemicals, exposure, their sources (crops, cooking water) (WHO, 2022).
- High-risk populations should be monitored. Although children with lead in their blood may seem healthy and have no visible signs or symptoms, CDC recommends blood testing at the age of 12 and 24 months (CDC, 2022). Usually, skin problems might be early signs of arsenic poisoning (WHO, 2022).
- Install arsenic removal systems – either centralized or domestic – and ensure the appropriate disposal of the removed arsenic. Technologies for arsenic removal include oxidation, coagulation-precipitation, absorption, ion exchange and membrane techniques.
- Reduce occupational exposure from industrial processes.
- Independent surveillance agencies could be responsible to assess the relationships and performance of sector institutions (ex. schools) in meeting health-based targets (Scharp et al., 2019).
- Decision makers should advocate on policy and regulatory reforms regarding water quality and protection. Also, civil society should force decision makers to advocate about those matters (Scharp et al., 2019).

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Quality in Health Care: The Case of the Intensive Care Unit (ICU)[1]

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Abstract

Quality in healthcare organizations is achieved by increasing the delivery of desired outcomes to individuals and population groups in accordance with current professional knowledge. The Intensive Care Unit (ICU) is a specially equipped and staffed department of the hospital. The improvement of the quality of the services provided in the ICU is evaluated by quality indicators which assess all interventions, direct and indirect, to the patient. The aim of this study is to investigate and present improvement of quality in the ICU. The methodology followed includes literature review of contemporary studies and articles in PubMed and Google Scholar databases from 2003 to date. From the thorough analysis of the international and Greek literature it appears that quality in the services provided in ICU is achieved when it focuses on patient survival and safety, patient and family satisfaction, effectiveness, equity, timeliness and efficiency. Quality indicators that assess quality in ICU aim to document and support quality in the care provided, compare hospitals, establish priorities and enable patients to choose a health care structure in order to be helped effectively. A study of the international literature makes it clear that improving quality in ICU implies providing more effective care and ensuring a rational allocation of available resources.

Keywords: Quality, ICU (Intensive Care Unit), quality indicators, evaluation, patients.

Ποιότητα στην Υγεία: Η Περίπτωση της Μονάδας Εντατικής Θεραπείας (Μ.Ε.Θ.)

Σταματίνα Δούκη & Μάρθα Κελέση-Σταυροπούλου

Περίληψη

Η ποιότητα στην υγεία επιτυγχάνεται με την αύξηση της παροχής των επιθυμητών αποτελεσμάτων στα άτομα και στις πληθυσμιακές ομάδες, σύμφωνα με τις σύγχρονες επαγγελματικές γνώσεις. Η Μονάδα Εντατικής Θεραπείας (ΜΕΘ) αποτελεί ένα ειδικά εξοπλισμένο και στελεχωμένο τμήμα του νοσοκομείου. Η βελτίωση της ποιότητας των παρεχόμενων υπηρεσιών στη Μ.Ε.Θ. αξιολογείται με δείκτες ποιότητας, που εκτιμούν το σύνολο των παρεμβάσεων, άμεσων και έμμεσων, προς τον ασθενή. Η παρούσα ερευνητική μελέτη στοχεύει στη διερεύνηση και στην παρουσίαση της βελτίωσης της ποιότητας στη Μ.Ε.Θ. Η μεθοδολογία που ακολουθήθηκε περιλαμβάνει την ανασκόπηση σύγχρονων μελετών και άρθρων στις βάσεις δεδομένων PubMed και Google Scholar από το 2003 μέχρι σήμερα. Από την ενδελεχή μελέτη της διεθνούς και ελληνικής βιβλιογραφίας, φαίνεται ότι η ποιότητα στις παρεχόμενες υπηρεσίες στη Μ.ΕΘ. επιτυγχάνεται όταν εστιάζεται στην επιβίωση και στην ασφάλεια των ασθενών, στην ικανοποίηση αυτών και των οικογενειών τους, στην αποτελεσματικότητα, στην ισότητα, στην επικαιροποίηση και στην αποδοτικότητα. Οι δείκτες ποιότητας που αξιολογούν την ποιότητα στη Μ.Ε.Θ. στοχεύουν στην

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τεκμηρίωση και στην υποστήριξη της ποιότητας στην παρεχόμενη φροντίδα, στη σύγκριση των νοσοκομείων, στη θέσπιση προτεραιοτήτων και στη δυνατότητα των ασθενών να επιλέξουν δομή υγείας προκειμένου να βοηθηθούν αποτελεσματικά. Η μελέτη της διεθνούς βιβλιογραφίας, καθιστά ξεκάθαρο ότι η βελτίωση της ποιότητας στη Μ.Ε.Θ. συνεπάγεται παροχή αποτελεσματικότερης περίθαλψης, καθώς και διασφάλιση ορθολογικής κατανομής των διαθέσιμων πόρων.

Keywords: Ποιότητα, Μ.Ε.Θ. (Μονάδα Εντατικής Θεραπείας), δείκτες ποιότητας, αξιολόγηση, ασθενείς.

Εισαγωγή

Σύμφωνα με το Institute of Medicine (IOM), οι οργανισμοί υγειονομικής περίθαλψης είναι πολύπλοκα συστήματα και αποτελούνται από ένα σύμπλεγμα αλληλεπιδρώντων στοιχείων μεταξύ τους, τα οποία προσαρμόζονται στο διαρκώς μεταβαλλόμενο εξωτερικό περιβάλλον. Η Μονάδα Εντατικής Θεραπείας (Μ.Ε.Θ.) ως υποσύστημα ενός οργανισμού υγειονομικής περίθαλψης, φέρει όλα τα χαρακτηριστικά των πολύπλοκων προσαρμοστικών συστημάτων υγείας (Laszlo & Krippner, 1998). Οι διαδικασίες που ακολουθούνται στη Μ.Ε.Θ., οι οποίες αποτελούν τον ακρογωνιαίο λίθο για την επίτευξη ποιότητας στις παρεχόμενες υπηρεσίες, οφείλουν να εστιάζονται στην επιβίωση των ασθενών και στην ικανοποίηση αυτών και των οικογενειών τους (Ervin, 2006; Thiedke, 2007; Latour, et al, 2008). Εξάλλου, η εντατική θεραπεία που παρέχεται σε βαριά πάσχοντες (ασθενείς με νοσήματα απειλητικά για τη ζωή, τραύματα κ. ά) διερευνά τους κινδύνους που σχετίζονται με την εξαιρετικά περίπλοκη περίθαλψη και παρέχει ασφάλεια στους ασθενείς, με την αποφυγή ενδεχόμενου τραυματισμού που συνοδεύει τις παρεχόμενες υπηρεσίες.

Η ασφάλεια των ασθενών αποτελεί σημαντικό στοιχείο της εντατικής θεραπείας και εντάσσεται στην ποιότητα της υγειονομικής περίθαλψης (LT, 2000). Η βελτίωση της ποιότητας στη Μ.Ε.Θ. στοχεύει στην αναδιαμόρφωση του παρεχόμενου έργου και στην αλλαγή της οργανωσιακής κουλτούρας. Πιο ειδικά, η βελτίωση της ποιότητας στη ΜΕΘ με την προώθηση της ασφάλειας των ασθενών, έχει ηθικές (Finkler, 2008; White, et al, 2007), οικονομικές (Dimick, et al, 2006) και κοινωνικές διαστάσεις (Rie & Kofke, 2007), αποτελώντας επιτακτική ανάγκη για τα επόμενα χρόνια. Τα ανεπιθύμητα συμβάντα και λάθη που προκύπτουν, δεν οφείλονται μόνο σε λανθασμένες ανθρώπινες ενέργειες, αλλά κυρίως στην απουσία διαδικασιών αναδιαμόρφωσης των παρεχόμενων υπηρεσιών και υλοποίησης των λύσεων, όπως περιγράφονται από τη World Alliance (LT, 2000; Wolfe, 2001) και είναι κατάλληλες για ασφαλέστερη υγειονομική περίθαλψη.

Ωστόσο, αξιοσημείωτο είναι ότι η περίοδος από το 1980 μέχρι σήμερα χαρακτηρίζεται από την προσπάθεια προσδιορισμού των αιτιών που προκαλούν το υψηλό επίπεδο του κόστους ποιότητας, το οποίο λειτουργεί ανασταλτικά στη βελτίωση της ποιότητας υγείας (Binioris, 2009).

Η έννοια της ποιότητας στην υγεία

Η διασφάλιση της ποιότητας στην υγεία, μέχρι τα τέλη της δεκαετίας του 1970, έχει περισσότερο ακαδημαϊκό χαρακτήρα σε αντίθεση με άλλους τομείς (όπως η βιομηχανία) όπου εφαρμόζεται συστηματικά από τη δεκαετία του 1930. Ο Avedis Donabedian διενεργώντας μία ανασκόπηση των μελετών κατά την περίοδο 1954-1984 και καταγράφοντας τις προσπάθειες που πραγματοποιήθηκαν για τη διαμόρφωση του πλαισίου διασφάλισης ποιότητας, ορίζει την έννοια της ποιότητας. Σύμφωνα με τον Donabedian η ποιότητα στην υγεία ορίζεται ως: «ο βαθμός που αυξάνουν την πιθανότητα οι υγειονομικοί οργανισμοί να παρέχουν τα επιθυμητά αποτελέσματα υγείας στα άτομα και στις πληθυσμιακές ομάδες, σύμφωνα με τις σύγχρονες επαγγελματικές γνώσεις» (Donabedian, 1979). Ο ερευνητής στην έννοια της ποιότητας συμπεριλαμβάνει τρεις σημαντικούς άξονες: τη δομή, τη διαδικασία και τα αποτελέσματα, που αποτελούν θεμελιώδη συστατικά για τη διασφάλιση της ποιότητας και τη σφαιρική ανάπτυξη των υγειονομικών οργανισμών, συνθήκες που μέχρι σήμερα δεν έχουν αναπτυχθεί στον επιθυμητό βαθμό (Becker & Formisano, 2006).

Πιο συγκεκριμένα, η δομή αναφέρεται στον τρόπο σχεδιασμού και στις συνθήκες της παρεχόμενης φροντίδας στις υπηρεσίες υγείας. Η δομή στις υπηρεσίες υγείας περιλαμβάνει τις εγκαταστάσεις, τον εξοπλισμό, το ανθρώπινο δυναμικό (σε αριθμό και σε εκπαίδευση), τα έντυπα μητρώου, καθώς και τα οργανωτικά χαρακτηριστικά, όπως: η ερευνητική δραστηριότητα και η οργάνωση του παραγόμενου έργου, ώστε η υγειονομική μονάδα να εκτελέσει ορθά την αποστολή της. Ωστόσο, στη ΜΕΘ υπάρχει ετερογένεια στη δομή, τόσο μεταξύ των χωρών όσο και μεταξύ των διαφορετικών περιοχών μιας χώρας. Η διαδικασία περιλαμβάνει τη διάγνωση, τη θεραπεία, την πρόληψη, καθώς και τις δραστηριότητες της παρεχόμενης φροντίδας στον ασθενή και στην οικογένειά του (ποιές είναι επιτυχείς και ποιές όχι) (Michou, 2017). Αναλυτικότερα, η διαδικασία οφείλει να προσθέτει αξία στο τελικό αποτέλεσμα δηλ. οι προσδοκίες των ασθενών να είναι σύμφωνες με την παρεχόμενη υπηρεσία. Ως εκ τούτου, η Μ.ΕΘ. οφείλει να ικανοποιεί τις απαιτήσεις και τις προσδοκίες των ασθενών και των οικογενειών τους, καθώς και όλων όσων εμπλέκονται με το παραγόμενο έργο (Gallesio, 2008). Τα αποτελέσματα περιγράφουν τις επιθυμητές αλλαγές ή μη που συμβαίνουν στον ασθενή από την παρεχόμενη φροντίδα υγείας και είναι βαρύνουσας σημασίας για την έκβαση του ασθενούς στη Μ.Ε.Θ. (Michou K, 2017).

Το Institute of Medicine (IOM) ορίζει 6 στόχους για τη βελτίωση της ποιότητας. Πρώτος στόχος είναι η ασφάλεια και ακολούθως η αποτελεσματικότητα, η ισότητα, η επικαιροποίηση, η εστίαση στον ασθενή και η αποδοτικότητα. Σύμφωνα με το IOM, η διασφάλιση ποιότητας είναι ανέφικτη χωρίς ένα επιτυχημένο πρόγραμμα ασφάλειας και η ασφάλεια είναι εξίσου ανέφικτη, εάν ο υγειονομικός οργανισμός δεν εστιάζει στην ποιότητα (LT, 2000). Επιπροσθέτως, τα συστήματα

διασφάλισης ποιότητας στους οργανισμούς υγείας έχουν ιδιαίτερα χαρακτηριστικά, σε σχέση με άλλους οργανισμούς, όπως: ευελιξία, σταθερότητα, σημαντικότητα, ανταποκρισιμότητα, αξιοπιστία και ερμηνευτική αξία (χρησιμότητα) και έχουν ως σκοπό τη σύγκριση και τη βελτίωση της ποιότητας της παρεχόμενης φροντίδας υγείας (De Vos, et al., 2007).

Ποιότητα στη Μ.Ε.Θ.

Η ΜΕΘ είναι ένα ιδιαίτερο τμήμα με πολλές λειτουργίες που απαιτεί διάφορα επίπεδα γνώσης και πρέπει να διαθέτει την κατάλληλη υλικοτεχνική υποδομή και στελέχωση, έτσι ώστε το εξειδικευμένο προσωπικό με την ορθή χρήση της τεχνολογίας να παρέχει υπηρεσίες ποιοτικής φροντίδας στους βαριά πάσχοντες (De Vos, et al, 2007; Robert, et al, 2000).

Στη ΜΕΘ η εφαρμογή συστημάτων ποιότητας είναι καθοριστικής σημασίας, καθώς αποτελούν υγειονομικούς χώρους με αυξημένη νοσηρότητα και θνησιμότητα, που διαφέρουν μεταξύ των νοσοκομείων. Αυτή η διαφορετικότητα στην έκβαση των ασθενών, στις Μ.Ε.Θ. των διαφόρων νοσοκομείων, αποδίδεται κυρίως στις δομικές και διαδικαστικές διαφορές σχετικά με την παροχή φροντίδας υγείας. Συνεπώς, κατανοώντας αυτούς τους παράγοντες και ορίζοντας συστήματα διασφάλισης της ποιότητας, αυξάνεται η πιθανότητα επίτευξης ομοιογένειας μεταξύ των ΜΕΘ και κατ΄ επέκτασιν βελτιώνεται το επίπεδο της παρεχόμενης φροντίδας (De Vos, et al, 2010). Εξάλλου, σύμφωνα με μελέτη σημαντικοί άξονες για την εύρυθμη λειτουργία στη Μ.Ε.Θ. είναι: η ασφάλεια, η έγκαιρη αντιμετώπιση και η αποτελεσματικότητα (Chrusch & Martin, 2016).

Ωστόσο, για τη βελτίωση της ποιότητας στη Μ.Ε.Θ. και για την παροχή αποτελεσματικότερης φροντίδας στους ασθενείς χρησιμοποιούνται ως εργαλεία μέτρησης οι δείκτες ποιότητας. Η χρησιμότητα των δεικτών ποιότητας σχετίζεται με τις υγειονομικές υπηρεσίες (λειτουργικότητα Μονάδων), με τους επαγγελματίες υγείας (αξιολόγηση πορείας ασθενών) και με τους ασθενείς. Ταυτόχρονα, οι δείκτες ποιότητας στοχεύουν: στην τεκμηρίωση και στην υποστήριξη της ποιότητας της παρεχόμενης φροντίδας, στη σύγκριση των νοσοκομείων, στη θέσπιση προτεραιοτήτων και στη δυνατότητα του ασθενούς να επιλέξει δομή υγείας προκειμένου να βοηθηθεί αποτελεσματικά (Mainz, 2003).

Άλλες μελέτες στη ΜΕ.Θ., χρησιμοποιώντας τεκμηριωμένους δείκτες ποιότητας, στοχεύουν στη γεφύρωση του χάσματος ανάμεσα στην παρεχόμενη φροντίδα και στην τεκμηριωμένη πρακτική, στη βελτίωση της διαδικασίας φροντίδας και στην επίτευξη των επιθυμητών αποτελεσμάτων (Hickey, et al, 2004; Pronovost, et al, 2003). Σύμφωνα με τα διεθνή ερευνητικά δεδομένα, στις μελέτες επιλέγονται δείκτες ποιότητας που επικεντρώνονται είτε στη δομή, είτε στη διαδικασία, είτε στα αποτελέσματα ή ακόμα και στον συνδυασμό τους, σύμφωνα με το μοντέλο ποιότητας του

Donabedian. Η τελική επιλογή των δεικτών καθορίζεται ανάλογα με το σκοπό της μελέτης και τη δυνατότητα μέτρησης των συγκεκριμένων δεικτών. Ακολούθως, χρησιμοποιούνται ως εργαλεία μέτρησης των δεικτών οι συνεντεύξεις, τα ερωτηματολόγια, τα φύλλα καταγραφής και η παρατήρηση και πραγματοποιείται η καταγραφή των δεδομένων (Najjar-Pellet, et al, 2008).

Επιπροσθέτως, ο Pronovost και ο Iqbal υποστηρίζουν ότι με τη χρήση των δεικτών ποιότητας αυξάνεται η πιθανότητα μείωσης της θνητότητας, της νοσηρότητας, της διάρκειας παραμονής στη ΜΕΘ και του κόστους φροντίδας (Pronovost, et al, 2003; Iqbal 2007). Παρόμοια με αυτή τη θέση, κάποιοι ερευνητές συμπληρώνουν ότι με την αξιολόγηση, επιτυγχάνεται η βελτίωση της ποιότητας στην παρεχόμενη φροντίδα (Mainz, 2003; Pronovost, et al, 2003). Αντίθετα, άλλες μελέτες αναφέρουν ότι η χρήση αρκετών δεικτών ποιότητας, δεν επηρεάζει την ποιότητα της παρεχόμενης φροντίδας στη ΜΕΘ (De Vos, et al, 2007; Najjar-Pellet, et al, 2008).

Σύνοψη αποτελεσμάτων σχετικών ερευνών

Τα αποτελέσματα των περισσότερων ερευνητικών μελετών επισημαίνουν ότι η επίτευξη ποιότητας στις παρεχόμενες υπηρεσίες στη Μ.ΕΘ., πρέπει να εστιάζεται:

- Στην επιβίωση των ασθενών
- Στην ικανοποίηση των ασθενών και των οικογενειών τους
- Στην ασφάλεια των ασθενών
- Στην αποτελεσματικότητα
- Στην ισότητα
- Στην επικαιροποίηση και
- Στην αποδοτικότητα
- Ενώ οι δείκτες ποιότητας που αξιολογούν την ποιότητα στη Μ.Ε.Θ. πρέπει να στοχεύουν:
- Στην τεκμηρίωση και στην υποστήριξη της ποιότητας της παρεχόμενης φροντίδας
- Στη σύγκριση των νοσοκομείων
- Στη θέσπιση προτεραιοτήτων και
- Στη δυνατότητα των ασθενών να επιλέξουν δομή υγείας προκειμένου να βοηθηθούν αποτελεσματικά

Συμπεράσματα

Η ΜΕΘ είναι ένα ιδιαίτερο τμήμα με πολλές λειτουργίες που απαιτεί διάφορα επίπεδα γνώσης και πρέπει να διαθέτει την κατάλληλη υλικοτεχνική υποδομή και στελέχωση, έτσι ώστε το εξειδικευμένο προσωπικό με την ορθή χρήση της τεχνολογίας να παρέχει υπηρεσίες ποιοτικής φροντίδας στους

βαριά πάσχοντες. Κατέστη ξεκάθαρο, ότι η βελτίωση της ποιότητας στη Μ.Ε.Θ. συνεπάγεται παροχή αποτελεσματικής περίθαλψης, στον κατάλληλο χρόνο και με το σωστό τρόπο, εξασφάλιση του καλύτερου δυνατού αποτελέσματος και διασφάλιση ορθολογικής κατανομής των διαθέσιμων πόρων με οικονομικό τρόπο.

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Topic 2

International Relations, International Security and Migration Policy

The European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS): Enhancing Counterterrorism and Counterintelligence Efforts[1]

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Abstract

The European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) is set to revolutionize border security in the European Union. Scheduled for operation in 2025, it will screen travelers from visa-exempt countries, enhancing security by identifying potential threats such as terrorism, organized crime, and illegal migration. Regulated by EU legislation and involving a detailed application process, the system collects and cross-references traveler data with various databases to assess security, public health, and migration risks. While ETIAS is a powerful tool for counterterrorism, preventing entry of potential terrorists, it is also an advanced counterintelligence asset, employing intelligence capabilities to detect espionage and Intelligence related activities and act as a deterrent to potential spies. With a comprehensive approach, the present paper describes the ETIAS promises to bolster EU security.

Keywords: ETIAS, Counterterrorism, Counterintelligence, Security, Border Control, Intelligence, European Union.

Introduction

The historical background of the European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) is a tale of evolving security measures and technological advancements. ETIAS, set to become operational in 2025, represents a significant milestone in the European Union's ongoing efforts to safeguard its external borders while streamlining travel for its citizens and visitors (Gäckle, 2019). This electronic travel authorization system will primarily target travelers from over 60 countries exempt from the EU's visa requirements (Primorac et al., 2023). Rooted in Regulation (EU) 2018/1240, which gained approval in June 2018, ETIAS lays the legal groundwork for its establishment and operation (Europarl, 2018; Cesarz, 2021). This regulation meticulously defines the scope of the system, the data to be collected, the procedures for obtaining travel authorizations, and the rights of travelers and data subjects, ensuring a comprehensive and transparent framework for its implementation (Europarl, 2017).

ETIAS' objectives encompass more than just enhancing border security; it is an integral component of the EU's counterterrorism and counterintelligence efforts. The system will conduct thorough pre-

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screening checks by cross-referencing traveler data with various databases, including the Schengen Information System (SIS), Visa Information System (VIS), and Eurodac for fingerprint data (European Commission, 2016). These checks aim to identify security, public health, or migration risks posed by travelers, enabling authorities to take appropriate action (Cesarz, 2021). Moreover, the ETIAS system is designed to foster cooperation with national and international Intelligence agencies, reinforcing Europe's intelligence-sharing network and increasing its resilience against Intelligence operations and espionage threats.

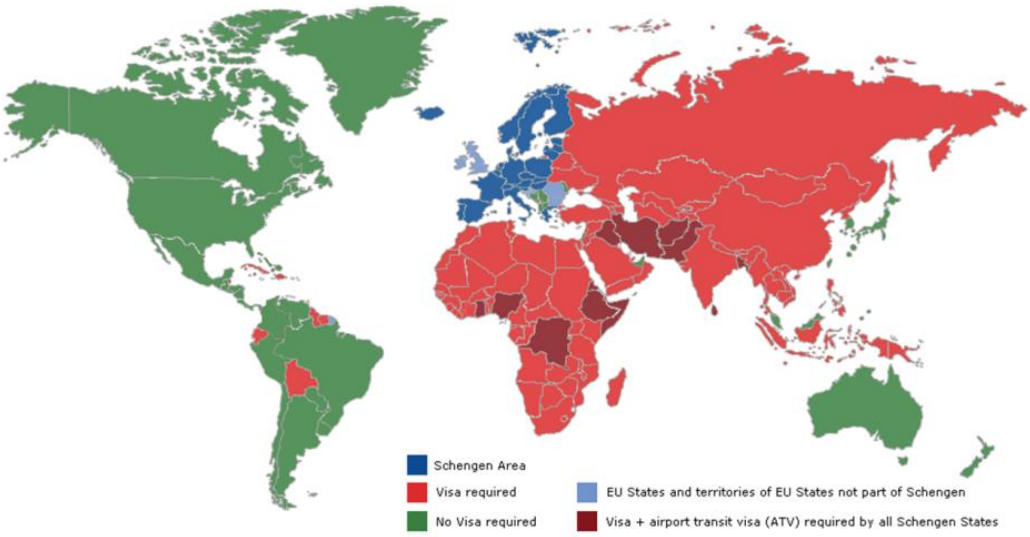

Figure 1: Countries of origin of visa-exempt third-country nationals, EU Home Affairs, 2016

ETIAS Implementation

One of the key features of ETIAS is its ability to screen visa-exempt travelers before they arrive in the EU (Musco Eklund, 2023). This is achieved through the collection and analysis of traveler data, which includes personal information such as name, date of birth, and passport details, as well as travel itinerary and other relevant information (European Commission, 2016). The data is collected through an online application process, which requires travelers to provide the necessary information and undergo pre-screening checks (Primorac et al., 2023).

The pre-screening checks involve the integration of ETIAS with existing databases and watchlists, such as the Schengen Information System (SIS), the Visa Information System (VIS), and the Eurodac system for fingerprint data (Gäckle, 2019). This integration enables authorities to access and share information about travelers and data subjects across different databases, thereby improving the accuracy and effectiveness of pre-screening checks (Cesarz, 2021).

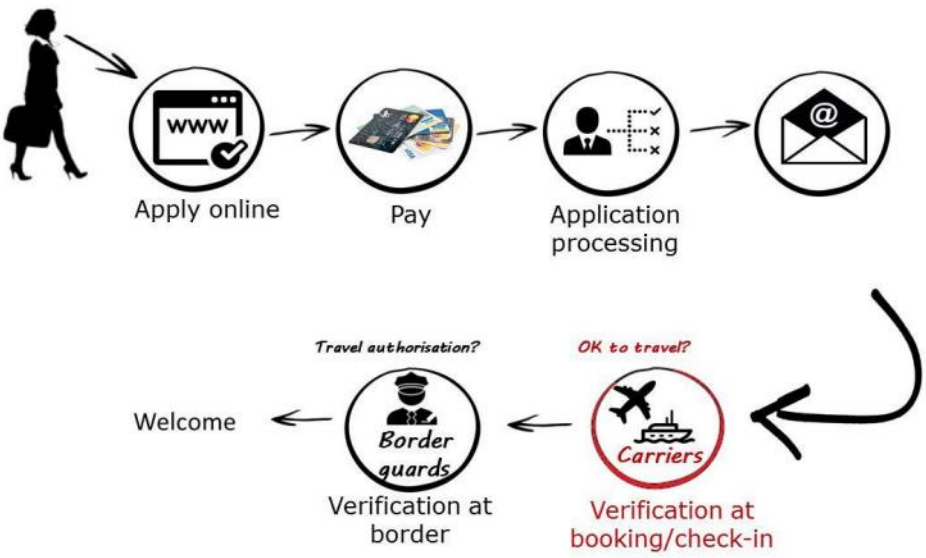

Figure 2: Traveller's journey with ETIAS, European Commission, 2016

The authorization process for ETIAS involves the analysis of the traveler data and the results of the pre-screening checks. If the checks reveal any potential security risks, such as a criminal record or a history of terrorism, the travel authorization may be denied or subject to additional scrutiny by the relevant authorities (EU Home Affairs, 2016; European Commission, 2016). On the contrary, if the checks are successful, the travel authorization will be issued electronically and will be valid for a period of up to three years or until the expiration of the traveler's passport, whichever comes first.

The timelines for the authorization process will depend on various factors, such as the volume of applications and the complexity of the pre-screening checks (Musco Eklund, 2023). However, the ETIAS regulation requires that the authorization process be completed within a maximum of 96 hours, or four working days, from the submission of the application. This timeline is designed to ensure that travelers receive their travel authorization in a timely manner, while also allowing sufficient time for pre-screening checks and analysis of the traveler data (EU Home Affairs, 2016).

Eventually, the implementation of ETIAS is expected to have a significant impact on the screening of visa-exempt travelers and the security of the EU's external borders. By pre-screening travelers before they arrive in the EU, the system will enable authorities to identify and prevent potential security threats, while also improving the efficiency of border checks (Musco Eklund, 2023).

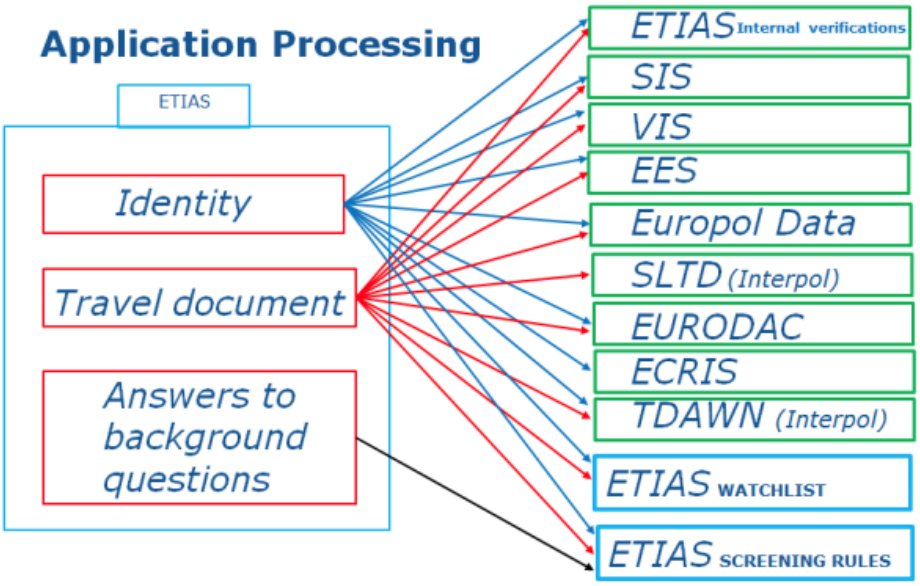

Figure 3: Automated Application Processing, European Commission, 2016

ETIAS Risk Intelligence Analysis

The integration of the Frontex CIRAM (Common Integrated Risk Analysis Model) into the European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) for intelligence analysis and profiling could be a transformative leap in enhancing the European Union's border security and immigration management (Europarl, 2017). ETIAS, designed as a pre-arrival screening system, can significantly amplify its capabilities by incorporating CIRAM's cutting-edge risk assessment model. The synergy between these two systems equips intelligence analysts with a potent tool to conduct comprehensive traveler profiling, thereby providing a more nuanced and accurate understanding of individuals seeking entry into the EU (Primorac et al., 2023).

CIRAM, with its extensive database and predictive modeling, empowers ETIAS with a multifaceted approach to assessing applicants. This merger enables authorities to delve deeper into an individual's background, considering factors such as travel history, criminal records, affiliations with criminal or terrorist networks, and even real-time intelligence feeds. Furthermore, by utilizing CIRAM within ETIAS, the EU can streamline its border management procedures, making the process more efficient, secure, and conducive to legitimate travelers.

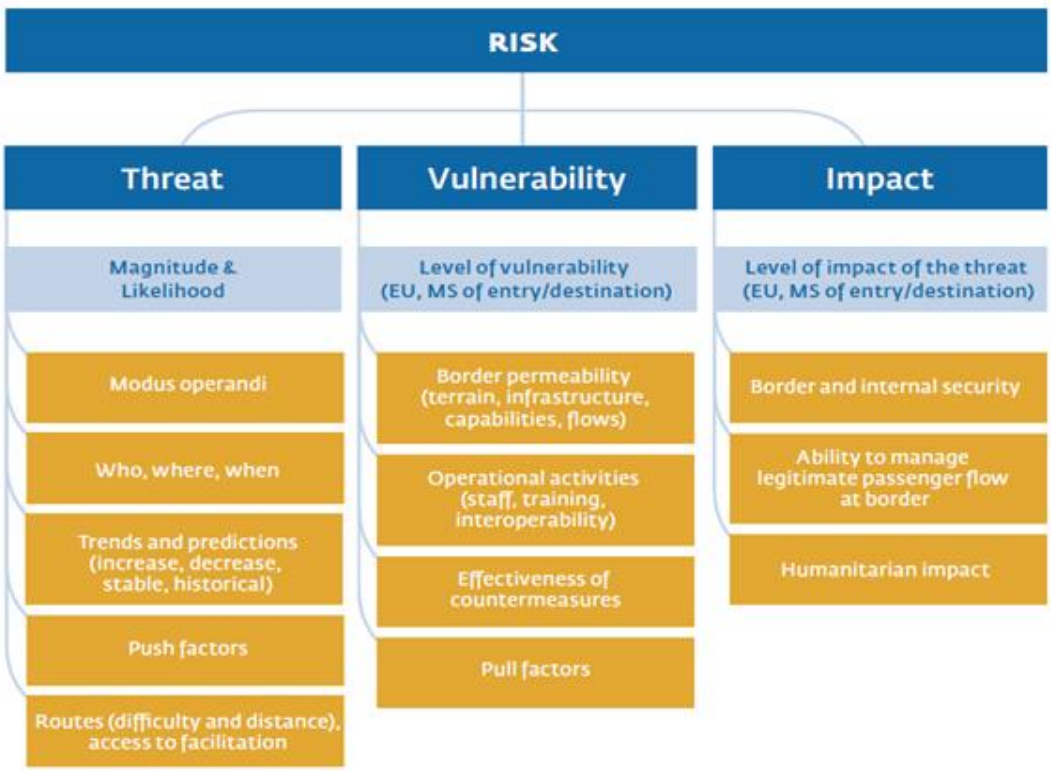

Figure 4: Common Integrated Risk Analysis Model, Frontex, 2019

Operational Challenges

However, the implementation of ETIAS also poses several operational challenges. One of the main challenges is ensuring the technical issues and system reliability of the system. The system will rely on complex technology and databases to pre-screen travelers and identify potential security threats. This will require significant investment in technology and infrastructure to ensure that the system is reliable and effective (Gäckle, 2019).

Another challenge is ensuring consistency across Schengen member states. The implementation of ETIAS will require coordination and cooperation among all Schengen member states to ensure that the system is implemented consistently and effectively (Musco Eklund, 2023). This will require significant investment in training and resources for border and immigration authorities to ensure that they are able to use the system effectively and efficiently.

Finally, adequate training and resources for border and immigration authorities will be essential to the success of ETIAS. The system will require significant investment in training and resources to ensure that border and immigration authorities are able to use the system effectively and efficiently. This will require significant investment in training and resources for border and immigration authorities to ensure that they are able to use the system effectively and efficiently.

Overall, the implementation of ETIAS will pose several operational challenges, including technical issues and system reliability, ensuring consistency across Schengen member states, and providing adequate training and resources for border and immigration authorities. However, with the right investment and planning, these challenges can be overcome, and ETIAS can become a powerful tool for enhancing the security of the EU's external borders.

ETIAS and Data Privacy

One of the key concerns related to ETIAS is the collection and processing of personal data by the system. The system collects a range of personal information from travelers, including name, date of birth, passport details, and travel itinerary (Jo Pesch et al., 2022). To address these concerns, the ETIAS regulation includes provisions for the protection of personal data and compliance with the GDPR (European Commission, 2016). The regulation requires that all personal data collected by the system be processed in accordance with EU data protection laws, and that travelers be informed about the purposes and procedures of the system. The regulation also provides for the right of travelers and data subjects to access and correct their personal data, and to lodge complaints with the relevant authorities if they believe their rights have been violated (Europarl, 2017).

In addition, the ETIAS regulation requires that the system be designed and implemented in a way that ensures the security and confidentiality of personal data. This includes the use of appropriate technical and organizational measures to prevent unauthorized access, disclosure, or alteration of personal data. The regulation also requires that the system be subject to regular audits and assessments to ensure compliance with data protection laws and regulations (Jo Pesch et al., 2022).

Subsequently, the implementation of ETIAS is expected to have a significant impact on data privacy and data protection rights. While the system is designed to enhance the security of the EU's external borders, it must also be balanced against the need to protect civil liberties and data protection rights. The ETIAS regulation includes provisions to ensure that these rights are respected and protected, and compliance with the GDPR is a key aspect of this (Jo Pesch et al., 2022). By ensuring that personal data is collected, processed, and stored in a secure and confidential manner, the ETIAS system can help to address concerns related to data privacy and data protection, while also enhancing the security of the EU's external borders.

ETIAS as a Counterterrorism and Counterintelligence Tool

ETIAS is expected to be a powerful counterterrorism tool for the EU. By requiring travelers to apply for electronic travel authorization and undergo pre-screening checks, the system will enable authorities to identify and prevent potential security threats, such as terrorism, before they enter the

EU (Cesarz, 2021). This will help to reduce the risk of terrorist attacks and other serious crimes, while also improving the efficiency of border checks and reducing the workload of border guards.

One of the key features of ETIAS as a counterterrorism tool is its ability to prevent the entry of potential terrorists. The system will enable authorities to identify and screen travelers who may pose a security risk, such as those with a criminal record or a history of terrorism (Musco Eklund, 2023). This will help to prevent potential terrorists from entering the EU and carrying out attacks, thereby enhancing the overall security of the region. Another important feature of ETIAS is its real-time access to security databases (EU Home Affairs, 2016). The system will enable authorities to access and share information about travelers and data subjects across different databases and systems, such as the Schengen Information System (SIS), the Visa Information System (VIS), and the Eurodac system for fingerprint data. This will enable authorities to quickly identify and respond to potential security threats, such as suspicious travel patterns or the use of false identities (Glouftsios, 2018).

In addition, ETIAS will enable the monitoring and tracking of suspicious travelers. The system will enable authorities to track the movements of travelers who are deemed to pose a security risk, such as those with a criminal record or a history of terrorism. This will enable authorities to respond quickly to potential security threats and prevent attacks before they occur (EU Home Affairs, 2016). Moreover, ETIAS will enable coordination with law enforcement agencies. The system will enable authorities to share information and coordinate their efforts with other law enforcement agencies, both within the EU and internationally. This will enhance the overall effectiveness of counterterrorism efforts and enable authorities to respond quickly and effectively to potential security threats.

Beyond its role as a counterterrorism tool, ETIAS functions as a counterintelligence asset through the employment of advanced Intelligence capabilities (Musco Eklund, 2023). Continuously monitoring and analyzing vast volumes of travel data, it identifies patterns and anomalies indicative of espionage-related activities, flagging travelers whose behaviors or backgrounds raise suspicion. By detecting espionage threats at the early stages of travel planning, ETIAS acts as a deterrent to potential spies (EU Home Affairs, 2016). The knowledge that their activities will be meticulously scrutinized and tracked within the EU sends a clear message that Europe is unwavering in its commitment to safeguarding its borders against espionage threats. As ETIAS combines these functionalities, it emerges as a holistic security solution for the EU (EU Home Affairs, 2016).

Conclusions

In conclusion, the European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) represents a pivotal milestone in the ongoing evolution of border security, data privacy, counterterrorism and counterintelligence efforts in the European Union. As ETIAS prepares to become operational in 2022, it embodies a proactive approach to enhancing the security of the EU's external borders while streamlining travel for those exempts from visa requirements. The foundation of ETIAS, Regulation (EU) 2018/1240, sets out a robust legal framework that defines its scope, data collection, authorization procedures, and the protection of travelers' and data subjects' rights, ensuring transparency and accountability.

The system's objectives and implementation are underpinned by advanced data analytics and integration with existing databases, making it a formidable tool for pre-screening travelers and detecting potential security threats, whether related to terrorism, organized crime, or illegal migration. Additionally, the real-time access to security databases, monitoring of suspicious travelers, and coordination with law enforcement agencies contribute to its effectiveness as a counterterrorism tool.

ETIAS also serves as a counterintelligence asset by employing cutting-edge technology, and Intelligence capabilities, to monitor travel data and identify patterns associated with Intelligence operations and espionage-related activities. This not only enables the timely detection of potential spies but acts as a deterrent by sending a clear message that Europe is committed to safeguarding its borders against espionage threats.

However, the implementation of ETIAS comes with its operational challenges, such as ensuring system reliability, consistency across Schengen member states, and providing adequate training and resources for border and immigration authorities. Balancing the enhancement of security with the protection of data privacy and civil liberties is another critical consideration, which the system addresses through compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

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Security Risk Analysis as a Strategic Counterterrorism Tool for National Security: The Case of Frontex Common Integrated Risk Analysis Model (CIRAM)[1]

Anastasios-Nikolaos Kanellopoulos[2]

Abstract

Security Risk Analysis consists an important tool that can be leveraged to properly process information related to National Security and draw useful conclusions through appropriate analytical products. The European Union formulated the appropriate legislation and established new organizations to ensure its external and internal security such as Frontex, designed and developed, in collaboration with the member states, a new security risk analysis tool, the Common Integrated Risk Analysis Model (CIRAM). This paper seeks to approach and examine descriptively, both the elements of this model and its appropriateness to carry out Counterterrorism Risk Analysis.

Keywords: National Security, Security Risk Analysis, Strategy, Counterterrorism, Frontex, CIRAM.

Introduction

Security Risk Analysis is a process that assists in identifying, assessing, and managing potential risks and vulnerabilities. It is an essential component of risk management and plays a crucial role in ensuring the protection of sensitive information and state infrastructure. Also, it is closely related to the study of National Security threats and vulnerabilities.

Moreover, European Union (EU) has established various initiatives and agencies to enhance border security and manage migration flows, such as the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex). This agency is responsible for coordinating and supporting the management of the EU's external borders, in accordance to collecting, managing, analyzing and disseminating analytical products, that lead to specific operations on the field (Fernández-Rojo, 2021). In this context, the agency generated a new Common Integrated Risk Analysis Model (CIRAM), in order to perform its new analytical duties and lead the intelligence sharing and collaboration between the EU member states (Liashuk and Tsaruk, 2021).

The term Counterterrorism Risk Management refers to the strategies and measures set in place to identify, assess, and mitigate the risks associated with terrorist activities. It involves analyzing potential threats, vulnerabilities, and consequences to develop effective countermeasures and

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response plans (Hughes, 1982). The goal is to prevent or minimize the impact of terrorist attacks and protect individuals, infrastructure, and National Security.

The present paper examines the aspects and components of CIRAM, as a new analytical approach in the sector of Security Risk Analysis and aims to evaluate its importance as a strategic Counterterrorism analytical tool.

National Security Strategy and Security Risk Analysis

National Security consists an inclusive term, encompassing all the aspects of a state's security. The term tends to vary between different states, due to the diversified national priorities and interests. Charles S. Maier refers to National security as the "capacity to control those domestic and foreign conditions, that the public opinion of a given community believes necessary to enjoy its own self-determination or autonomy, prosperity, and wellbeing" (Maier, 1993, p. 5). Moreover, Ann Fitz-Gerald mention that "National Security differs from country to country, and indeed from institution to institution" (Fitz-Gerald, 2008, pp.5-6).

Furthermore, the nature of National Security and the wide range of its components, mandates the collection of information and intelligence from a vast network of open and closed (maybe classified) sources. This information is collected, managed and analyzed through the utilization of specific analytical tools, concluding to the formation of a National Security Strategy (Lowe, 2014).

Additionally, Security Risk Analysis models are analytical tools utilized to allocate data, information and intelligence sources, aiming to maintain an up-to-date strategic and operational picture, regarding security threats such as serious organized crime or terrorism. The frameworks that generate the formation and application of these models, arise from ISO publications like the ISO 31000 and 31100, that are generally offer a "regulation path" for the development of specialized Risk Analysis Models. Hence, Risk Analysis methodology provides the capability of information analysis based on the final intended results, attempting to predict the likehood future events' occurring (Bonta, Law, & Hanson, 1998). Moreover, the methodology offers facile adaptation to the nature of the information, as it supports the information management from multiple databases and information inputs.

Frontex Common Integrated Risk Analysis Model (CIRAM)

In accordance to Schengen Catalogue (2002), the activities of border checks, controls and management should be based on risk analysis. Subsequently in 2004, the European Parliament created Frontex, including to its tasks, the conducting of a security risk analysis and in 2006 established a plan of Integrated Border Management (IBM) procedures (Léonard, 2010). The development of an IBM system continued until 2013, leading to EUROSUR regulation establishment. EUROSUR is the

first intelligence sharing system for the European border protection and law enforcement agencies, offering the capability of information and analysis sharing, in both operational and strategic level (Jeandesboz, 2020).

As the legislative and institutional developments of the European family promoted the formation of special channels for the exchange of classified information at the analytical level, the need for a "common analytical language" appeared. The central role that Risk Analysis had to play in conformity with European Council of Seville in 2002 and Helsinki in 2003, leaded to the formation of a specialized Risk Analysis Model that encompassed the intelligence needs of both border security and law enforcement agencies (Hansen, and Pettersson, 2021). The Regulation establishing the Schengen Borders Code in 2006, places common rules for crossing the EU external borders and sets risk analysis as the main tool of data and information analysis. Following that, the Frontex regulation of 2011, reinforce the role of Frontex in EU external border management and position the border risk analysis procedures in its functions (Fernández-Rojo, 2021).

Frontex in collaboration with EU member states, created the first version of a European Common Integrated Risk Analysis Model (CIRAM) in 2012, (Frontex, 2012). CIRAM is the conceptual framework developed by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, to assist in the preparation of risk analyses within the Schengen Zone. It aims to promote a common understanding of risk analysis and contribute to greater coherence in the management of the external borders (Léonard, 2010; Liashuk and Tsaruk, 2021).

In particular, CIRAM adapts a management approach to risk analysis, defining risk as a function of threat, vulnerability, and impact. This approach aligns with the spirit of the Schengen Borders Code, which determines risk analysis as the key tool for ensuring the optimal allocation of resources within constraints of budget, staff, and equipment efficiency. The model provides the framework for conducting risk analyses, which helps Frontex and Member States in making informed decisions regarding border management and resource allocation. By analyzing various factors such as threats, vulnerabilities, and potential impacts, CIRAM enables the identification and assessment of risks associated with cross-border activities (Hansen, and Pettersson, 2021). This information allows the implementation of the appropriate measures to address or mitigate the identified risks (Jeandesboz, 2020).

In addition, the Schengen Zone consists of the EU Member States and Schengen-associated countries that share common external borders. For maintaining the integrity of the Schengen area it is crucial to ensure the security and effectiveness of the borders (Manjarrez, 2015; Oliveira Martins et al., 2022).

CIRAM plays a significant role in supporting Member States and Schengen-associated countries by providing analysis and insights into cross-border crime and risks (Liashuk and Tsaruk, 2021). This information allows them to take appropriate measures to address the identified risks and maintain border security (Fernández-Rojo, 2021).

CIRAM Intelligence Cycle

Intelligence is placed in the heart of CIRAM leading to the utilization of Intelligence Cycle procedures, so as to receive, handle, manage, analysis and disseminate analysis (Frontex, 2012). Specifically, the cycle contains the steps:

Tasking: This step involves identifying the specific intelligence requirements and objectives, as well as establishing the overall management and guidance for the intelligence effort.

Collection: In this step, relevant information is collected from various sources, such as human intelligence (HUMINT), open-source intelligence (OSINT), and more. The collection process aims to gather data and insights that can contribute to the analysis and understanding of potential threats.

Evaluation: This step serves several purposes such as assessment of information quality, validation of intelligence by comparing it with other sources, cross-referencing information, and verifying its accuracy, analysis of information relevance and identification of intelligence gaps.

Collation: This step includes consolidation of information and data and identification of patterns and connections, by ensuring the completeness through avoiding oversight or missing critical details that could impact the accuracy and reliability of the intelligence.

Analysis & Interpretation: The purpose of this steps is to identify intelligence patterns and trends based on the collated data, information and intelligence. Plus, it is important to derive useful insights and conclusions.

Reporting: Reporting is an essential step in the CIRAM intelligence cycle. It involves the production and dissemination of intelligence reports based on the analysis and interpretation of collected information. The reporting step serves also, the purpose of communicating the findings and insights derived from the intelligence analysis to relevant stakeholders, decision-makers, and consumers of the intelligence.

Dissemination: It is a crucial step involving the distribution of finished intelligence reports and findings to the intended consumers, such as policymakers, security agencies, or risk management teams. The goal of dissemination is to ensure that the relevant stakeholders receive the information, effectively and timely, so as to utilize it effectively for decision-making and risk management.

Review: This step occurs at the end of the intelligence cycle and involves assessing the effectiveness and accuracy of the intelligence analysis. Its key points include the evaluation of analysis, its accuracy and completeness, the verification of the findings, the feedback incorporation for the future analytical procedures and the continues improvement of the analysis methodologies.

Figure 1: CIRAM 2.0 Intelligence Cycle

CIRAM Threat, Vulnerability and Impact components

As it was mentioned above, the model application relays as a function on threat, vulnerability, and impact. The final risk is considered as an assessment of these three components, following the application and establishment of ISO 31000 and 31100 basic principles, in its function. In the components assessment, the analyst should take into consideration both qualitative and quantitative data and cover a specific time period and geographical area.

$$R = f\,(TVI)$$

Moreover, the threat is defined as a force or pressure acting upon the external borders that is characterized by both its magnitude and likelihood (Frontex, 2012). The analysis should identify, describe and measure the factors both inside and outside the EU that affect the threat volume. The threat assessment includes the sections of:

Modus Operanti: It refers to methods or patterns of operation, particularly in the commission of a crime, terrorism or generally illegal activity.

Who, where, when: The basic analytical questions to establish the main need of threat assessment.

Trends and predictions: Referring to quantitative indicators that arise from past statistical reports and lead to future occurrence predictions.

Push factors: Indicators and factors that "push" people to leave areas and travel toward other places.

Routes and access to facilitation: Factors that indicate travel routes and the existence of facilitation in specific areas.

Additionally, vulnerability assessment provides an overall evaluation of the vulnerabilities present in the border management systems and processes (Frontex, 2012). It takes into account upcoming challenges, monitoring of the situation along the external borders, and the assessment of Member States' contributions to the rapid reaction pool. It includes the sections of:

Border permeability: It refers to ease or difficulty with which individuals, goods, or illicit activities can cross a border, encompassing various aspects such as terrain, infrastructure, capabilities, and flows that can affect the ability to control and secure the border.

Operational activities: Various actions and tasks carried out as part of border management and security operations. These activities can include border surveillance, patrolling, intelligence gathering, risk assessment, and response planning.

Effectiveness of countermeasures: Specific descriptive comparison of measures taken in the external and internal EU area in accordance to EU border protection and the level of their success.

Pull factors: Factors associated with migration or mobility patterns, attracting or pulling individuals or communities towards specific locations or countries. These factors may include economic opportunities, employment prospects, social benefits, or other favorable conditions that make a particular destination attractive for migration.

Ultimately, impact assessment appears to be related to the evaluation or analysis of potential impacts associated with threats, taking into consideration the vulnerabilities that are related also to the threat (Frontex, 2012). Impact encompasses the sections of:

Border and Internal security: It contains all the possible impacts in the border and internal security, connected to law enforcement and border security personnel, infrastructures, as well as the states and governments' physical and economical assets and nationals.

Ability to manage legitimate passenger flow at border: The EU member states ability to manage properly without any problem the passenger passing flow in every border crossing point.

Humanitarian impact: It includes every impact on human lives.

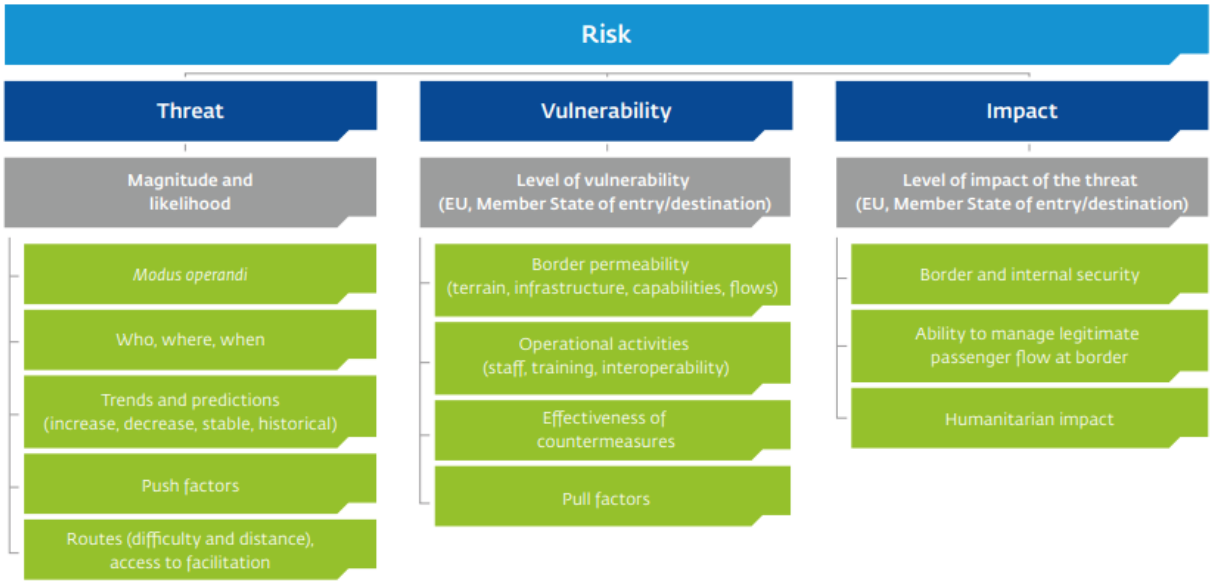

Figure 2: CIRAM 2.0 Risk Assessment parts

Counterterrorism and Security Risk Analysis

Counterterrorism generally refers to strategies and efforts, in the tactical, operational and strategic level, aiming to prevent, respond to, and mitigate acts of terrorism (Richards, 2018). It involves various measures that aim on detecting, deterring, and disrupting terrorist activities, as well as protecting individuals, infrastructure, and societies from terrorist threats (Hughes, 1982). The main methodologies of countering terrorism acts, incorporate law enforcement intelligence collection and analysis that lead to decision making in regard of the countermeasures and operations need to be settled (Bures, 2010). Also, because of the internationalized nature of the threat, it is crucial important for the states to promote international agencies' cooperation and information sharing, as expertise helps in identifying and tracking these transnational networks (Lowe, 2014).

In the Border Security level, counterterrorism efforts often include strengthening border security and management to prevent the movement of terrorists, weapons, and illicit goods across borders. This may also involve implementing advanced technologies, intelligence sharing, and coordinated border control operations. In this regard, Risk Analysis model, eventually containing information and intelligence of terrorism threat, a specific area's vulnerabilities and the impact the terrorism, could be applicated (Rios, and Insua, 2011).

Eventually, in Europe the threat of terrorism primarily arises from jihadist terrorism, but there has also been a rise in right- and left-wing extremism (Zmire, and Kim, 2017; Marrero Rocha, 2018). The evolution towards the radicalization of the persons involved is a complex process differs, depending on the social and physical environment (Webb, and Sutton, 2016). The environment may determine in a high volume the appearance of behavioral tendencies το support specific terrorist organizations (Kumar and Mandal, 2012; Nesser et al, 2016). In regard of the well-known case of Abdelhamid Abaaoud, specific factors such as the feeling of belonging to an ethnic population and religious group, the involvement from an early age in organized crime and connections with persons in foreign countries, can lead to the inclusion of persons in the cycle of terrorist activity (Van Vlierden, 2015; Teich, 2016; Marrero Rocha, 2018).

In due course, the set of quantitative data and information on the occurrence of terrorist attacks and actions, as well as its qualitative characteristics, can be an information source, which under an appropriate methodology of intelligence cycle and in accordance to risk analyses processes, can yield synergistic analytical products, in the direction of dealing with the terrorism phenomenon (Rios, and Insua, 2011; Richards, 2018).

CIRAM application on Counterterrorism

Since at European level the protection of external borders tends to be based on CIRAM, it is decisive to examine the appropriateness of the model, both in terms of data and information collection and management procedures, as well its capabilities the analysis of all available information and intelligence (Liashuk and Tsaruk, 2021).

Beginning with the threat components, it is obvious that is a platform for combining information that is essential for mapping terrorism. It is widely known that terrorist organizations often present concrete structure based on qualitative data of ethnic or religious origin. For example, terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State present different qualitative characteristics with organizations such as Hezbollah, both in terms of the geographical origin of their members and in terms of their religious beliefs. However, this operational approach is not fixed and can vary on a case-by-case basis, such as the occasions of joint operational activity by members of Shia and Sunni Salafist organizations in the Middle East and the Balkans (Đorđević, 2018; Marrero Rocha, 2018). In these instances, the processing of information such as the modus operandi the illegal transit routes utilized by the terrorists, can clarify he organization of their origin. Besides, social and religion push factors can determine the focus of terrorist activity of specific population groups (Đorđević, 2018).

Furthermore, the CIRAM vulnerability function, embrace all the possible aspects that could be threatened by terrorism. Specifically, terrorism often aiming to strike vital border protection and internal security infrastructure of a state, so as to cause chaos and security uncertainty for citizens. Damage invitations often target border infrastructure, causing problems in their perpetual operation (such as airports). At this level, getting aware of the effectiveness of measures to protect infrastructure, borders and the internal state security is decisive for defining future needs and reducing possible exposure to risks. Plus, it is important to identify and monitor specific pull factors that drive terrorists to travel to regions and countries, such as the maintenance of terrorist networks and terrorist financial infrastructure, such as the hawala system (Hancock, 2008).

Moreover, the impact of terrorism can be far-reaching and significant. The loss of life, the property, infrastructure and property damage, the possible suspension of economic activity, the reduction of citizens' trust in the internal security of the state and other factors, can lead to macro-environmental problems. The components of CIRAM impact assessment, includes the whole possible aspects, determining significally the total Risk assessment of a threat.

Conclusions

Consequently, the legislative and institutional evolution of the European Union led to the formation of institutions, services, and analysis methodologies with aim to protect the external borders of the Union and the internal and national security of the Member States.

In this direction, the creation of CIRAM is a serious evolution of the formation of the appropriate procedures for the proper collection, processing, management, analysis and exchange of information and intelligence. The elements of CIRAM seem to correspond to the intelligence processes for dealing with terrorist threats and appear to be ideal for studying and promoting Counterterrorism measures. Finally, a future study of the model can be done regarding its applicability in the field of Counterintelligence.

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The Absence of a Rationalized Migration Data Policy in Greece and the Discontinuity of Greek Migration Policy: A Glance at the First Results of the PreMiGro Project[1,2]

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to present the first findings of a funded project (PreMiGro) that concerns the development of a start-up pilot prediction model of short and long-term migration flows in Greece using machine-learning tools. During the first phase of the project, which focused on the examination of data regarding historical number of immigrants to Greece associated with country of origin and its political status for the period 1990-2022 through a range of primary and secondary sources, a vital finding surfaced. The discontinuity of the Greek migration policy seems to be related, among others, to the absence of a consistent data policy on migration, ever since Greece became a host country of migrants in the 1990s up to 2022 when Greece had already witnessed major transformations in its migration policy domain. A first reading of PreMiGro's initial research outcomes sheds some light on the peculiarity of the Greek migration policy. Indeed, the securitization of migration in Greece, the (at times negative) perception of migrants and refugees from parts of the Greek Society and Public Sphere and the fragmented Greek migration policy per se, could be explained through the lens of the absence of a rationalized migration data policy in Greece, among other things.

Keywords: PreMiGro Project, Greek Migration Policy, Discontinuity, Data Policy.

Introduction

The migration issue is a dominant topic in the political scene Europe-wide, transforming the equilibrium between change and political stability in an unprecedented manner (Thiele et al, 2023). This situation poses the challenge to provide reliable prediction of future trends of migration flows to politicians in order for them to comprehend migration dynamics and orient their decisions and related legislation towards optimum solutions to manage the flows and the population of immigrants, leading to a political culture of consensus. Greece is at the center of this necessity due to – mainly – two reasons. First, its geopolitical location as a 'first step' country for migrants and second due to its

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– proven – inability to handle massive migration flows as a result of its fragmented migration policy (Papadakis & Dimari, 2023).

In this sense, the present paper concerns the presentation of the first results derived by a funded project which is called *Managing Migration in Greece: Construction of a Start-Up Pilot Prediction Model for Migration Flows and Development of Policy Scenarios for the Greek Migration Policy* (PreMiGro)). The project revolves around the development of a start-up pilot prediction model of short and long term migration flows in Greece using machine-learning tools and is funded by the University of Crete.

The model, which is of an experimental character, is currently being constructed on the basis of a multi-parametric data set, concerning historical number of immigrants to Greece associated with country of origin and its political status. The framework of the model regards a properly trained scheme based on state-of-the-art machine learning models. The end result of the project is expected to be an evidence-based policy tool that will lead to policy scenarios that in turn will tackle societal challenges that affect the 'politicalness' of everyday lives.

The main aspect explored here is the discontinuity of the migration policy in Greece in terms of migrant and refugee arrivals for the period 1990-2022, and its relation with the political culture as regards the Greek migration policy making as well as the perception of the migration issue from the Greek people. The analysis conducted is related to the processing of the previously mentioned multi-parametric data set that regards historical number of migrants' and refugee arrivals to Greece for the period 1990 to 2022, associated with country of origin and its political status. The paper zooms at the sources that provide these data.

Methodology

Triangulation of data was deemed the most suitable method for this kind of research. And this is so, because triangulation concerns the combination of research methods so as to grasp more thoroughly the phenomena that are being examined (Papadakis et al, 2016). The first part concerns data extracted by a thorough literature review on the Greek migration policy for the period under examination (1990-2022) and secondary quantitative analysis. A range of policy documents in tandem with national and international literature on the Greek migration policy was conducted. A central focus of the literature review concerned the official sources of the United Nations, the European Union and Greece.

Secondary quantitative analysis refers to the review of quantitative data already collected either in international and national official databases, or in a previous study, by a different researcher who aspires to find answers to new questions (Johnston, 2014). The secondary quantitative sources that

were used to find the exact number of the arrival of migrants/refugees, their ethnicity, sex, age, entry point, political condition and returns have been the Ministry of Migration and Asylum of Greece, the Operational Data Portal (ODP) Refugee Situations which was set up in 2011 from the UNHCR in order to monitor migrant/refugee arrivals mainly in the Mediterranean, and the Greek Statistical Authority.

State of the art

During 2015, over one million people arrived in Europe by sea (UNHCR, 2020). As an outcome, migration topped the EU agenda in the summer and autumn of 2015, and the media focused on the situation on Europe's southern borders (Guiraudon, 2017) and in particular on Greece, which eventually became a place of reception of huge migratory/refugee flows, mainly due to the lack of a coherent EU migration response. This situation posed a major challenge to Greek political authorities as regards the management of migration and the (ongoing) refugee-migration crisis (Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 2023).

As a consequence, a new migration policy began to emerge and take shape in Greece which began to systematically transform the core of Greece's migration policy landscape to mostly fragmented attempts to manage migration in the context of the five nodes of the transformation of the Greek Migration Policy: the European Migration Agenda signed in May 2015, the EU-Turkey Joint Statement of 18 March 2016, the Instrumentalization of the Refugee Issue by Turkey in February 2020, the arrival of the Corona Virus Pandemic (Covid-19) and the New Pact on Migration and Asylum signed in September 2020 (Papadakis & Dimari, 2023).

When faced with the refugee crisis of 2015, Greece proved totally unprepared to handle and manage this situation. And this is so, not only because Greece did not have the means to accommodate such a big number of people that were crossing its sea borders in terms of hosting policy. The state had also to deal with the perception of the crisis it dealt with by Greek people. This ‘double trouble’ surely surfaced the inability of the Greek policy to effectively implement migration policy. The reason for this is that Greece, at that point, lacked a coherent migration policy framework. This is the case today and this was the case in the past. The Greek migration policy is widely fragmented, leading, among many other things, to ineffectiveness when action is taken.

Many reasons account for this, such as the lack of a national long term strategy on migration, the securitization of migration in Greece, the inability to walk along the lines of the European migration policy and the incapacity of EU policy makers to practically induce mandatory solidarity in the ‘burden’ sharing among members that are not at the so-called front line of migration management.

Another very important reason, which seems neglected, is the lack of a rationalized data policy on the issue of migration, ever since Greece became an importing country of migrants. This argument is supported by evidence presented in this paper and that pertain to the whole timeframe of Greece being a host country of migrants and refugees, from the 1990s, when the Soviet Union dissolved and many people from the SEE sought safe heavens in Greece or migrated for a better standard of life, up to this point (November 2023). As it will be shown in the next sections, ever since the 1990s, there is not a coherent, reliable and rationalized migration data policy in Greece.

Analysis of results: The discontinuity of the migration policy in Greece for the period 1990-2022

The following table (1) depicts the discontinuity of the Greek migration policy in terms of data policy, and provides a quite clear picture on the reasons (some of the many) Greece has not managed to draw a successful and long-term migration policy.

Table 1: Depiction of migrant arrivals in Greece for the period 1990-2022[8]

Year	Number of Migrants (Annual)	Sources regarding arrivals that were granted asylum	Operational Data Portal Refugee Situations Sea and Land Arrivals
1992	271.000, 184.00 out of them undocumented	**Polyzos, S. (2006)**	**SEA AND LAND ARRIVALS**
2001	762,000	Census, 2001, ELSTAT	
2005	432,030	Triantafyllidou (2012)	
2006	540,839	Triantafyllidou (2012)	
2007	34,648	Triantafyllidou (2012)	
2008	589,796	Triantafyllidou (2012)	
2009	602,797	Triantafyllidou (2012)	
2010	553,916	Triantafyllidou (2012)	
2011	912, 000	Census, 2011, ELSTAT	
2012	440, 118	Triantafyllidou (2013)	
2013	3,486		

[8] The data used here were compiled and edited by the authors according to the sources mentioned

2014	8, 542	**MINISTRY OF MIGRATION AND ASYLUM**	43.318
2015	10, 356		861.630
2016	28, 332		177.234
2017	34, 648		36.310
2018	45, 363		50.508
2019	71, 894		74.613
2020	10, 296		15696
2021	6, 939		9157
2022	9, 423 (Total number of migrants 754.862)	Ministry of Migration and Asylum; Census, 2023 ELSTAT	18780

Table 1 is divided in four columns. The first column concerns the date of the arrival, the second the number of migrants/refugees, the third concerns sources regarding arrivals that were granted asylum, whereas the last columns concerns data provided by the Operational Data Portal of the UNHCR (ODP) which provides information on 'Refugee Situations'.

Let us now begin our analysis from the first year presented in the table. Before proceeding as such though, it should be noted that the decade of 1990s is a peculiar one, as there is not a single official Greek authority providing data on migrants and refugees' arrivals. So, for the year 1992, according to Polyzos (2006), which is a secondary source, there resided 271.000 migrants in Greece, out of which, 184.00 were undocumented. Several secondary sources provide some data on the 1990s, citing several authorities, such as the (former) Ministry of Public Order, which, nevertheless, cannot be found any more. One such example is the study of Chletsos (in Polyzos, 2006) who claims that in 1994 the number of illegal immigrants amounted to 350,000, while according to other estimates the total number in the years 1995-1996 was 500 to 600 thousand, without providing though number for people that were granted asylum.

Interesting insights on the illegal migrants of the 1990s are provided by the Clandestino study that was conducted in 2008. According to the study,

"the study by Kanellopoulos et al. (2006) argues that there were 400,000 illegal immigrants in Greece in 2001 – a number that is falling at 230,000-330,000 in 2004 according to the estimate of Zografakis, Konti & Mitrakou (2007). For the same year, Maroukis' study within the CLANDESTINO research program estimates that the population of of informal immigrants ranges between 260-300,000. Whereas according to the evaluation of the Greek study of CLANDESTINO in 2007, illegal migrants were found to be 205,000 in Greece in 2007. For the same year the study by Lianos,

Kanellopoulos et al. (IMEPO 2008) finds 172,000-209,000 foreigners residing unofficially in the country" (Eliamep, 2008, 2).

The previous paragraph clearly shows the discrepancies in the number of illegal migrants.

The next period is quite interesting in terms of sources and arrivals a well. On 2001, there is conducted the first official census after the massive inflows of the 1990s. According to ELSTAT[9] (2001), the number of legal migrants in Greece in 2001 was 762,000. It is estimated, though, that their actual number ranges between 800,000 and 1,000,000, while the total population in Greece was almost 10 million. Despite this number though provided by the official statistical authority of Greece, Polyzos (2006, 86) in his research claims that:

"According to the 2001 National Census, registered immigrants in Greece amounted to 391,674, while to this number should be added a significant number who were not registered due to their illegal stay and not being included in the legalization program or their reluctance to be registered considering that in this way they would secure work more easily or avoid paying the insurance funds (Lianos, 2003). With the information available to date, the exact number of immigrants in the country, or the number of each immigrant group separately, is not known, however, according to some rough estimates it should be around 600,000–1,000,000".

This is peculiar as the aforementioned numbers that were provided by Polyzos (2006) do not agree with the findings of ELSTAT. Polyzos (2006) himself, in this study, does not provide an accurate source for his finding, leading researchers to question his estimations on the 1990s arrivals. The same happens with Triantafyllidou (2013) who in her study mentions that:

"According to the last census of the National Statistical Service of Greece (ESYE), that has taken place in 2001, there were 797,091 foreign residents in Greece at that time. Of those, 750,000 were citizens from outside the EU-15 countries. If we also include the population of repatriated Greeks from the former Soviet Union who migrated to Greece predominantly during the 1990s, which, according to a census carried out by the General Secretariat of Repatriated Co Ethnics in 2000, numbered 155,319 people (General Secretariat of Repatriated Co Ethnics, 2000), the actual number of migrants in Greece in 2001 raises up to 900,000 approximately."

The reliability of the data provided by several authors, is argued here, is due to the multiplicity of sources and institutions gathering several types of data that have not been unified through the years to provide us with a clear picture on migration in Greece.

[9] Sheet M4_Economically active and inactive population of foreigners by gender and nationality.

Regarding the years of the 2000s decade separately, Triantafyllidou (2012) provides some reliable data obtained by the then Ministry of Interior and particularly by the database of valid stay permits, that nevertheless were not possible for the researchers to access at this point and that concern years 2005 to 2011. According to Triantafyllidou (2012) in 2005 there resided in Greece 432,030 migrants, in 2006 540,839, in 2007 585,585, in 2008 589,796, in 2009 602,797, in 2010 553,916 and in 2011 447,658.[10]

The next timeframe concerns the landmark year 2011, where the next census was conducted by ELSTAT. According to ELSTAT's (2011) estimates, the number of migrants and refugees that resided in Greece in 2011 were 912,000. This is a quite different number from the one provided by Triantafyllidou (2012). An explanation for this is given in the previous paragraphs.

From the next year on, that is from 2012, we begin to have a more systematic view on migrant and refugee arrivals as the Ministry of Migration and Asylum starts recording annual and monthly arrivals. More in particular, despite the fact that for the year 2012 we have a secondary source (Triantafyllidou, 2013) providing us with data on migrant arrivals (440,118), nevertheless, from 2013 the Ministry of Migration and Asylum commences the unification of data on migrants on its website. More specifically the Ministry provides monthly data that concern Unaccompanied Minors, Records by age group, Logs by vulnerability category, Records per month, Records by recording site 2013, Records by Nationality, Records by gender and Referrals (Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 2023). All these data concern people that have been granted asylum though, not everyone that sets foot in Greek territory. Speaking in numbers, according to the Ministry of Migration and Asylum of Greece, in 2013 Greece had 3,486 arrivals, in 2014 it had 8,542 arrivals, in 2015 it had 10,356 arrivals, in 2016 it had 28,332 arrivals, in 2017 it had 34,648 arrivals, in 2018 it had 45,363 arrivals, in 2019 it had 71,894 arrivals, in 2020 it had 10,296 arrivals, in 2021 it had 6,939 arrivals and in 2022 it had 9,423 arrivals.

According now to the last census conducted by ELSTAT in 2023, in 2022 there were legally residing 754.862 legal migrants in Greece. What is crucial and very particular, is that the ODP gives a rather different picture on arrivals of migrants and refugees in Greece as it gives numbers of arrivals on a daily basis of every person that sets foot in Greek territory, either it is granted asylum or not. This is a turning point in terms of data provision on migration, which, nevertheless come from the UNHCR and not from Greek authorities.

[10] This number also differs from the one provided by the census conducted by ELSTAT in 2011. See next paragraph.

Speaking in numbers again, according to the ODP, in 2014 there were 43.318 arrivals of migrants and refuges in Greece, in 2015 (given the onset of the refugee-crisis) there were 861.630 arrivals, in 2016 there were 177.234, in 2017 there were 36.310, in 2018 there 50.508, in 2019 there were 74.613 arrivals whereas in 2020 there were 15696 arrivals. Last, in 2021 Greece had 9157 (a significant decrease) and in 2022 it had 18780 arrivals (ODP, 2023).

Conclusions

One quick glance at the above numbers along with the *problematique* that the lack of a data policy on migration brings forward, clearly explains the fragmentation of the Greek migration policy which is sustained by an *ad hoc* ingredient that renders it, at the end of the day, ineffective. Indeed, all estimates of formal as well as of informal migration are based on problematic databases that do not agree between them. Those that appear from time to time in the national and international literature, seem to be unreliable.

This ineffectiveness, in turn, can be linked with a triple impact in the Greek case as regards migration. First, the political Culture of Greece in relation to migration is mainly characterized by the securitization of migration (Karyotis, 2012; Stivas, 2023). Second, the reception of migrants from Greeks is negative in several occasions and there have been recorded some cases of xenophobia (mainly towards Islam) (Swarts & Karakatsanis, 2012; Galariotis et al, 2017; Karyotis, 2012). Last, but not least, the Greek migration policy, per se, as already stated, is fragmented (and inevitably ad hoc in some cases due to geopolitical challenges) and it is not coherent, while it is highly affected by the persistent and evident incapacity of the EU to make a consistent and 'fair' (based on actual solidarity and "allocations clauses") common migration policy in line with the rest of the EU M-S and especially the ones that are at the forefront of reception of flows (se analytically Papadakis & Dimari 2023: 102- 119). The absence of unified data and subsequently the lack of a consistent data policy have inevitably affected the Greek migration policy landscape, even impacting (at some extent) on the precarity of people seeking refuge in Greece (Dimari, 2022).

This is very big issue to analyze, that nevertheless that does not fall into the scopes of this paper. What is important, is that the PreMiGro Project aspires to tackle these issues through, the concentration and unification of existent data on migration and through the articulation of future predictions, based on the numerical and general data obtained, so as to contribute innovatively in the rationalization of the migration data policy in Greece and in turn in the rationalization of the Greek migration policy overall.

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Permacrises and Polycrises: Outlining the Contemporary Security Environment through References to Strategic Documents of Regional and International Actors[1]

Georgios Koukakis[2]

Abstract

The contemporary security environment has been characterised as an environment of permacrises and polycrises, indicating the simultaneous occurrence of crises in different fields, which is evident in a plethora of strategic documents containing relevant references that indicate the existence or emergence of a variety of threats and risks. The purpose of this analysis is to highlight the main threats and risks of the contemporary security environment through a comparative analysis of several strategic documents of international and regional actors.

Keywords: China, European Union, Germany, Japan, NATO, Russia, Security Environment, Strategy, USA.

Αεικρίσεις και Πολυκρίσεις: Σκιαγραφώντας το Σύγχρονο Περιβάλλον Ασφάλειας μέσα από Αναφορές Στρατηγικών Εγγράφων Περιφερειακών και Διεθνών Δρώντων

Γεώργιος Κουκάκης[3]

Περίληψη

Το σύγχρονο περιβάλλον ασφάλειας έχει χαρακτηριστεί ως ένα περιβάλλον αεικρίσεων και πολυκρίσεων, καταδεικνύοντας την ταυτόχρονη εμφάνιση κρίσεων σε διάφορα πεδία, η οποία είναι έκδηλη σε μία πληθώρα στρατηγικών εγγράφων, τα οποία περιέχουν σχετικές αναφορές που καταδεικνύουν την ύπαρξη ή ανάδυση ποικίλων απειλών και κινδύνων. Σκοπός της παρούσας ανάλυσης είναι η ανάδειξη των κυριότερων απειλών και κινδύνων του σύγχρονου περιβάλλοντος ασφάλειας μέσα από τη συγκριτική ανάλυση διάφορων στρατηγικών εγγράφων διεθνών και περιφερειακών δρώντων.

Keywords: Γερμανία, Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, ΗΠΑ, Ιαπωνία, Κίνα, NATO, Περιβάλλον Ασφάλειας, Ρωσία, Στρατηγική.

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Εισαγωγή

Το σύγχρονο περιβάλλον ασφάλειας έχει χαρακτηριστεί από πολλούς δρώντες ως ένα περιβάλλον *αεικρίσεων*[4] και *πολυκρίσεων*,[5] υποδηλώνοντας ότι η ταυτόχρονη εμφάνιση μακροχρόνιων κρίσεων σε διάφορους τομείς της καθημερινότητάς μας αναμένεται να αποτελέσει τη μελλοντική *κανονικότητα*. Η προαναφερθείσα εκτίμηση είναι έκδηλη σε μία πληθώρα στρατηγικών εγγράφων περιφερειακών και διεθνών δρώντων, τα οποία περιέχουν σχετικές αναφορές που καταδεικνύουν την ύπαρξη ή ανάδυση ποικίλων *απειλών* και *κινδύνων*, αποσκοπώντας στη λήψη κατάλληλων μέτρων αντιμετώπισής τους από τους υφιστάμενους και συνεργαζόμενους φορείς.

Ο όρος *περιβάλλον ασφάλειας* (security environment) περιλαμβάνει τις υπάρχουσες και εν δυνάμει *απειλές* (threats) και *κινδύνους* (risks) που περιστοιχίζουν έναν δρώντα, θέτοντας σε κίνδυνο την ασφάλειά του λόγω των *πράξεων* των απειλών ή των *επιπτώσεων* των κινδύνων. Στο σημείο αυτό αξίζει να επισημανθεί το γεγονός ότι ο όρος απειλή συνήθως αφορά κάποιον δρώντα με φυσική ή/και νομική υπόσταση[6] ο οποίος στρέφεται εκούσια εναντίον κάποιου άλλου, ενώ ο όρος κίνδυνος αναφέρεται συνήθως σε κάποιο φυσικό φαινόμενο, κατάσταση ή αλληλεπίδραση,[7] η οποία έχει αρνητικές συνέπειες για κάποιον δρώντα (Wallander & Keohane, 1999:91). Αρκετές φορές ωστόσο –κυρίως για λόγους απλούστευσης– δεν γίνεται διάκριση μεταξύ των δύο αυτών κατηγοριών, ενώ ορισμένες φορές οι απειλές/κίνδυνοι αναφέρονται και ως προκλήσεις (challenges).

Σκοπός της παρούσας ανάλυσης είναι η ανάδειξη των κυριότερων απειλών και κινδύνων του σύγχρονου περιβάλλοντος ασφάλειας μέσα από τη συγκριτική ανάλυση της στρατηγικής ασφάλειας πέντε διεθνών και περιφερειακών δρώντων. Αυτοί περιλαμβάνουν έναν *περιφερειακό οργανισμό* (ΕΕ), ένα *διεθνή οργανισμό* (ΝΑΤΟ), ένα κράτος της *αμερικανικής ηπείρου* (ΗΠΑ), ένα κράτος της *ευρωπαϊκής ηπείρου* (Γερμανία) και ένα κράτος της *ασιατικής ηπείρου* (Ιαπωνία).

Η δε σημασία της έγκειται στο γεγονός ότι η γνώση των εν λόγω απειλών και κινδύνων συμβάλλει στη διαμόρφωση ανάλογων *πολιτικών* (policies) από τους *λήπτες απόφασης* (decision makers) για την ανάπτυξη της *ανθεκτικότητας* (resilience), της πολυπόθητης αυτής ικανότητας που εξασφαλίζει αφενός την αποτελεσματική απόκρουση ή/και αντιμετώπιση των απειλών/κινδύνων και αφετέρου την ανάκαμψη ενός δρώντα με το πέρας της απειλής (Koukakis, 2023).

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[4] Ο σύνθετος όρος *αεικρίση* (*αεί-* και *-κρίση*) χρησιμοποιείται για να υποδηλώσει τη *μόνιμη παρουσία* κρίσεων και αποτελεί μετάφραση του αγγλικού όρου *permacrisis*.

[5] Ο σύνθετος όρος *πολυκρίση* (*πολύ-* και *-κρίση*) χρησιμοποιείται για να υποδηλώσει την *ταυτόχρονη* παρουσία *πολλών* κρίσεων διαφορετικής φύσης και αποτελεί μετάφραση του αγγλικού όρου *polycrisis*.

[6] Ο όρος *φυσική/νομική υπόσταση* υποδηλώνει δρώντες όπως άτομα/ομάδες, κράτη, οργανισμούς, κ.λπ.

[7] Τέτοιοι κίνδυνοι είναι η μόλυνση του περιβάλλοντος, η οικονομική/επισιτιστική/ενεργειακή κρίση, κ.λπ.

Η Στρατηγική Πυξίδα της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης

Η *Στρατηγική Πυξίδα* (Strategic Compass) της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης (ΕΕ) εγκρίθηκε από το Ευρωπαϊκό Συμβούλιο στις 21 Μαρτίου 2022 (European Council, 2022), σχεδόν ένα μήνα μετά την εισβολή της Ρωσίας στην Ουκρανία. Αξίζει δε να σημειωθεί ότι στο τελευταίο μέρος του εγγράφου με τίτλο *Συμπεράσματα* αναφέρεται ότι η ΕΕ σχεδιάζει να κάνει ένα κβαντικό άλμα κατά την επόμενη δεκαετία, με στόχο να γίνει ένας πιο διεκδικητικός και αποφασιστικός *πάροχος ασφάλειας*, καλύτερα προετοιμασμένος για την αντιμετώπιση των σημερινών και μελλοντικών απειλών και προκλήσεων (European Union External Action, 2022:62).

Όσον αφορά το περιβάλλον ασφάλειας, το εν λόγω στρατηγικό έγγραφο καταδεικνύει τις κυριότερες απειλές/κινδύνους στο τμήμα του με τίτλο *Ο κόσμος που αντιμετωπίζουμε* (European Union External Action, 2022:17-23), το οποίο βασίζεται στην *Ανάλυση Απειλής της ΕΕ* (EU Threat Analysis). Η πρώτη απειλή που καταδεικνύεται μέσα στο έγγραφο είναι τη *Ρωσία*, η οποία αναφέρεται ότι παραβιάζει το διεθνές δίκαιο και τις αρχές του Καταστατικού Χάρτη (ΚΧ) του ΟΗΕ, υπονομεύοντας την Ευρωπαϊκή και παγκόσμια ασφάλεια και σταθερότητα. Ακολούθως το έγγραφο αναφέρεται στην *Κίνα*, την οποία χαρακτηρίζει αφενός μεν ως εταίρο για συνεργασία, αφετέρου δε ως οικονομικό ανταγωνιστή και συστημικό αντίπαλο (Κουκάκης, 2023β:58-60).

Τέλος η Στρατηγική Πυξίδα επισημαίνει τις αρνητικές συνέπειες των κινδύνων της τρομοκρατίας, του βίαιου εξτρεμισμού, του οργανωμένου εγκλήματος, της εμπορίας ανθρώπων, των υβριδικών συγκρούσεων, των κυβερνοεπιθέσεων, της εργαλειοποίησης της παράτυπης μετανάστευσης, της διασποράς των όπλων μαζικής καταστροφής (ΟΜΚ), της χρηματοπιστωτικής αστάθειας, των ακραίων κοινωνικών και οικονομικών αποκλίσεων, των εκστρατειών χειραγώγησης πληροφοριών, της ξένης παρέμβασης, της υπερθέρμανσης του πλανήτη σε συνδυασμό με τους γεωπολιτικούς ανταγωνισμούς, των συνεχιζόμενων περιφερειακών συγκρούσεων, της κλιματικής αλλαγής, της περιβαλλοντικής αποσάθρωσης, των φυσικών καταστροφών, και των παγκόσμιων υγειονομικών κρίσεων.

Το Στρατηγικό Δόγμα του ΝΑΤΟ

Το πλέον πρόσφατο *Στρατηγικό Δόγμα* (Strategic Concept) του ΝΑΤΟ εγκρίθηκε από τους ηγέτες των κρατών-μελών της Συμμαχίας στις 29 Ιουνίου 2022 (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2022a) κατά τη διάρκεια της Συνόδου Κορυφής που πραγματοποιήθηκε στη Μαδρίτη (Koukakis, 2022c). Με το εν λόγω έγγραφο το ΝΑΤΟ ήθελε να διασφαλίσει ότι η Συμμαχία παραμένει ικανή και εφοδιασμένη με όλα τα απαραίτητα μέσα για το μέλλον, έχοντας ως όραμα τη διαμόρφωση ενός κόσμου όπου η κυριαρχία, η εδαφική ακεραιότητα, τα ανθρώπινα δικαιώματα και το διεθνές δίκαιο

θα είναι σεβαστά, και όπου κάθε χώρα θα μπορεί να επιλέξει το δικό της δρόμο, απαλλαγμένη από την επιθετικότητα, τον εξαναγκασμό και την υπονόμευση (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2022b:2).

Όσον αφορά τις κυριότερες απειλές/κινδύνους, το Στρατηγικό Δόγμα του 2022 τις καταδεικνύει στο τμήμα του με τίτλο *Στρατηγικό Περιβάλλον* (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2022b:3-6), αναφέροντας ως πιο σημαντική και άμεση απειλή τη *Ρωσική Ομοσπονδία* καθώς παραβιάζει τους κανόνες και τις αρχές που συνέβαλαν σε μια σταθερή και προβλέψιμη ευρωπαϊκή τάξη ασφαλείας. Η αμέσως επόμενη απειλή –αν και αναφέρεται λίγο αργότερα μέσα στο κείμενο– που καταδεικνύεται είναι η *Λαϊκή Δημοκρατία της Κίνας*, η οποία αμφισβητεί τα συμφέροντα, την ασφάλεια και τις αξίες της Συμμαχίας χρησιμοποιώντας μία πληθώρα πολιτικών, οικονομικών και στρατιωτικών μέσων, καθώς και υβριδικές επιχειρήσεις, επιχειρήσεις στον κυβερνοχώρο και παραπληροφόρηση για να προβάλει την ισχύ της.

Τέλος, το έγγραφο αναφέρεται στους κινδύνους που εγκυμονούν από τις κακόβουλες δραστηριότητες στον κυβερνοχώρο και το διάστημα, την προώθηση εκστρατειών παραπληροφόρησης, την εργαλειοποίηση της μετανάστευσης, τη χειραγώγηση των ενεργειακών αποθεμάτων, τον οικονομικό εξαναγκασμό, την υπονόμευση των πολυμερών κανόνων και θεσμών, και την προώθηση αυταρχικών μοντέλων διακυβέρνησης. Ως κινδύνους καταδεικνύει επίσης την τρομοκρατία, τις συγκρούσεις, την ευθραυστότητα και αστάθεια πολλών κρατών, την καταστροφή της πολιτιστικής κληρονομιάς και του περιβάλλοντος, την εξαναγκαστική μετανάστευση, την εμπορία ανθρώπων, την επένδυση σε νέες τεχνολογίες, τη διάβρωση της αρχιτεκτονικής μη διασποράς ΟΜΚ, την υποβάθμιση των κρίσιμων υποδομών, και την κλιματική αλλαγή.

Η Στρατηγική Εθνικής Ασφάλειας των Ηνωμένων Πολιτειών

Η τελευταία *Στρατηγική Εθνικής Ασφάλειας* (National Security Strategy) των ΗΠΑ δημοσιεύτηκε στις 12 Οκτωβρίου 2022 (The White House, 2022α), όντας η δέκατη όγδοη αμερικανική Στρατηγική (Koukakis, 2022a:9) και πρώτη για τον Πρόεδρο Biden, ο οποίος επισημαίνει ότι το εν λόγω έγγραφο στοχεύει στην προώθηση των ζωτικών συμφερόντων της Αμερικής με σκοπό να καταστήσει τις ΗΠΑ ικανές να ξεπεράσουν τους γεωπολιτικούς τους ανταγωνιστές, να αντιμετωπίσουν τις κοινές προκλήσεις και να θέσουν τον κόσμο σε μια σταθερή πορεία προς ένα φωτεινότερο και πιο ελπιδοφόρο αύριο (The White House, 2022b:2).

Όσον αφορά το περιβάλλον ασφάλειας, το εν λόγω στρατηγικό έγγραφο καταδεικνύει τις κυριότερες απειλές/κινδύνους στο πρώτο τμήμα του με τίτλο *Ο ανταγωνισμός για αυτό που έρχεται στη συνέχεια* (The White House, 2022b:6-12). Ως κυριότερες απειλές αναφέρει τη *Ρωσία* και την *Κίνα* (Koukakis,

2022b:127) –χαρακτηρίζοντας την πρώτη ως άμεση απειλή για το ελεύθερο και ανοιχτό διεθνές σύστημα και τη δεύτερη ως το μοναδικό ανταγωνιστή των ΗΠΑ που διαθέτει τόσο την πρόθεση όσο και τη δύναμη να αναμορφώσει τη διεθνή τάξη– και ως δευτερεύουσες το *Ιράν* και τη *Βόρεια Κορέα*, κυρίως λόγω των πυραυλικών και πυρηνικών τους δυνατοτήτων.

Τέλος, η Στρατηγική Εθνικής Ασφάλειας αναφέρεται στις κοινές παγκόσμιες προκλήσεις (κινδύνους) της κλιματικής αλλαγής, της υγειονομικής κρίσης, της πείνας και της φτώχειας, της οικονομικής ασφάλειας, της διασποράς ΟΜΚ, της τρομοκρατίας, των συγκρούσεων, των κυβερνοεπιθέσεων, της προστασίας των κρίσιμων υποδομών, και της ενεργειακής κρίσης.

Η Στρατηγική Εθνικής Ασφάλειας της Γερμανίας

Η *Στρατηγική Εθνικής Ασφάλειας* της Γερμανίας –η οποία δημοσιεύτηκε στις 14 Ιουνίου 2023 (Schreer, 2023)– αποτελεί το τέταρτο στρατηγικό έγγραφο που εξετάζεται στο παρόν άρθρο και έχει ιδιαίτερη αξία για δύο λόγους. Πρώτον επειδή η Γερμανία αποτελεί ένα από τα δύο ηγετικά κράτη-μέλη της ΕΕ,[8] και δεύτερον επειδή το εν λόγω έγγραφο έχει ιστορική σημασία καθώς είναι η πρώτη Στρατηγική Εθνικής Ασφάλειας που δημοσιεύεται από τη Γερμανία (Κουκάκης, 2023α) –έπειτα από μία μακρά περίοδο εσωτερικών διαβουλεύσεων– με σκοπό τη διατήρηση της ασφάλειας για τους πολίτες και τη συνεισφορά στην ασφάλεια της Ευρώπης (The Federal Government, 2023:5).

Όσον αφορά τις κυριότερες απειλές/κινδύνους, το εν λόγω στρατηγικό έγγραφο τις καταδεικνύει στο τμήμα του με τίτλο *Το δικό μας περιβάλλον* ασφάλειας (The Federal Government, 2023:22-27), αναφέροντας ως πιο σημαντική απειλή για την ειρήνη και την ασφάλεια της Ευρω-Ατλαντικής περιοχής τη *Ρωσία,* της οποίας οι πολεμικές ενέργειες παραβιάζουν τον ΚΧ του ΟΗΕ και τη συνεργατική τάξη ασφάλειας της Ευρώπης. Στη συνέχεια το έγγραφο αναφέρεται στην *Κίνα*, την οποία χαρακτηρίζει –υιοθετώντας πλήρως τη σχετική διατύπωση της Στρατηγικής Πυξίδας– ως συνεργάτη, ανταγωνιστή και συστημικό αντίπαλο.

Τέλος, η Στρατηγική αναφέρεται στους πολέμους, τις κρίσεις και τις συγκρούσεις στη γειτονία της Ευρώπης, τον εξτρεμισμό, την τρομοκρατία, τη διάβρωση της αρχιτεκτονικής μη διασποράς ΟΜΚ, τους Χημικούς, Βιολογικούς, Ραδιολογικούς και Πυρηνικούς (ΧΒΡΠ) παράγοντες, την εξασθένιση των οικονομικών και χρηματοπιστωτικών σχέσεων, την πανδημία του COVID-19, την οικονομική εξάρτηση, την ανάγκη μετάβασης σε Ανανεώσιμες Πηγές Ενέργειας (ΑΠΕ), τον ανταγωνισμό στον τομέα της τεχνολογίας, τη σημασία των κρίσιμων υποδομών, τις κυβερνοεπιθέσεις, τη δράση ξένων

[8] Το άλλο ηγετικό κράτος-μέλος της ΕΕ είναι η Γαλλία. Ο εν λόγω χαρακτηρισμός οφείλεται αφενός στο γεγονός ότι αποτελούν ιδρυτικά κράτη-μέλη της ΕΕ και αφετέρου στην πολύπλευρη ισχύ που διαθέτουν, με αποτέλεσμα να ασκούν σημαντική επιρροή σε περιφερειακό και διεθνές επίπεδο.

υπηρεσιών πληροφοριών, το οργανωμένο έγκλημα, το παραεμπόριο, την κλιματική κρίση, τη φτώχεια και την πείνα, καθώς και την υποβάθμιση του φυσικού περιβάλλοντος.

Η Στρατηγική Εθνικής Ασφάλειας της Ιαπωνίας

Η πλέον πρόσφατη –και δεύτερη κατά σειρά– *Στρατηγική Εθνικής Ασφάλειας* της Ιαπωνίας δημοσιεύτηκε στις 16 Δεκεμβρίου 2022 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2022), αποσπώντας την επιδοκιμασία τόσο του Υπουργού Εξωτερικών όσο και του Συμβούλου Εθνικής Ασφάλειας των ΗΠΑ (Κουκάκης, 2022). Αξίζει δε να σημειωθεί ότι το εν λόγω έγγραφο χαρακτηρίζει την παρούσα χρονική περίοδο ως ένα σημείο καμπής της ιστορίας, συμπληρώνοντας ότι η Ιαπωνία βρίσκεται στη μέση του σοβαρότερου και πολυπλοκότερου περιβάλλοντος ασφάλειας από το τέλος του Β' Παγκοσμίου Πολέμου (National Security Council of Japan, 2022:2).

Οι κυριότερες απειλές/κίνδυνοι καταδεικνύονται στο τέταρτο τμήμα της Στρατηγικής Εθνικής Ασφάλειας της Ιαπωνίας με τίτλο *Το Περιβάλλον Ασφάλειας που Περιστοιχίζει την Ιαπωνία και οι Προκλήσεις Εθνικής Ασφάλειας της Ιαπωνίας* (National Security Council of Japan, 2022:17-23). Για ακόμα μία φορά η επιθετικότητα της *Ρωσίας* αναφέρεται ως πρώτη απειλή, καθώς διαταράσσει τα θεμέλια της διεθνούς τάξης, ενώ η προσπάθεια της *Κίνας* "να αναζωογονήσει το Κινεζικό έθνος" σε συνδυασμό με την ενίσχυση των αμυντικών της δυνατοτήτων, την αποχή της από διεθνή σχήματα συνεργασίας, και την απειλή χρήσης βίας στην Ταϊβάν, χαρακτηρίζεται ως η μεγαλύτερη στρατηγική πρόκληση για την Ιαπωνία. Στις προαναφερθείσες απειλές, το εν λόγω έγγραφο προσθέτει τη *Βόρεια Κορέα*, η οποία δεν έχει προβεί στις απαραίτητες ενέργειες όσον αφορά τα ΟΜΚ, εκτοξεύει συνεχώς βαλλιστικούς πυραύλους, ενισχύει τις πυρηνικές της δυνατότητες, και παραβιάζει τα ανθρώπινα δικαιώματα.

Τέλος, ως κίνδυνοι καταδεικνύονται οι κυβερνοεπιθέσεις, ο υβριδικός πόλεμος, η παραπληροφόρηση, οι ενέργειες εναντίον της ανεφοδιαστικής αλυσίδας και των κρίσιμων υποδομών, η βιομηχανική κατασκοπεία, ο οικονομικός καταναγκασμός, η αλλαγή του *status quo*, η πειρατεία, η τρομοκρατία, η διασπορά ΟΚΜ, οι φυσικές καταστροφές, η κλιματική αλλαγή, καθώς και η υγειονομική, επισιτιστική και ενεργειακή κρίση.

Πίνακας 1. Συγκριτικός πίνακας των απειλών και κινδύνων των στρατηγικών (εθνικής) ασφάλειας

Απειλές & Κίνδυνοι του Περιβάλλοντος Ασφάλειας	Στρατηγική Πυξίδα (ΕΕ)	Στρατηγικό Δόγμα (ΝΑΤΟ)	Στρατηγική Εθνικής Ασφάλειας (ΗΠΑ)	Στρατηγική Εθνικής Ασφάλειας (Γερμανία)	Στρατηγική Εθνικής Ασφάλειας (Ιαπωνία)
Ρωσία*****	X	X	X	X	X
Κίνα*****	X	X	X	X	X
Βόρεια Κορέα**	-	-	X	-	X
Ιράν*	-	-	X	-	-
Τρομοκρατία *****	X	X	X	X	X
Βίαιος εξτρεμισμός**	X	-	-	X	-
Οργανωμένο Έγκλημα**	X	-	-	X	-
Εμπορία ανθρώπων**	X	X	-	-	-
Υβριδικές συγκρούσεις***	X	X	-	-	X
Κυβερνοεπιθέσεις*****	X	X	X	X	X
Εργαλειοποίηση μετανάστευσης**	X	X	-	-	-
Διασπορά ΟΜΚ*****	X	X	X	X	X
Χρηματοπιστωτική αστάθεια****	X	X	X	X	-
Ακραίες κοινωνικές αποκλίσεις*	X	-	-	-	-
Ακραίες οικονομικές αποκλίσεις**	X	-	-	X	-
Χειραγώγηση πληροφοριών/Κατασκοπεία***	X	X	-	-	X
Ξένη παρέμβαση**	X	-	-	X	-
Ένοπλες συγκρούσεις*****	X	X	X	X	X
Κλιματική αλλαγή*****	X	X	X	X	X
Περιβαλλοντική αποσάθρωση***	X	X	-	X	-
Φυσικές καταστροφές**	X	-	-	-	X
Υγειονομική κρίση (πανδημίες)****	X	-	X	X	X
Κακόβουλες δραστηριότητες στο διάστημα*	-	X	-	-	-
Χειραγώγηση ενεργειακών αποθεμάτων***	-	X	X	-	X
Οικονομικός εξαναγκασμός**	-	X	-	-	X
Υπονόμευση των πολυμερών κανόνων/θεσμών*	-	X	-	-	X
Προώθηση αυταρχικών μοντέλων διακυβέρνησης*	-	X	-	-	-
Ευθραυστότητα & αστάθεια κρατών *	-	X	-	-	-
Καταστροφή πολιτιστικής κληρονομιάς*	-	X	-	-	-
Επένδυση σε νέες τεχνολογίες**	-	X	-	X	-
Υποβάθμιση κρίσιμων υποδομών/ανεφοδιαστικής αλυσίδας****	-	X	X	X	X
Επισιτιστική κρίση, Πείνα***	-	-	X	X	X
Φτώχεια**	-	-	X	X	-
ΧΒΡΠ παράγοντες*	-	-	-	X	-
Πειρατεία*	-	-	-	-	X

Σημείωση: Ο αριθμός των αστερίσκων δίπλα από κάθε απειλή/κίνδυνο υποδηλώνει τον αριθμό των δρώντων που αναφέρουν τις εν λόγω απειλές/κινδύνους στις αντίστοιχες στρατηγικές (εθνικής) ασφάλειας.

Πηγή: Επεξεργασία του Γεώργιου Κουκάκη

Συμπεράσματα

Από την εξέταση των εγγράφων στρατηγικής (εθνικής) ασφάλειας που πραγματοποιήθηκε καταδεικνύεται ότι τόσο η *Ρωσία* όσο και η *Κίνα* αποτελούν δύο από τις κυριότερες απειλές της διεθνούς έννομης τάξης και ασφάλειας, καθώς και τα πέντε σχετικά έγγραφα (Πίνακας 1) εμπεριέχουν ανάλογες αναφορές ως προς τη δράση τους. Αξίζει ωστόσο να επισημανθεί το γεγονός ότι η Ρωσία –αν και τον Φεβρουάριο του 2022 εισέβαλε στην Ουκρανία– δεν θεωρείται τόσο σημαντική απειλή όσο η Κίνα, η οποία χαρακτηρίζεται ως (ο μόνος ικανός και πρόθυμος) συστημικός ανταγωνιστής/αντίπαλος από τις ΗΠΑ, την ΕΕ και τη Γερμανία.

Αντιθέτως, η *Βόρεια Κορέα* αναγνωρίζεται ως απειλή μόνο από τις ΗΠΑ και την Ιαπωνία, προφανώς λόγω των στενών σχέσεων των δύο δρώντων αλλά και της γειτνίασης της Ιαπωνίας με τη Βόρεια Κορέα, ενώ το *Ιράν* χαρακτηρίζεται ως απειλή μόνο από τις ΗΠΑ προφανώς λόγω των πυρηνικών του δυνατοτήτων και της μακροχρόνιας αντιπαράθεσης των δύο μερών.

Τέλος, οι κίνδυνοι του περιβάλλοντος ασφάλειας μπορούν να διαχωριστούν –σύμφωνα με τον αριθμό των δρώντων που περιέχουν αντίστοιχες αναφορές στα εξεταζόμενα στρατηγικά τους έγγραφα (Πίνακας 1)– στις ακόλουθες κατηγορίες:

- ✓ *Υψηλοί κίνδυνοι* (σχετικές αναφορές σε 4-5 στρατηγικά έγγραφα): Αυτοί περιλαμβάνουν την τρομοκρατία, τις κυβερνοεπιθέσεις, τη διασπορά των ΟΜΚ, τις ένοπλες συγκρούσεις, την κλιματική αλλαγή, τη χρηματοπιστωτική αστάθεια, τις πανδημίες, και την υποβάθμιση των κρίσιμων υποδομών και της ανεφοδιαστικής αλυσίδας.

- ✓ *Μέσοι κίνδυνοι* (σχετικές αναφορές σε 2-3 στρατηγικά έγγραφα): Αυτοί περιλαμβάνουν τις υβριδικές συγκρούσεις, τη χειραγώγηση των πληροφοριών και την κατασκοπεία, την περιβαλλοντική αποσάθρωση, τη χειραγώγηση των ενεργειακών αποθεμάτων, την επισιτιστική κρίση, το βίαιος εξτρεμισμός και το οργανωμένο έγκλημα, την εμπορία ανθρώπων και την εργαλειοποίηση της μετανάστευσης, τις ακραίες οικονομικές αποκλίσεις, την ξένη παρέμβαση, τον οικονομικό εξαναγκασμό, την εκμετάλλευση της τεχνολογίας, τη φτώχεια, και τις φυσικές καταστροφές.

- ✓ *Χαμηλοί κίνδυνοι* (σχετικές αναφορές σε 1 στρατηγικό έγγραφο): Αυτοί περιλαμβάνουν τις ακραίες κοινωνικές αποκλίσεις (ΕΕ), τις κακόβουλες δραστηριότητες στο διάστημα (ΝΑΤΟ), την υπονόμευση των πολυμερών κανόνων και θεσμών (ΝΑΤΟ), την προώθηση αυταρχικών μοντέλων διακυβέρνησης (ΝΑΤΟ), την ευθραυστότητα και την αστάθεια των κρατών (ΝΑΤΟ), την καταστροφή της πολιτιστικής κληρονομιάς (ΝΑΤΟ), τους ΧΒΡΠ παράγοντες (Γερμανία), και την πειρατεία (Ιαπωνία).

Ως εκ τούτου, οι λήπτες απόφασης θα πρέπει να έχουν υπόψιν τους ότι κατά τη διαμόρφωση των πολιτικών (policies) του φορέα που εκπροσωπούν –ειδικά εάν αυτός ανήκει στον ευρύτερο δημόσιο/κρατικό τομέα– θα πρέπει *να συμβουλεύονται πρώτα το αντίστοιχο στρατηγικό έγγραφο* που εκφράζει την επίσημη θεσμική πολιτική ασφάλειας, καθώς η συνεργασία με άλλους φορείς (όπως στην περίπτωση της Ρωσίας, της Κίνας, της Βόρειας Κορέας και του Ιράν) ενδέχεται να ελλοχεύει σημαντικούς κινδύνους ή να βρίσκεται εκτός θεσμικού πλαισίου. Επιπλέον, θα πρέπει να λάβουν τα κατάλληλα *μέτρα ασφάλειας*[9] για την ανάπτυξη της ανθεκτικότητας του φορέα τους, πρωτίστως απέναντι στους υψηλούς και δευτερευόντως τους μέσους και χαμηλούς κινδύνους.

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[9] Τα μέτρα ασφάλειας (ανεξαρτήτως φορέα) συνήθως χωρίζονται σε: (1) *προληπτικά* τα οποία στοχεύουν στην αποτροπή της εκδήλωσης ενεργειών από μία απειλή ή/και τη θωράκιση του φορέα ώστε να μην υποστεί βλάβη από έναν κίνδυνο, (2) *κατασταλτικά* τα οποία στοχεύουν στον μετριασμό των αρνητικών συνεπειών μετά την εκδήλωση της ενέργειας μίας απειλής ή/και την επίδραση ενός κινδύνου και την απόκρουσή/εξάλειψή τους, και (3) *επακόλουθα* τα οποία στοχεύουν στην αποκατάσταση της βλάβης που υπέστη ο φορέας από την απειλή ή/και τον κίνδυνο.

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Topic 3

Sustainable Development and Environmental Policies

Alternative Approaches to Plastic Production and Recycling Policies[1,2]

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Abstract

Plastics offer convenience to businesses and the supply chain, but their improper disposal and low recycling rates pose significant environmental and health challenges. Each year, millions of tons of plastic end up in oceans, with a recycling rate below 9%. Thus, urgent action is required to tackle this global plastic crisis. This policy brief proposes a Europe-wide ban on colored plastics to promote a circular economy and enhance plastic recycling, drawing insights from successful recycling policies in Japan and South Korea. This approach, despite initial challenges, can yield long-term benefits such as reduced exports, energy conservation, and increased consumer awareness. Collaboration, funding, and material design innovation are key to promoting sustainable practices and combatting plastic pollution. By seizing this opportunity collectively, we can make a lasting impact in the fight against plastic pollution and address the climate crisis before it is too late.

Keywords: plastic, recycling, colored plastic, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), Green Deal, circular economy, waste management.

Introduction

Plastics are widely recognized for their multiple benefits, such as being cheap, durable, and versatile. However, these very qualities can also lead to negative impacts on the environment and human health when plastics are not properly disposed of. The enormous amount of production and the lack of proper recycling exacerbate the problem, highlighting that, even if plastics are properly disposed of, a significant issue persists. Research indicates that every year 14 million tons of plastic end up in oceans (Marine Plastic Pollution, 2021, 1). The plastic epidemic is a global issue, with over 300 million tons of plastic produced each year and less than 9% of it being recycled (Pollution Facts | PlasticOceans.org/the-Facts, 2021). Out of this amount, packaging makes up more than 40% of the world's total plastic usage, with less than 14% of plastic packaging being recycled on a global scale (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2022).

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The UN has encouraged nations to significantly reduce plastic by 2030. Retailers are now trying to improve their plastic footprint by using alternative packaging, but this is not enough. Businesses need to find ways to reuse and recycle products in order to eliminate waste and pollution. The design phase of a product ultimately plays the biggest part in combating plastic pollution, as it accounts for up to 80% of its environmental impact (European Commission, 2020: 3).

This policy brief examines the EU's plastic recycling situation and uses Japan and Korea as case studies. We propose a ban on colored plastics as the initial step toward long-term plastic recycling and waste management solutions. Our goal is to facilitate the recycling process, establish good practices, raise consumer awareness, and pave the way for a sustainable circular economy.

Literature Review

Overview of Plastic

Nowadays, a diverse range of plastics exists, customized to meet specific requirements. Understanding plastic types is crucial, as it facilitates recycling, and provides insights into the potential health hazards linked to plastic materials. Each plastic type has different properties and uses, and some are more easily recyclable than others. Thus, proper disposal of plastic is crucial in the prevention of harming the environment and its ecosystems. The seven types of plastic, according to Hardin (2021) are:

1. Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET or PETE): one of the most common types of plastic, due to its lightweight, strength, and transparency. It is mostly used as food packaging (beverage bottles, food bottles), fabric, and rope.

2. High-Density Polyethylene (HDPE): strong and resistant to chemicals and moisture, making it appropriate for cartons, containers, and other building materials.

3. Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC or Vinyl): highly resistant to chemicals, hard and rigid. Often used in construction and medical applications, even though it is considered the most dangerous for human health.

4. Low-Density Polyethylene (LDPE): compared to HDPE, is softer, clearer, and more flexible. It is mostly used as plastic wrap.

5. Polypropylene (PP): the most durable, as it is heat resistant, and flexible, retaining its shape and strength. It is also used as a hot food container.

6. Polystyrene (PS or Styrofoam): insulates well, while it is rigid and low cost. Found mostly in takeout food containers.

7. Other: other or a mixture of the above. These can't be recycled. Examples include CDs, electronics, etc.

Plastics are important in the supply chain for various reasons (Pilz et al., 2010). Their durability and versatility make them ideal for packaging and transportation needs, as they can be customized to suit different products and applications. Compared to materials such as glass or metal, plastics are cost-effective, due to their lower price. Moreover, their lightweight nature facilitates efficient transportation, enabling mass transportation and thus reducing transportation costs. Plastics offer extended shelf life and protection during transportation and storage by acting as a barrier against moisture, oxygen, and contaminants, ensuring the safety and longevity of food products (British Plastics Federation, n.d.).

Circular Economy and Plastics

A circular economy is an economic system that minimizes waste and maximizes resource sustainability through continuous resource cycling. It promotes sustainable production, consumption, and economic growth while reducing environmental impact (McGinty, 2021).

To achieve a circular economy for plastic, three actions are necessary: eliminating unnecessary plastics, innovating reusable and recyclable materials, and ensuring the circulation of plastic items to minimize environmental harm (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2022). The EU has implemented measures, initiatives, and programs to address plastic sustainability concerns and promote the circular economy for plastics. This includes considering the entire product lifecycle and adopting strategies for sustainable production and consumption (European Parliament, 2018, 1).

Plastics and Circularity in the EU

According to European Parliament (2018), plastic production worldwide has increased significantly over the years. Specifically, the amount of plastic waste has grown from 1.5 million tons, as observed in the year 1950, to 359 million tons in 2018. Despite the EU's efforts to reduce plastic waste, challenges persist in achieving efficient plastic recycling. Complications arise from factors such as the price and quality disparities between recycled and unrecycled products. Additionally, the diverse composition of plastic's raw materials further impedes the recycling process, resulting in increased costs and potential compromises in the final product's quality.

Nevertheless, the EU has developed a comprehensive strategy, proposed by the European Commission, to address plastic waste. This strategy aims to ensure the reuse or recycling of plastic packaging by 2030, aligning with the directives of the Green Deal (European Commission, 2019). To support this goal, the European Parliament adopted legislation in 2015 that restricts the use of

lightweight plastic bags in the EU and promotes their replacement with environmentally friendly alternatives like compostable and biodegradable bags.

In 2019, the EU implemented new rules targeting the issue of marine litter, which currently exceeds 150 million tons in our oceans (The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, 2019). As marine litter poses risks to marine life and causes economic losses in sectors such as tourism and fisheries, EU lawmakers decided to ban single-use plastics such as cotton bud sticks and straws to prevent further ocean pollution. Furthermore, in 2022, the European Commission proposed new rules concerning packaging, promoting the use of bio-based and recycled plastics, as well as the improvement of packaging design (European Commission, 2022). MEPs also agreed to ban the use of microplastics in personal care and cleaning products. Finally, in early 2023, the European Parliament expressed its stance on waste shipment regulations, advocating for the cessation of exports to non-OECD countries and a phased-out approach within four years, emphasizing the importance of recycling (European Parliament, 2023).

Case Studies: Japan and S. Korea

The goal of this case study is to investigate noteworthy plastic recycling policies, while simultaneously conducting an analysis of sub-optimal practices. Japan and South Korea are two great examples in this regard.

Plastic Recycling in Japan

Japan's plastic waste management performance is notable, as evidenced by its high Plastic Management Index (PMI) of 84.5 out of 100, the second highest globally, according to the Economist's Impact (Economist Impact, 2021). Additionally, Japan achieved an impressive PET bottle recycling rate of 86% in 2021 (Tiseo, 2023).

The country has embraced Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), an environmental policy approach defined by the OECD, which extends a producer's responsibility for a product to the post-consumer stage (OECD, 2001). In Japan, EPR was introduced through the "Packaging Recycling Act" in December 1995 (Yamakawa, 2016). The act assigns specific roles to stakeholders: consumers are accountable for source sorting, municipalities handle sorted collection, and producers bear the responsibility for recycling, while each stakeholder has physical and financial obligations. The government actively promotes public awareness through education and initiatives like strategically placed PET bottle collection points, encouraging individuals to process their waste at home (García, 2020).

However, despite these efforts, Japan faces challenges in overall plastic waste management. Its plastic waste per capita in 2022 was 32.4 kg, second only to the US (40 kg) (Heinrich Boell Stiftung Hong Kong et al., 2022). In 2017, Japan was among the world's highest-rated exporters, exporting 1431.45 million kilograms of plastic waste (Klein, 2023). Moreover, the predominant method of plastic waste disposal in Japan is incineration, accounting for 75% in 2019, which contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, which severely contributes to climate change (Klein, 2022).

Plastic Recycling in S. Korea

The Republic of Korea first introduced EPR policies in 1992 through the Law for Promotion of Resources Saving and Reutilization (LRSR), which emphasized the legal role of the producers (Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, 2009). This law established the Producer Deposit Refund (PDR) system, operating under the deposit-refund principle to incentivize recycling. In 2003, the LRSR was amended, introducing the Producer Responsibility (PR) system, which sets Mandatory Recycling Targets (MRTs) for manufacturers based on packaging materials. Producers failing to meet obligations face recycling fees, while those exceeding obligations can carry over results for up to two years (Kim, 2010).

According to Statista in 2017 the Republic of Korea recycled approximately 22.7% of plastic waste as material and 39.3% as energy (SEA Circular Country Profile_SOUTH KOREA, 2020). However, a 2016 survey by Statistics Korea revealed that the country had the highest plastic consumption per capita globally for that specific year, at 98.2 kg (SEA Circular Country Profile_SOUTH KOREA, 2020).

Takeaways

Our case study highlights that Japan stands out in PET plastic bottle recycling. However, Japan faces challenges in overall plastic waste management, including high per capita plastic waste generation and reliance on incineration. Meanwhile, South Korea has achieved commendable recycling rates for plastic waste, despite its high plastic consumption per capita. Also, both countries have implemented Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) policies to manage post-consumer plastic waste.

The overall effectiveness of PET bottle recycling implies that clear plastics facilitate the recycling process, ultimately reducing plastic waste. Although colored plastic handling is not explicitly mentioned in our findings, the success of bottle recycling shows the potential benefits of promoting clear plastic packaging and implementing a ban on colored plastics. This strategic approach could offer a valuable solution to enhance plastic recycling efforts and minimize plastic waste, leading to a circular and sustainable supply chain.

Policy Recommendations

The Literature Review and Case Study provide valuable insights into the current state of plastic disposal and recycling practices across the globe. To establish sustainable solutions for plastic waste management, it is vital to tackle harmful practices such as overconsumption and the prevalent use of incineration and landfilling for end-stage plastics. By analyzing both successful and unsuccessful cases, we can embrace effective practices and steer clear of pitfalls, thereby solidifying our efforts toward sustainability.

Most plastics produced today are used for packaging, with colored plastics being particularly prevalent. To align with the Green Deal's target of recycling at least 55% of plastic packaging waste by 2030 (European Commission, 2019), we propose a Europe-wide ban on colored plastics used in packaging, targeting vibrant hues that pose challenges for effective recycling. This ban aims to drive a shift towards clear or transparent plastics, ensuring greater recyclability and reducing the need for additives that hinder the recycling process. The resulting color uniformity in plastic packaging is grounded in the principles of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), emphasizing the manufacturer's role during the production stage in facilitating subsequent recycling.

Implementing a ban on colored plastics for packaging would have far-reaching implications across the production and distribution supply chain. While initial challenges and potential negative effects on employment and production may arise, the ban offers opportunities for import savings and reduced energy consumption. Additionally, it promotes consumer awareness of eco-friendly practices, laying a solid foundation for future actions. This approach aligns with international programs and government standards, including NATO's recommendations for green economic systems (NATO, 2021; 2022). Therefore, it is vital to secure funding and industry support during the transition towards modern, sustainable, and affordable materials. Recognizing the benefits of the production deal, we strongly advocate for the swift implementation of the ban, allowing sufficient restructuring time for supply chain actors. If executing a tender is deemed excessively costly, it may involve goods not yet manufactured or pending purchases of fibers and additives.

It is important to emphasize that this approach also serves as a protective measure for the marine biome and public health. Microplastics, insoluble in nature, result from the decomposition of plastic waste when it enters the oceans. By implementing our proposal, we contribute to safeguarding the marine ecosystem and mitigating the risks associated with consuming seafood and fish that have been exposed to microplastics (United Nations Environment Programme, 2021).

The commitment to the environment and the implementation of relevant regulations are topics of intense debate. Urgency is fueled by the imminent climate crisis, demanding swift legislative action. The proposed ban, which entails a significant transformation of the entire production system and brings forth noticeable changes in product appearance, can yield substantial effects. By promoting sustainable practices and actively engaging consumers, we can significantly amplify the benefits and raise awareness about the importance of the transition.

Conclusions

Plastics offer convenience in various industries, but their improper disposal and low recycling rates cause significant environmental and health problems. Millions of tons of plastic reach our oceans annually, with less than 9% being recycled. Urgent action is crucial in order to tackle this global plastic crisis. Governments, businesses, and individuals must swiftly adopt sustainable practices and eco-friendly alternatives to combat plastic pollution and address the urgency of the climate crisis.

The study of plastic recycling policies in Japan and South Korea underscores the overall effectiveness of PET bottle recycling, which suggests that clear plastics facilitate the recycling process. These findings emphasize the importance of comprehensive approaches involving all stakeholders, including the successful implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) policies, public education, and infrastructure development.

Our proposal for a Europe-wide ban on colored plastics is a practical solution to promote a circular economy and improve plastic recycling. Despite initial challenges and sector-specific impacts, the ban can lead to long-term benefits such as reduced imports, energy conservation, and increased consumer awareness of sustainability. Adopting the ban and fostering a circular economy will pave the way for a greener future. Through collaboration, funding, and material design innovation, we can significantly reduce plastic waste, protect ecosystems, and ensure a healthier planet for future generations. It is crucial to seize this opportunity and work collectively to achieve a lasting impact in the fight against plastic pollution.

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Advancing Sustainable Development, Responsibility and Civic Engagement in Greece: Analyzing the Interplay of Education, Employment, and Political Involvement within the European Policy Framework for Youth[1]

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Abstract

Democracy, social welfare and environmental modernization are issues in EU political agenda that deal with the future generations, therefore this paper will elaborate the political will for European Youth in EU and Greece by 2030. More specifically, this paper will analyze the social challenges that youth faced in EU since 2020 from Covid-19 to the war period and the future via Sustainable Development Agenda. The social challenges will be analyzed first towards the Sustainable Development Goals (4, 8) in EU and Greece, whilst it is necessary these challenges to be associated with the sense of political belonging in EU for youth. EU has launched a strategy for youth that is mainly based on 11 Goals under public discussion and consultation "The Euro-pean Youth Goals 2019-2027". During crisis periods (financial, Covid-19, war), the negative socioeconomic outcomes were an uncertain risk for youth regarding their SD potentials, while political engagement and the sence of political belonging in EU pub-lic affairs seems to be associated with goals 9 and 11 in Youth Strategy. Although EU and its member states (including Greece) have a significant institutional tradition in social welfare and considered as one of the best place to live, political steps need to be taken in order to ensure youth capability to meet their own needs. These values are strongly associated with SD and its definition 36 years after Brundtland report and the significant institutional tradition in social welfare, which is considered very im-portant in order future generation to ensure youth capability to meet their own needs in Europe and Greece towards democracy, social welfare, environmental moderniza-tion and economic competitiveness.

Keywords: European Policy, Greece, Sustainable Development, Youth, Crisis.

Introduction

European Union in 2022 dealt with significant issues related to post Covid-19 period, the war and the sustainability issues (e.g. climate change). Moreover, EU have faced significant socioeconomic challenges (e.g. financial crisis) and uncertain risks (e.g. Covid-19, war) that had to deal with since 2010. These issues have affected EU citizens regarding the role of EU in high policy issues. At the same time Euroscepticism has increased not only because of facts such as Brexit but also regarding political discourse for democratic deficit in EU institutions. In Covid-19 period and war crisis, Next

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Generation EU[5] programme have been launched as the largest financial and development package in EU structural funds and policy cohesion process (2021-2027 period) (Commission, 2020; Taliouris and Manasakis, 2022). Such policy tools (e.g. financial and economic) are significant and influence political changes not only institutionally but indicate the political dimension of EU in participatory process and democratic framework as fundamentals for success. Democracy, social welfare, environmental modernization are issues in EU political agenda that deal with the future generations, therefore the title of this programme pictures the political will for European Youth.

This paper will analyze the social challenges that youth faced in EU since 2020 from Covid-19 to the war period. The social challenges will be analyzed first towards the Sustainable Development Goals[6] 4 and 8 in EU and Greece, whilst it is necessary these challenges to be associated with the sense of political belonging in EU for youth. This is important because youth is the social backbone of labor market as well as the overall sustainability of European Social Model and welfare in EU. These reasons have indicated youth as an interesting policy topic for EU that it is associated with other traditional policy realms such as education and employment. This paper will focus on education policy realm in EU and Greece and youth capability to meet their own needs in terms of sustainability.

Therefore, this paper will analyze the Youth Strategy by 2027 (Youth Year 2022) in EU in parallel with the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and the Next Generation programme, whose title and targets are directly associated with youth as social group. According to Eurostat[7], Youth is consisted of the population in EU between 15 and 29 years old and more specifically it is mainly consisted by the group of Millennial (people born between 1981 and 1995) and Gen Z (people born between 1995 and 2012) (EURES, 2023). For the purposes of this study, in order to examine the risks and challenges faced by the new generation as well as the prospects and opportunities for employment, they are analyzed using statistical data (Eurostat, OECD) as well as the other forms of archive research from EU Institutions and International Organizations.

The qualitative research method of this paper will be based on theoretical investigation and literature review, the archive research and the analysis of statistical data. Moreover, through Eurobarometer polls will be analyzed the Youth views regarding the issues above and the impact on their political perspectives for EU, welfare and education regarding their social competences' literacy and engagement in EU and Greece. Education is a development factor in EU and in particular for youth

[5] Next Generation EU: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/eu-budget/eu-borrower-investor-relations/nextgenerationeu_en
[6] Europe Sustainable Development Report 2022: https://eu-dashboards.sdgindex.org/map/goals/SDG4
[7] Eurostat: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/youth

in order to achieve SD (EESC, 2022); the policy analysis is based on the perspective which is associated with European institutional traditions (e.g. social welfare, environmental modernization) and neo-institutional perspectives for social responsibility and democratic participation.

Youth, education and social welfare

After Lisbon treaty in 2009, the common steps of member states in EU had a policy framework with significant potentials compared to the past; financial crisis, EU institutional setting and democratic deficit discussions has generated a political discourse among parties and stakeholders. Moreover, Brexit (Commission, 2018) as a fact in combination with Euroscepticism increase and the EU weaknesses to respond effectively that time in financial crisis have set up a political discourse for the Europeanization process and the EU responsiveness in risks and crisis (health issues and war). Consequently, the main outcome that crisis has derived for EU is the development of a common attitude in dealing with crisis such as Covid-19 and Peace. In practice, these risks influenced negatively youth capability (Millennial and Z generation) to meet their own needs in EU and states such as Greece. The relatively high unemployment rates, the increase of NEETs (Young people – Not in Education Employment or Training) and the social vulnerability of youth set education process as a policy mean for responsible citizenship and social engagement. Education is a policy realm that reflects the European institutional tradition of social welfare in terms of social inclusion and participation (e.g. self-esteem), employment and social engagement (e.g. social competences, democratic values, science skills), as reflected in all European education policy planning efforts.

At the beginning of 21st century, the common policy process among EU institutions and member states was to achieve the objectives were set in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy. Another important aspect that time was the education and lifelong learning policy framework regarding youth's position in society and labor market (Chourdakis, 2020: 67). This perspective was also pictured in Bologna Declaration (1999) and follow-up process, emphasizing the political need to create the European Higher Education Area in order to increase the potentials of employability in general and in particular for youth (Bologna Declaration, 1999). This program set out objectives for education and training by 2020 and it was based on Bologna Declaration and Lisbon Strategy. In 2010, Commission develops "Europe 2020" Strategy as a response to crisis and as a common path after the institutional changes in EU (e.g. Lisbon Treaty) (Commission, 2010, EP, 2023). In general, education seems to tackle unemployment and its negative consequences in labor market and soft skills increase. During crisis, unemployment across EU was the main factor for social exclusion and poverty deprivation rate for people and vulnerable social groups such as youth. It is estimated that in 2013 the unemployment rate reached 11%, in Greece 30% and 15 million unemployed population (Eurostat,

2019). That time 1 out of 2 young people were unemployed in Greece, while age in combination with sex and education level to be factors that are strongly associated with employment and social welfare as well. In 2022, 95.3 million people in the EU were at risk of poverty or social exclusion; this was equivalent to 21.6 % of the EU population (Eurostat, 2023a; 2023b).

Despite the fact that education at secondary level is obligatory in EU, its postmodern societies had still to deal with issues such as early school leavers, unemployment, specialized and up-skilling work force increase and better synergies among education (e.g. Universities) and development sectors. Unemployment as a risk for youth is strongly associated with the absence of an appropriate "mechanism" that links education with labor market in member states like Greece. Moreover, early school leavers are more vulnerable in long term unemployment, which seems to affect NEETs. This indicator in the majority of EU member states, indicates that NEETs are of low or medium educational level (Eurofound, 2012: 31; 2016a: 2; Papadakis et al., 2020). Consequently, this confirms the difficulty of early school leavers face and NEETs to join vocational training, highest education or employment. Summing up, the socioeconomic barriers that early school leavers face while they are trying to have access in labor market is a fact (EU, 2015).

Thus, the sum of education, training and lifelong learning set the necessary conditions for human development and success in labor market (Cedefop, 2015, p.4). Another interesting fact is the positive impact in employability of those have at least bachelor degree, compare to young people, who have not completed higher education. The correlation between educational level and employability confirms the importance of education as policy realm in society and social engagement, which might influence the challenges that young people faced. This linkage has been underlined before financial crisis in the OECD report "Education at a Glance 2008"(OECD, 2008: 151-152). This report underlines the importance of education again towards employability through statistical evidence-based analysis which underlines both the positive impact in job seeking and better opportunities as well. Bologna Process in EU incorporates this adjustment and the vulnerability as well towards unemployment of well-educated people during crisis (Chourdakis, 2020). In conclusion, the latest OECD report “Education at a Glance 2022” indicate the employment rates for people who have not completed secondary education (56%), those completed secondary education (76%) and tertiary education (87%) in EU, confirming the correlation between educational level and employment potentials for those who have completed higher education (OECD, 2022).

The Covid-19 restrictions to people in EU and Greece have affected negatively their social activities and skills, especially when schools and academic institutions closed (Eurofound, 2021). Consequently, the overall living conditions as well as the mental well-being has been affected in a

triple way from financial crisis outcomes, the Covid-19 restrictions and post-covid period because of the war in East Europe (Ukraine, Russia). The latter has a significance consequence at a global level and influenced global trade and investments as well as power balance and the national economies outside EU (Ruta, 2022). However, European youth must "survive" in this complex and challenging socioeconomic environment. In 2020, Rome ministerial communique commit to build an inclusive, innovative and interconnected EHEA by 2030, able to underpin a sustainable, cohesive and peaceful Europe (Rome Communique, 2020).

Since 2000 and the beginning of financial crisis at the first decade of 21st century (Commission, 2000), the social goal of education policy does not solely based on knowledge but also on social skills and competences (Commission, 2010). According to Chourdakis (2020), employability and higher education are strongly interrelated before crisis in London Ministerial Conference (2007), during Bologna process and postcovid-19 period. This employment-education dependency (in terms of accessibility, level, longivity) is also pictured in OECD statistics (Education at a glance 2018; 2022). As described in the Eurydice report, graduates' employment prospects are greatly influenced by economy's performance and demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, nationality or social class (European Commission/EACEA/ Eurydice, 2014). Therefore, higher education and lifelong learning can significantly contribute to employment prospects and the quality of working life (Chourdakis, 2020); a fact that underlines the need for analysis and depth understanding of another integrated youth indicator the NEETs.

At the same time, NEETs pictures the underdog characteristics that this social group develops in employment market and its very low potentials. But who the NEETs really are; the Young People - Not in Education, Employment or Training)[8] at at the age of 15-29 (e.g. millenials, GZ), who do not participate in any category of social welfare network (e.g. education, employment and training). At EU level, NEETs are considered one of the main parts of youth long term unemployment (Eurofound, 2012). This form of social vulnerability reveals the weaknesses of modern social and economic systems (Lavdas, 2016) and EU institutional tradition as well, called Social Europe model (Sapir, 2004; Taliouris and Tzagarakis, 2020). Statistics and evidence-based policy analysis indicates that NEETs rates are quite similar with unemployment, whilst financial crisis was a milenstone in social vulnerability of NEETs and youth. Up till 2019 the NEETs rate has been gradually declined; however, Covid-19 social externalities had negative socioeconomic outcomes and increased rates. This

[8] For more information on the profile of NEETs, see Papadakis N. (2013). *Absentee Barometer: NEETs (Young People Not in Education Employment or Training)*. Athens: I. Sideris Publications (in Greek).

situation in combination with the negative outcomes of the war in political (e.g. sense of belongingness in EU) and economic (e.g. inflation) issues has influenced the sustainability perspective for EU and its youth (e.g. Next Generation EU). Despite financial crisis, covid-19 and energy crisis NEETs rate is lower in 2021 than in 2011. Additionally, current data shows that EU and Greece are not close to 2030 target (9% (EC, 2021). Despite financial crisis, Covid-19 and energy crisis NEETs rate is lower in 2021 than in 2011. Additionally, current data shows that EU and Greece are not close to 2030 target for 9% (EC, 2021). Thus, EU and Greece, must pay extra attention in such target because indicates another fact which does not based on discrimination between ages (e.g. millennials, GZ) but sex as well. In 2022, 13.1% of young women aged 15–29 in the EU were NEETs, while the corresponding share among young men was 2.6 percentage points lower, at 10.5%. (Eurostat, 2022a).

The unemployment rate varies between member states, for example between Germany and Greece, which in November 2019 recorded unemployment rates of 3.1% and 17.1 % respectively (OECD, 2023). The difference between EU member states becomes more pronounced if we compare the unemployment index in 2022. According to Eurostat, the lowest youth unemployment rates were recorded in the Czech regions of Central Bohemia (1.7%), South-West (3.1%) and Prague (3.2%), the German region of Upper Bavaria (3.3%) and the Polish region of West Transdanubia (3.6%), while the highest youth unemployment rate was recorded in the Spanish region of Ceuta (42.4%), and in the two Greek regions Thessaly (39.8%) and Central Greece (36.5%) (Eurostat, 2022a). These figures confirm the serious effects of successive crises and the difficulties that European citizens have to face (Eurostat, 2022a). Unfortunately, Youth is a social group that in the last decade and crisis period is vulnerable compare to population over 29 years old (Choudhry, et. al. 2012). An important role in the reduction of unemployment rates was played by the efforts and actions carried out both at European and national level in Greece such as the Youth Guarantee (Matthes, 2016).

The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly affected unemployment rate. This has increased in 2020 to 19.1% (Eurostat, 2022a), confirming that the crises are multidimensional and have social and economic consequences in vulnerable social groups such as youth. Although youth is generally more optimistic, have ideas and digital competences, it still faces high rates of unemployment or work in lower quality or for low wages (Eurofound, 2021). In post-Covid-19 period the social threat for youth exists but it seems to be gradually decreased reaching 13.9% (2.6 million) for EU countries in April 2022 (Eurostat, 2023a); April 2021, youth unemployment decreased by 685 thousand in the EU and by 555 thousand in the euro are (Eurostat, 2023b). However, in some countries, the social risk of unemployment is still a threat for youth in terms of age and sex. According to OECD data in July

2023, Greece has one of the highest unemployment rates for young people aged 15-24 and the second unemployment rate gap between men and women (OECD, 2023b). In 2020, Rome ministerial communique commit to build an inclusive, innovative and interconnected EHEA by 2030, able to underpin a sustainable, cohesive and peaceful Europe (Rome Communique, 2020)

EU policy framework for youth and its policy implications in Greece

EU has launched a strategy[9] for youth that is mainly based on prioritization regarding policy orientation and 11 Goals under public discussion and consultation (Commission 2018a; 2018b; EU, 2018). The European Youth Goals 2019-2027[10] are: 1. Connecting EU with Youth, 2 Equality of All Genders, 3. Inclusive Societies, 4. Information & Constructive Dialogue, 5. Mental Health & Wellbeing, 6. Moving Rural Youth Forward, 7. Quality Employment for All, 8. Quality Learning, 9. Space and Participation for All, 10. Sustainable Green Europe, 11. Youth Organisations & European Programmes (Commission 2018a; 2018b; EU, 2018). In 2021, European Parliament and Council have also concluded to set European Year of Youth in 2022 (Commission, 2021), based on the fact that EU needs the vision, engagement and participation of all young people to build a better future, that is greener, more inclusive and digital. The following year 2023 is the European Year for Skills that focuses in youth, as well among other social groups (e.g. vocational training), common citizenship issues and Erasmus+. Summing up, it is interesting to underline at that point that Greek youth and EU is familiar with Erasmus as an exchanging programme in EU (Greece: 72, EU: 50) (Eurobarometer, 2022). This is reasonable because Erasmus heightened the sense of cultural sensitivity and understanding (92% of participants), make a stronger connection to Europe (75%), attained at least intermediate proficiency in a second language etc (EC, 2018).

During crisis periods (financial, Covid-19, war), the negative socioeconomic outcomes were an uncertain risk for youth regarding their SD potentials, while political engagement and the sence of political belonging in EU public affairs seems to be associated with goals 9 and 11 in Youth Strategy. In particular, goal 9 sets political engagement as an issue in elections and day by day participation. According to EP (2021) Youth Survey "Voting in European elections" (p. 36, chapter 2.5), the eligible young population voted to a higher extent compared to the overall turn out[11] in 2019. Moreover, the impact that younger voters had was important, while the civic duty is associated with socioeconomic and environmental issues (e.g. growth, climate change and environment). "These elections saw a younger, more pro-European and engaged group voting in increased numbers. This translates into

[9] Engaging, Connecting and Empowering young people: a new EU Youth Strategy
[10] Youth Goals: https://youth-goals.eu/youthgoals
[11] EP. 2019 European election results: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/election-results-2019/en/turnout/

greater legitimacy for the European Parliament and empowers its members when approving the new European Commission and holding it to account over the next five years" David Sassoli President of EU Parliament (EP, 2019).

According to the Eurobarometer 502 (2022), important things for European youth in EU are related with people well being and mental health, free movement-employment, climate change and socioeconomic justice. The first issue is strongly associated with the negative outcomes of financial crisis (since 2009), Covid-19 and the need for peace. Therefore 34% of youth in EU and 33% in Greece have indicated the "Improvement of mental-physical health and wellbeing" as important. Another important topic for policy discourse and responsibility is environment and climate change, which is pictured in youth responses both in EU (34%) and Greece (33%). However, financial crisis that broke out in 2008 and recession brought a large number of European young citizens face to face with unemployment, poverty, social exclusion and inequalities. Europe faced unprecedented challenges and its citizens experienced economic uncertainty. Hence, most popular issues for youth in Greece are employment (Increasing job opportunities for young people, Greece: 45%, EU: 33%), social welfare (Fighting poverty and economic and social inequalities, Greece: 46%, EU: 32%) and international cooperation for peace (Preserving peace, reinforcing international security etc, Greece: 42%, EU: 37%). The latter is a significant issue in post- Covid-19 period and it is pictured at another Eurobarometer 97 (2022) for European Parliament for the overall population, which highlighted the importance of a common defense-security policy (Greece: 78, EU: 77), energy policy (Greece: 79, EU: 75), foreign policy (Greece: 74, EU: 70). Despite, these pro-Europeanism perspectives the youth in Greece (rather in EU) were not satisfied both from EU (Greece: 59, EU: 37) and their national Government (Greece: 64, EU: 40) with the response to the war crisis in East Europe. Moreover, they were very disappointed from this war's negative consequences in economy at large (Greece: 92, EU: 62) and for themselves as well (Greece: 99, EU: 88).

The socioeconomic perspectives are further pictured in the Eurobarometer 97 (2022), in which the issue of employment and economy are crucial for young people: expectations for "the employment situation" as worse (Greece: 46, EU: 35) and as static (Greece: 37, EU: 40), and "the economic situation" as worse (Greece: 49, EU: 53). In details, this uncertainty is pictured in the living cost increase (Greece: 55, EU: 54), unemployment (Greece: 20, EU: 9) and health (Greece: 21, EU: 14), which conclude to different perspectives for EU as a whole: "positive" (Greece: 31, EU: 47), "neutral" (Greece: 38, EU: 36), "negative" (Greece: 31, EU: 16). Moreover, this is also pictured in Eurobarometer 547 (2021) for youth priorities at EU policy level, which were mainly based on social issues related to wellbeing, tackling poverty and social welfare. This significant tradition of European

Social Model in EU and its implications in domestic and member states institutional setting it is still a topic that is associated with trust and prosperity from youth in EU and Greece. Despite the deregulation of ESM the last two decades, its negative externalities and its weak alternatives by Corporate Social Responsibilities policy substitutes at high level policies (EC, 2007; 2011; 2014). A brief presentation for European Social Model is necessary at this point and its regional characteristics which are called social models in EU (Commission, 1994; Eurofound, 2011; European Economy News 2006; Kotroyannos, et al., 2013; Sapir, 2004). The social models had also a significant impact to CSR perceptions, public policy models and EU citizens approach in welfare issues, due to this institutional tradition (Taliouris, 2019; 2018) but also traditional policy topics education, employment and social security.

Business sector is a significant non state actors that has a role to play in EU and internationally for SD (Taliouris, 2019b). At the same time youth consider it as social stakeholder (e.g. employer, growth contributor etc). For instance, companies are organizations that need to be close to youth perspectives about environment, social inclusion, work life balance and community improvement (Deloitte, 2023). According to EURES (2023) European Youth (e.g. Millennial and Generation Z) political and economic issues are not isolated but interrelated. Moreover, the link with Sustainable Development, its definition and SDGs requires social engagement of stakeholders such as business sector via political Corporate Social Responsibility (Commission, 2011; Taliouris, 2021; Manasakis and Taliouris, 2022; Taliouris and Manasakis, 2021). Despite the fact that youth in EU and Greece pay attention on business sector responsible activities and entrepreneurship (EURES, 2023), policy experience indicates this strategy very useful but optimistic not only for EU (Commission, 2016) but also Greece (2017; 2018). Business sector is an important stakeholder for social equity and European Social Model (Sapir, 2004; Taliouris, 2019; 2018) because contribute in employment increase and social inclusion. Although EU and its member states have a significant institutional tradition in social welfare and considered as one of the best places to live, political steps need to be taken in order to ensure youth capability to meet their own needs. These values are strongly associated with SD and its definition 36 years after Brundtland report (WCED, 1987).

Conclusion

According to the C456 Official Journal of EU (2018: 3), “socioeconomic exclusion and democratic exclusion go hand in hand. Youth struggling with disadvantages are generally less active citizens and have less trust in institutions. Europe cannot afford wasted talent, social exclusion or disengagement among its youth. Young people should not only be architects of their own lives, but also contribute to positive change in society”. Due to this statement, Youth prosperity EU and its member state is a

crucial policy topic that challenges not only their economic and political future, but the overall institutional setting and its core elements such as democracy, social welfare, environmental modernization and economic competitiveness. These core elements are very prosperous from the one hand and optimistic as well in order to be met, due to the different interests and perspectives of EU member states and stakeholders.

Education is linked with the social welfare institutional tradition in EU, whilst an aim is to increase human capital capability to be more qualified though soft skills that will contribute to their employability's improvement in national and EU labor market. These are related with SDG 4[12] for Education and SDG 8[13] for employment, while both have a significant progress and they have been performed relatively well despite the fact of financial and health crisis in EU[14] and Greece[15.] In SDG 4, EU have marked significant progress towards the final goal by 2030 except in low achieving 15 years old in reading mathematics or science 2006-2018 that is characterized with insufficient progress towards EU target. Greece reaches significant low rates (4.1%) compare to EU (9.6%) in early school leavers from education and training (18-24) in 2022, while the overall progress and its score is stagnating or increasing at less than 50% of required rate, with a weak performance such as in Pisa score and Underachievers in science (% of 15-year-olds), employment rate of recent graduates and adult participation in learning (Hellenic Statistics SDG4, 2023). In SDG 8, EU have marked significant progress in all of the targets except a moderate progress in real GDP, material footprint and NEETs in benchmark period 2007-2022. Furthermore, it is also indicated an insufficient progress towards EU targets in investment share and in work at risk in poverty rate 2010-2021. Greece has non dynamic progress and significant changes remain to be done, while it is insufficient to meet the overall goal Despite the progress and the minimization of the gap in indicators related with NEETs, long unemployment rate etc the "total employment rate" in combination with "inactive population due to caring responsibilities" and "Involuntary temporary employment" has weak performance (Hellenic Statistics, 2023).

Moreover, the Eurobarometer (502) for European Year of Youth, young people's most common expectation is decision-makers to be aware more to their demands and act on them (EU: 33%; Greece: 36%), climate change (EU: 34%; Greece: 33%), education (EU: 33%; Greece: 41%), employment

[12] Quality education in the EU: overview and key trends, Low achieving 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics or science, Participation in early childhood education, Early leavers from education and training, Tertiary educational attainment, Adult participation in learning in the past four weeks.
[13] Decent work and economic growth in the EU: overview and key trends Real GDP Investment share of GDP Employment rate Long-term unemployment rate Young people neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET) Fatal accidents at work
[14] SDG Index Eurostat: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/infographs/sdg/index.html
[15] Sustainable Development Report INDEX: https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles/greece

(EU: 28%; Greece: 40%) and social inclusion (EU: 32%; Greece: 45%). The optimism regarding the goals for EU youth strategy are very important and indicate youth political participation and engagement as a prerequisite for a democratic society. At that point, it is necessary to underline the overall need for civic education in youth and public sphere in general by EU institutions (EU: 23%; Greece: 21%), Media (EU: 25%; Greece: 18%) Teaching staff (EU: 18%; Greece: 18%) and family-friends-colleagues (EU: 23%; Greece: 21%) (Eurobarometer 547, 2021). Especially, in Greece, it is important in order to increase the youth familiarity with EU institutions and political affairs in general both domestically and internationally (Chourdakis et al. 2022). Hence, social literacy introduces the concept of responsible citizenship in education, which is based on the rights and obligations towards society. Unfortunately, in Greece, the development of such courses in secondary educational level needs to be empowered and increased in curriculum in High School, especially those related with the entrance to social sciences Departments and Universities in Greece (e.g. administration, economics, law, political science etc).

Hence, civic education can play an important role in promoting values into an open and democratic society; elements that EU and Greek citizenship is based on politically (EU, 2015: 2). The development of civic education is therefore imperative for the acquisition of comprehensive knowledge of European affairs that will contribute to the development of an active and democratic European and Greek youth (Chourdakis et al, 2022). In conclusion, civic education offers the opportunity to Greek and European citizens to get to know the rights and privileges offered by the EU, while at the same time it helps them grasp the importance of their active participation “together” in EU (EU:80%; Greece: 70%). In essence, it gives them the opportunity to develop their European citizenship and sense of belonging, which is very important for youth and its positive feeling for EU in the ages 15-24 (EU: 58%; Greece: 42%) and 25-39 (EU: 55%; Greece: 32%), before Covid-19 and war in Europe (EP Eurobarometer 4021, 2019). In conclusion, Lisbon strategy perspectives is still up to date because underlines the fact that EU is an ongoing social, political and economic process that through crisis and successes shape at the end the characteristics of the "young citizen", who is required to be more democratic, more responsible and fully active, ready to act and take initiatives (EC, 2000) in order to achive sustainability and democracy in daily life.

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Topic 4

Internal and External Affairs of the European Union

European Health Data Space: A New Era in EU Health[1]

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Abstract

After the COVID-19 pandemic, the European Union (EU) put in action the plan to create a European Health Union, the structural pillar of which is the creation of the European Health Data Space (EHDS). In 2022, the European Commission presented the proposal for a regulation for its creation. Its purpose is to enable European citizens to control their health data and to strengthen health research and innovation in the EU. The EHDS is a key step in the transition to digital health in the EU. Digital health is the means to enhance the resilience of healthcare systems in the EU as it will strengthen healthcare. For this reason, the "MyHealth@EU" platform is being created, which will contribute both to the transfer of primary data and to checking the validity of digital health documents. On the research and innovation side, the "HealthData@EU" platform is being developed, which will bring together a plethora of health data. The EHDS Board will play a coordinating role in the EHDS project. The policy brief concludes with the need for an immediate adoption of the proposed EHDS Regulation, which will contribute to improving healthcare provision while completing the single internal market and achieving the free circulation of health data.

Keywords: European Health Data Space, European Health Union, Resilience, Digitalization, Health Data, Single Market.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the weaknesses of the health systems of EU Member States and brought health policies into focus to strengthen them. The EU and its Member States realized that to deal more effectively with health threats they need to establish more resilient health systems and strengthen their health cooperation (European Commission, 2020).

In this context, the European Commission presented a Proposal for a Regulation on 11 November 2020 to create a European Health Union. At the core of the European Health Union is the strengthening of Member States' cooperation in tackling serious cross-border health threats, the development of a new pharmaceutical strategy, the strengthening of the role of the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and European Medicines Agency (EMA), the cancer response plan and a holistic approach to mental health (European Commission, 2020). At the same time, the EU is setting the ambitious goal of creating a European Health Data Space, which will be a structural pillar of the European Health Union (European Commission, 2020).

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In this Policy Brief we will analyze the European Health Data Space and establish its importance, its role in building a European Health Union and the enlargement of the single market.

On 3 May 2022, the European Commission presented its Proposal for the creation of the EHDS. According to the Commission, this proposal serves a dual purpose, on the one hand to create a European Health Union and on the other hand to strengthen the effort to digitalize the Union (European Commission, 2022). Its aim is to enhance the healthcare of EU citizens by providing them with free digital control of their personal health data and the possibility to transfer this data to other Member States, to strengthen health research and innovation in the EU and to create a single market for health data in the EU (European Commission, 2022). This Proposal, although published in May 2022, is still in the process of consultation between the Council and the European Parliament, as required by the ordinary legislative procedure.

Primary Use of Health Data

The proposal for a Regulation on the European Health Data Space implements the objective of strengthening the resilience of health systems through their digitalization in the context of the Digital Transformation of the Union by 2030, as set out in the Strategic Compass. The digitalization of health data will include the patient's medical history, electronic prescription of medicines, results of medical examinations, hospital discharges and medical opinions (Article 5(1) of the proposed EHDS Regulation).

Taking into account both Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which sets out the obligation of each Member State to provide a high level of healthcare while respecting the right of Member States to shape their national health policies, and the fact that the health systems of each Member State have different needs, the Commission has proposed the creation of a digital health authority in each Member State. The aim of the authorities is to coordinate the work of digitization in each Member State, while respecting what will be decided through the ordinary legislative procedure and promoting cooperation between Member States and the Union. In addition, they are given the right to intervene to deal with any problems. It is very important that the regulation provides that the task of both digitalization and data exchange will be undertaken by a national authority. This means that the Member States have the first word, with the EU acting in a supportive way by providing certain guidelines that strengthen national health systems throughout the Member States of the Union for the benefit of European citizens. Moreover, according to Article 6 TFEU, public health is a supporting competence of the EU.

To achieve the objective of exchanging health data between the Member States of the EU and the European Economic Area, a central platform "MyHealth@EU" is created to which the relevant national health platforms are connected (Article 12 of the proposed EHDS Regulation). At its core is the secure exchange of data while enhancing the safety and level of healthcare provision. Thus, it will help to achieve the exchange of health data referred to in Article 5 of the proposed EHDS Regulation, but also to facilitate the provision of complementary services such as telemedicine, mobile health, citizens' access to their data and the storage and verification of health certificates and vaccination certificates. This platform is an outgrowth of the need to check the validity of health-related documents. This was most evident during the pandemic period with the creation and verification of the European digital health certificates for COVID-19. The platform therefore protects both the health of the individual who may be at risk and, in some cases, public health in general.

Secondary Use of Health Data

The EHDS aims to study and process health data to support health research and innovation at European level. It is essentially a secondary use of health data that aspires to lead to the prevention of cross-border health threats and the development of new treatments, medicines, vaccines, and medical equipment (Article 34 of the proposed EHDS Regulation). Access to data will be determined by authorities designated by Member States, which in turn will be responsible for assessing requests for access and data processing by other authorities. The assessment and granting of access will be carried out in accordance with security and privacy protocols (Articles 36, 37, 45 of the proposed EHDS Regulation). It is important to note that research and innovation are key to creating more resilient health systems (European Commission, 2022). Resilience has been brought into focus already in 2016 through the EU Global Strategy. Resilience is the means for the Union to achieve a common and coherent approach towards the issues of concern (Joseph et Junicos, 2019). At the societal level, resilience implies the ability of communities to resist "external shocks" through innovation (Adger 2000, p. 361). The EHDS could therefore serve as a tool to prevent and respond to future external shocks, such as a pandemic.

To achieve the objective of secondary data use, the Commission proposes the creation and use of the HealthData@EU platform (Article 52 of the proposed EHDS Regulation). Member States will authorize the bodies that will be able to make electronic health data available on the platform, provided that the body communicates its data to the Commission. Access to the platform will also be available to Union institutions and bodies that research, formulate policy or analyze developments in the health sector. It is noteworthy that third countries and international organizations can also participate in the platform, provided they respect the rules set by the EU. We note that in this platform,

too, the primary role is played by the Member States, as they are responsible for formulating public health policies and therefore decide which bodies will have access to and upload data on the HealthData@EU platform. The Commission, on the other hand, in its role, supports the Member States by providing them with both incentives and guidelines to digitalize their health systems, which is in line with its primary objective of providing a high level of quality of health services.

European Health Data Space Board

Considering that the initiative to create a European Health Data Space is based on cooperation and information exchange, the Commission proposes to set up a new Board, the European Health Data Space Board (EHDS Board), which will bring together representatives of digital health authorities, health data access bodies from each Member State and other national authorities. Depending on the topic to be discussed, observers, experts, research groups and patient representatives may participate in the meetings. The EHDS is chaired by the Commission (Article 64 of the proposed EHDS Regulation). The responsibilities of the EHDS Board include coordinating Member States' digital health authorities, making recommendations to coordinate Member States for the optimal implementation of this Regulation, promoting cooperation between the digital health authorities of each Member State, taking preventive action to avoid risks and consulting with interest groups. These responsibilities relate to both primary and secondary use of health data (Article 65 of the proposed EHDS Regulation). This Board is a new intergovernmental cooperation framework that aims to better coordinate Member States around the goal of digitalizing healthcare. Digital health is gradually emerging as a tool to enhance the resilience of healthcare systems which will help improve healthcare services and strengthen the competitiveness of the EU medical sector by introducing innovations, such as telemedicine, which have the aim of improving the quality of life of EU citizens (European Commission, 2022). In the context of European integration theory, the EHDS Board as an intergovernmental cooperation framework constitutes an aspect of Spillover Effect and more specifically Spill Around[4] (Schmitter, 1970:846).

Recommendations

- **Need for immediate adoption**

Considering the results of the public consultation on the European Health Data Space, which took place in 2021, it is significant to expedite the procedures for the vote and implementation of the EHDS Regulation. In particular, 88% of participants to the public consultation supported the use of digital

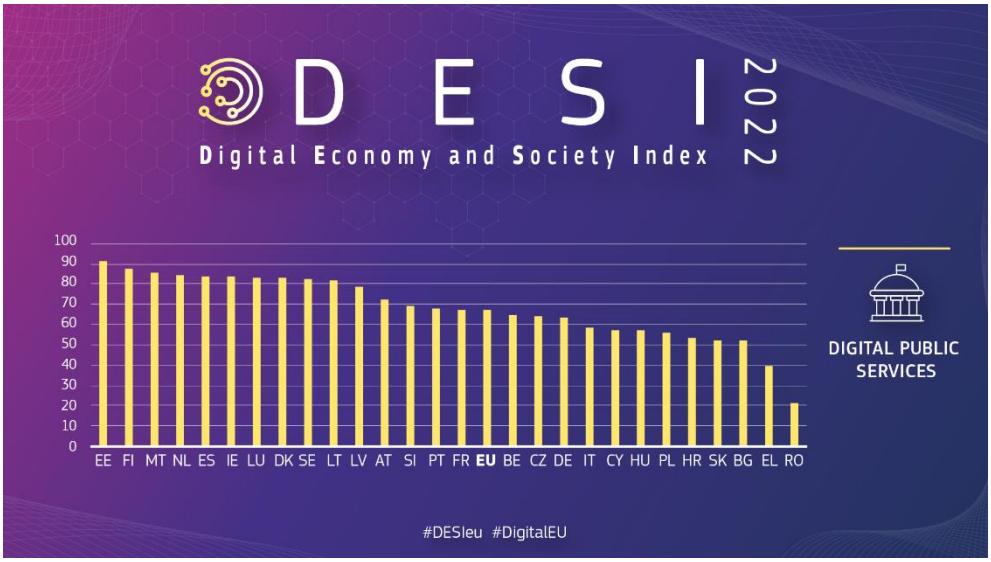
[4] Spill Around is interpreted, as increasing competences in intergovernmental institutions or creating new intergovernmental cooperation frameworks (Schmitter 1970:846).

tools in order to check their health data. 83% were in favor of simplifying healthcare procedures at cross-border level between EU Member States. Finally, 89% emphasized that EU research should be strengthened on public health issues. It is noteworthy that 87% of participants argued that obstacles to the circulation of health data increase the cost of healthcare. This is confirmed by the Commission which estimates the cost at €25-30 billion/year. This cost is estimated to be doubled over the next decade. Moreover, according to Article 168 TFEU, a high level of care must be provided to citizens. In this light, EHDS comes to serve this purpose as 84% of the respondents to the public consultation consider that problems in the free movement of health data cause delays in providing the required therapy (European Commission, 2022). For all these reasons, it is deemed necessary within the first half of 2024 to have the procedures for the adoption of the proposal for a regulation on the European health data space completed, especially considering that it takes 4 years to become fully operational.

- **Exchange of good practices**

To expedite the digitalization of health services and data in the EU, it is proposed that countries with a high digitalization rate of their public services, such as Estonia, Finland, Malta and the Netherlands, contribute to the exchange of good practices with EU countries with a low digitalization rate, such as Romania, Greece and Bulgaria (European Commission, DESI 2022). This exchange of good practices can take place through the EHDS Board in which independent experts can participate in addition to Member State representatives. Thus, this Board can be a tool to accelerate digitalization in the EU health sector.

Figure 1: Digital Economy and Society Index



Source: European Commission, DESI 2022, Available at: https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/el/policies/desi-digital-public-services

Conclusions

In a nutshell, the European Health Data Space is intended to resolve the problems that existed in the access, free circulation, and use of primary and secondary health data in the EU. Its importance lies in the fact that it completes the single internal market, which has so far allowed the free movement of goods, services, capital, and people. Thus, with the creation of the European Health Data Space, the free circulation of health data will be achieved**.**

This proposal for a regulation should be seen as an effort to protect public health on the one hand and to strengthen the prevention and response to health threats through the effective use of primary and secondary health data on the other. At the same time, the adoption of this regulation will be another important step towards the creation of a European Health Union. Consequently, the Council and the European Parliament should proceed to the immediate adoption of the regulation, which strengthens the welfare state in the EU.

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Migration Policy as a Challenging European Policy[1]

Panagiotis Myrotis[2]

Abstract

Since 2014 a new policy topic has appeared and integrated in national and European political agenda, the migration crisis. The migration crisis, that peaked in 2015 had as a result, not only the movement of a large number of migrants to Europe, but also created friction and new conflicts between member states of the European Union. The aim of this paper is to focus on the current situation of the topic of European migration policy and to highlight the issues that arise from migration. In conclusion, attempts to propose some actions in order to manage this multidimensional phenomenon will be analyzed. The attempt to reach this aim is done via the study of primary sources such as decisions of European Union and statistics from international organizations, as well as secondary sources such as relevant analyses and studies.

Keywords: European Union, European Policy, East Mediterranean, Migration Policy, European Governance, Asylum, Transnational Cooperation, Migration Crisis, Greece, Italy, Tynisia, Türkiye.

Η Μεταναστευτική Πολιτική ως η Μεγάλη Πρόκληση της Ευρωπαϊκής Πολιτικής

Παναγιώτης Μυρωτής

Περίληψη

Από το 2014 και έπειτα ένας νέος τομέας πολιτικής ενσωματώθηκε στην εθνική αλλά και ευρωπαϊκή ατζέντα, ένα νέο ζήτημα, αυτό της μετανάστευσης. Η μεταναστευτική κρίση που κορυφώθηκε το 2015 είχε ως αποτέλεσμα, όχι μόνο την μετακίνηση μεγάλου αριθμού μεταναστών προς την Ευρώπη, αλλά ταυτόχρονα πολλές τριβές και νέες συγκρούσεις μεταξύ των καρτών- μελών της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. Στόχος του εν λόγω κειμένου είναι να εστιάσει στην υφιστάμενη κατάσταση στον τομέα της ευρωπαϊκής μεταναστευτικής πολιτικής, να αναδείξει τα ζητήματα που προκύπτουν σήμερα από το φαινόμενο της μετανάστευσης και εν κατακλείδι να επιχειρήσει να προτείνει κάποιους χειρισμούς, που μπορούν να 'ελέγξουν' και να διαχειριστούν αυτό το πολυδιάστατο φαινόμενο. Η απόπειρα ανάδειξης του εν λόγου στόχου γίνεται μέσω της μελέτης πρωτογενών πηγών (στατιστικά στοιχεία φορέων αποφάσεις θεσμών) καθώς και δευτερογενών (αναλύσεις και μελέτες για το ζήτημα).

Λέξεις-Κλειδιά: Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, Ευρωπαϊκή Πολιτική, Ανατολική Μεσόγειος, Μεταναστευτική Πολιτική, Ευρωπαϊκή Διακυβέρνηση, Διαδικασία Ασύλου, Διακρατική Συνεργασία, Μεταναστευτική Κρίση, Ελλάδα, Ιταλία, Τυνησία, Τουρκία.

Εισαγωγή

Η μεταναστευτική πολιτική, από το 2015 παραμένει ένα ζήτημα Ευρωπαϊκής Πολιτικής, το οποίο φαίνεται να χρήζει κεντρικής διαχείρισης, διότι δεν επαρκεί μόνο η εθνική διάσταση στη διαχείριση

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του. Έκτος από τα μεγάλα πολιτικά προβλήματα που επιφέρει η μεταναστευτική κρίση, όπως η αύξηση της ρητορικής μίσους, καθώς επίσης και της αύξησης της δημοτικότητας των ακραίων δεξιών κομματικών σχηματισμών, αποτελεί και μια ευκαιρία για περαιτέρω εμβάθυνση της ενοποίησης της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. Λόγω των αυξομειώσεων των ροών (Ευρωπαϊκό Συμβούλιο, Συμβούλιο της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, 2023) ανάλογα με τις συνθήκες που διαμορφώνονται στο διεθνές περιβάλλον (λχ. αναταραχές στη Μέση Ανατολή, ανελεύθερα θεοκρατικά κράτη, εμφύλιοι πόλεμοι κ.λπ.) αυξάνεται με αναλογικό τρόπο η πίεση που δέχεται ο χώρος Σέγκεν, ο οποίος φαντάζει ως η γη της επαγγελίας για εκατομμύρια ανθρώπους. Έτσι τα κράτη-μέλη που μπορούν να χαρακτηριστούν ως κράτη πρώτης υποδοχής, επωμίζονται ένα μεγάλο βάρος, τόσο στο πεδίο της οικονομίας τους και της διαχείρισης των μεταναστών και των αιτούντων άσυλο, όσο και στην ασφάλειά τους, διότι πρέπει να είναι σε θέση να αντιληφθούν ενδεχόμενη απειλή εθνικής ασφάλειας. Είναι εύκολα αντιληπτό, πως το ζήτημα δεν μπορεί να το διαχειριστεί μόνη της η εκάστοτε χώρα αλλά χρειάζεται συντονισμένη δράση και αλληλεγγύη μεταξύ των κρατών. Θα μπορούσε, λοιπόν, εύκολα να ισχυριστεί κάποιος, πως το νέο σύμφωνο για την μετανάστευση είναι ένα βήμα προόδου προς την επίλυση του ζητήματος και ταυτόχρονα μια ευκαιρία για βαθύτερη ενοποίηση σε έναν ακόμα τομέα πολιτικής. Στο κείμενο που ακολουθεί γίνεται μια μελέτη της υφιστάμενης κατάστασης στο πεδίο της μετανάστευσης σε επίπεδο Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, αναφέρονται οι αντιδράσεις κάποιων κρατών μελών σχετικά με το Νέο Σύμφωνο για την μετανάστευση, και τονίζονται οι κίνδυνοι που καιροφυλακτούν στις συμφωνίες με τρίτες χώρες για το εν λόγω ζήτημα. Τέλος, γίνεται μια απόπειρα συγγραφής προτάσεων που θα βελτιώσουν το ζήτημα αυτό. Στόχος του κειμένου είναι η παρουσίαση του ζητήματος της μετανάστευσης, ως ευκαιρία εμβάθυνσης της ενοποίησης, αλλά και η ανάδειξη των κινδύνων που ελλοχεύουν. Για την επίτευξη αυτού του στόχου έχουν μελετηθεί πρωτογενείς και δευτερογενείς πηγές.

Η Υφιστάμενη Κατάσταση

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, η οποία προωθεί τον σεβασμό των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων και το κράτος δικαίου, προστατεύει τα άτομα που προσπαθούν να διαφύγουν από διώξεις ή σοβαρές βλάβες στη χώρα καταγωγής τους. Το αίτημα στο άσυλο αποτελεί θεμελιώδες δικαίωμα και διεθνή υποχρέωση σύμφωνα με την Συμφωνία της Γενεύης του 1951 (Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή, χ.χ.). Ως χώρος Σέγκεν, τα κράτη μοιράζονται τις ίδιες θεμελιώδεις αξίες και έχουν κοινή προσέγγιση στη διαχείριση του φαινομένου. Οι χώρες δεσμεύονται για την ασφαλή και αξιοπρεπή υποδοχή των αιτούντων άσυλο, καθώς και για την διασφάλιση της δίκαιης αντιμετώπισης και εξέτασης των αιτήσεων με ενιαία πρότυπα. Με αυτόν τον τρόπο επιδιώκεται η διασφάλιση του αποτελέσματος, ανεξαρτήτως της χώρας στην οποία κατατίθεται η αίτηση. Το ζήτημα που προκύπτει με την υφιστάμενη κατάσταση

είναι ότι οι αιτήσεις ασύλου δεν κατανέμονται ομοιόμορφα σε όλη την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, χώρες όπως η Γερμανία, η Γαλλία, η Ισπανία, η Αυστρία και η Ιταλία δέχονται τους περισσότερους μετανάστες που αιτούνται άσυλο για πρώτη φορά στον Ευρωπαϊκό χώρο (Eurostat, n.d.).

Το ευρωπαϊκό σύστημα προστασίας των αιτούντων άσυλο, που αποσκοπεί στην δίκαιη μεταχείριση των αιτούντων άσυλο στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, βασίζεται σε πέντε νομοθετικές πράξεις και σε έναν οργανισμό, οι οποίοι είναι οι ακόλουθοι :

- Οδηγία σχετικά με τις συνθήκες υποδοχής και το αξιοπρεπές επίπεδο διαβίωσης με γνώμονα το Χάρτη των Θεμελιωδών Δικαιωμάτων.
- Οδηγία για την αναγνώριση: Η συγκεκριμένη οδηγία αποσαφηνίζει τους λόγους για τους οποίους κάποιος χρήζει διεθνή προστασία, με αποτέλεσμα να καθιστά την βαρύτητα της απόφασης για παροχή διεθνούς προστασίας ιδιαίτερα σημαντική και νομικά ισχυρή. Ακόμη, παρέχει πρόσβαση σε δικαιώματα και μέτρα ένταξης στους δικαιούχους της.
- Κανονισμός του Δουβλίνο: Στόχους του συγκεκριμένου κανονισμού είναι η προστασία των αιτούντων άσυλο κατά τη διαδικασία προσδιορισμού του κράτους το οποίο είναι υπεύθυνο για την εξέταση της αίτησης και αποσαφηνίζει τους κανόνες που διέπουν τις σχέσεις μεταξύ των κρατών στο ζήτημα της διεθνούς προστασίας. Επιπλέον, δημιουργεί ένα σύστημα για τον εντοπισμό πρώιμων προβλημάτων στα εθνικά συστήματα ασύλου και υποδοχής με σκοπό την αντιμετώπιση των βαθύτερων αιτιών τους πριν εξελιχθούν σε ολοκληρωμένες κρίσεις.
- Κανονισμός Eurodac: Υποστηρίζει τον καθορισμό του κράτους μέλους που είναι υπεύθυνο βάσει του προαναφερθέντος κανονισμού για τις αιτήσεις ασύλου και ταυτόχρονα επιτρέπει στις αρχές επιβολής του νόμου της εκάστοτε χώρας να έχουν πρόσβαση στην βάση δεδομένων της Ε.Ε. για τα δακτυλικά αποτυπώματα των αιτούντων άσυλο. Στόχος είναι η πρόληψη, η αντιμετώπιση και η διερεύνηση σοβαρών εγκλημάτων όπως η δολοφονία και η τρομοκρατία.
- Οργανισμός της Ε.Ε. για το άσυλο: Στόχος του οργανισμού είναι η βελτίωση της λειτουργίας και της εφαρμογής του κοινού ευρωπαϊκού συστήματος ασύλου. Παρέχει επιχειρησιακή και τεχνική βοήθεια στα κράτη μέλη κατά την αξιολόγηση των αιτήσεων διεθνούς προστασίας σε ολόκληρη την Ευρώπη (Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή, χ.χ.).

Τον Σεπτέμβριο του 2020 η Επιτροπή πρότεινε την κατάρτιση ενός νέου συμφώνου για την μετανάστευση και το άσυλο, το οποίο περιείχε ορισμένες λύσεις μέσω νέων νομοθετικών προτάσεων και τροποποιήσεων των εκκρεμών προτάσεων για την θέσπιση ενός συστήματος που θα σέβεται τα ανθρώπινα δικαιώματα και θα είναι αποτελεσματικό. (Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή, χ.χ.).

Το Νέο Σύμφωνο για την Μετανάστευση

Βλέποντας τα προβλήματα που απορρέουν από την ισχύουσα κατάσταση στο πεδίο της μετανάστευσης, τα όργανα της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης συμφώνησαν να 'οικοδομήσουν' το Νέο Σύμφωνο για την Μετανάστευση. Σύμφωνα με αυτό προβλέπονται:

- Ταχύτερες διαδικασίες σε όλο το σύστημα ασύλου και μετανάστευσης και επιχειρείται ισορροπία στις αρχές του δίκαιου επιμερισμού της ευθύνης και της αλληλεγγύης. Με αυτόν τον τρόπο επιδιώκεται η αποκατάσταση της αμοιβαίας εμπιστοσύνης μεταξύ των κρατών μελών στον συγκεκριμένο τομέα πολιτικής.

- Η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή προτείνει την βελτίωση του συνολικού συστήματος ασύλου, περιλαμβάνοντας την εξέταση τρόπων βελτίωσης της συνεργασίας με τις χώρες προέλευσης και διέλευσης των μεταναστών, καθώς και τη διασφάλιση αποτελεσματικών διαδικασιών, που θα οδηγήσουν στην επιτυχή ένταξη των μεταναστών, αλλά συνάμα και την επιστροφή όσων δεν έχουν δικαίωμα παραμονής στην χώρα (European Commission, 2020).

Σε μια συνολική θέση για το νέο Σύμφωνο για το άσυλο και την μετανάστευση, θα μπορούσαμε να ισχυριστούμε ότι η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή επικεντρώνεται σε μια δέσμη μέτρων, που σχετίζονται με την υιοθέτηση νέου κανονισμού για τον έλεγχο και την διαλογή των μεταναστών στα κέντρα υποδοχής, καθώς και σε τροποποιήσεις του κανονισμού για την θέσπιση κοινής διαδικασίας απόκτησης διεθνούς προστασίας. Επιπλέον, επιχειρείται αναθεώρηση του κανονισμού του EURODAC, με στόχο την καλύτερη δυνατή συνεργασία μεταξύ των κρατών με γνώμονα την ασφάλεια των εσωτερικών και εξωτερικών συνόρων της Ένωσης (European Commission, 2020). Τέλος, λαμβάνονται σημαντικά μέτρα για την αντιμετώπιση και τη διαχείριση νέων μεταναστευτικών κρίσεων. Φαίνεται, ότι το Νέο Σύμφωνο για την μετανάστευση και το άσυλο βασίζεται στη διακρατική συνεργασία και στοχεύει στην καλύτερη διαχείριση του φαινομένου με κοινές πολιτικές σε ευρωπαϊκό επίπεδο.

Η Επιτροπή προσανατολίζει την πολιτική αυτή στους κάτωθι πυλώνες: Την οικοδόμηση εμπιστοσύνης, τις σαφείς ευθύνες των κρατών μελών, την αλληλεγγύη και την προσέγγιση του θέματος χωρίς αποκλεισμούς.

Η οικοδόμηση εμπιστοσύνης θα επιτευχθεί μέσω αποτελεσματικότερων διαδικασιών ελέγχου στα σύνορα, βελτίωσης των συστημάτων ταυτοποίησης και προσαρμογής των κανόνων για την αίτηση ασύλου. Σε επίπεδο αποτελεσματικής αλληλεγγύης στόχος είναι η βελτίωση των διαδικασιών μετεγκατάστασης για τις ευάλωτες ομάδες και τα άτομα που διασώζονται από την θάλασσα. Επίσης,

βαρύνουσα σημασία έχει η καλύτερη δυνατή υιοθέτηση και εφαρμογή πολιτικών ένταξης στις τοπικές κοινωνίες μέσω της εκπαίδευσης και της εργασίας (European Commision, n.d.).

Οι σαφείς ευθύνες σχετίζονται με την αποτελεσματικότητα των διαδικασιών, που αποσκοπούν στην αποκατάσταση της εμπιστοσύνης μεταξύ των κρατών μελών και ταυτόχρονα παρέχουν σαφήνεια στους αιτούντες άσυλο επί της διαδικασίας που οφείλουν να ακολουθήσουν. Η αλληλεγγύη στοχεύει στην μετεγκατάσταση νεοαφιχθέντων ατόμων, στην άμεση επιχειρησιακή στήριξη και στην μακροπρόθεσμη στήριξη για την ανάπτυξη ικανοτήτων σχετικά με τις διαδικασίες ασύλου. Επίσης, έχει σημαντικό ρόλο για την υποδοχή των νεοαφιχθέντων αλλά και τις επιχειρήσεις επιστροφής τους. Επιπλέον, η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση προσανατολίζεται στην αντιμετώπιση μεταναστευτικών τάσεων μέσω συνεργασίας με τρίτες χώρες όπως η Τυνησία και η Τουρκία.

Τον Ιούνιο του 2023, το Συμβούλιο για την Δικαιοσύνη και τις Εσωτερικές Υποθέσεις κατέληξε σε συμφωνία πάνω σε δυο βασικούς κανόνες: τον κανονισμό για τη διαχείριση του ασύλου και της μετανάστευσης, και τον κανονισμό για τη διαδικασία ασύλου. Σημαντικό είναι το γεγονός ότι ο υπάρχον κανονισμός του Δουβλίνο θα αντικατασταθεί με νέο, που θα καθορίζει το κράτος μέλος το οποίο θα είναι υπεύθυνο για την εξέταση της αίτησης ασύλου. Σημαντικός επίσης είναι ο κανονισμός που θεσπίζει νέο μηχανισμό διαχείρισης της μετανάστευσης και της αλληλεγγύης, εξασφαλίζοντας πιο ομοιόμορφη κατανομή των μεταναστών σε ολόκληρη την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση (European Council Council of the European Union , 2023).

Περαιτέρω εμβάθυνση της Ενοποίησης

Η μεταναστευτική κρίση φαίνεται πως οδήγησε στην μεταφορά της μεταναστευτικής πολιτικής, από το εθνικό στο διακυβερνητικό επίπεδο. Είναι γνωστό ότι μέσω της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης τα κράτη μέλη έχουν μεγαλύτερη ισχύ, για να διαπραγματευτούν συμφωνίες με τρίτες χώρες, ενώ ταυτόχρονα μπορούν να εξασφαλίσουν τους απαραίτητους πόρους για την διαχείριση των μεταναστών. Για ακόμη μια φορά, μια κρίση έχει σαν αποτέλεσμα την δημιουργία της ανάγκης για λήψη αποφάσεων σε κεντρικό επίπεδο. Η προώθηση του ζητήματος στην κεντρική ευρωπαϊκή πολιτική ατζέντα και στα όργανά της συνοδεύεται από τον κίνδυνο της ανόδου του Ευρωσκεπτικισμού και της δημιουργίας τριβών μεταξύ των κρατών μελών (Zhelyazkova, Thomann, Ruffing & Princen, 2023). Έτσι, για την αποφυγή αυτών των εντάσεων και του πολιτικού κόστους υπάρχει ο κίνδυνος της διαφοροποίησης στην ευρωπαϊκή πολιτική μέσω της δυνατότητας των κρατών μελών να έχουν 'option out' από την εφαρμογή των αποφάσεων ή και ορισμένων άρθρων. Φαίνεται ότι η προοπτική της περαιτέρω ενοποίησης στη διαχείριση της μετανάστευσης κινδυνεύει στο να περιοριστεί σε ζητήματα συνεργασίας γύρω από την ασφάλεια του χώρου Σέγκεν και σε διαπραγματεύσεις με τρίτες χώρες,

χωρίς να επεκταθεί στην αλληλεγγύη μεταξύ των κρατών μελών για την αποσυμφόρησή τους από μεγάλο αριθμό αιτούντων άσυλο, καθώς επίσης και στην συνεργασία για την ένταξη και την αφομοίωση μεταναστευτικών πληθυσμών.

Η αντίθεση των κρατών

Τα κράτη μέλη που αντιτίθενται στο νέο σύμφωνο για την μετανάστευση είναι η Πολωνία και η Ουγγαρία. Σύμφωνα με τα συμπεράσματα του Προέδρου του Ευρωπαϊκού Συμβουλίου, σχετικά με την εξωτερική διάσταση της μετανάστευσης, οι δυο προαναφερθείσες χώρες, στο πλαίσιο των εργασιών του Συμβουλίου, συμφώνησαν και αναγνώρισαν την ανάγκη για επίτευξη συμφωνίας γύρω από το Νέο Σύμφωνο για την μετανάστευση. Τόνισαν, όμως, ότι στο πλαίσιο αλληλεγγύης η μετεγκατάσταση και η επανεγκατάσταση θα πρέπει να γίνονται σε εθελοντική βάση. Επιπλέον, στάθηκαν στο γεγονός ότι όλες οι μορφές αλληλεγγύης θα πρέπει να μη χρησιμοποιούνται ως μια πάγια τακτική της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης αλλά ως μηχανισμός αντιμετώπισης κρίσεων ώστε να μη λειτουργεί ως δυνητικός παράγοντας έλξης παράτυπης μετανάστευσης (Ευρωπαϊκό Συμβούλιο Συμβούλιο της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, 2023).

Από τα είκοσι-επτά κράτη μέλη της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης τα είκοσι-δυο συμφώνησαν για τον τρόπο διαχείρισης της παράτυπης μετανάστευσης. Με στόχο, όπως έχει αναφερθεί και στις παραπάνω ενότητες, να γίνει ένα βήμα μπροστά για την μεταρρύθμιση και την βελτιστοποίηση των αναποτελεσματικών κανόνων που εφαρμόζονται σήμερα στον τομέα πολιτικής της μετανάστευσης και του ασύλου. Αν και οι Πολωνία και Ουγγαρία διαφωνούν με το νέο σύστημα και τις βελτιώσεις που προτείνονται δεν έχουν την δυνατότητα να το εμποδίσουν, παρ' όλα αυτά η αντίθεσή τους έχει έναν συμβολικό χαρακτήρα (Euroactive-Reuters , 2023). Φαίνεται, λοιπόν, ότι η μεταναστευτική κρίση του 2015 άνοιξε τον δρόμο της μεταρρύθμισης και της κεντρικής διαχείρισης του συγκεκριμένου ζητήματος από τα όργανα της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. Παρ' όλα αυτά, δημιούργησε αντίθετες απόψεις και θέσεις μεταξύ των κρατών μελών που δεν έχουν καμφθεί μέχρι και σήμερα. Η αλληλεγγύη που προωθείται σε γενικευμένο επίπεδο, όχι εθελοντικά, όπως επιθυμούν τα κράτη που στέκονται ενάντια στο Νέο Σύμφωνο, θα βοηθήσει στην αποσυμφόρηση των χωρών του Νότου και των κρατών όπως η Γερμανία, που έχουν δεχθεί την μεγαλύτερη πίεση από την έναρξη της κρίσης μέχρι και σήμερα, υποδεχόμενα χιλιάδες μετανάστες κατά περιόδους.

Το μέτρο της συνεργασίας με τις τρίτες χώρες.

Εκτός από τις ενέργειες που αναφέρονται παραπάνω σχετικά με τον έλεγχο των μεταναστευτικών ροών, που σχετίζονται με την ασφάλεια και προστασία, τόσο των εσωτερικών όσο και των εξωτερικών συνόρων της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, η Ένωση επενδύει και στην συνεργασία με τρίτες

χώρες. Χαρακτηριστικό παράδειγμα τέτοιων συμφωνιών με τρίτες χώρες είναι η Κοινή Δήλωση Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης-Τουρκίας του 2016, η οποία προέβλεπε την συνεργασία ανάμεσα στα δύο μέρη για τον περιορισμό των ροών από την Ανατολική Μεσόγειο. Σύμφωνα με την Κοινή Δήλωση, η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση θα χρηματοδοτήσει με 6 δις την Τουρκία και θα μεριμνά για την χρηματοδότηση του αριθμού μεταναστών που επιστρέφονται στην Τουρκία (European Council Counci of the European Union , n.d.). Φαίνεται ότι η συνεργασία αυτή περιόρισε τις ροές αλλά οδήγησε στην Μεταναστευτική κρίση στα σύνορα Ελλάδας- Τουρκίας το 2020, όπου οι μετανάστες χρησιμοποιήθηκαν ως μοχλός πίεσης από την Τουρκία (Oztig, 2020).

Στο ίδιο πνεύμα συνεργασίας με την αναφερόμενη Συμφωνία, η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση συνεργάζεται και με την Τυνησία, με σκοπό τον περιορισμό των αφίξεων μεταναστών στην Ιταλία. Συμφωνήθηκε, λοιπόν, ένα MoU μεταξύ των δυο μερών, με σεβασμό στα ανθρώπινα δικαιώματα και την χορήγηση οικονομικής βοήθειας από την πλευρά της Ένωσης, με στόχο την επιστροφή Τυνήσιων που δεν μπορούν να παραμείνουν νόμιμα στην Ένωση και την καλύτερη διαχείριση των μεταναστών στην Τυνησία (Vasques, 2023).

Επίλογος-Συμπεράσματα

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση έχει κάνει βήματα μπροστά στην εμβάθυνση της συνεργασίας μεταξύ των μελών σε έναν νέο τομέα πολιτικής με γνώμονα την ασφάλεια, ένα μεγάλο ζήτημα για οποιοδήποτε σύγχρονο κράτος. Για ακόμη μια φορά μετά την οικονομική κρίση και την υγειονομική του COVID-19, γίνεται κοινή προσπάθεια αντιμετώπισης του ζητήματος. Παρ' όλα αυτά, εξαιτίας της στάσης ορισμένων κρατών ελλοχεύει ο κίνδυνος για εφαρμογή του νέου συμφώνου για την μετανάστευση με διαφοροποιήσεις. Επιπλέον, στο πλαίσιο της συνεργασίας με τρίτα κράτη ενδέχεται η ισχυροποίηση του ρόλου τους στις διεθνείς σχέσεις. Χαρακτηριστικό παράδειγμα, η κρίση στα Ελληνοτουρκικά σύνορα το 2020 αλλά και η κίνηση της Τυνησίας να μη δεχθεί ομάδα διαπραγματεύσεων του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου το 2023 (Fox, 2023).

Η Ένωση, λοιπόν, πέρα από όσο το δυνατόν καλύτερη και πιο άμεση εφαρμογή του Νέου Συμφώνου για την Μετανάστευση, θα μπορούσε να επενδύσει περισσότερο στην συνεργασία με τρίτες χώρες στον τομέα της ανάπτυξής τους, προκειμένου οι μετανάστες να προτιμούν να παραμένουν σε αυτές από το να επιχειρούν με κίνδυνο της ζωής τους, σε αρκετές περιπτώσεις, να μεταβούν στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση για ένα καλύτερο μέλλον. Επιπλέον, με αυτή τη κίνηση, η Ένωση θα επεκταθεί σε μια νέα αγορά, ενώ ταυτόχρονα θα περιορίσει την απειλή της εργαλιοποίησης των μεταναστευτικών ροών.

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Multiculturalism and Ethno-Cultural Diversity: Theoretical Insights, Developments and Rising Challenges to the European Migration Policy[1]

Nikos Papadakis[2], Georgia Dimari[3] & Nikolaos Kosmadakis[4]

Abstract

The present study critically reviews the current theoretical debate on the management of cultural diversity and multiculturalism, emphasizing on the debate between Charles Taylor's theoretical legacy on "equal worth" and the approach of moral liberalism. Within this context and taking into account the key stakes, the paper proceeds in the brief critical analysis of the European Migration Policy, after the outbreak of the 2015 Refugee Crisis, as well as on the political impact and subsequently the rise of euro-scepticism and anti-migration political agendas and parties (across Europe), based on the instrumentalisation of stereotypes and fears within the European Societies-at-Large. Given the above-mentioned, it also focuses on the rising challenges for the EU Migration Policy.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, cultural diversity, equal worth, moral liberalism, multicultural awareness, refugee crisis, migration policy, anti-migration agenda & discourse, New Pact on Migration and Asylum.

Πολυπολιτισμικότητα, Εθνο-Πολιτισμική Ετερότητα και Μετανάστευση: Θεωρητικές Προκείμενες, Εξελίξεις και Προκλήσεις για τη Σύγχρονη Ευρωπαϊκή Μεταναστευτική Πολιτική

Νίκος Παπαδάκης, Γεωργία Δημάρη & Νικόλαος Κοσμαδάκης

Περίληψη

Η παρούσα μελέτη επισκοπεί κριτικά τη σύγχρονη θεωρητική συζήτηση για τη διαχείριση της πολυπολιτισμικότητας και της πολιτισμικής ποικιλότητας, με ιδιαίτερη έμφαση στη θεωρητική διαμάχη ταυλοριανού κοινοτισμού και ηθικού φιλελευθερισμού. Στη συνέχεια και λαμβάνοντας υπόψη τις θεωρητικές προκείμενες και τα ζέοντα διακυβεύματα, εξετάζει ευσύνοπτα την εξέλιξη της ευρωπαϊκής μεταναστευτικής πολιτικής μετά το ξέσπασμα της Προσφυγικής κρίσης του 2015, αλλά και τις πολιτικές επιπτώσεις στις ευρωπαϊκές κοινωνίες, με έμφαση στην άνοδο ευρωσκεπτιστικών- αντιμεταναστευτικών-ακροδεξιών πολιτικών σχηματισμών, στη βάση και της εργαλειοποίησης στερεοτύπων και φόβων. Τούτων δοθέντων, εστιάζει επίσης στις αναδυομένες προκλήσεις για την ευρωπαϊκή μεταναστευτική πολιτική.

Keywords: Πολυπολιτισμικότητα, Πολιτισμική Ποικιλότητα-Ετερότητα, Ταυλοριανό ιδανικό της αυθεντικότητας, Ηθικός Φιλελευθερισμός, Πολιτισμική Αναγνώριση, Προσφυγική Κρίση, Μεταναστευτική Πολιτική, αντι-μεταναστευτικός Λόγος, Νέο Σύμφωνο για τη Μετανάστευση και το Άσυλο.

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Εισαγωγή

Αν επισκοπούσε κανείς τη συζήτηση για την πολυπολιτισμικότητα σήμερα, θα διαπίστωνε ότι μια σειρά από επιμέρους επιχειρήματα συγκροτούνται, προκειμένου να πλαισιώσουν την εξελισσόμενη θεωρητική συζήτηση (και μεταξύ άλλων τη ζέουσα διαμάχη ταϋλοριανής παράδοσης και ηθικού φιλελευθερισμού) και συνακόλουθα τις κανονιστικές προσεγγίσεις μιας ρευστής πραγματικότητας. Οι ίδιες οι μεταβιομηχανικές κοινωνίες δείχνουν συχνά αμήχανες ενώπιον των πολιτικών και αξιακών διακυβευμάτων της συν-οίκησης πληθυσμιακών ομάδων με διαφορετική πολιτισμική ταυτότητα και κεφάλαιο. Οι πρόσφατες εξελίξεις και ειδικά οι τρομοκρατικές επιθέσεις του ISIS στην Ευρώπη και η προσφυγική κρίση περιπλέκουν ακόμα περισσότερο την κατάσταση.

Τι συμβαίνει λοιπόν με την πολυπολιτισμικότητα; Απέτυχε όντως, όπως (άμεσα ή έμμεσα) επισημαίνουν κατά καιρούς ηγέτες Κρατών- Μελών της Ε.Ε. θέτοντας, ουσιαστικά, εν αμφιβόλω τις καταγωγικές σημασίες και τις συγκροτησιακές συνιστώσες του ίδιου του αξιακού πλέγματος της ευρωπαϊκής ολοκλήρωσης; Ενώ οι περισσότεροι εκπρόσωποι των mainstream πολιτικών σχηματισμών δεν δείχνουν να αμφισβητούν επισήμως τη σημασία της ενσωμάτωσης των εθνο-πολιτισμικά διαφορετικών, τα σημασιακά όρια των σύστοιχων εννοιών δείχνουν να επαναπροσδιορίζονται, ενόσω τα πολιτικά αυτονόητα φλεγμαίνουν. Το τοπίο αναδιατάσσεται και οι συναινέσεις δείχνουν να υποχωρούν. Η αντι-μεταναστευτική ατζέντα φαίνεται να κερδίζει έδαφος στην πολιτική δημοσιότητα. Και η πολυπολιτισμικότητα συνεχίζει να γεννά πολιτικές και θεωρητικές εντάσεις, ενίοτε και εννοιολογικές και σημασιακές συγχύσεις, όπως και διλλήματα σε επίπεδο εφαρμοσμένης πολιτικής (βλ. και Χιωτάκης, 1999). Αρκεί μόνον να λάβει κανείς υπόψη του ότι ο ίδιος ο όρος χρησιμοποιείται άλλοτε για να αποτυπώσει ένα φαινόμενο και άλλοτε για να περιγράψει μοντέλα διαχείρισης αυτού.

Μέσα σε ένα τέτοιο πλαίσιο, ακόμα και όροι όπως πολυπολιτισμικότητα (multiculturalism) και διαπολιτισμικότητα (interculturalism) δείχνουν να αναπροσδιορίζονται, καθώς η ίδια η πολιτισμική ποικιλότητα (cultural diversity) δεν αρκείται στα σημασιακά αποθέματα του ταϋλοριανού ιδανικού της αυθεντικότητας. Μάλιστα ειδικά σε ότι αφορά την έννοια της πολυπολιτισμικότητας, εντοπίζεται μια σοβούσα σύγχυση, καθώς η ολοένα και πιο δημοφιλής χρήση του εν λόγω όρου «συγχέει συχνά τη συνύπαρξη διαφορετικών εθνών μέσα σε ένα κρατικό (ή και ομοσπονδιακό) μόρφωμα (multinational states) με τη συνύπαρξη ομάδων ή και ατόμων με διαφορετική εθνοτική προέλευση» (polyethnic states) (Λάβδας, 2012: 16-17).

Σε κάθε περίπτωση η μελέτη της πολιτισμικής ποικιλότητας ανακινεί την ανάγκη ανάλυσης των κρίσιμων δημόσιων πολιτικών που σχετίζονται με τη «διαχείριση» της εθνοπολιτισμικής ετερότητας.

Πέραν από το Ταυλοριανό ιδεώδες; Στον αστερισμό του ηθικού φιλελευθερισμού

Για 2 περίπου δεκαετίες επικυρίαρχο στη συζήτηση περί πολυπολιτισμικότητας ήταν το Ταυλοριανό, νέο- αριστοτελικό κοινοτιστικό παράδειγμα. Το τελευταίο προτάσσει την αναγνώριση κάθε διαφορετικής αυθεντικής εθνο-πολιτισμικής ομάδας, χωρίς να καταφεύγει σε έτερα κριτήρια με συμβατικές αξιακές αναφορές, «φιλικές» στην κυρίαρχη ομάδα, τα οποία «υποτίθεται» ότι εδράζονται σε οικουμενικές (σ.σ. δυτικές) αξίες και αναπαραστάσεις (Taylor, 1997: 128). Το *ιδανικό της αυθεντικότητας* (ως εναντιωματικό αξίωμα στις πολιτισμικές ηγεμονίες), το πρόταγμα της *αμοιβαίας αναγνώρισης (mutual recognition)* και η σήμανση του "*equal worth*"[5] (Taylor, 1992 και 1997: 123 & 128) επικαθόρισαν σειρά πολιτικών, που αφορούσαν στην ενσωμάτωση διαφορετικών ομάδων (κυρίως μεταναστών και μειονοτήτων), ειδικά σε πεδία όπως η εκπαίδευση, η γλώσσα κ.λπ.. Έτσι επί παραδείγματι συνέβαλλαν στην υιοθέτηση της αρχής της γλωσσικής αλληλεξάρτησης ("cultural- linguistic interdependence hypothesis"- βλ. Cummins, 1999: 147 και Cummins, 1984) και στην αξιοποίηση της υπόθεση της προσθετικής διγλωσσίας (additive form of bilingualism/ additive bilingual enrichment principle- βλ. Landry & Allard, 1991: 198- 231) για τη δόμηση των προγραμμάτων εμβάπτισης στη γλώσσα (two way bilingual immersion programs- βλ. Cummins, 1999: 261-2 και Παπαδάκης, 2005: 214- 216), ενώ επηρέασαν συνολικά πολιτικές εκπαίδευσης και ενσωμάτωσης (education & inclusive policies).

Ωστόσο η κριτική στο Ταϋλοριανό υπόδειγμα προσέγγισης της πολιτισμικής διαφοράς δεν άργησε να αποτυπωθεί σε συγκεκριμένα θεωρητικά corpus, ενώ η αναδιάταξη των αξιακών αναφορών «γέννησε» νέους Λόγους (discourses) περί πολιτισμικής ποικιλότητας- ετερότητας (cultural diversity). Ανάμεσά τους φαίνεται να αναδεικνύεται ως ολοένα και πιο επιδραστικός, ειδικά τις δυο τελευταίες δεκαετίες, ο ηθικός φιλελευθερισμός. Ο τελευταίος έλκει την καταγωγή του στο αίτημα υπέρβασης της ακαμψίας του διαδικαστικού φιλελευθερισμού και στο εγχείρημα αντίστιξης στον «αξιακό σχετικισμό» των ταυλοριανών κοινοτιστών. Κινείται στη σφαίρα του πολιτικού φιλελευθερισμού και της φιλελεύθερης ηθικής και πολιτικής θεωρίας, ενώ εμβληματική φυσιογνωμία του είναι ο Will Kymlicka. Δεν χωρεί αμφιβολία ότι ο ηθικός φιλελευθερισμός κερδίζει προοδευτικά σε ισχύ και δημοφιλία στις δημόσιες σφαίρες, γιατί μεταξύ άλλων δομεί εμπειρικά εδραιωμένες αναλυτικές κατηγορίες και κυρίως ενσκήπτει στις έννοιες, αξιοποιώντας νέα αναλυτικά εργαλεία.

[5] Στη μορφή της αποδοχής της ισοτιμίας- «φυσικής (και αταξινόμητης) ισότητας» κάθε διαφορετικού πολιτισμού και παράδοσης (Hohman, 1989: 16) όπως παρατίθεται στο Δαμανάκης, 2000: 17) και συνακόλουθα της αποδοχής της ισοτιμίας των διαφορετικών πολιτισμικών και μορφωτικών κεφαλαίων που φέρουν τα μέλη οποιασδήποτε εθνο-πολιτισμικής ομάδας (βλ. Δαμανάκης, 1997: 38- 40).

Πιο συγκεκριμένα τώρα: Συγκροτησιακές συνιστώσες του ηθικού φιλελευθερισμού αποτελούν οι αρχές της *ατομικής ελευθερίας στη μορφή του μη καταναγκασμού*, το ιδανικό της *ηθικής αυτονομίας*, η εμπράγματη έμφαση στον *αυτοσεβασμό* (με όρους Rawls), ενώ η αναγνώριση ενσωμάτωση των διαφορετικών εθνο-πολιτισμικών ομάδων προϋποθέτει την αναγνώριση από τις τελευταίες της ατομικής ελευθερίας και αυτονομίας των μελών τους (βλ. Kymlicka, 1995). Στην ουσία, ο ηθικός φιλελευθερισμός αντιπροτείνει σε αυτό που θεωρεί ότι διέπει το ταυλοριανό discourse (ήτοι τον αξιακό σχετικισμό- βλ. και Λάβδας, 1999: 27- 51 και Lavdas, 2001) την ανάδειξη εμπειρικά και θεωρητικά θεμελιωμένων κριτηρίων αναγνωρισιμότητας του Πολιτισμικά Ετέρου και σημαίνει την ηθική αυτονομία (moral autonomy) και το δικαίωμα της επιλογής (right to choose) ως τις καταστατικές προϋποθέσεις αναγνώρισης και ενσωμάτωσης μιας εθνο-πολιτισμικής ομάδας σε ένα σύγχρονο δημοκρατικό πολιτικό σύστημα (Kymlicka, 1995: 83). Για την ακρίβεια η προστασία της ηθικής αυτονομίας και η μη παραβίαση των ατομικών δικαιωμάτων των μελών μιας εθνο-πολιτισμικής ομάδας φαίνεται να θεωρείται κρισιμότερη από την αυθεντικότητα και ιδιαιτερότητα (βλ. Λάβδας, 1999: 34), ενώ η ισότιμη μεταχείριση (equal handling) δεν ταυτίζεται επ ουδενί με την ομογενοποιημένη (uniform) αντιμετώπιση (βλ. Parekh, 1995: 83- 4). Τελικά, εκκινώντας από την αποδοχή του κοινωνικά διαδραστικού και διαλογικού χαρακτήρα της διαδικασίας συγκρότησης ταυτότητας (βλ. και Λάβδας, 1999), οι θεωρητικοί του ηθικού φιλελευθερισμού θεωρούν το συνδυασμό των προαναφερθέντων αξιών ως conditio sine qua non για τη διαμόρφωση μιας ολοκληρωμένης ταυτότητας και για την εμπράγματη κατοχύρωση της ιδιότητας του πολίτη στις σύγχρονες πολυπολιτισμικές κοινωνίες. Επιπρόσθετα, για τον ηθικό φιλελευθερισμό, η άμβλυνση των συγκρούσεων μεταξύ της φιλελεύθερης πρόσληψης της ελευθερίας και των (κάποιες φορές θεωρούμενων ως «ανελεύθερων) πρακτικών μεμονωμένων εθνο-πολιτισμικών ομάδων, εδράζεται στο διαφορικό διαμοιρασμό μεταξύ των «*εσωτερικών περιορισμών*» (στη μορφή των απαιτήσεων μιας ομάδας από τα μέλη της) και της «*εξωτερικής προστασίας*», όπου ως τέτοια νοείται η δέσμη των απαιτήσεων της ομάδας από την ευρύτερη κοινωνία και vice versa. Με όρους Kymlicka, ένας τέτοιος διαχωρισμός επέχει θέση όρου συγκρότησης της αναγνώρισης του πολιτισμικά διαφορετικού (multicultural awareness): «οι φιλελεύθεροι μπορούν και πρέπει να ενσωματώσουν συγκεκριμένες μορφές εξωτερικής προστασίας, όπου αυτό βοηθάει την προαγωγή του δικαίου ανάμεσα στις ομάδες, αλλά, ωστόσο, θα πρέπει να απορρίψουν τους όποιους εσωτερικούς περιορισμούς που δύναται να περιορίσουν το δικαίωμα των μελών μιας ομάδας να αμφισβητήσουν και να αναδιαμορφώσουν τις παραδοσιακές δομές και πρακτικές».

Συγχρόνως ο ηθικός φιλελευθερισμός εστιάζει στον αποκαλούμενο «κοινοτικό πολιτισμό-κουλτούρα», ο οποίος «παρέχει στα μέλη του έναν τρόπο ζωής με νόημα για ολόκληρο το φάσμα

των ανθρώπινων δραστηριοτήτων, συμπεριλαμβανομένων των κοινωνικών, εκπαιδευτικών, θρησκευτικών και οικονομικών πτυχών της ζωής τους, τόσο στη δημόσια όσο και στην ιδιωτική σφαίρα. Αυτού του τύπου οι πολιτισμοί συνήθως είναι συγκεντρωμένοι σε συγκεκριμένες περιοχές και βασίζονται σε μία κοινή γλώσσα»[6] (Kymlicka & Norman, 2000, αλλά και Parekh, 1995 & 1998).

Με βάση όλα τα προαναφερθέντα, το αναδυόμενο κανονιστικό πλαίσιο προτείνει τη ρύθμιση των σύνθετων σχέσεων μεταξύ των διαφορετικών εθνο-πολιτισμικών ομάδων, μέσα από τη θέσπιση-θεμιτοποίηση μιας σειράς συλλογικών δικαιωμάτων. Στη φιλελεύθερη θεωρία του για τα μειονοτικά δικαιώματα (liberal theory of minority rights), ο Will Kymlicka εισάγει τρεις θεμελιώδεις τύπους πολιτισμικών- μειονοτικών δικαιωμάτων (βλ. αναλυτικά Kymlicka, 1995 και Kymlicka & Norman, 2000). Πρόκειται για μια τυπολογία που επιχειρεί να «συνομιλήσει» με τους όρους συγκρότησης της ιδιότητας του πολίτη στις σύγχρονες κοινωνίες[7]:

- ✓ δικαίωμα στην αυτό-διακυβέρνηση ("*self-government rights*") για τις εθνοπολιτισμικές ομάδες, που διαβιούν σε πολυεθνικά κράτη,
- ✓ πολυεθνικά δικαιώματα ("*polyethnic rights*"), ήτοι το δικαίωμα των μειονοτήτων να λαμβάνουν οικονομική και νομική υποστήριξη από το Κράτος με βάση τα αιτήματα και τις ανάγκες τους και
- ✓ δικαιώματα υπερ-εκπροσώπησης ("*special representation rights*"), που αφορούν στο δικαίωμα υπερ- αντιπροσώπευσης των (αναγνωρισμένων) διαφορετικών εθνο-πολιτισμικών ομάδων, στο πολιτικό σύστημα και στη διαδικασία λήψης αποφάσεων (μια εκδοχή θεσμοποιημένης θετικής διάκρισης).

[6] Εδώ οι θιασώτες του ηθικού φιλελευθερισμού αναλαμβάνουν ένα σύνθετο θεωρητικό εγχείρημα, «αναμειγνύοντας» συλλογικές δημόσιες ταυτότητες με την ιδέα του πολιτισμού. Υπάρχουν τα έθνη και οι κοινωνίες όπως το Ελληνικό, το Γερμανικό, το Γαλλικό και τα οποία είναι οργανωμένα σε κράτη αλλά δεν υφίστανται ελληνικές, βρετανικές, γαλλικές «κοινοτικές κουλτούρες-πολιτισμοί» που να συστοιχούν πλήρως με τις προϋποθέσεις του ορισμού του Kymlicka. Άλλωστε «κάθε περίπλοκη ανθρώπινη κοινωνία, σε οποιοδήποτε χρονικό σημείο, συγκροτείται από συμβολικές πρακτικές και μια ιστορία που συναρθρώνει με τις ρηματικές πρακτικές και τους λόγους που παράγουν εξουσία. Αυτή η ιστορία αποκρυσταλλώνει και διαφυλάτει τους αγώνες για εξουσία και κυριαρχία- δύναμη, τα σύμβολα και το ιδιαίτερο νόημα, εν συντομία την προσπάθεια για πολιτισμική και πολιτική ηγεμονία, οι οποίες καταβάλλονται από ομάδες, τάξεις και φύλα. Υπήρξε όμως ποτέ μία και μόνο κουλτούρα ή ένας και μόνο πολιτισμός, ένα συγκροτημένο σύστημα πεποιθήσεων, νοημάτων, συμβόλων και πρακτικών, το οποίο σύμφωνα με τον Kymlicka, "θα εκτεινόταν σε ολόκληρο το φάσμα των ανθρώπινων δραστηριοτήτων"» (Παπαδάκης & Φραγκούλης, 2007: 149);

[7] Η ίδια η ιδιότητα του πολίτη, διαμεσολαβώντας μεταξύ συλλογικής ταυτότητας και ετερότητας- ατομικότητας, συσχετίζεται καταστατικά με τις «ποιότητας» και διεργασίες που απηχούν τους 4 τύπους των «αστικών αρετών»: γενικές, κοινωνικές, πολιτικές και οικονομικές (Galston, 1991: 221- 4). Η ισόρροπη ανάπτυξη και των 4 αποτελεί, για τον ηθικό φιλελευθερισμό, conditio sine qua non για τη διαμόρφωση της ιδιότητας του πολίτη (με την μορφή της ενεργούς συμμετοχής σε μια Πολιτεία- βλ. Lavdas 2001: 3) στις σύγχρονες δημοκρατίες (βλ. Kymlicka & Norman, 2000: 7-8).

Ρύθμιση, διαβούλευση και κατοχύρωση τόσο της εμπράγματης συμμετοχής στο πολιτικό σύστημα όσο και της ελευθερίας στην μορφή της καταστασιακής απονεύρωσης κάθε δυνάμει ή ενεργεία καταναγκασμού. Αποτελούν οι νέες κανονικότητες που εισάγει ο ηθικός φιλελευθερισμός την ορθολογική απάντηση στα σύγχρονα σημασιακά, αξιακά και πολιτικά αδιέξοδα αλλά και στις προκλήσεις της συμβίωσης στις πολυπολιτισμικές κοινωνίες;

Καταρχήν οφείλει να αναγνωρίσει κανείς ότι η κριτική που ασκεί ο ηθικός φιλελευθερισμός στο ταυλοριανό υπόδειγμα διαχείρισης της πολιτισμικής ποικιλότητας και στις σχετικές προτάσεις πολιτικής, προσφέρει μια νέα, ψύχραιμη, ορθολογική «ματιά» στις σύνθετες σχέσεις που αναπτύσσονται μεταξύ μειονοτικών και mainstream πολιτισμικών ομάδων (οι οποίες εμφανίζουν μια ιστορικά κυρωμένη έξη κυριαρχίας- *«old and habitual ideas of the main group»* με όρους Edward Said, 1993). Συγχρόνως καταδεικνύει την δομική θνησιγένεια του αξιακού σχετικισμού, καταλύει τις αναγωγιστικές «ευκολίες» του και αναδιατάσσει την πολιτική agenda. Παράλληλα όμως οφείλουμε να λάβουμε υπόψη ότι η νέα αυτή τάση (ήδη ηγεμονική σε αρκετές συζητήσεις στις ΗΠΑ και τον Καναδά, αλλά και σε κάποιες ευρωπαϊκές χώες) αναπτύσσεται σε μια περίοδο όπου οι κοινωνίες γίνονται ολοένα και πιο φυλετικά και εθνικά διαφοροποιημένες, πολώνονται διαμήκως νέων ταξικών γραμμών, ενώ δεν καταφέρνουν να άρουν τις κατά φύλο και κοινωνικό- οικονομική προέλευση ανισότητες και διακρίσεις (Giroux, 1993: 89-90). Και προσφέρει μια ορθολογικότητα, εμπειρικά εδραιωμένη μεν, καθόλου ουδέτερη και απροκατάληπτη ωστόσο. Κι αυτό γιατί «η επαγγελία της εξόδου από την ηγεμονία του τεϋλοριανού, κλασσικού κοινοτιστικού λόγου περί πολυπολιτισμικότητας και του συναφούς μάγματος σημασιών που αντλούσε νομιμοποίηση από έναν διευρυμένο αξιακό σχετικισμό και η σύγχρονη αναγγελία της επιστροφής σε κάποια νέα, σχεδόν «αυτονόητα» και οπωσδήποτε γενικά, κριτήρια για την αναγνωρισιμότητα (όπως η «ελευθερία ως μη καταναγκασμός») δεν μπορούν να κρύψουν μια ήκιστα ομολογημένη ιδεολογική επιλογή: αυτήν της νομιμοποιημένης μετάβασης από την καθολικότητα στην επιλεκτικότητα (γενναιόδωρη ή μη)» (Παπαδάκης & Φραγκούλης, 2007: 151). Ο συνδυασμός της αναδυόμενης επιλεκτικότητας με την επιστροφή στα κριτήρια αναγνώρισης (τα οποία ας μην ξεχνάμε είναι υπόλογα στην ιστορικότητα και στις συγκειμενικές προϋποθέσεις συγκρότησης τους) αναδεικνύει μια εκφανή (με όρους Emmanuel Levinas) πρόθεση αξιολόγησης και ταξινόμησης της πολιτισμικής ετερότητας ως τέτοιας. Άλλωστε, όπως επισημαίνει ο Richard Rorty τέτοια κριτήρια αποτελούν “temporary resting places” (Rorty, 1979: 390) με σαφή πρόσδεση στις καταστατικές προϋποθέσεις εδραίωσης τους και στις σχεσιακές εξουσιαστικές συνιστώσες αυτών. Οι συνέπειες αυτής της επαν-εγκαθίδρυσης κριτηρίων γίνονται εμφανείς σε διάφορα, λιγότερο αφαιρετικά, προβλήματα. Επί παραδείγματι, ο Kymlicka υποστηρίζει τη διαφοροποίηση μεταξύ των δικαιωμάτων των εθνικών μειονοτήτων και των

δικαιωμάτων των μεταναστών. Δύσκολη και οπωσδήποτε διακυβεύσιμη διάκριση. Και άραγε αρκεί η αναγνώριση του δικαιώματος της διακριτότητας των (αναγνωρισμένων) πολιτισμών[8] για να νομιμοποιήσει την επιστροφή σε κριτήρια αναγνωρισιμότητας; Ποιος τελικά είναι αυτός που θέτει τα κριτήρια; Και ποιες οι πρακτικές ανακλάσεις- συνέπειες μιας τέτοιας προσέγγισης;

Μπορεί, στα πλαίσια του ηθικού φιλελευθερισμού, να παρέχεται στα μέλη των μικρότερων εθνο-πολιτισμικών ομάδων ηθική αυτονομία και το τόσο σημαντικό δικαίωμα στην επιλογή, που πιθανόν να το στερούνται εντός της «εγγείας» ομάδας τους, ωστόσο «οι μικρές αυτές πολιτισμικές οντότητες αποθαρρύνονται από την συλλογική ενεργό συμμετοχή και πιθανή (εμπλοκή στην) μεταρρύθμιση αυτού του κυρίαρχου (και έστω και ήπια) κανονιστικού πλαισίου δράσης» (βλ. Παπαδάκης & Φραγκούλης 2004: 233). Ας μην ξεχνάμε ότι η ένθεση κριτηρίων εντός ενός πολιτισμικού πλαισίου που εκλαμβάνεται ως δεδομένο, έστω γενικών και «αυτονόητων» κριτηρίων φίλιων ωστόσο στις αξίες δυτικού τύπου και στο φιλελεύθερο πρότυπο δημοκρατίας, επιστρέφει στις mainstream εθνοπολιτισμικές ομάδες τμήμα της ισχύος τους. Και μάλιστα αφού το εμβαπτίσει στο αναγγελθέν εγχείρημα εξόδου από τον (οπωσδήποτε επικίνδυνο) αξιακό σχετικισμό. Ωστόσο αυτές ακριβώς οι ομάδες αποτελούν «μέρος του προβλήματος». Συναινώντας με τις σχετικές απόφανσεις του Michaeal Apple[9] (1993 & 1996), θα μπορούσε κανείς να ισχυριστεί ότι το μέρος του προβλήματος καλείται να εγκαθιδρύσει εκ νέου κριτήρια και συνακόλουθα να αποκαταστήσει τη σχέση του με τους μειονεκτούντες και υστερούμενους (disadvantaged) και συμβολικά να επιλύσει το πρόβλημα που ιστορικά δημιούργησε (βλ. σχετικά Παπαδάκης, 2005: 213).

Πρόκειται άραγε για ένα (ακόμα) παράδοξο της ύστερης νεωτερικότητας η μια θεμιτοποιημένη υπαναχώρηση στις ίδιες τις καταστατικές διακηρύξεις της;

Η κοινωνία της νεωτερικότητας καταγγέλθηκε από τον Theodor Adorno για τη διαμόρφωση συνθηκών ανέκκλητης δίωξης του Ξένου, για τη διαμόρφωση τελικά ενός πολιτισμού στον «οποίο οι ετικέτες έχουν κολληθεί (και) ότι είναι διαφορετικό μπορεί να αρχίσει να τρέμει» (Adorno & Horkheimer 1986). Μήπως μετά από λίγες δεκαετίες επίμονης έμφασης στην αναγνώριση του (κάθε) διαφορετικού, που οδήγησε σε ακρότητες (στις εκβολές της, συχνά αυτοαναφορικής, πολιτικής

[8] Η στόχευση του ηθικού φιλελευθερισμού για την κατοχύρωση της δυνατότητας των εθνοτικών ομάδων να παραμείνουν διακριτές (εφόσον το επιλέξουν) είναι εύλογη. Σε αρκετές περιπτώσεις υφίστανται ιστορικά κυρωμένοι λόγοι για την επιθυμία διατήρησης τέτοιων εκδοχών «διακριτότητας», όπως στην περίπτωση του Καναδά υφίστανται λόγοι για τη διατήρηση του τριμερούς «συμβολαίου» αγγλόφωνων, γαλλόφωνων και ιθαγενών και για τη σαφή διάκριση μεταξύ πολυεθνικών και πολυεθνοτικών πολιτισμικών δικαιωμάτων (Kymlicka, 1995).

[9] Ο τελευταίος αποτυπώνει το πρόβλημα απολύτως παραστατικά: «θα έπρεπε λοιπόν η πολυπληθής λευκή κυρίαρχη αγγλοσαξωνική κουλτούρα (WASP) να εξακολουθεί να διατηρεί το έσχατο δικαίωμα να κρίνει ποιες ΑφροΑμερικάνικες, ΑμερικανοΙνδιάνικες, Λατινικές, Ασιατικές κουλτούρες και ιστορίες του παρελθόντος, του παρόντος και του μέλλοντος είναι νομιμοποιημένες, είναι εκείνες που δικαιούνται την επίσημη κατοχύρωση;;;» (Apple, 1993: 16- 17).

ορθότητας) και νομιμοποίησε εκφάνσεις του Μεταμοντέρνου, τα όρια ανεκτικότητας του ύστερα νεωτερικού (late modern) υποκειμένου φλεγμαίνουν; Τέσσερις ήμισυ αιώνες μετά τη συνθήκη του Augsburg, καλό είναι να ξαναθυμηθούμε ότι η θρησκευτική ειρήνη και η εμφάνιση του ιδανικού της ανεκτικότητας στην Ευρώπη έλκει την καταγωγή της όχι σε κάποια «αγνά» αδιαμεσολάβητα ιδανικά, αλλά στο ίδιο το καθημαγμένο οικονομικό και παραγωγικό τοπίο της Ευρώπης που είχαν διαμορφώσει οι θρησκευτικοί πόλεμοι (βλ Schumpeter, 1942, Papadakis, 2003 και Χιωτάκης, 1999: 106) και να αναζητήσουμε τις συγκροτησιακές συνιστώσες της εν εξελίξει νέας συζήτησης περί πολυπολιτισμικότητας ανάμεσα στα νέα οικονομικά και πολιτικά δεδομένα των μεταβιομηχανικών κοινωνιών, αλλά και στις ανασφάλειες όσων διαβιούν σε αυτές.

Δεν χωρεί αμφιβολία ότι, μέσα σε ένα τέτοιο πλαίσιο, ο ηθικός φιλελευθερισμός αποτελεί μια ασυνέχεια στην πολιτική θεωρία περί πολυπολιτισμικότητας και συγχρόνως ανακινεί ζητήματα μείζονος σημασίας για τις σχετικές δημόσιες πολιτικές. Ειδικά μάλιστα δομώντας μια πειστική αντιπρόταση στην κληρονομιά του «αξιακού σχετικισμού», την οποία άφησε το μεταμοντέρνο και οι εμμονές στο Κράτος ως Κυβερνούσα Ολότητα, και στις (συχνά στρεβλωμένες και οπωσδήποτε νομιμοποιητικές) χρήσεις της ταϋλοριανής, νέο-αριστοτελιανής παράδοσης. Ωστόσο δεν μπορεί να αγνοηθεί και μια ανεπίλυτη αντίφαση, που φαίνεται να ανακύπτει: «ενώ οικοδομεί το επιχείρημά του στη βάση της έννοιας της ελευθερίας συνομιλώντας με τα πιο σύγχρονα ρεύματα, δείχνει να "ξεχνά" ότι η νέο-ρεπουμπλικάνικη προσέγγιση που όχι σπάνια επικαλείται, εμβαθύνει στην έννοια της ελευθερίας και τη συνδέει ευθαρσώς όχι μόνο με την απουσία του καταναγκασμού (όπως η φιλελεύθερη προσέγγιση) αλλά και της ίδιας της κατάστασης εξουσίασης, της καταστατικής δηλαδή προϋπόθεσης της ηγεμονίας (όπως επισημαίνει ο Pettit), και εύλογα αναρωτιέται κανείς πώς είναι δυνατόν η επαναφορά κριτηρίων για την αναγνωρισιμότητα, να μην δημιουργήσει μια νέα αόρατη (άρα και πανίσχυρη) κατάσταση εξουσίασης;» ((Παπαδάκης & Φραγκούλης, 2007: 152). Η αναγγελία ενός χειραφετητικού εγχειρήματος, μιας συγκροτημένης απόπειρας άρσης οδυνηρών αδιεξόδων μπορεί να μετατραπεί σε μια δυσαγγελική εκδοχή της ιεραρχικής δόμησης υποκειμενικοτήτων, νομιμοποιώντας («αναπόφευκτους») αποκλεισμούς στη μορφή της άρνησης αναγνώρισης κάποιων ετεροτήτων; Κι αν ναι, μπορεί να γίνει αλλιώς;

Πρόκειται για βαθιά πολιτικά ερωτήματα, που δεν επιδέχονται εύκολες απαντήσεις.

Σύγχρονα ερωτήματα και επίμονες προκλήσεις.

Το μοντέλο διαχείρισης της πολιτισμικής ετερότητας όπως επικράτησε στις πολυεθνικές αυτοκρατορίες και στα εθνικά κράτη έχει μείζον ιστορικό ενδιαφέρον. Η μελέτη δε μοντέλων πολυπολιτισμικότητας όπως εκείνο της αφομοίωσης (π.χ. Γερμανία) ή του Melting Pot (π.χ. ΗΠΑ)

είναι χρήσιμη για την εξέταση και την ανάγνωση των γνωσιοθεωρητικών επιχειρημάτων που εμπεριέχουν. Το μοντέλο της φιλελεύθερης πολυπολιτισμικότητας, το οποίο έχει υιοθετήσει σήμερα ο δυτικός κόσμος, συνιστά επιταγή της Νεωτερικότητας, καθώς ενσωματώνει τον (εξισωτικό) φιλελευθερισμό ως κοινωνικό, ιδεολογικό και πολιτικό πρόταγμα επιτρέποντας στα άτομα να έχουν ένα ζωτικό χώρο ελευθερίας και έκφρασης, ενώ η εκάστοτε πλειοψηφία εκφρασμένη με τη μορφή του κρατικού εξαναγκασμού πρέπει να είναι ουδέτερη.

Σε καμία περίπτωση, όμως δεν πρέπει να θεωρεί αυτονόητη η ουσία της σχέσης πολυπολιτισμικότητας- φιλελευθερισμού. Ένα απλό ερώτημα που μπορεί να διασφαλίσει ότι η συγκεκριμένη σχέση μπορεί να γίνει προβληματική είναι το εξής: Σε ποιο βαθμό μπορεί η κρατική εξουσία να παραμείνει ουδέτερη στις προτιμήσεις, στις πεποιθήσεις διαφορετικών μειονοτήτων, οι οποίες όμως ενδέχεται να εμφορούνται από ανελεύθερες ιδέες, ικανές να υπονομεύσουν τη σταθερότητα μιας δημοκρατικά ευνομούμενης κοινωνίας και πόσο δε μάλλον όταν αυτές οι ιδέες είναι σημαντικές για το άτομο.

Ο καλύτερος τρόπος για να κατανοηθεί καλύτερα η σχέση φιλελευθερισμού- πολυπολιτισμικότητας, είναι να απαντηθούν τα παρακάτω τέσσερα ερωτήματα.

Το πρώτο ερώτημα είναι εάν ο φιλελευθερισμός οφείλει να ασχοληθεί εκτενώς με την πολυπολιτισμικότητα[10]. Ο φιλελευθερισμός έχει ως βάση την ατομική ελευθερία. Ισχυρίζεται πως το άτομο είναι σε θέση να γνωρίζει το προσωπικό του συμφέρον και να διαμορφώνει το σχέδιο ζωής του όπως ακριβώς επιθυμεί στη βάση των ιδιωτικών του επιλογών (βλ. Glazer, 1982). Πολύ πρακτικά, το άτομο είναι κριτής της ζωής του.

Η πολυπολιτισμικότητα[11] από την άλλη εγκαταλείπει τη μονομέρεια του ατόμου και ενδιαφέρεται για τη συλλογικότητα. Ενδιαφέρεται για τη συνύπαρξη και τη συμβίωση διαφορετικών μονάδων. Σε ποιο βαθμό ο φιλελευθερισμός ως ένα (ενδεχομένως) ατομοκεντρικό πρόταγμα ενδιαφέρεται για την ταυτότητα μιας συλλογικότητας? Στις επιλογές που ο άνθρωπος προβαίνει, κομβικό ρόλο διαδραματίζει και η σχέση που έχει αναπτύξει με τ' άλλα άτομα. Οι σχέσεις αυτές ενδέχεται να έχουν

[10] Η πολυπολιτισμικότητα είναι ζήτημα που προκύπτει στις φιλελεύθερες δημοκρατίας αφού οι δημοκρατικές προϋποθέσεις αναζητούν το θεωρητικό διάλογο ώστε οι μειονότητες να συμμετάσχουν υπό όρους ισοτιμίας και θεσμικής ελευθερίας στην πολιτική και κοινωνική ζωή. Η φιλελεύθερη σκέψη είχε διαμορφωθεί γύρω από «την απουσία της θετικής ηθικής καθοδήγησης στη φύση, την προτεραιότητα της ελευθερίας έναντι της εξουσία, την εκκοσμίκευση της πολιτικής και στην προώθηση θεσμών της διοίκησης και των αρχών των νόμων που εγκαθιδρύουν τα όρια της κρατικής εξουσίας και την υπεράσπιση των δικαιωμάτων των πολιτών απέναντι στην εξουσία του κράτους» (Λεοντσίνη, 2005: 27).

[11] Ο Βρετανός, ινδικής καταγωγής, Parekh αναγνωρίζοντας ότι όλες οι κοινωνίες είναι πια πολυπολιτισμικές θεωρεί πως η ετερότητα θα πρέπει να αντιμετωπίζεται ως πλούτος με στόχο τον αμοιβαίο σεβασμό και την αρμονική συνύπαρξη όλων των διαφορετικών ομάδων, ενώ ο στόχος των θεσμών και των πολιτικών των κυβερνήσεων θα πρέπει να είναι η εξάλειψη διακρίσεων και παντός είδους εκμετάλλευσης (βλ. Parekh, 1995).

έναν «χρηστικό» χαρακτήρα: το άτομο εισέρχεται και εξέρχεται από τις σχέσεις αυτές ελεύθερα. Σε κάθε περίπτωση, η ελευθερία διαμόρφωσης σχέσεων συνιστά αναμφισβήτητα μια φιλελεύθερη οπτική.

Στις πολιτισμικές ταυτότητες σε συνθήκες πολυπολιτισμικότητας, δεν ισχύει ωστόσο αυτόματα κάτι τέτοιο. Το άτομο δεν αισθάνεται απαραίτητα ελεύθερο να ενταχθεί σ' ένα πολιτισμικό τρόπο ύπαρξης. Απεναντίας, ενδέχεται να αισθάνεται τον πολιτισμικό τρόπο ύπαρξης ως κάτι το υποχρεωτικό, το αναγκαίο και καθοριστικό για τη διαμόρφωση της ταυτότητάς του. Δεν είναι λίγοι εκείνοι οι στοχαστές και οι θεωρητικοί οι οποίοι έχουν επισημάνει πως η ένταξη σ' ένα πολιτισμικό τρόπο ύπαρξης καθορίζει την ίδια την ανθρώπινη υπόσταση (Margalit και Halbertal, 1994). Το άτομο γεννιέται και σχεδόν αμέσως εντάσσεται σ' ένα συγκεκριμένο τρόπο ζωής. Η ίδια δε η συγκρότηση ταυτότητας είναι μια διαλογική διεργασία (βλ. Παπαδάκης, 2008).

Η συμμετοχή του ατόμου σ' ένα συλλογικό τρόπο ζωής είναι κομβικό στοιχείο για τον ίδιο. Είναι επέκταση προσωπικής ελευθερίας. Πώς λοιπόν ο φιλελευθερισμός, ως ένα δόγμα που ασπάζεται τη γενική ιδέα της ατομικής ελευθερίας και της ισότητας των ευκαιριών, μπορεί να αντιμετωπίσει την πολυπολιτισμικότητα ως μια εκ των προτέρων δεδομένη και συλλογική κατάσταση;

Το κεντρικό ερώτημα που κυριαρχεί πλέον είναι «αν το ιδεατό δίκαιο κράτος θα έπρεπε να συσταθεί από τη σκοπιά του πώς θα πραγματοποιήσουμε μία ιδανική κοινωνία ή αν θα έπρεπε να συσταθεί από τη σκοπιά του πώς θα αναθρέψει την ευδαιμονία των ατόμων σε αυτήν την κοινωνία» (Hampton, 1997: 159)

Το δεύτερο ερώτημα έχει άμεση σχέση κατά πόσο μια πολιτισμική μειονότητα είναι σε θέση να εγείρει οιονεί δικαιώματα διαβίωσης (ως τέτοια) εντός του ενιαίου (σύνθετου) πολιτικού μορφώματος. Εκ πρώτης όψεως, το ερώτημα φαντάζει ιδιαίτερα αντιφατικό αφού ο φιλελευθερισμός είναι εγγυητής των δικαιωμάτων, τα οποία είναι μέσα εξυπηρέτησης των αναγκών των πολιτών. Πρέπει να σημειωθεί πως ο φιλελευθερισμός όμως ανέχεται την πολυπολιτισμικότητα υπό την απαράβατη προϋπόθεση ότι τα άτομα θ' απολαμβάνουν ανά πάση στιγμή ένα αναφαίρετο δικαίωμα εξόδου από την πολυπολιτισμική κοινότητα στην οποία βρέθηκαν ή εισήλθαν με τη θέλησή τους (Habermas, 1994:107). Κάτι τέτοιο ασφαλώς δεν εξασφαλίζεται στο παραδοσιοκρατικό μοντέλο. Το τελευταίο μοντέλο επιτάσσει την υποταγή της πολυπολιτισμικής ταυτότητας του ατόμου στην πολιτισμική κοινότητα που επικρατεί αριθμητικά. Επομένως, το άτομο υποχρεούται να εγκαταλείψει την ιδιαίτερη και ξεχωριστή ταυτότητα του και να ενσωματωθεί (ακριβέστερα αφοιμοιωθεί) σε μια νέα ταυτότητα. Είναι ένα μοντέλο (σχηματικά) φιλελεύθερο, υπό ωφελιμιστική προσέγγιση όμως. Μόνο όταν οι πολιτισμικές μειονότητες ενσωματωθούν στο επικρατέστερο αριθμητικά μοντέλο

πολιτισμού νομιμοποιούνται να διεκδικήσουν ζητήματα διαβίωσης. Το συγκεκριμένο μοντέλο στοχεύει στην εξασφάλιση της κοινωνικής συνοχής και σταθερότητας. Το παραδοσιοκρατικό μοντέλο διαφέρει λοιπόν σημαντικά από το μοντέλο της φιλελεύθερης πολυπολιτισμικότητας (Παπαθεοδώρου, 2003: 69) και εκβάλει μοιραία στην υποκατάσταση της εμπράγματης ενσωμάτωσης των πολιτισμικών ετεροτήτων από την γραμμική αφομοίωση.

Αντιθέτως, το μοντέλο της φιλελεύθερης πολυπολιτισμικότητας αναγνωρίζει την ατομική ελευθερία ως κινητήριο μοχλό υπεράσπισης της πολυπολιτισμικής ταυτότητας αλλά και ως μια δυνατότητα έγερσης καθολικών δικαιωμάτων επιβίωσης, διαβίωσης και ενσωμάτωσης. Βέβαια, το άτομο μπορεί με την ίδια μορφή ελευθερίας (ατομική) να απολέσει την προηγούμενη και κατόπιν ιδίας βούλησης (προσωπική αυτονομία) να γίνει μέλος μιας πολιτισμικής κοινότητας (Kukathas, 1992: 105-139). Αυτό συνεπάγεται ότι ο φιλελευθερισμός αποδέχεται ως θεμιτό το ενδεχόμενο, τρόποι ζωής, πολιτισμικές και άλλες ταυτότητες και κοινότητες να εξαφανισθούν εν τέλει ως αποτέλεσμα των δημοκρατικά φιλελεύθερων διαδικασιών και ως συνέπεια της ασκήσεως των ατομικών δικαιωμάτων τους από τους πολίτες. Ωστόσο, το μοντέλο της φιλελεύθερης πολυπολιτισμικότητας μπορεί και να ερμηνευθεί από μία δεοντοκρατική σκοπιά. Πρακτικά, στοχεύει στο σεβασμό των ατομικών και ιδιαίτερων γνωρισμάτων της πολιτισμικής μειονότητας. Δηλαδή, το πρόσωπο αναγνωρίζεται ως φορέας αξιών και πεποιθήσεων και γι' αυτό το λόγο χρήζει σεβασμού.

Το τρίτο ερώτημα που απασχολεί τη θεωρητική συζήτηση (εκβάλλοντας και στην εφαρμοσμένη πολιτική) είναι το κατά πόσον ο τρόπος ενσωμάτωσης των διαφόρων πολιτισμικών ομάδων και κοινοτήτων στο κυρίαρχο κοινωνικοπολιτικό μόρφωμα επηρεάζει ή όχι το ηθικό βάρος των αιτημάτων για αναγνώριση, κατοχύρωση, προστασία και ενδεχομένως προαγωγή (Kymlicka, 1995: 18) . Η απάντηση στο συγκεκριμένο ερώτημα είναι διακλαδική. Σε καμία περίπτωση, τα αιτήματα αυτά δεν έχουν το ίδιο ηθικό βάρος. Οι ντόπιοι λαοί που βρέθηκαν χωρίς τη συναίνεσή τους κάτω από την κυριαρχία αποικιοκρατών και υπέστησαν, ενδεχομένως, μακροχρόνια, διακριτική σε βάρος τους μεταχείριση είναι προφανές ότι προβάλλουν ισχυρές και ιδιαίτερα νομιμοποιημένες αξιώσεις. Σχετικά διαφορετική δείχνει να είναι ωστόσο η περίπτωση των οικονομικών μεταναστών που έρχονται στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση για την εξεύρεση εργασίας. Το χρονικό διάστημα παραμονής τους (μικρό ή μεγάλο) σε συνδυασμό με το βαθμό ενσωμάτωσης τους μπορεί να δικαιολογήσει σταδιακά τη μεταβολή της μεταχείρισής τους και να ισχυροποιεί βαθμηδόν αιτήματα αναγνώρισης και προστασίας της συλλογικής ταυτότητας. Συχνά θεωρείται ότι διαφορετικό ηθικό θεμέλιο έχουν οι αξιώσεις των ομάδων οι οποίες έρχονται και διαμένουν ένα μικρό χρονικό διάστημα στο κυρίαρχο κοινωνικο- πολιτικό μόρφωμα. Για παράδειγμα, τα αιτήματα των προσφύγων δεν έχουν (στην πράξη) την ίδια αναγνώριση από τα αιτήματα των οικονομικών μεταναστών που διαμένουν επί δεκαετίες. Η

ενσωμάτωση τους είναι από μικρή έως ανύπαρκτη με αποτέλεσμα η κρατική εξουσία να μην τους αντιμετωπίζει ως ίδιους (Ζαϊμάκης & Κανδυλάκη, 2005: 45).

Τέλος, συναφές με το αμέσως παραπάνω είναι και το ερώτημα κατά πόσον η διαχείριση του προβλήματος της πολυπολιτισμικότητας επιδέχεται ή όχι ενιαία αντιμετώπιση. Οι περισσότεροι στοχαστές φαίνονται να αναγνωρίζουν ότι επειδή ακριβώς οι παράγοντες που επιδρούν στη διαμόρφωση, άσκηση και προβολή των αιτημάτων αναγνώρισης και προστασίας συλλογικών πολιτισμικών ταυτοτήτων είναι πολλοί και ποικίλοι, το πρόβλημα της πολυπολιτισμικότητας δεν επιδέχεται μια μοναδική απάντηση ούτε ενιαία αντιμετώπιση. Επίσης, υπάρχουν παράγοντες όπως η ιστορική συνέχεια, το μέγεθος της μειονότητας και της εθνο-πολιτισμικής ετερότητας που είναι καθοριστικοί παράγοντες για την αντιμετώπιση της συγκεκριμένης μειονότητας και της εθνο-πολιτισμικής ετερότητας από ένα επικρατές πολιτισμικό πρότυπο.

Σε κάθε περίπτωση, υπάρχουν κοινωνίες που αυτοαναγορεύονται ως πολυπολιτισμικές όπως οι ΗΠΑ και ο Καναδάς. Θα έλεγε κανείς πως αυτές οι χώρες επιδιώκουν ιστορικά τη διατήρηση του πολυπολιτισμικού τους χαρακτήρα προκειμένου να συνεχιστεί η σταθερότητα τους μέσα από τη συνύπαρξη πολλών και ετερογενών πολιτισμικών ταυτοτήτων.

Σε επίπεδο Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, τα Κ-Μ υιοθετούν (τουλάχιστον σε ρηματικό επίπεδο) τις αξίες του πολιτικού πλουραλισμού και του δημόσιου πολιτικού πολιτισμού, αποδεχόμενα την πολιτισμική ταυτότητα του κάθε κράτους αλλά και των διαφορετικών εθνο-πολιτισμικών ομάδων εντός αυτού. Ωστόσο οι πρόσφατες εξελίξεις, ειδικά μετά το ξέσπασμα της προσφυγικής κρίσης, θέτουν εν αμφιβόλω αυτό το consensus, το οποίο ωστόσο αποτελεί συγκροτησιακή συνιστώσα της ίδιας της ενωσιακής διαδικασίας.

Προσφυγική Κρίση και Ευρωπαϊκή Μεταναστευτική Πολιτική: μια κριτική επισκόπηση

Η προσφυγική-μεταναστευτική κρίση των τελευταίων ετών αποτέλεσε πρόκληση για την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση με αποτέλεσμα να διεξαχθεί ένα έντονος δημόσιος διάλογος σχετικά με την πρόταση αναθεώρησης του Κανονισμού ΙΙΙ του Δουβλίνου (604/2013/ΕΕ), ήδη από τον Μάιο του 2016 και έκτοτε οι συζητήσεις συνεχίζονται.

Η προσφυγική κρίση κατέδειξε πως οι εθνικές μεταναστευτικές πολιτικές δεν είναι εναρμονισμένες, δηλαδή δεν υπάρχει μια απόλυτα ενιαία ευρωπαϊκή μεταναστευτική πολιτική, καθότι αρκετά κράτη-μέλη είναι απρόθυμα να παραχωρήσουν ουσιαστικό μέρος των εθνικών κυριαρχικών τους δικαιωμάτων στην Ένωση. Η ΕΕ αποφασίζει τους όρους νόμιμης εισόδου και διαμονής, ενώ τα κράτη μέλη διατηρούν το δικαίωμα να ορίσουν τον αριθμό των ανθρώπων που θα δεχτούν να εισέλθει στην χώρα τους. Ωστόσο η ΕΕ μπορεί να διαδραματίσει υποστηρικτικό ρόλο προς τα κράτη - μέλη, ειδικά

σε οικονομικό επίπεδο. Σημειωτέον, ότι πρωταρχικό κριτήριο των πολιτικών της Ε.Ε. αποτελεί ο σεβασμός των θεμελιωδών ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων .

Δυστυχώς, η ανομοιομορφία στο εσωτερικό της Ε.Ε. δημιουργεί προσκόμματα στην εφαρμογή κοινής πολιτικής για τη μετανάστευση και το άσυλο. Παρότι δε, γίνονται προσπάθειες σε θεσμικό επίπεδο, υπάρχουν ακόμη πολλές ελλείψεις και προβληματικά σημεία, τα οποία καθιστούν αναποτελεσματικές ή μερικώς αποτελεσματικές τις εκάστοτε πρωτοβουλίες. Και δεν υπάρχει χαρακτηριστικότερο παράδειγμα του ελλείμματος συντονισμού αλλά και αποτελεσματικότητας, που παρουσιάζει η ευρωπαϊκή μεταναστευτική πολιτική, από την προσφυγική κρίση όπως ξεκίνησε το 2015 με κύρια χώρα εισόδου την Ελλάδα.

Ουσιαστικά, η προσφυγική κρίση ήρθε να αποκαλύψει την «έλλειψη πολιτική διακυβέρνησης σε ευρωπαϊκό επίπεδο αλλά και τις βαθιές και εγκολπωμένες ασυμμετρίες, τη θηριώδη έλλειψη συντονισμού και τελικά την αδυναμία της Ε.Ε. να διαχειριστεί την κατάσταση των πραγμάτων στην λεγόμενη ευρωπαϊκή γειτονιά δηλαδή στην περιφέρεια ζωτικών της συμφερόντων» (Παπαδάκης, 2018: 5). Σε αυτήν τη νέα διαμορφωθείσα κατάσταση, η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση αρχικά αποφάσισε να εφαρμόσει την πολιτική της κατανομής των προσφύγων στη βάση του αριθμού των πολιτών και των δυνατοτήτων που είχε η κάθε ευρωπαϊκή χώρα («ρήτρα κατανομής ») (βλ. και Παπαδάκης, 2018). Γρήγορα όμως η συγκεκριμένη συμφωνία κατέστη ανενεργή. Εξίσου ανενεργή κατέστη και η συμφωνία (Κοινή Δήλωση) ΕΕ-Τουρκίας της 18ης Μαρτίου 2016, που αναφέρεται στη μεταφορά μεταναστών από την Ελλάδα και την Ιταλία πίσω στην Τουρκία. Έχει επικριθεί έντονα από ομάδες ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων και μελετητές (Barbulescu, 2017) καθώς η Τουρκία δεν θεωρείται ασφαλής χώρα για την επιστροφή των μεταναστών. Κυρίως όμως η αναποτελεσματικότητά (και τελικά αποτυχία της) οφείλεται πρωταρχικά στις διατυπώσεις ασφάλειας που επιτρέπουν στην Τουρκία να ενεργεί όπως κρίνει σκόπιμο προκειμένου να επιδιώξει επιδιωκόμενους γεωπολιτικούς στόχους, εργαλειοποιώντας, μεταξύ άλλων, την αδυναμία της ΕΕ να επιτύχει πολιτική συναίνεση όσον αφορά ένα ενιαίο μέτωπο για τη μετανάστευση (Papadakis & Dimari, 2021).

Και πράγματι, τον Φεβρουάριο του 2020, η Τουρκία άρχισε να εργαλειοποιεί το προσφυγικό ζήτημα για τα δικά της γεωπολιτικά συμφέροντα. 13.000 πρόσφυγες και μετανάστες έφτασαν στον Έβρο για να εισέλθουν στην Ευρώπη, αποκαλύπτοντας την πρόθεση της Τουρκίας να χρησιμοποιήσει το προσφυγικό προς όφελος των δικών της γεωπολιτικών εξελίξεων και (μαξιμαλιστικών) σκοπών-σχεδίων (Lappas, 2020). Η άμεση απάντηση της Ελλάδας ήταν η αναστολή της διαδικασίας ασύλου μέσω νομοθετικής πράξης, που αναφερόταν στην εξαιρετικά επείγουσα και απρόβλεπτη ανάγκη αντιμετώπισης της ασύμμετρης απειλής για την εθνική ασφάλεια (βλ. Dimari, 2020). Αυτή η κρίση

αποκάλυψε τις εγγενείς ελλείψεις της συμφωνίας της ΕΕ σε πραγματικές συνθήκες. Το γεγονός ότι η Ελλάδα ήταν στην πρώτη γραμμή κατά τη διάρκεια αυτής της κατάστασης, δεν της άφησε άλλη επιλογή από το να ενεργήσει αποφασιστικά κατά της Τουρκίας που προσπάθησε να χειραγωγήσει την αναποτελεσματική συμφωνία, ωθώντας την Ελλάδα να υιοθετήσει μια συγκεκριμένη στάση απέναντι στη μεταναστευτική- προσφυγική κρίση, που ήταν ωστόσο αναπόφευκτη εκείνη τη στιγμή (Papadakis & Dimari, 2023).

Αξίζει να σημειωθεί ότι το Νέο Σύμφωνο για τη Μετανάστευση και το Άσυλο (New Pact on Migration and Asylum), που υπεγράφη τον Σεπτέμβριο του 2020, βασίζεται σε τρεις πυλώνες: ισχυρή εξωτερική διάσταση με τις χώρες προέλευσης και διέλευσης, αποτελεσματικότερη διαχείριση των εξωτερικών συνόρων, αυστηρότερους και δικαιότερους κανόνες αλληλεγγύης εντός της ΕΕ (Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή, 2020 και Papadakis & Dimari, 2021 και 2023). Τα προβλήματα όμως παραμένουν και το (φιλόδοξο, όσο και ουσιαστικό- ολιστικό) Νέο Σύμφωνο, θα κριθεί στην πλήρη εφαρμογή του. Ήδη η αποτυχία της πρόσφατης άτυπης Συνόδου των Ηγετών της Ε.Ε. στη Γρανάδα (στις 6/10/2023) να καταλήξουν σε μια κοινή διακήρυξη για τη μεταρρύθμιση του συστήματος-πλαισίου για τη μετανάστευση και το άσυλο, λόγω των αντιδράσεων της Ουγγαρίας και Πολωνίας, περιπλέκει περαιτέρω την κατάσταση και περιορίζει τα περιθώρια αισιοδοξίας για την συγκρότηση μιας (επιτέλους) συνεκτικής και κοινής μεταναστευτικής πολιτικής στην Ε.Ε.

Καταληκτικές επισημάνσεις: επιπτώσεις και προκλήσεις

Λαμβάνοντας υπόψη όλα τα προαναφερθέντα, αξίζει να επισημανθεί ότι οι αντιδράσεις από τμήματα της κοινωνίας και του πολιτικού κόσμου ήταν ιδιαίτερα ισχυρές σε αρκετά Κ-Μ της Ε.Ε.. Στερεότυπα αναδείχθηκαν, τα οποία άφησαν το υλικό τους αποτύπωμα στην ευρωπαϊκή δημόσια σφαίρα και επηρέασαν την διαμόρφωση και υλοποίηση πολιτικής. Σημαντικά τμήματα του πληθυσμού έδειξαν να αντιδρούν, καθώς θεώρησαν (ακριβέστερα πείστηκαν) πως η διαμονή των προσφύγων απαιτεί ένα υπέρογκο οικονομικό κόστος. Στο σημείο αυτό, είναι αναγκαίο να επισημανθεί πως η προσφυγική κρίση εμφανίστηκε σε μια περίοδο οικονομικής αβεβαιότητας και αστάθειας.

Οι επισφάλειες που δημιούργησε το διευρυμένο κοινωνικό κόστος της κρίσης, έδωσαν το έναυσμα στις πολιτικές δυνάμεις της Άκρας Δεξιάς να εργαλειοποιήσουν φόβους, προβληματισμούς και ανασφάλειες (βλ. και Παπαδάκης, 2018) και να διεκδικήσουν μια θέση στην εξουσία. Η Εναλλακτική για τη Γερμανία εισήλθε στο Γερμανικό Κοινοβούλιο. Ο Μακρόν στο δεύτερο προκριματικό γύρο των προεδρικών εκλογών στη Γαλλία αντιμετώπισε τη Λεπέν, τη πρόεδρο του Εθνικού Μετώπου. Παράλληλα, μετά τις τελευταίες εθνικές εκλογές της Ιταλίας, η Μελόνι αρχηγός του μετα-φασιστικού

Κόμματος Fratelli d' Italia σχημάτισε κυβέρνηση. Στην Ουγγαρία, Πρόεδρος είναι ο Β. Όρμπαν, ενώ στο βρετανικό δημοψήφισμα του 2016, όπου κατίσχυσε το Brexit, φαίνεται ότι κυριάρχησε σε τμήματα του εκλογικού σώματος η λογική της εθνικής ομοιογένειας και η δυσανεξία στη βασική ελευθερία της ελεύθερης κυκλοφορίας- μετακίνησης των εργαζομένων- πολιτών τη Ε.Ε. εντός της Ε.Ε. (βλ. σχετικά http://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/el/sheet/41/vrij-verkeer-van-werknemers και Papadakis, 2016). Επιπρόσθετα, αξίζει να επισημανθεί η σημαντική άνοδος που σημείωσαν τα ευρωσκεπτικιστικά, εθνικιστικά και ακροδεξιά κόμματα στις πρόσφατες Ευρωεκλογές του 2019[12].

Φαίνεται λοιπόν να υπάρχει ένα ισχυρό κλίμα δυσπιστίας ενίοτε και δυσανεξίας από τμήματα της κοινωνίας ως προς την αποδοχή των προσφυγικών και μεταναστευτικών ρευμάτων, το οποίο εργαλειοποιείται από εθνικιστικούς και ακροδεξιούς κομματικούς σχηματισμούς σε διάφορες Ευρωπαϊκές χώρες και αποτυπώνεται στις εκλογικές διαδικασίες.

Τούτων δοθέντων, η ίδια η εφαρμογή μιας ουσιωδώς φιλελεύθερης και γνησίως ενσωματωτικής μεταναστευτικής πολιτικής αποτελεί μια διαρκή και επίμονη πρόκληση για την ίδια την Ευρώπη και την πορεία της ευρωπαϊκής ολοκλήρωσης. Μια πρόκληση που δεν μπορεί να παραμείνει αναπάντητη, ούτε επιτρέπεται να παραμείνει όμηρος μιας αντι-μεταναστευτικής και (νέο)εθνικιστικής ατζέντας.

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Re-Approaching EU's Energy Policy: The Vital Role of Nuclear Power[1]

Eirini Korda[2]

Abstract

The energy cut-down that followed the Russo-Ukrainian war is the main cause of the recent skyrocketing gas prices, which are jeopardizing the stability of the EU's internal energy market. Hence, the diversification of energy sources has become a major priority. In this context, nuclear power must be reconsidered as a reliable alternative energy source which can lead to the partial independence of the EU. The upper goal of energy security can only be achieved if the EU relies on an energy source, such as nuclear, that ensures availability, reliability, affordability, and sustainability – all, at once. This policy brief outlines the importance of nuclear energy as a key factor for the EU's energy future and proposes measures that can be implemented to achieve a nuclear and green transition.

Keywords: nuclear energy, sustainability, diversification of sources, energy autonomy, SMRs, waste management.

Introduction: Where is the problem located?

Currently, the European nuclear industry generates 26% percent of the EU's electricity (Eurostat, 2022). However, almost two-quarters of the whole energy production is based on combustible fuels (mostly oil and natural gas). Even though renewable sources could decarbonize the economy and reduce the EU's dependence on "monopoly players" such as Russia, they are not always available. This is why the EU is re-approaching its external relations with possible suppliers from around the globe. Given the fact that energy is the monitor of every single activity, the EU needs a well-structured strategic plan that includes not only external partnerships but also internal methods of energy production. Therefore, the enhancement of the European nuclear industry is important.

The *Clean Energy for All Europeans Package*, which is the latest measure taken towards the completion of the Energy Union is moving towards a fast transition to a net zero future, a goal which is also described in the European Green Deal (European Commission, 2023). Thus, the work of the EU becomes more complex because the environmental aspect of its action cannot be ignored. Consequently, the multi-level needs of the Union demand careful multi-level action.

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Discussion

Why nuclear energy is so important?

Availability: fewer raw materials and multiple suppliers

As nuclear energy is generated by the splitting of uranium atoms, its production does not include fuel burning. Thus, nuclear requires fewer raw materials than any other energy source. According to MIT, raw materials availability is decreasing, and nations must be prepared for possible shortages. Due to its nature, nuclear power is the perfect alternative (MIT, 2018).

Moreover, uranium has increased supply security because there are multiple supply sources, from which the EU can benefit. Countries like Kazakhstan, Niger, Canada, and Australia are potential future partners. Uranium, even though imported, represents a much lower effective dependence on external suppliers than coal or gas, since significant reserves can easily be held (World Nuclear Association, 2023). In this way, nuclear power is classified as an indigenous production that can ensure -on one level- the EU's energy security.

Economic Benefits

The European nuclear industry is currently supporting more than 1.3 million jobs, which are about to increase if the use of nuclear energy to produce electricity and heat expands. Well-paid jobs, in all phases of nuclear energy production (construction of nuclear reactors, operation, or decommissioning) contribute significantly to the EU's GDP.

It must be taken into consideration that the reliability and the aforementioned availability of nuclear power also intrigue investors. Consequently, even though the nuclear programs often need imported equipment, technology, and expertise, they attract huge investment which can reduce the financial burden of the Union per se (nucleareurope, 2019.

Those are not the only benefits. The nuclear industry has the potential to boost tax revenues by billions of dollars, which the EU can use to upgrade nuclear programs. Considering that the EU has already the technological leadership throughout the whole chain, including nuclear fuel enrichment and reprocessing, the economic boost of the industry may contribute to the rise of the EU as a dominant player in energy production (Euratom Supply Agency Advisory Committee Working Group on Prices and Security of Supply, 2020). This contribution is critical since energy is not just an economic weapon but also a geopolitical one.

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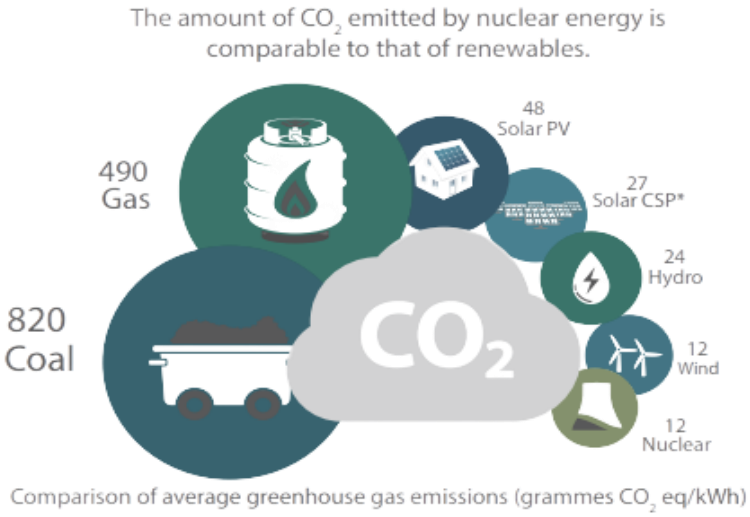
Sustainability



Source: nucleareurope (2022). *Contributing to the fight against climate change by avoiding CO2, SO2 and NOx emissions.* file:///C:/Users/korda/Downloads/Infographe_pocket_guidewe2022%20(1).pdf

Apart from being economically beneficial, nuclear energy is also environmentally friendly due to its low-carbon nature. The objective of climate neutrality by 2050 – set by the European Green Deal- can only be achieved if the EU re-approach its energy production methods.

Many innovative nuclear technologies, such as small modular reactors (SMRs) are able to facilitate the transition to clean energy systems due to small land use, low material dependency, reliability, and abundance of nuclear power.

SMRs

SMRs are nuclear reactors that have a power capacity of 300 MW(e) per unit. Because of their smaller size, they can be factor-assembled and transported to locations not suitable for larger reactors. SMRs not only produce large amounts of low-carbon electricity, but they can also operate for up to 30 years without refueling (International Atomic Energy Agency, 2023).

As research has shown, nuclear energy produces low-carbon hydrogen which is an efficient power source for vehicles and industries. Along with its ability to produce heat and desalinize water, nuclear energy is the key to decarbonizing the economy, meeting clean air standards, and ensuring access to clean water (International Atomic Energy Agency , 2021). Nucleareurope's statistical analysis proves the validity of the above claims. As the graph shows, the EU has enormous benefits from the expansion of nuclear power within its borders due to a radical drop in CO2 emissions.

Restrictions

Waste management

The major concern about the use of nuclear energy is the hazardous nature of radioactive wastes. Although the EU has taken major legislative measures for waste management and safety, there are practical actions that the member states can adopt to tackle the dangers of radiation, such as the circular economy approach to nuclear waste.

The 4-R Method

This method is based on 4 pillars: **Reduce-Reuse-Recycle- Residual**. In detail, improved reactor design, operation, and fuel production can lead to a **reduction** in the volumes of generated waste. Simultaneously, the use of technology enables the **reuse** of spent fuel through chemical processing. Additionally, materials used in nuclear programs such as plutonium and americium can be fully **recycled** and used in sectors like medicine. The **residuals** can be kept in Deep Geological Repositories to minimize the long-term disposal of radioactive wastes. Some countries can also store residuals temporarily and reprocess them in the future (FORATOM, 2020).

Funding

A possible obstacle to the expansion of nuclear energy in the EU is the unwillingness or incapacity of the member-states governments to invest in the nuclear industry and in R&D. In those cases, the role of the EU can only be supportive. Funds from the undermentioned structures should be used for the upgrade of European nuclear programs (European Commission, n.d.):

1. EU's Cohesion Fund
2. Connecting Europe Facility
3. European Investment Bank and the European Fund for Strategic Investments
4. European Regional Development Fund
5. Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe
6. InvestEU
7. Just Transition Mechanism
8. LIFE: Clean Energy Transition
9. Modernization Fund
10. Recovery and Resilience Facility
11. The Innovation Fund

The creation of those structures proves the willingness of the EU to invest in its energy security and future. Even though those funds are referring generally to the energy sector, a part of them can be used for the proliferation of the nuclear industries in the EU. France, Germany, Spain, Sweden, and Belgium have already developed decent nuclear structures, although the inclusion of the other

member states in the process is mandatory. With the use of EU funds to expand research on this domain and to construct more advanced nuclear reactors, this inclusion is becoming more feasible.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The expansion of nuclear energy in the EU is linked with economic growth, energy security, and the sustainable future of the Union. It can be achieved by:

1. Approaching different external suppliers of nuclear sources, such as Kazakstan, Niger, Australia, and Canada in order to diversify the EU's options and reduce the danger of a sudden energy cut-down, similar to the one that followed the Russian-Ukrainian War.
2. Keeping high reserves of nuclear sources which can boost the indigenous production of electricity, while decreasing the external dependency of the EU.
3. Motivating the member-states to invest in the construction of nuclear reactors which can contribute to the production of low-carbon electricity and heat, while creating thousands of jobs per year.
4. Benefiting from the high tax revenues of nuclear activity and re-investing the funds collected to further upgrade the nuclear industry, which will gradually cover more space in the energy mix.
5. Encouraging the construction of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) because they have small land use, reliable performance, and less frequent refuel needs.
6. Reassuring the safe management of radioactive wastes. This could be achieved through the implementation of the 4-R method, i.e., Reduce-Reuse-Recycle-Residuals (circular economy approach).
7. Using the EU's funds for the support of research and development (R&D), which can lead to well-structured strategy plans for the promotion of nuclear energy's safe use.
8. Using the EU's funds – as a supplementary financing source- for the construction of advanced reactors in more member states, because currently only five EU countries (France, Germany, Spain, Sweden, and Belgium) have a relatively strong nuclear industry.

Due to its nature, nuclear energy can play a vital role in the EU's energy transition. It presents both economic and environmental benefits while ensuring a long-last future for indigenous energy production. Thus, is crucial for the policymakers and stakeholders of all levels to reconsider the path of the EU's energy policy. The nuclear future of the EU seems to be promising.

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Topic 5

Political Economy in the 21st Century

Reforming State-Owned Enterprises (SOES) to Facilitate the Economic Recovery of Sri Lanka[1]

Tharindu Udayanga Kamburawala[2] & Dilmini Hasintha Abeyrathne[3]

Abstract

The economic downturn and escalating debt levels prompted Sri Lanka to seek assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), resulting in the formulation of the 17th IMF program. This program, aimed at fiscal consolidation and restructuring, designates SOEs as a pivotal element in the nation's economic recovery strategy. This policy brief addresses the imperative need for reforming State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) in Sri Lanka. A historical overview reveals the evolution of Sri Lanka's SOEs, from their establishment during World War II to a surge in numbers in the 1980s. Despite their vital role in the economy, SOEs have faced operational inefficiencies, financial struggles, and governance issues, leading to a privatization policy in 1988. The document explores international experiences in SOE reform, drawing insights from successful models in Singapore, China, and India. Current policy measures in Sri Lanka encompass various reform strategies, such as corporatization, restructuring, and commercialization, focusing on enhancing financial transparency and accountability. The establishment of the State-Owned Enterprise Restructuring Unit (SRU) reflects a commitment to effective implementation, with international support from entities like the International Finance Corporation (IFC). In conclusion, the path to economic recovery in Sri Lanka hinges on the successful transformation of SOEs, ensuring financial viability, transparency, and sustainable growth.

Keywords: State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), Reforming SOEs, Economic Recovery of Sri Lanka, IMF Bailout program, Corporate Governance.

Introduction

Before the COVID-19 outbreak, Sri Lanka's economy was already beginning to exhibit signs of decline. Growth and the fight against poverty had stalled in the previous five years. External imbalances had been exacerbated by a controlled exchange rate, a weak investment environment, years of loose monetary policy, and a restrictive trade regime. Tax cuts in 2019 and ongoing fiscal inequalities, mostly caused by inadequate revenue collections, have all contributed to huge fiscal deficits, significant gross financing requirements, and a quick increase in unsustainable debt.

Sri Lanka struggled through the biggest economic crisis in history and faced a substantial economic downturn in 2022 due to the issues that emerged in the fiscal, monetary, and external sectors. The

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real GDP of Sri Lanka was predicted to decline by 9.2 percent in 2022 and by a further 4.2 percent in 2023 (World Bank, 2022). Sri Lanka requested assistance from the IMF for the 17th time as the crisis worsened. In September 2022, the IMF and the government signed a staff-level agreement on a 48-month Extended Fund Facility program worth approximately US$2.9 billion (IMF, 2022).

Six goals are outlined in the 17th IMF program. The primary goal is to advance revenue-based fiscal consolidation and restructure social safety nets, financial institutions, and state-owned enterprises. Second, it aims to re-establish the viability of the public debt. The program also aims to restore price stability by rebuilding external buffers. Additionally, the initiative aims to protect against corruption and provide public financial stability. Another broader goal of the program is to raise sustainable economic growth. Among these goals, reforming state-owned enterprises has obtained national and international attention for several reasons. At the national level, state-owned enterprises have secured a significant public interest, while at the international level, several international investors are focusing their keen attention on these institutes to capture some investment opportunities. Thus, this policy brief attempts to critically analyze the necessity of reforming SOEs, given the need for economic recovery.

Development of SOEs in Sri Lanka

Enterprises in which the state exercises substantial control through full, majority, or significant minority ownership are identified as State-owned enterprises (SOEs) (Kim & Ali, 2017). SOEs have been significant in the socioeconomic development of world economies for a long time. Well-performing SOEs are vital in employment creation, poverty alleviation, and fiscal stability. Furthermore, State-owned enterprises (SOEs) often comprise the country's mega infrastructure projects and remain a critical source of employment and economic growth in developing Asian countries (Robinett, 2006).

Sri Lanka's public sector enterprises were established during the Second World War (CBSL, 2021). However, in the mid-1950s, the Sri Lankan government favored socialistic policies; thus, central planning was considered the key development path. During this period, several SOEs were established, including those related to cement, paper, ceramics, leather, and footwear. In 1959, the Sri Lankan government introduced a Ten-Year Plan which favored the Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) policy (CBSL, 2021). The main intention of adopting the ISI policy was to address the balance of payments deficits by producing imported items domestically. Therefore, the government initiated SOEs in cement, steel, paper, tires, mineral sands, salt, flour milling, plywood, petroleum refining and fertilizer.

With the government's favoritisms to import substitution economic policy, the number of SOEs rose rapidly from 14 in 1962 to over 280 public enterprises by the mid-1980s (CBSL, 2021). However, several complications could be observed with SOEs in the 1980s. These obstacles included operational inefficiencies, poor financial performance, low quality of products and services, supply shortages, political interferences in recruitments for SOEs, inefficient allocation and mobility of resources among SOEs, and heavy reliance on the government budget. Because of these reasons, the Sri Lankan government initiated the privatization policy for SOEs in 1988. The initiation of the privatization policy for SOEs was facilitated by the IMF structural policy adjustment program in 1989, and it was identified as the second wave of liberalization in Sri Lanka (Kelegama & Dunham, 1995).

The recent performance of SOEs in Sri Lanka

Companies Act No. 07 of 2007 and "Administer Part II" of the Finance Act No. 38 of 1971 control SOEs in Sri Lanka (MoF, 2018). At present, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) oversees 52 strategic State-Owned Business Enterprises (SOBEs), the Department of Public Enterprises oversees 87 SOEs with a strong commercial aspect, and the National Budget Department oversees 117 SOEs with noncommercial aspects (SOE Reforms; the Impetus for Post Pandemic Economic Revival, 2021). Due to their prevalence in vital industries like banking, insurance, energy, water, ports, transportation, aviation, and construction, state-owned enterprises (SOEs) constitute a significant portion of the Sri Lankan economy. The 52 key SOEs employed over 10% of all public sector workers in 2019, and their asset base grew by 16.6% year over year (YoY) in 2020 (MOF, 2020). The subpar financial performance of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) has resulted in a substantial fiscal burden and noteworthy macroeconomic ramifications, notwithstanding their crucial role in the economy across vital sectors. In addition to crowding out profitable investments, SOEs' heavy reliance on the banking system to cover their losses has made the financial system susceptible to their poor financial performance. Figures 1, 2 and 3 project the profits/losses and the outstanding credit from the banking sector of the Ceylon Electricity Board, Ceylon Petroleum Corporation, and Sri Lanka Airlines.

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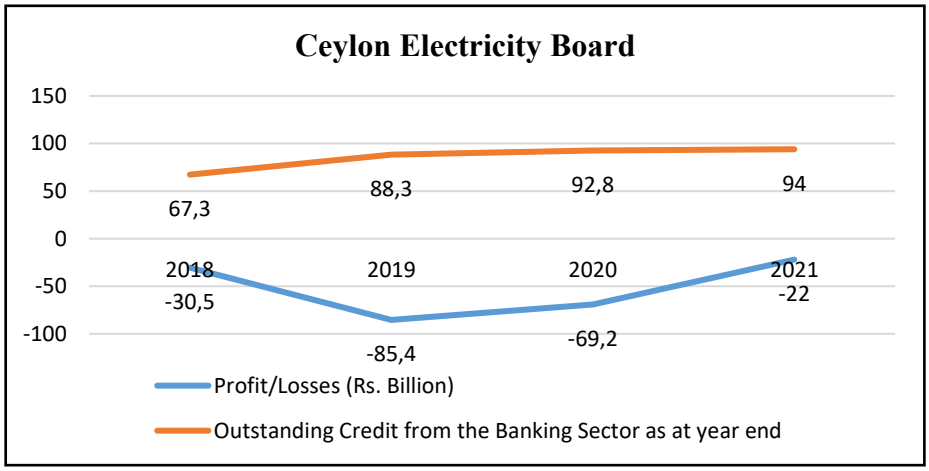
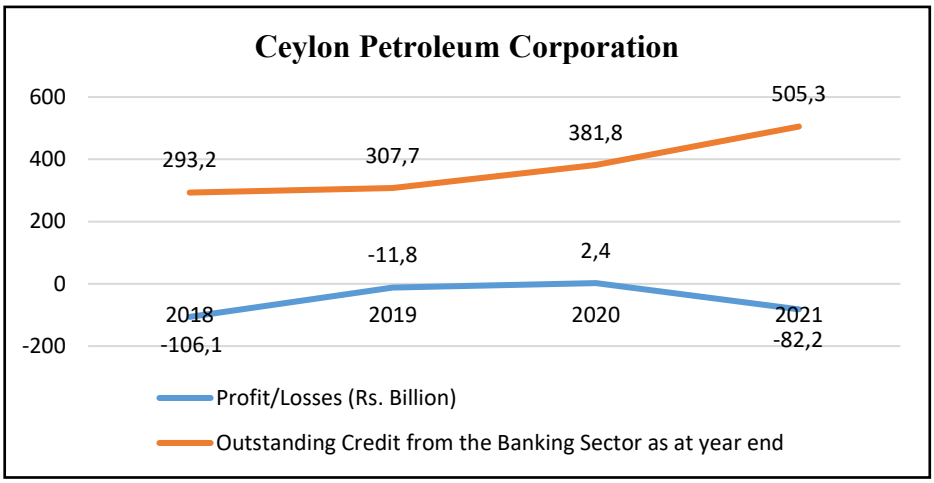
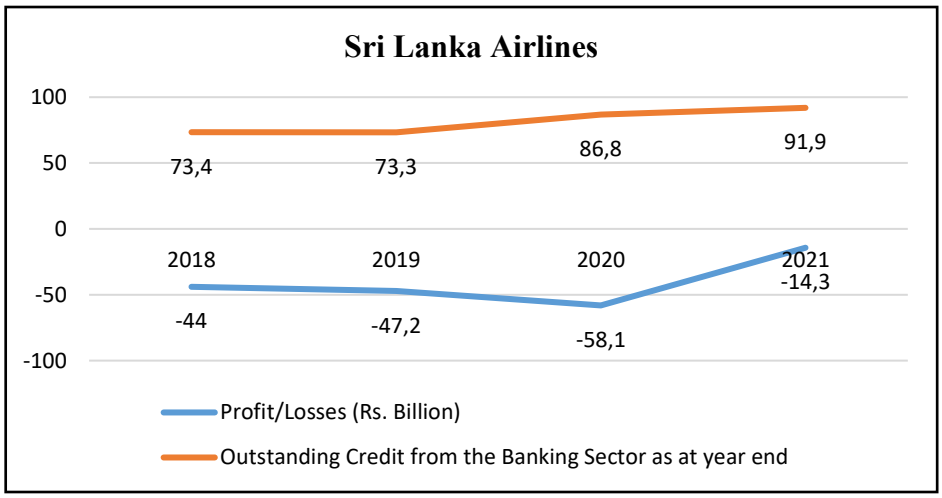
Figure 1: Comparison of Profits/ Losses and Credit Obtained from the Banking Sector for Selected SOEs – (Rs. Billions)







Source: Annual Report 2021, Central Bank of Sri Lanka

Considering the continuous losses of most of the SOEs in Sri Lanka, a huge public discussion emerged, empathizing with the necessity of reforming SOEs. Furthermore, the Auditor General's and the Committee on Public Enterprise (COPE)'s reports have detailed numerous examples of carelessness, corruption, fraud, and poor management (Advocate, 2019). The problems were deeper, systemic flaws rather than isolated instances of people acting opportunistically or infrequently losing control. As a result of that, when the Sri Lankan government requested assistance from the International Monetary Fund for the 17th bailout package, reforming SOEs became a major policy objective. The 17th IMF assistance program is expected to address the debt overhangs of SOEs and improve their governance.

Reforming SOEs: International Experiences

In Singapore, the investment holding company Temasek has experienced significant success. It was founded in 1974 to own and manage investments and assets the Singaporean government previously owned. Due to a dearth of unprocessed natural resources, Singapore launched a vigorous industrialization and economic development program after gaining independence in 1965. Temasek was created to relieve relevant ministries of the commercial management of these businesses in which the government held a majority stake, as the government launched startups in several important industries. The government's reluctance to get involved in investment decisions has likely contributed to Temasek's success in enhancing the corporate governance of its invested companies rather than imposing stringent legislative requirements (Chen, 2016).

From the 1970s, market-oriented economic reforms that sought to open the Chinese economy to foreign trade have led to several reforms affecting China's state-owned enterprises (SOEs). To finance and oversee SOEs, the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC) was founded in 2003. China started concentrating on large-scale SOE mergers and expanding mixed ownership programs in 2013. China's SOE reform program aims to make SOEs "stronger, better, and bigger" (Guluzade, 2020). SOE reforms have supported China's economic growth in two ways: First, the shift to SOEs has allowed for the birth and flourishing of private firms and enterprises with alternative ownership structures by creating the required space and conditions. Second, the SOEs' efficiency and competitiveness have increased due to this shift, contributing to a notable increase in their output. This has allowed SOEs—especially the larger ones—to keep a sizable portion of the economy (Ligang, 2018).

In response to the problem of inefficient SOEs, India has adopted a disinvestment strategy in recent years. This has required transferring management control and selling a sizeable chunk of the

government's stake in businesses. According to Fortune Global 500, India has the second-highest state-owned enterprises (SOEs) after China. The Privatization of Air India, with the government of India getting roughly US$360 million in equity and a private company taking over US$2 billion in debt, is a recent step in its reform plan (Kim & Panchanatham, 2019). Concerning infrastructure and human capital, where the government has a clear role to play, India's recently announced privatization strategy could help shift the balance sheet composition of the public sector toward high-return public sector investments, freeing up commercially viable companies for the private sector. (Agarwal, 2022).

Ongoing policy measures to reform Sri Lanka's SOEs

Several types of SOE reform can be utilized for the Sri Lankan context, considering the potential benefits they can generate. Corporatization, Corporate restructuring, Commercialization, Public-private partnership, and Privatization are those possible ways (Athukorala et al., 2017). Corporatization makes a conscious effort to keep political and economic factors apart. Corporate restructuring is known as reorganizing an entity's ownership, legal, operational, or other structures to improve its current state of organization or increase profitability. Commercialization aims to restructure the SOE into a profitable business enterprise without government funding. In order to increase the SOE's financial viability, financial restructuring goes hand in hand with it. A public-private partnership is a long-term agreement wherein a private company and a government organization work together to provide a public good or service.

The Sri Lankan government aims to adopt these types of reforms where necessary. According to the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, four identified major SOE reforms include introducing cost-reflective pricing policies, improving strategic direction, enhancing financial transparency and accountability, and strengthening corporate governance (CBSL, Anual Report, 2021). After requesting assistance from the IMF for the 17th bailout program, the Sri Lankan government agreed to implement specific reforming measures to mitigate fiscal risks arising from the energy SOEs and implement structural reforms to make SOEs financially viable (IMF, 2023).

Retail fuel prices were hiked several times in early 2022 to reach cost-recovery levels, passing on to customers the sharp increase in fuel prices worldwide and the significant depreciation of the rupee. Furthermore, the Cabinet authorized the inclusion of further private sector firms in the downstream petroleum industry in June 2022. Three businesses received retail gasoline permits from the Ministry of Power and Energy due to this decision: Sinopec, a Chinese company; United Petroleum, an Australian company; and RM Parks, an American company that partners with Shell (Newswire, 2023). This action was made to increase competition in the petrol market and enhance the fuel supply

because Sri Lanka needed to set the price of fuel using an established formula regularly. Consequently, on November 21, 2022, the government approved the fuel pricing formula that was introduced in 2018. Furthermore, audited financial statements of several major SOEs for 2021 were published, including CPC (IMF, 2023).

Sri Lanka expects to introduce legislative reforms, making the Minister of Power and Energy responsible for implementing cost-recovery-based fuel and electricity price adjustments by 2024. Along with energy pricing reforms in Sri Lanka, SOE reforms intended by the IMF assistance program are expected to achieve the following:

(i) Cabinet approved a comprehensive strategy to restructure the CPC, CEB, the Road Development Authority, and Sri Lankan Airlines balance sheets by June 2023.

(ii) Prompt publication of audited financial statements for all 52 major SOEs.

(iii) Prohibition of new foreign exchange borrowing by nonfinancial SOEs with limited foreign exchange revenues. In addition, the authorities should commit to further strengthening SOE governance by clarifying key SOE mandates through Statements of Corporate Intent and reviewing the framework for selecting SOE board members (IMF, 2023).

Moreover, The State-Owned Enterprise Restructuring Unit (SRU), a division of the Ministry of Finance, Economic Stabilization and National Policies (MoF), was established by GOSL to carry out SOE reforms. The March 13, 2023, Cabinet resolution requires the SRU to divest a certain SOE group. The SRU looks to designate reputable, competent, and experienced firms to offer transaction consulting services to help with such divestments. The International Finance Corporation (IFC) has been appointed Transaction Advisors for The Lanka Hospitals Corporation PLC, Sri Lankan Air Lines Ltd, and Sri Lanka Telecom PLC (MOF, 2023).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the economic challenges faced by Sri Lanka, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, have underscored the urgent need for comprehensive reforms in State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs). The country's economic downturn, marked by a sharp decline in GDP and unsustainable debt levels, prompted a request for assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The 17th IMF program, focusing on fiscal consolidation and restructuring, identified SOEs as a key element in the economic recovery strategy.

The historical context of SOEs in Sri Lanka reveals a pattern of inefficiencies, operational challenges, and financial burdens, necessitating a shift in policy. International experiences, such as those in Singapore, China, and India, offer valuable insights into successful SOE reforms. These examples demonstrate the importance of corporate governance, disinvestment strategies, and public-private partnerships in enhancing SOE performance.

Current policy measures in Sri Lanka emphasize reforms such as corporatization, restructuring, commercialization, and public-private partnerships. The government aims to address cost-effective pricing policies, strategic direction, financial transparency, and corporate governance issues. The recent hikes in fuel prices and the inclusion of private sector firms in the petroleum industry are steps toward creating a competitive market.

As Sri Lanka moves forward, implementing the proposed reforms, as outlined in the IMF assistance program, will be crucial. Timely publication of audited financial statements, comprehensive restructuring of major SOEs, and governance enhancements are expected outcomes. The establishment of the State-Owned Enterprise Restructuring Unit (SRU) reflects a commitment to effective implementation, with international support from entities like the International Finance Corporation (IFC). In conclusion, the path to economic recovery in Sri Lanka hinges on the successful transformation of SOEs, ensuring financial viability, transparency, and sustainable growth.

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Was There Any Greed After All? The Lack of Greedflation Evidence in Greek Economic Data[1]

Ioannis Krompas[2]

Abstract

As Greece has been experiencing a 9.6% inflation in 2022 and 4.2% in 2023, a policy narrative has risen claiming that corporate profits are to blame for the price hikes. However, Greek economic data indicate that when precisely defined, corporate unit profits are within their usual range. Furthermore, publicly available data indicate that corporate mark-ups (price-to-cost ratios) are relatively stable and primarily driven by the increases in costs of goods sold, with a mild increase being attributed to temporary business support measures in force in 2021. In addition, there is the overlooked demand-side component of inflation, contributing up to 50% in price increases between 2021 and 2022, fueled by the country's fiscal responses to the crises of COVID-19 and the energy crisis of 2021-2022, both of which were among the largest in the world relative to GDP. On top of that, spending of the funds available under the RRF, with Greece once again spending the most in the E.U. relative to its GDP, further contributes to the inflationary pressures. As a result, it is imperative that any government financial support against increasing prices must be better targeted to not work as an income boost, fueling demand side inflation, and that the RRF plan be quickly implemented to lower prices by increasing the country's productivity, rather than providing widespread income support in the hope of lowering mark-ups and prices only by enforcing competition regulations, which may bring opposite results than those intended.

Keywords: Greedflation, Corporate Profits, Mark-ups, Inflation, Greece.

Introduction

Defined as an increase in the general level of prices by corporations over that which would be justified by rising costs of production, Greedflation is a controversial theory popularized during the ongoing post-COVID-19 inflationary cycle. Under this theory, corporations take advantage of the rising inflation and their market power, to excessively increase prices and subsequently their profit margins at the consumers' expense, creating further inflationary pressures in the process. While ECB has admitted to be monitoring profit margin levels (ECB, 2023), in Greece it was the Hellenic Parliamentary Budget Office's (HPBO) report (Kountetakis et al., 2023), that started the policy debate about greedflation, by referencing the work of Hansen et al. (2023), who by decomposing the Euro Area's GDP deflator, found that 45% of its growth between 2022:Q1 and 2023:Q1 can be attributed to higher domestic profits (with another 40% being attributed to increases in import prices and the remaining 15% to wage increases).

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Indeed, the release of the HPBO's report in July 2023, sparked a hot policy debate regarding the extent of the role of profit margins in shaping prices, as later on Bank of Greece's Governor called corporations in specific sectors (such as energy and food) to limit their profit margins (Stournaras, 2023), with heads of several other policy institutions and academics stating that there is some sort of profit-driven inflation caused, for example, by the lack of market competition (Liargovas, 2023), the concentration of market power to international conglomerates (Baltas, 2023) or by the corporation's unwillingness to lower prices despite falling costs (Petrakis, 2023).

Against this background and given that the inflation averaged at 4.2% during the first half of 2023 (vs 9.6% during 2022 and 3.1% during 2021:H2, when inflationary pressures started) (Elstat, 2023), in this paper it is examined whether or not firms illicitly boosted their profit margins and hence their profitability under the pretense of cost-driven inflation. Policy implications from confirming excessive increases in corporate profit margins are significant as it means that the focus must shift away from monetary and fiscal policy to imposing competition regulations and limiting abuses of market power.

The rest of the paper is based on Hahn (2023), whose work provides a blueprint for analyzing the relationship between corporate profits and inflation. More specifically, section 2 examines corporate profit developments in national accounts, thus approaching the issue from a macroeconomic perspective. Section 3 analyzes corporate pricing strategies as evidenced by company mark-ups (approaching corporate profitability in a microeconomic setting). Section 4 focuses on the contribution of demand-side factors to inflationary pressures. Lastly, the remainder of the paper discusses the findings and the policy implications that arise from them.

Corporate profits from a macroeconomic perspective

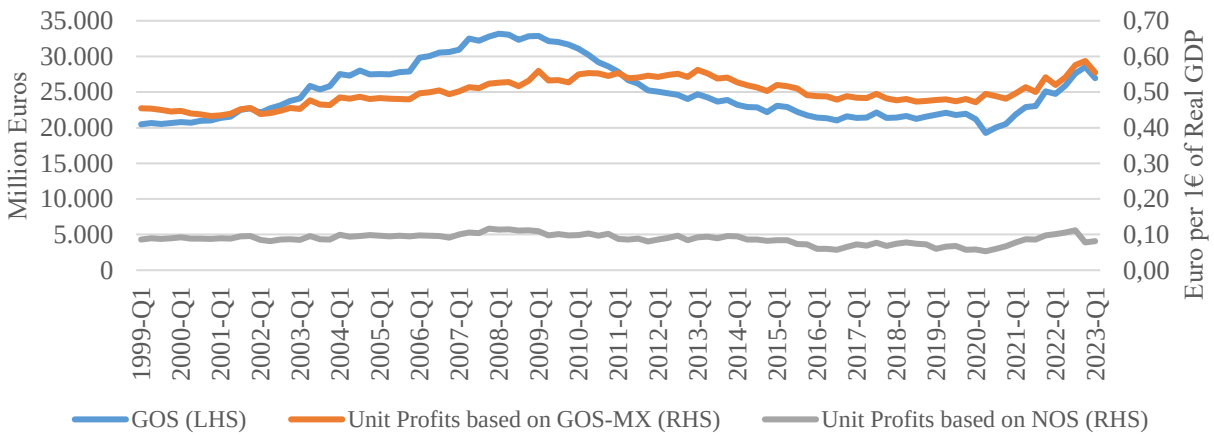
In the work of Hansen et al. (2023) the authors estimate the unit profits of corporations by dividing the Gross Operating Surplus and Mixed Income (GOS-MX)[3] with real Gross Domestic Product (GDP), this helps examine the profitability of the corporate sector regardless of the level of economic activity. Furthermore, as GOS-MX is a subcomponent of GDP from the income side (along with Wages and Salaries and Net Taxes), and the division of nominal with real GDP is the GDP deflator

[3] Eurostat defines Gross Operating Surplus and mixed income as "the surplus (or deficit) on production activities before account has been taken of the interest, rents or charges paid or received for the use of assets. Mixed income is the remuneration for the work carried out by the owner (or by members of his family) of an unincorporated enterprise. This is referred to as 'mixed income' since it cannot be distinguished from the entrepreneurial profit of the owner." (Eurostat, 2023)

(which captures inflation in a national account setting), unit profits also show the percentage of the excess nominal value per unit of volume output that is absorbed by corporations.

Using this approach to determine inflation contributions of the Greek business sector, however, comes with some serious caveats. First of all, the Greek business sector is comprised to a larger extent of sole proprietors and unincorporated enterprises compared to other countries of the European Union. Furthermore, the greatest share of housing stock belongs to households rather than real estate businesses, thus most of the rent income is not reported as corporate profit but rather as non-wage household income, and given that rents have increased 23% since 2019 (SPI, 2023) and the inelastic nature of the housing market, this has most likely resulted in increased income from rents for households. These characteristics of the Greek business economy mean that a greater share of GOS-MX is reported under Mixed Income rather than Gross Operating Surplus, which blurs the image of developments in corporate profits. This is important as it is corporations who have the market power to impose higher prices and higher profit margins, increasing inflation in the process under the "greedflation hypothesis". Micro enterprises and sole proprietors due to their large number and small size can safely assumed to be price takers. On top of these, Gross Operating Surplus includes the consumption of fixed capital[4], which usually constitutes a cost for businesses. To avoid all these problems, it is preferable to examine the Net Operating Surplus of Non-Financial Corporations (NOS) as a proxy for corporate profits, which, divided by the real GDP, yields the corresponding unit profits. Figure 1 shows developments in GOS-MX, unit profits based on GOS-MX, and unit profits based on NOS:

Figure 1: Greek Business sector profits and unit profits



Sources: Elstat (2023) and author's calculations.

[4]Eurostat defines consumption of fixed capital as the "decline of fixed capital in value due to normal wear and tear, foreseeable ageing (obsolescence) and a normal rate of accidental damage" (Eurostat, 2017).

Both overall GOS-MX and unit profits based on GOS-MX have been on the rise since 2021:Q2 and peak in 2022:Q2, most likely due to windfall profits of energy corporations[5], as wholesale energy prices had also peaked during that quarter.

On the other hand, unit profits based on NOS, which historically account only for c. 18% of unit profits based on GOS, have also increased, but only back to their 2014-2015 levels and in 2023:Q1 stand at the same level as their 10-year average (whereas unit profits based on GOS insofar 2023 stand 8% higher than their respective 10-year average). It is thus evident that no excessive profiting is taking place, at least in a national account setting, where only final goods and services are considered. To examine corporations providing both final and intermediate goods and services, one must turn to corporate accounts data.

Greek corporate pricing strategy in the post-pandemic inflationary environment

To examine whether the extent of price increases is analogous to the cost businesses face or whether businesses take advantage of the situation by increasing prices extensively, one should examine businesses' mark-ups. Mark-up is defined as price over marginal cost but given the fact that marginal costs are difficult to estimate, the average cost is often used. The ratio of price and average cost can be estimated by the ratio of turnover over total cost (as turnover and total cost are price and average cost times quantity respectively). Overall, there are three possible scenarios when a firm raises its prices in response to an increase in its average cost:

1. **1-to-1 pass-through:** A firm can increase its prices by 1€ for every euro of average cost increase. This way, mark-ups as a ratio are suppressed and the company while retains the same profit per unit sold, it does so in nominal terms, as profits are not adjusted for inflation.
2. **Same percentage increase:** A firm can increase its prices by the same percentage its average cost is increased. This way the mark-up remains constant, and the company protects its profits against inflation, as nominal profits are increased by the same percentage as inflation (under the assumption that inflation is in its entirety cost-driven).
3. **Excessive price increase:** A firm's price increases outpace that of the average cost in percentage terms. This way mark-ups increase and profits per unit sold increase more than inflation (under the assumption that inflation is in its entirety cost-driven)[6].

[5] Up to 90% of which were later taxed away in accordance with E.U.'s and Greek Government's decisions to offset the effects of the energy crisis (Enache, 2023).
[6] Firms may also increase prices in anticipation for higher costs in the near future. Mark-ups may also temporarily increase as firms may be reluctant to lower prices in the face of falling costs, if they anticipate that this cost reduction is temporary.

If the greedflation hypothesis holds, the majority of firms, across sectors, should have significantly increased mark-ups adding to the inflationary pressures. Table 1 presents developments in turnover and total cost for all business sectors in 2021 (vs 2019)[7].

Table 1: Greek Business Sector mark-up developments in 2021 (vs 2019)

	Turnover	Total Cost	COGS	OPEX & Financial costs
Agriculture	25%	19%	20%	7%
Mining-quarrying	3%	-9%	0%	-26%
Manufacturing	17%	16%	17%	10%
Energy-water	44%	14%	40%	-60%
Construction	17%	14%	10%	32%
Trade	14%	12%	13%	4%
Tourism	-13%	-18%	-13%	-26%
Transport-ICT	-2%	2%	3%	1%
Other Services	10%	5%	9%	-5%
Total	**15%**	**12%**	**15%**	**-4%**

Sources: ICAP CRIF (2023, 2022), author's calculations

Putting aside sectoral variations, business sector turnover in 2021 grew 15% (vs 2019), whereas total costs increased by 12% (vs 2019), implying a markup increase of 3%. However, by decomposing the total cost into the cost of goods sold (COGS) and operating expenses (OPEX) and financial costs it is found that turnover grew by the same amount as COGS (which captures the costs of raw materials and other inputs). On the other hand, operating expenses and financial costs, which include wages and other business day-to-day costs, interest payments, and other financial obligations, declined by 4%. Given that, in 2021 unemployment declined -3.1% vs 2019 (ELSTAT, 2023) and total wage expenditure increased 2.5% in 2021 vs 2019 (ELSTAT, 2023), operating and financial obligations should have been increased. However, as 2021 was a year influenced by lockdowns and the pandemic, the decline in OPEX and financial costs likely reflects the business support measures that were in force at the time. Those measures included deferring social security contributions, postponing loan payments, and energy subsidies in an attempt to "jumpstart" the economy, and as so, they were temporary in nature, thus it is logical that firms did not incorporate them in their pricing strategy.

[7] 2020 is excluded as an abnormal year due to COVID-19 related lockdowns, 2019 also serves well as a base year as then prices were relatively stable. 2022 data were not publicly available at the time of writing of this policy brief.

Mark-ups can be expected to have slightly deteriorated in 2022 and 2023 given that support measures were gradually rolled back, and regulations were introduced requiring key consumer and raw material providers to keep stable their gross profit margins (Laws 4818/2021 and 5045/2023).

Demand-side inflationary pressures

So far, the analysis has been considering supply-side contributions to inflation, but in economics, an outcome is rarely a result of only one effect. More specifically, it has been shown that demand-side factors accounted for 30% up to 50% of inflation between 2021:Q1 and 2022:Q3 (Bank of Greece, 2022). The strong momentum of demand is also evidenced in the upward trends of both household consumption in volume terms, which grew by 4% y-o-y in 2023:H1, following an 8% y-o-y increase in 2022 (ELSTAT, 2023) and household savings (+4.5% y-o-y in 2023:H1 vs +4.6% in 2022) (Bank of Greece, 2023), indicating that households increase their consumption and manage to keep money on the side, despite the increasing prices.

Apart from the economic recovery of the last years, it is the current fiscal policy that heavily influences these demand developments and their subsequent contribution to inflationary pressures. More specifically:

1. Greece's COVID-19 support (either in the form of spending or in deferred/foregone revenues) amounted to 28% of the 2019 GDP (IMF, 2021), this enabled both firms and households not only to stay afloat during the pandemic but to hoard savings which they would later spend, creating excess demand in the process.
2. In the aftermath of the pandemic, during the energy crisis of 2021-2022, Greece once again deployed one of the largest fiscal support measures among OECD countries to offset energy price increases (6.3% of GDP). Furthermore, 80.6% of those measures did not target specifically the most vulnerable households but were rather untargeted (OECD, 2023). This lack of targeting led energy support measures to act as an income boost for better-off households.
3. Greece is the largest recipient of funds from the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) compared to the size of its economy (20% of 2021 GDP[8]). As the available funds are channeled into the economy, inflationary pressures are to be expected. In fact, simulations run by the Bank of Greece indicated that RRF spending would indeed create inflationary pressures in the short run, which will eventually be counter-balanced by longer-term

[8] Including the RepowerEU chapter subsidies and extra €5bn. in loans requested from the EU Commission in the Greece 2.0 RRF plan modification in August 2023 (European Commission, 2023).

deflationary pressures, caused by the increase in productivity induced by the RRF plan (Malliaropoulos et al., 2021).

Government spending has been excessive between 2020 and 2023 as other policy objectives (such as surviving COVID-19 lockdowns, enduring energy price spikes, and implementing the Greece 2.0 plan) were prioritized over price stability. Nonetheless, the size of government spending and the robust increases in real consumption and savings, indicate that indeed there is a demand-side boost in inflation. If the greedflation hypothesis held, and increased corporate profit margins drove price increases, then inflation should be combined, at least to some extent, with a slowdown in consumption and possibly a decline in household savings, as companies would take advantage of excessive market power to increase prices and in products with inelastic demand.

Conclusions

In the previous sections, it was shown that corporate unit profits are in line with their historic levels when precisely defined and that markups are broadly stable (up to the period that available data exist), showing only a small increase which can reasonably be attributed to the temporary support measures at force in 2021. Therefore, price increases from the supply side of the economy are most likely fueled by increases in the costs of goods sold, which can be attributed to factors such as the lower availability of supply - for example in agriculture, where crop output was in decline in 2022 (Eurostat, 2023) - and the increasing number of trade-restricting interventions globally, which have nearly quadrupled since 2019, impacting the cost of international trade for a number of commodities (IMF, 2023). Demand side effects are also found to play a significant role in price increases. As a result, there is no indication that there are excessive profits at an economy-wide level, fueled by excessive price increases, that could lead to characterizing inflation as profit-driven.

These findings raise significant policy issues, as the debate around the “greedflation hypothesis” persists. More specifically, should the narrative of greedflation be adopted as an explanation for price developments:

1. The government may be misled (or provided with an alibi) to keep providing households and businesses with financial support against rising prices, to ease both political pressure and social unrest, in the hope that competition authorities will enforce market regulations and lower mark-ups, while, in reality, what the government will be doing is fueling demand-driven inflation.

2. Households, under the impression that corporations reap unusually high profits would demand further financial support from the government and press for wage increases, potentially causing an inflationary spiral.
3. Corporations, seeing that profit margins are overregulated, and a possible increase in their costs may not be able to be accommodated by an increase in prices may lower their investment appetite or willingness to enter the Greek market, in the face of this increase in uncertainty. As a result, neither productivity nor competition in the economy will improve, both of which contribute to lower prices.

It is, therefore, important for economic policy advisors and policymakers to take into consideration the full range of available data before conducting policy, as they are in danger of producing the opposite outcomes than the ones desired. For example, better targeting of financial aid to households and businesses is necessary along an as quick as possible implementation of the RRF plan, which are necessary first steps for easing inflationary pressures.

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Comparative Analysis of Debt Restructuring Strategies in Developing Economies: A Case Study of Ghana, Zambia, and Sri Lanka[1]

Dilmini Hasintha Abeyrathne[2] & Tharindu Udayanga Kamburawala[3]

Abstract

The issue of global debt distress is a matter of great concern, not just for the affected developing countries but also for developed countries and international organisations. According to the United Nations Development Program (2022), 54 developing economies are currently grappling with severe debt problems. During the period of 2020 to 2022 Ghana, Zambia, and Sri Lanka, representing the African and Asian regions, have found themselves in dire financial straits. This study aims to discover the common and specific reasons that led to the mounting debt crises in these three countries. The study describes the tax revenue challenges and governance issues, middle income trap and China's role in debt restructuring discussions as common challenges apart from country specific challenges. Timely discussions with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and expedited agreements with creditors, and updated debt restructuring mechanisms are drawn to attention in this study.

Keywords: developing countries, developed countries, debt distress, debt restructuring, IMF.

Introduction

A least 54 developing economies are suffering from severe debt problems. Together they represent little more than 3% of global GDP but 18% of the global population, more than 50% of people living in extreme poverty, and 28 of the world's top-50 most climate vulnerable countries. Much in line with the history of debt relief, efforts have still not caught up to the seriousness of the unfolding debt crisis (United Nations Development Program, 2022). Debt challenges in low-income countries are far from where they were in the 1990s before the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, both in terms of debt levels and accumulation of arrears. However, they have been on the rise for the last decade, in a context of low interest rates, high investment needs, limited progress in domestic revenue mobilization, and often constrained public financial management capacity. They have been further aggravated by the COVID-19 crisis and now by the fallout of the war in Ukraine (International Monetary Fund, 2022).

Common Challenges in Ghana, Zambia, and Sri Lanka

The debt crises in Ghana, Sri Lanka, and Zambia share a common theme of policy mismanagement that has given rise to structural imbalances in their respective economies. While each of these

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countries faced unique challenges—Sri Lanka with excessive money printing and disruptive agricultural policies, Ghana with impractical election promises, and Zambia with allowances for specific employment and climate vulnerabilities—the underlying problems were not unique to these cases. These nations have grappled with inadequately structured tax systems, the middle-income trap, and the challenges of restructuring bilateral debt with China. The following Table 01 summarises the reasons for debt crises in the three countries.

Table 1: Summary of Debt Crises in Ghana, Zambia and Sri Lanka

Country	Ghana	Zambia	Sri Lanka
Total External Debt US$ (Billion)	29.1 (By Dec 2022)	26.6 (By Dec 2020)	49.6 (By Dec 2022)
External Debt as a % of GDP	42.4% (2022)	72.9% (2020)	74.7% (2022)
Date of Default	December 2022	June 2020	April 2022
Date of IMF Grant	May 2023	August 2022	March 2023
IMF Agreement	US$3 billion Extended Credit Facility 36 Months	US$1.3 billion Extended Credit Facility 38 Months	US$3 billion Extended Fund Facility 48 Months
Country specific reasons for debt crisis	Increasingly unconstrained domestic financing	Higher rates of poverty, adverse climate changes, inefficient public investment drive	Protracted twin deficit, excessive money printing
Common reasons for debt crisis	Low economic growth rate, losing investor and lender confidence, local currency depreciation, depleted international reserves, policy missteps, COVID-19, Ukraine-Russia war		
IMF Restructuring deal	Started restructuring domestic debt before the IMF assistance was granted.	Restoring sustainability through fiscal adjustment and debt restructuring	Restructure both domestic and foreign debt.
Specific terms	The ECF program aims to restore macroeconomic stability, ensure debt sustainability, and lay the foundations for higher and more inclusive growth.	creating room in the budget for much-needed social spending. Strengthening governance and reducing the risk of corruption, including by improving public financial management.	Foreign debt excludes multilateral debt.
Common terms	Focus on structural reforms and prior actions if needed under ECF and EFF schemes.		

Source: International Monetary Fund (2023), Central Bank Annual Report (2022), External Resource Department of Sri Lanka (2023)

Specific Challenges

Besides the common reasons including lack of foreign reserves, domestic currency depreciation and policy missteps, country specific reasons have worsened the debt crises by leading to negative impacts on the economies. Initiatives like Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) available to lower income countries like Zambia signal the timely requirement of proper mechanisms to address the global debt distress among the developing nations especially remaining in the middle-income category.

The composition of Sri Lanka's sovereign debt has recorded a notable rise in both domestic and foreign debt, particularly during the period from 2020 to 2022. Several inherent weaknesses of the economy, further exacerbated by policy lapses, steered the country towards a multifaceted disaster. Ill-timed tax reductions, an ill-equipped attempt to swiftly adopt organic agriculture, the depletion of the country's official reserves amidst futile attempts to maintain an untarnished debt servicing record, the delay in the exchange rate adjustment, and the failure to pay heed to several early warning signals caused tremendous shockwaves across the economy (Central Bank Annual Report, 2022).

The financial mismanagement and unrealistic political pledges of tax breaks and subsidies in Ghana hastened the country's economic collapse. The main tax reforms were the elimination of the financial services, import tariffs, and real estate VAT/NHIL, as well as the tax reductions on the national electrification programme, public lighting fee, and special petroleum tax rate. According to Donkor (2023), when Ghana decided to make high school education (including boarding) completely free, reinstate allowances for nursing and teacher trainees, eliminate several taxes enacted by the previous government, and construct a factory in each of the country's 261 districts, these impractical political promises that were made solely to win the elections and remain in power to enrich them had a significant negative impact on the economy.

Although the circumstances were significantly different in Zambia, fiscal imbalances also increased the pressure on debt. Zambia encountered economic shocks from climatic vulnerabilities and restored allowances for certain employment-related benefits, which put more strain on the national economy. All three case studies experienced the same outcomes: the inability to pay down foreign debt in foreign currencies made it necessary for these countries to rely on private credit markets in order to get foreign exchange for debt servicing and necessary imports, which eventually compounded and resulted in sovereign defaults. Akiwumi (2022) pointed out that as a low-income country grappling with mounting debt over decades, Zambia faced economic contractions due to its strong reliance on export earnings, falling copper prices and continuous lending from abroad. Zambia faces significant development challenges exacerbated by climate vulnerabilities, which have created a difficult dichotomy for policymakers. The government's growth strategy has focused on export-led growth from commodities, which relies on foreign exchange revenue from volatile international markets. When prices fall, foreign exchange revenues fall, putting pressure on servicing external debt. With the start of the debt distress, foreign lenders refused desperate pleas from Zambia to suspend interest payments, even for a few months, draining Zambia's foreign cash reserves and finally leaving no option for Zambia, but to default.

IMF Financial Assistance

All three countries consulted the IMF as the last resort to their debt crises, and the IMF showed willingness to offer support under certain conditions. Due to their lower-middle-income status, Ghana and Sri Lanka were treated differently from the low-income country, Zambia. Ghana and Sri Lanka had to agree to restructure their domestic debt before receiving financial assistance, while Zambia had the opportunity to ignore domestic debt restructuring.

Ghana received a US$3 billion Extended Credit Facility (ECF), Sri Lanka a US$3 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF), and Zambia a US$1.3 billion ECF. Zambia stood out as the only nation among the three to benefit from the HIPC initiative, which enabled the restructuring of debts with senior creditors (multilateral creditors) such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. This safeguarded their development goals from being compromised by unsustainable debt and gave access to more robust forms of debt relief. This stark difference marks the 'middle-income trap' as part of the ongoing global debt crisis, as debt-distressed countries requiring additional concessional financing are predominantly of middle-income status, highlighting the need for better mechanisms to address debt distress beyond the traditional measures. Wijewardena (2018) explained that as a lower middle-income country, Sri Lanka lost its access to concessional financing and was stuck in the middle-income trap since it was elevated to the World Bank's middle-income level in 1997.

The Role of China in Debt Restructuring Negotiations

Following a more than decade-long boom in overseas lending and investment, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has come under pressure, as many recipient (debtor) countries in the developing world experience financial distress. It has already been documented that Chinese state creditors have responded to this crisis by reducing new overseas lending flows to the Global South and by negotiating dozens of sovereign debt restructurings (Horn et al., 2023). According to IMF statistics, China accounted for around 17.6% of Zambia's external debt, and while in Ghana this is only 3%, this debt is collateralized against natural resources such as cocoa, bauxite, and oil. China is Sri Lanka's largest bilateral creditor, to whom Sri Lanka owes around 45% of its bilateral debt by 2022. Because China is such a major bilateral creditor and faces its own domestic debt pressures, this created additional challenges when restructuring debt as part of Sri Lanka's IMF agreement.

Debt servicing payments comprise a significant source of China's government revenue due to its status as a major global bilateral creditor. Hence, China is cautious not to set a precedent for generous and straightforward debt restructuring, as this may open the door to serial defaults on bilateral debts through the Belt and Road Initiative, further exacerbating economic pressures. Considering these

issues, as a strategic creditor with less preference for losses, China typically prefers lengthy extensions on debt repayments and resists any reductions in the outstanding principal.

This was the experience of Zambia, who agreed a deal with The Export-Import Bank (Exim) of China agreed to reduce the coupon on its US$4 billion in recognized official claims to 1% for the remainder of Zambia's IMF program. The Zambian agreement with China is to pay interest rates as low as 1% until 2037 and push out maturities on US$6.3 billion in bilateral debt to 2043, representing an average extension of more than 12 years.

After Presidential level discussions, Sri Lanka has confirmed that it has reached a deal with China, regarding US$4.2 billion of debt and it is a positive sign for the second IMF tranche receipt which will help settling arrears owed to multilateral creditors while expediting the debt restructuring process. This may give reassurances to Ghana, who are yet to finalise a debt restructuring deal with China, as it aims for a flexible and cordial response from creditors with the support of the IMF. However, the difficulties faced by Ghana, Zambia, and Sri Lanka when restructuring their bilateral debt with China may ward off other potential defaults in the developing world.

Possible Solutions

Both Sri Lanka and Ghana as lower middle-income countries defaulted before the debt restructuring process. Developing countries defaulting before initiating the debt restructuring process show relatively higher losses for investors and suggest that reaching out to the IMF before a default is crucial to prevent rejection by potential lenders. This situation should serve as a wake-up call for the World Bank, IMF, and other multilateral organisations to evolve mechanisms that address this unprecedented debt crisis and promote better initiatives for economic development. Without effective debt restructuring, relief, or forgiveness, middle-income debtor nations risk falling into a debt trap where economic policies focus solely on servicing unproductive debt repayments to creditors and propping up an unfair global financial system.

As previously indicated, the HIPC is a programme that is only available to low-income nations in order to protect them from unmanageable debt impeding their ability to develop. But medium-income nations, who are trapped in a "middle income trap" with little recourse to concessional financing because of antiquated, arbitrary income classification, are the main players in the current global debt crisis. Under the HIPC, countries can access significantly more lenient restructuring circumstances and receive 100% debt forgiveness. Therefore, these economies might have the right to restructure their debt in order to pay off senior creditors, or multilateral lenders, including the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. However, because they are lower middle-income nations, Ghana and Sri

Lanka are not qualified to restructure their debts to senior creditors. One of China's primary defences against the postponement of common creditor discussions is the restructuring of the debts owing to senior creditors.

The amount of opportunity cost that emerging nations must bear is another significant obstacle brought on by the ongoing debt crisis. Not only does Sri Lanka spend a large portion of its public revenue on servicing its external debt, but it also forgoes expenditure on infrastructure, healthcare, education, and other vital public services that help to reduce poverty and advance economic development. It is imperative that creditors acknowledge and tackle the opportunity cost associated with debt servicing. The government of Zambia managed to negotiate a payment of only US$750 million instead of the initial US$6.3 billion. By lowering debt commitments, Zambia is able to allocate more funds to other development initiatives and encourage sustainable growth, which would strengthen the country's economy and make it better capable of handling debt in the medium and long terms. This was further enhanced by US$188.8 million in funding from the World Bank and US$75 million from the IMF to implement new development projects in Zambia. In the Sri Lankan context, IMF conditionalities influence changes to institutional structures, job opportunities, salaries, tax subsidies, etc. Hence, the Sri Lankan government and the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) need to ensure that the transparency and accountability of the IMF program are maintained throughout the procedure and that the maximum level of relief is gained through adjustments to the principal and interest rates during the restructuring process.

Prolonged debt restructuring procedures have resulted in rising debt loads over time, as seen in nations like Zambia. Sri Lanka must move quickly and proactively in its interactions with its creditors in order to avoid incurring further financial losses. In order to protect the country's financial stability and minimise any potential negative economic effects from prolonged debt restructuring, prompt consultations are essential. Being a big creditor to developing nations like Sri Lanka, China has a big part to play. Comprehensive debt restructuring is required to provide governments with the financial room they need to pay down their debt on long-term infrastructure projects, while also making sure they can finance public sector institutions, social spending, and development projects that are vital to the recovery of the economy. Even while nations view IMF aid as a last choice, certain of the IMF's conditionalities—such as its austerity measures—exacerbate vulnerabilities and disparities. Economic development requires access to other sources of concessional finance to meet the opportunity costs of debt in order to overcome the obstacles posed by IMF policies.

Conclusion

Despite historical debt relief efforts, the global response has inadequately addressed the crisis, worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine conflict. Ghana, Sri Lanka, and Zambia serve as illustrations of this crisis, characterized by policy mismanagement leading to structural imbalances. They grapple with poorly structured tax systems, the middle-income trap, and challenges in restructuring bilateral debts with China, exacerbated by issues like excessive money printing and fiscal mismanagement. All three nations sought IMF assistance, but disparities arose due to Ghana and Sri Lanka's middle-income status. Ghana and Sri Lanka had to restructure domestic debt, while Zambia benefited from the HIPC initiative, safeguarding its development goals. China's role in debt restructuring, particularly through the Belt and Road Initiative, significantly contributes to the challenges faced by Zambia and Sri Lanka. The prolonged debt restructuring process incurs substantial opportunity costs, hindering vital sector investments. The IMF's involvement in conditionalities and the call for transparent, accountable processes underscore the urgency for global mechanisms addressing the unprecedented challenges faced by middle-income nations, aiming to ensure economic development without succumbing to a perpetual debt trap.

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Financial Expenditure for the Public Higher Education in Greece and Cyprus during 2015-2019[1]

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Abstract

The economic crisis that affected Greece and Cyprus is a period that deserves to be studied and analyzed in various areas of governance. An important period of time namely from the year 2015 to 2019 where the most important events took place. These events affected public higher education in both countries. The purpose of this particular study is to document and compare central bank spending, for both countries, and draw conclusions. The study presents original findings because if we look at earlier researches there are no reports on this specific topic. It helps us get a picture of the whole situation in public higher education. Thus, researchers who study elements of this can enrich their knowledge and future research.

Keywords: Expenditure, Higher Education, Central Government, Greece, Cyprus

Οικονομικές Δαπάνες για την Δημόσια Τριτοβάθμια Εκπαίδευση στην Ελλάδα και στην Κύπρο την Τετραετία 2015-2019

Γεώργιος Μαρής και Σταματία Μαλωίνα

Περίληψη

Η οικονομική κρίση που επηρέασε την Ελλάδα και την Κύπρο είναι μια περίοδος που αξίζει να μελετηθεί και αν αναλυθεί σε διάφορους τομείς διακυβέρνησης. Μια χρονικά σημαντική περίοδος και συγκεκριμένα από το έτος 2015 έως το 2019 όπου πραγματοποιήθηκαν τα σημαντικότερα γεγονότα. Αυτά τα γεγονότα επηρέασαν την δημόσια τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση και στις δύο χώρες. Σκοπός της συγκεκριμένης μελέτης είναι να καταγράψει και να συγκρίνει τις δαπάνες των κεντρικών τραπεζών, και για τις δύο χώρες,και να εξάγει συμπεράσματα. Η μελέτη παρουσιάζει πρωτότυπα ευρήματα διότι αν ανατρέξουμε σε παλιότερες έρευνες δεν υπάρχουν αναφορές για το συγκεκριμένο θέμα. Μας βοηθάει να αποκτήσουμε εικόνα για το σύνολο της κατάστασης στην δημόσια τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση. Έτσι, οι ερευνητές που μελετάνε στοιχεία αυτής μπορούν να εμπλουτίσουν τις γνώσεις τους και τις μελλοντικές έρευνες τους.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: Δαπάνες, Τριτοβάθμια Εκπαίδευση, Κεντρική Κυβέρνηση, Ελλάδα, Κύπρος

Εισαγωγή

Η τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση ανήκει σε έναν από τους ποιο κρίσιμους τομείς της δημόσιας διοίκησης

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στα περισσότερα αναπτυγμένα κράτη του κόσμου. Αυτό συμβαίνει γιατί η τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση αποτελεί καθοριστικό παράγοντα για την μελλοντική εξέλιξη του κράτους αλλά και στον κατάλληλο προσανατολισμό των μελλοντικών επιστημόνων. Παρουσιάζεται ιδιαίτερο ενδιαφέρον η μελέτη και ανάλυση των οικονομικών στοιχείων που προσδιορίζονται για την τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση.

Αντικείμενο της συγκεκριμένης έρευνας είναι να αναλύσει ποσοτικά τις δημόσιες δαπάνες της κεντρικής κυβέρνησης στην τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση. Γίνεται αναφορά και σύγκριση σε δύο κράτη, την Ελλάδα και την Κύπρο. Η σύγκριση μεταξύ αυτών των κρατών έγινε σκόπιμα διότι είναι δύο ανεπτυγμένα κράτη που ανήκουν στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, έχουν κοινή γλώσσα, σχεδόν ίδια κουλτούρα και σχεδόν ίδιο σύστημα τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης.

Η μέθοδος που χρησιμοποιήθηκε για την συλλογή των δεδομένων είναι η ποσοτική ανάλυση αριθμητικών δεδομένων όπου συγκεντρώθηκαν από τις επίσημες σελίδες ερευνών του εκάστοτε κράτους. Η χρονική διάρκεια που μελετήθηκε στην έρευνα μας ήταν από το 2015 έως το 2019, δηλαδή στο σύνολο τέσσερα χρόνια. Η επιλογή των χρονολογιών αυτών δεν έγινε καθόλου τυχαία διότι τα χρόνια αυτά ήταν τα ποιο κρίσιμα χρόνια, και για τις δύο χώρες, σε θέματα διοίκησης, οικονομικής κρίσης και αστάθειας.

Η δομή της παρακάτω έρευνας έχει ως εξής: αναφορά στους παράγοντες που διαμόρφωσαν την οικονομία της Ελλάδας και της Κύπρου για το χρονικό διάστημα από το 2015 έως το 2019, αναφορά και ανάλυση των δημόσιων οικονομικών στοιχείων της τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης στην Ελλάδα και στην Κύπρο, ακολουθούν τα συμπεράσματα της έρευνας αλλά και οι βιβλιογραφικές αναφορές.

Παράγοντες που διαμόρφωσαν την οικονομία της Ελλάδας και της Κύπρου

Η Ελλάδα διένυσε μια δύσκολη περίοδο περίπου για μια δεκαετία. Οι δυσκολίες που αντιμετώπισε ήταν κυρίως οικονομικές αλλά όχι μόνο. Στην περίπτωση της Ελλάδας οι ρυθμοί ανάπτυξης και οι καθαροί οικονομικοί δείκτες που παρουσιάστηκαν ήταν παραπλανητικοί για την οικονομική απόδοση της χώρας. Οι οικονομικοί παράγοντες συνέλαβαν στην κρίση αλλά δεν ήταν οι μόνες αιτίες ανάπτυξης αυτής. Οι βασικές αιτίες ανάπτυξης της κρίσης στην Ελλάδα βρίσκονται στον τρόπο διακυβέρνησης αλλά και στο θεσμικό και πολιτικό μοντέλο ανάπτυξης (Σκλιάς & Μαρής, 2013).

Πρέπει να ειπωθεί ότι η οικονομική κρίση στην Ελλάδα έχει μοναδικά χαρακτηριστικά και για τον λόγο αυτό η εύρεση μιας αποτελεσματικής λύσης από τους αρμόδιους ήταν πολύ δύσκολή. Δυστυχώς τα τελευταία χρόνια της κρίσης, από το 2015 και έπειτα, υπήρχαν και αρκετοί εξωτερικοί παράγοντες που δυσχέραιναν την κατάσταση. Παράγοντες όπως οι μεταναστευτικές ροές στην Ελλάδα και η πανδημία του COVID-19 (Maris, Sklias & Maravegias, 2021).

Την περίοδο 2015-2019 κυβερνών κόμμα στην Ελλάδα ήταν ο ΣΥΡΙΖΑ. Η πολιτική που έπρεπε να ακολουθηθεί ήταν συγκεκριμένη διότι η χώρα είχε ενταχθεί σε αυστηρά μνημόνια για να μπορέσει να γλυτώσει την χρεωκοπία. Εξαιτίας λοιπόν του τρίτου μνημονίου επιβλήθηκαν μια σειρά από οικονομικά μέτρα. Μερικά από τα μέτρα που επιβλήθηκαν ήταν η συνέχιση του ΕΝΦΙΑ, αυξήσεις των συντελεστών ΦΠΑ και προσθήκη νέων φόρων. Επιπλέον εκείνη την περίοδο τα έσοδα από τα δημοσιονομικά πλεονάσματα θα χρηματοδοτούσαν ουσιαστικά τις δανειακές συμβάσεις της χώρας (Καζάκος, 2020).

Όσο αφορά την Ελλάδα, η εποχή των μνημονίων που ήταν σχεδιασμένα με πολλές αβλεψίες και συγκρουόμενους στόχους (Liargovas & Psychalis, 2019)συντάραξε την πολιτικοοικονομική ζωή στη χώρα δημιουργώντας μια σειρά από προκλήσεις (Hazakis, 2022).

Η Κύπρος αντιμετώπισε δυσκολίες με το τραπεζικό της σύστημα που επικρατεί στο νησί. Φυσικό επόμενο των δυσκολιών αυτών ήταν οι επιπτώσεις στην πολιτικό σύστημα, στην κοινωνία αλλά και σε άλλους κλάδους.Το Κυπριακό τραπεζικό σύστημα αντιμετώπισε την κρίση με μια σειρά από μέτρα. Δηλαδή, εφαρμογή αυστηρών κανόνων, έγκαιρη παρέμβαση για να σταματήσει ο επιθετικός δανεισμός ακινήτων και μια συνεχή και συνετή εποπτεία (Clerides & Stephanou, 2009).

Η βαθιά κρίση που έπληξε το νησί ξεκίνησε το 2013 όπου η Κύπρος δέχτηκε βοήθεια από το ΔΝΤ, την ΕΚΤ και το Eurogroupρύψους 10 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ αλλά και 5,8 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ για την σωτηρία των τραπεζών. Υπήρξε παράλληλα ανακεφαλαιοποιήση των τραπεζών μέσω καταθέσεων, το λεγόμενο bail-in. Ωστόσο η διάσωση των καταθετών και των δύο συστημικών τραπεζών δημιούργησαν δυσμενείς επιπτώσεις στην οικονομία της Κύπρου (Zenios, 2013).

Το έτος 2015 οι περισσότεροι κλάδοι της κυπριακής οικονομίας συρρικνώθηκαν σε μεγάλο βαθμό. Μερικοί από αυτούς τους κλάδους ήταν: ο κλάδος των κατασκευών, η δημόσια διοίκηση, οι υπηρεσίες άμυνας, οι τέχνες, η γεωργία, το λιανικό εμπόριο κ.α. Το έτος 2016 έως το έτος 2017 υπήρξε μια σταθερότητα στην κυπριακή οικονομία. Όμως το έτος 2018 υπήρξε αναβρασμός στο τραπεζικό σύστημα της Κύπρου. Οι καταθέτες απέσυραν από τις τράπεζες 1,619 δισ. ευρώ. Η τότε κυβέρνηση προσπάθησε να αντικαταστήσει τις εκροές με αποτέλεσμα να σταθεροποιηθεί η οικονομία της Κύπρου. Συνολικά η Κυπριακή οικονομία συρρικνώθηκε κατά 10% διότι μειώθηκε ο αριθμός των τραπεζών που υπήρχαν στην Κύπρο. Δηλαδή, η μια τράπεζα απορροφούσε τα «καλά» δάνεια της άλλης. Έτσι, η Ελληνική τράπεζα έγινε η δεύτερη μεγαλύτερη τράπεζα στην Κύπρο όπου το πελατολόγιο της περιλάμβανε τα μισά περίπου κυπριακά νοικοκυριά. Σε λιγότερο από 5 χρόνια κατάφερε να επανέλθει πλήρως η οικονομία της. Όλοι οι κλάδοι της οικονομίας ανέκαμψαν την περίοδο 2016-2018 (Scott et al., 2019).

Οικονομικά στοιχειά δημοσίας τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης στην Ελλάδα και στην Κύπρο

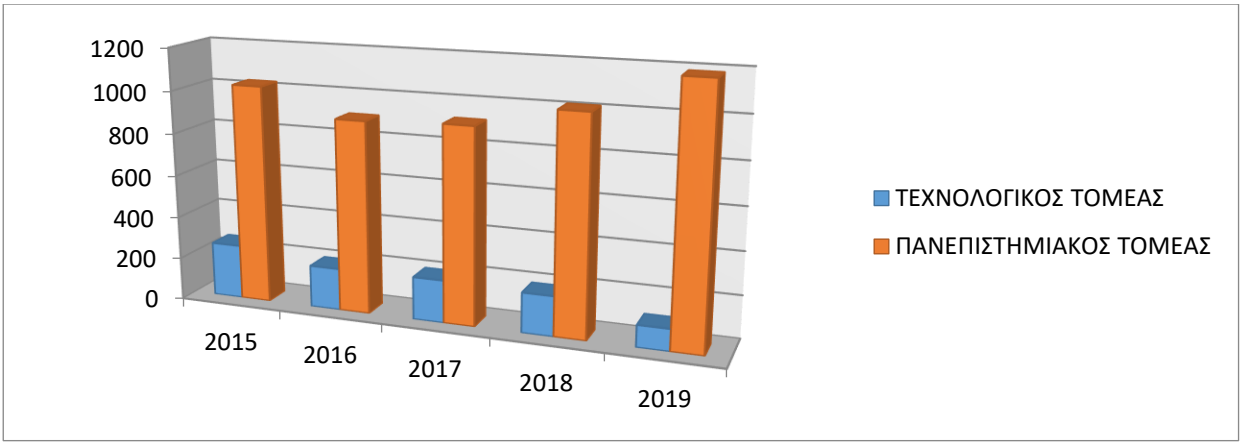
Ο Carnoy αναφέρει ότι η μελέτη του εκπαιδευτικού συστήματος είναι αδύνατον να διαχωριστεί από την ανάλυση της κυβερνητικής λειτουργίας, μιας και η εξουσία εκφράζεται σε ένα μεγάλο ποσοστό μέσα στο πολιτικό πλαίσιο (Carnoy, 1988). Η σχέση κράτους και εκπαίδευσης αναθεωρείτε συνεχώς ανάλογα με τις ευρύτερες εξελίξεις (Σιάνου- Κυργιου, 2014).

Υπεύθυνες για την εκπαιδευτική πολιτική που εφαρμόζεται είναι οι κυβερνήσεις. Είναι αυτές που ορίζουν πως θα διανεμηθούν οι οικονομικοί πόροι στην εκπαίδευση με σκοπό πάντα την κάλυψη των εκπαιδευτικών δαπανών. Η κρατική παρέμβαση στον τομέα της εκπαίδευσης είναι αναγκαία και οφείλεται στην ύπαρξη των λεγόμενων εξωτερικοτήτων ή και στην αποτυχία της αγοράς (Καμαριανός κ.ά., 2019).

Όπως αναφέραμε και παραπάνω η Ελλάδα αντιμετώπισε σοβαρές οικονομικές προκλήσεις κατάτην διάρκεια μιας δεκαετίας. Επακόλουθο όλων αυτών των δυσμενειών ήταν να επηρεαστούν βασικοί θεσμοί του κράτους, όπως η εκπαίδευση. Η κρίση σίγουρα έχει επηρεάσει και την τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση με διάφορους τρόπους. Οι δύσκολες οικονομικές συνθήκες που βίωσε η Ελλάδα και οι περικοπές δημοσίων δαπανών ήταν πλήρως κατανοητές τόσο από διδάσκοντες τόσο και από τους φοιτητές (Koulouris, Moniarou-Papaconstantinou & Manessi, 2014).

Η Κύπρος παρουσιάζει ιδιαίτερο ενδιαφέρον γιατί φαίνεται να έχει την δεύτερη υψηλότερη εκπαιδευτική δαπάνη σε ποσοστό ΑΕΠ στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση. Η εκπαίδευση στην Κύπρο παρέχεται δωρεάν από το κράτος (Andreou, 2012).

Αντλώντας δεδομένα από την Ελληνική Στατιστική Αρχή διατυπώθηκαν τα ακόλουθα αριθμητικά στοιχεία. Σχετικά με την ανώτατη εκπαίδευση μέχρι το έτος 2019 υπάρχει διαχωρισμός στον τεχνολογικό τομέα και στον πανεπιστημιακό τομέα. Οι δαπάνες της κεντρικής κυβέρνησης για την εκπαίδευση στον πανεπιστημιακό τομέα είναι τέσσερις φορές περισσότερες το έτος 2015 από ότι στον τεχνολογικό τομέα. Η κορύφωση διατυπώνεται το έτος 2018 όπου η κεντρική κυβέρνηση μειώνει τις δαπάνες στον τεχνολογικό τομέα και αυξάνει τις δαπάνες στον πανεπιστημιακό τομέα περίπου τέσσερις φορές περισσότερο (βλέπε Διάγραμμα 1).



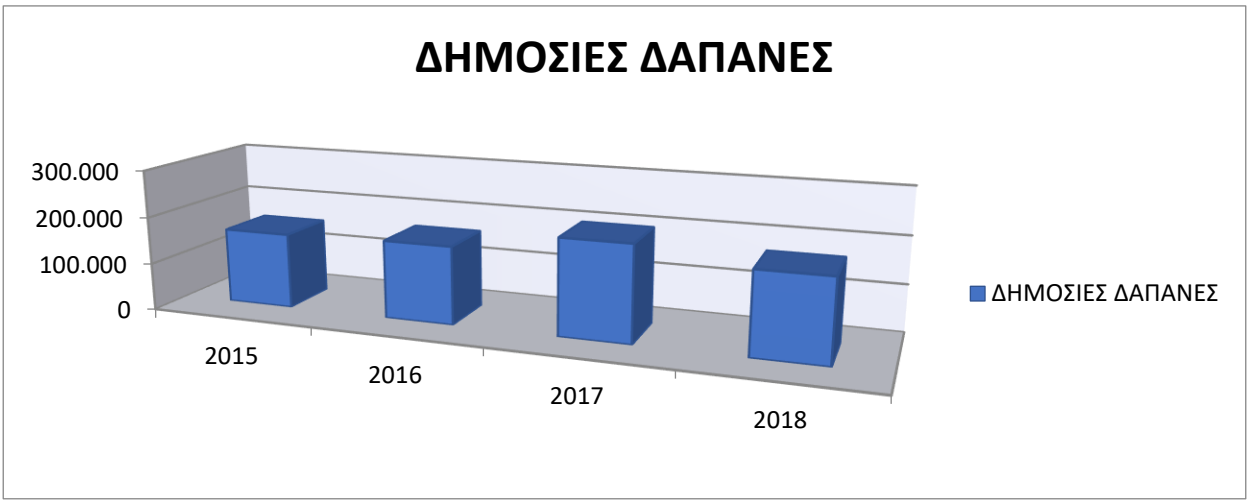
Διάγραμμα 1ο: Απεικόνιση δαπανών κεντρικής κυβέρνησης της Ελλάδας για την τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση (Πηγή: ΕΛΣΤΑΤ)

Είναι ξεκάθαρη και εμφανής η διαφορά στις κρατικές δαπάνες που αφορούν τον τεχνολογικό τομέα και τον πανεπιστημιακό. Το 2015 η ελληνική κυβέρνηση δαπάνησε 1.026,7 εκατ. ευρώ για την ανώτατη εκπαίδευση με κατεύθυνση τον πανεπιστημιακό τομέα ενώ την ίδια χρονιά δαπάνησε 255,6 εκατ. ευρώ για τον τεχνολογικό τομέα. Το 2016 η κεντρική κυβέρνηση μείωσε τις δαπάνες κατά 22,7% για τον τεχνολογικό τομέα και στον πανεπιστημιακό τομέα μείωσε τις δαπάνες κατά 12,1%. Το 2017 υπήρξε αύξηση των δαπανών στο σύνολο της ανώτατης εκπαίδευσης. Το έτος 2018 μειώνονται οι δαπάνες στον τεχνολογικό τομέα κατά 6,4% και αυξάνονται στον πανεπιστημιακό τομέα κατά 10,5%. Το 2019 είναι καθοριστικό για τον τεχνολογικό τομέα διότι οι κρατικές δαπάνες μειώνονται κατά μεγάλο ποσοστό και συγκεκριμένα κατά 45,4%. Η μείωση αυτή είναι αποτέλεσμα της κατάργησης των ΤΕΙ και της ενσωμάτωσης αυτών στα αντίστοιχα ΑΕΙ της χώρας.

Οι δαπάνες από τις διεθνείς πηγές διαφέρουν στον τεχνολογικό τομέα και στον πανεπιστημιακό τομέα. Όσο αφορά τον τεχνολογικό τομέα οι διεθνείς δαπάνες το 2015 ήταν 83 εκατομμύρια ευρώ ενώ το 2016 μειώθηκαν κατά 84,7%. Τον επόμενο χρόνο αυτές κυμάνθηκαν στα ίδια επίπεδα με τον προηγούμενο, δηλαδή σε 12,5 εκατ. ευρώ. Το 2018 υπήρχε αύξηση στις δαπάνες από τις διεθνείς πηγές που αφορούν τον τεχνολογικό τομέα της ανώτατης εκπαίδευσης. Η αύξηση ανέρχεται σε ποσοστό 107,2%. Έπειτα ακολούθησε μείωση των δαπανών κατά 38,6% (ΕΛΣΤΑΤ, 2021).

Για την Κύπρο αντλούμε στοιχεία που αφορούν τις δαπάνες στην τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση από την επίσημη σελίδα της στατικής υπηρεσίας Κύπρου. Το 2015 η Κύπρος δαπάνησε στο σύνολο, για την πανεπιστημιακή δημόσια εκπαίδευση, 159.548 εκατομμύρια ευρώ. Το 2016 η Κύπρος αύξησε τις δαπάνες της για την δημόσια εκπαίδευση κατά 5.582 εκ. ευρώ. Συγκεκριμένα, δαπάνησε 165.130 εκ. ευρώ. Έναν χρόνο αργότερα οι δαπάνες της Κύπρου για την δημόσια εκπαίδευση αυξήθηκαν αρκετά. Η αύξηση από το προηγούμενο έτος ήταν κατά 37.573 εκ. ευρώ. Συγκεκριμένα, οι δαπάνες της

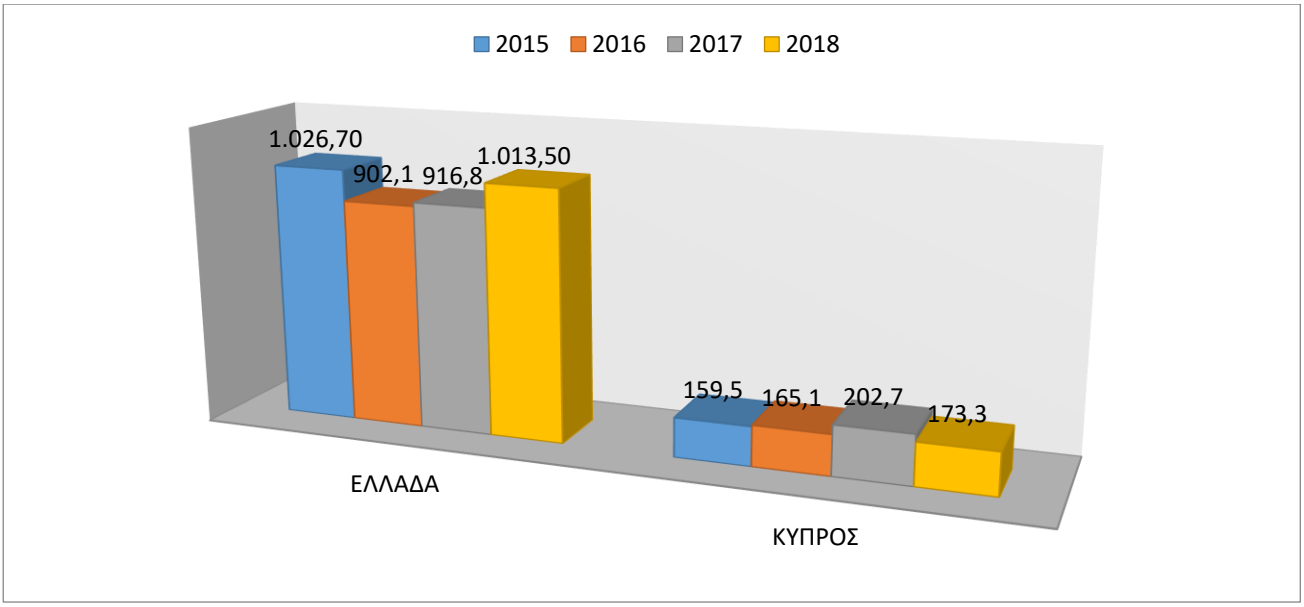
Κύπρου για την δημόσια εκπαίδευση το 2017 ανέρχονται σε 202.703 εκ. ευρώ. Η πρώτη μείωση των δαπανών για την δημόσια τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση πραγματοποιήθηκε το 2018. Η μείωση των δαπανών ήταν 29.413 εκ. ευρώ. Συγκεκριμένα η Κύπρος δαπάνησε για το έτος 2018, 173.290 εκ. ευρώ. Οι διακυμάνσεις των δαπανών της Κύπρου για την δημόσια εκπαίδευση φαίνονται στο παρακάτω διάγραμμα (βλέπε Διάγραμμα 2) (ΣΥΣΤΑΤ, 2018):



Διάγραμμα 2ο: Απεικόνιση δημόσιων δαπανών για την τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση στην Κύπρο.
(Πηγή: ΣΥΣΤΑΤ)

Οι κρατικές δαπάνες που αφορούν την τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση στην Ελλάδα παρουσιάζουν ιδιαίτερο ενδιαφέρον. Αρχικά υπάρχει διαχωρισμός στην εκπαίδευση σε πανεπιστημιακή και τεχνολογική. Οι δαπάνες της κεντρικής κυβέρνησης για τα Ανώτατα Εκπαιδευτικά Ιδρύματα, για την περίοδο 2015-2018, είναι τέσσερις φορές μεγαλύτερες από ότι οι δαπάνες τηςκεντρικής κυβέρνησης για τα Τεχνολογικά Εκπαιδευτικά Ιδρύματα. Οι δαπάνες της κεντρικής κυβέρνησης για τα ΤΕΙ παρατηρείται ότι μειώνονται με την πάροδο των χρόνων. Αποτέλεσμα αυτής της πολιτικής είναι η κατάργηση των ΤΕΙ και η αναβάθμιση αυτών σε ΑΕΙ.

Η Κύπρος από το 2015 έως το 2017 δαπανούσε με αύξοντα ρυθμό πολλά εκατομμύρια ευρώ για να καλύψει τις ανάγκες της δημόσιας εκπαίδευσης. Το 2017 η Κύπρος αρχίζει να αναπροσαρμόζει τα έξοδα που αφορούν την τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση με αποτέλεσμα να εφαρμόζει πολιτική μείωσης δαπανών. Στο παρακάτω διάγραμμα απεικονίζονται οι οικονομικές διακυμάνσεις των χωρών Ελλάδας και Κύπρου, που αφορούν την δημόσια τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση (βλέπε Διάγραμμα 3).



Διάγραμμα 3ο: Απεικόνισηοικονομικών διακυμάνσεων που αφορούν την τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση (Πηγή: ΣΥΣΤΑΤ)

Συμπεράσματα

Η Ελλάδα και η Κύπρος είναι δύο χώρες που έχουν υποστεί τις μεγαλύτερες μεταρρυθμίσεις διαχρονικά στο σύνολο της εκπαίδευσης. Οι αλλαγές αυτές προέρχονται από το κράτος με σκοπό πάντα την κάλυψη των στόχων της εκάστοτε κυβέρνησης. Βέβαια δεν μπορούμε να παραβλέψουμε και τις οικονομικές διακυμάνσεις που επηρέασαν τις δαπάνες στην τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση. Η Ελλάδα και η Κύπρος είναι δύο χώρες της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης που υπέστησαν μεγάλο πλήγμα στην οικονομία τους την περίοδο 2015 έως το 2019 και αυτό δεν μπορούμε να το παραβλέψουμε.

Διαπιστώνουμε λοιπόν, με βάση το πόρισμα της έρευνας μας, ότι η Ελλάδα την περίοδο 2015 έως το 2019 προσπαθούσε να κάνει ένα «συμμάζεμα» στην τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση. Με τον όρο «συμμάζεμα» εννοούμε να ενοποιήσει τους φορείς της τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης σε έναν. Δηλαδή την κατάργηση των ΤΕΙ και την ίδρυση νέων ΑΕΙ. Έτσι, την τετραετία που μελετάμε, η κεντρική κυβέρνηση διαθέτει ένα αρκετά μεγάλο ποσό και στην συντήρηση των ΤΕΙ μέχρι να επέλθει η κατάργηση τους. Συνεπώς, η Ελλάδα το 2015 δαπανά ένα σεβαστό ποσό στην τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση που παρόλο που είχε πολλές δυσκολίες δεν σταμάτησε την χρηματοδότηση σε μεγάλο βαθμό. Τα επόμενα δύο χρόνια οι κρατικές δαπάνες μειώθηκαν και έπειτα επήλθε η άνοδος.

Η Κύπρος παρουσίασε στο σύνολο της κρίσης προβλήματα στον τραπεζικό τομέα της και έτσι ξεπέρασε ευκολότερα τα οικονομικά προβλήματα της. Δηλαδή, παρουσίασε βελτίωση των δημοσιονομικών μεγεθών. Η οικονομική δραστηριότητα της Κύπρου ανακάμπτει και το δημόσιο

χρέος σταθεροποιείται. Έτσι συμμετέχει στις αγορές μετά από την αναβάθμιση που υπήρξε στους οίκους αξιολόγησης πιστοληπτικής ικανότητας έπειτα και από την μείωση των επιτοκίων δανεισμού στις διεθνείς χρηματοπιστωτικές αγορές. Επιπλέον, οι δαπάνες για την τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση δεν επηρεάστηκαν τόσο από την κρίση που υπέστη το νησί. Αρχικά τα έτη 2015 και 2016 οι κρατικές δαπάνες για την τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση παραμένουν σταθερές. Το έτος 2017 υπάρχει μια αρκετά μεγάλη άνοδος στις δαπάνες της κεντρικής κυβέρνησης και τέλος το 2019 επανήλθε η μείωση σε αυτές.

Συγκριτικά θα λέγαμε ότι η Ελλάδα παρότι πέρασε μεγάλες οικονομικές δυσκολίες και με όλες τις ανακατατάξεις που πραγματοποιήθηκαν στην τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση, η κεντρική κυβέρνηση δεν μείωσε σε μεγάλο ποσοστό της δαπάνες για την τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση. Η Κύπρος διαπιστώνουμε ότι δεν επηρεάζεται πολύ από εξωτερικούς παράγοντες και έτσι η κεντρική κυβέρνηση δαπανά, με τον ίδιο ρυθμό περίπου και με ελάχιστη απόκλιση, σχεδόν στην ίδια κλίμακα. Και οι δύο χώρες προσπάθησαν να μην έχουν μεγάλες αποκλίσεις στις δαπάνες της κεντρικής κυβέρνησης για την τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση. Τέλος θα λέγαμε ότι και οι δύο χώρες επενδύουν στην εκπαίδευση και στην δημιουργία νέων γνώσεων και έρευνας.

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Topic 6

Public Policies, Social Policies and Welfare State

Social Policy: Religious Neutrality in a Multicultural World[1]

Ioanna Gkika[2]

Abstract

Religious rights are an especially important aspect of social policy. This policy brief aims to inform the audience about the perception of some European countries about religious neutrality in multicultural societies. Is there a sharp vision that must be followed by all countries? Can the decision of the Court of Justice have absolute implementation in all countries? What can Greece do to establish its role as a multicultural country while avoiding the danger of social unrest?

Keywords: European Union, Religious neutrality, Court of Justice, Discrimination, Multicultural World, Human Rights, Legitimate Aim.

Introduction

How can we secure multiculturalism, equal labor rights, and opportunities within the EU borders while avoiding the rise of radicalization? This question is immediately connected with the basic values of the European Union regarding human rights, democracy, equality, and dignity. Europe has suffered, through the years, from many extremist regimes and manifestations of violence frequently based on matters of religion. For that reason, we should highlight the effort of the union to eliminate these tensions and create a social model that will include religion while condemning every source of fanatism and extremism.

Regarding this frame of solidarity and equality in the years of globalization we should undoubtedly refer to the decision of the Court of the European Union on the 13th of October 2022 on the topic of 'Establishment of a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation – Prohibition of discrimination on the ground of religion or belief – Internal rule of a private undertaking prohibiting any manifestation, in the workplace, of religious, philosophical or political belief – Prohibition including words, clothing, or any other means of manifesting those beliefs – Wearing of an item of religious clothing'. (L.F. v SCRL, 2022) This critical issue has aroused reactions as well as similar decisions made in other European countries such as France and Germany that provoke controversies on the matter of religion in a multicultural world. Considering the importance of the matter for policy makers, minorities, and European people we will analyze the issue in the context of Greece. To proceed to a further analysis, we should set as a common ground Article

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16 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. "The freedom to conduct a business following the Union Law and National Law is recognized (2007/C 303/01) while we must agree with the court's statement that "religions and beliefs should be regarded as a single grant of discrimination."

Main Aspects

On the 13th of October 2022, the Court of the EU ruled on the request for a preliminary ruling by the Belgian court on the dispute between L.F., the applicant in the main proceedings, and SCRL, the defendant in the main proceedings, a cooperative limited liability company whose main activity consists of the letting and operating of social housing, concerning the failure by that company to take into consideration the unsolicited application for an internship submitted by the applicant in the main proceedings on account of the latter's refusal to comply with the prohibition, imposed by SCRL on its employees, on manifesting, in particular through their clothing, their religious, philosophical or political beliefs. The court decided that Article 2(2)(a) of Directive 2000/78 must be interpreted as meaning that a provision of an undertaking's terms of employment which prohibits workers from manifesting, through words, clothing, or in any other way, their religious or philosophical beliefs. Whatever those beliefs may be, does not constitute, workers who intend to exercise their freedom of religion and conscience through the visible wearing of a sign or an item of clothing with religious connotations, direct discrimination 'on the [ground] of religion or belief. For that directive, provided that that provision is applied in a general and undifferentiated way. In this term, everyone may have a religion or a belief so, there is no accusation of targeting specific religions since every form of expression is banned. (Cranmer, 2022).

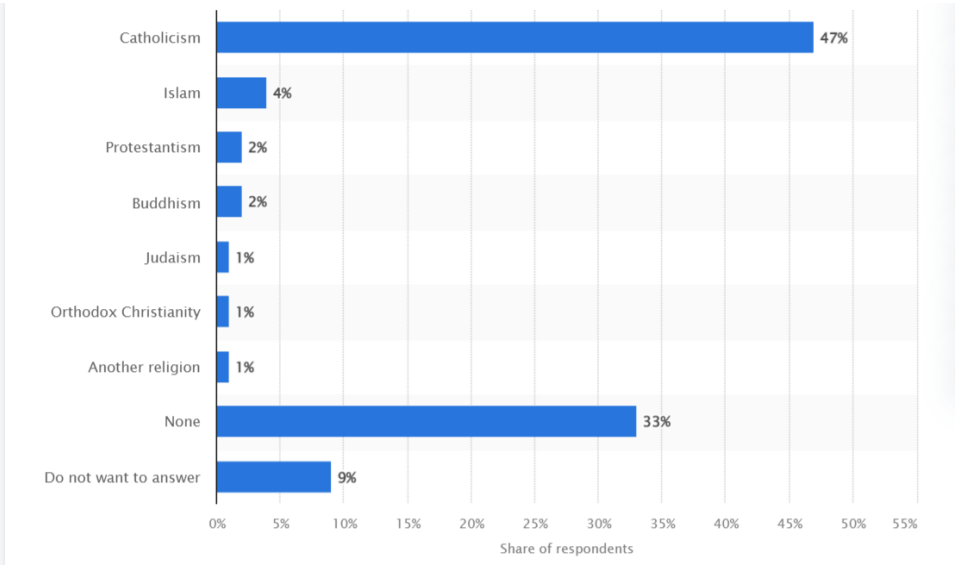
This decision reaffirms one of the main targets of the EU, to provide equal opportunities in a multicultural environment and protect basic human rights in the spirit of political neutrality and anti-discrimination. This is not the first time that the EU has worked on the matter of religious liberties but is surely, the most recent. Alongside, this analysis and before focusing on the matter at a national level, it is interesting to study the examples of two important countries for the EU, France, and Germany.

France

France is a country with a high percentage of diversity in its population, a fact that reaffirms its multicultural structure. Specifically, when it comes to religion, we see from the figure below that there are most Christians with important percentages of other religions to follow. Considering the social structure, the French government has implemented laws to secure the separation of nation and religion. Therefore, in 2004 the French legislation banned "wearing conspicuous religious symbols

in French public (e.g., government-operated) primary and secondary schools" (Aziz, 2022). This law, as well as similar ones that were implemented in the following years {for example, the law of 2011 for banning full-face veils (burka and niqab) in public}, has aroused much opposition, especially from Muslims. Indeed, at first sight, this law might seem that eliminate the rights of religious minorities. At this point, it is interesting to refer to the Muller case (another case regarding matters of religious neutrality within the EU) where neutrality policy aimed to discriminate against certain religious groups with the rule of "non-use of big political signs". In this case, matters of direct discrimination arose. (Müller, 2010) However, we should focus on the matter from a comprehensive approach. French laws were implemented as an effort for the integration of minorities into French society while giving the opportunity -especially- to women to oppose any oppressive behavior imposed by third parties. But, to a considerable extent, we notice the effort of the government to ensure the division of nation and religion by enhancing secularism and clarifying that religion is a deeply personal matter that is related to delegate management.

Figure 1: Religions in France



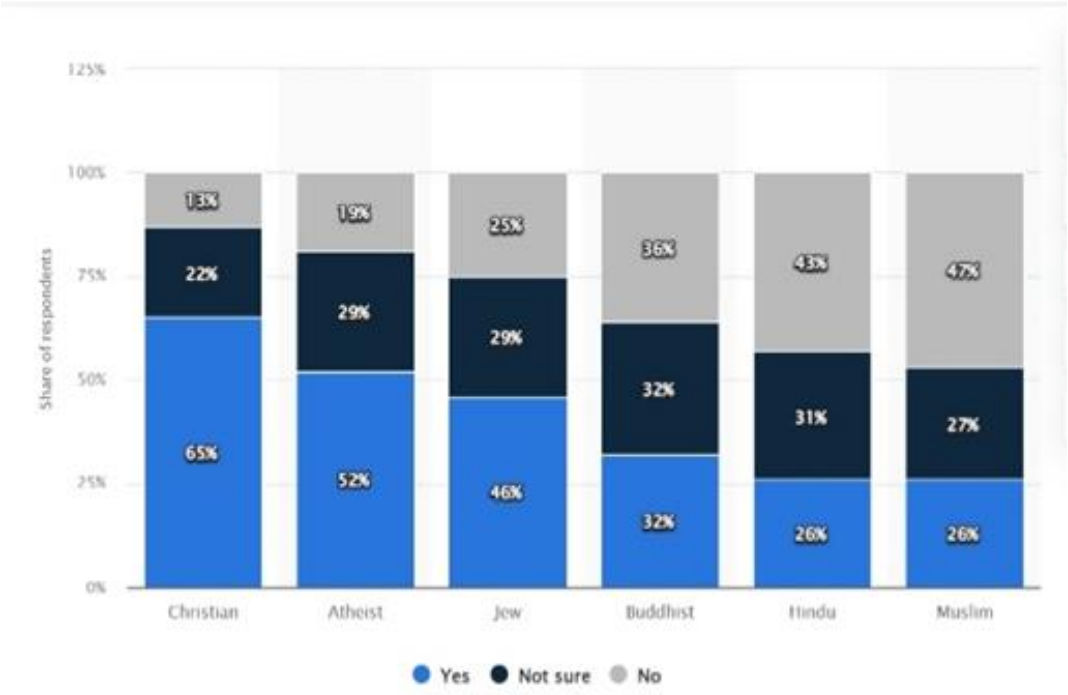
Source: Statista, 2021

Germany

Germany, especially due to the high rates of immigrants that receives annually, is recognized as a multicultural country. Different nations and religions are called to live together in German society as we can see from the below data. Taking that into consideration and connecting it with the recent decision of the court of the EU, we should proceed to an overview of German legislation regarding the critical issue that we work on. In 2005, Germany introduced a law that banned wearing visible religious or ideological symbols or garments (except for small pieces of jewelry). The law referred to

teachers at public schools, police officers, judges, court officials, prison guards, prosecutors, and civil servants working in the justice system. Of course, the German constitution by Article 4 protects the freedom of religion. Germany has no state church and treats religions "neutrally" without showing samples of opposition or discrimination by giving the right to "self-determination" or religious communities.

Figure 2: Religions in Germany



Source: Statista, 2023

Greece

Continuously, we should focus on the approach that Greece has to the matter. Greek constitution guarantees secularism and religious neutrality with Article 13. At the same time, it is widely known that Greek people are highly related to religion, and it is a big part of their culture and daily life, especially if we take into consideration the large population of orthodox people. The Greek state could not be able to be completely indifferent when it comes to religious matters. However, it is obvious that the Greek constitution is ideologically "neutral" and promotes pluralism through Article 25, par. 1 that guarantees human rights "as a person and as a member of the society as a whole". Additionally, confirmed by articles 2 and 13 refer to democratic values and religious liberties as well as social and spiritual liberties. Consequently, the Greek constitution secures the ideological, social, political, and religious pluralism as well as other member states of the European Union. If we focus on the religious diversity in Greek society, 6 years ago we will see an increased majority of Greek

Orthodox. Through these 6 years, however, thousands of immigrants have crossed our borders with a high percentage of them considering Greece as their destination. Given the fact that Greek society has increased its percentage of multiculturalism, we should focus on developing practices that will cover the "emerging requirements." With the term requirements we enclose the democratic values, the rise of multiculturalism, and the need for neutrality to avoid conflicts and radicalizations.

Recommendations

After referring to the matter of religious neutrality in three different countries with different evidence for each, we understand how sensitive is that issue and how ambiguous remains. The recent decision of the European Court embraced that there is no "absolute right or wrong" aspect, the main concern of every European country should be the promotion and strengthening of democratic values and pluralism. Therefore, we proceed to several recommendations that can be implemented in Greece to secure a world of equality while following the model of other European countries.

- Firstly, when it comes to judicial proceedings, national courts, must examine every case carefully and by taking into consideration every detail. Of course, the case law of the Court of Justice can be a basic guideline, but the national court's decision must be aligned with the social structure of the country.
- Secondly, to enhance secularism, we propose the banning of visible religious symbols in public services from public officials. Government structures must make the first step in the emerging world of neutrality. Considering the social status in Greece, this decision may raise objections, but we are referring to a more open division between secular authority and religion. In this way, religion will become a more personal matter.
- However, we understand that many dilemmas may occur since we refer to a very ambiguous issue that does not only have to do with the visibility of religious symbols. That is why a strategy of information and education should be operated by the government. Campaigns inform students, employees, and employers about what is religious neutrality, on what terms can be implemented and what are the positive effects of it.
- Finally, when it comes to labor policy and neutrality, we should highlight the need for it to be justified. For instance, employers must inform their employees about their policy and why they have chosen it before their recruitment.
- Regarding the latter statement, it is essential to clarify and emphasize that neutrality policies must occur with a legitimate aim and a crucial need on the part of the employer. Particularly, there must exist a precise and real risk for other protected constitutional

values or rights. At this point, we shall highlight the distinction between equal treatment rights and religious freedom (Mulder, 2022).

Conclusions

In the conclusion of our policy brief, we must admit that the aspects of social policy regarding issues of religion in the 21st century are very wide. Our research focuses on the decision of the Court of Justice while analyzing the practices of two multicultural countries and taking them as examples that Greece may follow. Undoubtedly, the main concern of policymakers must be implementing laws that protect human rights in a multicultural world without provoking discrimination either directly or indirectly. Social constructions keep evolving and we must be ready to follow. This presentation may not offer enough information to a policymaker, but provides a vision that, in the immediate future, might be necessary. Yet, much research is needed, before making decisions but surely, Greece sooner or later will be called to form its place on the matter. It is important to remember that pluralism and protection of human rights must be our main awareness. “Our freedom stops where the freedom of others begins.”

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Religion and COVID-19 Pandemic: Policy Directions for Potential Future Public Health Crises[1]

Georgios Tsertekidis[2]

Abstract

Religion has always been important in human societies. It has also been of great importance during the recent COVID-19 pandemic. There is scientific consensus that its role has been multidimensional. Many religious groups have been endorsing COVID-19 mitigation measures while others have been opposing them. Furthermore, faith-based anti-vaccine stances have been a major obstacle in vaccination campaigns worldwide. In many cases, religious groups and organizations have been providing humanitarian aid, as well as, spiritual and emotional support to individuals and communities during a time of crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic. In conclusion, religions have been functioning in this aforesaid variety of manners. Policy recommendations for potential future public health crises are being made in this paper with the intention to make sure that religions will be part of the solution, and to enhance already existing activities and initiatives towards the promotion of public health.

Keywords: Communities, COVID-19, Crisis, Government, Pandemic, Public Health, Public Health Policy, Public Policy, Religion, Vaccine.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic, caused by the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, emerged near the end of 2019 and spread all around the globe at a very rapid pace. That led to almost 772 million confirmed cases (WHO, 2023), a tremendous loss of life with almost 7 million deaths worldwide (WHO, 2023) and major socioeconomic turbulence and disruptions. Governments along with national and international public health authorities made an unprecedented effort to respond to this global crisis. At the same time, religious communities worldwide experienced the pandemic's severe social and cultural impact. That impact can be explained by the harsh restrictions imposed by governments in many countries around the globe, which in turn triggered social hostilities involving religion and COVID-19 (Pew Research Center, 2022).

Historically, religion has been playing an unequaled role for societies in terms of identity and culture (Petmesidou & Polyzoidis, 2013). Also, religion has been of great significance in terms of social care, provision and facility of various social welfare services (Polyzoidis, 2019). The role of religion during the COVID-19 pandemic has not been one-dimensional (Sisti et al., 2023). On the contrary, it has

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been multidimensional and multifaceted by influencing public health behaviors to more than one direction, either towards the implementation of the mitigation measures, by opposing those measures, by fostering anti-vaccine stances and attitudes, by providing valuable humanitarian aid, or by supporting individuals and communities spiritually and emotionally.

Religious groups endorsing COVID-19 mitigation measures

Barmania and Reiss (2021) have suggested that religion could be of valuable aid in health promotion. In their research they used lessons learned from India, Pakistan, Uganda, Malaysia, South Africa and Ethiopia where religions have been critical factors in combating highly infectious diseases like poliomyelitis, Ebola and HIV.

The stance on mitigation measures of many black faith leaders in the United States of America has been very crucial. They have assisted in communicating to their communities basal and weighty information about COVID-19, ways to prevent infection and ways of self-protection (Webb Hooper et al., 2020).

Data from a 4-wave survey in Israel indicates that religiosity played a positive role in the willingness to take the COVID-19 vaccine, in the context of protecting the community and life within it (Lahav et al., 2022). Jewish people with low and moderate levels of faith were more willing to get vaccinated contrary to Jewish people of "stronger" religious faith who were significantly less willing to get vaccinated against COVID-19. Most of those people that expressed "stronger" religious beliefs were ultra-Orthodox Jews who tend to adhere more strictly to the Jewish law (Lahav et al., 2022).

Religiosity as an opposing factor against COVID-19 mitigation measures

A study concerning 53 metropolitan statistical areas in the United States of America, concluded that when shelter-in-place directives have not been imposed by authorities, religiosity did not have a significant effect on people's movements. However, when shelter-in-place directives were imposed, higher religiosity resulted in less adherence to the directives (DeFranza et al., 2020).

Religious congregation is of major importance for all Abrahamic but also for many non-Abrahamic religions (Smart, 1989). This fact has triggered a conflict between the religious rituals and habits of billions of religious individuals and the need to avoid gatherings due to the highly infectious virus.

Sisti et al. (2023), in a large-scale narrative review concerning the role of religions in the COVID-19 pandemic, presented some of the thousand cases related to how religious gatherings have functioned as triggering factors for massive infection clusters. That review included the gatherings in churches,

synagogues and mosques from all around the world. It also included pilgrimages by massive numbers of Muslims and Christians during times of infectious outbreaks.

Faith-based anti-vaccination stance

Religion has been linked to an anti-vaccination stance in many ways, from vaccine hesitancy in some Islamic communities (Lee et al. 2022) to Christian nationalism in the USA. Christian nationalism[3] has been found to be "one of the strongest predictors of COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and uptake" (Corcoran et al. 2021: 6614).

As mentioned before, Lahav et al. (2022) found that, contrary to Jewish Israelis with low or moderate levels of expressed faith, ultra-Orthodox Jews show substantially less chances of getting vaccinated against COVID-19. That was a finding, though, which seemed to validate pre-existing qualitative research findings from similar ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities, concerning child vaccination hesitancy (Henderson et al., 2008).

According to Issaris et al. (2023), despite the official endorsement by the Greek Christian Orthodox Church[4] and the majority of its bishops, some members of the clergy were vocally against the vaccination. Not only have there been arguments about the vaccines' safety and effectiveness, but it has also been characterized my some religious and para-religious minorities as "the mark of the devil" in a similar manner with other evangelical denominations in the USA (Galang, 2021).

Within the context of Islam, there had been a noteworthy controversy concerning the ingredients of the vaccines against COVID-19. The controversy was related to whether the composition of the vaccine was "halal" or "haram", that is to say whether it was appropriate for a religious Muslim to take it in her/his body. Mohd Jenol and Ahmad Pazil (2023) enlightened this issue of vaccine hesitancy for religious reasons via a study on the 2021 relevant discussion between thousands of Twitter users in Malaysia.

Providing humanitarian aid during the pandemic

Modell and Kardia (2020), through examination of the case of Christian churches in post-industrialized Detroit (USA), argued that churches have always been effective health-promoters for those who are less privileged. By providing food and financial help to people in need, churches come to aid the poorest members of their congregations in terms of physical health. Similarly, the spiritual, moral, and emotional support is highlighted as well as the health promotion programs that many

[3] Christian nationalism is ''an ideology that idealized and advocates a fusion of American civic life with a particular type of Christian identity and culture" (Whitehead et al. 2020: ix-x)
[4] Officially known as "The Church of Greece"

churches implement by providing vital information, and by communicating that information to people that otherwise are not easy to approach by the state, federal or international authorities.

Religious organizations with their food and financial supplies, have been contributing in providing aid to communities affected by COVID-19 and to individuals (financially or/and socially marginalized) that have been more vulnerable to the effects of the pandemic due to their socioeconomic statuses (Pew Research Center, 2022).

Spiritual and emotional support for individuals and communities in need

Religion has been a form of an asylum for many people during the pandemic. It has been a source of comfort, resilience, spiritual and emotional support. Prayers, counseling, and religious services via virtual means helped many people cope with the emotional and psychological burden of the pandemic. International relevant literature offers concrete evidence via a (quite rare, actually, in social sciences and humanities) consensus that proves that religious communities of many religions offered a sense of belonging to individuals experiencing distress, anxiety and fear. Hence, they have functioned as beacons of hope, comfort and empowerment (Molteni et al., 2021; Derossett et al., 2021; Safdar et al. 2023).

Of course, it would be accurate to note that there are various major and minor differences between the experiences of each religious individual and each religious community. The variables of geography, unique historical, social and political processes that define each society and community, create a wide spectrum of lived experiences. Despite those differences between religions and the different denominations or expressions within each religion (for example Orthodox Christianity, Roman-Catholicism, Shia Islam, Sunni Islam etc.), these functions of religion during this postmodern global public health crisis are outlined by many scholars and researchers with solid evidence.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Religions have always been here, and public health crises have too. The key issue after this recent pandemic, which socked the world, is for international organizations, national governments, national and international public health authorities to utilize all knowledge and experience gained; utilize and use it in order to address and combat potential future public health crises. All action that needs to be taken in order to promote public health and community well-being involves utilization of existing knowledge, more flexibility, more transparency, more information for the public and more synergies.

Synergies with religious organizations are vital. Evidence from many different places around the world support the fact that a critical number of religious people of -at least- the most known, organized, and populous religions trust and are more willing to receive information about health

matters from their religious community leaders and authorities rather than the official institutions and the media (Weinberger-Litman et al., 2020; Tan et al., 2022).

If a comprehensive conclusion was to be drawn about how religions did in promoting public health during this recent pandemic, one would look for a moderate and realistic assessment. This assessment would range from "not too bad" to "quite good, actually". The challenge, now, is to foster and develop all these mechanisms and policies to improve and enhance the potential of religious communities to help people, but also their will and their ability to contribute their best in potential future public health crises.

To be more specific, some useful policy recommendations could include:

- Establishment, through communication and social dialogue, of the core idea that when humanity faces problems, every religion needs to be part of the solution.
- Recognition of the important role that religious leaders and organizations play through the deep and complex bonds of trust with billions of people around the globe, in a significant range of individual and social activities, including health behavior.
- Development and elaboration of systematic synergies at national, regional and local level between public health authorities and religious leaders, organizations and institutions that have showed willingness to promote responsible public health behaviors.
- Establishment of customized guidelines and protocols that concern religious gatherings during public health crises by working on the delicate balances between religious freedom and public health safety.
- Addressing misinformation concerning public health issues by utilizing collaboration with religious leaders by providing them scientifically sound (based on concrete scientific evidence) information, fostering dialogue and enhancing transparency around the reasoning and the decision-making processes that concern the implementation of public health measures.
- Addressing vaccine hesitancy by ensuring transparency in every phase of the vaccines' development and provision to the public.
- Encouragement of scientific knowledge to be communicated both at macro and micro levels, through conventional media, social media and education, but also by providing information presented in popularized ways in order to be more comprehensible and customized for target-groups like religious communities that have shown relevant preconceptions.

- Enhancing and deepening the collaboration/synergies by leveraging infrastructure and resources that religious organizations use while providing humanitarian during public health crises.

Work on the enhancement of the emotional support provided by religious communities during public health crises by contributing valuable mental health personnel and social workers that could assist in the context of a trusted -for the people who turn to these communities- milieu.

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Pondering Deeper, Ahead and Beyond over the Use of ChatGPT in H(A)Igher Education[1,2]

Elena Soroliou[3], Maria Ontil Kritikou[4], Sotiris Antonopoulos[5] & Anna Kania[6]

Abstract

While within the last months several studies reveal the real and full implementations of the cutting edge ChatGPT in higher education institutions, a comprehensive examination of its potential at the micro and macro levels of higher education is crucial. To address this gap, this policy brief scrutinises the integrated and potential capabilities of ChatGPT through three lenses-levels: student-facing, teacher-facing, and system-facing advantages, disadvantages, blind spots, challenges, and risks. The core aim of this policy brief is to research and shed light on a robust and nuanced understanding of the level of (in-)appropriateness of ChatGPT's use in higher education among core stakeholders, i.e. educators, students, and administrators, who co-sign an "educational contract" via core emerging trends and implications. Finally, a set of applicable recommendations is presented for policy makers, other interlocutors, and future researchers, in order to walk the talk for a more ethical, inclusive and equitable use of AI in higher education, since a "one-size fits all" approach should be strongly avoided.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, higher education institutions, ChatGPT, students, academics, advantages, disadvantages, challenges, concerns and risks.

Introduction

ChatGPT[7] - which stands for a real Artificial Intelligence ("AI") sensation (Gilbard, 2023) and "generative pretrained transformer"- has been characterised as the scientific and technological breakthrough of the decade (Llaners, 2023). Five days after its official launch, more than 1.000.000 people had signed up to use it (Buchholz, 2023), while it reached 100 million users two months later (Milmo, 2023). ChatGPT's thousands of supporters thrive on its capabilities in astonished and grandiose terms, especially due to its speedness, technical ascendance/predominance and interesting

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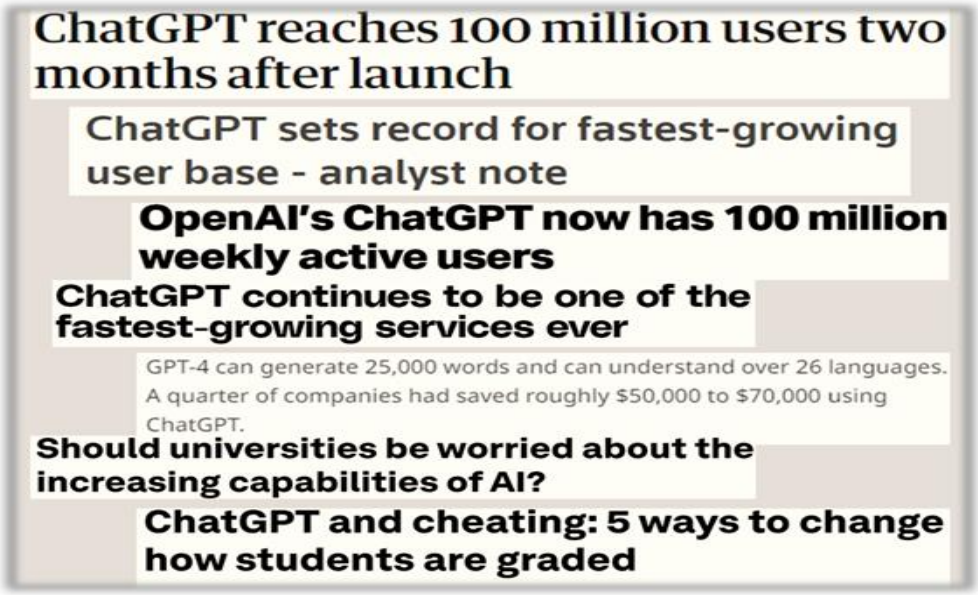
[7] According to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (2023, p. 5) "ChatGPT is a language model that allows people to interact with a computer in a more natural and conversational way. ChatGPT uses natural language processing to learn from Internet data, providing users with artificial intelligence-based written answers to questions or prompts".

combinations of information (Roose, 2022). Unavoidably, ChatGPT could be described as "smarter", weirder, more flexible and interactive in comparison with other Natural Language Processing[8] ("NLP") previously used technological models and flattering chatbots. In detail, ChatGPT also seems to be ominously good at answering the types of open-ended analytical questions, frequently appearing on higher education assignments. Due to these reasons, plenty of educators have predicted that versatile ChatGPT, and similar tools, will spell the end of homework and take-home exams (Roose, 2022).

Picture 1: Titles from well-known newspapers in a global level for the wide use of ChatGPT



This policy brief mainly focuses on ChatGPT's most important advantages and disadvantages, challenges and risks for the signees and signers of the educational contract in and for the academia, i.e educational and administration staff, and students. The subject is approached via three levels-lenses: the teacher-facing, the student-facing and the system-facing tools and characteristics, while exploring ChatGPT's core advantages and disadvantages. Additionally, the policy brief aims to:

a) underline the access to ChatGPT's functionality;

b) shed wider light to its designers' and users' proactivity and foresight, and

c) highlight that its use by people will show that it can be a double-edged sword.

[8] According to IBM (2023) "Natural Language Processing ("NLP") refers to the branch of computer science -and more specifically, the branch of Artificial Intelligence or AI - concerned with giving computers the ability to understand text and spoken words in much the same way human beings can".

Finally, the authors suggest a set of policy measures, in order to establish and maintain a fairer and more detectable mandate with the AI enterprises and higher education institutions.

Which are the advantages of ChatGPT in Higher Education?

According to Wingard (2023), Universities should have a holistic view and thoroughly tweak and adapt their curricula at least every single year. Therefore, this implementation and wise use of AI technologies in higher education will become and appear as a necessity in the near future, in order for Universities to provide their students with competitive degrees for the globalised market. Stalzer (2023) underlines the dominance of the technological titans, such as Google, Microsoft, Apple, and Amazon and their neural networks of course, but most importantly their capabilities for deeper and stronger interconnectivity and interoperability of different types of databases and information.

According to Metzler and ChatGPT (2022), Stalzer (2023), and Stock (2023), who focus on the main advantages of the ChatGPT's applications, students -but also teachers- can write entire essays or articles based on a well-stated prompt, generate new content and do desk research, prepare a press release, compose a story or play, write basic code, create or upgrade basic material for social media, excel or better connect their research questions and translate or summarise texts. Simply put, students could wisely use ChatGPT, in order to save time from mechanistic tasks and devote their energy for more complex scopes and frameworks (Heaven, 2023).

From the student and teacher facing levels-lenses, apart from the previously mentioned capabilities, students can use ChatGPT as a more interactive and faster than "turbocharged" Google search engine, since it rapidly combines information and knowledge (O'Byrne, 2023; Roose, 2022, UNESCO, 2023). Additionally, both students and academics could be benefited by ChatGPT's use via real-time feedback, which is a daunting task especially for academics in classes of 20 or even more students, taking into consideration that everyone is comprehending, learning and consolidating information via different ways. From this point of view a personalised and adjustable learning system could be optimised and supported. Therefore, this could be adopted and applied in higher education institutions in which a high number of students is the main rule and trend. Following Varwandkar's (2023) point in a different contextualisation in India, students could have a digital tutor, who would help them understand difficult conceptualisations and provide them with additional motivations to deal with the academic liabilities.

Both students and academics could also be benefited by "intelligent textbooks", such as "Inquire", an iPad app that monitors students' focus and attention while reading and mainly how do they select to interact with the application, analyse their weaknesses and take measures for their support (O'Byrne,

2023). Simply put, characteristic examples of interactive text could be definitions of keywords for the deeper comprehension of the con-text. Furthermore, a deeper implementation could also be the suggestion of questions for future research and the inclusion of audio-visual content, i.e. videos, photos, podcasts, etc. (O'Byrne, 2023).

Furthermore, according to Gilbard (2023), academics could involve the chatGPT's use for the better organisation and planning of their courses, and in some disciplines and frameworks for their students' evaluation schemata, such as assignments. Students struggling with grammar or spelling in their or other language(s) could be unavoidably benefited and practise their capabilities more systematically (Entrepreneur Staff, 2023).

Are we ready to face the music, i.e. disadvantages, challenges and concerns for ChatGPT in Higher Education?

Despite many enthusiastic views on ChatGPT, it would be considered as an omission to conceal its serious weaknesses. Gilbard (2023) crucially underlines the vacua and loopholes for dishonest behaviour, where students simply copy-paste material generated by ChatGPT and present it as their own. Undoubtedly, this core challenge endangers both honesty and effectiveness in higher education. According to a recent survey in Technews (2023), 51% percent of students consider using AI tools, such as ChatGPT to complete assignments and exams, and this is conceptualised as a form of cheating and misuse. Gilbard (2023) supports that this situation will promote and enhance multiple inequalities, and probably lead to misleading or delusive evaluation of each student's knowledge, comprehension, "interactivity" and accreditation.

Tajik and Tajik (2023) strongly underline that inaccurate information, biased content, plagiarism, and limited or low quality's context are some of the crucial perplexing issues that occur systematically. Its questionable accuracy, which is quasi-scientific, mainly based on the level of prompts' quality, as well as the fact that it is only internet-sourced are a core disadvantage for both students and academics (Lukeš, 2023). More specifically, several times ChatGPT abounds in false or manipulated facts, can misunderstand context, produce bias-prone text, and undermines the plausibility and traceability of the retrieved data (Entrepreneur Staff, 2023).

Simultaneously, the authors highlight that ChatGPT cannot think critically and "understand" the deeper connotations among different frameworks or disciplines. These drawbacks can and should also be analysed from at least a European governmental system-facing level, since the above-mentioned negative impact may have far-reaching malign consequences on all the aspects of students' and academics' perspectives (European Commission, 2021). Apart from these parameters,

ChatGPT's improvident use may strengthen students and academics' dependence on technology and heavy reliance on the tool (Entrepreneur Staff, 2023). If students or even academics and researchers mainly or solely rely on responses generated by AI, their creativity, originality, innovation, spirituality, coherence and problem-solving skills would be decreased (Entrepreneur Staff, 2023; Varwandkar, 2023).

From an academic-facing level, there are many looming challenges, which make some authorities even ban the software totally from use in Universities. For instance, the New York City Department of Education decided to ban ChatGPT's possible (inappropriate) applications (Gilbard, 2023). However, this doesn't seem to solve the problem, as students still use it for this scope. According to Ellen B. Meier, Professor of Computing and Educational Practice (Gilbard, 2023), it would be wiser to redefine AI's contribution to higher education and enrich the academic repository of pedagogical tools. Similar to this point is Lalitha Vasudevan's, Vice Dean for Digital Innovation at Columbia University (Gilbard, 2023), according to which students and academics should become equal partners in deciding how they should use AI tools at the Universities. Moreover, huge compute resources and vast accurate datasets for the training of chatbots are necessary requirements to avoid suspicious techniques and shady LLM models.

Correspondingly, researchers pointed out AI's inclination to generate texts including racist as well as manipulated and deep-fake content, or endangering some of the currently human-pursued occupations through automation (Gilbard, 2023). Additionally, authors excelling Stock's point (Stock, 2023) believe that an undisputable challenge is the need for focusing from the final result to the whole process and the crystal-clear presentation of the sources which have been used or reused for the "education" and better responses of ChatGPT.

For all the aforementioned reasons, the authors strongly support that ChatGPT, as well as other AI tools, ought to be regulated by law. For instance, drafts of regulations on AI can be found by the European Commission regarding the draft EU AI Act (2021) and its Digital Strategy attempts, which have already been taken by the European Union, the United States' or China's Government. However, the European companies sound alarm over the draft AI law, claiming disproportionate compliance costs and liability risks (Espinoza, 2023).

A taste of thought-provoking risks, plausible costs and red flags

Following the main logical backbone, emphasis will be put on the categorisation of risks with the extended and unregulated use of chatGPT in higher education. The authors would like to underline

that if not proper attention is given to consider the challenges and limit the risks, then probably these will "reappear" in the near future as red flags and subsequently as multiple and important costs.

The complexity of the issue, affecting all the signees and signers of the educational contract, does not definitely require system-based actions. Looking at it via system-facing lenses, authorities have started to recognise the need for proper regulation of AI's use and implications, which has already been done by e.g. the EU. In accordance with The European Commission's Regulatory Framework on Artificial Intelligence there are four (4) graded levels of risk in AI, whose identification is of great use for system-created measures:

- **Unacceptable risk** (a clear threat to our safety which entails AI's total ban),
- **High risk** (AI referring to critical infrastructures that could jeopardise citizens' lives),
- **Limited risk** (users should be fully that they interact with an AI machine), and
- **Minimal or no risk** (relating to AI-enabled video games or spam filters) (European Commission, 2021).

As suggested by various researchers (Rainee & Anderson et al., 2017 & Stalzer, 2023) the potential of Open AI's chatbot, still not fully recognised, imposes on its creators the necessity of algorithm transparency, ethics and awareness of its possible societal impacts. The tool ought to be controlled by both AI owners and its consumers. In the same spirit, Assistant Professor Alexandra Mihai fully agrees with the argument of Tajik & Tajik et al. (2023), that in order to fully comprehend the possible AI applications, the first and foremost milestone is for the algorithm literacy to be (deeper) included in basic education[9] (McGraw Hill, 2023). Moreover, Prof. Mihai underlines the necessity of academics and students working together with ChatGPT, in order to shed light on what actually benefits the University and what should be excluded.

From an academic-facing lens, concerns and costs should mainly focus on the reliance of chatGPT in the evaluation of educational or vocational training, which may strongly affect a person's professional

[9] Provocatively, if someone asks ChatGPT about itself and consider a comprehensive examination of the potential application of ChatGPT in Higher Education Institutions, it will refer: "To avoid ChatGPT being used for cheating, there are a few different steps that educators and institutions could take. For example, the right education about the ethical usage of ChatGPT could be provided to students and educators when it comes to academic settings. There's also a need for guideline development and policy making for the use of ChatGPT in academic work, and to make sure that students and educators are aware of and follow these guidelines. Moreover, the use of ChatGPT in academic settings is suggested to be monitored so cheating or other unethical behaviour can be avoided. The use of ChatGPT is going to help support learning and academic achievement, rather than as a replacement for traditional forms of assessment. Incorporate critical thinking and ethical reasoning into the curriculum, to help students develop the skills and habits necessary to use AI technology responsibly" (Tajik & Tajik, 2023).

career (Gilbard, 2023). Another plausible concern and risk is the endangerment of some currently human-pursued occupations, since technology vividly gains ground. A characteristic example is educating programmers, coding IT Specialists and secretaries. Hence, again, authors highlight the European Commission's effort via EU AI Act to lawfully regulate this AI software and all the possible hazards associated with it, in order to support teachers in real terms.

However, a concrete challenge and concern regarding the system and administration is the high level of the main game changers' (such as Microsoft and Google) unpredictability in combination with the low reflex actions of the global, European and the national legislation.

Moving forward to a more administrational level, authors would like to be differentiated in the debate on the topic between the "original" developer and "downstream" developer. The latter may not always be a part of the original model development but can only adjust it and incorporate its outputs into a different software. In consequence, neither of them holds complete control or a comprehensive view into the entire system. Therefore, a crucial concern is that the function of the final AI software could be difficult to be identified and furthermore, may result in its unexpected occurrence of errors (Engler, 2023).

Among others, the European Union via its framework for regulation in AI applications (2021) will hopefully settle clear requirements for AI systems for high-risk applications and determine certain obligations for AI users alongside providers of high-risk AI tools. Furthermore, the EU framework will plausibly put forward a conformity assessment preceding the launch of a particular AI system and propose a governance structure at European and national levels. The proposed framework is aimed at the monitoring of the accuracy and clarity of the information provided by AI software as well as human-generated supervision in order to lessen the possible risks (European Commission, 2021).

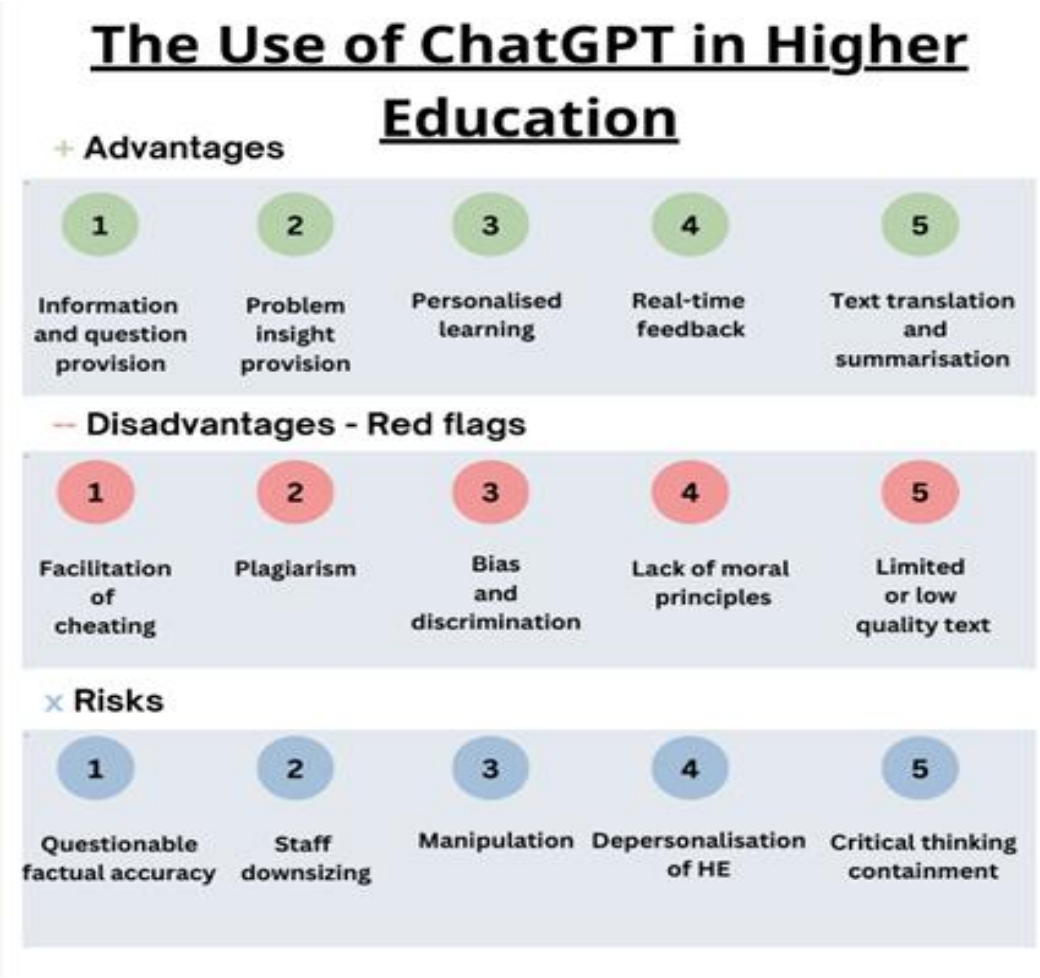
There is a clear red flag that ChatGPT may diminish students' potential and ability of critical thinking due to their heavy dependence on it and lack of creative approach towards its use (Gilbard, 2023). An essential factor in increasing students' self-dependence when creating thoughts, accompanied by AI tools, is teachers. As pointed out by experts, education professionals need to first get themselves familiarised with proper incorporation of the software into teaching, classroom management and the design of lesson planning. Only then they can and may fully use AI tools for the benefits of their learners, thus taking care of students' capability of critical thinking (Gilbard, 2023).

Furthermore, excelling National CyberSecurity Center's argumentation (NCSC, 2023) as serious concerns and red flags could also be conceptualised the coaching of users in harmful behaviours and

tactics, which aim at their manipulation. The ubiquitous character of technology in the framework of higher education for both academics and students, in order to combinedly promote and encourage ChatGPT's safe use, is a difficult challenge for all and a daily and daunting task, which should be prioritised. Then, NCSC underlines that we should not isolate the human factor from ChatGPT, since until now its content is not totally accurate, trustworthy, concrete and regulated.

Another red flag in these LLM models can be coaxed into creating toxic content and AI chatbots are prone to "injection attacks" (NCSC, 2023). Therefore, some undoubted and high risks are the limited data security, continued data breaches, the ethical concerns for the fairness of using AI in modern education, some jobs displacement and staff redundancies, the creation of malware, and the over-dependence of people on technocracy.

Figure 1: Crucial argumentation on the advantages, disadvantages, red flags and risks of ChatGPT in Higher Education ("HE")



Discussion: Is it time to move faster and break things (Zuckerberg) or time to hit pause (Musk)?

Traditional higher education used to be based on tacit trust, understood by reciprocal cooperation between students and academics. The drastic change in the field of education forced by AI technology

affects not only students, but also academics and administrators by saving them useful time through robust systematic procedures. In theory, an AI tool like ChatGPT could be even referred to as a digital personal encyclopedia, helping all parties involved to stay on top of their most important responsibilities through a personalised experience (Tajik & Tajik, 2023).

Due to the high impact of ChatGPT in higher education, it is assumed that the employment of AI tools, as presented by Paulo Blikstein, Associate Professor of Communications, Media and Learning Technologies Design at Columbia University (Gilbard, 2023), may complicate the case and contribute to the creation of some awkward learning settings underlined by suspicion on either side (e.g. due to students' possible cheating). Moreover, in accordance with Elon Musk's mindset, creating a toxic environment, harmful to any user.

Following this argument, there seem to appear various and important question marks of mainly negative aspects concerning the limited knowledge of potential outcomes of newly designed AI models by the designers themselves as well as regarding ethics, literacy, transparency and oversight. As noted by the Hall of Fame member, technologist, founder and CTO of US Ignite, Glenn Ricart, "*The danger is that algorithms appear as "black box", whose authors have already decided upon the balance of positive and negative impacts – or perhaps have not even thought through all the possible negative impacts*" (Rainie & Anderson, 2017). When talking about ethics in this specific subject one can make out two different paths, the ethics of the maker and the morals of the user. Meaning that both parties ought to use this type of technology as indicated by the regulation book of every workspace either in the digital or real world. Both these worlds can possibly co-exist under good conditions if the results are thought regarding the social impact they will have as a basic principle. Therefore, the foundations of learning and teaching assisted by AI should be revised and based on ethical and fully transparent and concrete agreements among the signers and the signees of the education contract.

Aside from ChatGPT's inherent limitations, such as its inability to reason about the physical and social world, temporal reasoning, factual errors, bias and discrimination, transparency, reliability, robustness, security, and plagiarism, it cannot be denied that ChatGPT and other LLM tools, are from another aspect positively revolutionising the infrastructure of higher education, leading to a more efficient and effective education system that benefits all stakeholders involved. Therefore, in relation to Mark Zuckerberg's reasoning, while it is important to acknowledge and address the limitations of ChatGPT and other LLMs tools, their potential for positive impact on education cannot be ignored.

Nevertheless, several tech-companies, including "Open AI" - the company founded by Elon Musk, Sam Altman, Peter Thiel, OpenAI chief scientist Ilya Sutskever, Jessica Livingston, and Linkedin co-founder Reid Hoffman, which originally landed ChatGPT (Marr, 2023), have already presented helpful applications (e.g. GPTZero, Turnitin plagiarism detector[10]). Those have the ability to detect the use of ChatGPT or AI content in general, as they would for plagiarism. Meaning that even at a rapid technological race solutions have now risen deflecting one of the most talked about problems, the cheating factor.

Furthermore, proposed regulations have also emerged from the European Commission's Regulatory Framework on Artificial Intelligence, which result in monitoring of the accuracy and clarity of the information provided by AI software, as well as human-generated supervision, in order to reduce the possible risks (European Commission, 2021). However, in any case, it is critical that all involved parties should be properly informed and also trained in the use of AI tools, in order to gain all the potential benefits in and for higher education. Last, but not least, it seems that every emerging problem is likely to face a different corresponding solution, which may usually require a combination of appropriate retreats or steps forward.

Policy Recommendations

The central aim of this policy brief was to gain a better understanding, blind spots and red flags of ChatGPT, and therefore its level of appropriateness in higher education for the anthropogeography of academics, researchers, students and administration staff via a rigid argumentation and articulation of points. This section offers guidance for policy-makers on how to best leverage the emerging opportunities and highlight the risks, presented by the growing connection between AI and higher education.

According to the "Policymaking in the Pause" and the Future of Life Institute (2023) authors would like to adopt and further ameliorate the main policy agenda, in order to establish and maintain a fairer and more detectable mandate with the AI enterprises, higher education institutions, different communities and the previously alluded anthropogeography. The authors underline the need for transition from the disciplinary silos to inter- and trans-disciplinarity, meaningful dialogue and active cooperation among diverse perspectives.

[10] In particular, Turnitin has been trained specifically on academic writing sourced from a comprehensive database, as opposed to solely publicly available content. Thus, it's able of finding instances of potential dishonesty in student assignments.

In parallel, higher education institutions have a unique responsibility to teach how to distinguish real evidence from fabricated information via sharpening critical and divergent thinking. Therefore, truth seeking skills should be at the core of every curriculum regardless of the scientific field. According to Wingard (2023), higher education institutions should have a holistic view and thoroughly tweak and adapt their curricula at least every single year. Therefore, this implementation and wise use of AI technologies in higher education will become and appear as a necessity in the near future, in order for higher education institutions to provide their students with competitive degrees for the globalised market.

1. Regulate access to computational power.

The involvement of private entities, such as OpenAI in higher education, is not new and calls for care and regulation if selecting AI and other tools that are run by enterprises dependent on making profit may not be open source (and therefore more equitable and available). Therefore, there are loopholes, according to which they may extract data for commercial purposes (Sullivan, Kelly et al., 2023). Investing in properly staffing and resourcing the mechanisms for the governance of AI is a crucial need in our changing world.

2. Mandate robust and systematic third-party auditing and certification.

According to UNESCO (2023), regardless of whether ChatGPT and other forms of AI are already being used in higher education institutions, conducting an AI audit is an important step that will help the monitoring and assessment of the current situation and support institutional planning. It is suggested that this audit is undertaken by the higher education institutions governing bodies following extensive consultation with all academic, research, administrative and IT departments, as well as with students. This triangle process should have: “Understand-Decide-Monitor” intertwined steps.

3. Establish capable AI agencies at a national, european and global level.

Since ChatGPT cannot be described as a flash in the pan and the change is already upon us, authors recommend that national AI agencies should be established in line with a blueprint developed by Anton Korinek at Brookings. Korinek (Future of Life Institute, 2023) proposes that an AI agency has the power to:

- Systematically monitor the public developments in AI progress and define a threshold for which types of advanced AI systems fall under the regulatory oversight of each agency.

- Mandate impact assessments of AI systems on various stakeholders, define specific reporting requirements for advanced AI companies and audit the impact on people's rights at a macro-level.
- Establish enforcement authority to act upon risks identified in impact assessments and to prevent abuse of AI systems.

However, a crucial question that turns out here is who will guard the guardians? (Rainee & Anderson, 2017). The authors highlight this point given that if information is power, then logically information control is supreme power.

4. Expand the technical AI safety research funding.

Exploring the logic of the Future of Life Institute (2023) and to ensure that AI's enterprises and other organisations capacity to control AI systems keeps pace with the growing risk that they pose, authors highly recommend a significant increase in public funding for technical LLM models' safety research in the following research domains:

- ***Alignment:*** development of technical mechanisms for ensuring AI systems learn and perform in accordance with intended expectations, intentions, and values.
- ***Robustness and assurance:*** design features to ensure that AI systems responsible for critical functions can perform reliably in unexpected circumstances, and that their performance can be evaluated by their operators.
- ***Explainability and interpretability:*** develop mechanisms for opaque models to report the internal logic used to produce output or make decisions in understandable ways. More explainable and interpretable AI systems facilitate better evaluations of whether output can be more credible and reliable.

The authors highly recommend increased funding for research techniques, and development of standards, for digital content provenance. Therefore, there should be specific criteria and standards to ensure that a reasonable person will determine whether content published online is of synthetic or natural origin, and whether the content has been digitally modified in a manner that protects the privacy and expressive rights of its creator.

5. Develop high(er) standards for identifying and managing AI-generated content.

Due to this reason, the publication of generalised lessons should be prioritised from the impact assessments. This transparency would also allow academics and researchers to focus on necessities, study trends and propose solutions to common problems. According to Dr. Chris Kubiak, Associate

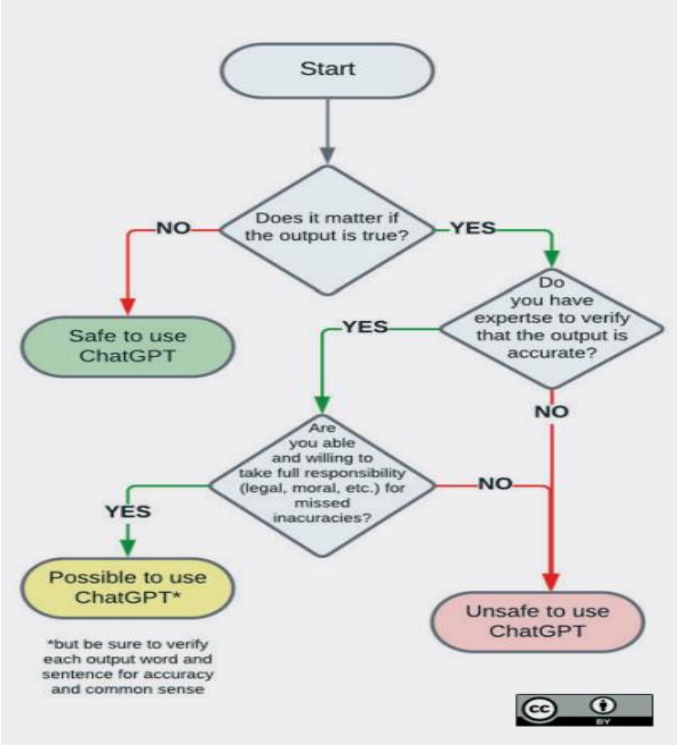
Head of School at the Open University, the update of plagiarism policy would be useful, in order to track and trace which students use chatGPT to fulfil their assignments (McGraw Hill, 2023).

6. Establishment of laws and standards clarifying the fulfillment of "duty of loyalty" and "duty of care" when AI is used in the place of or in assistance to a human fiduciary.

The authors also recommend the expansion of "bot-or-not" laws that require disclosure when a person is interacting with a chatbot. These laws help to prevent users from being deceived or manipulated by AI systems impersonating humans, and facilitate contextualising the source of the information. The draft EU AI Act (2021 and 2023) requires that AI systems be designed such that users are informed they are interacting with an AI system. Almost all of the world's nations, through the adoption of a UNESCO's recommendation on the ethics of AI (2021), have recognised "the right of users to easily identify whether they are interacting with a living being, or with an AI system imitating human characteristics". If all the intertwined designers and technical staff of ChatGPT and similar tools don't probe deeper into its capabilities and explore its limitations, then the recipients of their services will face versions of mis- or disinformation, or even worse the hallucination of biased information.

The following figure can roughly depict in which cases ChatGPT would be a good choice.

Figure 2: When is it safe to use ChatGPT?



Source: A. Tiulkanov (2023).

ChatGPT seems to have the power to transform higher education by all the above mentioned means. The key question -that is yet to be answered- is if this "wind of change" will mainly have a positive, neutral or negative burden and footprint. It is important to note that ChatGPT is not governed by ethical principles and cannot distinguish between right and wrong, true and false. This tool only collects information from the databases and texts it processes on the internet, so it also learns any cognitive bias and inaccuracies found in that information. It is, therefore, crucial to critically analyse the results that ChatGPT provides and compare them with other sources of information.

Since technological development is rapid and followed by emerging threats, in some cases, there is little agreement on a regulatory agenda. Undoubtedly, policies and guidelines are necessary to safeguard AI, ensuring its benefits and trustworthiness while mitigating its risks.

Conclusions and Consensus

It is agreed that the future of our interconnected world is unpredictable, fluid and uncertain. But what can we do, then? Simply put, knowing what future we would like to have, and afterwards creating it. And then of course work and rework on it. For instance, the authors suggest to prevent undue political interference and welcome public consultations closely related to fundamental rights. The authors reach the consensus that only when proactively multiple and solid checks and balances are in place, there can be a more thoughtful, beneficial expansion of generative AI technologies not only in higher education, but also in other fields of a society. Similarly, the authors maintain that powerful AI systems, such as NLP models should be developed only once scientists are confident that their effects will be precise and mainly positive and their risks will be manageable.

Probably, a stepping back from the dangerous race to ever-larger unpredictable "black box" models with emergent capabilities until there is adequate documentation by OpenAI for the internal mechanisms of ChatGPT would be the golden ratio at this phase. However, in the meantime, there is great need for education in algorithm literacy, accountability processes, oversight and transparency and a reassurement that the algorithms' designers should be trained in ethics and required to design code that considers societal impact as it creates efficiencies and inequalities. Indisputably, a strategic foresight mindset and proper education of the academics and students will intercept delusions, deadlocks, certain risks and faits accomplis lurking from the thoughtless development of LLM models.

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The Impact of COVID-19 in Women's Inequalities: Education, Employment, Healthcare and Abuse[1]

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Abstract

Social inequality is a social fact that occurs both within and between countries. Social class, gender, ethnicity, and disability are the main factors causing social inequality. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to an exacerbation of social inequalities, especially among vulnerable groups of the population. In this article, we examine impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the inequalities experienced by women at an international level. In particular, its impact on inequalities in employment, education, health and violence and abuse are examined. A critical review of the relevant literature reveals an increase in women's inequalities in all the above areas and in some cases to a significant degree. For this reason, it is deemed necessary to strengthen women's participation in public discourse, to further develop structures and services for empowering and supporting women, especially those that belong in the most vulnerable groups, and to further develop relevant scientific research and studies on the issue.

Keywords: Social inequality, women, COVID-19, employment, education, healthcare, abuse

Introduction

Social inequality is a social fact encountered in countries worldwide, manifesting in various forms, including limited access to economic resources, education, and healthcare services. Social class, gender, ethnicity, and disabilities are the four fundamental factors contributing to the emergence of social inequality (Baker, Lynch, Cantillon, Walsh, 2004). As a result, social inequality can be found both within and between countries, leading to significant variations in the standard of living among populations (UNDESA, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the situation of vulnerable population groups, thereby intensifying pre-existing inequalities. As a result, the income and access to healthcare services of the lower economic strata and migrants were adversely affected by the pandemic (Eurofound, 2023; Berchet, Bijlholt, Ando, 2023; Malliarou et al., 2023; Alevizos, Michail, Eleftheroglou, Sidiropoulos, 2023; Blundell, Costa Dias, Joyce, Xu, 2020). At the same time, the pandemic had a negative impact

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on women and individuals with disabilities (Inequality.org, 2023; UNDESA, 2023; Hunt, Kuper, Shakespeare, Banks, 2023; UN Women, 2021). This paper focuses on the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the inequalities experienced by women through a comprehensive literature-review.

Women's inequalities in education due to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic wrought profound changes in the education sector, disrupting the learning of 1.2 – 1.6 billion students across 170 countries, constituting 72% of the global student population during lockdowns. This upheaval laid bare stark inequalities in access to knowledge and educational resources, with gender disparities exacerbating the challenges. Students faced varying degrees of difficulty or limitations in transitioning to online learning, amplifying existing education inequalities (United Nations, 2020; Shulla et al., 2021).

Before COVID-19, there was already a long way to achieve gender equality in education. UNESCO states that only 75% of young girls were enrolled in secondary education in 2018 (130 million were uneducated). It is estimated that the gap will increase by 11-20 million girls as they will be excluded from the right to education due to COVID-19 and are found to have less chance of accessing online learning. Girls aged 12-17 from low-income households and girls in rural areas are particularly at risk (UNESCO et al., 2020; Pfunye & Ademola-Popoola, 2021).

Dropping out of school has the direct effect of increasing risks in other areas such as child marriage, early pregnancy, child labor and domestic violence (Diallo et al., 2021). In sub-Saharan Africa, teenage pregnancy increased by 65% due to school lockdown measures (Pfunye & Ademola-Popoola, 2021). Furthermore, in rural areas of Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, it was recorded that 34% of young girls lost a parent due to the pandemic and 70% of them had no choice but to drop out of school and work to support their families financially. In Nairobi (Kenya) there was a 49% increase in teenage girls having paid sex for financial support to their families with their willing or not (Kwauk et al., 2021).

Regarding distance education (tele-education), which was deemed necessary by governments, the different circumstances of students, especially girls, had to be considered. For many countries this type of teaching did not present any problems, but in other, economically underdeveloped countries, it posed an obstacle, due to lack of access to a network or the inability to access an electronic device. Furthermore, in these countries, perceptions that access to devices posed safety or defamation risks limited the ability to access the internet by 33% less than men (MALALA FUND, 2020). At the same time, due to increased time at home it is taken for granted that a girl will take on more household responsibilities and the care of family members who are potentially ill. Consequently, it was not

always possible to focus on distance learning, which was supposed to be their only responsibility (Renault, 2022).

Despite pre-existing challenges in achieving gender equality in education, the pandemic has widened disparities, particularly for girls in low-income and rural areas. The forced school closures and the shift to distance education led to increased risks and posed obstacles, respectively. The pandemic has revealed and intensified resilient educational strategies the urgent need for inclusive and resilient educational strategies.

Women's inequalities in employment due to COVID-19

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic and the global lockdown measures has resulted in the closing of many companies. Statistics show that in this downturn women were more affected than men. The reason why COVID-19 measures disproportionately burden women in the labor market is linked to gender inequalities. Women's inequality in the labor market existed even before COVID-19, however it has maintained a slow but steady increasing tendency in terms of eliminating the low participation rates of women in the labor market with partners and young children (Mascherini& Bisello, 2020; Azcona et al., 2022).

During the pandemic, this progress was completely reversed as these global rates dropped significantly. Initially, men were working in fields considered more essential to the economy and society (transport, civil protection services, agriculture, and construction) (ibid). On the contrary, women worked in industries that had close contact with customers and were therefore drastically affected by the pandemic (cleaners, chefs, tourism/hospitality, retail, and leisure workers), a large proportion of whom worked in atypical employment, so there was no insurance during the lockdown, nor was paid leave possible (Beales et al., 2020). This arises mainly from the fact that in many industrial, touristic and retails countries, women are not well enough represented or defended to claim their rights (Billi et al., 2021). Approximately 113 million women with families were unemployed in 2020 compared to 13 million men (Azcona et al., 2022).

On the other hand, a significant number of the employees has been forced to work through telework in an era of social dislocation and enclosure, where it has proved exhausting for many working mothers as they combine work, home schooling and caring, all in the same place at the same time. Through data drawn from the International Labor Organization, there is an observable unequal distribution of responsibilities at home, which ultimately leads to unequal participation in the labor market (ibid). Specifically, a third of these women find it difficult to concentrate on their work, compared to a sixth of men, while family commitments prevented more women (24%) than men

(13%) from spending the time they would like in their work. At the same time, 32% of women as opposed to 25% of men said that their work prevented them from making time for their family. These circumstances led many women to develop a permanent emotional stress and psychological oppression (Mascherini & Bisello, 2020).

Regarding women who lost their jobs, they were less likely to receive financial support from competent institutions than their male colleagues. In addition, women without children in the household (either unmarried or widowed) were the least likely to receive financial support (8% of women versus 17% of men). The same was observed for women with children who were not married (Billi et al., 2021).

In this context, during the pandemic, women faced significant challenges in the workplace, compelling some to exit jobs entirely or reduce working hours. Others opted for job changes seeking increased flexibility. These shifts, driven by the need to meet societal demands, are emblematic of broader issues in women's employment. The pandemic underscored existing gender inequalities, particularly affecting women in any industry. These changes will undoubtedly impact women's professional development in the next decades. Addressing and rectifying the deteriorating gender inequalities in the workforce is essential towards fostering an inclusive and equitable post-pandemic recovery.

Women's inequalities in healthcare due to COVID-19

The worldwide health systems were not properly prepared for the COVID-19 pandemic, and approximately 90% of countries encountered disruptions in health service (Shulla, 2021). Hospitals and healthcare facilities that are overloaded with COVID-19 patients make it unsafe for other patients with acute or chronic medical conditions to access their typical treatment. Also, pre-existing health inequalities are magnified by COVID-19. Vulnerable populations, including low-income communities, racial and ethnic minorities, and individuals with underlying health conditions, are disproportionately affected (Khetrapal & Bhatia, 2020).

A major social group affected by these COVID-19-induced disorders are women and young girls. Many countries were unable to provide the required sexual and reproductive healthcare services, which directly resulted in neglect and increased threats to the health of girls and women (Ghouaibi, 2021). This limited to zero access to these rights-based services has increased maternal mortality, the rates of teenage pregnancies, HIV, and sexually transmitted diseases. Specifically, 58% of women experienced difficulties in accessing health products (menstrual products and contraceptives) and medical care (obstetrical and gynecological services) (Billi et al., 2021).

Access to contraception and abortion are considered necessary and integral rights for women, in order to choose the future of their lives freely, without pressure, and there is no time for any delay in such a decision. Unfortunately, due to the market's blockade, access to these rights has not been possible, with some countries preventing this kind of trade. With the simultaneous restriction of transportation, many women have been deprived of their right to choose, as they could not visit a different country in order to perform the operation (Council of Europe, 2020). The United Nations Fund documented that in 115 low- and middle-income countries women lacked access to services, leading to a projection of seven million unwanted pregnancies (Ghouaibi, 2021).

The period of pregnancy is very special for a woman, as she experiences a mixture of emotions and at the same time is vulnerable to mental and physical health problems. For many pregnant women, the COVID-19 pandemic brings increased fear and a decreased sense of control due to the lack of proven data on the effects of COVID-19 during pregnancy (Almeida, 2020).

Women's abuse during COVID-19

Violence and sexual abuse constitute another dimension of gender asymmetry. Specifically, physical and sexual violence against women is prevalent across countries, with levels varying depending on the specific country in question. Notably, a significant proportion of women experience abuse from their partners or individuals within their close environment. Moreover, many women who fall victim to abuse in their surroundings experience multiple instances of victimization (UNDESA, 2016).

Early sexual abuse, occurring before the age of 15, is often associated with male family members, such as fathers or stepfathers (ibid).

Sexual harassment occurring in the workplace or other public spaces is often underreported, resulting in statistically lower recorded instances compared to the previously mentioned forms of violence. Similarly, psychological, and economic violence, despite significantly impacting the well-being of women, are also frequently underreported. (ibid).

Thus, violence against women constitutes a grave violation of human rights, with global rates indicating that one in three women worldwide has experienced sexual or physical violence, often perpetrated by their partners (UN Women, 2021). Notably, the Eastern Mediterranean region stands out with the second-highest prevalence of violence against women, reaching 37% (WHO, 2023). This alarming statistic is closely tied to structural systems that perpetuate gender inequalities.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the issue, leading to a surge in incidents of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence. Since the onset of the pandemic, seven out of ten

women report an increase in physical and verbal abuse, while six out of ten cite a rise in incidents of sexual harassment in public spaces (UN Women, 2021).

In more detail, based on data collected from 13 countries (Albania, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Nigeria, Paraguay, Thailand, and Ukraine), reveals that nearly one in two women has experienced some form of abuse since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the data indicates that one in four women feels less safe at home, with domestic conflicts having increased since the beginning of the pandemic. Approximately 21% of women report that one of the reasons for this insecurity is physical abuse (UN Women, 2021).

Furthermore, one in two women feels unsafe walking alone at night on the street, and one in five feels unsafe during the day. Simultaneously, half of the women with children have experienced abuse, while the corresponding percentages for women with a partner without children are 37%, and for women without a partner and children, it is 41% (UN Women, 2021).

Women residing in rural areas have reported feeling insecure when walking alone at night on the street since the onset of the pandemic, with a percentage of 44%, whereas the corresponding figure for urban areas is 39%. Simultaneously, the likelihood of experiencing sexual harassment in rural areas is 62%, compared to 55% in urban areas. Notably, employed women reported that 43% have experienced violence, 26% feel insecurity in their workplace environment, and 37% feel insecure walking alone at night. In comparison, non-employed women reported higher percentages, with 52%, 33%, and 50%, respectively (ibid).

In this context, it is recognized that a series of policies and measures need to be developed to support abused women and mitigate incidents of violence against women. These measures include the empowerment of women in the public sphere and in decision-making processes, the strengthening of support structures for abused women, and the systematic recording of statistical data related to the issue under consideration (ibid).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored and exacerbated existing social disparities, particularly evident across four critical dimensions: employment, healthcare, education, and abuse.

Throughout the pandemic, women faced disproportionate challenges in the workforce, experiencing higher rates of job loss and workplace difficulties compared to men. Gender inequalities entrenched within labor markets meant that women, often employed in industries with close customer contact or reliant on atypical employment arrangements, bore the brunt of economic downturns. The pandemic

not only reversed progress in narrowing the gender gap in workforce participation but also intensified the emotional and psychological stress faced by many women juggling work, caregiving, and household responsibilities.

In the realm of healthcare, disruptions caused by the pandemic disproportionately affected women and girls, limiting their access to essential sexual and reproductive health services. This lack of access led to increased maternal mortality rates, higher incidences of teenage pregnancies, and greater risks of HIV transmission. Furthermore, restrictions on movement and healthcare services hindered women's ability to exercise their reproductive rights, exacerbating existing inequalities in healthcare access.

Education systems worldwide faced unprecedented challenges during the pandemic, with school closures and the shift to online learning widening educational disparities, especially for girls in low-income and rural areas. The transition to distance learning highlighted inequalities in internet access and increased domestic responsibilities, hindering girls' ability to engage in remote education. Consequently, the risk of dropping out of school rose, contributing to higher rates of child marriage, early pregnancy, and child labor, particularly in vulnerable communities.

The pandemic also exacerbated incidents of violence against women and girls, with domestic violence rates surging in many parts of the world. Women, particularly those in rural areas, reported heightened insecurity and increased instances of physical, verbal, and sexual abuse. The spread of violence underscored the urgent need for comprehensive policies and support structures to assist abused women and address systemic issues perpetuating gender-based violence.

As societies embark on post-pandemic recovery efforts, addressing these established inequalities is imperative. Policy interventions and support structures must prioritize the needs of marginalized groups, empower women in decision-making processes, and foster inclusive and resilient communities. Only through concerted and sustained efforts can societies strive towards a future marked by equity, justice, and social cohesion.

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