Security, Refugees and Multiculturalism

Until lately, the debate on migration in European states focused on people leaving their home countries willingly in order to pursue economic benefits. Thus, most national immigration policies have been addressing voluntary migration although, if one looks back in history, the mass movement of people across their national border was the result of forced migration (Adamson,2006). The recent violent conflicts in many Middle Eastern and African states made thousands of people flee their homes and seek refuge on European soil. According to UNHCR (2015), more than 1 million people reached Europe fleeing war and persecution. Furthermore, the number of refugees worldwide increased from 8.8 million in 1980 to over 19 million in 2014 (Adamson, 2006 and UNHCR, 2015). The current influx of refugees made international migration one of the key issues on the security agenda for most European states, as these migration flows are perceived to be the main channel for terrorism (Adamson, 2006 and ICAR,2006).

Refugees started to be seen as a potential security issue because most them used smugglers to get in Europe and/or organised criminal networks to get fake documents that would give them the right to seek asylum. However, reports suggest that when people are fleeing civil war, they often have no other option but to use illegal means to reach a country where they can be protected (ICAR,2006). Therefore, the refugees are often characterised by how they entered in Europe rather than by the reason for which they are claiming asylum (ICAR,2006). Furthermore, when a Syrian passport was found in the possession of one of the Paris attackers (The Guardian, 2015), the ongoing growing concern that some refugees have been trained by different terrorist groups increased drastically.

 The challenge for Europe is to decrease the potential security risks associated with immigration without "undermining core 'European values' such as freedom, human rights and justice" (Dannreuther, 2007, pp.111), especially now with the increase in popularity of far right parties and in the negative descriptions of refugees in the media (Bowden, 2015). Besides the potential terrorist attacks, many fear that the mass refugee flows may alter the ethnic balance in the host countries and thus causing radical changes in the autochthone values and customs (ICAR,2006). In order to prevent the issues related to a potential clash between cultures, such as intolerance, discrimination and extremism, it is important for Europe to provide strategies for how to deal with the increasing cultural diversity that the refugee crisis is bringing (Kim, 2013).

With many European states starting to seal their boarders, the journey of the refugees to safety might take a different route, maybe through Bulgaria and Romania. Multiculturalism in Romania and Bulgaria has a different complexity than in Western Europe. Being neither former colonizing empires nor fully developed countries, Romania and Bulgaria were bypassed by the modern migration flows and thus they have no extensive experience in formulating integration policies for the new asylum seekers (Ellmeier and Rasky,2005; IMF,2015). Thus, the refugees might feel alienated from the societies they find themselves in, and this will increase the risk of them being isolated from host communities. This might fuel the existing anxiety on both sides, which might have repercussions on the security of the refugees and of host country citizens alike.

Although Europe has been multicultural from a long period of time, in 2011 key leaders across Europe declared that multiculturalism has failed and that it is the cause for everything that went wrong with the integration process of minority groups (Banting and Kymlicka, 2012). Furthermore, the recent terrorist attacks in Paris increased insecurity and mistrust between Muslims and other communities within European states, thus strengthening the argument that multiculturalism is

indeed a failure (Papademetriou,2015). However, according to Beck (2011), European states actually implemented a 'plural monoculturalism ' not multiculturalism, as different ethnic communities were perceived as "little nations" within one grater homogenous nation. Also, according to Mahamdallie (2011) the main reasons for radicalisation are discrimination, poverty and unemployment. Thus, the success of multiculturalism does not rely on the submissive and silent coexistence of different cultures and ethnicities but on their active interaction with each other (Parekh,2006). Furthermore, the ethical norms in a multicultural society should include values which are regarded as 'good' within the wider society because in the end no culture can be judged in isolation from the world (Griffin, 2011; Parekh, 2006). Although, there might be different cultural values that could be incompatible, it is not impossible to find common ground within the differences or to create new norms which will join together a diversity of cultural views (Evanoff, 2005). Then, could the shared common values serve as the nucleus for dialogue and conflict prevention in the current security context of Europe?

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