RISKS AND THREATS TO EUROPEAN SECURITY – THE MASSIVE FLOW OF REFUGEES

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Abstract: At a global level, the situation of refugees is treated as a national and international responsibility to provide a democratic context for their development, including respect for basic rights such as the right to shelter or food, as well as ensuring adaptation to the social environment of the country that received them, mentioning access to the labor market or access to education. According to resolution SG/SM/8417-SC/7523 of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, pursuing national security by violating or limiting human rights is a "unilateral, contradictory, and in the long term, undermining democracy" perspective (Bianchi et al., 2008:416).
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Introduction

The image of the refugee is a pejorative one of a person "without documents" in a socio-political context marked by the need to record and monitor every detail of daily life. Compared to citizens of a state, refugees are seen as "frozen" entities, rarely able to integrate into the local labor market or the local community, preferring a solitary existence in special centers, through which they can preserve their collective identity, as is the case of the numerous campuses in the Middle East, sheltering over 3 million Palestinians. The Palestinian exodus, starting in 1948, motivated the United Nations to create a specific agency to monitor and improve the situation of Palestinian refugees, being the first global approach to managing the phenomenon of migration, implicitly of refugees and asylum seekers (Burgess et al., 2011:105). Although it is a social stereotype, the image of the Palestinian refugee since the end of World War II tends to negatively orient public discourse at the national and international levels.

In the case of the European Union, in the public space the theme of managing the flow of refugees, without acting inhumanely, has become recurrent in the last five years. There are member states such as Italy or Germany, which have become a favorite target of refugees in search of social or political protection, as well as in the guise of a possibility of economic or educational development. Germany and France, as founding member states of the European Union, have constantly expressed their supportive position, considering that receiving refugees represents the respect of fundamental human rights, but member states such as the United Kingdom of Great Britain have expressed their skepticism regarding the need for the EU to "open" the doors to certain social categories, which may present an imminent risk of not adapting to the social, political, economic or social realities of the space (Bilgic, 2013:24).

Migration crises across Europe

Europe has been affected by difficult situations, even refugee crises, in the last decade, with a constant concern of both European authorities at the level of the community space, but also of national authorities, to properly manage their situation. In the last decade, decisive moments of European strategies to deal with refugees are reminiscent of the exodus of Balkan refugees at the time of the separation of the Republic of Yugoslavia. In the case of Bulgaria, for example, over 218,000 Bulgarians left the country, migrating mainly to Turkey, being one of the highest levels of European migration in the Balkans in the post-communist period, after 1989.

Another crucial moment in the case of European migration was represented by the three waves of Afghan refugees in the UK as a result of the civil war that affected this state, creating social tensions within the British state, with both representatives of parties or civil society who viewed Afghan refugees as a threat, but also representatives of the principle of respecting democratic treatment, based on fundamental human rights. On the other hand, in the case of the USA, the refugee issue was essentially influenced by post-Cold War political strategies, creating a feeling of social insecurity, since after 1970 asylum applications or the reception of refugees became a "generous" process (Christopher, 2006:64) from the American authorities, although the population would have liked a slower absorption rate. Specifically, over 96% of asylum applications or assistance granted to refugees went to people from communist countries or states of the Near East, the US wanting to consolidate its position as a decisive factor in Eastern Europe and Asia.

With the most recent enlargements of the European Union, the topic of migration, including the situation of refugees, has become a favorite topic in the discourse of European forums, but also of candidate countries. Before being admitted to the EU, Poland, Hungary or the Czech Republic had to highlight how they would manage migration, once the state changed to an EU member state, becoming a point of attraction for people from Eastern Europe as a better labor market or a better educational level, compared to their native country. Another coordinate of the migration strategy included the situation of migration from outside the community space or Europe, the new member states being required to take concrete measures to manage the situation in social, political, economic, but also cultural terms, including religious aspects.

On the other hand, founding member states such as France tend to adopt protective measures against immigrants, refugees or asylum seekers (Burgess et al., 2011:66), for example, the case of legal violations in areas considered "waiting", at the borders of the French state benefits from a period of judicial control of four days and a grace period of maximum twenty days, in which the person accused by the authorities for various violations of French law can demonstrate, gather evidence to support his innocence. In the case of immigrants, refugees or asylum seekers from other areas of France, the provision does not apply, as they fall directly under the incidence of French laws. The aforementioned provisions violate the Refugee Convention statute, but also French jurisprudence, since normally a person accused of a crime can be detained for an initial period of 24 hours, with the possibility of extension up to 48 hours as a measure of judicial control, and in the case of special situations such as drug trafficking or terrorism, the period of custody can be extended to four days. In the case of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers, an exacerbation of the

tendency for self-protection on the part of the French authorities can be observed, especially in the border areas, considered the most vulnerable, as they are likely to attract the interest of persons who violate the law, under the apparent protection of the status of immigrant, refugee or asylum seeker in the French state.

Compared to other historical periods, the refugee situation in 2015 constitutes a unique event, being the largest displacement movement of communities since the Second World War. Over 1 million refugees risked their lives, in precarious conditions such as improvised boats, to cross the Mediterranean Sea or traveled by car, in conditions of asphyxiation, to reach the territory of an EU member state, in the hope of obtaining protection. Refugees, towards which the EU has adopted a contradictory position, with member states supporting this influx, but also member states that consider that Europe is not prepared to host refugees from Asia or Africa, represent a social problem, which could become a diplomatic problem, in the absence of effective measures to manage the crisis that exists at this time. The masses of refugees arriving in Europe include both mature men and women, but also children, elderly people or people with disabilities. In this context of categories with special needs, such as pregnant women, elderly people or children with certain deficiencies, their placement in transit camps can create a social problem, as they do not receive the assistance they need, thus their rights are violated, and the countries hosting them risk severe sanctions. For example, during 2015, especially during periods of maximum refugee transit, such as June-December, over 250,000 children were registered by the Turkish or Greek authorities in refugee camps, in need of specific assistance, especially medical and psychological counseling, to overcome the traumas associated with the risky journey they were subjected to Europe (Boccardi, 2015:24).

The European Union, as well as international forums such as the United Nations, seemed to be taken aback by the influx of Asian refugees to Europe in the fall of 2015, acting contradictoryly in terms of adopting effective measures to manage the situation. Due to the hesitation of the authorities, the situation in some refugee camps was on the verge of becoming a diplomatic crisis, as they were not given the humanitarian assistance they needed, there were deficiencies in terms of shelter or food conditions, while their counselling was considered a secondary objective, the authorities being particularly interested in their registration, resettlement and monitoring. The collection of data on refugees is not an objective to be neglected, as it supports a state's efforts to objectively assess their situation, but respect for fundamental human rights should have taken precedence in all refugee camps, to the detriment of the particular interests of the authorities.

The Member States of the European Union, through their contradictory attitude towards refugees, have maintained a climate of insecurity, likely to create a diplomatic crisis. Some Member States, such as Hungary, have responded to the "threat" of refugees by increasing security measures, such as strengthening border security measures, creating protective fences or other obstacles necessary to prevent the transit of immigrants through their territory. Initially assumed as an internal protection measure, Hungary's decision to build protective fences on the borders with Yugoslavia or Romania can be considered a violation of fundamental human rights, assumed by the EU Member State. The effect of these measures, considered fair by the authorities of the respective state, was contrary to

expectations, as thousands of refugees tried to destroy the protective fences, driven by the urgent need to reach the territory of an EU Member State in order to obtain protection. If the refugees did not react in the manner already mentioned, they headed to neighboring states such as Croatia, forcing the authorities in this country to find solutions to the refugee crisis (Pallida, 2015:35).

After the first moments of the refugee crisis, namely October and November 2015, when most cases were registered, states in the Balkans and Eastern Europe, such as Turkey, imposed more rigorous control of transit, in order to be able to monitor and intervene as efficiently as possible in the conditions of humanitarian crises. For example, the Turkish authorities allow transit through the territory of the state only to people from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, who cannot present identity documents, based on the context in their native countries. For other people, who wish to reach Turkey, the authorities request the necessary documents, and in their absence they can temporarily host applicants or expel them, if they pose risks such as a history of illegal actions.

Monitoring, which transit states have invoked to better manage the refugee crisis, can be considered a violation of human rights, as it has led groups of refugees to remain in camps without adequate conditions, awaiting answers from the authorities, or to try to reach Europe by transiting through a country other than the one initially chosen. People in the first situation, such as the refugees between the Greek border and Macedonia, were forced in December 2015 to accept relocation to camps whose conditions were precarious, some of them preferring to try transiting through another European country. In this context, the authorities' increased focus on monitoring methods can create diplomatic crises, as refugees are indirectly encouraged to head to another transit point, putting their lives at risk or affecting their already precarious situation. In the absence of effective strategies for managing the refugee situation for the coming period, moments such as the influx of refugees in November 2015 may be repeated, with negative effects that are difficult to anticipate or resolve under time pressure. The situation is all the more difficult, as children or adolescents who cannot make decisions for themselves are implicitly influenced by the attitude of their parents or guardians, who consider that reaching Europe is not enough, and that it is necessary to reach countries with developed economies in order to obtain certain benefits, much more significant than in the case of countries bordering Asia or Africa. In this context, the states hosting refugees must find pertinent solutions to manage their situation. The establishment of strict rules, similar to detention, cannot create the expected effects, as they limit the freedom of movement of refugees, but neither the attitude of non-involvement, considering that it is the duty of the state where refugees will settle to respect their rights, is beneficial in the case of an efficient management of the refugee crisis.

In addition to macro-level issues, such as the security policy of a state or the position of the European Union, the refugee crisis also has effects at the micro-level, of the local community. The continuous flow of refugees implies costs for the local community, such as waste management, the provision of electricity services or the supply of drinking water. In addition, stringent services such as medical or psychological assistance, as appropriate, as well as the provision of educational opportunities, given that refugees wish to learn the language of the local community that hosts them. In this context, local authorities must find the necessary solutions to provide these services, necessary to respect the rights of refugees.

The public image of refugees

The image of refugees, reflected in the media (newspapers, television, internet, to a lesser extent radio) is contradictory, suggesting ambiguous reporting by the local community or the state itself regarding the refugee situation. According to the analysis of the British Information Centre for Refugees and Asylum Seekers, carried out between 1999 and 2004, the community perceives refugees in three ways: elements incapable of affecting the existing social balance; neutral presences or presences that negatively affect the evolution of the community or, more generally, the evolution of the host state (International Policy Institute, 2004:28).

Regarding the stance of accepting the presence of refugees, the analysis of the British Information Centre for Refugees and Asylum Seekers on visual documents (photos of articles, images from TV materials or online creations such as banners) suggested that refugees are caught in poses that suggest vulnerability or the lack of negative intentions towards the community. Thus, the refugees smile at the journalist and implicitly the audience of his journalistic material. In the text accompanying the visual document, journalists usually show a tone of sympathy, focusing on the difficult situation in their homeland, as well as on the possibilities of improving their lives, given the assumption of the social and political rules existing in the host country. The journalists' favorite images focused on the case of Ugandan refugees, who settled in the UK, forced to leave their homeland due to the authoritarian Amin regime. In the host country, they have managed to be accepted by the community, proving that they are meritorious elements of it through honest behavior and involvement in the labor market or in the educational system as students. The case of neutral presences, who have not yet been accepted by the community, being in search of a job or waiting to be accepted into the British educational system is reduced, suggesting the existence of a duality between being accepted and being rejected by the British state, in the form of the local community in which refugees are trying to establish themselves.

Refugees who are not accepted by the community are portrayed as people who do not want to respect the social balance of the community, being responsible for illegalities such as robbery, prostitution, begging, deprivation of liberty, illegal introduction of people into British territory or even murder. In the case of these refugees, journalists prefer to use visual documents that suggest the efficiency of the British justice system, such as the escort of the defendants in handcuffs or their presence in courtrooms. In this sense, journalists give the public the impression that they are safe, since the authorities monitor and punish any behavior that is not approved by the community.

Other frames, which journalists use to create the context of social fear or the need to avoid contact with refugees, are represented by images that are intuitively associated with negative values, such as begging that suggests the intention of refugees to work, to receive aid from the British state or passers-by. Similarly, people suffering from incurable diseases are illustrated, respecting their right to image by covering their faces, but the impact is overwhelming on the public, suggesting that refugees could be the sources of diseases that affect the community. In this case, the text that accompanies the visual document is also alarming, indirectly creating the scenario of an unwanted invasion of foreigners, by using

words such as "millions", "increasingly more", "massive groups" or "explosion" (International Policy Institute, 2004:29).

The image of refugees has become a constant topic of the media, starting with the case of Aylan Kurdi, a three-year-old Syrian boy, found dead on a beach in the Mediterranean Sea, in September 2015, at the time of a Syrian refugee crisis, trying to reach Europe at all costs, in the hope of a better life. The image of the lifeless boy belongs to a Turkish photojournalist, becoming a topic taken up by media institutions around the world. Also, on social media, the event created an acute interest of users to know more details about immigrants and refugees. For example, before the news about Aylan Kurdi, approximately 6,000 users on Twitter were searching for information or engaging in discussions about immigrants and refugees every day. Immediately after the tragic announcement of his case, user interest increased to 5.3 million searches on the topic of immigrants and refugees.

The case of Aylan Kurdi, which aroused the sympathy of some audiences targeted by the media, was cancelled as an impact by the terrorist attacks of November 13, 2015, in Paris. If until that moment, public opinion mostly viewed the situation of Syrian refugees as difficult, demanding active intervention by the authorities to improve their situation, after the Parisian incident involving a Syrian refugee, public opinion suggested a different approach to the problem of refugees, especially Syrian ones. The media suggested the possibility of closing the borders or limiting the right of access to the territory of European countries considered favorite targets of refugees.

A similar, but nuanced, approach was taken by public institutions such as the European Council regarding measures to manage the refugee crisis, while the Hungarian government adopted drastic measures such as permanent control at its borders, trying to convince neighboring states such as Yugoslavia to create impenetrable barriers for refugees. Although the measures adopted by Hungary were based on the need to defend the integrity of its border communities, its intentions to create impenetrable fences raised questions about the ability of the Hungarian state to respect fundamental human rights in this context of the Asian refugee crisis.

Moving the discussion from the level of acceptance or refusal, it is interesting to analyze what is the impact of refugees, once integrated into local communities in Europe. In this sense, there are two possibilities of analysis: they are a profitable source for the community or, on the contrary, they are a cause for concern. After the dramatic episode of Alan Kurdi, the European Union decided that member states must receive a number of 32,000 refugees and asylum seekers, with this figure to gradually increase to the level of 160,000, in order to avoid the recurrence of similar events.

By 2015, the peak of the influx of refugees and asylum seekers, more than 362,000 illegal immigrants were arriving in Europe annually, hoping for a peaceful social climate, better job opportunities or educational opportunities that were non-existent in their home countries. In this context, the European perspective was ambiguous: initially, limiting the access of refugees, considering that they could become a financial "burden", and finally stimulating their access, based on respect for fundamental rights or to integrate a cheap workforce and adapt potential experts to European culture in the case of young refugees who want to settle in Europe (UNCHR, 2016).

Conclusions

European legislation on asylum seekers and refugees was created in the early 1990s to provide answers to a small number of cases. At present, the existing legislation is outdated, as Europe is facing a refugee crisis, for which there is no legal framework designed to provide a solution. In the 1990s, a refugee or today's applicant usually settled in the first European country they reached, for example if they were a Yugoslav immigrant they could choose Hungary as their host country, where they were fingerprinted, introduced to adaptation programmes on professional or educational skills. At this point, refugees or asylum seekers may decide not to settle in the first European country they reach, benefiting from the prerogatives of freedom of movement within the European space, leading European authorities to create strategies that guarantee their rights in any European country they choose at a given time as a host country. The tendency of refugees and asylum seekers is to transit border countries such as Romania or Yugoslavia, considered not as attractive in terms of economy and personal development possibilities, as countries in Central or Western Europe, such as France, Germany or the United Kingdom, corresponding to their interests.

Since 2014, the trend of refugees and asylum seekers heading to Europe has been increasingly pronounced, based on the displacement of people from conflict zones. For example, in 2014, over 60 million people were affected by armed, economic or other conflicts, a record number for the last seven decades. Of this volume of affected people, 14.4 million were refugees, a figure that indicates an increase of over 25% compared to 2013.

Regarding their image perceived by the local population, sociological surveys have highlighted attitudes such as fear or repulsion towards the refugee groups that have arrived in the respective community or that may arrive, which suggests the premises of a possible social conflict between the two social groups. The perception of local populations in transit areas such as Bulgaria or Greece is that the authorities that should represent their interests, such as the Government, are not capable of analyzing and intervening effectively in the refugee crisis. The feeling of social fear towards this social category is also fueled by the image of the terrorist attacks in Europe in recent times, metropolises such as Madrid or London being affected by illegal actions of immigrants of Asian origin. On the other hand, European authorities such as the European Parliament call for social dialogue and solidarity, arguing the difficult situation of these social groups, who arrive in Europe in search of fundamental rights that are affected in their native countries, such as the right to equal treatment with regard to race, religion or any other criterion.

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