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Introduction

The refugee crisis has undoubtedly been one of the greatest challenges that the global community has faced since the beginning of the 21st century. Although the emphasis at the moment seems to be on the urgent need for the management of the refugee crisis, in the midst of all this lays an important challenge that involves the integration of refugees in the countries that will eventually host them. Central to this concern is the analysis regarding the relation of the newly arrived population to local labour markets. This paper suggests that such focus needs to take into consideration not only the structural characteristics of host countries but also the values and beliefs of refugees concerning economic action. As opposed to essentialist approaches that view this group of people as a unified whole, which is driven by survival or economic self-interest, this analysis argues that a focus on the perceptions of refugees concerning work can inform not only labour market policy, but our wider understanding of the issues that emerge.

More specifically, this entails the use of a biographical approach that will focus on the effects that the turmoil in the countries of origin and the actual migration journey has had on refugees' perceptions of work. In order to do that the research utilizes the explanatory tool of the holistic approach to migrant exclusion (Xypolytas 2017b). This framework focuses on the importance of migrant labour and approaches exclusion in three stages: Preparation, Allocation and Habituation. *Preparation* refers to the experiences of crises in the countries of origin and the cultural acclimatization of future migrants to casual and low-status work. *Allocation* involves the workings of the labour markets in the host country and the overrepresentation of migrants in low-status jobs. *Habituation* concerns the internalization of the demands and characteristics of labour that lead to the marginalization of migrants in the host countries.

Using qualitative interviews with migrants and refugees in the island of Lesvos, the research shows that people in the present developing situation are faced with a preparation stage that – in the absence of proper policy intervention – decisively paves the way for their

future exclusion. In past experience, the preparation stage involved usually only one country; namely, the country of origin. In the case of the refugee crisis, the preparation stage spans across three countries at least: a) the country of origin, b) Turkey, as an intermediate stop and c) the Hotspots in Greece. It is within this long journey, which is in no way concluded by all, that the perceptions of work of migrants and refugees are affected and shaped by the mold of a profound humanitarian crisis.

Literature review

In the past three years there has been considerable research activity on the topic of refugee integration and the vast majority of this work naturally suggests that access to labour market is arguably the most important factor for accomplishing that goal. However, this work can be analytically divided into two dominant categories. On the one hand, there are studies whose findings suggest that most of the burden of the integration efforts should, or eventually will, rest on the shoulders of refugees themselves. This approach is heavily influenced by human capital theories and mainly focuses on the social characteristics of the population in order to address issues of integration. On the other hand, there is another strand of research that represents a more critical approach and focuses more on structural characteristics of the host countries and the various barriers these pose for refugee integration.

Concerning the first approach, the research has been predominantly quantitative and has identified many key factors that influence labour market entry. Using survey data and elaborate statistical analysis, it places particular importance on education or proficiency in the language of the host country as important determinants of integration (Auer 2017, Bach 2017). Similarly, this type of research has highlighted the importance of refugee resilience and adaptability to labour market characteristics (Bakker et al 2017, Pajic et al 2018) or the need to actively engage in entrepreneurial activity (Sak et al 2017, Obschonka et al 2018). In this line of reasoning, the state could facilitate these efforts by establishing certain policies, but at its core the argument suggests that it is the activation of refugees themselves that is of paramount importance for successful labour market integration.

Apart from quantitative research, there has been also some qualitative work that approached refugee labour market integration in a rather similar manner. These studies emphasize strongly on the need for refugees to establish networks in the host countries

(Kofler and Streifeder 2017, Gericke et al 2018) as well as on their ability to quickly adjust culturally to the workings of local communities and labour markets (Almohamed et al 2017).

On the other hand, the second strand of research suggests that it is the structural barriers in the host countries and not personal characteristics that undermine labour market integration for refugees. Once again, there are many quantitative studies that show there is persistently poor evidence of labour market integration for refugees due to discriminatory practices (Ceritoglou et al 2017), inflexible institutional arrangements concerning skill recognition and creation (Eisele 2014) and over-representation of migrants and refugees in casual and low-status jobs (Aslund et al 2016, El-Warari et al 2017).

However, it appears that both approaches seem to underestimate the effects that the turmoil in the country of origin and the management of the refugee crisis can have on labour market integration. Unfortunately, this is a rather common characteristic of migration research, which often overlooks the analytical importance of the country of origin or the migration journey and instead focuses solely on the events and features of the host country (Xypolytas 2017a). There is some important research however, which suggests that there are elements within the management of the refugee crisis itself that contribute to labour market disadvantages. For example, a quantitative study in Australia found that there are significant links between time spent in refugee camps and the ability to enter stable employment in the host country (Delaporte and Piracha 2017).

Nonetheless, in order to understand the mechanisms that connect refugee management and labour market integration it is important to place emphasis on the values and beliefs of refugees themselves. In that vein, a rather important study is a recent one by Refai et al (2018), which suggests that before entering the host country, the living conditions and experiences in refugee camps in Jordan have heavily influenced refugees' labour identity which is becoming centered on the notions of immediate gratification and survival.

Given this research background, the present study suggests that in order to approach labour market integration, much more emphasis should be placed on the countries of origin and the intermediate stages of the migration journey that have shaped refugees' experiences as well as their values concerning work. The developments in the country of origin, in Turkey and in Greek hotspots represent a social space that influences refugees' work orientations and the latter ought to be understood as an essential analytical aspect of labour

market integration. This research wishes to voice refugees' experiences and concerns and suggests that these three spaces that make up the preparation stage have a profound effect on labour identity and thus undermine any policy interventions that do not take this development into account. After establishing the analytical tools and the context within which this study is situated, the next section will look at the methodological implications of the research.

Methodology

The research was carried out in Lesvos during a 6-month period between April and September of 2017 and the data was collected through 22 semi-structured interviews. The reason for using qualitative methodology was twofold. *Firstly*, the research focused on the perceptions and beliefs of refugees and migrants concerning work and labour identity. This implies the ability to record the interaction between personal consciousness and objective social reality (Thomas and Znaniecki 1984) that can best be accomplished through qualitative data gathering. In other words, perceptions of work cannot be approached without recording both the experience of labour exercised as well as the meaning that this generates for the subjects themselves (Beynon and Blackburn 1972). *Secondly*, the focus was on the attitudinal shifts and changes that occur as refugees move from one part of the preparation stage to the next. Emphasizing on social processes that unravel through time makes it very difficult to depend on quantitative methodology, which can only provide snapshots and does not easily have the ability to track changes and shifts in values and beliefs (Patten and Newhart 2018).

The interview guide was constructed in order to approach the nature of employment and perceptions of work in three distinct contexts: a) in the country of origin, b) in Turkey and c) in the hotspot in Lesvos. In the case of the Moria hotspot there were no data on work and instead questions concerning living conditions and everyday activities were asked, since these proved to be of great significance for the development of specific work orientations amongst refugees.

Concerning the sampling of the research, this was based on male refugees from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. More specifically from the 22 interviews taken, 8 were with Syrians, 7 with Iraqis and 7 with Afghani. The age group of the research population was from 19 years old to 33. This was an intentional choice as the sample should cover people of economically

active age and at the same time be indicative of the population in the hotspot of Moria, of which the vast majority is young males. Apart from that, it must be noted that from the population living in Moria a great number comes from the African continent. However, it was a methodological choice to deal solely with subjects from these three countries, as they represent people that, due to the armed conflict in the countries of origin, have more probabilities of having their asylum application accepted and eventually move to various countries in Europe. In addition to that, the armed conflict in itself is significant as it plays an important role to the generation of specific attitudes concerning occupational identity and work orientations.

The specific people that participated in the research were selected through snowball sampling. This is the technique used when one interviewee is introducing the researcher to a second interviewee and that one to a third etc. (Noy 2008). This approach to sampling is particularly important for hard-to-reach populations, where a certain level of trust must be established before the actual data collection takes place (Cohen and Arieli 2011). Arguably, the most important aspect of snowball sampling is the issue of the so called "key people". These are individuals that are respected within the community that one wishes to research and they can provide the necessary introduction of the researcher to the group.

In order to avoid a possible bias in the sample and safeguard reliability, 4 different key people were used. Using a smaller number might have led to chain referrals that would eventually form a sample which would not be indicative of the population but rather of the social characteristics of the key people (Waters 2015). Hence, each key person provided a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5 referrals. The remaining 5 interviews were with people that were particularly eager themselves to participate in the research.

The interviews were conducted outside the hotspot in canteens that have seating arrangements with tables and chairs. This was particularly challenging due to weather conditions as well as considerable noise, since these canteens are the only place for socialization outside the camp. Out of the 22 interviews, 5 were with subjects whose command of the English language was sufficient for this specific purpose and 17 were conducted in Arabic with the aid of a translator. The translator was a Palestinian-Greek political scientist who was working as a volunteer in Lesvos and his educational background ensured a working knowledge of the methodological implications behind his role as an interpreter.

Having said that, here are indeed certain considerations concerning the use of interpreters in qualitative interviews (Edwards 1998, Kosny et al 2014), such as the ability of the interpreter to disassociate himself from the events and opinions described, but nonetheless, this was a conscious methodological choice. Knowledge of English in the three countries of interest suggests a relatively high level of educational attainment and socioeconomic background. Thus, conducting all the interviews with subjects that spoke English, albeit practical, would seriously undermine the reliability of the research (Marshal and While 1994).

Lastly, in terms of data analysis, after the transcription of the interviews 3 axial codes were created (Strauss and Corbin 2008): a) *Conditions of Work*, b) *Perceptions of Work* and c) *Living Conditions*. Each of these was in turn separated in the 3 contexts of interest: Country of origin, Turkey and Moria hotspot. These categories were further elaborated and eventually 17 codes were formulated and became the building blocks for the analysis.

Data analysis

The main argument of this paper is that there are three distinct parts of the preparation stage which seriously undermine refugees' social status but more importantly, they strongly affect their work orientations and make people particularly vulnerable to the dangers of future exclusion. The main reasons for this is that refugees become culturally accustomed to low-status and casual labour as well as the loss of social rights. These are developments that people experience initially in the country of origin, afterwards in Turkey and lastly in Greece. Following these processes of marginalization, the exodus from this social context becomes a necessity for which refugees are willing to accept social conditions that they otherwise may not have accepted. That in turn can effectively undermine their future social position in the host countries as it poses a grave threat to their future social integration.

- *Country of origin*

For the three countries in question (Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan), armed conflict – either in the form of officially recognized war or in the form of generalized insurgency – is the main characteristic for many years now. This is particularly important since this environment massively undermines the ability of crucial social institutions to function properly or even elementary. In all three countries the data suggest that the issue of security

is the main reason behind the staggering situation in terms of development and economic growth (Shatz 2014, Echavez et al. 2014).

Given the particularly lengthy period that these countries have been in turmoil, it is no surprise that the people interviewed have experienced a rather turbulent occupational past. From those subjects that had an employment history, the data suggest that their main concern surrounding their work was the one of safety. A rather typical example of this is 33-year-old Ahmed from Iraq, who was working as a truck driver for 10 years. The armed violence that plagues the country forced him out of his job and into casual labour until the time of his departure to Turkey.

"*I was driving big trucks for a big company (for) 10 years. But it was very difficult. Some roads were closed and people with guns (were) shooting and you have to pay to go by. Or you load the truck and bombs would go (off). Big bombs. I can't do that… I left. Worked construction, plumber, fix things in houses. Anything! I did that 2 years and I left… Nothing for me there*"

The same problems appear in different occupations as Mohammed, a 28-year-old teacher from Afghanistan, suggests. In his region, Taliban forces, in order to gain resources, often abduct young girls from – or on their way to – school and demand ransom from the family. As a result, many families do not send their children to school and instead they pay teachers to come to their homes and give lessons there.

"*I was working for three years as a private teacher but it was not safe for me. They (the Taliban) knew who was working as a teacher and many were beaten up and some even killed. They even stopped me one time but I left. I couldn't stay… We made clothes at home with my wife and I worked in the field. I got some money and I came here*".

What both of these extracts show is that on the one hand, living in this part of the world is particularly unsafe. The absence of a formal recognition of a country being at war does not imply that living conditions are approximating those in times of peace. It is hardly the case for both Iraq and Afghanistan. However, the main point is that armed conflict is forcing people to move away from their occupation and into casual labour in order to survive. This implies a loss of occupational identity prior to migration, which has been identified in the past as an important aspect of both social relations in the country of origin and future migrant exclusion (Zhurzhenko 2001, Xypolytas 2017a). The inability to define one's self through a specific skill set and instead focus on the priority of survival might

intuitively might make sense in times of crisis and war. However, the data suggest that this undermines the ability of workers to retreat to the previous perceptions of work after the end of the crisis (Komarovsky 1940, Bridger and Pine 1998, Xypolytas 2013). This is a crucial finding especially in terms of policy-making and the analysis will return to this in the last section.

- *Turkey*

The second part of the preparation stage takes place in Turkey. It is there that people come for the first time in contact with the social status of the refugee (not in legal terms, but in terms of perception). Especially for those who stayed in the country and worked in order to gain passage to Greece, this is a particularly difficult experience. One that introduces them to a social space with little or no access to social rights and the facing of many dangers on a daily basis (Yildiz and Uzgoren 2016). Similarly, the stay in Turkey represents an important part of the preparation stage, as it often brings people in close contact with low-status work and the social identity that is often associated with the undermining of social and human rights.

The passing from Turkey is an essential part of the journey to Greece, since all the migrants and refugees that live or have stayed in the past in Lesvos or other islands have arrived on boats from Turkey. Their stay in the neighboring country might be very short – a day or two – or particularly long, as hundreds of thousands are still waiting for a chance to cross the border. The consequences for the refugees are rather different depending on the time spent in the country. In the case of a short stay, the main negative effect is the contact with the smuggling operation, which entails hiding from the authorities for a day or two and entering unsafe vessels for a life-threatening journey. Regardless of the small duration of stay, for many migrants and refugees, this is a rather unpleasant experience since it introduces them to a world of criminality and exploitation (Jarahzadeh 2013, Mandic 2017). However, apart from the issues of legality, this introduction is particularly important as it is the first contact with the social status of the refugee. A status, which according to the refugees is defined by the lack of social and human rights. Hussam, who is 19 years old from Syria, explains this quite clearly in the following extract.

"*I was shocked. I felt like a cow. We were told where to go. They made us sleep in the forest to hide and we didn't know what was going on. They put us on the boat and we pray we will*

live to go to the other side… For them, we were not even people. I was not Hussam. I am a refugee. I have no rights. I keep my mouth closed and I go where they tell me".

As important as the above may be, it appears that the experiences of those that stayed in Turkey for a longer period of time is of greater sociological significance. Because it is during their employment and stay in Turkey that perceptions concerning work and social status are decisively constructed. The people that have stayed in Turkey are the ones that did not have the sufficient funds to cross the sea into the islands of Greece. Hence, during their prolonged stay they had to work in order to gain this amount of money which varied, at that time, from 700 to 1000 euros. Living and especially working conditions for refugees in Turkey have been already described as fairly problematic by much research on the field (Yildiz and Uzgoren 2016, Baban et al 2016). The data from this research is in no way different. 25-year-old Ali from Iraq explains this quite clearly.

"*I was working in a small factory and we made showers (showerheads). 13 hours. Can you believe that? 6 hours work. Standing and making shower. No break. Just standing. Then half hour break to eat and 6 hours again. My feet still hurt. And then run back to my room because it was late and they attack you and steal your money. One time police stop me and take 60 euros. Then they hit me. They say they want more. But it's OK. I left*".

In a more or less similar vein, Murad, who is 21 years old from Syria, says the following.

"*Things are very bad in Turkey. You can't go outside at night. There are young people with knives and police and they hit you and they say "para" (money)… So, you work and you stay inside. I was living and working in a bakery. I worked hard for 12 hours. 8 at night until 8 in the morning. Then I sleep and the same next day. For 4 months. And then the boss didn't pay me and said he will call the police because I didn't have papers*".

These are rather typical extracts concerning the situation in the cities by the coast of Turkey and indeed the problems have been commonly reported by the press and other organizations worldwide (Open Democracy 2016). What is sociologically important however, is that, opposed to the assumptions behind the EU – Turkey refugee deal, Turkey is not perceived as a "safe country" by many refugees. Cases of muggings, violent assaults, rape and even murder, with refugees being the victims, are unfortunately happening rather often (Hakan 2017) and avoiding the public eye seems to be an efficient survival strategy for many people. The options in this case are the following: Either live with many other

refugees in a small room or flat, in which case when one goes outside, they would have to take their money with them in fear of having them stolen by other occupants. In this scenario, the refugees are vulnerable to beatings and muggings or even having their money taken by corrupt members of the police force.

The other option is taking up jobs that would prevent them from entering the public eye. Much like migrant women, entering live-in domestic work in order to gain money and avoid being caught by the police, many refugees are forced to take up jobs that entail living in the place of work. As it has been shown by research on the field, this form of labour, apart from its exploitative conditions, also exposes people in conditions of servitude and deference (ILO 1995, Anderson 2000, Xypolytas 2016) and can be an important factor that influences perceptions of work. Such work, is indeed difficult and occasionally hazardous, but it also may often involve the failure to observe the terms agreed with the employers, which is the case for some refugees who are forced into making this choice of employment. Generally speaking, what this rather brief description suggests is that Turkey indeed represents a crucial part of the preparation stage that is strongly associated with low-status work and the undermining of social rights, and it lays an important stone on a structure of exclusion that will be further built in the hotspots of Greece.

- *Hotspots in Greece (Moria, Lesvos)*

The third space of the preparation stage are the hotspots of Greece and Italy and, in the case of this particular research, the hotspot of Moria in the island of Lesvos. The refugees' stay in the hotspot is characterized by an extremely long period of waiting in order for their asylum claim to be processed and then accepted or denied. During this period, they live in often appalling conditions that seriously undermine their physical and mental health (Hebebrand et al 2016, Al Jazeera 2017, Jauhiainen 2017). Apart from that, the hotspot represents a space of demoralization (Amnesty International 2016, Afouxenidis et al 2017) that refugees are willing to escape under any means necessary. This desperate need to move away from the constraints of migration policy can undermine refugees' safety as well as their ability to enter labour markets with precaution to the dangers of the allocation to casual and low status jobs.

The main characteristic of living in the Moria hotspot, as described by all the interviewees, is inactivity. Hundreds of people, mostly men, are living inside the camp waiting for their asylum claim to be made and then processed. This is a particularly long

period that can take up to 9 or even 12 months. During this time, the activities organized by the authorities responsible for the hotspot are minimal, since most of them are organized from NGOs outside the camp and they usually involve mainly women and children. This intuitively makes sense, given the vulnerability of this subgroup, but it leaves the vast majority of the camp, which is young males (18 to 30 years old), in complete idleness.

The act of waiting in itself can become a great problem for the later integration of refugees. Making people wait, without destroying hope, is one of the quintessential ways of experiencing domination (Bourdieu 2000). Ethnographical research on welfare claimants has shown that the long period of waiting is an essential part of constructing compliant and passive citizens (Auyero 2011). The act of waiting for this long period of time represents a technique of domination that generates passivity in the refugee population and can greatly undermine integration efforts, especially those centered on active labour market policies, as discussed in the literature review section.

Apart from the above, during their time in the camp refugees and migrants have to live under extremely problematic conditions that involve among others inappropriate housing facilities, hygiene problems, 500 meters long queues for sometimes inedible food, lack of personal space, deaths of fellow refugees inside the hotspot that understandably upset the entire camp, riots and clashes with the police. This list, which is under no circumstances comprehensive, combined with the unwanted prospects of returning back to the country of origin, being sent back to Turkey, or remaining even longer in Lesvos without having the funds to support oneself, makes the situation extremely difficult. Often refugees and migrants are quite desperate to leave the island, in which case, if they can afford it, they pay smugglers to get them across to the mainland and from there maybe find a similar way to reach another European country or remain in Athens and try to live there.

The combination of idleness, often inhumane conditions and fear of deportation has taken its toll on refugees and migrants, with problems of mental illness being the top priority for the authorities and the NGOs operating in Lesvos (PBS 2017). 22-year-old Amir from Syria says the following concerning this problem.

"*I see many people and they are all depressed. You see so many in the camp walking just like that and talking to themselves. Or they sit down and cry and you don't ask anymore. It's everyday the same. I try to walk outside the camp up in the mountain and be alone. Because*

this is the biggest problem. You are never alone. Last time I was alone I was in Syria. It is so difficult. It makes you hard inside"

These demoralizing conditions are combined – or even arguably tackled – with the extensive use of alcohol and drugs inside the camp. The abuse of alcohol and substances as well as prostitution are daily problems that refugees face in Moria. One of the ways authorities are dealing with this situation is to find alternate forms of housing for women, unaccompanied minors and families, so that these people are not exposed to the dangers of these rather common practices. It is understandable that this is not a particularly effective strategy. As with the case of organized social activities, the main bulk of the population, which is young males, is not affected by this measure. Even more so, prostitution, drugs and alcohol are becoming more prevalent inside the camp. 21-year-old Masoud from Syria describes the situation.

"*Oh! Here we have everything friend. What do you want (laughing)? Drugs? Easy! Everybody knows who sells them and sometimes they ask you. They are so busy all the time but they have time for new customers (laughing)… They have bottles of whiskey and vodka and they sell them. After 9 at night everybody is drunk. Some people can't sleep without whiskey or vodka. When you are in a room with 30 people. One is singing, one is on the phone, some fight. It's crazy… And prostitutes. Yes! We know who are the prostitutes. There is a mattress behind the wall and some tents are just for that… Moria life is expensive (laughs)*".

It is understandable from the analysis above that the experience of living in the hotspot Moria is indeed rather disheartening. However, what is important is the values and attitudes that are generated within this environment. The data from the interviews show a clear case of individualization. In the context of the hotspot approach, as it is experienced in Lesvos, refugees are trying to cope with the situation relying on their own devices. This undermines the ability of people to create or be a part of collectivities that could defend the rights of refugees in these circumstances. But more importantly, it generates specific values concerning peoples' social relations. Ahmed is 25 years old from Afghanistan and he describes this attitudinal shift in the following manner.

"*Here you learn many things about people. So many different people are here. Good, bad, with problems, crazy… Inside the camp, you trust no one. You see everything here. Drugs, alcohol, prostitutes. You know who to avoid. And everybody wants something. But it's*

normal. I want something too. You want something with this (points at recorder). You see what people want and it is good. It is the truth. Before I was like a child. You tell me something I believe it. Now I am more wise. I understand people".

This third part of the preparation stage is arguably more important from the other two due to its extremely negative consequences. The "Hotspot Approach" represents not only the physical but also the cultural entry point into Europe. It is not simply a place where people temporary live in order to move to their next destination. It is a social space that for many refugees signifies the cultural condition of living in Europe[1]. So, it is understandable that the most crucial part of the hotspot experience is the generation of values and attitudes that can seriously undermine the future social integration of refugees. Combined with the experience of work in both the countries of origin and Turkey, this third part of the preparation stage can affect work orientations which in turn can heighten the risk of exclusion for refugees in the countries they will eventually find themselves in. This is a topic of paramount importance that will be analyzed in the following section.

- *The preparation stage and its effect on work orientations*

As previous research on migration suggests (Psimmenos 2013, Lazarescu 2015, Xypolytas 2017), work orientations are particularly affected by the preparation stage and play a pivotal role on the allocation of migrants in the labour markets of the host country (Peck 2000). The present data show any one of the three parts of the preparation stage can have a decisive effect on work orientations. It becomes even harder for those refugees that experienced more than one. As opposed to static sociological understandings of the issue, work orientations are a dynamic cultural construct that alters depending on the conditions experienced both within and outside the employment "gate" (Beynon and Blackburn 1972, Daniel 1973). The three parts that comprise the preparation stage understandably lead to a purely instrumental orientation to work that 28-year-old Karim from Afghanistan portrays rather clearly.

"*I will find work when I am in Europe. I learn how to fight for my life and my family. I am not afraid in Afghanistan. I am not afraid in Turkey. I am not afraid in Moria. People say here (in Greece) 'Things are difficult. No Work'. I say you have to fight. First, I go to*

[1] For example, the living conditions are generating a level of skepticism – if not hostility – towards the political decisions concerning the management of the refugee crisis.

Europe. Then I find work. In Turkey I worked very hard. In Europe I (will) do the same. There is work always"

It is important that, regardless of the country that refugees end up, the allocation in the host labour market is not similar to the employment history of the preparation stage. If this becomes the case, there can be detrimental effects on the social relations of migrants to the host country and it can lead to their exclusion, as previous migration research suggests (Lazarescu 2015, Xypolytas 2016). Karim's orientations might appear valid and self-explanatory, but there is an inherent danger to this approach that the scientific and the policy-making communities ought to address.

Policy suggestions

Although it is not within the scope of this paper to engage in an elaborate policy analysis, certain brief suggestions can be made as the data point to specific directions. *Firstly*, it is important for refugee policy to be informed by qualitative studies. The subjective aspects of the refugee crisis can provide policy-makers with a wealth of knowledge concerning the characteristics, values, beliefs and incentives of the people who these policies target. Unacknowledging this can lead to poor results in both design and implementation. This issue becomes even more significant in the light of recent efforts to algorithmically approach relocation and integration policies (Aziz et al 2017, Bansak et al 2018). The *second* important suggestion involves the need for immediate decongestion of hotspots. The living conditions in these camps can effectively undermine labour market integration given the effects of confinement and inactivity on refugees' mental health as well as on their ability to become active citizens in the host country (Ayero 2011).

The *third* issue is understandably the one of skills. This becomes imperative not only for avoiding the "lure" of casual labour, but also for providing refugees in the host country with a sense of social identity, an important part of which is skill and labour identity (Attewell 1990, Nowika 2012). In order to actualize this, apart from skill creation, much needs to be done in order to enhance the mechanisms of acknowledging already existing skills. This means both recognizing existing educational degrees, or in case of interrupted studies, facilitate the ability to continue studying in the specific field or discipline chosen in the past (Desiderio 2016, Lodigiani and Sarli 2017). Similarly, it entails the acknowledgment of labour skills established through experience in the country of origin.

The practicalities behind these suggestions are in no way to be underestimated. After all, for many states in Europe this would demand the exercise of much greater flexibility in existing institutional structures (Sumption 2013) as well as the establishment of new ones that are not present even for those born in the country (Donlevy 2016). However, receiving this rather large number of people without accounting for the events of their personal histories and without considering the institutional and scientific experience gained from previous migration flows, would essentially render states unprepared for the challenges at hand. Despite the differences between the refugee crisis and previous migration patterns, it is imperative that emphasis is placed on the acquired knowledge of the past 20 years concerning the issue. The importance of work for social integration cannot be overstated. But the belief that the income generated through work – regardless of the type of labour – leads to social integration has been empirically disqualified for many years now (Myrdal 1976, Cohen 1983). Instead, it is a priority for policy makers to protect migrants from entering labour markets that can seriously undermine their social relations to the host country.

Concluding remarks

This article utilized the holistic approach to migrant exclusion in order to address the dangers that are lurking for refugees if and when they are settled in countries of Europe. Through the lens of this approach, exclusion is seen as a three-stage process that involves the *preparation* stage in the country of origin, the *allocation* in casual and low status jobs in the host country and the reproduction of refugees' social position through the *habituation* to the cultural aspects that characterize this labour. This paper argues that the journey from the country of origin to Turkey and then to the Greek hotspot of Moria represents a preparation stage, where refugees come in contact with living and working conditions that can have profoundly negative consequences concerning their work orientations as well as their future labour market integration.

The experience of this journey has in many cases led to the loss of the occupational identity that was characterizing people in the country of origin. In the turmoil of war many people were forced into casual and low-status work and understandably embraced choices and attitudes that were centered around the notion of survival. Later on, during their stay in Turkey, many were involved with employment that was once again completely unrelated to

their skills and characterized by low status, deference, petty remuneration and exploitative conditions. The third part of their journey, the hotspot, on the other hand, is not related in any way to employment. Instead it represents an experience of inertia and demoralization that pacifies refugees.

These experiences constitute a preparation stage that can decisively affect the refugees' work orientations. Placing emphasis on survival and escaping the present conditions is a perfectly understandable reaction to the experiences in all three parts of this journey. Willingness to work under any conditions, in almost any country of Europe, as long as people are safe, is not an unfathomable response to what refugees have experienced. However, these instrumental orientations to work have proven in the past to have detrimental effects on the social position of migrants in the host country (Xypolytas 2016). They have shown to lead to the allocation and later identification with casual and low-status jobs that undermine peoples' social position. In the light of this, it is imperative that policy mechanisms a) recognize these long marginalization processes, b) try to combat the entrapment of refugees in hotspots and c) emphasize on skill creation and acknowledgment in order to avoid the future exclusion of refugees in the countries of Europe.

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