Multiculturalism: the current theoretical debate and the ongoing challenges to the EU migration policy

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ABSTRACT

Multiculturalism seems to be the most complicated challenge to the traditional models of democracy, according to Dahl.

The presentation mainly deals with the ongoing theoretical debate concerning multiculturalism and cultural diversity. Subsequently, it mainly focuses on Charles Taylor's theoretical legacy on "equal worth", "mutual recognition" and equal handling, as well as on the approach of moral liberalism and Will Kymlicka's liberal theory of minority rights.

Further, the presentation provides a brief overview of the major current challenges, that the EU is facing regarding its migration policy (given, among others, the impact of the refugee crisis).

- **Key words:** Multiculturalism, equal handling, moral liberalism, EU migration policy.

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- Any attempt to review the debate on multiculturalism today, would probably end in ascertaining that a number of sub-arguments are being put together to frame the evolving theoretical debate (and, among others, the heated controversy between the Taylorian tradition and moral liberalism) and consequently the regulatory approaches to a fluid reality.

- EU societies themselves frequently seem puzzled by the political and ethical challenges regarding the co-habitation of groups with different *cultural and identity capital.* Recent developments, especially the ISIS terrorist attacks in Europe and the refugee crisis, have further complicated the situation.

- So what is happening with multiculturalism? Has it really failed, as (directly or indirectly) is occasionally pointed out by EU member states leaders, who, in essence, cast doubts on the importance of the origins and constitutive elements of the very complex of values regarding the European integration itself?

- While most representatives of mainstream political formations do not seem to formally challenge the importance of integrating ethno-culturally diverse groups, the semantic boundaries of similar concepts are apparently redefined

1. Introduction

- The landscape has been rearranged and generally accepted opinions appear to recede. The anti-immigration agenda seems to be gaining ground in political publicity and subsequently within the public sphere.

- Additionally, multiculturalism continues to generate political and theoretical tensions, and occasionally conceptual and semantic confusions as well as dilemmas at the level of applied policy (see also Chiotakis 1999).

- We have to bear in mind that the very term is sometimes used to illustrate a phenomenon, whilst others to describe models of its management.

- Within such a context, even terms like *multiculturalism* and *interculturalism* seem to have been redefined, as *cultural diversity* itself exceeds the semantic reserves of the Taylor's ideal of authenticity.

- Especially with regard to the concept of multiculturalism, a latent confusion can be detected, as due to the increasingly popular use of the term

"the coexistence of different nations within a state (or federal) construct (*multinational states*) is often confused with the coexistence of groups and/or people of different ethnic backgrounds" (*polyethnic states*) (Lavdas 2012: 16-17).

In any case, the study of cultural diversity raises the need to further critically analyse public policies related to the 'treatment' of ethno-cultural diversity.

2. Beyond the Taylor's ideal? On the "constellation" of moral liberalism

- For nearly two decades, the Taylorian, new Aristotelian communitarian model has been at the forefront of the debate on multiculturalism. The latter prioritises the recognition of all different authentic ethno-cultural groups, without applying other criteria with conventional ethical references -'well-disposed' to the dominant group- which are 'supposed' to be based on international (A/N: western) values and representations (Taylor 1997: 128).

- The ideal of authenticity (as axiom opposed to cultural hegemony), the prioritisation of mutual recognition and the signalisation of 'equal worth' (Taylor 1992 and 1997: 123 & 128) have determined a number of policies that involved the integration of different groups (mainly immigrants and minorities), especially in areas such as education, language, etc.

- For example, they contributed to the adoption of the principle of linguistic interdependence ("cultural-linguistic interdependence hypothesis" Cummins 1999: 147 and Cummins 1984) and the utilisation of the additive bilingualism approach (see Landry & Allard 1991: 198-213) for the construction of language immersion programmes *(two way bilingual immersion programmes -* see Cummins 1999: 261-2 and Papadakis 2005: 214-216), while they generally influenced education and inclusion policies.

- This influence was mainly based on the acceptance of equality - "natural (and unclassified) equality" of each different culture and tradition (Hohman 1989: 16 as cited in Damanakis 2000: 17) - and consequently the acceptance of the equivalence of the different cultural and educational capital carried by the members of any ethnic-cultural group (see Damanakis 1997: 38- 40).

- However, the criticism concerning the Taylorian model of cultural difference approach was soon reflected in specific theoretical corpus, while the rearrangement of value references has given rise to new discourses on cultural diversity.

- Among them, **moral liberalism** seems to be increasingly influential, especially during the last two decades. The latter traces its origins to the claim of overcoming the rigidity of procedural liberalism and to the countermeasure of the 'value relativism' of the Taylorian communitarians.

- It is positioned within the sphere of political liberalism and liberal ethical and political theory, with his emblematic figure being Will Kymlicka. Kymlicka's analysis "is rooted in contemporary social analysis in that it examines the ethnic and racial **diversity** of societies, and the **increasing connection** among these societies (with modern forms of transportation and communication). These increased connections have raised the issues of **identity and rights** to the forefront in social movements, individual experiences, and in public policy" (http://uregina.ca/~gingrich/k1.htm)

- There is no doubt that moral liberalism is gradually gaining in strength and popularity in the public realms, because, among other things, it builds empirically well-established analytical categories and mainly employs concepts, utilising new analytical tools.

- More specifically now: constituent components of moral liberalism are the principles of *individual freedom* in the form of *non-coercion*, the ideal of *moral autonomy*, and the real emphasis on *self-respect* (in Rawls's terms), whilst the recognition of the different ethnic-cultural groups' integration presupposes recognition by the latter of their members' individual freedom and autonomy (see Kymlicka 1995).

In essence, moral liberalism counterposes to what it considers to determine Taylorian discourse (i.e. *ethical relativism*; also see Lavdas 1999: 27-51 and Lavdas 2001) the highlighting of empirically and theoretically substantiated criteria for the recognition of the Ethno-Cultural Other, and defines moral autonomy and the right to choose as the constitutional requirements for the recognition and incorporation of an ethno-cultural group into a modern democratic political system (Kymlicka 1995: 83).

More precisely, protecting moral autonomy and not violating the individual rights of an ethno-cultural group members appear to be deemed more critical than authenticity and individuality (see Lavdas 1999: 34), while equal handling is by no means the same as uniform handling (see. Parekh 1995: 83-4). Finally, starting from the acceptance of the socially interactive and communicative character of the identity-building process (also see Lavdas 1999), the theorists of moral liberalism regard the combination of the aforementioned values as conditio sine qua non for shaping an integrated identity, and enshrining citizenship in modern multicultural societies.

Furthermore, for moral liberalism, the alleviation of conflicts between the liberal understanding of freedom and the (sometimes regarded as 'non-free') practices of separated ethno-cultural groups is based on the differential division between 'internal constraints' (in the form of a group's demands on its members) and 'external protection', in the sense of the set of the group's demands from the wider society and vice versa .

In Kymlicka's terms, such a separation holds the position of a constituting condition regarding the recognition of multicultural awareness: "liberals can and should endorse certain external protections, where they promote fairness between groups, but should reject internal restrictions which limit the right of group members to question and revise traditional authorities and practices" (Kymlicka 1995: 85). .

It should be noted at this point, that in his book entitled "Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Citizenship (2001), Will Kymlicka raises both the issues of *Liberal nationalism (namely* liberal nationalism cum multiculturalism- see. Koning 2001: 49) *and Liberal Culturalism.* The first is (for Kymlicka) the enhancement of "the legitimate function of the state to protect and promote the national cultures and languages of the nations within its borders" (Kymlicka, 2001: 38), while liberal culturalism "unifies two brands of collectivist thinking, nationalism and multiculturalism, hitherto not always regarded as compatible….(while) is currently the dominant paradigm in democratic theory" (Koning 2001: 49 & 50).

- At the same time, moral liberalism focuses on the so-called 'societal culture' which "provides its members with a meaningful way of life across the full range of human activities, including social, educational, religious and economic life, encompassing both public and private spheres. These cultures tend to be territorially concentrated, and based on a shared language" (Kymlicka & Norman 2000, and Parekh 1995 & 1998).

- Here, the proponents of moral liberalism undertake a complex theoretical venture, 'blending' collective public identities with the idea of culture. There are nations and societies such as the Greek, German, French, which are organised in states, but there are no Greek, British or French 'societal cultures' that fully comply with the requirements of Kymlicka's definition.

- After all, "*any complex human society, at any point in time, consists of symbolic practices and a history that articulates the verbal practices and the discourses that generate power. This history crystallises and preserves the struggles for power and sovereignty - power, symbols and signification, in short the striving for cultural and political hegemony, carried out by groups, classes and genders. But has there ever been a single culture or a single civilisation, a coherent system of beliefs, significations, symbols and practices, which, according to Kymlicka, 'would extend across the whole range of human activities*'" (Papadakis & Fragoulis 2007: 149)?

In light of all the previously mentioned, the emerging regulatory framework suggests the arrangement of the complex relations between different ethno-cultural groups through the establishment and legitimisation of a series of collective rights. In his liberal theory of minority rights, Will Kymlicka introduces three fundamental types of cultural-minority rights (for details see Kymlicka 1995 and Kymlicka & Norman 2000). It is a typology that attempts to 'converse' with the conditions that constitute citizenship in modern societies:

- *self-government rights* for ethnocultural groups, living in multiethnic states,
- *polyethnic rights*, i.e. the right of minorities to receive from the State financial and legal support based on their requests and needs, and
- *special representation rights* concerning the right of over-representation of (recognised) different ethno-cultural groups in the political system and the decision-making process (a version of institutionalised positive discrimination).

Citizenship itself, mediating between collective identity and individuality, is fundamentally associated with 'qualities' and processes that reflect the 4 types of 'civic virtues': general, social, political and economic (Galston 1991: 221- 4).

The balanced development of all four is, for moral liberalism, a conditio sine qua non for shaping citizenship (in the form of active political participation - see Lavdas 2001: 3) in modern democracies (see Kymlicka & Norman 2000: 7-8).

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- Arrangement, consultation and enforcement of both the concrete right to participate in the political system, and the freedom in the form of the fundamental deregulation *of any potential or* actual coercive action. Are the new regularities introduced by moral liberalism the rational answer to modern semantic, ethical and political impasses and to the challenges of living together in multicultural societies?

- First of all, it must be acknowledged that the critique of moral liberalism on the Taylorian model of cultural diversity management- handling and on relative policy proposals provides a new, dispassionate, rational 'look' at the complex relationships developed between minor and mainstream groups (which indicate a historically *validated convention* "old and habitual ideas of the main group" as mentioned by Edward Said, 1993).

- Moreover, it demonstrates the structural mortality of ethical relativism, overcomes its reductive 'conveniences' and redefines the political agenda.

At the same time, however, we ought to bear in mind that this new trend (already hegemonic in many debates in the US and Canada, but also in some European countries) is developed at a time

- when societies are increasingly becoming more ethnically differentiated, polarising along new class lines, while failing to remove inequalities and discrimination regarding sex and socio-economic origin (Giroux 1993: 89-90 and Papadakis et al 2017: 17-18).

And it offers a rationality, empirically-established, though not at all neutral and impartial.

That is because "the proclamation of the exit from the hegemony of Taylorian, classical communitarian discourse on multiculturalism and the related synthesis of meanings that used to derive legitimacy from an expanded ethical relativism, and the turn towards general criteria for recognition- awareness (such as 'freedom as non-coercion') cannot conceal a minimally confessed ideological choice: that of the legalised transition from universalism to selectivity (generous or not)" (Papadakis & Fragoulis 2007: 151).

The combination of emerging selectivity with the return to the criteria of recognition (which, let's not forget, are subject to their historicity and to the underlying conditions of their formation) reveals an obvious intention to evaluate and classify cultural diversity as such.

After all, as Richard Rorty points out, such criteria are "temporary resting places" (Rorty 1979: 390) with a clear attachment to the *fundamental requirements for the consolidation and the power-related components* of them.

The consequences of this re-establishment of criteria, becomes apparent in various, less abstract, problems.

For instance, Kymlicka supports the differentiation between the rights of national minorities and the rights of immigrants. Difficult and definitely challenging distinction.

Is it enough to acknowledge the right to distinction of (recognised) cultures in order to legalise the return to recognition- awareness criteria? Who ultimately is the one who sets the criteria? And what are the practical reflections - consequences of such an approach?

The goal of moral liberalism to guarantee the ability of ethnic groups to remain distinct (if they so choose) is reasonable. In many cases there are historically valid reasons for wanting to maintain such versions of 'distinction', as in the case of Canada where there are grounds for maintaining the tripartite "contract" of English, French and Native speakers, and for the clear distinction between multinational and multiethnic cultural rights (Kymlicka 1995).

In the context of moral liberalism, members of the smaller ethno-cultural groups may be granted moral autonomy and the so important right of choice that they may be deprived of within their 'proximal' group, though "these small cultural entities are deterred from the collective active participation and possible (involvement in) reform of this dominant regulatory framework for action (Papadakis & Fragoulis 2004:

Let us not forget that inserting criteria within a cultural context which is taken for granted, even though general and 'self-evident' criteria but well-disposed to western values and to the liberal model of democracy, returns to the mainstream ethnic groups part of their power.

Yet precisely these groups are 'part of the problem'. Consenting to the relevant claims of Michael Apple (1993 & 1996), one could argue that part of the problem is called to establish anew criteria and thus to restore their relationship with the disadvantaged and to symbolically solve the problem that has historically created (see more in Papadakis 2005: 213).

Is this a paradox (one more) of late modernity or a legitimate backtracking on its very *fundamental* declarations?

The 20th Century societies have been denounced by Theodor Adorno for shaping the conditions of an irreversible persecution of the Other, ultimately forming a culture in which "labels have been attached (and) whatever is different may start trembling" (Adorno & Horkheimer 1986).

The latter depicts the problem quite vividly:

"So should the overwhelming white dominant Anglo-Saxon culture (WASP) still retain the ultimate right to judge which African-American, American-Indian, Latin, Asian cultures and histories of the past, present and future are legalized, and entitled to be officially established???" (Apple 1993: 16- 17).

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Probably, after a few decades of persistent emphasis on recognising (every) different - which led to extremes (at the 'river ends' of the often self-referential, political correctness) and legalised forms of the Postmodern, the limits of tolerance of the late modern subject are inflamed.

Four and a half centuries after the Augsburg Treaty, it is good to have in mind that

- religious peace and the emergence of the ideal of tolerance in Europe draw their origins not in some 'pure' unmediated ideals, but in the very bloodstained economic and productive landscape in which they were shaped by the religious wars (see Schumpeter 1942, Papadakis 2003 and Chiotakis 1999: 106) and

- to seek the constitutive components of the ongoing new discussion on multiculturalism among the new economic and political contexts of post-industrial societies as well as in the insecurities of those who live in them.

There is no doubt that, in such a context, moral liberalism is a discontinuity in the political theory of multiculturalism, and at the same time raises issues of major importance for the relevant public policies. Especially by constructing a convincing counterpoint to the legacy of 'value relativism', left by the postmodern and by the obsessions with the State as Ruling Entity, and to the (often distorted) uses of the Taylorian, neo-Aristotelian tradition.

• However, an unsolved contradiction, which seems to arise, cannot be ignored: "while building its argument on the basis of the concept of freedom by conversing with the latest trends, it seems to 'forget' that the neo-Republican approach, which not rarely invokes, deepens the notion of freedom and insolently connects it not only with the absence of coercion (such as the liberal approach) but also with the status of dominance itself.

• That status is the fundamental precondition of hegemony (as Pettit points out), and one reasonably wonders how it is possible to reset the criteria for recognition-awareness   without creating a new invisible (and therefore powerful) dominating status?" (Papadakis & Fragoulis 2007: 152).

• The proclamation of an emancipatory venture, a concerted attempt to remove painful dead ends, can be turned into an ominous version of the hierarchical construction of subjectivities, legitimising ('inevitable') exclusions in the form of denial to recognise *some kinds of diversity?* And if so, could it be otherwise, in our liquid and complicated times?

These are deep political questions, not amenable to easy answers.

3. The state of play and the current challenges to the European migration policy

- The recent and ongoing refugee-migration crisis is a key-challenge for the European Union and has led to a vigorous public debate on the proposed revision of Dublin Regulation III (604/2013 / EU) as early as May 2016, and since then discussions continue. The Commission itself has stated in 2015 that "the Dublin system … remains the baseline system. (Yet), for relocated persons, the proposed decision entails a limited and temporary derogation from certain provisions of the Dublin system …." (European Commission 2015).

- There is no doubt, that "i*n 2015/16, Europe faced the largest inflow of refugees since World War II. This inflow highlighted systemic deficiencies in EU asylum co-operation which provoked a state of crisis. Together with the Eurozone crisis, this crisis has the potential to seriously damage the overall project of EU integration*" (Niemann & Zaun 2018: 3).

- Undoubtedly, migration policies are now at the top of the EU policy agenda. As Carrera, Blockmans, Gros and Guild point out**: "***The year 2015 has sorely tested the added value and legitimacy of the European Union in responding to the refugee crisis.*

The public outcry and unprecedented levels of political and media attention to the dramatic experiences and images of asylum-seekers arriving in the EU have put huge pressures on the European institutions and member state governments to show that they can meet the challenge" (Carrera, Blockmans, Gros and Guild 2015: 1)

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- The (ongoing) refugee crisis has shown that national immigration policies are not harmonised, that is to say, there is no single actual European migration policy, as many member states are reluctant to give up a substantial part of their national sovereignty rights to the Union and even more reluctant to accept and include refugees and migrants.

- The EU decides on the conditions for legal entry and residence, while member states reserve the right to determine the number of people who will be allowed to enter their country.

- However, the EU can play a supporting role for member states, especially at the economic level. It should be noted that the primary criterion of EU policies is the respect for fundamental human rights.

- Yet, "with the gap between the legal EU asylum regime and the actual practices of member states becoming wider, the EU has been compelled to engage in a process of policy reform" (Trauner 2016: 319). .

The European Commission has adopted, in May 2015, the so-called 'European Migration Agenda. The Agenda is "a political document outlining priorities in migration, asylum and borders policies for the years to come….. In contrast to the previous institutional arrangements, for the first time a *common policy* agenda was adopted between the two institutions (European Commission and European Council), aimed at being 'comprehensive' and joining up (or ensuring consistency between) the various *internal and external policy strands* and instruments at the Union's disposal" (Carrera, Blockmans, Gros and Guild 2015: 3- 4).

Apart from the 'immediate' actions, actually more 'medium-term' in practise, the European Agenda on Migration "outlined the following four key 'pillars' or 'levels of action' for an EU migration policy:

1) reducing the incentives for irregular migration;
2) Border management – saving lives and securing external borders;
3) Europe's duty to protect – a strong common asylum policy; and
4) a new policy on legal migration" (Carrera, Blockmans, Gros and Guild 2015: 3- 4).

Each pillar advanced a set of specific policy actions.

Further, it should be noted at this point, that "*the flagship proposal (of the European Migration Agenda) was the installation of an 'emergency relocation scheme' for a total of 160,000 migrants from three frontline member states, namely Hungary, Greece and Italy. It should become the first step towards a more permanent resettlement policy within Europe*" (Trauner 2016: 319).

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- Despite the adoption of the European Migration Agenda, EU has actually failed to develop consensus among its M-S.

- As Marco Scipioni points out "*by advancing integration through incomplete agreements, the European Union (EU) has created the very conditions for the emergence of crises, and this has, in turn, spurred on further agreements to deepen integration….. despite nominal action to address the weak monitoring mechanisms in use to date and incremental reinforcement of the constellation of institutions operating in this area, no solution has dealt with the critical lack of solidarity and absence of centralized institutions at the root of these issues*" (Scipioni 2018: 1357).

- The case of the Hotspots is quite indicative of the state of play. The Hotspot approach is in fact an accompanying measure to the relocation system, applied in the key entry-countries namely in Italy and Greece,

  aiming at the "'screening' of third country nationals (identification, fingerprinting and registration), provision of information and assistance to applicants of international protection and the preparation and removal of irregular immigrants" (Carrera, Blockmans, Gros and Guild 2015: 7).

- 4 years after the onset of the refugee crisis, the hotspot approach remains problematic, since "*the reception conditions in many countries are profoundly deficient undermine this model….. while the agencies' responsibilities are, at least formally, limited to supporting Greek and Italian authorities in specific areas considered to be particularly problematic or "hot". These EU agencies do not directly intervene or take part in national decisions concerning border controls (entry/refusal) in the common Schengen area or in assessing asylum applications, which in turn also limits the extent to which they can actually fill the gaps in current national systems*" (Carrera, Blockmans, Gros and Guild 2015: 13).

- Further, as far as the 'emergency relocation scheme' concerns, eventhough some Northern EU member states and mainly Germany, backed the Commission's plans, the strongest opposition to the Commission's reform agenda derived from Eastern Europeans.

- More specifically, "the Hungarian government of Viktor Orban rejected the Commission's perception of it being a 'frontline state' and opposed the idea of effectively hosting an EU refugee camp that registers and distributes newly arrived migrants (Robinson 2015). In reaction to the rising numbers of asylum seekers, Hungary perceived the necessity of a 'national emergency measure' and erected a new fence on its borders to Croatia and Serbia

  This contributed to diverting the refugee flow away from Hungary to neighbouring states, in particular Slovenia. Senior politicians from Hungary, the Czech Republic, Romania and Slovakia also disapproved of the Commission's plans on the grounds that they did not want to open their countries' doors for Muslim refugees from the Middle East and north Africa (Barber 2015)" (Trauner 2016: 320).

- Additionally, it should be mentioned that the Deal signed between the EU and Turkey on 18 March 2016, outlining several initiatives for jointly addressing the refugee crisis and managing irregular and refugee migration into Europe, has so far a clear implementation gap.

- More specifically, "as part of the deal, Turkey has agreed to admit returned irregular migrants and in exchange will send Syrian refugees in Turkey to Europe for resettlement – a type of population swap. This so-called 'one-to-one initiative' stipulates that for every Syrian who has traveled without authorization to Greece and been returned to Turkey, EU Member States will resettle one Syrian from Turkey (European Council, 2016)" (Rygiel, Baban, & Ilcan 2016, 316).

- 3 years after the "Deal", Turkey doesn't seem to actually apply the Deal from its side, while a few days ago (10/10/2019) Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan "*called on the European Union to "pull itself together" and threatened*

that …..he would 'open the gates and send 3.6 million refugees' to Europe. (Even though) under the deal agreed in 2016, the European Union has provided billions of euros in aid in return for Ankara stemming the influx of migrants into Europe, Turkey says the money was slow to materialize and paltry next to the $40 billion it says it has spent" (Reuters 2019).

4. Concluding remarks

- Unfortunately, the disparity within the EU creates obstacles to the implementation of a common migration and asylum policy. As Florian Trauner points out "*uncommonly high numbers of refugees, triggered by the wars in nearby regions, in combination with tight budgetary constraints of some member states have exposed the deficiencies of the EU asylum policy, such as a lack of comparability of the asylum standards of certain member states*" (Trauner 2016: 312).

- Although efforts are made at the institutional level, there are still many shortcomings and problematic areas that render the relevant initiatives ineffectual or partially effective.

- And there is no more obvious example regarding the coordination deficit and efficiency of the European immigration policy than the refugee crisis as it began in 2015, with Greece and Italy as the main countries of entry.

- In essence, the refugee crisis revealed the "lack of governance at the European level, as well as the deep and entrenched asymmetries, the enormous lack of coordination and ultimately the EU's weakness to manage the state of affairs within the so-called European neighbourhood, that is in the region of its vital interests" (Papadakis 2019: 1).

- It is quite indicative of the abovementioned that the European Union has initially decided to apply a policy regarding the allocation of the refugees across the European countries on the basis of the number of their citizens and the opportunities available in each country ('allocation clause') (see also Papadakis 2019). Soon, however, this agreement became inactive, due to the reactions of several M-S.

- The reactions from parts of society and the political sphere were particularly strong in many member states.

- Stereotypes emerged that left their *tangible* imprint on the European public sphere and influenced policy planning and implementation.

- Significant parts of the population appeared to react, as they considered (more precisely as they were convinced) that the settlement of the refugees requires an enormous financial expenditure. At this point, it is necessary to note that the refugee crisis occurred at a time of economic precariousness and instability, while the Recession and mainly its social impact were still visible .

- The uncertainties created by the wider social cost of the Crisis have prompted far-right (with a clear anti-migration agenda) political forces to instrumentalise fears, concerns and insecurities (see also Papadakis 2019) and claim a position of power.

- *AFD (Alternative for Germany)* political *party has* entered the German Parliament. In the second qualifying round of the French presidential election, Macron faced Le Pen, the leader of the *Front National*.

- At the same time, following Italy's recent national elections, Salvini, the president of the nationalist *Lega*, has been (until recently) one of the two partners in the government, and after his recent resignation from the government (and the subsequent political developments) he is still *ahead in opinion polls* in Italy.

- Viktor Mihály Orbán, namely the Prime Minister of Hungary, opposes on any effort to develop a joint European migration policy, while in the British referendum of 2016, where Brexit prevailed, it seems that, in parts of the electorate, the logic of ethnic homogeneity and intolerance regarding the basic right of free movement of workers-citizens within the EU have dominated. (see more in: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/el/sheet/41/vrij-verkeer-van-werknemers and in Papadakis 2019). In addition, it is worth noting that *radical right parties increased* their vote share in the recent 2019 European elections.

- The *Europe of Nations and Freedom* (ENF), in which both Marin Lepen's party in France and Matteo Salvini's Italian *League* belong, occupied 59 seats (against the 37 it had in the outgoing EU Parliament). The *Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy* (EFDD), reinforced by the *Alternative for Germany* (AfD) and the Italian ruling *Five Star Movement*, occupied 54 seats in the new EU Parliament, against the 37 it had in the previous one.

- It seems that in parts of European societies, *a strong trend of distrust* and occasionally intolerance appears to prevail with regard to the acceptance of refugee and migrant flows, which is instrumentalised by nationalist and *radical right political formations* in various European countries, and is reflected in the electoral processes.

- Given all these, the very implementation of a substantially politically liberal and genuinely inclusive migration policy is a permanent and persistent challenge for Europe itself and for the process of European integration. A challenge that cannot be left unanswered, and should not be allowed to remain "hostage" of both a rising anti-immigration and (new) nationalist agenda and the severe institutional deficits, disagreements among the M-S and implementation gaps.

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