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Developing diaspora through regional initiatives. Albanian and Western Balkan countries through a political and legal perspective approach

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Abstract

Diaspora is a nowadays issue that deserves to be treated into the terms of development. Sometimes, it is hard to keep the connection among this network alive worldwide. Regional initiatives can be an useful instrument that can help diaspora development specifically in the Western Balkan arena, where Albanians are mostly based.

This paper aims to analyze the political context of diaspora development, mostly into the Western Balkan countries and also proposing some alternatives on how regional initiatives can be a solution to keep the diaspora linked and also a successful network.

Regional initiatives are perceived as a new and an unknown issue, especially when it comes to refer this instrument to diaspora development. There is a whole network of Albanian people all over in the world, mostly based in Western Balkans, Europe, USA etc. The long historical migration of Albanians has presented often the need to be developed. Beyond many other instruments used so far, this paper aims to understand the importance on how local and regional initiatives can be a useful instrument that can empower the role of diaspora into another level of approach.

Going through this point of view, this paper presents the legal analysis of European legislation for local and regional initiatives that can be properly used into our diaspora context of living everywhere in the world.

Keywords: diaspora development, local and regional initiatives, EU legislation, Western Balkans

Diaspora Mobilization During Peace Conferences: Political Protests and Kosova's Statehood Question

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Abstract

Albanian Diaspora had played proactive role in the process of internationalization of the issue of Kosova. Peaceful political protests during the Dayton Peace Conference and the Rambouillet Peace Conference were a mechanism to make pressure over the Contact Group and expecting Kosova to be recognized like independent and sovereign state. The protests didn't go unseen but the course of the peace talks didn't change. Mediators referring to the complexity from the phase of the prenegotiations stayed in the positions that any additional correction in formula and agenda would cause failure of the "Around-the-table" negotiations. Despite an increased interest in diaspora studies focusing on the question on Kosova, particularly for the period from 1989 to 1999, few studies have treated the role of the Albanian Diaspora from the perspective of conflict resolution. The paper examines how the processes of negotiation have had a direct impact on the outcome of the political protests of the Albanian Diaspora during the Dayton Peace Conference and the Rambouillet Peace Conference. Therefore, the purpose is to analyze diaspora activism in terms of political support during the peace conferences, particularly focusing on the context of the prenegotiations and the around-the-table negotiations. The term Albanian Diaspora is used in the sense of ethnicity and not exclusively to the country of origin. The process of negotiation is constructed based on the Berridge's model. Analyzing Contact Group's Conclusions and published memories of the appointed delegates it is concluded that context under which happened the negotiations and the Contact Group's position for substantial autonomy for Kosova determined the success of the Albanian Diasporas' protests in Dayton and Rambouillet.

Keywords: Kosova, diaspora mobilization, political protests, prenegotiations, peace conference

“Feeling Pride Again”: the Hellenic diaspora and the pandemic.

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The economic crisis in Greece was a critical point for the country's relations to its diasporic communities. First, the gloomy economic situation reduced the funding of Greek education abroad as well as the network of embassies. Second, the negative publicity about Greece was reflected upon the Greek diasporic communities as 'shame'. Third, the crisis generated a wave of new emigration from Greece populating the established Greek communities in numbers, especially in western Europe and the USA. The pandemic reversed the situation as the management of the crisis of SARS-COV2 by the Greek government was considered successful in a newly introduced "global hierarchy of value" (see Herzfeld 2004), that of counting everyday death tolls from COVID.

My paper drawing from digital ethnography among diaspora media and social networks as well as think tanks will examine the new phase of the relations between Greece and its diaspora. The presentation will postulate the 1. capitalisation of this success (short and long human as well as economic capital support) (see Kalantzi 2020), 2.increase of emotional attachment (global recognition of Greece refreshes the emotional bonds of the diasporic communities with Greece), 3.intensification of the transnational ties not only between Greece and its diasporas but among the diasporic communities themselves. My presentation will conclude that the pandemic deepened the ties of the Greek diasporas to the homeland as it reinforced but also grew out of a core element of diasporic consciousness that of imagination.

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Diaspora and public donations during COVID-19

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The economic and financial crisis caused by COVID-19 has affected almost every country in the world. In Debar, the first cases of those infected with the virus began to appear in early March 2020, wherewith the first victims' registration, the city entered in total isolation, including establishing an artificial border with other cities of North Macedonia. The negative consequences of isolation began to be felt even more with migrants' absence due to restrictive measures imposed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and virus prevention policies imposed by the technical government. Through this research paper, we want to emphasize the role and contribution of the diaspora of Debar during the period of isolation and after it, which were in the form of public donations, initially distributed by the Emergency Office at the Municipality of Debar, in cooperation with non-governmental associations and religious communities. Public donations are in a database, where the exact amount of money donated and their distribution are known. To accomplish this study, we will interview competent persons, especially the mayor of Debar, who was also the head of the Emergency Office and the Dibra Community Organization president in the USA, as one of the most active diaspora associations of the city. There will also be a focus group with people who have been active throughout this period, where we will know their attitude about the management of public donations and their destination; and the impact of these donations on the overall social welfare and standard of living.

Keywords: Diaspora; COVID-19, Public donations, Social welfare; Standard of living.

A Homing Journey: Notions of Home during the COVID-19 pandemic

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Abstract

From March 2020 until today, the media and the governments have bombarded society with the phrase 'Stay at home', the most common recommendation to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The constant uncritical use of the term 'home' brought up several questions and became an invitation to re-think: What is home? How does it feel? And how is it built up? Home is primarily related to everyday life experiences, which involves different temporalities, spaces, and settings. However, in western society, the heteronormative model of 'home' has come to be the lens that informs and molds the experience of home remaining as a preferred model that neglects space for differences. Therefore, the present article shows how notions of home among the current LGBTQI+ Erasmus Mundus master students have been shaped during the COVID-19 pandemic. This research is relevant for understanding migrants' everyday life as a unique domain that provides multiple meanings of home that might disrupt its fixed and heteronormative notion.

This study uses a qualitative approach based on photovoice methods, in-depth interviews, and focus groups. The results show how the COVID-19 pandemic shapes what 'homing' means for them at different degrees. They realized how some of their daily life experiences were taken for granted, such as having personal space, taking care of their bodies, and their possibility to move across borders. Other aspects became more important, such as adding new routines and reinforcing bonds. Besides, for some, the pandemic opened a new space to understand how they had lived their sexual orientation during their home-building process. Moreover, despite having a high mobility life, their home is still attached to the idea of being settled down in the future. In conclusion, they are continuously becoming at home through practices of rooting and uprooting.

Confined bodies and banned citizens: impossible mobility, border anomia and utopic migration in times of COVID-19

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Abstract

If in the past migrations, mobilities, vagrancy and wandering have created larger impact on human cultures, nowadays since Covid-19 crisis, the larger impact is drifted by the blocked, confined, exclusive, sedentary life. Humans have regressed to their biological function and human body is still considered a vector of contamination, a vehicle of diseases, an imposter, an intruder, a biology of prohibition. Certain portions of citizens are even considered to be forbidden or banned and do not have the right to access certain countries. Borders, fences, boundaries, controls, tests arise everywhere and human body is allegedly considered as a confined body, as suppressed walking boundary. The dystopic experience of understanding the contextualization of fear and the culture of anxiety becomes an impossible action, like decoding an idiom, like “catching an illusion” (as remotely Clifford Geertz would underline on understanding culture) and it is definitely not an “achieving a communion” (Bhabha) as it is supposed to be but rather an imposed and violent distance which denotates mortal and contagious human contact. The permeability of the border areas, the instability of shifting space, the constantly dubious belongings, the need or search for homelessness, the impossible passage at border crossing in this although borderless, liquid, porous world, now, in times of pandemic, engraved with ontological uncertainty, become paradigm of impossible mobility and forbidden freedom of movement. In such violent circumstances, the human body, despite its borderline or rather bordering nature, now becomes physically restricted, removed, dislodged, dislocated, separated, potentially contagious and eventually banned.

Keywords: borders, barriers, confined body, impossible passage, forbidden threshold, banned citizens, global pandemic

“The impact of EU migration policy in enlargement process in the Western Balkans after migration crisis and refugee crisis 2015-2016: case study Republic of Northern Macedonia”

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This research paper analysis the EU’s attempts to extend its policies into members to be states of the Western Balkans, which have been conceptualised as ‘migration policy-aquis’ and have become particularly visible in projects towards aspiring countries from the Western Balkans. The research shows the theoretical limits of the so called «migration policy -aquis « approach for assessing their implementation in the Western Balkan (members to be countries) and argues for adopting an harmonized perspective to overcome these limitations. It distinguishes between "harmonization»and» diferentiation» and organisational factors and their influence on implementation of migration policies in order to evaluate the empirical limits of external enlargement policy. External migration policy is used as a test case to assess implementation dynamics of a EU priority towards Republic of North Macedonia . Rather than a story of policy transfer, this paper indicates that distributional and particularly organisational factors draw out the limits of EU migration policies towards accession countries when engaging in concrete external action.

Keywords: EU migration policy, migration policy, harmonization/differentiation of the EU migration policy

**“REFUGEE DOUBLE CRISIS DURING COVID-19 – THE PATH TOWARDS AN
EFFECTIVE REFUGEE POLICY.
THE CASE OF NORTH MACEDONIA”**

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The impact of COVID -19 pandemic has been a global concern. The crisis affected all segments of life, hindering and blocking people everywhere. As the coronavirus pandemic accelerated, it caused a double crisis for those crossing boundaries as refugees. Prior Covid 19 pandemic, debates about refugee policy were of paramount importance all over Europe. With the outbreak, the issue lost its relevance. Nevertheless, refugee issues remain and they are experiencing a double crisis: on one hand the pandemic and on the other their status as refugees.

This paper examines current situation of refugees, during the pandemic of COVID-19, in North Macedonia. The country has a significant number of refugees housed in shelter centers, who are waiting for the resolution of their status. What are the weaknesses of current policy mechanisms? How to address both shorter term challenges and longer term problems regarding refugees?

Methodologically, the research combines quantitative and qualitative data. Survey with refugees and in-depth interviews with experts and activists dealing with the crisis are conducted, in order to assess refugee's needs and challenges. Findings provide information that may be useful for governmental institutions and NGO's address the consequences of COVID-19 in situations of forced displacement in developing countries, ensuring that refugee rights are a policy priority.

Keywords: pandemic, COVID-19, refugees, crisis

COVID-19's impact on immigrants: integration programmes in Belgium and Germany

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Abstract

Integration programmes help immigrants to improve their language skills and to gain important cultural knowledge about the host country. Covid -19 crisis became a great challenge for the majority of the European countries and immigrants. In this paper, comparative analyzes is carried out to examine the impact of the Covid -19 crisis on newly arrived third-country nationals in Belgium and Germany. In the migration management systems are found similarities. Host countries' policy responses had been undertaken to facilitate social integration, particularly access to language courses and translation of the official recommendations, decisions and measures into language of the immigrants. Based on the study of the official documents and reports of the federal offices, IOM, OECD, and EU it is concluded that due to the crisis, restrictions on the mobility and lockdowns made difficult not only participation in the courses but also limited social interactions of immigrants with local people.

Keywords: integration programmes, immigrants, Belgium, Germany, COVID-19

Demographic changes in North Macedonia over the last decade

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Abstract

North Macedonia is a multiethnic country and represents a real mosaic of different cultures. This ethnic and cultural diversity would make this small country in the middle of Europe even more beautiful if no demographic battle takes place. Once part of the Yugoslav federation, the Macedonian population had the privilege of being called on behalf of the state, and other ethnic communities remained equal only in the communist documents of the regime, while in practice feeling deeply discriminated against. Now that the state is independent and sovereign, also the Constitution and other legal acts have incorporated the package of laws deriving from the Ohrid Framework Agreement, according to which Albanians are a constitutional category based on the percentage, respectively that over 20% in the state level, as these causes permanent tension in daily politics. As population censuses have been politicized and doubts about the ethnic structure of the state are growing, this study has taken into account recent demographic changes in the country in order to shed some light on this vague issue.

Keywords: Demographic change, natural increase, birth rate, mortality, census, daily politics.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MIGRATION AND LIFE SATISFACTION AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN RNM

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Abstract

The general social position of the young population has changed significantly, compared to previous decades, resulting in deterioration in the most important segments, such as rising unemployment and declining quality of daily life. Migration comes up as an answer to this social change. Migration as a social phenomenon is part of the development of human history and is essentially identified as a desire and determination of the individual to overcome difficulties, with the projected view towards a better life. This phenomenon has affected almost the entire young population in the territory of the Republic of Northern Macedonia. Statistics show that a large proportion of young people want to leave in order to create a better life outside their homeland. Potential migrants are motivated by a variety of factors, ranging from the opportunity for a higher quality education to the opportunity for a higher-income employment.

Based on this fact, this paper aims to investigate the relationship between migration and life satisfaction of young people in RNM. The study involved 42 subjects aged 18 to 26 years, grouped according to demographic data such as age, gender and place of residence. Two questionnaires were applied to the above sample: the migration questionnaire (consisting of 16 statements, rated on a scale of 1 to 5) and the life satisfaction scale (consisting of 5 statements, rated on a rating scale from 1 to 5).

According to the obtained results it is founded that there is a statistically significant correlation ($r = - 0.488$; $p < 0.01$) between the tendency of young people to migrate and their satisfaction with life offered to them in RNM, where the correlation is in the opposite direction. This shows that with the increase of life satisfaction in their homeland, the level of tendency of young people to express the desire to migrate decreases.

Keywords: migration, life satisfaction, young population

ANXIETY AS A PERSONALITY TRAIT AND ANXIETY STATE, DURING CORONAVIRUS COVID=19 PANDEMIC OUTBREAK AMONG ADULT POPULATION

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Abstract

The COVID-19 outbreak has warranted a significant influence on our mental health, hence monitoring and following this issue should be a top priority to most of the researchers worldwide. It is essential to protect our mental health and to develop appropriate interventions during this global crisis. Therefore, our study aims to help our population by understanding their emotional, behavioral changes and the overall impact that the fear and insecurity from coronavirus has brought to our lives.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the prevalence of anxiety as a state vs. anxiety as a personality trait and gender differences amid coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. The survey included 200 respondents, out of which 130 were females and 70 males, age range from 18 to 50 years old. For data collection we have used the 'snowball' sampling technique, which is an online software platform, called Survey Planet. To measure the levels of anxiety we have utilized the STAI – state- trait anxiety inventory. To analyze the data we used the SPSS 20.0.

Our findings suggest that demographic factors and basic personal data, such as age, marital status, academic level, employment status etc., create the diversity among the population, with the way they experience and how they feel toward this new mental health challenge. We have found statistically significant differences among the participants especially based on gender differences, where vulnerability to COVID-19 anxiety and it's mental implications have shown to 'prefer' the female gender more as their 'victim'.

With this research we tend to actualize the adult's mental health and to increase the proper weight on the issue by elevating population awareness and attention toward this problem. The world is facing with a new mental health trend, therefore changes in the mental state of every person are worthy of our attention!

Keywords: anxiety, coronavirus anxiety, pandemic outbreak, mental health, anxiety disorder.

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE IDENTIFICATION OF PERSONS WITHOUT PERSONAL DOCUMENTS, IN EVENTUALLY NEW THREAT OF A MIGRANT CRISIS

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Abstract

Introduction: A-patrimism, the state of statelessness of one or more persons at the level of a territory, city, region or the whole state, is the most general, and at the same time, the greatest problem in exercising the basic human, social and economic human rights. For this notion, be more complicated in the twenty-first century, all countries in the world, including the Republic of North Macedonia, have stateless persons, but at the same time their country of residence is no record – they have no proof that they exist, that they were born, simply they are without an ID card or any identification for them. These people are simply among us, but they do not exist officially. At the same time, they plight, they experience everyday hardships, bad and endangering life stories, and their basic human rights are broken, or worst - their criminality - again - do not exist. Often these people are without formal education or with only a minimum of basic working skills, which they have no prospects for a normal and dignified life. On the other hand, the greater escalation of the migrant crisis and the refugee route across the Balkans, make the refugees in these areas stay here, possibly assimilating with the regional-local population there. But will human rights and the dignity of life be guaranteed for all? And will such and how such a complex procedure be performed, in which social workers would be given a proactive role?

Purpose of the research: It is precisely the aforementioned guarantee of the dignity of human socio-economic life that makes the state a key factor in identifying those persons, preventing such persons from being created in the future, but also, integrating into the society of those identified as such persons without any personal documents. Most of these activities are done by social workers, along with members of the Ministry of Interior's units and from Ministry of Justice units, responsible for identifying and registering in the state system of these persons. In performing their duties, social workers often face numerous challenges, difficulties in the process of identification, as well as problems in the integration of persons identified as such into society once they have been identified and need to obtain their rights. However, the full-time emergency launched in 2014 around the migrant crisis has several times increased the risks for social workers, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Justice members in performing their duties in identifying these persons, where it has been undertaken in detail in several generations in the past to examine these persons, but at the same time to give them at least the basic human and social rights they are entitled to enjoy while integrating them into local society.

Materials and Methods of the research: Numerous documents and publications have been created nationally that provide relevant data obtained from demographic factors, as well as ways to use them more effectively for the purpose of identifying undocumented persons. First of all, in the international level they are adopted the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of

Stateless Persons, and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, from the UN. On the national level, the created new documents highlights the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics, which provides for the non-administrative division of Territorial Units at regional and local level, and which forms the basis for the collection and processing of regional statistics used for planning and conducting regional policy. At the national level, the Strategy for Demographic Policy of the Republic of Macedonia, the Strategy for Regional Development and numerous strategies for economic and social development and reforms in the Republic of North Macedonia have been created. On the other hand, in addition to the already known materials and documents above, the research will rely on data from direct field research through direct work with persons and social workers performing this work, through interviews with officials from the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and the Ministry of Interior. to develop strategies and policies on these issues, as well as through direct access to persons who have experienced statelessness and are already integrated into society.

Expected results: According to the above, Macedonia faces numerous challenges in implementing all these activities, although there are numerous strategies as well as national programs for the future integration of stateless persons and personal documents on the territory of the country. However, recently there has been a new modality, a new national strategy and national coordination between the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of justice, and all other relevant actors and relevant stakeholders for these activities, in which social workers again have a central role. While referring to the new national documents, at the time of their disclosure, the undocumented persons (without any ID) immediately grant a maximum of four (4) social rights, depending on the risk assessment of the persons identified, and immediately integrate them into the local society. Therefore, I expect in the analyzes and research to get a percentage of social inclusion of that persons, local integration of identified individuals, but also a real number of social rights acquired by these individuals. Also, the research will approach the straightening of possible new migrant crisis and the strategy and tactics for identifying migrants and domestic people without any documents.

Keywords: social workers, undocumented people, demographic factors, A-patriates, migrant crisis, social and economic rights, inclusive development.