

## EUROPE – BORDERS AND POPULATION

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**Abstract:** *The European area is a historical construct. Every single territory conquered to become a part of Europe from 1500 to 1940 has undergone a decolonisation process. Once the colonial empire came to an end, the geographical borders have become more distinct, while the demographical and economical ones have remained of much significance. The migratory trends have occurred forcefully. Some colonial migration began in Western Europe subsequently to the First World War, after WW2 the Europeans have kept migrating mainly to both North and South America, as they had done from 1846 to 1939, and also from Eastern to Western Europe, which made the ethnical composition of the latter change, while the Eastern Europe experienced some homogenization process within the state borders. The mass migration from Europe has helped reducing poverty, as well as the social pressure and the conflicts, whereas the migration waves towards Europe lead to an ethnical conflict which replaced the intra-European rivalries.*

**Keywords:** *migration; European space; population; ethnical composition; homogenization; cultural diversity*

### 1. LONG AGO...

Long ago, Europe was built around the Mediterranean Sea, including even the city of Alexandria and its Southern bank. As historical events occurred, the European space has enlarged and become what it is nowadays. Several events are worth mentioning: the Christianisation of the Northern Europe, hardly achieved in the 14<sup>th</sup> century with Lithuania, the reconquering of the Iberian Peninsula, the Mongols' defeat in the East, the rise of Moscow and Russia's orientation towards Europe under Peter the Great's rule, the Ottomans' withdrawal while nationalism turned towards Europe rose in the Balkans in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1492 marked the several-month lasting siege of the town of Grenade, the last Moors possession in the Iberian Peninsula. This event put an end to more than 780 years of Muslim presence on the Spanish territory. This date also means another important historical moment. Due to the general euphoria of the Christian Spaniards' victory over the Muslims, Christopher Columbus managed to convince the king to accept his sea expedition project heading to the Americas. This moment marks the dawn of the great discoveries, that of a new era in the history of humankind. The discovery of the route of the Good Hope's Cape

allowed sailors to circumvent the Mediterranean Sea to reach the East. Little by little, the Mediterranean Sea has become a border instead of a centre. Nowadays, this sea is the clearest and the most important border in Europe.

Other events also helped creating the European borders. Among them, the 1700 Karlowitz Treaty (marking the weakening of the Ottoman Empire), the philosophical movement known as the Enlightenment, and the wars which occurred during the French Revolution, giving Napoleon the opportunity to reach the Balkans (Castellan, 1991).

### 2. THE EUROPEAN BORDERS

Europe created a huge colonial empire from 1500 until 1940, whose surface and populations reached unprecedented sizes. Its peak was reached just prior to the Second World War: the period during which trading relations between the large cities and colonies were at their highest level.

Europe lost some territories of its colonial empire in the aftermath of WW2, which nevertheless did not trigger serious crises over the metropolitan economies. On the other hand, the former colonies stopped being the trading partners preferred by Europeans and privileged places for investing continental capitals. The native-born Europeans, as well as the Europeans born in these

colonies were brought to leave them and start a new life in the large continental cities. The geographical borders of Europe stepped back, while the demographic and economic ones have remained quite significant, mainly due to culture globalisation.

The European economy was largely boosted and the economic differences compared to North Africa, Western Asia, and Central Asia increased. The end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially the latest 25 years saw a diminishing gap between the European countries and the Northern African ones. Turkey and Egypt are a proper example, since they have benefitted from the transfer of their own immigrants, as well as Algeria (which picked up due to the increase of the oil price) and Morocco (Therborn, 2009:45).

Russia was indeed at loss after the USSR split into several countries rich in gas and oil deposits (Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan) or which turned rich due to investments by diaspora (see Armenia), yet it continued to take advantage of the countries torn apart by war and poor in resources, such as Tajikistan and Georgia. There is also an important gap between the European Union and Europe with its Eastern neighbours.

Yet the trend reversed and the Old Continent has become a land of immigration. Those who chose it have mainly come from the former colonies. The colonial migrations have brought cultural diversity to Europe – a kind of diversity which brought religion in the spotlight. The main European Christian population was therefore forced to share its territory and "live together" with people of different religions, most of them Muslim, its "traditional enemies" for centuries, but also Buddhists, Hindu, Baha'i, and Sikh people.

### 3. THE AFTER-WAR DEMOGRAPHICS

By the 1930s, the European society was characterized by the nuclear family, high marriage rate, low mortality rate, stay-at-home mothers, an insurmountable parental authority, a peaceful urban neighbourhood, a local school. Very few adults used to live by themselves. The highest level of this state of affairs was reached in Western Europe in the 1970s. The marriage rate significantly increased immediately after WW2, which, according to the social norms in fashion in those times, meant that the Western European women were little involved in economic activities, although they had proven their labour force during WW1, including in weaponry factories. They kept their role as housewives in this society and were kept away from the labour market.

In Eastern Europe, almost everybody was married; women worked outside their home and left their children at the nursery during the day. Abortion was liberalized after 1950. The number of children has therefore decreased. The East thus initiated developments which also occurred in the West afterwards. Egalitarian and contract-based, the communist legislation allowed divorce rate go higher, yet without exceeding the one in the United States.

*Birth and death are among the first population-structuring processes.* Birth rate decreased almost all over Europe, except for Albania (25 births per 1,000 inhabitants in 1989). Demographics in Eastern Europe collapsed after the fall of the communist regime<sup>1</sup>. Generally speaking, the evolution of fertility in Europe over the last quarter of the past century influenced the evolution of demographics over quite a long period afterwards.

If population has been growing in the modern era – a fact associated to the decrease of the mortality rate due to improved sanitary systems, hygiene, better quality food, and vaccines – by 0.7% per year, nowadays, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Western populations are naturally diminishing and are supported by immigration instead, while in the East, the deficit of population is caused by massive emigration. For instance, in 2005, the EU demographic growth was 0.4%, official immigration included. According to the European Commission forecasts, the size of the population is to be stabilized by 2025, only to decrease again from 2050 on (EP, 2012). Moreover, the aging of the population has also been taken into account (EP, 2012) and the Commission needs to consider modifying the retirement age depending on the longer life expectancy and the financing needs.

To be able to cope with the needs and the issues of the elderly, new markets (concerning pharmaceutical products, medical equipment, and cultural products) and new social services (CE, 2009)<sup>2</sup> need to be developed.

<sup>1</sup> In the former DRG, the gross birth rate decreased from 12 in 1989 to 5.3‰ in 1992, in G. Therborn (2009:46).

<sup>2</sup> From 2015 to 2080, the share of the population of working age is expected to constantly diminish by 2050, before stabilizing itself somehow, while the elderly group is to represent an increasing part of the overall population, the people over 65 being 28.7 % of the EU-28 population in 2080, compared to 18.9 % in 2015. Following these transfers between age groups, the dependence rate of the elderly in UE-28 is expected to almost double, from 28.8 % in 2015 to 51.0 % in 2080 (see graph no. 7). The overall dependence rate related to people's age is expected to boost from 52.6 % in 2015 to 77.9 % in 2080.

#### 4. THE END OF THE EUROPEAN COLONIAL ERA

The last redoubt conquered by Europe was Ethiopia, in 1940. To build its colonial empire, the Old Continent had subjected the entire Africa, Western Asia (except for Turkey and a large part of the Arabic Peninsula), India, Indochinese peninsula and the South-Eastern Asian archipelago, Mongolia, and Central Asia. WW2 changed much of what used to be. The losers of the 1940 battles (France, the Netherlands, and Belgium) managed to conquer back their colonies, but Italy was forced to relinquish Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, and Libya by treaty to the UN, whereas the Great Britain reluctantly ceded India, Myanmar, Ceylon, and Palestine. The British have fought hard to keep Malaysia and Kenya, while the Dutch had to quit Indonesia. The last stage of the decolonisation occurred in Vietnam, where the French were defeated in 1954. Although powerful from a military and economic standpoint, the European territory was a land of emigration at the same time, a land left between 1846 and 1939 by around 51 million people, i.e. about 12% of Europe's population back in 1900 (Gildas, 2002). Large numbers of people quit the Great Britain and Italy from 1850 until 1960 (Therborn, 2009:49).

*Migrations were another important process structuring the population in the long run.* The European emigration also continued subsequent to the Second World War. It originated in Ireland, the Netherlands, Italy, Greece, Portugal, and Spain. The colonial immigration in Europe started in early 20<sup>th</sup> century and meant some 200,000 individuals per country (France and the Great Britain). Yet immediately after WW2, each and every Western European country experienced several years of high immigration. Two processes occurred in the first half of the 60s: a decrease of the ancient European emigration and a peak of the immigration flows towards Europe.

Let's take into account the second issue: the inflow of extra-European immigrants. This phenomenon occurred in France, after WW2, when the country was in need for workforce to restore the industry. Immigrants were coming from Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. Later on, the Maghreb workers were given employment in Belgium and the Netherlands. Moroccans have arrived in Spain. In the 50s, the British population born outside Europe, in the Antilles, in India or in Pakistan, mainly issued from «the New Commonwealth», started to expand, only to become double in five years after 1961 (Castles, 1984:43, apud Therborn, 2009:52).

Turkey was a major source of immigrants for Europe. Germany in need for workforce signed an import agreement with Turkey, with Italy (in 1955), Greece, and Spain (1960), then also with Portugal in 1964 and Yugoslavia in 1968. In merely six years' time, the Turks had exceeded the Italians in terms of the most populous foreign population in the FRG (Therborn, 2009:52).

#### 5. THE INTEGRATION OF ETHNIC MINORITIES

*The third long-term population-structuring process* was the creation of the ethnic composition. The population of the nation-States has been undergoing ethnic homogenization within the state borders, especially in Eastern Europe, where the modern nations were shaped later than in the Western Europe. If we were to compare the share of inhabitants of some Central and Eastern European capitals issued from the national ethnic group, we would notice that few of these capital cities had, approximately 150 years before, this type of majority inhabitants (Ljubljana, Warsaw, and Zagreb). Sofia had kept an equal share of Muslims and Jews, on the one hand, and Bulgarians, on the other hand; Kiev had a Russian, Prague – a German, and Helsinki – a Swedish-born population (Therborn, 1995:44). As far as Bucharest was concerned, in 1930, 77% of its population was Romanian, 10% Jewish, and 3% Hungarian, the remaining small percentages being shared by Germans, Roma people, Armenians, Greeks, Russians, Slovaks, Bulgarians, and Serbians.

G. Therborn claimed that the ethnic homogenization of Eastern Europe was performed in four stages, each of them related to some original causes. Subsequent to the peasants' emancipation and the industrialisation, a massive rural exodus took place over the last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. That was the first stage of the process and bore as consequences the promotion of new languages and new alphabets. Budapest and Prague have become mostly Hungarian and Czech.

Romania faced mere gap between the urban and the rural environments during the aforementioned period, as well as the «dependence syndrome» on the Western Europe which characterized the countries modernized quite late and which urged that the national issue is settled in the same time as the economic and social metamorphosis. «It had to start with every single field and take action simultaneously». Even under those circumstances, the urban population had a significant 14% rise compared to the rural one

from 1930 until 1941, when the urban citizens were 80% of the entire population (Ghețu, 2004:5-41).

The second homogenization stage includes the forced ethnic changes occurred after the old multi-ethnic empires split at the end of WW1, a process followed by the emergence of the new nation-states. An example of this type is Thessaloniki – multi-ethnic and strongly Jewish – in the Ottoman Empire. The city served as the headquarters of a four-language workers' movement, the cradle of the Young Turk Revolution, residence place of its ideologist Zija Gökalp, a positivist sociologist, birthplace and military base of Mustafa Kemal and last, but not least, place of origin of rival armed ethnic groups (Bulgarians, Serbs, Greeks). After the Balkan wars, the city was reattached to Greece. If the population of the city in 1913 comprised Jews (around the half of it, speaking a Judaeo-Spanish dialect), Turks and Greeks, in 1920, when the Turks were chased and the nationals expatriated from Asia came back, the population has become mainly Greek.

The third stage was the almost complete extinction of the Jews in Eastern Europe. They had been better tolerated in this part of the continent. Poverty and various manifestations of nationalism chased them away, then they were massively killed during the Holocaust.

The last wave was that of the Germans. Forced by the outrages perpetrated by the Nazi, three years after the Second World War came to an end, more than 10 million Germans had fled the country or they had been deported from the Eastern Europe. In 1950, there were 8 million deported people (*Aussiedler*) in the Western Germany, i.e. 16.4% of the inhabitants of the FRG (West Germany) (Therborn, 1995:55). The Germans living in the Eastern Europe (in the USSR, Poland, and Romania) obtained in those countries some specific rights for minorities. After 1989, they went back to the FRG at their own request.

Escapes and deportations have also marked the citizens of other countries, such as Italy, Austria, and Finland, who came back after the flurry passed. The new post-war Poland deported 5 million Germans and ceded to the USSR several areas inhabited by Ukrainians and Byelorussians, while in the Western Poland, the Nazis had prepared a German colonisation.

In the 50s, the European countries have achieved the ethnic homogenization of their population by policies, by the construction of States and nations, by changing the borders, and repatriating citizens. Yet 69 different ethnic groups discovered by Jaroslav Krejci prove that Europe

has remained somehow heterogeneous (Therborn, 1995:56). There were anyway three multi-ethnic countries in Europe: Switzerland, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia.

Switzerland was qualified as « multi-ethnic » considering its old and clearly defined ethno linguistic communities. The two other countries included multiethnicity in their state construction itself. If, in the 1920s, USSR had a generous ethnic policy, providing, among others, written languages for 48 nationalities, illiteracy eradication due to ethnic schools in the mother tongue, the transcription of 70 languages in the Latin alphabet at the end of the 1930s, under Stalin's rule, while the Cyrillic alphabet was imposed throughout the Soviet Union. Communism managed to unify the Czech and the Slovaks, as well as the Yugoslavian peoples. To put it in a single word, at the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the European modernity emerged by homogenization or by the institutionalisation of multiethnicity, both aspects representing the ethnic integration.

Homogenization was the consequence of the Western Europe Enlightenment and of the French Revolution, of multiethnicity, of Herder's tradition and of the mix of rationalism and romanticism characterizing this area of Europe, which otherwise generated the Leninist concept of nationality. Yet nationalism has been strongly manifesting itself since 1956, under Stalin's influence, and has acted against all ethnic minorities.

## 6. NEW MIGRATIONS, NEW HETEROGENEITY

The path towards ethnic balance was interrupted after 1950 by other phenomena, among which the lack of workforce, triggering migrations all over Europe, yet less in the Eastern Europe. Traditionally an emigration continent, it has turned into a destination preferred by refugees and desperate people from other continents. The situation turned the other way round: if, in the past, poor Spaniards and Portuguese were setting sail for Brazil or other areas in all Americas, now the Argentinians, Brazilians, and Dominicans were attracted by the European opportunities. The Spanish and Portuguese authorities replied by deporting the poor Latin-Americans (*El Pais*, September 20, 1992:9).

The first migration process of this period occurred immediately after the Second World War in France, Switzerland, and Belgium. It spread from there towards the entire Central and North-Western Europe (except for Ireland) and it was

impossible to be fought especially in France, given the legal rules in force. The first immigration wave in France had started in 1830. The immigrant wave came to Switzerland, ancient emigration land, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as workforce for the railway system and the building industry, whereas in Belgium there was a high need of miners after the First World War.

The second migration process was caused by dramatic historical events: decolonisation, the 1970s dictatorships in South America, the Middle East crises, the Islamic revolution of Iran, the invasion and wars of Lebanon, the Somalia conflict, then the fall of the communism in the Eastern Europe, the 1990s crisis in Latin America, and the crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the Western Europe has become a large-scale immigration land. To comprehend the scope of this phenomenon, it is enough to mention Ireland, which, from the last emigration country of this region has become by 2003 a country where the immigrants were 1% of the population, exceeding the percentage of immigrants having reaching the USA back in 1913. In Spain, the same year, net immigration was rated 1.8% of the country's population (Eurostat Yearbook, 2005). Given the significance of this phenomenon, former emigration countries such as Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, and Spain have become destination countries. In Sweden, a country with an important ethnic homogeneity tradition, one out of six persons is of foreign descent.

Immigrants are very much concentrated from a geographical point of view, which creates a quite important local impact during certain events. In 1990, "foreigners" were 16% of the Paris region's population (*Le Monde*, May 11, 1993:17). From 2004 to 2009, the number of people coming to France remained stable, to increase from 2009 until 2012, mainly because of the inflow of European citizens. In 2013, in France, 7.4 million people were immigrants, i.e. 8.8% of the country's population, of which around 5.5 million people (8.3 %) were born outside the European Union (COS, 2016). All the more in 2016: only during this year 10 million refugees have immigrated to France. Most of the European-descent immigrants are of Portuguese, British, Spanish, Italian or German origin. In the Great Britain, the «whites» were 94.5% of the national population in 1991, but only 79.8% in London. Also in 1990, "foreigners" represented 22% of Amsterdam's, 25% of Frankfurt, and 28% of Brussels' population (Insee Première, 1524/2014).

Emigration in the Eastern Europe was more significant than immigration (except for the

USSR). Starting from 1959, the USSR reinforced the local national identity in all republics and their capitals, with the exception of Tallinn and Riga, which had an increasing influential Russian-speaking community. There were fewer people speaking Estonian and Latvian in those two capitals in 1989 compared to 1897. The Lithuanian community of Vilnius has hardly turned to be the majority in the 1980s, exceeding in terms of population the Polish and the Russian communities living in the town.

1989 made history with the fall of the Berlin wall and the opening of the borders for legal immigration and tourists. Significant migrations occurred from the East towards the West, especially from Central Asia, Caucasus, and the Baltic countries towards Russia. The Germans called *Aussiedler* (almost one million and a half) returned to Germany from the former USSR and from Romania, as well as a non-official inflow of Polish citizens. The Yugoslavian wars and the Eastern European crisis have caused a large number of people to migrate westwards, from Ukraine to Portugal or from Romania to Spain and Italy. The EU enlargement in 2004 and in 2007 did not coincide with the opening of the employment market in the Western Europe. Mobility restrictions were enforced for workers within the Union, except for the Great Britain, Ireland, and Sweden.

An exception to the European migration picture is represented by the newly-rich Russians who live nowadays throughout Europe.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Europe has never been "pure". It has always received significant and very diverse immigration. Moreover, it has "exported" and "imported" various populations so that the assimilation process has been a constant one (Wolton, 2003:179).

These decades of mass emigration outside Europe also had their own importance: emigration has reduced poverty and cut the social pressure and the conflicts. It has been an undertaken alternative and has led to labour markets which are less saturated, and to less social dependence. In the meanwhile, emigration has helped maintaining a certain ethnic homogeneity in the Western Europe.

The passage from emigration to immigration was a turning point in the social history, since the intra-European nationalist rivalries have been replaced by a continental-level ethnic conflict. The intent was to weaken the political and class division in favour of ethnic and non-class-related conflicts.

The xenophobic political trends arising almost throughout Europe following massive immigration (in France, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland) mostly affect the social relationships. What has been left of the long-time debated need for «social cohesion» the Old Continent has been struggling to achieve?

Immigration has certainly never stopped, but was characterized by oscillating flows over the latest around 70 years. The latest flows nevertheless, starting from 2014, have exceeded by far everything that could be imagined in this field. Yet this is a debate topic for some further analysis. The problem is that all that happens at the present had a door open in the past.

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