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LOCAL IMPACT OF REFUGEE AND MIGRANTS CRISIS ON GREEK TOURISM INDUSTRY

The movement of multiple groups of refugees and migrants to countries from the touristic macro region of Europe became one of the historical phenomena of the new century. In particular, the refugee stream of recent years has a decisive impact on the demand of touristic services to the Greek islands in northern Aegean Sea. Tourism in Greece is an important source of income by providing more than 9% of the GDP and stimulating the development of other related economic sectors such as trade, agriculture, and communications. It also provides about 30% of the total workforce in the country. Because of their favorable location, near the coast of Turkey the islands of Lesvos and Chios became a bridge to Western Europe for large numbers of refugees and migrants. This study aims to reveal the local impact of the refugee and migrants' crisis on tourism development in Greece and particularly on these two islands Lesvos and Chios.

For this purpose a research was conducted based on a representative sample, which includes the survey of 168 hotel managers. The primary empirical data was collected from the local hospitality entrepreneurs and was registered. After processing and analyzing the data, the research results show that there is a significant difference in percentage of reservations between January - February 2015 and January - February 2016 and the same about cancellations. As main reason for this situation the majority of the interviewed show the refugee and migrants' crisis.

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1. Introduction

According to Dimitrov (2009) even in ancient times there were formed certain contact zones between the major civilizations and world's economies that created opportunities for intensive commercial and economic relations between them. One of the oldest economic contact zones of the world is the Mediterranean, which was formed in the 3rd millennium BC (Dimitrov, 2009), when the Cyclades Islands, Crete island and southern Peloponnese develop civilizations (in Greek language $Kv\kappa\lambda\alpha\delta\iota\kappa\delta\varsigma$, $M\iota\nu\kappa\iota\kappa\delta\varsigma$, $M\iota\kappa\eta\nu\alpha\iota\kappa\delta\varsigma$ $\pio\lambda\iota\tau\iota\sigma\mu\delta\varsigma$), which connected Egypt with the Balkan lands and islands in the Eastern Mediterranean, thus giving ground to developing weaving trade, cultural influences and strategic interest.

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Since then, in the 21st century – the era of contrasts, Mediterranean is updating dynamically through the centuries its importance as an economic contact zone with a global role. The International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2016) stated that in 2015, about one million refugees and migrants passed from Mediterranean Sea to Europe, and nearly 850,000 of them along the so-called Balkan route from Turkey to Greece, through the Aegean Sea. The favorable location of the islands Lesvos and Chios located near the coast of Turkey became a bridge to Western Europe for large numbers of refugees.

2. Literature review

For the purpose of this work it is necessary to make an initial clarification the terms "refugee" and "migrant". The refugee problems became a subject of international law after the World War II. In 1951 a leading act of the international refugee law was adopted – Convention related to the Status of Refugees (Geneva Convention). According to the Geneva Convention (UN Refugee Agency, chapter I, article 1 (2)) as a "refugee" has been defined an individual who;

"due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or for the reason of such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country".

Coherent with the Geneva Convention is an instrument of secondary EC legislation (Gil-Bazo, 2006) – the Directive 2004/83/EC of the European Union in paragraph 3 (European Council, 2015):

"The Geneva Convention and Protocol provide the cornerstone of the international legal regime for the protection of refugees."

In granting "refugee status" the host country is obliged to provide housing services, employment, access to education and health, rights to acquire citizenship by issuing identity documents (UN Refugee Agency, 2011).

According to Article 1 of the UN Convention on the Migrants' Rights the term "migrant" can be understood as (UNESCO, 2015):

"any person who lives temporarily or permanently in a country where he or she was not born, and has acquired some significant social ties to this country".

The special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights has proposed that as "migrants" should be considered the following (UNESCO, 2015):

- "Persons who are outside the territory of the State of which they are nationals or citizens and who are not subject to its legal protection and are in the territory of another State.
- Persons who do not enjoy the general legal recognition of refugee status by the host State.

• Persons who do not enjoy either general legal protection of their fundamental rights by virtue of diplomatic agreements, visas or other agreements".

This definition follows the term "migrant" and shows that refugees differ from migrants. Migration has a *dynamic quality* (Migration, Sociological studies 1969) and covers the cases where the decision to migrate is taken freely by the individual concerned, because of personal convenience and without intervention by an external compelling factor. Eventual reasons that make migrants to move are the political, social, economic and demographic changes (Isaac, 1949) in the country of origin. Althought, they have the right to return to their homeland because they enjoy the protection of government and the rights defined by its laws.

But, what means an increasing number of migrants and refugees for a tourism destination with a good image? Brundell (2015, p. 1) notes that "migrants have made Australia what it is today" and states that Australia gives a welcome response to the crisis by taking an extra 12.000 refugees from Syria and Iraq. He also remarks that having in mind that three million are the produced refugees by the Syrian war it is a humanity duty to support these "boat people" in this refugee crisis, which is the worst since World War.

As Dimitrov (2007) presents in his book "Conjuncture in the tourism industry" the term conjuncture could explain as a mirror of the status and development of an economic system and mainly of the changes occurring in it as a result of a number of political, economic and natural factors. In unfavorable tourism conjuncture the supply structure is deteriorating, the manifucturing base can not access the optimum, as well as the labor resources, the competition is increasing and the final financial results are worsen. In terms of demand, the picture of tourism conjuncture has strong relationship with the demographic trends and sociocultural changes. He also notes that in view of the fact that tourism is not a vital service, tourist behavior is highly vulnerable to psychological and social influences, personal sensitivities and short-term reactions. If the image of a destination just in one link of the chain is bad then the all perception suffers.

Another researcher, Hein de Haas (2008) notes among the main reasons why it is hard to make general explanations about the causes and the consequences of migration are the diversity and complexity of the phenomenon, as well as the difficulty of separating migration from other socio-economic and political processes. Describing the historical-structural theory he notes that "historical-structuralists postulate that economic and political power is unequally distributed among developed and underdeveloped countries, that people have unequal access to resources, and that capitalist expansion has the tendency to reinforce these inequalities. Instead of modernizing and gradually progressing towards economic development, underdeveloped countries are trapped by their disadvantaged position within the global geopolitical structure".

In addition, according to Ekberg (1999) "immigration may affect the income conditions of the native population in many ways". There may be effects on the markets, on employnment opportunities for natives and on economic growth. In the same moment intercultural dialogue, through tools for adaptation may minimize missunderstanding with people from different cultural backround (Kiryakova-Dineva & Kitkova, 2016, p. 595). A research (Revkin, 2008, p. 742) condacted by Migliorino in Syria and Lebanon, concerning

the Armenian refugees moved there after the World War II, shows that while in Lebanon the Armenian community has benefited from the state's efforts to facilitate the preservation of their cultural identity, in Syria the mid-century emergence of authoritarian regimes has been detrimental to the autonomy of culturally diverse groups. More precisely Gerhard (1996, p. 161) remarks that "political losers in their countries of origin, refugees often suffer new abuses in their countries of asylum, where no domestic constituency exists to defend their rights" and recommends making an appeal to the host country nongovernmental bodies to focus on human rights behavior and organization of their operations accordind to the 1969 OAU Convention of Refugees. Additionally, such facilitators can be intercultural communication and effective dialogue, which play a huge role for building different kinds of ties and relationships with local residents (Saunders at al., 2015; Kiryakova-Dineva, 2016; Suciu, Pompili Pagliari, Neagu Trocmaer & Donolo, 2013).

The World Bank (2013) has studied the impact of the Syrian conflict in the economic and social life in Lebanon and had found that the conflict and the open border policy ("Since the onset of the Syrian crisis, Lebanon has generously maintained an open border policy and has permitted refugees to temporarily but freely settle across the country") are pronounced in the services trade sector and in particular to the large tourism sector – "with the number of international visitors having steadily declined since 2010".

3. Methodological framework of the survey

In this paper the researcher works on a case study about the Greek islands Chios and Lesvos and the impact of the refugee crisis on the tourism industry on this location. Like a result of these observations the researcher tries to make some generalizations on the topic. This is inductive approach. At the same time the research is based in some theories (deductive approach. Finally the methodology used is a combination of inductive and deductive approach. The instrument of the inductive approach is the questionnaire. The research was conducted by the author from February to March 2016. The questionnaire was distributed to hoteliers in the summer resorts of the two islands – on island Lesvos and island Chios, which are two of the islands through which pass a great number of refugees and immigrants in order to continue their road to the other countries of Europe. According to data taken from the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels the total number of registered hotels in the examined islands is approximately 178. The sample size of the research in this period of time is 168 hotels (one to five stars), an appropriate size for this research, taking into account the table for determing minimum returned sample size for given population size (Bartlett, Kotrlik, Higgins, 2001).

4. Refugee's and immigrant's segmentation

According to the National Organization of Migration (2016) in 2015 about one million refugees and immigrants passed from the Mediterranean Sea (Naimou, 2016) to Europe and

nearly 850,000 of them used the so-called Balkan Route from Turkey to Greece, trough the Aegean Sea.

The profile specifically for this group of refugees and immigrants will be examined according to separate segments – geographic, demographic, socio-economic, psychographic and behavioral one. As Kyurova (2013) underlined segmentation is an effective instrument for taking adequate decisions according to the situation in the market.

The **geographic segment** distinguish refugees and immigrants in terms of the countries they come from. In 2015 and until mid-December over 57% of refugees and immigrants arrived in Greece indicate Syria as a country of origin, 24% Afghanistan, 10% Iraq, 3% Pakistan, 1% Somalia and 6% other countries such as Eritrea, Morocco, Nigeria, Sudan, Senegal and Gambia. Over 60% of the arrived refugees and immigrants from Syria mentioned as residence city Damascus and Aleppo, respectively 37.22 and 25.24% (UN Refugee Agency, 2015, p. 8).

Map of Syria

Table 1
Place of residence in Syria



No	City	Percentage	
1.	Damascus and Rural Damascus	37.22	
2.	Aleppo	25.24	
3.	Homs	6.43	
4.	Daraa	6.03	
5.	Al Hasakah	5.05	
6.	Idlib	4.07	
7.	Latakia	3.58	
8.	Deir ez Zor	3.42	
9.	Hama	3.01	
10.	Ar Raqqah	2.52	
11.	Quneitra	1.63	
12.	Tartus	1.06	
13.	As Suwayda	0.41	
	No Reply	0.33	
Source: UN Refugee Agency, 2016, p. 8.			

Source: www.maps.com (2016).

The second of the examined segments – **the demographic** is mainly concerned with information related to age, gender, religion, and the marital status of the population. The percentage of refugees and migrant women and children varies, depending on their nationality. For example, among Syrian, Afghan and Iranian population, women represent 17%, 12% and 15% of the total number of refugees and immigrants, while children are 32%, 28% and 28% of them. Among Pakistani and Bangladeshi citizens, women are only 1% of the total number and children respectively 4% and 10%, while among Eritrean citizens, women form 62% and 11% of children and 11% of the population (Europe And Central Asia Regional Office UN Women, 2016, p. 13).

Table 2

Percentage of refugees and migrants by gender

Man	Women	Children
55	17	28

Nearly 50% of the refugees and migrants coming from Syria have said that they are not married, while 45% indicated that are married. The rest of them (about 5%) indicate that they are divorced or widowed. Approximately 56% of them said they do not have children and 44% have children who are with them at the time of the survey or they are in another country. Concerning the confessional composition over 85% of the refugees and migrants from Syria indicate that they are Sunni Muslims, 6% Christians (various denominations), 5% other religions (Yazidi, Druze and Alawite) and 4% did not respond (UN Refugee Agency, 2015, p. 7-8).

From its side the **socio-economic segment** characterized population mainly according education and occupation criteria. Refugees and immigrants from Syria indicate a high level of education – 86% secondary or higher education, and the higher educated have the highest percentage among them. Concerning the profession practiced in country of origin of refugees and migrants from Syria, have stated 16% students, 9% employed in trade, 8% employed in the private sector, 7% workers in engineering trades (carpenters, electricians, etc.), 5% engineers and architects, 5% teachers, 4% pharmacists, medical doctors, veterinarians, biologists, chemists and others such as lawyers, judges, cooks, drivers, professors, academics, hairdressers, beauticians and IT professionals, 4% workers and 4% housewives (UN Refugee Agency, 2015, p. 7).

The other segment within the migrant and refugee stream is examined – the **psychographic** one, treated the issues related to the value system and lifestyle of the population. Thus according to the psychographic segment the main nationalities of refugees or migrants passed from Turkey to Greece in 2015, will be considered. These nationalities are the Syrians and Afghans who represent over 80% of the total number of refugees and migrants.

Syrians have kept family and religious values, respect for elders, hospitality and generosity. Fundamental basis of the social relations is the family relationship. In general the inheritance is through the male line. Marriages are often concluded after the elders opinion is taking into account. Marriage between relatives is common and allowed in Syria (Maziak, 2005, p. 549) and is often preferred in order to strengthen family ties. The daily life of the women after marriage is bound to care for the prosperity of household and children. Local etiquette of communication is complicated. Foreigners should not gesticulate intensively — many traditional European gestures may be indecent. But the restraint is also not welcome. Such behavior may be perceived as a gesture of unwillingness to communicate with the person. Hospitality can be seen as a Syrian Tradition in which the pleasure is for the invited guests and for the host himself (Ribov M. et al, 2007, pp. 678-682).

Although the population of **Afghanistan** is made up of many different ethnic groups, certain elements of their way of life are common. The family is the basis of Afghan society. In the family there is extremely close relationship, which is being constructed by members

of several generations. It is led by the oldest man or the oldest living representative of the family, whose word is law for the whole family. Family honor, pride and respect are also extremely important. Usually marriages are settled in advance, most often older women play an important role in the decision about marriage. In the center of life in Afghanistan stands the family (Ribov M. et al., 2007, pp. 254-256).

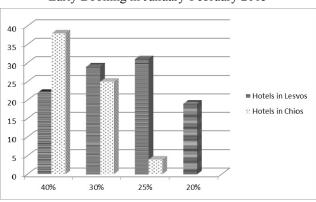
The last of the examined segments is the **behavioral**. It characterizes refugees and migrants in terms of benefits sought from taking a trip outside the country of origin. So 95% of them point that the war and the negative consequences of it as well as the uncertain future forced them to leave their place of permanent residence. The remaining 5% did not indicate a specific answer. Taking into account that the workforce is moving to countries with well-developed industrial base, relatively high standard of living and better salaries (Balkanska I. 2010) it is understandable why the majority of them – 98% who have left the country of first asylum and have taken a trip mainly to Western Europe, point out the lack of employment opportunities related to their skills, financial needs, for reasons of security and protection, seeking better opportunities for their children and the hope of educational opportunities. Only 2% of them mentioned as a reason for leaving the first country of asylum, exclusions from the host country (UN Refugee Agency, 2015, pp. 5, 12).

5. Analysis and evaluation of results

To the question which was the percentage of early booking during the months January and February last year (2015) some 30,6 % of the hoteliers of island Lesvos answered 25%, while the same percentage of early booking on island Chios declare only 5,97% of the hoteliers. Of significant importance for the research, something that will be shown after the next graphic, is the high percentage of early booking for the examined period - 40%, 30%, 20% respectively for 21,70% of the hoteliers on island Lesvos and 56,71 % of them on island Chios, for 28,7% on island Lesvos and 37,31 % on island Chios, for 18,8% of the owners of hotels on island Lesvos and none of them on island Chios.

Early Booking in January-February 2015

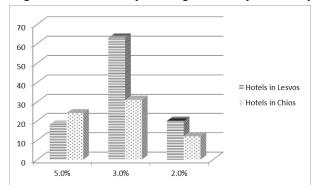
Figure 1



Source: Author's research.

Generally the analysis in graphic 2 shows that hoteliers from both island Lesvos and island Chios declare low percentage of canceling reservations in early booking for January -February 2015. Some 17,8% of the hoteliers on island Lesvos and 35,8% of the hoteliers on island Chios answered that the percentage of canceling was 5%. Close to this percentage -3% is the 62,4% of the owners of hotels in Lesvos and 46,3 % of them on island Chios. Some 20% of the hoteliers on island Lesvos and 18% of them on island Chios have given the answer that the cancelations in early booking (January – February) for 2015 was 2%.

Figure 2 Canceling reservations in early booking for January – February 2015



Source: Author's research.

These were the results of the analysis about reservations and cancelations of reservations in early booking for the months January-February 2015. The graphics that follow will show the situation for the same parameters but for January - February 2016, the year that the refugee and migrant crisis on the islands of north Aegean Sea reached high percentages and the social media spread abroad the things that happen in the region.

Early Booking in January - February 2016

60 50

30

20 10

12%

≡ Hotels in Lesvos

Hotels in Chios

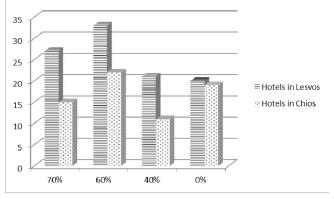
Source: Author's research.

Figure 3

Unlike to the tendency of the previous year (2015), for reservations in early booking with a percentage of 40%, 30%, 25% and 20%, this year (2016) the percentage is relatively lower. To the question "Which is the percentage for reservations in early booking for the months January – February 2016?" more than the half of the hoteliers from island Lesvos answered 10%, some 17,82% answered 12%, 10,89% give the answer 8% and 1/5 of them said that they do not have any reservations at all. Divided into almost same parts seem to be the results on island Chios, where 19,40%, 25,37%, 26,87% and 28,36% of the hoteliers answered that the reservations in early booking for January – February 2016 where respectively 12%, 10%, 8% and 0%.

As regards the percentage of canceling reservations in early booking in January – February 2016 a high percentage - 60% of interviewed hoteliers on island Lesvos show that they have a great number of reservations that are cancelled 60% -70%. Respectively, over 50% of the hoteliers on island Chios gave the same answer. As it can be seen in table №6, 1/5 of the interviewed hoteliers on island Lesvos and 1/3 of them on island Chios answer that they have no cancelations. This 0% is because of the fact that they have no reservations for the examined period – January and February 2016, conclusively they have no cancelations.

Figure 4 Canceling reservations in early booking for January – February 2016



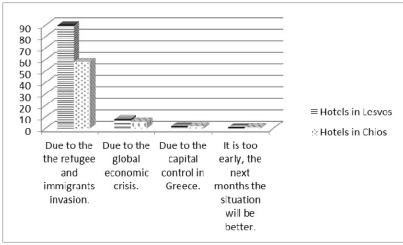
Source: Author's research.

The results for this period is something that comes in contrast with these from January-February 2015, that leads the author to make the question "If, there is a significant difference in percentage of reservations between January – February 2015 and January – February 2016 and the same about cancelations, why do you think it is happening?". The answers to this question can be seen clearly in the next table.

The results from the research show that a high number of the interviewed hoteliers, about 90% on island Lesvos and island Chios see as main reason for the lower percentage of reservations and higher percentage of cancelations in January - February 2016 in comparison with these in January - February 2015, the refugee and migrants crisis on the islands. As other reasons for this situation, but definitely in a lower percentage they state

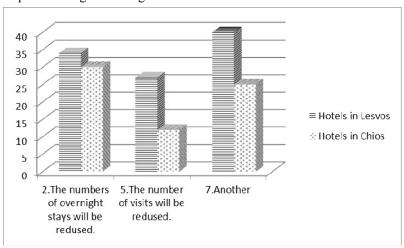
"Due to the global economic crisis" respectively 7,9% on island Lesvos and 8,95% on island Chios, "Due to the capital control in Greece" respectively 1,98% on island Lesvos and 2,98% on island Chios and "It is too early, the next months the situation will be better" respectively 0,99% on island Lesvos and 1,49% on island Chios.

Figure 5 Reasons for lower percentage of reservations and higher percentage of cancelations in January - February 2016 than in January - February 2015



Source: Author's research.

Figure 6 Impact of refugee and migrant crisis in tourism sector of the Greek islands



Source: Author's research.

To the question "Which is the impact of refugee and migrants crisis in tourism sector of the Greek islands?" no one of the interviewed didn't choose the answers "The number of overnight stays will increase", "The number of overnight stays will remain the same as last year", "The number of visits will increase", "The number of visits will remain the same as last year". About 60% of the interviewed hoteliers on island Lesvos and island Chios share the pessimistic opinion that the number of overnight stays and visits to the islands will be reduced. Interesting are the results from these almost 40% that answer "Another impact" and fill in the questionnaire that they will achieve completeness in the hotel with the stays of the refugees and immigrants themselves, as well as with the NGO's that have interest, doing their volunteer work to visit and stay on the island.

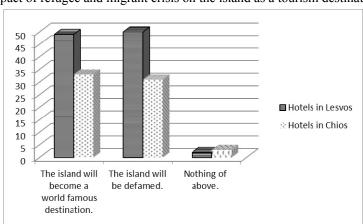


Figure 7 Impact of refugee and migrant crisis on the island as a tourism destination

Source: Author's research.

Divided seems to be the opinion of the hoteliers on islands Lesvos and Chios, about the impact of refugee and migrant crisis on the island as a tourism destination, as some 48,51% of the hoteliers from island Lesvos and some 49,25% of them on island Chios think of positive impact and specially "That the island will become a world famous destination" and some 49,50% of the hoteliers from island Lesvos and some 46,26% of them on island Chios gave answers that show a pessimistic point of view – "That the island will be defamed".

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The article had the aim to to reveal the local impact of the refugee and migrants' crisis on tourism development on the islands of Lesvos and Chios, in Greece. The analysis shows some interesting results. Firstly, according to the surveys founding it could be said that the refugee and migrant crisis contribute for an unfavorable tourism conjuncture on the Greek islands of the north Aegean Sea. Secondly, there is a significant difference in the

percentage of reservations in January-February 2015 and the same months in 2016, which are less than in 2016. On the question "If you find significant differences in rates of bookings and cancellations of reservations between 2015 and 2016 (January and February), please give your opinion on the reasons for this", 90% of the interviewed of both islands said: "Due to the refugees and migrants crisis", as the other rates are associated with responses such as "Due to the global economic crisis" and "Because of the capital control over Greek population". Thirdly, concerning the cancellations of early reservations there are made more in January and February 2016 in comparison with these one of the previous year. According to the survey 60% of the interviewed hoteliers on the islands Lesvos and Chios share the pessimistic view that as a result of the refugee and migrant crisis, the number of overnight stays and visits to the islands will be reduced. Interesting are the results of these almost 40%, indicating that the results will be different – other than those proposed in the questionnaire and they add that they will have clients - the refugees and migrants, as well as representatives of NGOs that have interests to visit and stay on the islands, but in this case the motivation is not tourism its self, but work (either voluntary or not). Finally, the hoteliers – representatives of the two islands are divided in their opinion whether the refugee and migrant crisis would help the islands to become known tourism destinations or will affect negatively the image of the islands.

This is a major challenge (Roberts B. et al, 2016, p. 4) and in the same moment a security threat for these tourism destinations coming outside (Stankova M., 2016, 162; Schmeidl, S., 2002, p.7) the Greek borders. There is a need for a good and adequate approach to minimize the negative effects on the tourism industry, the local economy and the local community without violating human rights and freedoms. Crucial to maintaining the good image and identifying these islands known as tourist destinations which are offering high quality and professionalism of tourism servises is the good coordination between the local communities, local authorities and those at regional, national and international level on marketing, economic and regional policy. They should establish the balance needed in order to contribute to positive results in the touristic sector of the region.

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