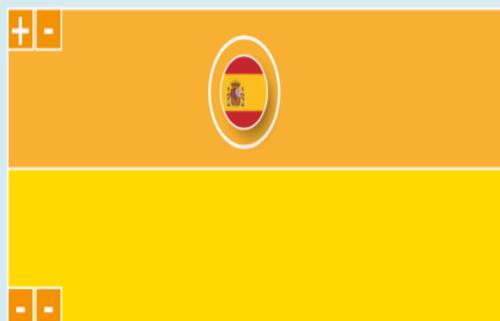


High polarisation/low salience



Low polarisation/low salience

High polarisation/high salience



Low polarisation/high salience

SRING 2019 ISSUE 3

European Commission funds two-year-research on the Evaluation of the Common European Asylum System under Pressure and Recommendations for Further Development (CEASEVAL) – Consortium from 13 countries in close collaboration

POLITICIZATION OF THE “REFUGEE CRISIS” IN SPAIN

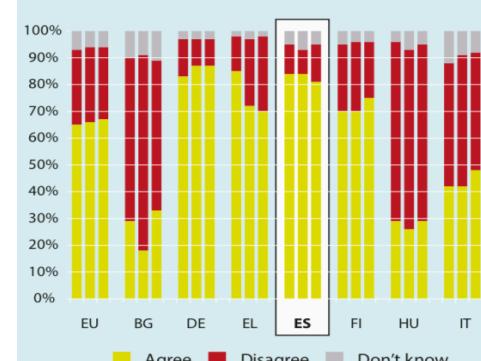
Since the summer of 2018, following the closing of the Eastern and Central-Mediterranean routes, Spain has become the main route of access to Europe with a total of 65,400 sea-arrivals during 2018 (UNCHR, 2019). This has led to an increasing salience of the immigration topic in the public and political debates. Vis-à-vis new migratory changes the answer provided by Spanish actors has been rather heterogeneous. The analysis carried out for WP5 country report captures the Spanish idiosyncrasy: i) a public opinion still favourably open towards immigration; ii) a civil society mobilised in favour of immigration and refugees; iii) a multilevel confrontation between the central state, on the one hand, and local policymakers on the other; iv) a parliamentary arena internally divided on migration-related matters. Given the imminence of the coming election (April, 28), parties’ division on immigration and refugees’ issues is particularly worth of consideration. The Popular Party, the main right wing party in the country, holds a securitarian position and calls for strengthening the fight against irregular migration, more borders control and a European solution to the so-called refugee crisis. On the opposite pole of the political spectrum we find *Podemos*, which supports a legal

and humanitarian frame and demands greater responsibility of Spanish institutions for ensuring the safeguard and protection of migrant’s needs and rights. In between these two positions we find the Socialist Party (*PSOE*), the outgoing ruling party. To date Pedro Sanchez’s government has held an ambiguous approach towards asylum and refugee. If the Aquarius gesture at the beginning of its legislature (June 2018), along with an open and benevolent discourse, made reasonable to expect a substantive change in the asylum policies, measures undertaken in the following months gave the lie to such hopes. Despite the condemnation of the European Court of Human Rights, pushbacks at the southern border kept continuing. Despite the condemnation of the European Court of Human Rights, pushbacks at the southern border kept continuing. Despite complaints coming from human rights organisations, the externalization of border control to Morocco has been reinforced. Despite the Supreme Court’s condemnatory ruling, Spanish relocation quota remains unfulfilled.

At the same time problems at accessing international protection at borders have increased in the last year with delays of several months for formalizing the application and the risk for asylum seekers to be forcibly returned to the countries where they had fled from. *PSOE* is the front runner of the coming election and, likely, the next ruling party, according to latest polls. If so, the hope is that this can finally be the chance to put words into action and deploy policies for asylum and refugee up to contemporary challenges.

By Dr Francesco Pasetti, CIDOB, Barcelona

4. Should our country help refugees? (2015-2017, %)



EVENTS

Glorius, B. and Doomernik, J. 2019. American Association of Geographers 3-7/04/19, Washington DC. Panel: Scales of sub-national refugee regimes: a transatlantic comparison

Glorius, B. 2019. American Association of Geographers 3-7/04/19, Washington DC. Paper: 'Asylum in the City – the impact of local policies & civil society actors in the support of asylum seekers in US cities'

Glorius, B. 2019 American Association of Geographers 3-7/04/19, Washington DC. External perspective: 'Contesting Schengen – border zones & cross-border cooperation during & after the European migration crisis'.

Bognar, E and Endre, S. 2019. Politicization of the Quota-Debate in Hungary: Results of an empirical study', SPP at Central European University, Budapest, 27/03/19

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Wagner, M. 2018. Responsibility-sharing for refugees: what ways forward? European Policy Centre, Brussels, 18/12/18

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Collyer, M. 2018. Naturalising resettled refugees in the UK search for 'normality'. Sussex Centre for Migration Research, University of Sussex, 28/11/18

Oesch, L 2018. Using Foucault's notion of dispositif : the case of border management & urban planning in refugee reception, University of Luxembourg ,

BREXIT & CEAS: Challenges ahead

By Dr Erica Consterdine, University of Sussex

As the UK heads towards Brexit, questions remain as to the UK's future in CEAS. As noted by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizen's Rights and Constitutional Affairs, international protection has so far received little attention in the Brexit negotiations. The report, *The future relationship between the UK and the EU in the field of international protection following the UK's withdrawal from the EU*, found that none of the existing legal mechanisms which are used to support the cooperation between the EU and other third countries in the field of international protection are exactly replicable for the UK.

The UK currently opts out of directives that regulate higher common standards for asylum procedures. However, the UK does opt into the Dublin regulations, governing which member state should be responsible for processing an asylum claim, a regulation the UK keenly participates in. Leaving the EU without a deal means the UK will be out of the Dublin regulations, and in turn will lose the right to return asylum seekers to other EU member states.

The UK government has made it clear it wishes to retain the first country of entry principle underpinned in Dublin, and the EU and the UK both have strong interest in continued cooperation. Yet the Dublin and Eurodac Regulations will cease to apply following Brexit in the case of a no-deal. In such a scenario, there will be no backup option to transfer asylum seekers to or from the UK under international law and uncertainty will persist in relation to pending transfers. Therefore the UK can either attempt to negotiate bilateral agreements with individual states or seek an agreement with the EU to ensure the UK continues to participate in Dublin. The UK may try to negotiate a version of the arrangements EEA states have with the EU during a transition period, although evidently the UK would not become part of the Schengen free movement area. This means that the UK would accept to be 'rule takers' in exchange for asylum system integration with the EU in order to take part in burden-sharing.

A further key yet unresolved issue is noted by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizen's Rights and Constitutional Affairs in their report is 'protection of asylum seekers' and refugees' human rights in the UK following Brexit, as the UK will neither have obligations under the EU Charter nor be subject to CJEU jurisdiction after exit day unless explicitly agreed'. Whilst the UK will remain committed to the 1951 UN Convention relating to the status of Refugees and the European Convention on Human Rights (under the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights), there are concerns that the UK will not replace the elements of the EU Charter that are not covered by these international commitments, leading to reduced human rights protection in the UK'.

Major questions remain as to how the UK's exit from the EU and therefore CEAS will affect asylum seekers rights and what workable solutions remain to ensure a mutually cooperative system of first entry. It seems unlikely such solutions will be found in the near subsequent months.

MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE OF THE NATIONAL ASYLUM RECEPTION SYSTEMS

By T. Caponio, I. Ponzo and L. Giannetto, FIERI, Torino, Italy

WP3 Comparative Report provides an overview on the multilevel governance (MLG) of reception policies in Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain. MLG is understood as a distinctive configuration of policy-making based on cooperative interactions – instead of power and imposition - among all relevant stakeholders including public authorities at different levels of government and non public actors operating at different territorial scales. Starting from this definition, the report had the goal of understanding: 1) if recent reforms of reception laws and policies in Europe have somehow lead to the emerging of MLG-like policymaking processes; 2) if MLG arrangements are actually underlying the implementation of asylum seekers' reception policies; 3) if and to what extent the existence of this type of arrangements favours policy convergence at the grassroots level.

On the first point, the Report shows that whereas some national systems have undergone dramatic institutional changes, others have changed much less if at all. In explaining policy change, the Report considers the problem pressure, intended as the sense of urgency generated by the refugee crisis, the role of political factors, i.e. changes in national governmental majorities, and the transposition of the recast Reception Directive (2013/33/EU). The latter seems to have had a minor relevance in triggering policy change whereas the problem pressure emerged as key. In general, in the context of the “refugee crisis” policymaking on asylum seekers reception became more centralised, leading to difficult relations between the central government and local authorities and a lack of MLG policymaking arrangements.

Concerning policy implementation, again MLG arrangements appear more the exception than the rule. Cases of bottom-up coordination structures have been pointed out in the cases of Greece Spain, Italy and Finland. These arrangements have usually remained quite limited over specific territories (Barcelona and Madrid in Spain, Turin in Italy, Nagu in Finland; Athens in Greece) and have assumed primarily a horizontal structure, linking together local/regional authorities with NGOs and CSO. In general, centralized and top-down decision-making and implementation processes prevail.

With respect to convergence, the scarce relevance of MLG policymaking, and more specifically of coordination on the vertical dimension, is clearly a source of heterogeneity of national systems. Horizontal networks gathering together representatives of the municipalities with NGOs, CSOs and sometimes representatives of national institutions like the Prefectures in Italy, have led to the emerging of what we can call ‘islands of convergence’, which though remain limited to specific territorial areas.

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Refuge Europe – a question of solidarity?

International conference at Chemnitz University of Technology, Germany,

October 1-2, 2019.

Since 2015, migration towards and within Europe has created a ‘stress’ in the EU asylum and migration systems, challenging both the adequacy of the legal design of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and its practical implementation. Soon after the influx, the process was labelled as a “refugee crisis” by some, and “crisis of solidarity” by others, referring to the notion of solidarity and responsibility-sharing, which both are founding principles of the European Union.

Our conference aims to reflect on these recent experiences with refugee reception in Europe and present research results on how those challenges have been tackled at the different levels of governance. The conference will discuss asylum governance and refugee reception from a multilevel governance perspective. It will integrate the migrants’ perspective and reflect their experiences of mobility, borders, arrival and settlement. It will furthermore reflect the contentious politicization processes of migration and integration, which stimulated a transformation of the political landscape in many European countries. Last but not least, the conference will be attentive to best practice approaches in the field of refugee reception and asylum governance and will discuss future scenarios of a common European asylum system, based on the principle of solidarity and responsibility sharing.

This conference is part of the Horizon 2020 project CEASEVAL Evaluation of the Common European Asylum System under Pressure and Recommendations for Further Development, which aims to evaluate the European Asylum System considering recent events of stress and elaborate possibilities for reform, based on the central idea of harmonization of regulations and solidarity among EU member states. The conference will give the floor to fellow researchers to present and discuss their findings in the field of refugee reception and asylum governance, focusing on the five thematic fields CEASEVAL is studying: (1) regulatory mechanisms of the CEAS, (2) multilevel governance of reception, (3) borders and the mobility of migrants, (4) patterns of politicization on refugees and policy responses and (5) rethinking solidarity – from lip service to good practice. Moreover, we will (6) debate methodological challenges of comparative fieldwork and (7) discuss good practice of dissemination to various audiences.

Venue and Organizational Issues

The conference will take place at Chemnitz University of Technology, Germany. Chemnitz is a mid-size town, located in the federal state of Saxony, about three hours from Berlin or one hour from Dresden (several train and bus connections available). Nearest airports are Berlin, Leipzig/Halle, Dresden, and Prague. There are train and bus connections from all those airports to Chemnitz.

Panel will be held in English and German, translation will be provided. Panels will start in the morning of 1st October and last until 2nd October 2 p.m. Conference registration will be open via the CEASEVAL website from May.

BORDERS IN THE LIVES OF ASYLUM SEEKERS & REFUGEES IN LUXEUMBOURG & METZ

BY DR CLAUDIA PARASCHIVESCU, UNIVERSITY OF LUXEMBOURG

Over the past 10 months, I have spoken with 25 asylum seekers, rejected asylum seekers and refugees currently in Luxembourg and Metz about their experiences of borders. On the one hand, I wanted to capture the meaning they attributed to border crossings and how these interfered with their movements. On the other hand, I was interested in finding out more about the ongoing barriers they experience in the host country, in the form of difficulties in finding employment or housing. This is what I found:

Borders were often conceptualized in terms of natural borders (the Aegean sea between Turkey and Greece), **material things and bodily representations**

A Syrian refugee who arrived in Luxembourg in 2015 gave an extensive account of how a natural boundary and a man-made border intersect in the creation of borders:

“The first difficult point [was] the sea between Turkey and Greece. The second difficult point was Hungary because there were a lot of policemen and the Hungarian government built something to not allow you to come into the country. Not a wall, but something to prevent you to come into the country. [Barbed wire fence].” (Syrian refugee in Luxembourg)

An Iraqi refugee who has been in Luxembourg since 2015 told me about how the Serbian border emerged through violence and the threat of violence of border agents:

“When I was in Turkey, my friend told me that Hungary is building this [fence] along the borders. When I arrived in Belgrade they finished it. There were a lot of policemen.” (Iraqi refugee in Luxembourg)

Despite their objective to regulate and/or stop human mobility, borders fail to impede the participants' mobility trajectories. Rather, they contribute to a change of the migratory movements.

Borders do not deter asylum seekers to get to their destination. An Eritrean asylum from Metz whose first country of entrance was Italy told me about his failed attempts at crossing the Italian-French border at night, through the forest. He would know he arrived in France when he would be caught by the French police and sent back to Italy. In the end, he decided to change the route and managed to travel to France via Switzerland and Germany, where he applied for asylum. Once his identification procedure was completed and Italy told the French authorities that he was not wanted back, he was able to lodge an asylum application in France.

The respondents in this study found ways to get across the borders by avoiding increased security flagged up by smugglers or friends. Nevertheless, the barriers experienced once arrived in the country of destination seemed to be less porous.

Everyday borders

In their everyday lives, asylum seekers and refugees are surrounded by borders which are not carried out solely by traditional actors such as border agents. These barriers can be enacted by any individuals during asylum seekers' and refugees' daily interactions. In this respect, control mechanisms of migration have moved from the outskirts of the territory towards its centre, represented by the societal level. In a similar vein, Yuval Davis et al. (2018: 230) argue that everyday bordering and ordering “involve the territorial displacement and relocation of borders and border controls that are, in principle, being carried out by anyone anywhere – government agencies, private companies and individual citizens”.

“Last time I was in Esch [in Luxembourg], I found an apartment, I went to the estate agents and the first two months, cost € 6000, something like that. I have looked for something for 3-4 months, to share a room in an apartment. I did find one, but they want at least a 6 months job contract, full time.” (Iraqi refugee in Luxembourg)

Housing represents a key dimension of integration as it can influence refugees' sense of belonging to the community and neighbourhood. It is however, closely connected with employment, as access to private housing is often made difficult without the presence of an employment contract and substantial savings for the upfront costs. Since refugees often experience bad labour market outcomes represented by occupational downward mobility (Jackson and Bauder 2014), access to decent housing is often challenging.

To conclude, the preliminary fieldwork findings indicate that the reinforcement of borders between countries via walls, fences, presence of police and border agents etc. has proved immaterial to movements. However, the everyday borders within countries have become more sophisticated and strengthened, particularly concerning actors from the private rented sector and labour market.

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