

## **EMERGING RISKS AND THREATS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE AFRICAN IMMIGRATION TO EUROPE.**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

*THE ONGOING CIVIL WAR IN LIBYA RESULTED IN A LARGE NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS TARGETING EUROPE, ESPECIALLY ITALY, THE ROUTE BETWEEN LIBYAN SHORES AND SOUTHERN ITALY BEING A VERY USED ONE IN THE PAST DECADES. MANY THOUSANDS OF OTHERS HAVE RISKED THEIR LIVES THIS YEAR, FLEEING CONFLICT AND INSTABILITY IN AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST, IN SMALL, OFTEN DECREPIT VESSELS IN AN ATTEMPT TO REACH EUROPEAN TERRITORIES. BUT ALL THIS EFFORTS FOR A BETTER AND SECURE LIFE MEANS NEW CHALLENGES FOR THE RECEIVERS, ESPECIALLY BECAUSE MANAGING A MASSIVE NUMBERS OF FOREIGNERS IMPLIES SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES AND A LONG-TERM PROCESS. ALSO, INTEGRATING THE IMMIGRANTS IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND AVOIDING ACTS OF DISCRIMINATION AND SO ON IS A DIFFICULT TO REACH ACHIEVEMENT. THIS PAPER ANALYZES THE FURTHER SECURITY CHALLENGES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE MASSIVE AFRICAN IMMIGRATION TO EUROPE FROM THE PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE LIBYAN CIVIL WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH.*

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**KEY WORDS:** LIBYA, CIVIL WAR, IMMIGRATION, THREATS, EUROPEAN SECURITY

### **INTRODUCTION**

The issue of immigration is not a new aspect on the international scene. This aspect has been developed during time in the same way with the main important social and political changes, embracing a mutual determination. More than that, no matter the context and the historical evolution, the migration phenomenon has determined transformations in the social economic and political aspects of the places where individuals went from and also in the regions that represented a new home for them. In the same way, the appearance of deep changes in the economic and political levels led to the movement of big groups of individuals in their attempt to ensure a better level of being or to protect their life and savings.

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The conflict situations, representing the most important elements of transformation regarding social, political and economic issues are the most common premises that determined the migration phenomenon. During the last decades, the transformation of the conflict and the easier access to the transportation facilities and communication instruments maintained the will of individuals to search for friendlier spaces, in their way to avoid threats.

On the other hand, in the last decades, the problem regarding the migration has deeply changed because of the national interests and the appearance of new instruments to block or to determine the big groups of individuals movement. That is why the international migration became a central problem in the security agenda of the developed states from North America and Europe. The nowadays migration concept represent a threat regarding the national and regional security because of the rising numbers of immigrations on the global level. According to International Organization for Migration, in 2005 there were around 191 million of individuals who left their countries and in 2010 the number has raised to 214 million. More than that, an UN Report estimate in 2013 that approximately three percent of the global population, almost two hundred and thirty milion individuals, represent immigrants<sup>2</sup>. Also the entrance of migration in the security agendas is due to the transformation of the concept. It is well known that after the end of Cold War, the security studies have embrace a more complex approach, giving up to the state centered vision<sup>3</sup>.

The exponential development of the conflict stances from different regions of the globe, have facilitate the migration and also rise new challenges regarding to the “opened” states. Because of the war fear and the search of a good economic level, individuals use a large number of instruments which helped them. Developed by globalization and internationalization, this phenomenon was supported by modern communications technology and also transportation facilities. This research concentrated on a developing situation that tends to become an impossible problem for present geopolitical and geoeconomic context. Having the civil war from Libya as a starting point, we analyzed the migration flow from Northern Africa to Southern Europe and also the changes which were determined by the context of the enhancement phenomenon of migration and its implications in terms of security. Because of the appearance and the development of the radical-extremist phenomenon and the intense presence of far right on the European scene, the article will lead the discussion to the main aspects of terrorism development and transformation in the European Union space.

### **THE POTENTIAL OF MIGRATION IN MENA REGION**

During time the relation between Europe and MENA region especially the European proximity, was characterized by a permanent change of individuals as also wellness and development. After the World War II and the end of European colonialism, in the period of `50-`60 there was an important wave of immigrants from the North Africa to Europe. The economy of the European states in that time was determined by the reconstruction efforts and the American capital with the developing necessity of labor force. The majority of the governments embrace the immigrants from North Africa to feel the lack in different areas. They came together with their families and they also form communities that helped the European economic development and also fill the necessity of a well standard of living in a social developed surrounding. This phenomenon continues to develop in the period of `70 when the entrance in Europe was legal and unconditional. But at the beginning of the `80 and

<sup>2\*\*\*</sup>, *On the move: 232 million migrants in the world*, accesat 06.07.2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2013/sep/11/on-the-move-232-million-migrants-in-the-world>

<sup>3</sup> Keith Krause, Michael Williams, “Broadening the Agenda of Security Studies: Politics and Methods.” In *Mershon International Studies Review*, 40(2), 1996, 229-254.

in the next decade the states that were very cooperative with immigrants begin to assemble new conditions and to limitate the number of individuals from other places. After the Schengen Accord was signed in 1985, the obtaining of visa was more difficult. At that time, the persons from North Africa searched and discovered methods and illegal ways to come to Europe. In the same period, from the central area of Africa, especially from the Sahel region, there was a migration wave to the north of continent. Obviously, the aim were not the states like Libya, Tunis, Morocco of Egypt, but the European states that were more developed from economic and social perspectives.

After the end of the Cold war, the migration wave from MENA region was maintained at a specific level thru being controlled by development of the community and national policies. The European cooperation was not so good in the immigration control and neither in the immigrant's integration, leaving this aspect into the hands of the member states. In this way, it has been developed an euro-Mediterranean cooperation partnership which together with European neighborhood policy oriented the European Union efforts to create a safe space from the political, economic and social point of view in the immediate vicinity. It was obvious that all these efforts were done to preserve the security aspects of the community and also to reduce the will of the immigrants to use the illegal methods to reach Europe.

On the other hand, the 2010-2011 moment represent the wave of revolution that changed the context in the social-political level from the North African states. This lead to an intense raise of immigration phenomenon towards Europe. The appearance of the resulted conflicts determined by the end of the totalitarian regimes and oligarchic elite lead to a major climate of insecurity. This issues determined the direct and indirect extern interventions which formed a new socio-political construction in the states like Libya, Tunis, Egypt and Yemen. The best example is the intervention made by the Unified Protector Operation which left behind a situation transformed into a civil war. The appearance of new enemies and the lack of debating and counseling framework between the communities generate a conflict status. Therefore, this lead to the appearance of a massive way of immigrants, but this aspect will be developed in another section of this article.

From another point of view, the internal conflict from Syria determined a major number of individuals to search refuge in nearby states. The different ideas at the international level regarding the humanitarian intervention or the ongoing civil war, determined the conflict continuation and also the rising number of immigrants. This aspect was also debated in the UN Security Council, based on different interest of states like SUA, Russia, Israel and Iran. In Yemen, the disapproval between the government forces and Islamic group within the Al-Qaeda element resulted in major population movements to non-conflicted regions. It was obvious that immigrants searched to get out from the open fighting zone and then to search for more developed states like the European region. A similar situation was in the border area of South Sudan and North Sudan where the conflicts for the oil field transformed the area into war zone.

It is obvious that more than conflict aspects, the more important reasons of the migration phenomenon appearance was the social, political and economic aspects. From the migration behavior point of view in the MENA region, the determined factors can be located in three major categories: the unequal resources distribution and also the access to them, the discrimination and persecution of communities along with the lack of political-administrative structures capable to handle in a nonviolent way the major differences between religious, ethnic and social groups. All these elements manifest themselves simultaneously in different proportions in the majority of northern african states. Therefore, the unequal distribution of resources and the access to them represent an important element in the migration phenomenon. It also represents a factor that always leads to the violent conflict appearance

when talking about oil and others natural resources. The income determined by and from commercial activities with these resources and their unequal distribution leads to social disappearance and the inexistence of a middle class that balance the situations and limits the discrepancies.

An important role is played by the religious element along with the ethnic one. The role of religion in the state decision making level and the use of profane arguments regarding racist decisions and policies focus on the appearance of social discomfort. The unrepresented people who were abused by the politic and military decision makers search for different ways to abandon their origin states. This issue is similar with the ethnic diversity problem and the communities' coexistence, inappropriate ruled, and is developing antisocial and anti-community feelings transformed in population movements. The main factors, which were represented above, justify the migration phenomenon appearance and have a major contribution to the decrease of life quality and also generate the emergence of radical behaviors. This problem has also secondary aspects.

One of these is the demographic raise. In the last decade, the demographic development of the MENA region states had a major increase between 20 % and 30%, which led to new economic and social challenges<sup>4</sup>. All the elements mentioned above are affected by the raising number of individuals, due to the difficult access to the resources, social segregation and also due to the embracement of extremist religious visions. At the same time, the government is not capable anymore to supply the public services, not even to a minimum level, and the phenomena like poorness, epidemics and social violence are more frequent.

Another aspect is represented by globalization and internationalization. These two were mentioned above too, connected to technology access and knowledge. It is well known that the appearance and also the development of social network resources provides to MENA regions communities a new prospection of the international system. In the same time, the internet was used to gather a big number of supportive individuals. The mobilization of the groups is easier in the nowadays context even in the regions which are characterized by a low level of alphabetization or in poor country. The radical visions are easier to be promoted and the online targeting facilities contribute to raise the number of supportive individuals, even if we talk about religious or another aspects.

If we take the Arab Spring as starting point, the chronologic axe is easier to be exposed in the way of mass manipulation. Although, the transfer knowledge leads to new instrument and methods that take into consideration plans used to generate political and social instability. Therefore, the people from MENA region are more exposed and connected to European and Euro-Atlantic realities supplied by real examples of politic and social attitudes. Obviously, in comparison with these, the individuals can take positive or negative attitudes, fact that lead to different feelings like empathy or hate. Therefore, the migration potential of MENA states is rising directly proportional with the communities' politic and social changes. Because the fact that these are the opposite of the principles of good coexistence and economic welfare, we estimate that in the next period, new groups of immigrant will come to southern Europe by finding new ways to get inside the European community.

## **NEW CHALLENGES POSED BY IMMIGRATION FROM NORTH AFRICA TO THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Naturally any migration process poses new challenges and emergencies that need to be managed. Therefore, over time, the prospect of welcoming the immigrants varied among

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<sup>4</sup>Nabil Kronfol, „The youth bulge and the changing demographics in the MENA region: Challenges and opportunities?“ in *The WDA-HSC Discoussion Paper Series on Demographic Issues*, 2011/8, 2011, passim.

states, as we previously found out this in the case of European countries. The danger of immigration to societal security of a state is not considered to be objective and universal. The subjective nature is supplied by how receiving states define themselves<sup>5</sup>. For example, while some actors consider multiculturalism as thickening and harmful for socio-cultural integrity of the state, others promote cultural, religious and ethnic diversity. Heisler and Layton Henry explains that Western European countries experienced after the Second World War an homogeneity transformations<sup>6</sup>. Thus, many have become ethnically and culturally heterogeneous, consisting of two or more majority communities<sup>7</sup>. In these situations immigration can be considered a direct threat to societal security, given that traditional national identity and social values are endangered. Moreover, the failure to integrate immigrants or these to be assimilated by local communities is an increasingly negative effect over the political, social and administrative stability of a state<sup>8</sup>.

From this perspective, we must acknowledge that at present Member States of the European Union are passing through a period of skepticism in relation to the waves of immigrants from south of the continent. That is because, from a political perspective, the general promoted vision is that illegal immigration that comes from the Mediterranean region represent a threat to the entire European community. Most individuals can not be identified, and authorities do not have the right tools and instruments to do this. However, the large number of individuals, who according to statistics published by the European Commission reached only in terms of asylum seekers number of 626,000 applications in 2014, imposes a number of risks and threats to the whole European structure.

Thus, if it is to clarify these risks in terms of the illegal migration that comes by the Libya - Italy route, the European Union faces challenges at all levels. From an economic perspective, management of illegal flows of immigrants is a common challenge especially in the current context when the financial situation becomes more difficult. The budget for migration issues, particularly in the Mediterranean countries remains limited in the past years, being given that in recent years considerable funds were spent to offset the effects of the economic recession. For example, the budget of Frontex program has been reduced from 118 millions in 2011, to 89 million euros in 2014<sup>9</sup>. On the other hand, the funds destined for Italy to manage illegal migration and rescue efforts were supplemented by 13.7 million in 2015 despite criticism from rights groups which believe that these funds are inadequate and insufficient<sup>10</sup>.

On the other hand the situation in Greece that needs to be managed by European Union will generate the redistribution of funds and will be subject to extra stress at the community level. While some states consider illegal immigration an issue of particular importance, other members, especially those from northern Europe are advocating for the reduction of funds. This can lead to disagreements that can block the development of coherent and effective policies. The failure of previous European Neighbourhood Policy, both in the South and in the East (proven by the current situation in Syria, Crimea, Ukraine

<sup>5</sup> Myron Weiner, "Security, Stability, and International Migration." in *International Security*, 17(3), 91-126.

<sup>6</sup> Martin Heisler, Zig Layton-Henry, "Migration and the Links Between Social and Societal Security." in *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe*, Waever, O., B. Buzan, M. Kelstrup and P. Lemaitre, eds. (London: Pinter Publishers, 1993), 158.

<sup>7</sup> Martin Heisler, Zig Layton-Henry, "Migration and the Links Between Social and Societal Security"...

<sup>8</sup> Martin Heisler, Zig Layton-Henry, "Migration and the Links Between Social and Societal Security"..., 162.

<sup>9</sup> Kevin Hempstead, *Europe's Migration Crisis: What are the Best Options?*, accesat 06.07.2015, <http://natocouncil.ca/europes-migration-crisis-what-are-the-best-options/>.

<sup>10</sup> Melodie Bouchaud, *European Commission Extends Migrant Rescue Mission Operation Triton*, accesat 06.07.2015, <https://news.vice.com/article/european-commission-extends-migrant-rescue-mission-operation-triton>.

and Libya) bear a reluctance related to community external capabilities. However, at the social level, the flow of migrants are transforming the way in which the economic perspective can be managed. Additionally, the increasing population of Muslim origin in Europe may affect community safety in multiple ways, especially from the national level towards regional level. Changing voting patterns and electoral base can facilitate the emergence of new political groups, with the vision to promote principles and values different from those of the Community. Military recruitment must be reconsidered in the context of accepting immigrants into the ranks of the military, police and internal security services that can become more vulnerable from inside. At the social level, the emergence of neighborhoods inhabited exclusively by different ethnic and religious-majority can impose the informal use of different laws (such Shari`a) and the promotion of cultural practices inconsistent with the shared values of the Member States within the union. An example of this situation is the Luton area in England, where the Muslim majority community is leading by its own rules. All these social tensions may arise between majority and minority groups, with a tendency to blame immigrants about certain shortcomings or reduced access to facilities. Changing the urban landscape and the presence of immigrants on the streets can bear anguish and fear among the population, who may use physical or verbal violence to protect themselves.

From a political perspective, the emergence of the European extreme right and other forms of radical socio-administrative approaches can be facilitated by the large flow of illegal immigrants. After the attacks in Norway, the European far right has undergone a refocusing and rethinking anti-Semitic practices, bringing into attention the the danger posed by the Muslim community present in several Member States. Based on a dialectic directed against multiculturalism and support for traditional values, parties such as UKIP UK, the National Front in France, Northern League in Italy, Freedom Party of Austria and the list can go on, can gain new followers and change the national leadership political structure. Accession of the party led by Marine Le Pen in the European Parliament is only the first example. Moreover, the EU is vulnerable and in terms of lack of consensus and determination to take concrete and effective measures regarding illegal immigration in Libya. We refer here to the case of Libya as the central Mediterranean route is the major point of entry into Europe migratory flux. Case of Lampedusa Island is one of the most relevant examples. On this route, immigrants from Syria, Iraq, Eritrea, Egypt and Somalia's southern border illegally penetrated the European Union. On the other hand, the situation in Ukraine, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and the entire area is affected by the emergence and expansion of ISIS, forcing European players to rethink their strategies and priorities.

The lack of a coordinated response to illegal immigration in the Middle East and North Africa demonstrates the inability of the community to produce a unified strategy on medium and long term and revive the phenomenon of individual management by affected Member States. It is also proves that the issue of illegal immigration is still considered to be a matter of national security rather than a matter of regional security.

From another perspective, the European practices and agreements are in danger, along with the risk of alienation of cultural traditions. For example, there is a risk that certain states are going to suspend their participation in the Schengen area, in the context of increasing migration flows, as was the case in France or Denmark in 2011. Heather Conley Senior Fellow of the Center for Strategic and International Studies says in April 2015, „I suspect if the politics surrounding migration really start getting messy, you'll see countries reintroducing internal borders with greater frequency, which means they would have chiseled away at one of the main pillars of Europe, which is the free movement of people.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Jeanne Park, *Europe's Migration Crisis*, accesat 07.07.2015, <http://www.cfr.org/migration/europes-migration-crisis/p32874>.

## **CONCLUSION**

As we noted previously, the phenomenon of illegal immigration poses new challenges to national and regional security. Given the societal, economic and social security development, it is much easier today for immigration to be considered a direct threat to communities, the economy and to social order. Although the nature of the threat is subjective, direct effects on national identity and ethnic and cultural integrity of Member States are relatively easy to identify, at least in theory, and from a long-term perspective. Yet it is not taken into account the capacity of assimilation and adaptation of European culture, even if it is a phenomenon which is in an uptrend at the moment. By the present approach we conclude that long-term effects posed by illegal immigration from North Africa into southern Europe on the regional security sector now lies only in theory. There is still no clear evidence demonstrating the correlation between immigration and crime or the interdependence between the terrorist phenomena development and the flow of individuals coming from the MENA region. Moreover, if immigration is labeled as a direct threat to the security, causes more negative effects than positive results. That is because there is a divergence of opinions at Community level; the fragmentation of efforts aimed at managing the phenomenon increases and it intensifies at social level xenophobic and racist attitudes.

Clearly, infiltration of terrorist elements by the route Libya-Italy is plausible and must be properly managed, but from here until considering each individual in search of better living a terrorist has to be a clear rationale and an evidence based analysis. Moreover, we believe that increased efforts of the Member States to manage the phenomenon and reach a consensus on a long-term strategy linked to it, would produce more beneficial effects than developing rejection positions, denial rhetoric and mass exclusion of immigrant groups. However, this would translate in a more effective approach to risks and threats raised by illegal immigrants to security.

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