

СОЦИАЛЬНАЯ ДИНАМИКА В КОНТЕКСТЕ МИГРАЦИОННЫХ ПРОЦЕССОВ

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MIGRATION PROCESSES AND ILLEGAL MARKET DEVELOPMENT IN GREECE

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The article presents the results of a scientific study which had been conducted by the author in the capital of Greece for five years between 2011 and 2016 in two phases. The aim of the sociological analysis is the representation of irregular immigration as an autonomous independent social phenomenon. On the basis of the endogenous and exogenous socio-economic conditions of its own reproduction some forms of immigration transformed into the shadow market, actively cooperating with other markets, legal and illegal, for example the real estate market, money laundering, drug trafficking, etc.. As a result of such activities the migrant's shadow market successfully includes and expands in the space of the Greek capital. The results of empirical studies reveal the real situation in the segment of undocumented immigration and the smuggling of migrants through the analysis of illegal markets, their reproduction and propagation mechanisms. The author also examines the impact of immigration on the shady legal economy, which is embodied in the growth of crime, insecurity and general urban blight. In addition, the text presents a critical analysis of the current state policy in the field of immigration and possible exit from the current crisis. Refs 75.

Keywords: migration, irregular immigration, markets, shadow market, economic crisis.

МИГРАЦИОННЫЕ ПРОЦЕССЫ И РАЗВИТИЕ НЕЛЕГАЛЬНОГО РЫНКА В ГРЕЦИИ

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В статье представлены результаты научного исследования, которое проводилось автором в столице Греции в два этапа в период между 2011 и 2016 годами. Целью социологического анализа является представление нерегулярной иммиграции как автономного самостоятельного социального феномена, который на основе эндогенных и экзогенных социально-экономических условий собственного воспроизводства преобразовался в теневой рынок, активно взаимодействующий с другими рынками, как легитимно функционирующими, так и нелегальными, — например, рынок недвижимости, отмывания денег, незаконный оборот наркотиков и т. д.. В результате такой деятельности теневые рынки мигрантов успешно воспроизводятся и расширяются в пространстве столицы Греции. Результаты эмпирического исследования раскрывают реальное положение дел в сегменте незарегистрированной иммиграции и незаконного ввоза мигрантов через анализ нелегальных рынков, их механизмов воспроизводства и распространения. Автор также рассматривает воздействие теневой иммиграции на легальную экономику, следствием которой — рост преступности, снижение уровня безопасности и общий городской упадок. Кроме этого, в тексте представлен критический анализ текущей государ-

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ственной политики, касающейся иммигрантов и возможные варианты выхода из сложившейся кризисной ситуации. Библиогр. 75 назв.

Ключевые слова: миграция, нерегулярная иммиграция, рынки, теневой рынок, экономический кризис.

1. Introduction

Greece's debt crisis, shrinking economy, surging unemployment and the continuous waves of irregular immigrants have transformed Athens, once considered one of Europe's safest and most lively capitals, into a city with a growing public sense of insecurity and aesthetic decadence. In particular, the presence of a large rotating number of people engaged in varying activities in urban public spaces, as well as the emergence of deprived neighbourhoods in the heart of the city, have resulted in deviant and criminal behaviour, which, along with the economic decline, are destroying the remaining nodes of the legal economy in the city.

This article presents results of a small-scale research, which has been repeated twice. The first round was carried out between 2011 and 2013, and the second between 2014 and 2016. Firstly, the article addresses the impact of increasing irregular immigration on the development of illegal markets in Athens. Secondly, it examines the role of economic and other interests involved in mass immigration, and thirdly the inner city neighbourhood decline and its effects on expanding criminal networks in the context of urban sociology.

The aim of the current study is to show that irregular immigration is an autonomous market, a market that feeds off and interacts with other legal or illegal markets, such as real estate and the rental market, money transfer/money laundering, forgery, etc., solely interested in reproduction and self-expansion. This analysis can provide a useful insight into illegal markets and, in particular, into undocumented immigration and migrant smuggling.

2. Key concepts and research hypothesis

According to Arlacchi, whose approach I follow in this section of the paper, illegal market is "a place or situation in which there is constant exchange of goods and services, whose production, marketing and consumption are legally forbidden or severely restricted by the majority of states or by international legislation" [3, p.203]. The exchange of such goods and services is regarded as an inherent threat to human dignity and the public welfare. Multilateral treaties and international conventions for the protection of human rights (e.g. slavery, drugs), the outlawing of violence in intrastate disputes, the increasing restrictive regulations of the production and sale of certain weapons are some examples of legal provisions which, while aiming at the enhancement of collective security and the protection of human rights have contributed to the creation of illegal markets. The determination of which goods and services are available in illegal markets depend on the relevant legislation, which accompanied economic growth and regulation in the wake of the two World Wars.

However, illegal markets are determined not only by judicial prohibition and regulation, but also by existing opportunities for their development, in particular, the efficiency of control and law enforcement mechanisms that seek to prevent and combat activities in them. If these mechanisms break down, as can happen in times of political struggle,

internal conflict or economic depression, then organized crime and anomie can emerge as a result of inadequate law enforcement activity.

Crime, like any other economic activity, can be supplied through various market structures. The logic of a market is to locate economic activities where they are most profitable. Organised crime emerges and develops because of the dynamics of the illegal markets in which it operates. Thus, illegal markets constitute the source of income for organized crime, but not every criminal economic activity constitutes an illegal market.

Illegal markets depend on the high demand of certain goods and services which are illegal, and less supply, on their expected profitability for the suppliers, but also on their financial and organizational capacities to produce and/or distribute the good and bypass law enforcement. Like the purchasers, the suppliers must be willing to overcome difficulties and risks associated with the illegality of their activities. They primarily aim at maintaining a stable consumption rate in order to have profits, and reducing competition.

The characteristics of illegal markets are a) the over-commercialisation of goods and services; b) their ability to use in parallel economic, political and military resources; c) the high costs of deals because of the clandestine operation in order to decrease the risks, i.e. confiscation of goods, deception and liquidation of the enterprise; and d) the absence of legal coercion which is generally accepted for the fulfilling of contracts.

They have similarities as well as differences with legal economy. The similarities are that both have vendors, vendees, salesmen, buyers, intermediaries, distributors, importers, losses and profits. Both have antagonistic and oligopolistic sector. The oligopolistic sector provides the competitive sector with goods and services and has access to natural resources. The competitive sector includes SMEs trafficking of goods and services to the public, which is the final consumer [4, p. 234]. The differences are that in these markets dominate clandestine networks because of high risk. The risk is related to the frequency of distribution, the type of goods (e.g. illegal immigrants, guns, drugs), the type of commercial relations that are necessary for their distribution (personal, by phone) and the respective policy of the state about the distribution, use or consumption of the product (liberal-prohibitive/repressive). As already referred to, the danger is related to the inability of the criminal organisations to be protected by state police and justice.

In order to operate the Illegal markets need funds, a coercion mechanism, and neutralization of law enforcement (formal social control) [60].

Neutralization is attained by

- a) Bribing state officials;
- b) Ensuring/Obtaining consensus from the population about the activities;
- c) Reselling consensus to politicians;
- d) Establishing of mutual economic interests with representatives of political authorities in order to monopolize a legal source of revenues (e.g. public procurements, procurements of defence equipment), or with the participation of the criminal organization in bigger networks of power; and
- e) Reducing dangers and risks by minimizing the chain of interacting persons and organizations, or with the cooperation of people with the same ethnic origin or race, dispersed in various countries and social interdependent ('tradediasporas') [12, p. 83–100].

EUROPOL's SOCTA report [17, p. 13] and its latest Public Information [18, p. 10] notes that organized criminal groups in source or transit countries exploit ethnic and

nationalities to diaspora communities, which offer them an established presence in market countries across the EU, including legal business structures, facilities and transportation.

The last OC report of the Hellenic Police (2012–13) [31] refers that the biggest illegal markets in Greece are migrants' smuggling, drug trafficking, organized robberies and thefts, and cigarettes' contraband.

Migrant smuggling will be defined as a business transaction between two willing parties involving movement across borders, usually by illegal means. It occurs with the consent of a person or persons, and the transaction usually ends upon arrival. Human trafficking, in contrast, begins with one party depriving another of the freedom of choice by using threats, force, coercion or deception for the purpose of exploitation (i.e. putting another party into slavery-like conditions). It is a violation of basic human rights, which can occur across and within borders. Despite the differences between migrant smuggling and human trafficking, smuggled persons may become victims of human trafficking at any point in the smuggling process.

Illegal immigration is the result of smuggling as an organized group process, as well as being done by individuals. Human trafficking is not included in this research, while migrant smuggling is discussed only in so far as it helps our analysis of irregular immigration. There are three key parameters that differentiate the types of immigration from each other [15]. The first involves whether the migration is intended to be temporary or permanent. The second parameter is whether migration involves skilled or unskilled labour. The third is the legality of migration, which is the most interesting for the present study. The versions of these characteristics are not of equal importance, while some can be ignored. Thus, we focus on illegal immigration of unskilled labour, permanent or temporary.

The 2009 OCTA Report of EUROPOL analysed criminal activities through the criminal hubs concept. This is an analysis of organised crime groups and criminal markets under the prism of their interaction within and without territorial entities. In this way, complex situations that have widespread effects remain in focus. Such tangled situations are based on considerations which take into account criminal activities in terms of geographical flows and facilitating factors, as well as organised crime groups in relation to their intentions and capabilities.

The present analysis regards undocumented immigration as an autonomous market, a self-reproducing system which has the capacity to maintain a loose coupling not only with the other systems consisting of its environment, but also with its own parts [55]. This scheme can provide the analysis of illegal markets and in particular of irregular immigration and migrant smuggling with more aspects, contributing to its better understanding.

The irregular migration has been developed to a market for three main reasons: the restrictions on legal immigration imposed by developed countries; the increasing demand for entry into these countries; and the comparatively low risks and high profits involved in migrant smuggling. In order to maximize the economic return on their activities, migrant smugglers use existing structures and concepts in legitimate businesses, such as organization, human resources, supply, production, distribution and finance.

Nevertheless, illegal migration has also developed its own 'infrastructure' for organizing transfers and clandestine border crossings, as well as support mechanisms after arrival, such as housing, employment, documentation, protection of rights and provision of legal aid, etc. in the host or the transit country. This 'infrastructure' reproduces demand from potential migrants, who, after successful entry into the host or transit country, send

money home — thus encouraging more potential immigrants. The system is supported simultaneously by accountants, lawyers, politicians, civil servants, civil society organizations, corporate executives and professional criminals in the host or transit country (offer), but the main factors driving its reproduction are the continuing wars and conflict worldwide. From the immigrants' point of view the system is reproduced by the hope (value) of a better life and safety(target), while the interests of the various entrepreneurs and criminal networks, as well as of other interested parties, are wealth, power and expansion of their operation.

There are numerous opinions with regard to the costs and benefits of immigration [28, p. 19–26]. Critics of illegal immigration argue that an influx of undocumented immigrants brings high economic costs by lowering domestic wages and raising public expenditure in some areas, such as health care and education. In terms of strict economic policy, it does support arguments in favour of restricting illegal immigration, but the costs are unknown.

It can also be argued that funds spent on reducing irregular immigration would vastly exceed the income gained from eliminating the net fiscal transfer to illegal immigrants. However, illegal immigration is not only a cost-benefit issue. Since it is illegal, it is also related to the underground economy, making the cost-benefit ratio difficult to estimate. With regard to Greece, as a 'host' or 'transit' state, the high rate of illegal immigration certainly creates wealth for individual entrepreneurs or groups and even political capital. Various markets are constructed and reproduced around irregular immigration, while having a number of other consequences. In addition, it is very difficult to estimate costs and benefits for the immigrants, although the continuing stream of immigration indicates that the benefits outweigh the risks in undertaking migration.

Illegal migration of unskilled people is not an outcome of different, unconnected causes, but a system with its own logic [48]. The first priority for illegal migration is to remain illegal as a business. Only under these conditions can it achieve its purposes. Migrant smuggling and illegal migration can be understood as a 'parasite' in the sense of Michel Serres' communication theory — developing nests and then colonizing the systems with which they communicate and finally transforming system aims and outcomes in order to serve the parasite [63].

Serres' concept of the parasite provides grounds for a rethinking of basic categories in human social science. The parasite is essential to thinking about communication and transformation in systems. Parasitism operates through the logic of taking without giving. Nevertheless, the parasite makes exchange possible by creating connections between otherwise incommensurable entities creating collectivity [11, p. 13–16].

System theorists have used this term to indicate systems whose major task is how to annul the declared (legal) function of any other social system with which it communicates, and to transform its goals and outcomes in a similar way [63]. If we consider the legal system an external environment of illegal migration (in addition to the economy, public administration, politics, culture, education, etc.), then the parasite influences their regular function and structures for the fulfilment of its own purposes. As a result, all the subsystems that support illegal immigration in one way or another do nothing more than perpetrate the flow of immigrants and the underground economy surrounding it.

Comparing an organized criminal group to an 'enterprise' or 'firm' and its key personnel to 'entrepreneurs' was a significant step to viewing its illegal activities as a

business process [20, 60]. Yet it was not until the early 1990s that criminologists began to study the logistics of specific illegal activities. It would also be useful to examine illegal markets as parasitic to the legal economy. Recently, there have been studies in economic sociology examining illegal markets operating parasitically on or symbiotically with legal markets, and the issue of how the parasite makes a profit for the illegal markets from the value construction of legal markets [7].

3. Methods used in empirical research

In general, according to Klaus von Lampe [7], three means of data collection have been used for the study of transnational organized crime and the illegal markets relating to it: observations, interviews and the retrieval of information stored electronically or on paper. Sometimes, different types of data sources are combined in the same research project. Participant observations have been rare and risky. An increasing number of studies rely on interviews with offenders, both those in prison and those in the community.

There are difficulties with these means of data collection: studies can lack detail regarding the modus operandi of offenders, the logistics of transnational criminal activities and the nature of groups' structures in the sense of forms of cooperation (e.g. market transactions between independent actors, network cooperation). In addition, only one area is usually examined (e.g. the destination country of smuggling), while the nature of activities and groups in source and transit countries is usually speculation.

Another difficulty is differential access for researchers to data sources/owners and the willingness of governments, law enforcement authorities, NGOs and the private sector, etc. to cooperate with the researchers. Likewise, the range and quality of data collected and processed by law enforcement agencies, local or governmental authorities and private organizations (e.g. commercial associations/unions) are very different to those needed by researchers.

The sources used for the present research include police, media and international organizations' reports (EUROPOL, Frontex, World Bank, IMF, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], US Department of State), Parliamentary proceedings, sessional proceedings of the Athens city council and of the council for the integration of immigrants, information provided and data submitted by local authorities, and data from national strategic analysts.

The methods used were field research and interviews with representatives of local government, representatives of the Financial and Economic Crime Unit of the ministry of Finance, of the Coast Guard, police officers and numerous city residents and entrepreneurs. From January 2011 until October 2012, systematic observation in community and town councils was carried out whenever relevant topics were on the agendas of local council meetings (usually every two weeks). Afterwards, the observation was periodically conducted until July 2015. No interviews with immigrants (shop owners, customers, people standing nearby) have been carried out, owing to their unwillingness and understandable suspiciousness, as well as the personal safety of the researcher.

Field research was conducted in November 2010, January, September and December 2011, October 2012, March and November 2013, October 2014, January 2015, and May 2016. In particular, the licensing of new 'enterprises of hygiene interest' (KYE) as they are officially called (e.g. barber shops, minimarkets, internet shops), their type, street and

community of operation, entrepreneur(s) and staff, their infringements (e.g. unlicensed operation, irregular goods' transfer, violations of health and hygiene legislation), sanctions for violations (e.g. review of the request-compliance control, license suspension, temporary closing of the shop) have been examined.

4. Results: Immigration Inc.

4.1. Accommodation and work

Since 2007–08 a large wave of unskilled illegal immigrants from Asia and Africa, dissimilar to that in the 1990s from the former communist Balkan countries, has entered Greece. The majority have settled in Athens and other big cities. These people, chiefly working-age males, have entered a city with no available jobs to offer them all, a situation that has degenerated even further due to the followed debt crisis.

The centre of Athens has been used from the beginning for the mass accommodation of immigrants by smugglers. Large and deteriorating buildings in the centre of Athens were filled by thousands of undocumented immigrants who lived there on a monthly rotation, where they pay organized criminals €2–5 per day for 'rent' [31]. Soon afterwards, authorities say that the leaders of these syndicates have bought the buildings and can thus provide shelter for those whom they have smuggled into the country. Hence, the syndicates acquired considerable illegal funds, taking also into account that they do the minimum to maintain the living standards of their property [52]. Apart from these profits, they acquire high earnings from using immigrants to sell narcotics and other products as illegal street vendors, from prostituting them or finding them temporary manual labour, one example being occasionally aggressive panhandling by cleaning car windows or selling sundries at traffic lights, while charging the immigrants a commission on their 'sales'.

Real estate companies as well, have either bought or rented many apartments to shelter the immigrants [64, p. 210–231]. Certain neighbourhoods operate as temporal (transitional) places of residence slowly declining and showing significant signs of stress.

As a consequence several native inhabitants have abandoned the neighbourhoods and either rent or sold their property at very low prices to these criminal networks, usually represented by real estate agencies. In spring of 2015, with the start of the refugee crisis, hundreds of thousands of people along with the refugees have freely entered from the sea borders. A large number of people have fled the camps where they are required to stay until they are identified and they go inland, and mainly to the capital city. The dwelling demand in the city has escalated. Now the UN refugees' agency, among others, has started renting dozens of free apartments and houses of inhabitants who have left the city, as well as entire hotels in the same areas to shelter the people. The neighbourhoods have been inevitably further degenerated.

The Greek National Intelligence Service produced a report in early 2011 that was leaked to a daily newspaper, in which it stated that crime syndicates have been able to create pro-immigrant NGOs [29], buy real estate and create 'zones of influence' within Athens, so as to construct their ghettos and evade police surveillance. In addition, the intelligence report noted that organized criminal groups have made the necessary 'investments' by buying influence in certain sectors of public opinion, so as to neutralize opposition in many cases.

Furthermore, among the Wikileaks US diplomatic cables revelations [40], it was noted that a former American ambassador in Athens had held talks with Greek officials (the Minister of Citizen Protection and the Chief of the National Police), pointing out the existence of certain ethnic networks that smuggle immigrants into the country, and that are believed to be related to radical Islamist groups in Southeast Asia. A detailed newspaper report already in 2010 stated that the number of Muslim extremists reaching Greece through illegal immigration channels is also increasing and that dozens of 'under-the-table' money transfer facilities exist. These, it states, are usually owned by immigrants from Muslim countries and facilitate substantial money laundering operations in Greece. Five years later, the same newspaper along with others revealed police information that Greece has been used as a passage for radical Muslims to other countries of Europe, exploiting the immigrants' and refugees' waves entering the country since 2015. Attacks in Paris in November 2015 and in Brussels in March 2016 were made with the support of the network of foreign 'fighters' of the Islamic State in Athens. Moreover, the Belgian journal *La Province* reported that the only survivor and arrestee for the 13 November 2015 Paris attacks, Salah Abdeslam, led ten terrorists to Belgium via Greece, Hungary and Germany.

4.2. Contraband goods and travel documents

One of the most profitable businesses and jobs for irregular immigrants is illegal outdoor trading of contraband goods. A special task force created by the Greek tax service uncovered seven illegal warehouses between October 2010 and March 2011 [52]. Stored within these facilities were illegally traded goods, such as clothing, bags and furniture, with a value of over €30 million. Illegal trade undercuts the turnover of legal merchants and shop owners, threatens jobs thus accentuating the recession of the legitimate economy.

Moreover, according to the statement of the Coordination Body for Contraband-control consisting of Police members, Financial Crime Unit, Customs, and Inspection Teams of illegal street vendors (Ministry of Development and Competitiveness / KELAYE), 131,349 inspections have been carried out in 2013 in contrast with 24,700 inspections in 2012 (431% increase), while 10,793,372 units have been seized compared to 2,052,483 units in 2012 (an increase of 425%). The Police Headquarters evaluating the four months operations of 'Xenios Zeus' (4.8–4.12.2012) stated inter alia that nine warehouses and other places have been identified with over three million contraband items and smuggled products [32].

In March 2011, the economic newspaper IMERISIA using the data of the Institute of Trade and Services (INEMY) of the National Confederation of Greek Commerce (ESEE), estimated that the contraband turnover was €20 billion. This means that losses for the state revenues from VAT and taxes reached €8.5 billion. In Greek Parliamentary Proceedings (2011) [5], the turnover of the illegal trade is estimated to be between €7 and €10 billion annually, and results in a loss of about €4 billion in state income. A year later, the president of the Athens Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) estimated the annual losses to state revenues to be a minimum of €6 billion, while the impact on legitimate businesses is €25 billion due to the loss of market turnover, significantly higher than the figures referred to in Parliamentary Proceedings [2, p.66]. In regard to the illicit cigarette trade as an income source for migrant smuggling rings and other criminal groups, indicatively, it is worth mentioning that in October 2015 the Coast Guard in Piraeus port seized a container with 500 thousand packages, i.e. 10 million smuggled cigarettes destined for the Greek

market. According to the General Secretariat of Public Revenues, the respective duties and taxes are estimated at €1.8 million [31]. The report of the Transcrime Institute of the University of Trento in Italy estimates that the criminal proceeds from cigarette smuggling for the EU28, only for 2013 ranged from €8,452 to 10,294 billion, and for Greece, from €416–494 million [2]. The situation, however, appears to be quite complicated.

According to the General Secretary of the Trade Union of Small vendors in Greece “the illegal vendors operate under the umbrella of some importers who circulate incredible amounts of money. To control illegal trade importers of smuggled goods should be addressed first. These importers are known, are members of trade unions. It is about a huge turnover in which Greek and foreign capital participates”.

Apart from contraband goods, there is also a widespread forgery industry for travel documents in general, and in the research area in particular, with most networks originating from two specific Asian communities. Police sources, press publications and anecdotal evidence from citizens during our research confirmed this. During a raid in February 2011, the Greek Special Forces recovered around 500 fake travel documents and stolen official stamps belonging to such groups; several raids followed with similar results [31].

In 2012 a *Sunday Times* investigation by an undercover reporter found that criminal gangs in Athens were renting genuine passports and identity documents to thousands of illegal immigrants, enabling them to enter EU countries undetected. The gang charged immigrants €1,000 to hire the identity documents, which they used to pass through border controls. In March 2016 the *Wall Street Journal* published a similar article after FYROM closed its borders with Greece.

Forgery of official documents is of vital concern for police and counter-terrorism authorities, since the groups often need multiple sources of false identification to travel internationally and successfully evade governments that may have blacklisted them. With the ongoing crises in North Africa and the Middle East exacerbating an exodus of refugees fleeing to Europe and migrants along with them, the trade in fraudulent or doctored papers (Greek i.e. EU, or Syrian passport) represents a major ‘growth industry’ for criminal groups involved in migrant smuggling in Greece today [24, p. 18, 42]. Even if forged documents have nothing to do with facilitating terrorist activities, this option cannot be excluded. EUROPOL itself underlines that counterfeit documents constitute a direct threat to the security of the EU, especially when they are used to conceal the identity of terrorists and dangerous criminals [17, p. 17].

4.3. *Remittance outflow and informal value transfer (IVT)*

It would be at least short-sighted and biased to imply that the remittances of immigrants, regular or not, are products of illegal enterprises. The study is restricted to organised crime groups.

A prerequisite for the operation of illegal markets and the underground economy is both entrepreneurship and employment that warrants a rudimentary economic activity, as well as unofficial and therefore undeclared transactions and money laundering. There are many ways to conduct an informal money transfer; the best known is hawala or hundi which is also regarded as the most organised system in the Middle East and South Asia by the IMF [37, p. 4–17].

A wide range of methods and networks operate in similar ways and offer comparable services (e.g. charities, internet-based payments/transfers of stored value, such as pre-paid

telephone cards, debit and credit cards used by multiple individual brokerage accounts) [58]. Other communities, such as eastern Europeans, tend to make greater use of hand-carrying of cash — by themselves or by a trusted relative or friend — or courier services and mostly transport operators [44; 45].

Underground remittance activity, particularly that which is carried out by immigrants, serves a legitimate need, but also offers a potential for misuse for money laundering / terrorism financing purposes. For instance, due to the lack of effective monitoring, anonymous customer transactions can take place and customer's beneficial owner can be hidden. The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on money laundering and financing of terrorism has issued recommendations that urge countries to implement a regulatory framework by licensing or registering money or value transfer providers and further to monitor their compliance with those laws, creating and imposing of sanctions [19].

- a) The World Bank, the IMF and the European Commission have stepped up efforts to calculate the outflow through alternative remittance systems based on the legal outflow, which however remains difficult [39]. This is also obvious in the case of Greece. According to the World Bank's data [70], the transfers back to their home countries from immigrant households in Greece legally in 2008 was US\$1,912 billion, in 2009 US\$1,843 billion, in 2010 US\$1,932 billion, in 2011 US\$1,941 billion—Dwindling numbers of legal businesses, which has been intensified by the economic crisis.
- b) A sharp drop in real estate prices (official and commercial land price).
- c) Social, aesthetic and economic neighbourhood degradation, leading to ghettoization.
- d) Increased opportunities for crime and grey economy taking advantage of social unrest, economic and political instability.
- e) Serious difficulties for law enforcement authorities to face and control the intensive law violations and the expansion of criminality committed by a large number of people which is constantly revolving.
- f) Expansion of criminal networks as a result of poor governance and law enforcement, budget cuts due to economic crisis, and reluctance or inability of local government to support an efficient control.
- g) Neighbourhood disintegration.
- h) Crumbling social cohesion, poverty and neighbourhood change.

5. Neighbourhood change models and disorganization

Research, mainly by American scholars, has shown that the degradation and disorganization of an urban area in architectural and aesthetic appearance is not an isolated negative situation, but has implications for the wider social fabric, feeding lawlessness and crime. The broken windows theory of James Wilson and George Kelling [69] suggested, 30 years ago, that signs of disorderly and petty criminal behaviour might trigger more disorder and escalation into more serious crime. This may effect a decline in the quality of life of the neighbourhood's inhabitants.

Neighbourhood change and decline has been an issue in urban sociology and human ecology since the beginning of the 20th century. Although the topic of this article is not the

analysis of neighbourhood change, it would be helpful to draw an outline, while having in mind the community zones of the present study.

Extremely varied analyses and interpretations have designated diverse causes for urban shrinkage. These explanations are sometimes concurrent and often complementary.

The earliest model of neighbourhood change is the Chicago School sociological theory of 'invasion-succession' developed by Park and Burgess [56], and is regarded as classic. According to them, as one population moves into or 'invades' a neighbourhood, the original population leaves or 'secedes' [27, p. 4]. The model was used to describe the processes of alteration in neighbourhood population that in turn change land use and the commercial structure or dominant activities of the neighbourhood [61]. For example, a few immigrants who are content with tenement style dwelling begin to populate — by themselves or supported by real estate companies and proprietors — a neighbourhood to the chagrin of the original residents, who eventually leave. Succession is the end of the process, when the area has changed completely from its former character [62]. The model is criticized as highly deterministic, because it sees neighbourhood change as inevitable [38].

Another significant approach, introduced by Hoyt [35] and developed by Smith [65], explains neighbourhood change as a result of decisions made by property owners. According to this model, as buildings age and the maintenance costs rise, homeowners and landlords will invest decreasing amounts of capital in them. Rather than making home repairs, more affluent residents move out of the neighbourhood into areas with newer homes. Studies by Fujita, as well as Leven and associates demonstrate empirical support for the idea that the more affluent will sacrifice commute time for housing quality [26].

Within the framework of the above models several theoretical orientations have evolved [50], such as the demographic-ecological orientation and the political-economic perspective [62]. The demographic-ecological perspective focuses on the adaptation of the population to its environment [30]. The key demographic element making for neighbourhood population change is migration. A major interest in human ecology is the extent to which neighbourhoods maintain their social organization under continued population turnover.

The emergence of a political economy perspective is one of the more interesting trends in modern neighbourhood analysis. The approach views community change in terms of the complex connections among economic and political institutions and the various segments of the business and housing markets. According to this approach, the city's growth is guided by a set of affluent land interests. These interests operate through inter-organizational connections in such a way that there is an uneven distribution across the city of the benefits of development and revitalization. The winners are always the wealthy [62, p. 92–97]. Research has been carried out on the ways institutions operate to control the urban land market. The political economy orientation places neighbourhood change in the broader perspective of change in the total urban system. For example, Downs [13] argues that the fate of any neighbourhood is not determined by neighbourhood councils or individual actors, but by economic, political and social forces outside its boundaries. The options for neighbourhood response are limited.

Several elements of the above perspectives seem to apply to our cases, but a focused research study should be conducted. From my peripheral view the most relevant seems to be the invasion-succession model along with the demographic-ecological and the political economy perspective.

Unfortunately, in Athens a growing segregation is obvious, which the policies of the local government are also facilitating, rather than preventing. Segregation and decline is not uniformly expressed across all urban territories. International research has shown this exactly; that the decline can be more or less attenuated or exacerbated by locally applied urban, social, and economic policies [23, p. 16].

6. Discussion and Conclusions

Eighty-six per cent of the detections of irregular migrants in 2011 on the EU's external borders occurred in two areas, the Central Mediterranean (46%) and the Eastern Mediterranean, primarily on the land border between Greece and Turkey (40%) [24]. In 2015 the number of persons who illegally entered Greece rose to 911,471 in comparison with the 77,163 in 2014 (increase +1,081%). Arrested traffickers were 1,501 and 1,171 respectively [34]. From the people who passed the Greek borders, 499,495 (54.8%) declared that they were coming from Syria, 213,267 (23.4%) from Afghanistan, 91,769 (10%) from Iraq, while the rest (11.8%) from Pakistan, Iran, Albania, Palestine, Morocco, Somalia, Algeria, Bangladesh, Lebanon et al.

Greek borders are too porous and practically impossible to seal. It is certain that Greece will unfortunately remain in the forefront of the EU's illegal-immigration problem for some time. Austerity measures and the economic downturn in Greece have affected its capacity to perform alone border controls in the intensity corresponding to the volume of the flow, and prevent a wide array of illegal activities at the borders, ranging from illegal border crossing to smuggling of duty goods and drugs. Such situations enable facilitators to select those border types and sections that are perceived as weaker [24, p. 5]. It is interesting to note the recent rapid change by smugglers in their choice of the main entry point to Greece, who now once more use islands near the Turkish sea borders because the northern border control has been strengthened.

In its latest report, Frontex underlines that in 2015, roughly 2,044,000 illegal border crossings by non-regional migrants (who are not citizens of non EU Balkan countries) en route from Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria were reported at the common and regional borders. This is a number that is unprecedented and beyond comparison with any previous period. The flows also exposed holes in border control management, especially in the absence of uniform EU-wide migration and asylum policies, as well as a temporary suspension of national and EU border-management legislation [25, p. 4–5, 12] The smugglers took advantage of the inconsistent and uncoordinated EU-member states policy and rhetoric for the promotion of their services.

The rapid growth of illegal markets in Greece, which is linked to the dramatic increase in irregular immigration and economic turbulence, also has a crucial relationship with the existence of powerful criminal networks in the wider south-eastern European region [52; 53]. The short-term immigration policy of Greek governments during the last two decades and their limitations in negotiations with the EU facilitated various parliamentary and non-parliamentary political groups and other organized interests to exploit the growth for their own benefit. Such conditions could also indirectly aid fundraising for criminal networks in the country.

The internal and external situation has further consequences for the physical and social disorder of cities, as described above. Timely control prevents aggravation of the

intensity and extent of the problem. In contrast, the weakening of law enforcement and social control increases delinquency and leads to law-abiding citizens abandoning the region. Thus, crime and delinquency become consolidated in the area [43]. The appropriate environmental design, which takes into account morphological and qualitative characteristics of the urban space, may lead to a significant reduction in crime and anomie. Research at the Universities of Harvard and Suffolk in the US in 2005 [9], as well as at the University of Groningen in The Netherlands in 2008 [42], found that the most effective measure to control crime in urban areas is the restoration of social order and the aesthetic improvement of the environment.

Yet, the renewal of towns and public places requires the belief of democracy in itself and its institutions, principles and values. It requires the identification of problematic situations as delinquency and not as alternative social realities, and a pragmatic law enforcement policy against crime and disorder [46]. This is of much significance for Greece, and Athens in particular, which have been suffering under the dominance of certain rhetoric during the last 20 years and the governments' short-sightedness.

To return to Serres' arguments presented briefly at the beginning of this chapter, a parasite functions by destabilizing and transforming a system that it has penetrated. However, according to Serres, the parasite is the guarantor for the viability of the host. The parasite system needs the host as much as itself. Is this applicable to the networks of migrant smuggling and exploitation, and the criminal groups?

Luhmann uses the parasite example from a different perspective. Parasitic systems and networks not only use the opportunities for acting and deciding within functional systems and their organizations exclusively for themselves, i.e. for their own members and for the development and reinforcement of the network, but they also absorb the attention and resources of the 'host' system. In this way, networks are also responsible for what is generally called 'corruption' of the system [51]. The parasite may benefit from the weakness of the host, and destroying it. Such asymmetric structures cannot be ignored.

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