

**Comparative Analysis of the Migration Policies of the USA, Germany and Greece:  
the Liberal Paradox**

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I have been a PhD student at the University of Athens (Faculty of Political Sciences and Public Administration) since July 2011. I am studying part time as due to the financial crisis in Greece all PhD funding has been suspended. In 2013, the SYLFF (Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship Fund) steering committee of the University of Athens offered me a SYLFF fellowship. As a SYLFF fellow, I got a grant under the SYLFF Research Abroad Program to conduct part of my doctoral research at an institution abroad. I chose to go the University of Gothenburg in Sweden and I passed there the last 4 months. This time has not only be extremely beneficial for my research and but also offered me the opportunity to widen my horizons, collaborate with excellent academics, and integrate in a stimulating environment. The University of Gothenburg and the Centre for European Research in particular shaped the ideal academic ecology for the kind of research I conducted in order to finalize my doctorate.

The title of my dissertation is *Comparative Analysis of Migration Policies of Greece, Germany and USA*. Human mobility preexists human history, and it amazing how a natural disposition of man and one of the most important mechanisms of survival and evolution has become the last century such a major policy issue for states. Modernization established the concept of borders and hence arose the question of who is allowed and under what conditions to pass through national borders. Today we are experiencing a transition to post-modern era and human mobility either volunteer or forced is a key component of globalization. Nation states on the other hand need to respond to these rising flows by regulating entrance, stay and integration of people by preserving social cohesion and national identity.

In particular the field of my research is focused in the policies pursued by European countries at national level and at the communal level, as well as by the United States, in the broader field of migration, and especially in the areas of border control, asylum, the naturalization law, the authorization of residence and work permits, the bilateral agreements with neighboring countries, and the participation in the welfare system of non-citizens, seek to discourage border crossing and installation of migrants.

On the other hand, the dominant liberal ideology in both the U.S. and Europe is indicating a degree of contradiction. Economic liberalism that dominated the post-Cold War leads rationally to further liberalization of movement of people, which is complementary to the free movement of goods and capital. However western liberal states, particularly in relation to this study, the U.S. and the EU Member States, since the early 1960's to date continually seek to impose limits on international migration, which is a complex phenomenon directly linked to the economy, and which throughout this period despite efforts to control it, it is growing.

Migration policy in liberal democracies is designed according to the national interest. Based on this assumption, it is argued that the state must primarily preserve and promote the rights of its citizens, and therefore it is justified to "violate" the liberal principles of equality. But this bring us to the next question: which is the public interest regarding migration. As explained above a liberal democratic state can reap economic benefits and develop faster with greater liberalization of immigration policy. The economic prosperity supports all state institutions offering more social benefits, reduced unemployment, lower crime rates and generally improved living standards.

As it is concluded from the above, it is necessary to investigate the migration policies of liberal states, which are the main receivers of immigrants, under the interdisciplinary light of economic, political and legal analysis. Additionally, the study of convergence of policies followed to date both in terms of border control and at the level of the integration of established immigrants highlights the liberal paradox

in which the western states are trapped. The convergence of migration policies of traditional host countries is not new, but it is interesting to study the countries which until recently categorized as sending and have been converted to receiving, such as Greece. It is therefore intriguing as a working hypothesis the migration policies convergence of liberal states which have different institutional history and financial situation. In particular, it seems appropriate to study the convergence of objectives and means chosen by the different liberal states in order to serve their national interest. My research proposes a comparative research of immigration policy in the U.S., Germany and Greece, creating the opportunity to discover the factors shaping this policy and to separate the internal (national) from external (international). The choice of these countries allows the drawing of conclusions on the parameters which lead to the formulation of public policies on migration, their evaluation and the reasons leading to convergence of policies.

The part of the research I conducted at the University of Gothenburg is the quantitative analysis of the policy outputs. I have coded the policy outputs of the aforementioned states and categorize them according to policy area (border control, naturalization, integration etc.) Then, I measured the degree of restrictiveness of the policy outputs of the case studies in order to assess the convergence. The analysis of this data is on the way but preliminary I can see that there is convergence of policies. Especially in the cases of Greece and Germany. The method I used to compare the different cases (states) in order to show that they pursue converging policies in the field of migration is Mill's method of similarity.

I expect that my proposed analysis will allow for a clear view of states' policies in relation to their institutional backgrounds. I already observe that the longer the institutional history of state the most elaborate their policy frameworks are. Additionally, my results once finalised will show the degree of convergence in the different subfields of policy of migration regulation and more specifically in the broader areas of migration control and migrants integration. The preliminary results indicate that convergence is bigger on the areas of border control. Furthermore, the

quantitative analysis of the policy outcomes provided a model for conducting similar analysis for more cases (states) in the future.

My ultimate purpose conducting research is to contribute to human knowledge, as I believe with all my heart that knowledge is the most powerful tool to change the world. Knowledge is the only way we have towards a linear evolution of our civilization. It is the only path to avoid our own mistakes. So being an active member of the academia does not only serve knowledge but it gives me the chance to spread it.

Likewise being a Sylff fellow does not only mean that I deserve this honor but above all it means that I have the responsibility of serving my purpose of spreading knowledge in order to improve this world.