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Title: Attitudes Towards Refugees in Greece. A comparative analysis of nation-wide and locally contacted surveys in medium-small size Greek cities.

Paschalis Arvanitidis ^{1,*}, Sofia Gourgouliani ², George Papagiannitsis ¹ and Penelopy Vergou ¹

¹Department of Economics, University of Thessaly, 38333 Volos, Greece; E-Mails: parvanit@uth.gr (P.A.), papagiannitsis@gmail.com (G.P.), pvergou@uth.gr (P.V)

² Postdoc researcher

*Corresponding author

Abstract

Over the past decade, Greece has received a significant number of migrants, refugees and Asylum Seekers, mainly from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, as a result of ongoing political instability and war in the region. Despite the fact that most of them want to settle mainly in countries of Northern and Western Europe, specific policies and actions of different countries and the European Union as a whole have resulted in a very significant number of people remaining “trapped” in Greece. Dealing with this situation was and still remains particularly problematic, given the prolonged economic crisis and the significant lack of available resources to meet basic living needs (housing, food, health coverage, education, job opportunities, etc.). The issue is further complicated by the fact that a significant part of the indigenous population is facing similar challenges due to the crisis.

Even though the influx of migrants or refugees in Greece is not new, the overall context makes policy particularly challenging, especially with regard to the spatial distribution of refugees throughout the country, as they often provoke reactions and involve great political costs, given that different localities exhibit different attitudes and views. These attitudes seem to be of great importance towards the success or failure of different policies and a number of recent nation-wide surveys sought to investigate the attitudes of Greek people towards migrants and refugees, with a view to identifying ways to strengthen resilience against the threats to democracy and inclusive societies. Even though, these studies advance our understanding about how the Greeks perceive all those issues, they also present serious limitations regarding the specificities of different localities. In this framework, the current works seeks to provide a comparative analysis between the nation-wide results of such surveys and one which was locally conducted in three medium and small size cities (Trikala, Larisa and Volos), in order to highlight points of convergence and points of divergence.

Keywords: Migration, Refugees, Spatial distribution, Attitudes