

“Sick man of Europe” or a Symptom of Greater Illness? : An Analysis of the Economic
and Refugee Crises in Greece

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Abstract

In seeking to determine the extent to which the economic crisis and the refugee crisis in Greece tested the European Union as an institution and what such a crises revealed about the nature of this particular institution, this thesis explores the role that the structure of the European Union had in shaping and addressing these crises. Through such analysis, this thesis makes the case that both the economic crisis and refugee crisis in Greece have proven to expose shortcomings of the European Union to handle such crises while simultaneously making the case for stronger centralized decision-making processes as a way to better handle crises within the European Union.

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Introduction

The original intention of this research project was to explore the economic impact of the refugee crisis in Greece in order to gauge the potential political repercussions further economic distress could have on Greece’s membership in the European Union. However, such a research question implies that the Greek economic crisis and subsequent refugee crisis are inherently Greece’s burden alone as the examination of the political repercussions of both crises are solely examined from the Greek perspective, though determined under the structure of the European Union. Due to Greece’s economic integration and shared policy through its membership in the European Union, such crises have much more intricate political repercussions that cannot only be examined solely through the Greek perspective (Zahariadis 2012). In initial research into this relationship, the flaws of the original research proposal were exposed to reveal an entirely different nature of the crises altogether. While some do argue that the current crises in Greece are indeed Greece’s burden to manage alone, there is relatively little opposition with regards to the structure of the European Union generating the context in which the crises have taken place, shaped the nature of the crises, and have established the policies which have been implemented in order to manage the crises (Zahariadis 2012). Due to economic integration and shared policies within the European Union, the original research question misrepresents the nature of Greece’s crises and the role that the European Union plays in shaping and addressing these crises. Therefore the political impact such crises would

have within this context was also misrepresented in the framing of the original research question.

While the economic crisis and the refugee crisis in Greece have their own unique histories and stem from a variety of different factors, each is currently addressed and regulated under the European Union's frameworks, and thus cannot solely be examined at Greece's domestic level as to do so neglects to address the influence of the European Union on Greek policy for handling such crises. European Union policy provides context for the conditions under which the crises take place and the framework sovereign member states can employ in order to manage the crises, thus shaping the nature of the crises themselves (Zahariadis 2012). Therefore, rather than exploring the ramifications of the Greek crises solely pertaining to Greece as a member of the European Union, the more relevant question is to explore the impact the Greek crises have had on the institution as a whole. More specifically, to what extent has the Greek economic and refugee crises tested the European Union as an institution and subsequently revealed about the nature of this particular institution?

The very mission of the European Union is to provide an institution for economic cooperation in order to promote peace amongst member states which in turn means to uphold a number of values the European Union considers "common to the member countries" such as human dignity, freedom, democracy and equality (Communication Department of the European Commission 2018). The mission of the European Union stems from the belief that such economic cooperation, or integration, between member states fulfills these goals under the theory that states that engage in peaceful trade are less likely to fall into conflict with one another (Communication Department of the European

Commission 2018). Further stabilizing features of the European Union include a common currency in the Eurozone, increased mobility throughout the region, and the goal of economic growth while increasing transparency of state goals as well as providing member states with frameworks they can communicate their interests and work collectively to achieve shared goals (Communication Department of the European Commission 2018). These goals supposedly drive the policy and action of member states as they set shared policy through the European Union in order to generate a method of peaceful, collective problem solving but that does not mean that Europe is immune to crisis conditions. It will be under this framework that the European Union's response to the crises in Greece will be examined.

Through the following analysis of the economic and refugee crises in Greece, I find that both crises have proven to expose shortcomings of the European Union to handle such crises while simultaneously making the case for stronger centralized decision-making processes as a way to better handle crises within the European Union. Stronger centralized decision-making processes would in turn allow the institution to maintain its mission while effectively engaging in collective action. Thus far, the European Union is still falling short due to the hesitation of individual member states to integrate further in the face of crisis (Zahariadis 2012).

Research Methods

In order to assess the extent to which the structure of European Union policy has not only generated conditions for the economic and refugee crises in Greece to arise, but has also shaped the nature of the crises and allowed for conditions in which the crises

have still not been resolved, I first began with a thorough review of existing literature pertaining to the topic before conducting my own research in Greece. The existing literature examined for this research project focused on building context for the economic crisis as well as the refugee crisis in Greece with an emphasis on the role the European Union has played in each crisis. It was important to build context for the roots of each crisis as well as the policy originally in place that not only provided the frameworks used by Greece and the European Union to respond to crisis conditions, but shaped the very nature of the crises themselves. After building such context, it was then imperative to examine how Greece and the European Union initially responded to the crises in addition to the ability of state and institution policy to adapt if necessary. From there it was discovered that current literature has done very little to follow the evolution of the crises, particularly from the Greek perspective and neglects to illustrate the changing nature of the crises and subsequent stagnation of conditions in Greece. The stagnation of conditions in both the economic and refugee crises in Greece further illustrate the extent to which Greece as well as the European Union are able to adapt to changing conditions efficiently in order to effectively resolve the crises. Because this information was largely absent in current literature, this information was subsequently collected through personal interviews conducted in Greece on a study abroad through the American College of Greece in partnership with the Oakland University program “International Reporting in Greece.”

Personal interviews were conducted at various locations in Greece with representatives ranging from coordinators of refugee camps, directors of non-governmental organizations, as well as representatives for governmental organizations,

all of which play a direct role in managing crisis conditions in Greece on a daily basis and were able to provide necessary insight regarding changing policies as they shape and respond to changing conditions of the crises in Greece. This qualitative data was largely missing from existing literature and is not only necessary to effectively answer the research question, but contributes new knowledge to the academic study of the crises in Greece in context of the crisis management capabilities of Greece and the European Union not yet explored in such context. Findings from both the review of current literature and personal interviews conducted in Greece are presented below, beginning first with building context for the crises in Greece.

Research Findings

Roots of Economic Crisis in Greece

In order to understand the implications of the Greek economic crisis in the context of the European Union, it is first important to illustrate Greece's economic integration within the European Union, of which it became the tenth member state to join on 1 January 1981 (Pappas 2013). Membership within the European Union promised Greece new economic opportunity as a reward for their swift democratization and establishment of inclusive institutions after a collapse of regime left the state subject to a power vacuum just a few short years earlier in 1974 (Pappas 2013). It was with the establishment of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) in 1992, however, that Europe Union member states experienced a major advancement in economic integration (European Commission 2017a). In order to join the Economic and Monetary Union, aspiring member states were required to meet specified prerequisites that qualified them for economic integration. The

most emphasized of these prerequisites was a target rate of 3 percent deficit, a goal designed to limit the number of members eligible at its inception, and modeled after German deficit rates in order to entice German membership in the Economic and Monetary Union as aspiring member states would have to match their deficit rate (Robbins 2015). This was problematic as the goal of the Economic and Monetary Union was to align the economies of member states in harmony with one another, and instead created an incentive for aspiring member states to hit this target goal as quickly as possible by any means necessary (Robbins 2015). Such was the case with Greece, as the state managed to reduce deficit by 10 percent in just 8 years, which qualified the state for membership within the Economic and Monetary Union in the year 2000 (Robbins 2015). Such an impressive reduction in deficit, however, was achieved through “quick fixes” that artificially reduced the deficit rate and was not sustainable in the long-term. False bookkeeping was used to make up the difference in order to meet the prerequisite for membership (Robbins 2015).

Under temporary measures to keep deficit rates low in combination with false bookkeeping, Greece managed to maintain appearances as a state following the requirements for membership within the Economic and Monetary Union, even further economically integrating with other member states when they transitioned to the Eurozone in 2001 (Pappas 2013). During this timeframe Greece experienced an increase of state benefits with a population becoming increasingly dependent on public sector jobs and pensions while also favoring relatively early retirement rates and a transition toward state-protected monopolies (Pappas 2013). Increased economic dependence on the state was made unsustainable through relatively low tax rates, rampant tax evasion, pension

fraud, unauthorized construction, and legislative immunity that added considerable strain to an economy that was already utilizing unsustainable methods for keeping deficit rates low (Pappas 2013). It was the global economic downturn of 2008 that exposed the dire straights of the Greek economic condition, as the Greek economy was unable to cope with such drastic market fluctuations, and the artificial system to prop up dying industry could no longer be sustained (Pappas 2013).

In light of Greece's dishonest bookkeeping and lack of sustainable financial policy, fellow member states of the EU, Economic and Monetary Union, as well as the Eurozone sought to lay blame on the state for its economic crisis. However, some argued that the Greek economic crisis merely exposed deep structural issues within the framework of established economic integration through these institutions as standards for membership were not focused on aligning economies of member states in a sustainable way, nor was there adequate enforcement to be sure that member states, like Greece, were meeting standards for membership (Zahariadis 2012). For example the Economic and Monetary Union established the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) in 1999 in an effort to oversee the "multilateral surveillance procedure" as well as the "excessive deficit procedure" with the purpose of monitoring whether member states were meeting requirements for membership (Robbins 2015). The SGP served as a whistle-blower, alerting member states of misconduct and exposing states that were not meeting requirements for membership, such as the target deficit rates. While the SGP was successful in identifying states in violation, most notably both France and Germany in 2003, there was no procedure that incentivized states to follow the rules, nor were there any repercussions for those who did not (Robbins 2015). Member states imposing

sanctions on violators was a considered option to promote adherence to standards, however, France and Germany evaded such punishment due to their power and influence in the European Union, effectively making the threat of future sanctions incredible (Robbins 2015). With no risk for retribution, states faced no risk in violating standards, or reaching target rates by any means necessary.

EU Response to Greek Economic Crisis

While the Economic and Monetary Union had no formal structure for punishing Greece for mismanagement of their economy and false bookkeeping, the institution and economic integration of member states made the Greek economic crisis one that required collective management in order to prevent a “domino effect” or the spread of negative economic impact as a result of the Greek economic crisis (Zahariadis 2012). It was the self-interest of other member states that drove them to action, as many blamed Greece for irresponsible fiscal policy but concluded that Greece would be unable to manage the crisis on its own. However, the majority of member states cited the crisis as a Greek problem, and not a result of the system (Zahariadis 2012). Steep austerity measures were introduced in order to manage the crisis in such a way that would prove a deterrent to others who may find an incentive not to adhere to standards, or irresponsibly try to meet them by implementing unsustainable fiscal policy (Robbins 2015). In a sense, austerity measures were a way of placing blame and punishing the state in violation while also managing the crisis to avoid further economic implications for other member states (Robbins 2015). By creating a solution to the problem that was so undesirable, the

European Union managed to find a way to punish Greece without having a formal procedure to do so (Robbins 2015).

The European Union's imposed austerity measures consisted of raising Greek taxes and cutting government spending in order to pay down sovereign debt (Robbins 2015). Greece agreed to implement austerity measures in exchange for a series of "rescue packages" or attempted bailouts from the European Union in partnership with the International Monetary Fund first in May 2010 and then again in February 2012 and March 2012 (Tsarouhas 2012). It is important to note that Germany insisted on the inclusion of the International Monetary Fund in the initial rescue package in order to ensure that they would not be saddled with the economic burden of rescuing Greece alone, and that the IMF's involvement diffused responsibility for the crisis (Zahariadis 2012). Even with this additional safety net, however, economic rescue of Greece took multiple attempts, as many member states, like Germany, did not want to become so involved in the crisis that they too took on the negative impacts of the economic crisis. The reluctance to become too involved however was also a hindrance to effective analysis and centralized decision making surrounding the crisis, as seen by the multiple attempts to rescue Greece from the crisis (Zahariadis 2012). While the economic crisis in Greece served to expose structural weaknesses in the Economic and Monetary Union's structure for punishing states in violation of standards as well as effectively managing crisis, it also proved to illustrate that when member states came together and turned to stronger centralized decision making, they were more successful than attempting to isolate themselves for their own benefit (Zahariadis 2012). Similar dynamics are also seen in the subsequent refugee crisis as well.

Refugee Crisis in Europe

Greece has a long history of migration due to its geographical location on the Mediterranean Sea, however, in more modern history the latest shift to Greece as a receiving country can be pinpointed to the 1990s with an influx of many “ethnic returnees” and migrants fleeing the Eastern Bloc. Many of these migrants settled in Greece, however, as of the 2000s patterns shifted yet again, this time toward migrants looking to make their way to Greece as a point of entry for the European Union rather than a point of settlement (Karamanidou 2015). Demographic patterns also shifted away from the “ethnic returnees” to migrants leaving countries affected by instability (Karamanidou 2015). The majority of migrants entering Greece at this time were from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, in addition to a significant number of refugees from Africa as well (Lamb 2016). This steady rate of migrants entering Greece continued until the winter of 2015. According to Christine Nikolas, a representative of the International Office of Migration, there were approximately 10,000 arrivals in Greece per day arriving from across the Aegean Sea with roughly 230,000 arrivals in October of 2015 alone (C. Nikolas, Personal interview, July, 18, 2017). At this time, Greece had its own domestic policies in place to regulate borders and migration into the state, while also sharing policy with the European Union due to its status as a member state and its strategic location as a point of entry into Europe (Karamanidou 2015). The existing infrastructure at the time, however, was never designed for the capacity at which Greece and the rest of Europe experienced the influx of migration in 2015 and resulted in conditions of humanitarian crisis as the system buckled under the unprecedented numbers of migrants (H. Gotsis, Personal interview, July 6, 2017). Greece lacked adequate infrastructure to provide

accommodations for 10,000 incoming migrants each day, especially under the existing conditions of economic crisis that were only further exacerbated by the refugee crisis (Lamb 2016). Government spending had already been reduced in Greece and jobs in the public sector also reduced, which in turn left Greek authorities scrambling to respond to further crisis (Lamb 2016). However, very few migrants sought settlement in Greece and instead began a mass migration through Greece to Macedonia and into Europe. Such migration of course posed security risks, not only to Greece but every other state that experienced the influx of refugees crossing into their borders, and by the end of 2015 the European Union responded with the implementation of new policies in order to adapt to the refugee crisis (S. B., Personal interview, July 10, 2017).

EU Response to Refugee Crisis

The first action taken by the European Union in an attempt to gain control over the refugee crisis was member states closing their borders to the wave of migrants making their way through Europe, starting with the first border closings in late 2015 to early 2016 (Lamb 2016). Such action was taken to stop the undocumented influx of migrants as state authorizes throughout Europe only allowed those with the proper documentation such as visas and asylum papers to move across borders (Lamb 2016). The closing of the borders in Europe along with the additional securities put in place to prevent further undocumented migration effectively trapped refugees at their points of entry, namely Greece and Italy, while preventing these migrants from continuing on to other European Union states, with roughly 2,000-3,000 additional refugees continuing to arrive each month (C. Nikolas, Personal interview, July, 18, 2017). According to Stadis

B., a representative for the Doctors of the World, approximately 50,000 migrants were effectively stopped in Greece at the time the borders closed, the majority of which were without the proper legal documentation to continue on through Europe. This generated a new procedural problem for the European Union as refugees continued to arrive in states like Greece and Italy without a process in place to move them through to the rest of Europe in order to distribute the burden of asylum (S. B., Personal interview, July 10, 2017).

The existing policy of the European Union during the peak influx of migrants during the refugee crisis was rooted in the Dublin Regulation of 2003, and based off of the Dublin Convention which was ratified by European Union member states in 1997 and set common standards for member states as to their responsibilities in handling asylum seekers (De Blouw 2010). The Dublin Convention deemed all European Union member states as safe for asylum seekers while the Dublin Regulation further restricted the ability of asylum seekers to pick the member state in which they would seek asylum by restricting asylum eligibility to the first European Union member state an asylum seeker entered (De Blouw 2010). Under such policy, it is unsurprising that member states along the Mediterranean Sea processed more asylum seekers due to their point of entry position within the European Union (De Blouw 2010). However, as these Mediterranean states became increasingly overwhelmed, the European Union had to quickly implement processes to alleviate the burden of the growing number of asylum seekers in the Mediterranean states, like Greece (C. Nikolas, Personal interview, July, 18, 2017).

In accordance with the Dublin Regulation, European Union policy still required migrants to apply for asylum in the first European Union member state in which they

arrived, as all member states are deemed safe for asylum seekers (C. Nikolas, Personal interview, July, 18, 2017). Therefore, refugees who cross the Aegean Sea and find themselves on the coast of one of the Greek islands must apply for asylum in Greece. However, once screened by asylum authorities in Greece and granted asylum, refugees become eligible to apply for relocation (C. Nikolas, Personal interview, July, 18, 2017). The relocation program allowed asylum seekers the chance to transfer from Greece to another European Union member state through an additional application process, which was implemented from October 2015 to October 2017. It is important to note that relocation, in sticking with the traditions of the Dublin Regulation, did not allow applicants to choose the member state they would like to transfer to (C. Nikolas, Personal interview, July, 18, 2017). Instead, a European Union member state would notify the point of entry states, like Greece, to pledge how many refugees they were willing to take. The point of entry state then examined the pool of relocation applicants, compiled a list of refugees most suited for that member state and sent the list to that member state for review. The state accepting relocation applicants then reviewed the list of applicants, and was entitled to conduct their own interviews with the applicants with the right to approve or reject applicants as they saw fit (C. Nikolas, Personal interview, July, 18, 2017). The relocation process was much more secure as individuals were screened through both the asylum application process in the first European Union member state they entered, and were screened again by the state they were to be relocated to under the relocation process, however the multiple application processes generated a very slow relocation of refugees between member states due to the extensive back and forth between the member states as well as the lengthy application procedure (De Blouw 2010).

Procedural and Structural Changes

The multiple application processes migrants faced when entering the European Union generated a very slow distribution of refugees amongst member states and further slowed the domestic processes within point of entry states like Greece. In order to prevent the state from being overwhelmed with the influx of refugees, Greece employed the use of its islands, such as Lesbos and Samos, as a buffer zone to detain migrants until they could be screened for the initial asylum application process (S. B., Personal interview, July 10, 2017). However, the processes are time-consuming and with Greece also facing economic crisis, the Asylum Service offices on the islands are severely understaffed and therefore do not currently have the capability to keep up with asylum application processes (E. Petraki, Personal interview, July 20, 2017). As of May 2017, only 200 caseworkers were managing over 10,000 cases for asylum and were only processing roughly 800 cases per week while 100-200 new refugees were arriving on the islands daily (E. Petraki, Personal interview, July 20, 2017). According to Ariel Ricker, Executive Director of Advocates Abroad, it is not uncommon for asylum application cases to span over a year, especially as cases are prioritized based on perceived vulnerability, thus moving families, unaccompanied minors, and women travelling alone through the system faster than other cases deemed less vulnerable (A. Ricker, Personal interview, July 11, 2017).

While the asylum and relocation processes together have further refined the distribution of refugees amongst European Union member states, the responsibility to do so is not evenly distributed amongst member states and places the heaviest burden on the Mediterranean states, such as Greece, where refugees continue to enter faster than these

states are able to relocate them (The Economist Intelligence Unit 2016). However, the original policies in place did nothing to ease the burden of the Mediterranean states anyway, so it can be argued that the value of these procedural changes is found, not in even distribution of the burden, but in other benefits the European Union enjoys as a whole (Hatton 2015). Such benefits of the slower, more complex system of relocating refugees include those that are counter intuitively associated with the increased cost of relocating asylum seekers, as overwhelmed states are less likely to grant too many applicants refugee status merely to send them off to the next state due to the increased financial burden of the slower process (Hatton 2015). This additional cost comes from the mandatory 10 months period that relocation applicants must wait in Greece before their applications will be reviewed by the next state (E. Petraki, Personal interview, July 20, 2017). For states facing economic hardships already, like Greece, this would be an incentive to be more selective when granting applicants asylum.

Under these conditions, states like Greece turn to other processes in order to incentivize migrants who knowingly do not qualify for asylum and relocation to return home. Programs like the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) program provides funds for economic migrants to return home, while reintegration assistance provided through the International Organization for Migration (IOM) provides economic migrants with resettlement compensation (C. Nikolas, Personal interview, July 18, 2017). Such an option becomes attractive to economic migrants who must wait longer with no guarantee of entry into the European Union as priority is given to refugees first (E. Petraki, Personal interview, July 20, 2017). The incentives provided under programs like

the AVRR and IOM's resettlement compensation are more cost-effective for the host-state, and help the state to further separate economic migrants from refugees.

While there are some benefits to a slower application process and therefore a slower redistribution of refugees, there are also pitfalls as well. The first and most obvious being that the disproportionate burden of responsibility for these processes places an enormous burden on the point of entry states, namely, Greece and Italy (The Economist Intelligence Unit 2016). There is also an immense burden placed on the migrants themselves, the great majority of which are refugees fleeing traumatic circumstances and then are held for extended periods of time legally bound to temporary living conditions, with the fear of potentially being rejected for asylum and sent back to the dangers they had fled (S. Mirogiannias, Personal interview, July 12, 2017). Further, once it is known that a route to Europe has been regulated to the point where migrants believe the route to be a dead end, they will search for new routes not yet under the same regulations, thereby forcing the European Union to implement these processes in the latest point of entry (IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Center 2016). As the processes to manage the crisis change, so too does the nature of the crisis.

Nature of the Crisis Shifts

What originally began as a humanitarian crisis and security concern for the member states of the European Union, as migrants flooded across borders seeking asylum, has now turned into a procedural crisis. The relocation process running from October 2015 to October 2017 is effectively over, leaving behind a stagnating process as asylum applicants can no longer apply for relocation to another member state while more

applicants are arriving each day (C. Nikolas, Personal interview, July 18, 2017). So far the European Union has not come to an agreement to extend this program, renew it, or to implement a similar program that would relocate refugees out of point of entry states to other member states within the European Union, merely offering vague promises as to review applications already completed that were waiting to be processed before the end of the program in October 2017 (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2017). However, institutions like the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as well as point of entry states such as Greece and Italy, are calling for other member states in the European Union to fulfill their initial pledges made in September 2015 to “relocate 160,000 asylum-seekers in total” even though the timeframe in which they pledged to do so has now passed. By the end of September 2017, fewer than 30,000 asylum seekers have been relocated, falling woefully short of the target goal (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2017). With no promise of further relocation within the European Union, this leaves Mediterranean states like Greece burdened with growing numbers of refugees seeking asylum.

In the anticipation of the eventual end of the relocation program, the European Union made a deal with Turkey to address irregular migrant patterns and deter such migrants from coming to Europe (Rygiel, Baban & Ilcan 2016). The deal signed 18 March 2016 agreed to even trades of Syrian refugees in Turkey for irregular migrants in Europe, thereby “sending back” the migrants that were not adhering to international standards, as to continue across borders labeled irregular migrants as such rather than refugees. The deal was also an attempt to stop the deadly crossings over the Aegean and the Mediterranean by implementing a procedure of legal transfer of refugees from Turkey

to the European Union and attempting to deter the use and creation of new illegal routes to Europe (Rygiel, Baban & Ilcan 2016). In exchange for such a deal, the European Union would also agree to “liberalize visa restrictions for Turkish citizens” as well as invest in €3 billion “Facility for Refugees in Turkey” (Rygiel, Baban & Ilcan 2016). The European Union’s deal with Turkey has been widely criticized as an immoral means to stop the flow of refugees to Europe, lessening their own burden while returning refugees to a state which has been argued to be unsafe for refugees (A. Ricker, Personal interview, July 11, 2017). The agreement has been effective at reducing the influx of irregular migrants in Greece by 97% which has arguably done more to ease the burden of the refugee crisis in Greece than relocation (European Commission 2017b). The European’s deal with Turkey, whether moral or immoral, indicates an alternative measure to managing the current refugee crisis by stemming the influx of refugees into the region, rather than sustaining the relocation model in the future.

Implications

The refugee crisis in Europe saw an increase in the harmonization of policy and strong cooperation between member states that did not reach full integration, but aligned the migration policy of member states in order to redistribute the burden of the refugee crisis from states such as Greece who, by the nature of existing European Union policy under the Dublin Regulation, experienced a disproportionate responsibility for asylum applications to other member states who experienced less asylum applications (De Blouw 2010). Cooperation between member states on migration policy saw the minimization of a deflection of applicants from one state to another under shared processes, which in turn

could increase security while honoring international obligations to accept large quantities of refugees for integration and settlement in Europe (Hatton 2015). Even though the alignment of policy was present between member states of the European Union, they still failed to fully cooperate and thus failed in their goal to relocate 160,000 asylum-seekers from the point of entry states to other member states (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2017). The reason for failure again being the structural inability of the European Union to effectively punish member states that do not adhere to the standards agreed upon by the collective (Hatton 2015). States that did not fulfill their pledge to take a specified number of refugees face no repercussions for their lack of action, and thus faced no incentive to fulfill their pledge during the two-year timeframe for implementing the relocation process (Hatton 2015).

While the European Union could agree to continue the relocation process until the initial goal is met, or could pursue alternative routes to managing the crisis such as seen with the European Union's deal with Turkey, such is not a true solution when the compliance of member states can be assured (Hatton 2015). While the continuation of relocation would further promote the harmonization of member state migration policy and work toward fulfilling international obligations while pursuing collective security, there is no guarantee that the same failures will not occur when member states who do not want to accept more refugees under relocation simply choose not to (Hatton 2015). This again illustrates the inherent structural flaws of the European Union and the puzzle of collective management crisis, as states can decide not to play along and effectively weaken the ability of the institution to be successful under such conditions.

Research Conclusion

The crises in Greece served to expose the shortcomings and flaws in the structure of the European Union in its ability, or lack thereof, to successfully engage member states in collective action under crisis conditions (Zahariadis 2012). The assurance of collective action is not viable under a system in which member states cannot be incentivized to adhere to specified standards, nor deterred from choosing not to participate (Hatton 2015). Under such a system, the European Union experiences member states choosing not to adhere to standards such as meeting specified deficit goals or fulfilling pledges to relocate refugees within a specified timeframe. While states seek economic integration as a means of achieving stability and peace among member states, retention of political sovereignty allows the security each member states desires for themselves but generates a flawed structure unable to fully manage the actions of member states (De Grauwe 2010). Thus the case can be made that stronger centralized decision-making processes would in turn allow the institution to maintain its mission while effectively engaging in collective action. This is a goal of the institution of the European Union itself in its mission statement to further integrate member states peacefully, providing common structure in order to uphold shared values and work toward a common goal (Communication Department of the European Commission 2018). This analysis does not determine the likelihood of such a more comprehensive centralized authority within the structure of the European Union, but is meant to illustrate how the lack of one generates conditions that makes collective management of crisis conditions difficult.

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