



Center for Open Access in Science

---

*Open Journal for*  
**Anthropological Studies**

2020 • Volume 4 • Number 2

<https://doi.org/10.32591/coas.ojas.0402>

---

ISSN (Online) 2560-5348

**OPEN JOURNAL FOR ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDIES (OJAS)**

ISSN (Online) 2560-5348

<https://www.centerprode.com/ojas.html>

[ojas@centerprode.com](mailto:ojas@centerprode.com)

**Publisher:**

Center for Open Access in Science (COAS)

Belgrade, SERBIA

<https://www.centerprode.com>

[office@centerprode.com](mailto:office@centerprode.com)

**Editorial Board:**

Alexandra Balakaki (PhD)

*Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Faculty of Philosophy, GREECE*

Meryem Bulut (PhD)

*University of Ankara, Faculty of Humanities, TURKEY*

Emil Heršak (PhD)

*University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, CROATIA*

Snežana Filipova (PhD)

*Ss. Cyril and Methodius University of Skopje, Faculty of Philosophy, NORTH MACEDONIA*

Tsvete Lazova (PhD)

*New Bulgarian University, Department of Anthropology, Sofia, BULGARIA*

**Executive Editor:**

Goran Pešić

*Center for Open Access in Science, Belgrade*

CONTENTS

- 35 Suicide among Undergraduate Students in Southeast Nigeria: An Empirical Evaluation of Durkheim's Classifications of Suicide  
*Samuel O. Okafor*
- 51 Critical Discourse Analysis of "Canción sin Miedo" by Vivir Quintana  
*Verónica Andrea Escobar Mejía*
- 61 European Policies for the Inclusion of Refugees in Higher Education: The Case of Greece  
*Andreas Vasilopoulos & Andriana Ioannidi*





# Suicide among Undergraduate Students in Southeast Nigeria: An Empirical Evaluation of Durkheim's Classifications of Suicide

Samuel O. Okafor

*University of Nigeria, Nsukka, NIGERIA*  
*Department of Sociology/Anthropology*

Received: 14 August 2020 ▪ Accepted: 27 October 2020 ▪ Published Online: 29 November 2020

## *Abstract*

The Durkheimian sociological doctrine of suicide is classified into regulation/integration, high and low social currents, with four resultant suicide types such as egoistic, altruistic, anomic and fatalistic suicide. Across Nigeria and social classes, suicide types and circumstances according to the above classifications have become worrisome, warranting empirical investigation into the social wellbeing and suicide potentials in the social realm of Nigerian socio-economic and political landscape. As such, this study investigated the suicide tendency among undergraduate students in some selected institutions of higher learning in south-eastern Nigeria. The study adopted a survey design using a sample size of 2,200 students (17+). The study adopted parametric statistics for the test of the relationship of variables. In the overall findings, altruistic suicide tendency is high (60%), this is followed by anomic suicide tendency (47%), egoistic suicide tendency (46%) and fatalistic suicide tendency (41%). From the regression model ( $p < .05$ ), altruistic suicide tendency was found to be predicted by family income and strong ties with family activities. Equally, anomic suicide tendency can be predicted by how many years the students have been in the school. Egoistic suicide tendency was found to be positively correlated with family income and source of sponsorship while fatalistic suicide tendency was found to be positively correlated with only family income.

**Keywords:** suicide tendency, anomic suicide, egoistic suicide, fatalistic suicide, altruistic suicide, Durkheimian suicide doctrine.

## 1. Introduction

Suicide as a social phenomenon is embedded in the prevailing socio-economic circumstances of the time and by implication, vulnerable to the negative or positive direction and influence of the indices of the socio-economic situation of the time (White & Morris, 2019; O'Connor & Nock, 2014). While suicide in its own right is human action, the action itself is an outcome of social circumstances. Across the ages and societies, the phenomenon of suicide has taken different shapes and meanings, making it more or less, object of scientific interest other than emotional circumstance demanding sympathy.

Suicide in antiquity has existed without a formal understanding of it as a social menace as such until the moment the French sociologist (Emile Durkheim) approached such in a scientific attempt (Haralambose & Holborn, 2008), bringing it to the limelight of the scholarly community.

Among other things, suicide was perceived as cultural practices among some ethnic and tribal groups while in some situations, it never appeared as a social problem (Baechler, 1979). With the work of Durkheim, which set the platform for the understanding of suicide as a social problem as well as worthy of scientific exploration, many interests were developed in understanding, classifying, predicting and controlling suicide phenomenon (João et al., 2016; Baechler, 1979; Taylor, 1982). As such, many scholars mostly on the platform of social science have put the phenomenon into consideration as one of the social problems to date, which required serious attention (Holmes, Crane, Fennell & Williams, 2007; White & Morris, 2019; O'Connor & Nock, 2014).

Following the unrestrained interest in the study of suicide, many understandings about the phenomenon have emerged increasing, the arguments about research methodology suitable for the study of suicide (Atkinson, 1978; Philipson, 1972; Taylor, 1982; Dorais, 2004; White & Morris, 2019). These equally, have enabled a large scope of interests and pieces of literature in the study of suicide, while creating numerous approaches in the study and interpretations of suicide phenomenon (Lester, 2001; Henry & Short, 1954; Chandler, 2019; Hjelmeland & Knizek, 2010). While Durkheim started with the macro-social phenomenon such as the socioeconomic factors (religion, politics, family, and economy), and positivist methodology (Durkheim, 1897; Haralambose & Holborn, 2008), other scholars such as Douglas (1967), Baechler (1979), Dorais (2004), Atkinson (1978), Philipson (1972), Taylor (1982), and host of others, have approached the phenomenon of suicide scientifically, using different methodologies and objects of interest other than that of Durkheim.

The peculiarity of Durkheim's approach is found in the fact that other arguments and approaches have one similarity or the other with Durkheim's approach making it, one of the enduring sociological and perhaps social scientific approaches to suicide to date (Hindess, 1973; Scourfield et al., 2012). As such, the relevance of Durkheim's sociological suicide doctrine cannot be overemphasized in the effort to understand the remote and immediate factors behind suicide tendencies, potentials, and ideation.

In recent times, the issue of suicide across the globe has become really a social problem demanding scholarly efforts from different disciplinary quarters in order to combat suicide as a social menace. According to World Health Organization (2019), about 800,000 people die by suicide annually. In the current historical epoch (21<sup>st</sup> century), suicide and suicide tendencies have increased to alarming rate according to empirical documentations from different parts of the globe (Scourfield et al., 2012; João et al., 2016; Boycea et al., 2018; Mars et al., 2014; Holmes, Crane, Fennell & Williams, 2007; White & Morris, 2019; O'Connor & Nock, 2014), with a large chunk of the reported suicide in the developed world (Mars et al, 2014; Holmes, Crane, Fennell & Williams, 2007; White & Morris, 2019; O'Connor & Nock, 2014; Holt, et al., 2015). Equally, evidences abound that the large chunk of unreported suicide are located in the developing world such as Africa (Adewuya et al., 2016). Although there are scholars in the two polarized zones, the differences in suicide reporting and documentation still lie on the extent of psycho and socio-human development in the understanding, management and reporting of death related phenomenon (Okafor, 2017). Consequently, most African nations such as Nigeria are still battling with unclassified reports on suicide phenomenon making it necessary for the use of macro socio-economic elements in the screening of suicide occurrence, ideation, and tendencies.

The suicide rate in Nigeria (3.2%) is among the disturbing digits, among African and other developing nations (Adewuya et al., 2016; Mars et al., 2014). It is such that deserves sociological investigations, for the understanding, analysis and possible control of the phenomenon. World over, the majority of the reported suicide and sometimes unreported suicides have been documented among the youth (Holmes, Crane, Fennell & Williams, 2007; White & Morris, 2019; O'Connor & Nock, 2014; Skinner & McFaull, 2012; Fact sheet, 2010). The same trend appears to be the case in sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria (Adewuya et al., 2016; Mars

et al., 2014). More concerns are the fact that unreported suicide actions are more than the reported suicide actions (Mars et al., 2014), coupled with the fact that government and other concerned agencies lack scientific information on the barometers to follow to control remote and immediate suicide tendencies. In view of the need for understanding and controlling suicide phenomenon especially among the undergraduate youth in Nigeria, the present study is designed to investigate suicide potential and ideation among the undergraduate students from south-eastern Nigerian higher institutions of learning. Among other things, the study investigated:

- (1) Micro cum macro socio-economic factors determining egoistic suicide tendency (potential) among the undergraduate students, in view of Durkheim's classification of suicides based on suicide;
- (2) Micro cum macro socio-economic factors determining altruistic suicide tendency (potential) among the undergraduate students, in view of Durkheim's classification of suicides based on suicide;
- (3) Micro cum macro socio-economic factors determining anomic suicide tendency (potential) among the undergraduate students, in view of Durkheim's classification of suicides based on suicide;
- (4) Micro cum macro socio-economic factors determining fatalistic suicide tendency (potential) among the undergraduate students, in view of Durkheim's classification of suicides based on suicide;
- (5) The most likely form of suicide tendency/potential (such as egoistic, altruistic, fatalistic and anomic suicide) among the undergraduate students in this area of the world.

## 2. Review of relevant literatures

Suicide, the unnatural death as a result of self-harm, is one of the enduring social problems of the current historical epoch. From the time of Durkheim (1897), who first classified the phenomenon for the more scientific approach, to the present, suicide has been a burden on many nations as well as the global body (World Health Organization) (Coop et al., 2014). Suicide has affected productivity and economic growth especially in the developed nations (Boyce, Wood & Ferguson, 2016); it has caused both micro and macro socio-economic challenges bordering on all aspects of life (Hawton & van Heeringen, 2009; Hawton, Saunders & O'Connor, 2012).

Although documentation on suicide as one of the social problems of the century is irregular in some nations, the available documentation so far presents some level of concern both to the researchers' community and that of the policymakers world over (Nock, Borges & Bromet, 2008; Nock, Borges & Ono, 2012). This is a result of the fact that many suicide actions, attempts, and ideation are mostly hidden especially among the developing nations (Holmes, Crane, Fennell & Williams, 2007; White & Morris, 2019; O'Connor & Nock, 2014).

Across the globe, there are a number of documentations indicating the trends of suicide and its overwhelming calling for more scientific investigations (Nock, Borges & Bromet, 2008). A number of researches in Europe have indicated the epidemiological posture of suicide over some decades (Gunnell et al., 2012; Saurina et al, 2013; Chang, Stuckler, Yip & Gunnell, 2013; Mills, 2018); in the United States of America, suicide has taken a dramatic turn in a number of decades defying, the power of social policies designed to mitigate such (Spates & Slatton, 2017; Sean et al., 2009; Reeves et al., 2012; Furr, Westefeld, McConnell & Jenkins, 2001; Borowsky, Resnick, Ireland & Blum, 1999; Fitzpatrick, 2018). Among the population in Canada, suicide incidents among the youth has appeared as one of the enduring challenges to the public health institution. Although this appears with some level of disparities among the sub social groups, the occurrence is relatively high in aggregate when compared to other developed nations (Kirmayer, Brass, Holton, Paul, Simpson & Tait, 2007; Pollock, Healy, Jong, Valcour & Mullay, 2018).

According to World Bank Group (2017) documentation and classification, most of the world's suicides were recorded in low-and-middle-income countries (79%). However, the highest age-standardized suicide rate were observed in high-income countries (11.5 per 100,000), compared to Lower-middle-income (11.4 per 100,000). Also, lower rates of age-standardized suicide was recorded in low-income and upper-middle-income countries (10.8 per 100,000 and 9.0 per 100,000 respectively). On male/female suicide ration, females in lower-middle-income countries had the highest suicide rate (9.1 per 100,000) compared to females in other income level groupings while, males in high-income countries had the highest rate (17.2 per 100,000) as compared to males in other income level groupings (WHO, 2019; World Bank Group, 2017).

Among the regions of the globe, World Health Organization (2016) documentation put suicide rates in Africa (12.0 per 100,000), Europe (12.9 per 100,000), and South-East Asia (13.4 per 100,000) regions as higher than the global average (10.5 per 100,000). The lowest suicide rate in comparison was in the Eastern Mediterranean region (4.3 per 100,000). There is a much higher female age-standardized suicide rates in the South-East Asia Region (11.5 per 100,000) when compared to the global female average (7.5 per 100,000). For males, the regions of Africa (16.6 per 100,000), the Americas (14.5 per 100,000), South-East Asia (15.4 per 100,000), and especially Europe (21.2 per 100,000), all surpassed the global male average (13.7 per 100,000) (WHO, 2018; 2019).

Among the African nations, depending on the available documentation, suicide rates across the continents has continued to grow as a result degenerating socioeconomic situation in the continent. While the suicide rate in Ghana was reported to be 5.4 against every 100,000 population, the ratio of 10:1 was equally documented (i.e. 10 men against every 1 woman) (Adinkrah, 2011; WHO, 2016; 2019).

By 2008, Johnson et al. (2008) reported that the suicide rate in Liberia was 6% of which the male/female ratio was 0.7:1. However, the WHO report (2018) put the suicide rate for both sexes at 6.8%. In Morocco, Agoub Moussaoui & Kadri (2006) using the region of Casablanca, reported suicide-related deaths and suicide prevalence of 2.1% with male/female ratio of 0.5:1. Gureje et al. (2007), using the Nigerian six geopolitical zones, investigated the rate of suicide across the nation. According to their findings, the suicide prevalence was 0.7% with a male/female ratio of 1.0:1. The WHO report (2018a) put the overall suicide rate in Nigeria at 9.5% (9.2 for females and 9.9 for males).

According to the study by Bekry (1999), which focused on Addis Ababa Ethiopia (1981-1996), revealed that the suicide rate among the population was as high as 49.8 per 100,000 with male/female ratio of 2.9:1. Taking a sample from Blantyre Malawi (2000-2003) by Dzumalala et al. (2006), suicide prevalence was recorded at 10.7 per 100,000 with the male/female ratio of 0.8:1. From Namibia, Ikealumba and Couper (2006) from their study reported the prevalence of suicide to be 100.0 per 100,000 with a male/female ratio of 0.9:1.

As at the time, 2002-2004, the study by Joe et al. (2008), which focused on South Africa, showed the lifetime prevalence of suicide of 2.9% with the male/female ratio of 0.3:1. However, the report of the World Health Organization (2018b) put the suicide rate in South Africa as 11.6%. According to a study in Kampala Uganda in January 2001-Oct 2002, which was reported by Kinyanda, Hjelmeland and Musisi (2004), the suicide prevalence in Uganda was shown to be 10.1 per 100,000 with male/female ratio of 1.7:1. Similarly, the study by Ndosi and Waziri (1997) in Dar es Salaam Tanzania between 1991- 1993 revealed a suicide prevalence of 5.2 per 100,000 with male/female ratio of 0.5:1 among the population. According to the findings by Chibanda, Sebit, and Acuda (2002) in Harare Zimbabwe, the suicide prevalence among the population was discovered to be as high as 49.9 per 100,000 with male/female ratio of 0.2:1.

Suicide has been connected to a number of social circumstances and phenomenon such as unemployment (Jackson & Warr, 1984), poverty (Skapinakis et al., 2006), economic



recession (Stack & Wasserman, 2007), poor governance and degenerating economic situation (Mars et al., 2014), marriage and mental instability (Borum, 2012), gender and gender imbalance (Marion & Range, 2003), culture and tribal practices (Taylor, 1982), sexuality (Dorais, 2004), religion and ethnicity (Durkheim, 1897), race and racism (Crosby & Molock, 2006), etc. However, regional differences in the reportage of suicide both in methodology and indices of interest, still leave more to be desired for, in terms of accurate methodology suitable for different regions of the globe with different stages of development.

While the purified indices of suicide and suicide ideation have worked in the developed nations, in encouraging accurate data gathering, religion, suspicion, and dearth of scholarly interest in the phenomenon of suicide have equally made it difficult for the presentation of accurate data on suicide and circumstances surrounding death in the developing nations such as Nigeria (Okafor, 2017). Much of the reported suicide actions and suicide studies in African nations such as Nigeria have been in the newspapers and perhaps the immediate social circumstances of suicide. As such, much is required from the fundamental categorization of suicide and remote social circumstances of suicide as was presented by Durkheim (1897) in the investigation and analysis of suicide potentials in the developing nations such as Nigeria; a task the present study was designed to accomplish.

Many studies have been carried out on suicide action and ideation but with little or no attention to the remote and immediate macro socio-economic factors surrounding suicide tendencies especially, in connection with the four classification of suicide by Durkheim. This is an intellectual exercise, which is much needed in the developing nations such as Nigeria where socio-economic situations and suicide tendencies/actions are still in crude nature and shares fluid relationship with each other.

### 3. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of the study anchored on the Durkheimian sociological doctrine of suicide (1897). In the quest for scientific understanding of suicide, Emile Durkheim developed the analytical structure of the immediate and remote causes of suicide taking cognizance of the social structures and available data on regional scale. Durkheim, a functionalist sociologist and one of the founders of the discipline of sociology, was of the view that suicide cannot occur outside the dominant social system, which revolves around the AGIL system (Talcott Parsons, 1951). The AGIL (Adaptation, Goal attainment, Integration and Latency/Pattern maintenance), is in itself, domicile within the four basic structures and functional prerequisite of the society as a whole such as the family, economy, religion, and politics (Durkheim, 1938; Parsons, 1951; Merton, 1968).

Although Durkheim's analysis of suicide was largely on data collected from across Europe during his time, his theoretical grasps on the sociological analysis of the society equally helped him to put the data into proper perspective hence the classification of the types and occurrences of suicide into the socioeconomic designation. Fundamental in Durkheimian sociological suicide doctrine is the fact that suicide is the product of the interaction between the individual/group, and the dominant socioeconomic situation.

Following Durkheim's observation of data on suicide across Europe during his time, suicide was classified into four major types (egoistic, altruistic, fatalistic and anomic suicides) following two major situational circumstances (regulation and integration) (Durkheim, 1897; Haralambose & Holborn, 2008). Egoistic suicide in Durkheimian classification falls within the situational circumstance of integration. This according to him is caused by insufficient integration by an individual in the social system. This may be as a result of insufficient integration at the family level or the general society by an individual. Altruistic suicide, on the other extreme according to

Durkheim, is a type of suicide, occurring as a result of excessive integration of the individual into the social system. In this type of suicide, individuals or even a group can take their own lives in the interest of the system they belong to, due to too much attachment to the system. According to Durkheim's classification, anomic suicide occurs as a result of insufficient regulation of the individual activities in the social system. Here, the individuals can fall prey to suicide action induced by uncontrolled excesses ostensibly to exercise freedom.

On the extreme pole of the anomic suicide, is the fatalistic suicide domicile with excessive regulation of the behaviors of the members of the society. In this type of suicide according to Durkheim's classification, excessive regulation in the society including other subgroups individuals can belong to in the social system can result in fatalistic suicide due to knowingly and unknowingly blocking the expectations of some members of the society.

Durkheim's publication on suicide in 1897 latter draw the attention of many researchers, who put forward either a supporting thesis on suicide with regard to Durkheimian perspective or, criticism of Durkheim's perspective (Haralambose & Holborn, 2008). From what seems to be contrary opinion on Durkheim's explanation of suicide, there are different approaches and perspectives observable.

Douglas (1967) was of the view that Durkheim's analysis using official statistics was wrong considering the understanding that, suicide phenomenon goes beyond official record into individual uniqueness and peculiar situations. Furthermore, Douglas was more interested in the social meaning of suicide order than the causes of the phenomenon such that, he could not agree with Durkheim on the ground that, what was classified as suicide on the statistical ground in reality may not be such if subjected to the dominant understanding and social discuss among a given group. Similarly, Baechler (1979) using a case study, classified suicide into escapist, aggressive, oblativ and ludic suicides. According to him, these types of suicide contrary to the earlier classification by Durkheim presented the picture of the circumstances of suicide directly connected to individuals at different circumstances and situations.

Durkheim's sociological doctrine of suicide received more criticisms on the ground that it was derived more from the quantitative approach to sociological studies order than the interpretive approach among some sociologist interested in suicide such as Atkinson (1978), Philipson (1972), Taylor (1982), Dorais (2004), etc. However, the legacy of Durkheim's work endures to date considering, his approach and the goal of mainstream sociology in evaluating and understanding the social phenomena.

While the interpretive sociologists, mostly from the phenomenology quarters were interested in the individually peculiar phenomenon in explaining suicide, they lost the focus of the components of the social system, which are sui generis to the individual members of the society. Sociology as a discipline is more interested in the macrocosm of the social system compared, to the microcosm of the social system. By this understanding, the explanation and analysis of the social phenomenon for a sociologist first, begin by the observation of the social system and structure, and how these affect other issues within the system. Suicide as a social phenomenon is subject to the overwhelming circumstances surrounding the individual members of the society.

Outside Durkheim's use of statistical data in explaining and putting suicide into perspective, his explanation was more of the regulation and integration issues domicile with social structural set up involving the family, religion, politics, and economy. All these put together, appeared as macrocosm interacting with other microelements in the social system, which now have a direct effect on the individual members of the society. As such, what the interpretive sociologists were dabbling with became the further interpretation of the Durkheimian doctrine of suicide.

For the present study, Durkheim's sociological doctrine of suicide is suitable for understanding and predicting the suicide potential of a sociological group such as students of higher institutions of learning. While egoistic suicide may likely occur among the students due to isolation from the family, students and other related social groups, altruistic suicide can occur among the students due to strong attachment to religious groups, fraternity, students' activism, etc. On the other hand, while fatalistic suicide may likely occur among the students due to excessive regulation from the family, school authority, individual academic staff, etc., anomic suicide may likely occur due to weak regulation from the family, religious group, school authority, etc. All these, are embedded in the four cardinal points of the social structural setup such as the family, religion, politics, and economy. Before now, to the knowledge of the present study, there has not been a study dedicated to the understanding of suicide tendencies in relationship with the macro socio-economic factors especially, in line with Durkheim's classification of suicide.

#### 4. Methodology

The study was carried out among three major strands of higher institutions of learning in Nigeria such as universities, polytechnics and colleges of education/agriculture randomly selected from the southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria comprising, Abia, Anambra, Imo, Enugu and Ebonyi states.

Undergraduate males and females from 17 years and above were selected from ten randomly selected institutions (four universities [2 federal/2state], two polytechnics [federal/state] and four monotechnic (colleges of education, health and agriculture) [federal/state]) using inclusive criteria such as institutions that are in full session within the period (month) of the study.

In each of the institutions, 220 respondents were selected using modified random sampling techniques. The age category in the study was chosen to specifically follow the minimum age requirement for admission into the higher institutions of learning in Nigeria by the National University Commission (NUC) and the Universal Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME). The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. The choice of this design followed the theoretical proposition about the remote and immediate factors to suicide potentials.

While suicide is an action capable of bringing unnatural death, suicide potentials as was couched in this study, is the possibility of suicide thought, if certain socioeconomic circumstances/pressures prevail. The instrument for the study was a survey questionnaire developed on a nominal scale built on the composite of the socioeconomic indices supposedly connected with the four strands of suicides as observed by Durkheim, such as egoistic suicide, altruistic suicide, fatalistic suicide, and anomic suicide.

The socioeconomic indices were captured in the questionnaire and scored with excel data interface as an aid of scoring manual, to isolate the scores for regression analysis. The questionnaires were self-administered with some guidance from the research assistants where the respondents requested for assistance. The data collected were coded and analyzed using Social Science Statistical Package (SPSS version 23) while, the research questions guiding the study were answered with descriptive and inferential statistics such as percentages and Logistic Regression.

5. Analysis of the findings

**Table 1. Logistic regression on egoistic suicide tendency and other variables**

	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Step 1 <sup>a</sup>								
GENDER	-1.971	.265	55.171	1	.000	.139	.083	.234
Age	-.321	.176	3.314	1	.069	.725	.513	1.025
Years spent in school	-.049	.107	.208	1	.648	.952	.772	1.175
Religion	-1.101	.145	57.535	1	.000	.333	.250	.442
Income	.301	.105	8.158	1	.004	1.351	1.099	1.661
Sponsorship	1.179	.256	21.236	1	.000	3.252	1.969	5.370
Social activity	.311	.262	1.409	1	.235	1.364	.817	2.279
Religious activities	-.296	.258	1.309	1	.253	.744	.448	1.235
Family activities	-.572	.300	3.648	1	.056	.564	.314	1.015
Constant	3.362	.855	15.468	1	.000	28.857		

**Dependent Variable: Egoistic Suicide tendency [measured in nominal scale with likely decision response to 5 common socioeconomic stress]**

Field Survey, 2019

Overall Percentage classified = 54.6%; Goodness of fit test = .210;  $\chi^2$ Value = 74.824 (df8); Cox & Snell R<sup>2</sup> = 34.5%; Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> = 46.1%

Note: Result is significant at .05 ( $p < .05$ )

The above Table 1 presented the binary logistic regression on Egoistic Suicide tendency (measured in nominal scale with likely decision response to 5 common socioeconomic stresses) among the students of the higher institutions of learning in southeast Nigeria. The collected data were coded to follow the binary logistic regression default, while the data were test-ran to avoid outliers. The overall strength of the model in explaining the factors surrounding Egoistic Suicide tendency according to the pseudo R<sup>2</sup> (Cox & Snell R<sup>2</sup> and Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup>) is between 34.5% and 46.1%.

Among the variables of interest, the gender of the students, religion, family income, and sponsorship significantly contributed to the explanation of Egoistic Suicide tendency among the students. Specifically in the model, gender of the students and religion, were in the negative direction according to their B. value, indicating the fact that the more the aforementioned factors, the less the egoistic suicide tendency.

**Table 2. Logistic regression on altruistic suicide tendency and other variables**

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Step 1 <sup>a</sup>								
GENDER	-.201	.268	.560	1	.454	.818	.484	1.384
Age	.041	.186	.049	1	.825	1.042	.724	1.499
Years spent in school	.017	.113	.022	1	.883	1.017	.815	1.269
Religion	-.522	.183	8.153	1	.004	.593	.415	.849
Income	.555	.115	23.437	1	.000	1.741	1.391	2.180
Sponsorship	-.817	.274	8.872	1	.003	.442	.258	.756
Social activity	-1.191	.280	18.091	1	.000	.304	.176	.526
Religious activities	-.921	.299	9.485	1	.002	.398	.221	.715
Family activities	.932	.325	8.198	1	.004	2.539	1.342	4.805
Constant	1.179	.930	1.608	1	.205	3.250		

**Altruistic Suicide tendency [measured in nominal scale with likely decision response to 5 common socioeconomic stress]**

**Field Survey, 2019**

Overall Percentage classified = 80.0%; Goodness of fit test = .134;  $\chi^2$ Value = 56.788 (df8); Cox & Snell R<sup>2</sup> = 10.8%; Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> = 17.1%

Note: Result is significant at .05 ( $p < .05$ )

The above Table 2 presented the binary logistic regression on Altruistic Suicide tendency (measured in nominal scale with likely decision response to 5 common socioeconomic stresses) among the students of the higher institutions of learning in southeast Nigeria. The collected data were coded to follow the binary logistic regression default, while the data were test-ran to avoid outliers. The overall strength of the model in explaining the factors surrounding Egoistic Suicide tendency according to the pseudo R<sup>2</sup> (Cox & Snell R<sup>2</sup> and Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup>) is between 10.8% and 17.1%.

Among the variables of interest, religion, family income, sponsorship, social activities in school, religious activities in school and family activities significantly contributed to the explanation of Altruistic Suicide tendency among the students. Specifically, in the model, the religion of the students, sponsorship, participation in social activities in school and participation in religious activities in school, were in the negative direction according to their B. value, indicating the fact that the more the aforementioned factors, the less the Altruistic suicide tendency.

**Table 3. Logistic regression on anomic suicide tendency and other variables**

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Step 1 <sup>a</sup>								
GENDER	-1.348	.228	35.108	1	.000	.260	.166	.406
Age	-.640	.170	14.179	1	.000	.527	.378	.736
Years spent in school	.217	.097	5.000	1	.025	1.242	1.027	1.502
Religion	-.235	.124	3.592	1	.058	.791	.620	1.008
Income	.135	.091	2.201	1	.138	1.144	.958	1.368
Sponsorship	-.275	.241	1.303	1	.254	.760	.474	1.218
Social activity	-.536	.226	5.613	1	.018	.585	.376	.912
Religious activities	-.818	.238	11.760	1	.001	.441	.277	.704
Family activities	-.931	.270	11.904	1	.001	.394	.232	.669
Constant	6.160	.892	47.717	1	.000	473.440		

**Anomic Suicide tendency [measured in nominal scale with likely decision response to 5 common socioeconomic stress]**

Overall Percentage classified = 67.0%; Goodness of fit test = .213;  $\chi^2$ Value = 31.611 (df8); Cox & Snell R<sup>2</sup> = 24.3%; Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> = 32.5%  
**Note: Result is significant at .05 (p < .05)**

The above Table 3 presented the binary logistic regression on Anomic Suicide tendency (measured in nominal scale with likely decision response to 5 common socioeconomic stresses) among the students of the higher institutions of learning in southeast Nigeria. The collected data were coded to follow the binary logistic regression default, while the data were test-ran to avoid outliers. The overall strength of the model in explaining the factors surrounding Egoistic Suicide tendency according to the pseudo R<sup>2</sup> (Cox & Snell R<sup>2</sup> and Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup>) is between 24.3% and 32.5%.

Among the variables of interest, gender, age, number of years in school, social activities in school, religious activities in school and family activities significantly contributed to the explanation of Anomic Suicide tendency among the students. Specifically in the model, gender, religion of the students, participation in social activities in school, participation in religious activities in school and family activities were in the negative direction according to their B. value, indicating the fact that the more the aforementioned factors, the less the Anomic suicide tendency.

**Table 4. Logistic regression on fatalistic suicide tendency and other variables**

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Step 1 <sup>a</sup>								
GENDER	-1.711	.278	37.817	1	.000	.181	.105	.312
Age	-.474	.196	5.860	1	.015	.623	.424	.914
Years spent in school	-.124	.116	1.132	1	.287	.883	.703	1.110
Religion	-1.604	.184	76.152	1	.000	.201	.140	.288
Income	.382	.109	12.363	1	.000	1.465	1.184	1.812
Sponsorship	-.375	.275	1.853	1	.173	.687	.401	1.179
Social activity	-1.081	.264	16.703	1	.000	.339	.202	.570
Religious activities	-.222	.277	.642	1	.423	.801	.466	1.378
Family activities	.528	.316	2.798	1	.094	1.695	.913	3.146
Constant	7.737	1.020	57.582	1	.000	2291.996		

**Fatalistic Suicide tendency [measured in nominal scale with likely decision response to 5 common socioeconomic stress]**

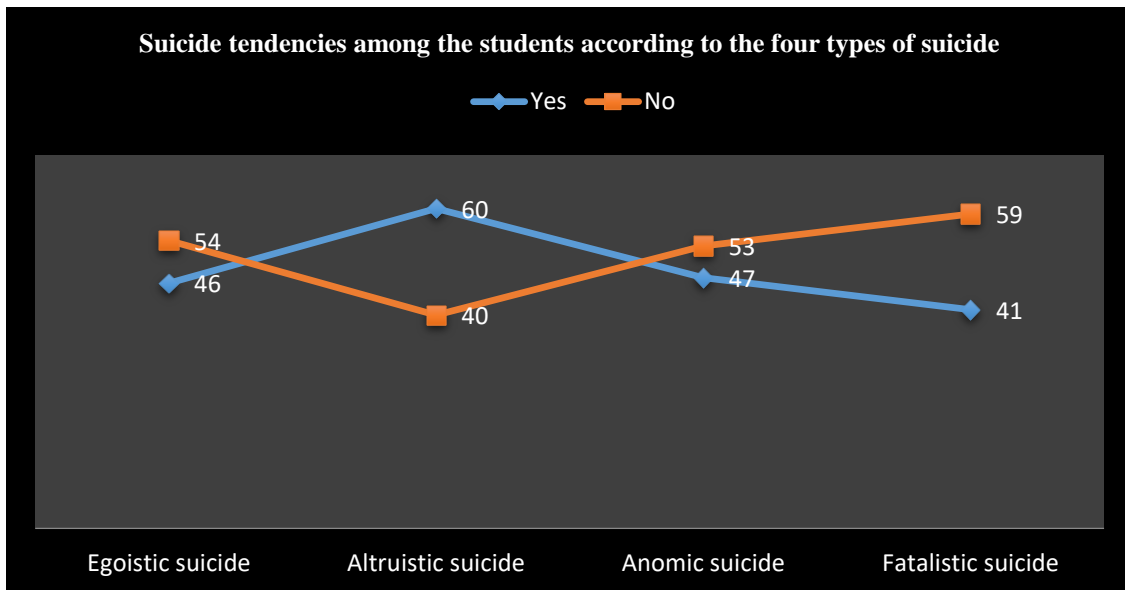
Overall Percentage classified = 82.0%; Goodness of fit test = .215;  $\chi^2$ Value = 125.338 (df8); Cox & Snell R<sup>2</sup> = 38.4%; Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> = 51.8%  
**Note: Result is significant at .05 (p < .05).**

The above Table 4 presented the binary logistic regression on fatalistic Suicide tendency (measured in nominal scale with likely decision response to 5 common socioeconomic

stresses) among the students of the higher institutions of learning in southeast Nigeria. The collected data were coded to follow the binary logistic regression default, while the data were test-ran to avoid outliers. The overall strength of the model in explaining the factors surrounding fatalistic Suicide tendency according to the pseudo  $R^2$  (Cox & Snell  $R^2$  and Nagelkerke  $R^2$ ) is between 38.4% and 51.8%.

Among the variables of interest, age, the gender of the students, religion, family income and participation in social activities in school significantly contributed to the explanation of fatalistic Suicide tendency among the students. Specifically in the model, gender of the students, age, sponsorship, participation in social activities in school and religion, were in the negative direction according to their B. value, indicating the fact that the more the aforementioned factors, the less the egoistic suicide tendency.

Figure 1. Display of suicide tendencies



Source: Field Survey, 2019

The above chart in Figure 1 presented the presence of the likelihood of suicide tendency among the students by types of suicide. As they appeared in the chart above, there are the presence of the different types suicides as classified by the Durkheimian suicide thesis. While fatalistic suicide tendency was the lowest among the study participants (41%), egoistic suicide tendency is 46% while anomic suicide tendency is at 47%. The top most suicide tendency among the forms of suicides is altruistic suicide tendency (60%).

## 6. Discussion of the findings

The focus of the study was to ascertain the presence and extent of suicide tendency among undergraduate students in the southeast region of Nigeria. Keeping in view, the multifaceted nature of suicide and suicide tendency, the study narrowed down to Durkheimian suicide doctrine as a point of departure from the regular approach to the study suicide tendency/ideation (Gureje et al., 2007; Gunnell et al., 2012; Saurina et al., 2013; Chang, Stuckler, Yip & Gunnell, 2013), while reaffirming the indispensability of the macro socio-economic factors in the understanding of the remote and immediate factors to suicide tendency (Goodman, 1999; Chandler, 2019; Durkheim, 2006[1897]). More so, the study was designed to bring into account,

the crude nature of suicide tendencies, and the fluid boundary between the remote factors and immediate factors of suicide action among the youth in the developing nations such as Nigeria.

From the finding of the study, there are indices of suicide tendency of the four types of suicide according to the Durkheimian suicide analysis. Although suicide actions among the developing nations are much considered on the line of completed suicide (WHO, 2018), the uncompleted suicide appears to be ignored. And this is mostly connected to the remote socio-economic factors. Similar findings by other researchers such as Furr, Westefeld, McConnell, and Jenkins (2001), and Westefeld et al. (2005) revealed that suicide tendencies among the youth can be larger than we can assume, and functions as remote factor to trigger off suicide. As pertain to this study, the findings unveiled the unseen remote factor, which has triggered the recent issues of suicides recorded in a number of higher institution in the southeast Nigeria and other parts of the nation bringing to the limelight of the global research community, the relevance of Durkheim's classification of suicide and socio-economic factors.

Fatalistic suicide tendency was found to be the lowest among the study participants (41%). However, this type of suicide tendency was only positively correlated with the family income but was negatively correlated with other factors such as age, gender, participation in social and religious activities in the school, sponsorship. By implication, the finding indicated the role of family income to the extreme level of socioeconomic aspiration among the students. The findings here supported the study by Borowsky, Resnick, Ireland and Blum (1999), which revealed the positive functions of macro socio-economic factors in reducing suicide tendency among the college students. Equally, the finding here revealed the importance of Durkheim's classification of suicide in tracking the hidden nature of different types of suicide especially the fatalistic suicide, which ostensibly operate as displaced aggression among the college students in the developing nations.

Egoistic suicide tendency was found to be 46% among the students under study. In Durkheimian suicide analysis, this type of suicide has more to do with isolation and personal evaluation compared to other forms of suicide. Egoistic suicide tendencies appearing with 46% among these students revealed the heterogeneous appearance of social and religious activities among these students in the region. This type of suicide tendency was only positively related to family income and the source of sponsorship among the students under study. Although there is extraneous variable(s) that exist between egoistic suicide tendency and the aforementioned two variables, the findings in its current appearance indicate the influence of higher family income instead of poverty, on the problem of egoistic suicide. Family affluence, more than creating satisfaction, can cause unseen isolation and by extension, suicide imagery (Haw & Hawton, 2011). However, the negative B values of the gender of the students and religion point to the unseen role of religion and gender in balancing the issue of egoistic suicide.

The study by Borowsky et al. (1999) equally proved the fact that gender is a factor to suicide attempts among the college students. On the issue of religion and egoistic suicide, from the preliminary analysis, Christians were more in the study compared to other religious affiliations. At the surface, we take this to be a result of a loosed relationship between the majority of these students and their religious activities as well as weak internal cohesion among the student worshippers. However, the positive role of religiosity and egoistic suicide tendency can be proving via the logistic regression on the variables. The finding corroborated the findings of the study by Marion and Range (2003) that, religiosity appears as a proof against suicide. While their findings was under the design of suicide phenomenon in a composite nature, the present study contributes to the ongoing researches on suicide, by isolating different types of suicides especially the egoistic suicide tendency and the remote macro socio-economic factors surrounding it.

Anomic suicide tendency is at 47%. Anomic suicide specifically is connected with weak regulation as well as high social current (Durkheim, 2006[1897]). Among the students, the presence of anomic suicide speaks volumes about the weak social bonds in the family and other

social institutions connected to the undergraduate students such as the institutional setup on the regulation of students' individual and collective activities. Regulation here per se is not on the extant rules of the higher institutions of learning backed up with some level of punishments but some emotional regulation in terms of students' orientation from time to time by the institutional authority with a focus on controlling inordinate ambitions among the students. As a matter of fact, the variable is only positively correlated in the model with how many years the students have been in the school but negatively correlated with other socio-demographic variables such as gender, the religion of the students, participation in social activities in school, participation in religious activities in school and family activities.

The studies by Borowsky et al. (1999) and Marion and Range (2003) complement this finding. According to their findings, religiosity, family ties, social activities, etc., function as protective factors against suicide. While their findings appeared on the studies that approached suicide as a composite factor, the present study's finding has a point of departure as further isolation of suicide into types and tendencies bringing to the limelight of the researching community, the forms of suicide according to the Durkheim's classification and their accompanying social current.

The topmost suicide tendency among the forms of suicides is altruistic suicide tendencies (60%). Altruistic suicide, the opposite of egoistic suicide according to Durkheim's suicide analysis, is a form of suicide in which collective conscience (Durkheim's term for a cooperative living) affects the individual willingness to take the risk or even lay their lives for the interest of the group in question. In the model, two variables were positively correlated with altruistic suicide tendencies such as family income and participation in family activities. At the surface, the correlation of altruistic suicide tendency, family income and participation in family activities reveals the effect of the dominant culture of pressure on the youth in southeast Nigeria from the family. In the other direction, altruistic suicide tendency is negatively correlated with other variables such as the religion of the students, sponsorship, participation in social activities in school and participation in religious activities in school.

This further shows that family ties are more superior on the scale of preference of the students compared to other social attachments. Although O'Donnell et al. (2004) and Borowsky et al. (1999) reported family ties as a protective factor against egoistic suicide; the findings here appeared otherwise and as such, unveiled the fluid relationship between suicide tendencies and socio-economic pressure originating from the family. And, as part of the goal of this study, it has made known to the global research community, the unseen contribution of family socio-economic pressure to the existence of altruistic suicide.

## 7. Conclusion

Suicide as a social phenomenon is embedded in the prevailing socio-economic circumstances (social current) of the time and by implication vulnerable to the negative or positive direction, and influence of the indices of the socio-economic situation of the time. Among other areas of interest, the undergraduate students in southeast Nigeria and the current socio-economic situation in Nigeria rightly fall in place in the question of ongoing empirical investigation of suicide phenomenon world over. However, for clarity purposes, the present study focused on the Durkheimian sociological suicide analysis as a point of departure from the dominant trend on suicide studies before now. Following the formulation and instrument designed for this study, the findings of the study pointed to the rising suicide tendency among these undergraduate students. While the study was more of investigating the remote factors surrounding the likelihood of suicide thought among the students under study, the instrument for the study was designed to capture some dominant socio-economic factors at the students' level, capable of testing their likely response to extreme conditions of life in different directions. While in the overall findings,



altruistic suicide tendency is high (60%), this is followed by anomic suicide tendency (47%), egoistic suicide tendency (46%) and fatalistic suicide tendency (41%). From the regression model, the altruistic suicide tendency was found to be positively correlated with family income and strong ties with family activities. Equally, the anomic suicide tendency was found to be positively correlated with how many years the students have been in the school. Egoistic suicide tendency was found to be positively correlated with family income and source of sponsorship while fatalistic suicide tendency was found to be positively correlated with only family income. The study findings contribute to the ongoing discussions on suicide, the indispensability of the remote macro socio-economic factors among the developing nation, in understanding the phenomenon of suicides especially with regard to Durkheim's classification of suicide.

#### Acknowledgements

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

The author declares no competing interests.

#### References

- Adewuya, A. O., Ola, B. A., Olurotimi, A. C., Olayinka, A., Mathew, P. Z., Olufemi, O., Adedolapo, F., & Olajide, I. (2016). Prevalence and associated factors for suicidal ideation in the Lagos State Mental Health Survey, Nigeria. *BJ Psych Open*, 2, 385-389. <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjpo.bp.116.004333>
- Adinkrah, M. (2011). Epidemiologic characteristics of suicidal behavior in contemporary Ghana. *Crisis*, 32(1), 31-36.
- Agoub, M., Moussaoui, D., & Kadri, N. (2006). Assessment of suicidality in a Moroccan metropolitan area. *J Affect Disord*, 90(2), 223-226.
- Atkinson, J. (1978). Societal reactions to suicide. In *Discovering suicide*. London: Macmillan.
- Atkinson, J. M. (1978). *Discovering suicide. Studies in the social organization of sudden death*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Baechler, J. (1979). *Suicides*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Bekry A. A. (1999). Trends in suicide, parasuicide and accidental poisoning in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. *Ethiop J Health Dev*, 13(3), 247-262.
- Borowsky, 1. W., Resnick, M. D., Ireland, M., & Blum, R. W. (1999). Suicide attempts about American Indian and Alaska Native youth. *Archives of Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine*, 153, 573-580.
- Borowsky, 1. W., Resnick, M. D., Ireland, M., & Blum, R. W. (1999). Suicide attempts about American Indian and Alaska Native youth. *Archives of Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine*, 153, 573-580.
- Borum, V. (2012). African American women's perceptions of depression and suicide risk and protection: A womanist exploration. *Affilia*, 27(3), 316-327.
- Boyce, C. J., Delaney, L., Ferguson, E., & Wood, A. M. (2018). Central bank interest rate decisions, Household indebtedness, and psychiatric morbidity and distress: Evidence from the UK. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 234, 311-317.

- Boyce, C. J., Wood, A. M., & Ferguson, E. (2016). Individual differences in loss aversion: conscientiousness predicts how life satisfaction responds to losses versus gains in income. *Personal. Soc. Psychol. Bull.*, *42*, 471-484.
- Chandler, A. (2019). Socioeconomic inequalities of suicide: Sociological and psychological intersections. *Eur. J. Soc. Theory*, 2019, 1-19.
- Chang, S.-S., Stuckler, D., Yip, P., & Gunnell, D. (2013). Impact of 2008 global economic crisis on suicide: time trend study of 54 countries. *BMJ Open Access*. 347, f5239. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.f5239>
- Chibanda, D., Sebit, M., & Acuda, S. (2002). Prevalence of major depression in deliberate self-harm individuals in Harare, Zimbabwe. *East Afr Med J*, *79*(5), 263-266.
- Coope, C., Gunnell, D., Hollingworth, W., Hawton, K., Kapur, N., Fearn, V., & Metcalfe, C. (2014). Suicide and the 2008 economic recession: Who is most at risk? Trends in suicide rates in England and Wales 2001-2011. *Social Science and Medicine*, *117*, 76-85.
- Crosby, A., & Sherry, D. M. (2006). Suicidal behaviors in the African American community. *The Journal of Black Psychology*, *32*(3), 1-9.
- Dorais, M. (2004). *Dead boys can't dance: Sexual orientation, masculinity and suicide*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Douglas, J. D. (1967). *The social meaning of suicide*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Durkheim, E. (1897). *Le suicide: étude de sociologie*.
- Durkheim, E. (1938). *The rules of sociological method*. New York: Free Press.
- Durkheim, E. (2006 [1897]). *On suicide*. London, England: Penguin Classics.
- Dzamalala, C. P., Milner, D. A., & Liomba, N. G. (2006). Suicide in Blantyre, Malawi (2000–2003). *J Clin Forensic Med*, *13*(2), 65-69.
- Facts and figures [Fact sheet] (2010). Retrieved 16 December 2019, from American Foundation for Suicide Prevention website.
- Fitzpatrick, S. (2018). Reshaping the ethics of suicide prevention: Responsibility, inequality, and action on the social determinants of suicide. *Public Health Ethics*, *11*, 179-190.
- Furr, S. R., Westefeld, J. S., McConnell, G. N., & Jenkins, J. M. (2001). Suicide and depression among college students: A decade later. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, *32*, 91-100.
- Goodman, E. (1999). The role of socioeconomic status gradients in explaining differences in US adolescents' health. *American Journal of Public Health*, *89*, 1522-1528.
- Gunnell, D., Bennewith, O., Simkin, S., Cooper, J., Klineberg, E., Rodway, C., & Kapur, N. (2012). Time trends in coroners' use of different verdicts for possible suicides and their impact on officially reported incidence of suicide in England: 1990-2005. *Psychol. Med.*, 1-8. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0033291712002401>
- Gureje, O., Kola, L., Uwakwe, R., Udofia, O., Wakil, A., & Afolabi, E. (2007). The profile and risks of suicidal behaviours in the Nigerian Survey of Mental Health and Well-Being. *Psychol Med*, *37*(6), 821-830.
- Haw, C., & Hawton, K. (2011). Living alone and deliberate self-harm: A case-control study of characteristics and risk factors. *Soc Psychiatry Psychiatr Epidemiol*, *46*, 1115-1125.
- Hawton, K., & van Heeringen, K. (2009). Suicide. *Lancet*, *373*, 1372-1381.
- Hawton, K., Saunders, K. E., & O'Connor, R. C. (2012). Self-harm and suicide in adolescents. *Lancet*, *379*, 2373-2382.
- Henry, A. F., & Short, J. F. (1954). *Homicide and suicide*. London: Macmillan.
- Hindess, B. (1973). *The use of official statistics in sociology: A critique of positivism*. London: Macmillan.

- Hjelmeland, H., & Knizek, B. L. (2010). Why we need qualitative research in suicidology. *Suicide Life Threat. Behav.*, (40), 74-80.
- Holmes, E. A., Crane, C. Fennell, M. J. V., & Williams, J. M. G. (2007). Imagery about suicide in depression—"Flash-forwards"? *J Behav Ther Exp Psychiatry*, 38(4), 423-434.
- Holt, M. K., Vivolo-Kantor, A. M., Polanin, J. R., Holland, K. M., DeGue, S., Matjasko, J. L., Wolfe, M., & Reid, G. (2015). Bullying and suicidal ideation and behaviors: A meta-analysis. *PEDIATRICS*, 135(2), 496-509. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1542/peds.2014-1864>
- Ikealumba, N. V., & Couper I. D. (2006). Suicide and attempted suicide: The Rehoboth experience. *Rural Remote Health*, 6(535), 1.
- Jackson, P. R., & Warr, P. B. (1984). Unemployment and psychological ill-health: The moderating role of duration and age. *Psychol. Med.*, 14(3), 605-614. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S003329170001521X>
- João, P. S., Tavares, M., & Barros, P. P. (2016). More than just numbers: Suicide rates and the economic cycle in Portugal (1910-2013). *SSM -Population Health*, 2 14-23.
- Joe, S., Stein, D. J., Seedat, S., Herman, A., & Williams, D. R. (2008). Non-fatal suicidal behavior among South Africans. *Soc Psychiatry Psychiatr Epidemiol*, 43(6), 454-461.
- Joe, S., Baser, R. S., Neighbors, H. W., Caldwell, C. H., & Jackson, J. S. (2009). 12-month and lifetime prevalence of suicide attempts among black adolescents in the National Survey of American Life. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 48(3), 271-282.
- Johnson, K., Asher, J., Rosborough, S., Raja, A., Panjabi, R., Beadling, C., & Lawry, L. (2008). Association of combatant status and sexual violence with health and mental health outcomes in post conflict Liberia. *JAMA*, 300(6), 676-690.
- Kinyanda, E., Hjelmeland, H., & Musisi, S. (2004). Deliberate self-harm as seen in Kampala, Uganda. *Soc Psychiatry Psychiatr Epidemiol*, 39(4), 318-325.
- Kirmayer, L. J., Brass, G. M., Holton, T., Paul, K., Simpson, C., & Tait, C. (2007). *Suicide among Aboriginal Peoples in Canada*. Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation.
- Lester, B. Y. (2001). Learnings from Durkheim and beyond: The economy and suicide. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 31(1), 15-31.
- Marion, M. S., & Range, L. M. (2003). Do extenuating circumstances influence African American women's attitudes toward suicide? *Suicide & Life-Threatening Behavior*, 33(1), 44-51.
- Marion, M. S., & Range, L. M. (2003). African American college women's suicide buffers. *The American Association of Suicidology*, 33(1), 33-43.
- Mars, B., Burrows, S., Hjelmeland, H., & Gunnell, D. (2014). Suicidal behaviour across the African continent: A review of the literature. *BMC Public Health*, 14, 606 <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/14/606>.
- Merton, R. (1968). *Social theory and social structure*. New York: Free press.
- Mills, C. (2018). Dead people don't claim: A psychopolitical autopsy of UK austerity suicides. *Crit. Soc. Policy*, 38, 302-322.
- Ndosi, N. K., Waziri, M. C. (1997). The nature of parasuicide in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. *Soc Sci Med*, 44(1), 55-61.
- Nock, M. K., Borges G., & Ono, Y. (Eds). (2012). *Suicide: Global perspectives from the WHO World Mental Health Surveys*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nock, M. K., Borges, G., & Bromet, E. J. (2008). Cross-national prevalence and risk factors for suicidal ideation, plans and attempts. *Br J Psychiatry*, 192, 98-105.
- O'Connor, R. C., & Nock, M. K. (2014). The psychology of suicidal behaviour. *Lancet Psychiatry*, 1, 73-85. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(14\)70222-6](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(14)70222-6)

- O'Donnell, L., O'Donnell, C., Wardlaw, D. M., & Stueve, A. (2004). Risk and resiliency factors influencing suicidality among urban African American and Latino youth. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 33*(112), 37-49.
- Okafor, S. O. (2017). Culture, perception/belief about death and their implication to the awareness and control of the socio-economic, environmental and health factors surrounding lower life expectancy in Nigeria. *Acta Psychopathologica, 3*(5), 56. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4172/2469-6676.100128>
- Parsons, T. (1951). *The social system*. New York: Free press.
- Philipson, M. (1972). Theory methodology and conceptualization. In P. Filmer et al. (Eds.), *New direction in sociological studies*. London: Collier-Macmillan.
- Pollock, N., Healy, G., Jong, M., Valcour, J., & Mullay, S. (2018). Tracking progress in suicide prevention in Indigenous communities: A challenges for public health surveillance in Canada. *BMC Public Health, 18*, 13-20.
- Reeves, A., Stuckler, D., McKee, M., Gunnell, D., Chang, S.-S., & Basu, S., (2012). Increase in state suicide rates in the USA during economic recession. *Lancet, 380*(9856), 1813-1814.
- Saurina, C., Bragulat, B., Saez, M., & Lopez-Casasnovas, G., (2013). A conditional model for estimating the increase in suicides associated with the 2008-2010 economic recession in England. *J. Epidemiol. Comm. Health. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/jech-2013-202645>*
- Scourfield, J., Fincham, B., Langer, S., & Shiner, M. (2012). Autopsy: An integrated approach to the study of suicide in men. *Social Science & Medicine, 74*, 466-473.
- Skapinakis, P., Weich, S., Lewis, G., Singleton, N., & Araya, R. (2006). Socio-economic position and common mental disorders: longitudinal study in the general population in the UK. *Br. J. Psychiatry, 189*(2), 109-117. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1192/bjp.bp.105.014449>
- Skinner, R., & McFaul, S. (2012). Suicide among children and adolescents in Canada: Trends and sex differences, 1980-2008. *Can. Med Assoc. J., 184*, 1015-1016.
- Spates, K., & Slatton, B. C. (2017). I've got my family and my faith: Black women and the suicide paradox. *Dynamic World, 3*, 1-9. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/2378023117743908>
- Stack, S., & Wasserman, I., (2007). Economic strain and suicide risk: A qualitative analysis. *Suicide Life-Threat. Behav., 37*(1), 103-112.
- Taylor, S. (1982). *Durkheim and the study of suicide*. London: Macmillan.
- Westefeld, J. S., Homaifar, B., Spotts, J., Furr, S., Range, L., & Werth, J. L. (2005). Perceptions concerning college student suicide: Data from four universities. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior, 35*(6), 640-645.
- White, J., & Morris, J. (2019). Re-thinking ethics and politics in suicide prevention: Bringing narrative ideas into dialogue with critical suicide studies. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health, 16*, 32-36. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16183236>
- World Bank Group (2017). *World Bank development report-governance and law*. Washington, DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank.
- World Health Organization (2018a). *Global Health Estimates 2016: Deaths by cause, age, sex, by country and by region, 2000-2016*. Geneva: World Health Organization.
- World Health Organization (2018b). *National suicide prevention strategies: progress, examples and indicators*. Geneva: World Health Organization.
- World Health Organization (2019). *Suicide in the world: Global Health Estimates*. Geneva: World Health Organization.



## Critical Discourse Analysis of “Canción sin Miedo” by Vivir Quintana

Verónica Andrea Escobar Mejía

*University of Guanajuato, MEXICO  
Division of Social Sciences and Humanities*

Received: 16 October 2020 ▪ Accepted: 29 November 2020 ▪ Published Online: 8 December 2020

### *Abstract*

The feminist movement in Mexico has recently gained attention due to the diverse manifestations along with the country. The song *Canción sin miedo* (2020) portrays elements that keep a relationship with the feminist ideology, as well as recent events that are depicted in the lyrics. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is presented as an approach to examining the song, using Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics (SFL) model and parallelism analysis. The outcomes of this study suggest that the song was produced as a claim for social justice, but it involves elements that generate a sense of identity for some women because their roles and struggles are depicted in the lyrics, principally femicide. Additionally, the parallelism analysis shows three syntactical structures that compose the body of the text. This examination is also a call for noticing the emergence of violence against women in Mexico.

**Keywords:** critical discourse analysis, feminist ideology, systemic functional linguistics, parallelism.

### 1. Introduction

This paper seeks to explore a song titled *Canción sin miedo* (Song without fear, 2020), under a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach. The methodology employed to carry out the analysis was Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and parallelism. This paper begins with a section of literature review, which includes key concepts about CDA and SFL as well as the feminist ideology. In the second section, a description of the methodology followed to analyze the lyrics are included. Then, the main findings are discussed, taking into consideration three levels of analysis proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), and parallelism. In the end, the conclusions are addressed.

- The examined song portrays elements of the feminist ideology.
- The analysis revealed that the narrative of the songs keeps a relationship with the context lived by some Mexican women.
- It also suggests a division between male and female characters, as well as a parallelism with the national anthem

## 2. Literature review

In this section key elements for the understanding of the topic will be discussed. For instance, critical discourse analysis and SFL, the feminist ideology and feminism in Mexico.

### 2.1 *Critical discourse analysis*

Critical discourse analysis is a way to examine spoken and written language. It is defined by Van Dijk (2001), as “research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (p. 72). According to this author, CDA does not follow a specific methodology, but it addresses some themes in common such as gender inequality, political discourse, media discourse, ethnocentrism, and racism. CDA is shaped by similar issues and it tries to evidence the disparities found in discourse. Quianbo (2016) establishes that CDA focuses on three aspects, which are language as a social practice, language and ideology, as well as power and discourse. These topics are connected as they explain how language works in society and how it is influenced by specific ways of thinking. In the same way, Fairclough (2013) identifies three essential characteristics in CDA. First, it is shaped by the social context, second, “it includes a systematic analysis of texts” (p. 11), and third, it is normative. This last characteristic means that CDA unveils power relationships. It makes emphasis on the importance of taking an ideological position to use it as a tool to expose disparities in the social structure.

Different critical approaches may be employed to carry out CDA. Todolí et al. (2006) identify four types of models. These are Fairclough’s socio-cultural method, Van Dijk’s socio-cognitive method, Kress and van Leeuwen’s socio-semiotic method, and Halliday’s SFL. Although these models share a critical view, they are unique in the way they approach the analysis of language, and the subjects of study may be variable. For example, Van Dijk works in the field of language and ideology, and the Fairclough model helps explain the relationship between power and society. The present work aligns with Halliday’s framework. In the following section, some of the characteristics of this model will be discussed.

#### 2.1.1 *Halliday’s SFL*

As stated above, one of the frameworks to carry out CDA is Halliday’s SFL (1989). This model contemplates the analysis of four levels of discourse: “context, semantics, lexico-grammar and phonology” (Almurashi, 2016: 72). Almurashi (2016) suggests that incorporating the four levels to an in-depth analysis is useful to have an extensive understanding of how language works in different situations. The level one, which refers to context, considers that language is shaped by the culture and situation. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) use the terms genre and register to identify how language varies according to the context.

The second level of analysis (semantics) examines three functions of language as meaning:

Language is represented paradigmatically in terms of systems of choice related to what is being talked about (i.e. ideational); how those interacting are relating to one another through what they say (i.e. interpersonal); and how ideational and interpersonal meanings are turned into discourse (i.e. textual). (Webster, 2019: 35)

The lexico-grammar level contemplates the same characteristics as in semantics. However, it is focused on examining clauses as a unit of discourse. For Halliday (1989), the ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions can be represented in this level of analysis as clause as representation, clause as exchange, as well as clause as a message. The first element can be explained throughout transitivity analysis, which comprises process types, participants, and circumstances. Clause as exchange incorporates the terms of mood and modality, and clause as the message is interpreted using the concepts of theme and rheme.

The last level corresponds to phonology. It is relevant to consider patterns of sounds because “there are some grammatical systems that are realized by prosodic means: for example, by the contrast between falling and rising tone” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 11). In other words, the phonological and the lexical system work together, and a complete analysis requires to consider both.

In this section, the main concepts of SFL were briefly discussed. The following paragraphs give contextual information about the main topic of this paper.

## 2.2 *The feminist ideology*

Feminism is the ideology that circumscribes this work. Van Dijk (2006) explains that ideologies are “a social representation that defines the social identity of a group” (p. 116). According to his view, it encompasses specific elements, such as the relationship between social cognitions, personal cognitions, and discourse” (p. 138). This implies that the principles of an ideology need to be examined considering discourses emitted by the social group but also the one produced as individuals. In this instance, the feminism has its roots in the last century; it raised having as the main concern “understanding fundamental inequalities between women and men and with analysis of male power over women. Its basic premise is that male dominance derives from the social, economic, and political arrangements specific to particular societies” (Jackson, 1998: 12) For feminists, the social order must be questioned and changed to give women access to rights and opportunities they have not to achieve yet. Feminism has a broad history, and it has been studied from different angles. However, four periods define what women have fought for. These periods are summarized by Rampton (2008) as follows:

- (a) The first wave of feminism. Its origins can be established before the 1960’ and the topics discussed consisted of women’s participation in politics as well as their right for suffrage.
- (b) The second wave of feminism. It can be placed from 1960 to 1990. This period focused on minorities as well as sexuality and reproductive rights.
- (c) The third wave of feminism. The period that defined this wave started in 1990. Some of the prevalent topics of discussion were women and social media and technology, as well as the right for deciding over their bodies.
- (d) The fourth wave of feminism. The last wave of feminism is blurred because it combines the appropriation of diverse fights. As stated by Rampton (2008).

They [feminists] speak in terms of intersectionality whereby women’s suppression can only fully be understood in a context of the marginalization of other groups and genders. Feminism is part of a larger consciousness of oppression along with racism, ageism, classism, ableism, and sexual orientation (*Ibid.*: 7).



Each period on the feminism movement are a watershed that allows us to understand some of the principles of the movement. Therefore, it is considered that the most recent phase is related to both, local and global interests. For this reason, feminism in the Mexican context will be discussed.

### 2.2.1 *Feminism in Mexico*

Having established some of the key elements of the feminist movement, it is relevant to emphasize that it has its agenda in Mexico. It depends on specific events that have been taken place in the context of the country. Although other nations have achieved access to fundamental human rights, in Mexico some goals still need to be accomplished. For instance, there is a need for the government to take action against femicides and gender violence, the fight for recognizing the reproductive rights of women, including legal abortion, and the acknowledgment of indigenous women's rights (Marcos, 1999).

One of the main concerns in the country is the femicides because they have been a noteworthy issue that has affected multiple women in the country. Michel, 2020 argues that:

Since human rights activists first denounced it as a systemic problem in 1993, femicide continues to be a crime that occurs far too often and that is rarely punished in Mexico. Between 1990 and 2016 more than 45,500 women were killed in the country. Femicides are easily forgotten in the Public Prosecutor's Office... The criminal justice system has been harshly criticized for its inefficiency. From all crimes reported to the authorities, it is estimated that on average about 95% are never punished. (pp. 27-28)

This argument is relevant because the fight for justice against femicides is part of the agenda in the Mexican feminist movement. Furthermore, this data reveals the context in which Mexican women live which is linked with violence and injustice. The importance of addressing this issue has a relationship with the topic of the song to be analyzed.

## 3. Methodology

The text examined is a song titled *Canción sin miedo*, interpreted by the musician Vivir Quintana. This song was released on 5 March 2020 to commemorate the international women's day. This work argues that this song is imbued with the feminist ideology. Nonetheless, analyzing the elements that compose it, will give more details about its context. As it was previously mentioned, Halliday's SFL was chosen to approach this text because it promotes a complete textual framework. The analysis of this song will be based on the lexico-grammar level, which includes textual, interpersonal, and experiential meanings. These elements correspond to three levels of a clause, namely clause as representation, clause as exchange, and clause as message (Halliday, 1989). This is supported by an analysis of parallelism, which reflects specific aspects of the structure of the song (to see the lyrics consult Appendix 1).

## 4. Discussion of findings

In this section, the main findings will be discussed regarding the three levels of analysis mentioned previously.

#### 4.1 The textual function

The first level of analysis is the textual function, it studies “the use of language to signify discourse” (Bustam, 2011: 2). It refers to what is being communicated. For Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) “Theme is the element which serves as the point of departure of the message; it is that which locates and orients the clause within its context” (p. 64). The authors refer to the rheme as what is included after the theme. In the case of the *Canción sin miedo* (2020), there are two worth discussing elements. The first theme in the song is *Que tiemble el estado, los cielos, las calles*. This start helps to draw the listeners’ attention to the topic. However, after the first two lines, another theme is presented: *Hoy a las mujeres nos quitan la calma*. This can be considered the main thematical position because the complete song centers in *las mujeres* as actors. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) also mention that the topical theme: “ends with the first constituent that is either participant, circumstance or process” (p. 79). In this case, women are the participants in the complete text. The song focuses on describing how they live, as well as the obstacles that they face due to their position in the social structure of Mexico. That is a representation of what the author wants to communicate. In other words, the clause as a message.

#### 4.2 The interpersonal function

This level of analysis addresses the clause as exchange. Bustam (2011) considers that “The interpersonal function is the use of language to establish and maintain social relations” (p. 23). It refers to the choices that the speaker makes to show her position in what she wants to transmit. It is explained as: “In the act of speaking, the speaker adopts for himself a particular speech role, and in so doing assigns to the listener a complementary role which he wishes him to adopt in his turn” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 106). Although the song is not a regular exchange because it is not based in a turn-taking model, it can be interpreted the author positions herself and she talks in the name of the women who are mentioned in the song. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) distinguish between two main roles in communicative exchanges, which are giving and demanding. These are determined by the position of the speaker. In this case, some of the clauses reflect a demand, for instance, *No olvide sus nombres por favor, señor presidente*. This clause refers to have present the names of the women who have been victims of femicide in the country. Moreover, the ones who are disappeared, and it claims to take action to solve this problem. Taking into consideration the concept of modality this is the only sentence in the song which can be categorized as an imperative. The other clauses fall into the classification of declaratives. Table 1 illustrates this type of clauses.

Table 1. Declarative and imperative mood examples

<b>Declarative mood</b>	<b>Imperative mood</b>
<b>Pedimos justicia</b>	No olvide sus nombres por favor
<b>Gritamos por cada desaparecida</b>	
<b>Nos queremos vivas</b>	
<b>Que caiga con fuerza el feminicida</b>	
<b>Si tocan a una respondemos todas</b>	

Although these are declarative sentences, they are understood as claims for social justice. An examination of the meaning of the phrases allows us to identify that the author seeks fairness as well as for other women’s right to live.

### 4.3 *The ideational function*

The last level of analysis is the ideational function, which can also be considered as a clause as representation. To examine this, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) proposed the concept of transitivity, which will be explained below.

#### 4.3.1 *Transitivity*

Bustam (2011) mentions that a regular definition of transitivity normally considers the position of the verbs. However, “whether a verb takes or does not take a direct object is not a prime consideration. There are three components of what Halliday calls [transitivity process], namely: (a) the process itself, (b) participants in the process; and (c) process types” (p. 23). Those elements are included in the analysis of the ideational function. The outcomes of this level are described in the subsequent section.

#### 4.3.2 *Process types*

Table 2. Process types

Process type	Number	Percentage	Example
<b>Material processes</b>	23	60%	Hoy a las mujeres nos quitan la calma
<b>Existential processes</b>	6	16%	Soy Claudia
<b>Mental processes</b>	3	7.9%	Nos queremos vivas
<b>Verbal processes</b>	3	7.9%	Pedimos justicia
<b>Relational processes</b>	2	5.3%	Soy la niña que subiste por la fuerza
<b>Behavioral processes</b>	1	2.6%	La madre que ahora llora por sus muertas
<b>Total processes</b>	38	100%	

In Table 2, the main process types are shown. The most prominent are material processes (60%) followed by existential processes (16%). They cover in total 76% of the verbs. The material processes refer to actions caused by the women or by other agents, whether existential processes refer to the recognition that something exists. Hence, the percentages give relevant information. For instance, the material processes reflect real actions, which are not detached from women's reality, for example: *A cada minuto de cada semana, nos roban amigas, nos matan hermanas*. On the other hand, the existential processes in the lyrics reveal names of women such as *soy Claudia, soy Esther y soy Teresa*. This choice in the language is linked to the practice of naming women who are dead or disappeared. The purpose is to keep them in the collective memory, under the logic that if they are named, they are not forgotten. It can also have another purpose, which is making the listener feel identified, meaning that women are not immune to violence.

#### 4.3.3 *Participants*

Regarding the material process, it is important to define that “The two main participants associated with this process are: the Actor (the doer of the process) and the Goal (the entity affected by the process)” (Ezzina, 2015: 287). The author means that not only the actions

are important, but also who take part in it. Table 3 shows the characters who are mentioned in the song.

Table 3. Participants

Male participants	Female participants	
<b>Estado</b>	Mujeres	Claudia
<b>Jueces</b>	Amigas	Ester
<b>Judiciales</b>	Hermanas	Teresa
<b>President</b>	Compas	Ingrid
<b>El feminicide</b>	Morras	Fabiola
<b>Algún fulano</b>	Comandantes	Valeria
	Madres	La niña
	Todas	

The division between male and female participants give relevant details of the types of processes related to each actor. For instance, the song is a response to structural elements caused by the social condition, in which the government has not guaranteed respect to women's rights. The male characters can be divided into two groups. The first group refers to agents who belong to the government: the president, judges, and police officers. However, the second group refers to other agents, but they are not named. For instance, *algún fulano* refers to any man, and *el feminicida* to a criminal. The types of actions that they perform are negative. Conversely, the nouns that refer to women are expressed in plurals such as *morras*, *madres*, *mujeres*, *amigas*, and *hermanas*. The use of plural involves different women, it is used by the author to express and generate a sense of belonging to the audience. Additionally, the types of actions performed by women are a response to the violence against them, meaning that they have to defend themselves and to demand justice. It also relevant that they do not take the role of victims, but also as actors who can change and question the social order.

#### 4.4 Parallelism in the song

Parallelism is another device used to analyze this song. It refers to: "Elements in a sentence that have the same function or express similar ideas should be grammatically parallel or grammatically matched" (Vu, 2011: 7). The author also makes the distinction between three types of stylistic devices, namely phonetic, lexical, and syntactic (p. 9). For this paper, the syntactic feature was considered. Regarding the syntactic analysis, three main structures compose the song, and they are represented in Table 4.

Table 4. Examples of parallelism

Structure	Example	
<b>Verb + noun</b>	Que tiemble el estado, los cielos las calles	Que teman los jueces y los judiciales
<b>Be + noun+ verb</b>	Soy la niña que subiste por la fuerza	Soy la madre que ahora llora por sus muertas
<b>Verb inf. + noun</b>	Pedimos justicia	Gritamos por cada desaparecida

The examples reflect that the song was elaborated simple structures. However, this makes the song simple to remember and to repeat. Also, most of the verbs are written in the present tense, which suggests a link to recent activities, located in the woman’s context.

#### 4.4.1 *Parallel with the national anthem*

This section has as an objective to show how the end of the song keeps a parallel with the Mexican national anthem. The last verse of the anthem is:

*Y retiemble en sus centros la tierra al sonoro rugir del cañón*

The autor of *canción sin miedo* (2020) uses the same structure and changes two words:

*Y retiemble en sus centros la tierra al sororo rugir del amor*

These modifications are worth considering because they involve a concept in the feminist movement. For instance, the word *sorora* is the adjective of the noun *sororidad*. Its name in English is sisterhood and it is defined by Lugones (1995) as “a metaphor for the reality of relationships among women” (p. 95), and it involves the idea of a pact between women to enhance their relationships and to help each other, over any other relationship the masculine world. Additionally, the writer of the song substitutes the word *cañón* for the word *amor*, which can be attributed to a quality of the word sisterhood. This small change has made some women consider *canción sin miedo* (2020) as an anthem for the feminist movement.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper analyzed the song *Canción sin miedo* (2020) with SFL and with parallelism. Each level showed that the feminist ideology shaped the way in which the song was written. The textual function revealed that the women are the thematic unit of the song because it describes the issues they face in the national context. With the interpersonal function, and the category of mood, it was possible to identify that the majority of the clauses were declaratives and written in present, meaning that it reflects the recent events in women’s lives. The ideational function allowed to distinguish the prevalent process types which were material and existential, as well as the participants in the song. The characters can be divided into masculine and feminine and they have different attributes. The analysis of parallelism reflected that there are three main syntactical structures that are repeated. Also, the last part of the song keeps parallelism with the Mexican national anthem.

### Acknowledgements

I want to thank my professor Dr. Troy Crawford Lewis for his advice during the elaboration of this article.

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

The author declares no competing interests.

## References

- Almurashi, W. (2016). An introduction to Halliday's systemic functional linguistics. *Journal for the Study of English Linguistics*, 4(1), 70-80. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5296/jsel.v4i1.9423>
- Bustam, M. R. (2011). Analyzing clause by Halliday's transitivity system. *Journal Ilmu Sastra*, 6(1), 22-34. <http://jis.fs.unikom.ac.id/jurnal/analyzing-clause-by.v/bm.rayhan-bustam-2.pdf>.
- Ezzina, R. (2016). Transitivity analysis of "The Crying lot of 49" by Thomas Pynchon. *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies*, 2(3), 283-292. <http://ijhcs.com/index.php/ijhcs/article/view/382>.
- Fairclough, N. (2013). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Routledge.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1989). *Spoken and written language*. Oxford University Press.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. (2004). *An introduction to functional grammar*. Arnold.
- Jackson, S. (1998). Feminist social theory. In S. Jackson & J. Jones (Ed.), *Contemporary feminist theories*. (pp. 11-33). Edinburgh University Press.
- Lugones, M. & Rosezelle, P. (1995). Sisterhood and friendship as feminist models. In P. Wessels and M. Friedman (Eds.), *Feminism and community* (pp. 135- 145). Temple University Press.
- Marcos, S. (1999). Twenty-five years of Mexican feminisms. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 22(4), 431-433. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-5395\(99\)00036-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-5395(99)00036-9)
- Michel, V. (2020). Judicial reform and legal opportunity structure: The emergence of strategic litigation against femicide in Mexico. In A. Sarat (Ed.), *Studies in law, politics, and society* (pp. 27-54). Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Qianbo, L. I. (2016). Theoretical framework of critical discourse analysis. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 13(5), 36-40. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/9066>
- Quintana, V. (2020). *Canción sin miedo*. Mexico, Producciones Orco.
- Rampton, M. (2015). Four waves of feminism. *Pacific University Magazine*, 25, 1-10. <https://www.pacificu.edu/about/media/four-waves-feminism>.
- Todolí, J., Labarta, M., & Dolón, R. (2006). What is critical discourse analysis? *Quaderns de Filologia-Estudis Lingüístics*, 11, 9-34. <https://ojs.uv.es/index.php/qfilologia/article/view/5041>.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2001). Critical discourse analysis. In D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen & H. Hamilton (Eds.), *The handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 352-371). Wiley Blackwell.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2006). Ideology and discourse analysis. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 11(2), 115-140. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569310600687908>
- Vu, T. (2011). *Syntactic and semantic features of parallelism in English and Vietnamese songs* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Danang.
- Webster, J. (2019). Key Terms in the SFL Model. In W. Bowcher., L Fontaine & D. Schoental (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of systemic functional linguistics* (pp. 35-54). Cambridge University Press.

## Appendix 1. Lyrics

Que tiemble el Estado  
los cielos, las calles,  
que teman los jueces y los judiciales  
Hoy a las mujeres nos quitan la calma  
Nos sembraron miedo, nos crecieron alas

A cada minuto, de cada semana,  
nos roban amigas, nos matan hermanas  
destrozan sus cuerpos, los desaparecen  
No olviden sus nombres, por favor, señor presidente.

Por todas las compas marchando en Reforma  
Por todas las morras peleando en Sonora  
Por las comandantas luchando por Chiapas  
Por todas las madres buscando en Tijuana  
Cantamos sin miedo, pedimos justicia  
gritamos por cada desaparecida  
Que resuene fuerte: ¡Nos queremos vivas!  
Que caiga con fuerza, el feminicida

Yo todo lo incendio, yo todo lo rompo  
Si un día algún fulano te apaga los ojos

Ya nada me calla, ya todo me sobra  
Si tocan a una, respondemos todas  
Soy Claudia, soy Esther y soy Teresa  
Soy Ingrid, soy Fabiola y soy Valeria  
Soy la niña que subiste por la fuerza  
Soy la madre que ahora llora por sus muertas  
Y soy esta que te hará pagar las cuentas  
¡Justicia!

Por todas las compas marchando en Reforma  
Por todas las morras peleando en Sonora  
Por las comandantas luchando por Chiapas  
Por todas las madres buscando en Tijuana  
Cantamos sin miedo, pedimos justicia  
gritamos por cada desaparecida  
Que resuene fuerte: ¡Nos queremos vivas!  
Que caiga con fuerza, el feminicida

Y retiemble en sus centros la tierra al sororo rugir del amor.



## European Policies for the Inclusion of Refugees in Higher Education: The Case of Greece

Andreas Vasilopoulos & Andriana Ioannidi  
*University of Patras, GREECE*  
*Department of Education and Social Work*

Received: 10 October 2020 ▪ Accepted: 17 December 2020 ▪ Published Online: 25 December 2020

### *Abstract*

The abrupt influx of refugee populations in Europe in the last few years has, undoubtedly, posed many challenges in European countries. Higher Education is considered to be vital for the successful settlement of refugee communities into their host societies. Therefore, it is necessary to establish whether potential refugee aspirations to gain access in HEIs of their host country can be met at all. The present paper examines Greek policies regarding the inclusion of refugees in Higher Education (HE) and attempts to illustrate the range of initiatives taking place in Greek universities, directly or indirectly related to refugees, by highlighting the levels of authority involved, the locations, sources of funding and subject matter. Overall, what is made evident is that, in concurrence with dominant EU trends, the Greek government lacks a coherent policy for the inclusion of refugees in HE in Greece. It is most likely that the initiatives taken by researchers and academics (co-)shape what is considered to be the dominant policies regarding refugees in Greece and are not so much linked to their inclusion into HE as to other aspects of their presence in the country also involving separate target groups (teachers, local communities, researchers and others).

*Keywords:* refugees and asylum seekers, access to higher education, higher education policies, comparative education.

### 1. Introduction

Since 2015, large numbers of people – immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers<sup>1</sup> – from countries in the Middle East, Asia and Africa have reached Greece with the aim of moving on to other countries in Western Europe. Several thousands have been trapped in Greece, waiting for the processing of their asylum claims (Tzoraki, 2019). Specifically, the number of refugees

---

<sup>1</sup> In this paper – unless specified otherwise – the terms refugee and asylum seeker is used collectively, for all third-country nationals who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group is outside the country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country, or a stateless person, who, being outside of the country of former habitual residence for the same reasons as mentioned above, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it and to whom Article 12 of Directive 2011/95/EU does not apply. Asylum applicant/seeker, in particular, refers to the person having applied for international protection or having been included in such an application as a family member (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary>, accessed in 20 September 2020).



claiming asylum in Greece in 2016 was close to 50,000; 35,000 of those remained in mainland Greece and 15,000 on the islands, while in 2017 the number reached 57,000 (see European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019). Further, according to the latest statistics of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the total number of refugees that have entered Greece so far in 2020 is 10,458.

- The Greek state has not yet developed a coherent policy for the integration of refugees aged 18+ into Greek HE, following the dominant EU trend.
- Policies related to the inclusion of refugees in Greek HE are for the most part limited and comprise of initiatives undertaken by academic teaching staff within Greek universities, mainly through European funding.
- The initiatives implemented by Greek universities relate both directly and indirectly to refugees, have a guidance/training and research character or are undertaken within the remit of the university's social function and are mainly financed by EU funds and private entities, or are occasionally self-financed.
- Greece, for the moment, chooses not to utilize the human capital that the refugee population could provide in the country's development through its integration in Greek HE, and subsequently in Greek society.

The present paper will examine some of the state policies with regards to the inclusion of refugees in Higher Education (HE) in Greece, framing current policies by the Greek state within the context of other countries in Europe – the related field of educational research, remains relatively under-developed (Lambrechts, 2020). It will present a number of actions and initiatives taken by Greek universities and elaborate on their connection to refugees and the issue of migration. After briefly discussing the research methodology and presenting the research tools that were used, it will delineate the different levels of authority involved in the initiatives (supranational, national, regional) the differences in, and role played by, geographical location, how different initiatives are funded (state, public, private) and their subject, content and groups they are aimed at. These educational policies are differentiated from the national educational policy which, until a few decades ago, monopolised the national education system (Stamelos & Vasilopoulos, 2013). The paper aims to start a debate on the challenges faced by Greek universities in integrating refugees in academic settings as well as to consider the multiplicity of issues at stake. The authors argue that taking into account the large number of people arriving in Greece, Higher Education (HE) can be seen as a fundamental tool for their social inclusion and their familiarisation with European values, as well as enabling the use of their resources, both professionally and academically.

## 2. European policies for the inclusion of refugees in higher education

In 2017, approximately half a million third-country nationals were granted refugee status in the EU. There is no reliable statistical information with regards to how many of them were higher education students in their countries of origin. However, we do know that half are aged between 18 and 34 years old (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019). That is, they form a group of people that could potentially be involved in HE but unfortunately possess limited chances of being able to continue their studies at a European university.

Refugees face a multitude of problems, obstacles and difficulties related to access to HE in a number of European countries. This is to a large extent due to the fact that, despite the significant increase in the numbers of people seeking asylum in the last five years, the majority of European countries do not yet have a comprehensive, coherent policy for their inclusion in HE. This is partly because, on the one hand, the sudden influx of refugees has potentially led European

states to adopt measures to *manage the situation* rather than make centralised political choices: 16 EU countries have adopted nationwide measures rather than policies for specific academic institutions or any given geographical region (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019). On the other hand, the number of countries actually hosting refugees is limited. According to the EU's relocation and resettlement plan which came into force in September 2015, the hundreds of thousands of migrants arriving in Europe and sheltering in refugee camps in Italy and Greece are promised to be equitably distributed across Member States (European Commission 2015). The Netherlands agreed to a legal commitment to host 5,947 refugees before the end of September 2017. However, as of 14 November 2017, the Netherlands had only accepted 2,551, constituting less than half the agreed number (EU Commission, 2017). Spain pledged to host 17,337 refugees from the European relocation and resettlement quotas. However, as of summer 2017 Spain only took in 11 per cent of the number agreed, also taking into account that the agreement ended in September 2017. Similarly, the EU-Turkey Statement which came into effect on 18 March 2016 was agreed by EU Heads of State and/or Governments and Turkey with the aim of ending irregular migration flows from Turkey to the EU, assuring the protection of several hundred thousand fleeing the Syrian War, and creating safer conditions and legal channels to Europe for them (European Commission, 2018). Its results, though, seem somewhat dubious.

At any rate, the requirement for people who had likely been violently forced to flee their place of residence to present proof of academic qualifications, as well as the process of recognising these qualifications, are two of the most basic obstacles to the inclusion of refugees in the HE systems of European countries. Refugees themselves rank these obstacles very highly in their prioritisations and recognize they have significant consequences for their integration to the societies of host countries. In addition to these, there are also obstacles such as the lack of information and guidance about HE procedures and systems of host countries, differentiated access procedures even within the countries themselves, discrimination with regards to status (International students Vs Home students), lack of financial means and, of course, lack of knowledge of the language of instruction. All these, combined with the absence of policies for the reinforcement of language acquisition for refugee populations, constitute a partial list of the fundamental obstacles to the inclusion of refugees in HE in Europe (Lambrechts, 2020; Yildiz, 2019).

With regards to the last point, thirteen European countries have established a form of language support for refugee populations which, on most occasions, takes the form of financial help for learning the language of the host country. Twelve countries have a system of scholarships providing financial support for the payment of refugees' study fees; in Italy for example, 100 such scholarships are offered to refugees wishing to attend programmes of study at Italian universities. Eight countries have created entry programmes within their HE systems, called "welcome", or "introductory" programmes, while in ten countries individual guidance for third country nationals is given in order to facilitate their integration within HE (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019). Conversely, in Spain refugees are treated in the same way as migrants or other third country nationals who are permanent residents, which means that they are required to provide copies of their degrees and other relevant qualifications in order to gain entry to various university faculties<sup>2</sup> (Yildiz, 2019). Schneider (2018) provides evidence that German HEIs commonly subsume refugee populations and asylum seekers under the more general admission classification of *international students*. She argues that *an intentional blindness of the background of non-European Union students in the admission procedure is*

---

<sup>2</sup> For a complete account of the access and admission system for University Degrees in Spain, see also Arraiz Pérez A. et al. (2015), The Access and Admission system for University Degrees: current situation and perspectives in Spain, *Academia*, vol. 5 (no. 1), 2015.

*justified on the grounds of equal treatment* but findings indicate that refugees experience the disregard for their distinct struggles as particularly stifling and disillusioning (Schneider, 2018).

On the issue of qualifications, Article 7 of the Lisbon Convention provides a clear legal framework for the recognition of qualifications held by refugees with the aim of facilitating their recognition. However, the application of this specific article in European countries is limited at most, as only sixteen countries have a clear legal requirement for procedures to be followed. Malta and Italy are two host countries that have developed a very effective and clear legal framework in relation to the procedures refugees must follow in this regard. A 2016 report of the LRC Committee monitoring the implementation of the convention found that in 35 out of 50 countries surveyed, this article was not formally implemented – neither through national level regulations, nor through recognition bodies or agencies at the national level. As a result, while waiting for their skills and credentials to be recognized, most of the highly educated refugees are employed at a level lower than their qualifications or they remain unemployed<sup>3</sup>.

In conclusion, as is shown by the information presented, the majority of European countries do not have a comprehensive, coherent policy for the inclusion of refugees in their HE systems. The development and implementation of suitable policy frameworks for access to HE for those with refugee backgrounds in Europe in particular, has been somewhat variable, and mostly inadequate (Lambrechts, 2020: 804). Thus, to date, despite the continuously growing levels of human displacement globally only about 3% of the world's 25.9 million refugees have access to HE opportunities in the host states – a long way from the target of 15% set for 2030 (UNHCR 2019).

Universities, on the other hand, maintain the ability to adopt initiatives to develop possible short, medium and long-term actions with the aim of facilitating access to HE for refugees who were university students in their countries of origin. Some, have already created their own programmes through the “Student-refugees Welcome Program” initiated by the European University Association (EUA). This campaign serves as an instrumental tool which documents initiatives by higher education institutions and organizations concerning refugees’ access to higher education. The platform is designed with the purpose of allowing refugees to start or continue with their academic studies in the host countries via a regular university programme. In doing so, universities which are part of the EUA network introduced separate procedures for the registration of refugee students which is rather different from usual admission procedures. For example, the inHERE Good Practice Catalogue (GPC) is the product of an in-depth analysis of almost 300 initiatives from 32 countries of HE institutions and organisations committed to welcoming refugees that participated in EUA’s Refugees Welcome Map Campaign up until early 2017.

### 3. State policy for the integration of refugees in the Greek education system

It is true that the Greek state has recognised the importance of policies on migration in the country's overall development strategy and the safeguarding of social cohesion. For this reason, it has been noticeably active in the last few years, taking legal steps to ensure that Greek legislation complies with that of the European Union on issues of migration and towards the rationalisation of the existing institutional framework. This has been done with the aim of simplifying the processes for the issuance of residence permits but also of establishing a network of rights, so that third country nationals can benefit from increased protection in accordance with

---

<sup>3</sup> See also, [http://www.enic-naric.net/fileusers/Monitoring the Implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention 2016.pdf](http://www.enic-naric.net/fileusers/Monitoring%20the%20Implementation%20of%20the%20Lisbon%20Recognition%20Convention%202016.pdf), accessed in 21 September 2020.

the principles of equality and non-discrimination with regards to race, gender, language or religion, and with respect to their particular circumstances.<sup>4</sup>

As pertains to education in particular, the Greek state legislated for the inclusion of children from third countries in primary and secondary education long before the escalation of the refugee issue in 2015. Specifically, already from 2005, Legal Act 3386/2005 on “Entry, housing and social inclusion of third country nationals in Greek territory”, stipulated in article 72 that underage third country nationals who are living inside Greek territory are subject to compulsory school attendance, as are Greek nationals, and have unrestricted access to activities run by schools or wider education community. With regards to this, emphasis is placed on the fact that Greece, on the issue of the education of refugee children, consistently applies Article 28 of the Convention for the Rights of the Child which is related to education (Hajinikolaou, 2020). This Article acknowledges that by exception, children of third country nationals can be registered in schools even with inadequate documentation, as long as: (a) they are under the protection of the Greek state as refugees or under the protection of the United Nations High Commission; (b) come from areas in which there is unrest and upheaval; (c) have filed for asylum; and (d) are third country nationals residing in Greece, even if their legal right to reside in Greece has not yet been settled. Legal Act 4415/2014 also contains legislation in relation to education taking place in Greek and multicultural education, alongside other clauses. More specifically, in Article 20 the concept of Multicultural Education is linked to the building of relationships between different cultural groups with the aim of combating inequalities and social exclusion. In addition, article 21 refers to the means by which the aims of multicultural education are to be achieved, such as: (a) the enrolment of children of diverse cultural origin in the same schools as those of locals; (b) the strengthening of the democratic function of the school on the basis of respect for democratic values and the rights of the child; (c) the preparation of appropriate educational programmes, textbooks and material; (d) the handling of negative discrimination based on cultural difference, xenophobia and racism; (e) the adoption of measures and the application of support structures that assist in the educational and social inclusion of children with a migrant background in the context of equality and respect for the preservation of their cultural identity; and (f) the creation of appropriate training programmes and other multicultural activities aimed at all members of the educational community (Mavroviti, 2018).

Furthermore, Article 26 of Act 3879/2010, entitled “Development of Lifelong Learning and other clauses” has been put in place. In relation to the education of the children of refugees, it stipulates the establishment of Areas of Educational Priority (AEPs) in which, through the setting up and running of welcome classes, support classes, summer classes and classes for the learning of the language of students’ countries of origin, all students are able to be included in the educational process. Ministerial Decree 131024/D1 (Government Gazette 2687 B, 2016) includes regulations for the Areas of Educational Priority related to the operation of Refugee Education Welcome Facilities (REWFs) inside primary school buildings, in accordance with the new *National Strategy for Inclusion* (Ministry for Migration Policy, 2018). Article 1 classifies as AEPs all the regional authorities of Primary and Secondary Education, including specific primary school units, in which it is possible to establish and operate REWFs. The aim of these Facilities is to provide educational support to the children of refugees through the teaching of Greek as a foreign/second language and through the organisation of educational programmes and activities, so that they can subsequently be included in the Greek education system<sup>5</sup> (see also National

---

<sup>4</sup> Legal Act 4451/2014.

<sup>5</sup> The total number of students enrolled in all tiers during the school year 2018-2019 was 12,867, out of which 4,577 were registered in REWFs, 4050 in Welcome Classes and 4,240 in schools without welcome classes. However, complications arise in this process related to the availability and preparedness of teachers, the limited available places in public classes, the children and parental responses, and the response of wider

Strategy for Inclusion, Ministry for Migration Policy, 2018: 21). In the same vein, provisions are made for the implementation of comprehensive training/information programmes for Primary and Secondary education professionals on issues of intercultural education, with the aim of gaining specialised academic knowledge specifically with regards to teaching and learning in a multicultural school and the management of cultural difference<sup>6</sup> (National Strategy for Inclusion, Ministry for Migration Policy, 2018).

For adult third country nationals,<sup>7</sup> the Greek state has legislated on a set of rights which guarantees the equal treatment of Greek citizens and third country nationals.<sup>8</sup> These involve, among other things, education and professional training and the recognition of diplomas, certificates and other professional titles. As was made evident in the previous section, this is not a given for all European countries, since in contrast to what applies to Primary Education, HE is not covered under article 22 of the 1951 Convention for the Rights of Refugees to Education.<sup>9</sup> However, even in this case, equality of treatment for Greek citizens and third country nationals maybe be a null point,<sup>10</sup> since the requirement to follow relevant national procedures with regards to access<sup>11</sup> to university, tertiary education and professional training involves having sufficient knowledge of the Greek language and the payment of fees, where this applies. Similarly, the fact that Greece has not signed the Lisbon Convention for the Recognition of Qualifications (see previous section) creates significant obstacles for the integration of refugees who have the required skills and relevant qualifications in Greek HE<sup>12</sup>. Of course, at this point it needs to be noted that even among countries that have signed the Lisbon Convention there are many which have not consistently implemented it, and in some cases appropriate recognition procedures for refugees, displaced persons, and persons in refugee-like situations do not exist (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019). Finally, integration of refugee populations in Greek HE also faces obstacles from the standpoint of refugees themselves, whose main priority is the positive outcome of their application for international protection and not the issue of their integration into education and/or Greek society, seeing as they consider Greece more as an interim destination on their journey towards other countries in Western Europe.

---

society. Generally, an account of the terms and processes of participation of refugee children in Greek public schools see also Nikolaou & Samsari (2020) and Zsofia (2018).

<sup>6</sup> Training programmes are aimed at all teaching staff, regardless of specialism, while programmes also need be implemented specifically for language teachers on how to teach Greek as a foreign language, and to School Councillors and Headteachers on issues of school management.

<sup>7</sup> In 2018, the number of refugees who applied for asylum in Greece was 58,000, of which 22,500 were children (Tzoraki, 2019).

<sup>8</sup> Holders of a Uniform Residence Permit, on the retention, where applicable, of specific deviations or reservations from specific national legislation.

<sup>9</sup> The 1951 Refugee Convention refers to the right of education in its Article 22: *The Contracting States shall accord to refugees the same treatment as is accorded to nationals with respect to elementary education. The Contracting States shall accord to refugees treatment as favorable as possible, and, in any event, not less favorable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances, with respect to education other than elementary education and, in particular, as regards access to studies, the recognition of foreign school certificates, diplomas and degrees, the remission of fees and charges and the award of scholarships.*

<sup>10</sup> Zubair's story is exemplary in relation to that matter (<https://iomintandem.com/stories/zubair/>, accessed in 21 September 2020).

<sup>11</sup> Only for third country nationals who are currently, or have been in the past, in work and are registered as unemployed and therefore not for refugees.

<sup>12</sup> What is more, Lioffi (2019) argues that “the certification of non-formal education and informal learning in Greece is more related to the enhancement of the employability of the individual and less to the promotion of its social inclusion” (p. 92).

The new National Strategy for Inclusion, in fact, specifies the creation of a relevant legal framework for the recognition of the level of education and qualifications of third country nationals who cannot provide certificates of proof from their country of origin, as well as the provision of information to refugees about where they can apply to have the education they received abroad be recognised in order to continue their studies in Tertiary and Higher Education, or exercise any professional rights potentially granted to them by their diploma or degree. In fact, the Greek state, in accordance with corresponding European policies (see <https://ec.europa.eu/migrantskills/#/>, accessed in 21 September 2020), has committed itself to mapping out the educational background, work experience and professional skills' profile of recipients and claimants of international protection through the creation of an information system for the qualitative and quantitative processing of the skills-mapping data and its linking to relevant services (see National Strategy for Inclusion, 2018: 61). In the field of informal education, the new Strategy also stipulates the creation of language learning programmes for young people aged 15-18 and adults (18+) as well as facilitating entry to Second Chance Schools for second generation immigrants who discontinued their education in a previous phase (dropouts).

To sum up, the Greek state has taken significant legal steps towards the inclusion of refugee children and children of refugees in the Greek education system, which are primarily limited to the Primary and Secondary tier of the Greek education system. For now, in concordance with mainstream European trends, no specific legal steps have been taken, nor has a comprehensive and coherent policy been created, for the inclusion of refugees in Greek HE. The priorities for the future appear to be related to the establishment of a coherent framework for the academic and professional recognition of qualifications achieved abroad, the mapping of refugees' educational background and work experience and the strengthening of language learning initiatives at the informal level.

#### 4. Policies for the inclusion of refugees in Greek higher education

##### 4.1 *Research methodology*

As the present paper examines Greek policies for the inclusion of refugees in Greek HE and the actions which directly or indirectly relate to refugees in Greek universities, the research questions have been formed as follows:

- What are the policies for the integration of refugees in Greek Higher Education (levels of authority, locations, sources of funding), within the context of other countries in Europe?
- What is the subject matter/content of initiatives directly or indirectly related to refugees in Greek universities?

In this context, two research tools were chosen for data collection: textual analysis and the qualitative, semi-structured interview. Textual analysis was used to locate, delineate and study the initiatives taken by Greek universities and academic institutions related to refugees. Research was undertaken online on university websites, those of the Lifelong Learning Centres (KEDIVIM in Greek) of each respective Institution, as well as on other web pages from where relevant information and data could be obtained<sup>13</sup> (see for example the EUA website: <https://eua.eu/101-projects/541-refugees-welcome-map.html>, accessed in 21 September 2020). The second data

---

<sup>13</sup> There is yet to be an observatory of initiatives related to refugees in Greece, both in HE or any other educational tier. As a result, and as was mentioned before, the search for initiatives was limited to university websites and other pages with relevant data. This fact obviously needs to be taken into account in the limitations of the current research.

collection tool used was the semi-structured interview with academic teaching staff and programme managers at the University of Patras and the University of the Aegean. These academic institutions were not selected at random but were deemed to be appropriate firstly due to their geographical positions: The University of the Aegean spans the islands of the Aegean that host the largest numbers of refugees in the country. The city of Patras in mainland Greece also hosts a significant number of refugees. Moreover, another selection criterion for the conducting of interviews was that of access to research subjects. Overall, five interviews were conducted with individuals responsible for initiatives related to refugees that took place in the last five years, during which the refugee issue has been exacerbated.

The research data was analysed using the method of thematical analysis. Specifically, the transcription of interviews was followed by a careful reading of the resulting texts, and extracts related to the research questions were identified and collated. During this collation, “a researcher must interpret the data, namely, understand their significance and render them through a semantic definition, called a code” (Tsiolis, 2017; Clarke & Braun, 2013). Subsequently, the codes were put together into topics. The issues that came about from the processing, comparison and collation of these codes are presented below in combination with relevant extracts from interviews and data from the study of University initiatives which corroborate the findings.

In social research, if one relies on a single data source, there is danger that undetected errors in the process of data production may render the analysis incorrect (Hammersley, 1984). Thus, it is essential for the researcher to triangulate his/her data. What is involved in triangulation is not the combination of different data per se, or a matter of checking whether inferences are valid. It is rather an attempt to relate different shorts of data in such a way as to counteract various possible threats to the validity of the analysis. It is a matter of discovering which inferences are valid (Foster, 1994; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Hammersley et al. 1994). In relation, finally, to reliability issues, Filstead (1970) suggested that this concept focuses on the degree of consistency in the observations obtained from the devices employed. Hammersley (1984) related the reliability issue with that of reactivity. He suggested that with triangulation of data, threats to reliability may be counteracted.

#### 4.2 Greek university initiatives related to refugees

From the research conducted online, it appears that initiatives directly related to refugees have been undertaken by 6 universities: The National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), Harokopeio University, the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUT), the University of Patras (UOP), the Hellenic Open University (HOU) and the University of the Aegean (UOA) (see Table 1).

Table 1. Initiatives run by Greek universities related to refugees

University	Recognition	Access	Financial Support	Language and Bridging Courses	Integration Measures	Refugee researchers – academic staff	Online Learning	Strategic Approaches	Employability	Humanitarian work	Collaboration
NKUA	+		+	+	+	+				+	
HAROKOPEIO		+		+	+						
AUT	+	+		+	+	+	+				
HOU	+	+	+	+	+	+					
UOP					+					+	
UOA	+	+		+	+	+				+	

Apart from the initiatives taken by academic teaching staff at the universities directly related to refugees, there are also training initiatives primarily aimed at educators and education professionals and implemented through Lifelong Learning Centres (KEDIVIM in Greek), which are designed to support them in being better able to successfully manage the challenges they face inside multicultural classrooms. Moreover, academic teaching staff closely monitor migration as a phenomenon as a whole, as well as the issue of refugees, in order to contribute to an in-depth understanding and assist in the amelioration of the lives of vulnerable population groups. In this way, it should also be taken as a given that members of the academic teaching staff of universities implement research projects individually and/or in collaboration with researchers from other European countries indirectly related to refugees and the issues that arise from their stay in Greece.<sup>14</sup> For the latter, it is not possible to compile systematic data. For the former, however, that is for the projects offered to educators and other interested parties through the Lifelong Learning Centres of Greek universities, the picture is given in the following table (See Table 2).

Table 2. Lifelong learning center programs in Greek universities related to the education of refugees

University	Programme Title (2019-2020)
NKUA (U.of Athens)	Intercultural Education, Language and Communication Teacher Training in Intercultural Education Teacher Training in the teaching of Greek as a Second/ Foreign Language (immigrants, refugees, Roma)
Panteion University	Intercultural Education
U. of Western Attica	Intercultural Education - Creative Learning and New Technologies
U. of Patras	Teacher Training in Intercultural Education and the teaching of Greek as a Second/ Foreign Language
U. of Western Mac.	The teaching of Greek as a Foreign Language in intercultural educational settings
U. of the Aegean	Intercultural Education: Diversity, acceptance, inclusion and the school
U. of Crete	Supporting students from diverse cultural backgrounds in school
Greek Med. U.	Intercultural Education

On this basis, and regarding the first research question, Stamelos (2009) has argued that the phrase “educational policy” was, until a few decades ago, only pertinent to state policies related to the national education system. Today, the development of a plethora of educational policies can be observed, which can be separated into different categories according to the levels of authority, locations, sources of funding and subject matter (Stamelos & Vasilopoulos, 2013: 22-23).

What is evident from the previous discussion is that, for the moment at least, state policy mostly involves the inclusion of children of third country nationals in the primary and secondary tier of the Greek education system. As has emerged from the interviews conducted with individuals responsible for programmes related to refugees in the universities of Patras and the Aegean, as well as from the examination of the relevant legislation of the Greek state, there does not appear to be a coherent policy for the inclusion refugees in Greek HE: *There is a clear policy for Primary and Secondary, REWF classes in AEPs, legislation for Primary and Secondary Education, but there is no policy that relates to Tertiary Education...But generally, there is no clear policy as there is no law which specifically mentions Tertiary Education anywhere (Interview. #4).*

<sup>14</sup> Five such projects have been implemented at the University of the Aegean in the last decade.



What is clear and reflected in the new National Strategy for Inclusion (see Ministry of Migration Policy, 2018) is the state's willingness to create a relevant legal framework for the recognition of the level of education and qualifications of third country nationals who are not able to present proof from their country of origin: *There is, however, a big problem with the young people who were students in Syria, Afghanistan or somewhere else and who were forced to leave because of war and so to interrupt their studies. These young people find themselves at a loose end because they can't continue their studies, there is no mechanism that can assess their level and place them at University so that there can be a continuation and I think that this is something that we could look at (Interview. #5).* Additionally, the new National Strategy for Inclusion (see Ministry of Migration Policy, 2018) provides for the launching of information and guidance campaigns for refugees, providing them with assistance on having the education they received abroad recognised so that they can continue their studies in Tertiary and Higher Education, or exercise any professional rights that their diploma or degree might grant them. Another priority for the Greek state, to the same end, is the mapping of the educational background and work experience of third country nationals as well as the reinforcement of language learning initiatives at the level of informal education. However, and for the time being: *a clear policy, no. Unfortunately, it doesn't exist. There could be a comparison, perhaps even through NARIC [National Recognition Information Centre]. Meaning that if a student is in the second year of medicine in Aleppo in Syria and is forced to leave, there could be a committee at NARIC which examines what level the student is at, what courses they have taken and place them in the respective level at a Greek University. Unfortunately, something like this hasn't occurred at the institutional level (Interview. #5).*

The levels of authority involved in policies that are being developed related to refugees seem to be supranational or sub-national in terms of their origin and regional with regards to their locations, namely taking place inside HE Institutions. They are primarily financed by EU: *The HORIZON project was funded by the European Union. Greece is also part of the European Union. Generally, the European Union funds projects like these, another project, BRiDGE II was funded by the European Union. This was planned by a German University, but generally yes, the European Union funds these [projects]. And the Greek state agrees to it. The funding takes place at the level of the European Union, not the national budget. (Interview. #2).* Furthermore, they are *privately funded (Interview. #3)* or can occasionally be *self-financed* (such as the programmes of study at Lifelong Learning Centres on multicultural education, **Interview. #5**).

Actually the activities designed and implemented by academic teaching staff at Greek universities, ultimately, (co-)shape what is considered to be the dominant policies regarding the inclusion of refugees in Greek HE: *There is no, and it is not necessary for there to be a policy, the same individuals who are responsible for teaching undertake such activities and implement them and the University accepts them and welcomes them (Interview. #4).*

This discussion, of course, brings us to the second research question involving the subject and content of initiatives related to refugees at Greek Universities. As is shown through the examination of Table 1, initiatives directly related to refugees that aim towards their integration in Greek HE, within the framework of the implementation of European programmes or other initiatives by academic teaching staff, are mostly limited. These also primarily involve providing financial support and helping with language learning. Also important are the opportunities for work given to refugee researchers and academic staff in the context of relevant European policies<sup>15</sup> and programmes implemented in Greece at four Universities (NKUA, AUT, EAP and UOP): *The aim was to reintegrate refugees who had a certain level of education, meaning who had a degree from a university of their country of origin, to include them in the*

---

<sup>15</sup> See <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/science4refugees>.

academic environment/setting in some way. That was the aim; it didn't continue. We granted some scholarships to a few people who were completing or had completed a PhD, to conduct research at the University (**Interview. #3.**).

Three relevant issues arise from this current examination. The first one involves the criteria and the particular aims of a research director assuming the design and implementation of a programme related to refugees.

**Interview. #3.:** *Our choice has to do with the fact that it wasn't as if refugees started arriving and we then decided to get involved as good people, because the hospital told us that there were refugees there, we were involved with immigrants and Roma people before, so that it was a natural sequence of events.*

**Interview. #2.:** *I am aware of the issues related to refugees and multicultural education, myself and my colleagues are as well but I wouldn't like to speak on others' behalf, I'll speak about me. It is my personal choice, out of my interest in refugees that I have been involved in these initiatives.*

The second issue relates to the geographical location of each University, and the level of participation in activities related to refugees. As is shown above, in the case of Greece, geographical position plays a significant part in the adoption and implementation of initiatives directly related to refugees, such as the initiatives by the University of the Aegean in the last five years. From looking at Table 2, however, it appears that geographical position does not play a part in the cases of initiatives indirectly related to refugees which involve teachers, education professionals and members of Non-Governmental Organisations. What has emerged from the analysis of research data is that the geographical position of Universities can influence the adoption of initiatives directly related to refugees and the refugee issue: *If the city where the university is located does not have immigrants then such initiatives do not make sense* (**Interview. #2**). It does not affect, though, research activities or those related to guidance and training of members of the local population who are called to work in new multicultural settings: *Geographical position does indeed have an influence, but the truth is that due to the refugee crisis it would be important for all universities to implement similar initiatives for refugees and also as influenced by Europe* (**Interview. #1**).

Finally, the third issue is related to the forms taken by the initiatives. From the previous discussion it is clear that we are referring to: European programmes directly related to the integration of refugees to Greek HE, research programmes predominantly funded by European funds (HORIZON 2020) or national funds (Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation), training programmes organised at Lifelong Learning Centres at different Universities and funded through fees paid by the trainees or other observational activities of the changing situation of the refugee issue, which are mostly funded by private institutions and entities (Tables 1 and 2).

## 5. Discussion

Relevant research, on the issue of refugee's inclusion in HEIs in Europe and elsewhere, although limited and somewhat under-developed, focuses, mainly, either on the barriers to access for refugee background students (Lambrechts, 2020; Yildiz, 2019) or the aspirations and experiences of refugees entering HE (Sontag, 2019; Schneider, 2018; Lenette, 2016). In this paper, we have attempted to portray the dominant trends in the European continent related to the integration of refugees in HE, focussing on the case of Greece and highlighting the policies of the Greek state towards the integration of refugees in the country's education system and the inclusion of refugees in Greek HE. We have also laid emphasis on the levels of authority involved, the locations, sources of funding and subject matter.

It appears, that the exacerbation of the refugee issue affected, mainly, the primary and secondary tier of Greek education, for example with the establishment of AEPs, REWFs, reception classes, learning support classes and the running of summer classes and language classes (for the students' first language). Greece remains one of the few countries that has not, yet, signed the Lisbon Recognition Convention. The sudden influx of refugees, being trapped in the country, has posed great challenges and created different, more urgent priorities -such as the creation of proper and adequate facilities and infrastructures for the accommodation of refugees. Moreover, interruptions in education either in the country of origin, or once they arrived in Greece, mean that refugee populations do not always achieve the grades, or the language fluency, required for progressing onto HE. They do not, also, possess the necessary documentation, regarding their educational qualifications, rendering recognition procedures problematic. Finally, the fact that refugees seem to think of Greece as an intermediate destination may account for the fact that this issue has not had a direct effect on Greek universities. It created, however, the need for universities to establish new services, such as the provision of technological solutions to make the daily lives of refugees easier, or the creation of facilities for psychological support. Another need that has arisen is for the design and implementation of new programmes of study, such as the development of refugees' language skills and multicultural education training for teachers, education professionals, and members of NGOs, realised through an administrative, management logic of the refugee issue. Furthermore, universities have remained true to their traditional role, studying the refugee phenomenon and flows of migration as a whole. In this sense, Greece seems to have, conveniently, followed the dominant EU trend regarding the inclusion of refugees into HE systems.

Overall, universities have conducted research on diverse aspects of the refugee crisis at the academic level. At the level of teaching, they have designed and implemented training initiatives which had as beneficiaries both local and refugee populations. Lastly, in the context of their social function, they have taken part in a series of voluntary actions/activities, separately, or in cooperation with local communities, NGOs and others. By participating in specific activities such as projects SUCRE, SCIREA, BRIDGE I and II funded by the EU, the HORIZON project and initiatives by the EUA (such as the Refugees Welcome Map), some Greek universities have contributed to initiatives aiming to integrate refugees into Greek HE.

## 6. Conclusions

In conclusion, the policies related to the inclusion of refugees in Greek HE are for the most part limited and comprise of initiatives undertaken by academic teaching staff within Greek universities, mainly through European funding. Following from that, the initiatives implemented by Greek universities relate both directly and indirectly to refugees, have a guidance/training and research character or are undertaken within the remit of the university's social function and are mainly financed by EU funds and private entities, or are occasionally self-financed. The Greek state has not yet developed a coherent policy for the integration of refugees aged 18+ into Greek HE, following the dominant EU trend. Above all, the priorities at this time relate to the establishment of a coherent framework for the academic and professional recognition of qualifications gained abroad, the mapping of the educational background and work experience of third country nationals as well as the reinforcement of language learning initiatives at the informal level.

Largely, this means that Greece, for the moment, chooses not to utilize the human capital that the refugee population could provide in the country's development through its integration in Greek HE, and subsequently in Greek society.

### Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Prof. P. Kimourtzis, and Ass. Professor D. Gouvias for all their help in realizing this research project.

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

The authors declare no competing interests.

### References

- Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners* ([https://www.researchgate.net/publication/256089360\\_Successful\\_Qualitative\\_Research\\_A\\_Practical\\_Guide\\_for\\_Beginners](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/256089360_Successful_Qualitative_Research_A_Practical_Guide_for_Beginners), accessed in 20 September 2020).
- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2019). *Integrating asylum seekers and refugees into higher education in Europe: National policies and measures*. Eurydice Report, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- European Commission (2015). *Refugee crisis: European Commission takes decisive action* [Press Release] Brussels ([http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-15-5596\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-5596_en.htm), accessed in 25 August 2020).
- Filstead, W. (ed.) (1970). *Qualitative methodology*. Chicago: Markham.
- Foster, P. (1994). *A methodological guide*. London: Paul Chapman.
- Hajinikolaou, A. (2020). *A review of the Greek legislation concerning the education of immigrants, refugees and Roma* ([http://peroma.web.auth.gr/peroma/sites/roma/files/files/2292015\\_16.pdf](http://peroma.web.auth.gr/peroma/sites/roma/files/files/2292015_16.pdf), accessed in 25 August 2020).
- Hammersley, M. (1984). *Methods and data: Ethnography*. The Open University Press.
- Hammersley, M., Gomm, R., & Woods, P. (1994). *Study guide, MA in educational research methods*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (1995). *Ethnography: Principles in practice, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. London: Routledge.
- Lambrechts, A. (2020). The super-disadvantaged in higher education: Barriers to access for refugee background students in England. *Higher Education*, 80(5), 803-822.
- Lenette, C. (2016). University students from refugee backgrounds: Why should we care? *Higher Education Research and Development*, 35(6), 1311-1315.
- Lioffi, F. (2019). Validation of non-formal and informal learning. From European policies to national implementation. *Academia*, 14, 92-118 (in Greek).
- Mavroviti, E. M. (2018). *Policies, mechanisms and actions for the education of children of refugees*, Postgraduate Thesis: Korinth, University of Peloponnese, Dept of Social and Education Policy (in Greek).
- Nikolaou, G., & Samsari, E. (2020). Greek university students' attitudes towards refugees: The role of contact with refugees in a common context since the beginning of refugee's arrival. *Revista Internacional de Estudios Migratorios*, 10(1), 73-95.
- Perez Arraiz, A., Sabirón Sierra, F., & Soler Costa, R. (2015). The access and admission system for university degrees: Current situation and perspectives in Spain. *Academia*, 5(1), 135-163.

- Schneider, L. (2018). Access and aspirations: Syrian refugees' experiences of entering higher education in Germany. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 13(3), 457-478.
- Sontag, K. (2019). Refugee student access to three European universities: An ethnographic study. *Social Inclusion*, 7(1), 71-79.
- Tzoraki, O. (2019). A descriptive study of the schooling and higher education reforms in response to the refugees' influx into Greece. *Social Sciences*, 8(3), 1-14.
- Tsiolis, G. (2015). Analysis of qualitative data: Dilemmas, potential and processes. In G. Pyrgiotakis (Ed.), *Research methodology in social sciences and education* (pp. 473-498). Athens: Pedio (in Greek).
- UNHCR (2019). *Stepping up: Refugee education in crisis*, (<https://www.unhcr>, accessed in 20 September 2020).
- Yildiz, A. (Ed.) (2019). *Integration of refugee students in European higher education: Comparative country cases*. Izmir: Yasar University Publications
- Zsófia, N. (2018). From camps to schools: The participation of refugee children in Greek public education. *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 36, 373-399.



### AIMS AND SCOPE

The OJAS, as an international multi-disciplinary peer-reviewed **online open access academic journal**, publishes academic articles deal with different problems and topics in various areas of anthropology and close scientific disciplines (cultural anthropology, social anthropology, urban anthropology, ethnology, ethnomusicology, anthropology of art, media anthropology, feminist anthropology, economic anthropology, physical anthropology, psychological anthropology, medical anthropology, linguistic anthropology, palaeoanthropology, applied anthropology, archeology, etc.).

The OJAS provides a platform for the manuscripts from different areas of research, which may rest on the full spectrum of established methodologies, including theoretical discussion and empirical investigations. The manuscripts may represent a variety of theoretical perspectives and different methodological approaches.

The OJAS is already indexed in Crossref (DOI), DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals), BASE (Bielefeld Academic Search Engine), Google Scholar, J-Gate, ResearchBib and WorldCat - OCLC, and is applied for indexing in the other bases (Clarivate Analytics – SCIE, ESCI, SSCI and AHCI, Scopus, ERIH Plus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, Cabell's Directory, SHERPA/RoMEO, EZB - Electronic Journals Library, etc.).

The authors of articles accepted for publishing in the OJAS should get the ORCID number ([www.orcid.org](http://www.orcid.org)), and Thomson-Reuters' Researcher ID ([www.researcherid.com](http://www.researcherid.com)).

The journal is now publishing 2 times a year.

### PEER REVIEW POLICY

All manuscripts submitted for publishing in the OJAS are expected to be free from language errors and must be written and formatted strictly according to the latest edition of the [APA style](#). Manuscripts that are not entirely written according to APA style and/or do not reflect an expert use of the English language will **not** be considered for publication and will **not** be sent to the journal reviewers for evaluation. It is completely the author's responsibility to comply with the rules. We highly recommend that non-native speakers of English have manuscripts proofread by a copy editor before submission. However, proof of copy editing does *not* guarantee acceptance of a manuscript for publication in the OJAS.

The OJAS operates a double-blind peer reviewing process. The manuscript should not include authors' names, institutional affiliations, contact information. Also, authors' own works need to be blinded in the references (see the APA style). All submitted manuscripts are reviewed by the editors, and only those meeting the aims and scope of the journal will be sent for outside review. Each manuscript is reviewed by at least two reviewers.

The editors are doing their best to reduce the time that elapses between a paper's submission and publication in a regular issue. It is expected that the review and publication processes will be completed in about 2-3 months after submission depending on reviewers' feedback and the editors' final decision. If revisions are requested some changing and corrections then publication time becomes longer. At the end of the review process, accepted papers will be published on the journal's website.

## OPEN ACCESS POLICY



The OJAS is an open access journal which means that all content is freely available without charge to the user or his/her institution. Users are allowed to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of the articles, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without asking prior permission from the publisher or the author. This is in accordance with the BOAI definition of open access.



All articles published in the OJAS are licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Authors hold the copyrights of their own articles by acknowledging that their articles are originally published in the OJAS.

