Research Report

Leiden Model United Nations 2015
~ fresh ideas, new solutions ~

Forum: *European Council*
Issue: *The rising migration flows to Europe*

Position: *President*

Introduction

International migration has been a topic of interest in Europe for decades. However, the issue has strongly arisen recently since immigration towards European nations has reached a climax. There are numerous reasons for these large flows of immigrants, the main reason being war in the migrants' home countries.

Because of its social and economic consequences, international migration has been one of the most debated topics in developed countries. Nowadays, the problem of the lack of sufficient housing and care is on that list as well, since the number of migrants is enormous. There are simply not enough asylums for all refugees. This calls for clear agreements, strict regulation and control, and a strong long term solution.

Definition of Key Terms

Pull factors
The factors that make a country seem a better place or even idyllic in the eyes of the foreigner. These factors are what attract people to migrate to a certain country.

Push factors
The factors that make the home country a (relatively) bad place to live in. These factors make citizens migrate from their home country.

Refugee
A civilian fleeing from danger, such as, for example, violence or a natural disaster. Under international law, refugees who cannot return to their home country due to fear of persecution are entitled to claim protection, or asylum, in the country they fled to.

General Overview

Reasons for migrating

Migration is often instigated by a combination of economic, social and political factors. People migrate because of the situation in their home country in contrast to the situation in the country of destination.[1] Of course, one's decisions in case of emergency can often not be defined very rationally, but the following reasons for migration to a specific country are a great outline for the possible motivations for certain choices migrants make.

The main pull factors are, for example, a stable economy, a lower unemployment rate, a good healthcare system, a strong social security network, high incomes and religious freedom. It is a common misbelief that immigrants are taking all the jobs; many natives in More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs) do not wish to do the jobs that require manual labour. The payment for these jobs in MEDCs is a lot higher than in most countries large groups of citizens emigrate from. That is why immigrants are often happy to take these jobs.

The push factors are strongly related to the pull factors; the income and unemployment rate are relative, for example. However, there are also many pull factors that have nothing to do with the country of destination. Religion, politics and war are the three main reasons for emigrating. One has to take into account that when a citizen is fleeing the country for one of these reasons, and especially for war, their destination and the journey are the least of their concerns.

The journey and the risks

The cause of the rapid surge of immigrants and refugees are the conflicts in the Middle East and northern Africa. Civil wars in Syria and Afghanistan, as well as Somalia, are major drivers of the migration. The only thing that separates these regions from Europe is the Mediterranean Sea. Therefore, many refugees board a boat or a raft that are often not meant to carry the number of refugees that are on it. There is seldom enough food and water on these boats, because the smugglers who own the boats want to transport as many refugees as possible, which means that there is no space left for provisions.

Many refugees pay thousands of dollars each for the journey across the

[1] *The academic literature on migration often suggests that push and pull factors are simple. In fact, migrants make active choices during each step of the journey. Moreover, these studies also take for granted that the migrants end up where they wanted to go.*

Mediterranean. Smugglers take advantage of the desperate position the refugees are in, knowing they want to flee their country no matter what. Many survivors even report violence and abuse from traffickers. Most migrants are well aware of the risks, of which dying at sea due to capsize or lack of water or nutrition is not a small one, however they are willing to take the risk anyway.

More than 2,500 migrants have drowned in the Mediterranean in the period of June to August, whilst trying to reach Greece or Italy. Many attempt to take the Western Balkans route, hoping to reach Germany and other northern EU countries. Most of those heading for Greece take the relatively short overseas route from Turkey to the islands of Kos, Chios, Lesvos and Samos[2].

Asylum

A surge of desperate migrants from the Middle East and Africa has put unprecedented pressure on EU member states, especially Italy, Greece and Hungary. About 340,000 migrants were detected at the EU's borders in the first seven months of 2015 - almost treble the figure for the same period last year. This number does not include the number of people that entered illegally, undetected. This last category makes it difficult to organise help and shelter. More detailed data on the number of migrants is essential.

Nearly 200,000 people came ashore in Greece in the period of January to July this year, while another 110,000 made it to Italy. The largest part of the refugees consists of Syrians, whose nation deals with a severe civil war. There are also many Afghans and Eritreans who migrate because of brutal living conditions and poverty.

After arrival ashore, the immigrants move further inwards. Germany, which receives by far the most asylum applications in the EU, is expecting 800,000 refugees to arrive this year.

The European Union's (EU) Common European Asylum System (CEAS) is intended to ensure that the rights of refugees under international law are protected in EU member states. The system sets out standards and procedures for processing and assessing asylum applications, and for the treatment of both asylum seekers and those who are granted refugee status. Many EU states have yet to properly implement these standards.
A problematic EU regulation is the requirement that each asylum claim is to be

[2] *Take a look at this map:*
http://frontex.europa.eu/trends-and-routes/migratory-routes-map/

processed in the first EU country in which the asylum seeker arrives. Each day, around 200 refugees land on the Greek island Kos, which is unmanageable for Greece only.

In the EU, migrants get asylum status when they can prove to authorities that they are fleeing persecution and would face harm or even death if sent back to their country of origin. These 'war refugees' are to be granted asylum by the authorities as soon as they arrive. Under EU rules, an asylum seeker has the right to food, first aid and shelter in a reception centre. They should get an individual assessment of their needs. If their application is unsuccessful they can appeal against the decision in court.
Asylum seekers are supposed to be granted the right to work within nine months of arrival. However, as a result of the large amount of migrants, the last declaration is likely to be another improbability.

Major Parties Involved

Syria
Due to the current civil war, a predominant number of all refugees is from Syria.

Greece and Italy
Many of the refugees that flee to Europe arrive in either Greece or Italy. This means that these two countries have to cope with a lot of migrants that need to be registered and that need to receive temporary shelter, care and food.

Germany
The largest part of the refugees eventually ends up in Germany. This is because Germany has opened itself to any and all who are in need of help and shelter. Asylum policy and reception vary in importance between countries and this information is used by asylum seekers.

Frontex
Frontex promotes, coordinates and develops European border management in line with the EU fundamental rights charter applying the concept of Integrated Border Management.

Frontex helps border authorities from different EU countries work together. Frontex's full title is the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union. The agency was set up in 2004 to reinforce and streamline cooperation between national border authorities.

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Timeline of Events

1999	Treaty of Amsterdam; visas, asylum, immigration and other policies relating to the free movement of all persons were made.
17 June 2008	A common integration policy for Europe was made.
2 September 2015	A 3-year old boy named Aylan washed up on the shore of Turkey. The news and the picture caused a global uproar.

Possible Solutions

Possible solutions should contain ways to ensure a safe journey for migrants from across the Mediterranean Sea. Additionally, and most importantly, every refugee needs to be given shelter and access to food, drinking water and healthcare. Moreover, the slow and uncontrollable organisation of the refugee system needs to be modernised. Also, more data needs to be collected. Possible resolutions should contain proposals on how to deal with the problem on the long term.

The Common European Asylum System appears unable to handle sudden flows of people from conflicts, such as those in Syria and Iraq. Member states need to establish systems for allowing the rapid resettlement of people displaced by conflict. The EU should establish mutual recognition of asylum claims between countries, to make responsibility sharing easier to put into practice.

Laws that allow migrants to live a normal life during their stay in Europe can encourage self-direction and integration, reducing the need for state support and challenging anti-migrant feeling should be considered as well.

Useful documents

Before the boat – Townsend and Oome

http://frontex.europa.eu/about-frontex/mission-and-tasks/

http://frontex.europa.eu/trends-and-routes/migratory-routes-map/

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Jacob Townsend and Christel Oomen
May 2015
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