

# *The New Europeans*



## AUTHORS

Leonard Björnsson, Soroush Rezai, Keith Henry, Elis Henell, Niklas Milthers, Vilde Jakoby, Timinis Achilleas, Manel Msalmi, Eleni Vasileiou, Chris Hendrickson, Lex Cornelissen, Saara Jokela, Freja Fokdal, Alexander Bjørn Jensen, Danica Vihinen (editor).

**Cover design:** Edgaras Mascinskas

*Published by the European Liberal Forum asbl with the support of LYMEC. Co-funded by the European Parliament. Neither the European Parliament nor the European Liberal Forum asbl are responsible for the content of this publication, or for any use that may be made of it. The views expressed herein are those of the authors alone. These views do not necessarily reflect those of the European Parliament, the European Liberal Forum asbl, or LYMEC.*

© 2017 European Liberal Forum  
First Printing: 2017

ISBN 978-0-244-03538-9

ELF – European Liberal Forum, asbl  
Brussels, Belgium  
[www.liberalforum.eu](http://www.liberalforum.eu)

LYMEC – European Liberal Youth, asbl  
Brussels, Belgium  
[www.lymec.eu](http://www.lymec.eu)

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## Editor's note by Danica Vihinen, LYMEC Secretary General

The essays and articles in this book were initially presented at the ELF and LYMEC workshop “**The New Europeans**” in Athens, Greece on 24–26 February 2017, and the final versions included in this publication draw on the discussions during the event. The authors are members of LYMEC member organisations and individual members, young liberals from different parts of Europe.

The aim of this publication is to look beyond the so-called refugee crisis, and rather focus on the next phase of the migration equation: how to make the people that have come here, these new Europeans, adjust to and feel at home in our countries and make them integrate in our societies. These essays and articles present good practices and liberal ideas for how to take on this challenge, and we hope that it will be useful for decision-makers across our continent.

## Foreword by Dr. Jürgen Martens, ELF President

The refugee crisis that started in 2015 is etched in our collective memory and remains an immensely difficult and complex challenge. While European policymakers are still busy to address the inflow of refugees, a new and possibly far greater challenge looms in the background: the integration of the refugees in our society. How to make these new Europeans citizens part of our communities?

With the support of LYMEC, ELF in February 2017 organised a workshop in Athens on “The New Europeans”. This event brought together young liberals from all over Europe to analyse and discuss the topic. This book is the result of these discussions and brings together the contributions of the participants of the workshop.

The compilation has a distinct place in the wider body of work that ELF has conducted on the topic of integration policy, with publications such as “Challenges of international migration and integration of immigrants” and a more specialised publication on “Integration of the Roma in Central and Southeast Europe”. In this context, the youth perspective is immeasurably important for finding sustainable solutions that can bring new and old Europeans

together. Young people will inhabit the societies that we shape today and it is crucial that their views are taken into account.

On behalf of ELF I would like to thank LYMEC for its support in pushing forward this work. I would also like to thank the authors for their contributions, which I have read with great interest. Only through mutual dialogue can we find the answers to the challenges of our time and I hope that this publication offers a constructive contribution to the discussion.

## Introduction by Sissel Kvist, LYMEC President

### The New Europeans – an Opportunity, not a Threat

In the past years, nothing has been debated, disputed and challenged in our Union more than the refugee crisis and the question of migration in general. It has put our cooperation to a test, showcased how the EU might be a Union of 28 countries founded on the basis of solidarity and cooperation, but when things get really difficult there is a long way from words to action. Member States such as Greece and Italy have been left helpless for far too long, while others like Sweden and Germany have tried their best to cope and make up for the passiveness of the majority of the member states, which have done everything possible to shy away from the challenge, saying “not in our country”.

In LYMEC we already urged politicians to find a solution to the broken, unsustainable Dublin system for years. As tragic and painful it has been to see the lack of actions in the past years, and how some member states agree to one thing during council meetings, and then do and say the opposite on their national scene, we hope that we have finally reached a turning point. However, the question of redistribution is not the only challenge facing Europe. It is only the

beginning. The next challenge is the question of how we treat the refugees coming to Europe? Are they here to stay, or only here until their home country is stable enough to return? When will this be? No one holds the answer to these questions. No one knows when countries like Syria and Afghanistan will be peaceful. Thus, for LYMEC, the answer is relative simply. As the title of this book suggests, we firmly believe that we have to treat refugees as new Europeans. The European Union as a whole and the individual member states must be looking for long term solutions to successful integration. There cannot be any discussion on this. We need to welcome them, and see them as an opportunity not a threat. We have to rethink how integration is done, to avoid repeating mistakes made in the past. As one of the authors, Elis Henell writes "*The only way for integration to work is finding a way that both society and the individual would benefit from*".

This book contains a series of essays on the topic of integration, immigration, with spot on observations as the one above. It has been a pleasure to see how young liberals from all over Europe dare to think big and creative, while still managing to come up with hands on proposals and tools, of which many could be adopted and implemented today.

LYMEC, with the continued help and support from the European Liberal Forum, has with this book been able to create a platform that allows for young people to

think and bring forward their ideas in a more in-depth way than a fast evolving, “breaking news” focused society usually allows. Instead of 140 characters in a tweet, we have in depth analysis supported by facts, not the fear that is often surrounding the integration debate. I hope you will enjoy the book, whether you are a policy maker, a professional within the field or “just” a European citizen, and find suggestions to how you can help making sure that the new Europeans are successfully integrate

# **A New Culture**

Leonard Björnsson

Never before in modern time has Europe faced such a complex issue as today's immigration. In the latest years millions of new immigrants from places such as Africa and the Middle East have tried or entered Europe. Because of the vast number of immigrants now being in and trying to enter Europe, there has been a lot of focus surrounding the most effective way of integration. Common factors in the process of integrating new immigrants is for example, to make sure they have roof over their head and have a steady income. But the top and most difficult priority of integration is to make immigrants a part of a different country, which is more complicated because it's not just an economical aspect but a cultural one. And the cultural differences between Europeans and Immigrants, is a contributing factor to the complicated problem of integration which Europe faces today. Therefore it's beneficial for Europeans to try and

understand how big of an impact the cultural dynamic has on society. This essay is written to further understand people's view on culture and how culture is a keen factor in integration.

To begin the oldest theory regarding integration is called "Assimilation Theory" in which one minority group melts in with the majority group with the dominating culture. According to sociologist **Gordon M.M (1964)** there are seven different stages in assimilation but ultimately a complete assimilation can only be possible if people of the dominating culture accepts the immigrants. As proof professors such as **Chiswick (1970)** makes a historical argument with the European immigrants immigrating to the US in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Today Americans with a Europeans background are now fully associated with the dominating American culture.

But the problem with today's integration is that many immigrants don't tend to discourage their own cultural identity such as the Europeans who integrated in US. Consequently, it creates a difference between cultures,

which is called “oppositional identity”. Therefore, many Europeans today struggle to find any similarity with the immigrants coming to Europe, in addition do not feel an obligation to help them. Instead far-right parties have been pushing the possibility of a polarized society in which cultures divide cultural groups and that an assimilation of immigrants is a must for a united society. Therefore the “assimilation theory” describes that the only options for immigrants is either to give up their own cultural identity or create a difference between cultures, which creates a polarization.

However, the theory of having a wide range of cultures could also be looked upon as a positive aspect. A theory called “Multiculturalism” denies the assimilation to be a necessary component for an integrated society. Instead thinks there could be a society which has a Wide range of cultures. Sociologists **Glazer and Moynihan (1975)** believe that we can live in a society where the cultures of all peoples are protected, and that immigrants create their own identity rather than

becoming part of their own culture, when faced with the threat of being assimilated. Here scientist like **Handlin (1973)** have been regarding modern America as a prime example of a multicultural society in which immigrants form their own identity, rather than fully assimilate to the dominating culture. Even if there is a dominating culture in America a lot of other people's cultural identity are accepted. People who are pro-immigration argue that multicultural is better for society, because they think immigrants bring new positive ideas which benefits the society. For example, a vast amount of people from Syria are well educated, which a society always has a demand for. Another argument would be that citizens of a society can learn and experience new values from a multicultural society. For example, there are different interpretations of god in different religions which widens the citizens' perspective.

Nevertheless, neither theories focus on a cultures values and effect on integration. Today Europe is strong advocator for humanitarian values and is

working actively to cherish for example human rights which does not only have an effect on European culture. With the ongoing globalization sociologists like **Robertson (1992)** argue that culture also has become globalized. For example, most European countries today teach a second language than their native one. Due to the IT revolution and accessibility to travel, cultural values are now more widespread throughout the world and therefore some values are universal. According to Social psychologist **Schwartz (2012)** there are some values that are recognizable throughout the dominating cultures which has made them universal, for example “The universal declaration of human rights”.

Therefore, a factor to why immigrants are trying to enter Europe because they believe in some of the same values as Europeans and admire Europe’s humanitarian values. Most of the immigrants who are trying to enter Europe come from dictatorial countries, which according to NGOs such as **human right watch** have been in deep violation of “the universal

declaration of human rights". Due to shared values, the European culture has a lot in common with the immigrants' culture. By realising this, the thought of shared values could benefit the integration, as many Europeans today separate between their own culture and the immigrants' culture without realising that some cultural values are universal.

In conclusion, the complexity of integration is well known and the cultural aspect has been regarded as a big problem. The two theories of integration have been used as guidelines for what Europe should do to make integration more successful and what the consequences would be if no action is taken. But cultures have always been changing and adapting to new times. The new globalization makes values in different cultures more universal and makes culture more connected. Therefore, the way Europeans find common ground with immigrants does not have to be through cultural similarity for example language, ethnicity or heritage but in the values of humanity that the cultures share. Europeans often distinguish

themselves from the immigrant's culture rather than try to find similar values they share. The humanitarian values have been adopted by many more cultures than the European culture and a successful integration comes from shared values that grows within all cultures, and makes members of a society combined and well-integrated into a new society.

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# **The Next Step: a Report on Integration and its Challenges**

Soroush Rezai

## **Abstract**

The European Union faced an influx of refugees from the Middle East and Africa during 2015 which has led to one of the most critical situations the union has ever been through. People mainly leave their homes in Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq - but we also saw migration waves from countries in Europe as well as Africa.<sup>1</sup> Since the beginning of the crisis several countries of the European Union have had to further their efforts when it comes to people migrating and having them integrate into their societies. In 2015 Germany took on about 500,000 asylum claims, Sweden and Hungary took on about 100,000 each and many other countries - including France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Austria and Italy - all took on numbers in the thousands as

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<sup>1</sup> Eurostat via BBC (<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911>)

well.<sup>2</sup> Following the routes that these refugees are forced to take, several thousands of them have died on their way to Europe<sup>3</sup>, but as of 2017 more than one million refugees have arrived in Europe and are now waiting for their asylum grants, mainly in Germany and Sweden. The question is: what is the next step the European Union has to take?

### **Background**

If one wants to take on the challenge that is integration, one has to understand that different countries of the European Union define the word integration in different ways. What Sweden and Germany might find as obvious, Poland and Hungary might find unthinkable. According to the International Organisation for Migration, an agency within the United Nations, the word integration can be defined as "the process of mutual adaptation between host

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

society and migrant.”<sup>4</sup> What this means is that there is a sense of obligation for a pre-determined set of values which will put the migrants and their host communities at a mutual understanding. This, however, is one of the problems: different countries interpret the definition in various ways.

The other big challenge, which is underlined by the International Organisation for Migration, is that it is hard to create an effective integration policy which will intersect with other major political areas, for example the labour-market, education and the protection of the migrants’ human rights.<sup>5</sup> This issue is the one policy makers, such as ourselves, have to focus on to make the integration process as smooth and equal as possible - but before we start making decisions, there has to be a mutual understanding between the countries of the European Union, and policy makers across the

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<sup>4</sup> International Organisation for Migration  
(<http://www.iom.int/migrant-integration>)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

continent have to realise that the integration process will intertwine with other political areas.

## **Discussion**

Giving someone a chance at a job will give that person a sense of security and a feeling of control over one's life. This is a crucial part of the integration process that must be dealt with. Currently, European countries make poor attempts to assess migrants and their abilities which often result in wasted experience. On top of that, the labour-markets are hard to get in to which will make it even harder for someone that is a new citizen of a country to find a job. Programmes with the goal of assessing the abilities of refugees should be available while giving the new citizens a way to learn the language - getting an opportunity to work will 1) give the refugee a sense of purpose and 2) make it easier to learn the language.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> "Integrating Refugees Into Host Country Labor Markets: Challenges And Policy Options" by Maria Vincenza Desiderio

Furthermore, the labour-markets have to be reformed so that it will be easier to find a job for those with a lesser education. In Sweden, Karl Petter Thorwaldsson, the leading figure of the biggest workers union of the country LO, said that when the temporary asylum laws of Sweden end he wants to see more "regulated" immigration laws. Thorwaldsson says that "... it is true that we have economic growth and that many jobs are being created" but at the same time he says that "... hundreds of thousands of people don't have a job to go to".<sup>7</sup> While this is happening the former chief economist at the same union, Dan Andersson, says "... it is the Swedish union agreements that press up the salaries, compared to countries with less regulation on their labour-markets, that lead to less employment for those with lesser education."<sup>8</sup> This shows that there is an immediate conflict between the unions of a country and the immigration to that

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<sup>7</sup> Aftonbladet  
(<http://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/samhalle/a/WMAIj/los-nya-besked-om-flyktingpolitiken>)

<sup>8</sup> Aftonbladet  
(<http://www.aftonbladet.se/debatt/article22591406.ab>)

same country because of two simple reasons: the unions exist to stop salaries from being lowered and conditions being worsened, which means that the unions essentially stop lesser educated migrants from entering the labour-market.<sup>9</sup> This is something that has to stop - an immediate reform of labour-markets in countries that give unions too much influence is necessary if we want an easy option to integrate people made available to us.

The final challenge I think we have to overcome is the short-sightedness of humans. Integration is a long and hard process, especially for those least educated. It will take time and it will take effort - and if it is going to happen while the public opinion of migrants is as low as it is today, it will be even harder. The public opinion has to be changed and facts have to be shared. For one, American economists generally agree that

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

immigration to the U.S. lead to positive effects on their economy<sup>10</sup> and this is as true for Europe as it is the U.S.

To summarise this report, I think that there are three key steps the European Union has to take: 1) realise the importance of creating jobs, 2) change the public opinion for the better and 3) understand that it will take time and effort - but that it will be worth it in the end.

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<sup>10</sup> "The Effects Of Immigration On The United States' Economy"  
(<http://www.budgetmodel.wharton.upenn.edu/issues/2016/1/27/the-effects-of-immigration-on-the-united-states-economy>)

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# **Ideas on Integration and Inclusion**

Keith Henry

Since 2015 the numbers seeking asylum within the EU has dramatically increased due to numerous factors with unrest in the Middle East and Northern Africa being the largest contributing factor. We live in an age where people are moving around the globe at a never seen before pace and the number of displaced people is at its highest (UNCHR, 2015).

While the conflict in Syria occupies much of the European media spotlight, in the past number of years unrest in South Sudan, Yemen, Burundi, and Central African Republic have contributed to the number of people arriving at the European borders. The conflicts which commenced several decades ago in Afghanistan and Somalia and resulting outpouring of refugees are still not yet resolved. Europe is struggling to find a solution to dealing with the over one million refugees that have arrived since 2015 but the reality is that this is a small portion in comparison to the numbers

accommodated in less developed regions (86% of all refugees according to the UNCHR Report).

The attacks on Europe by Muslim extremists in recent years have brought some to question whether assistance should be given to such a large influx of people. However, at a time when nationalism and euro scepticism is on the rise in many regions, a cohesive plan that gets the backing of all Europeans is needed in order to prevent upheaval and racial tensions developing further.

This paper will examine how member states can integrate and include these refugees into their society. It will examine it looking at three areas; housing provision, learning of new languages and sport. It will reference examples of good and bad practices that the author knows from an Irish perspective in an attempt to share the good ideas and learn from the poor ones.

### **Housing Provision**

Irrespective of the number of refugees a country offers/is allocated to take, states must provide

somewhere to house them. The variance in how states operate their asylum/refugee processes leads to a patchwork of different outcomes across the Union. Some of the refugees are housed in Direct Provision centres, or reception centres. This patchwork is evidenced in the difference from the OECD report of 21 EU states which found that;

- Thirteen states have a deliberate dispersal policy for asylum seekers.
- Sixteen provide for or allow asylum seekers to stay in individually arranged housing (in 4 of them this, however, goes along with a loss of financial assistance and 5 countries attach conditions).
- Nine provide assigned housing for beneficiaries of international protection in a specific region or municipality after recognition of their status  
(OECD – Making Integration Work, 2015)

Generally, these provide basic services to the large number of occupants. These centres often become a holding or waiting area for the state while they process applications for permission to remain within the state which can run into several years (Irish Refugee Council).

The new Europeans should not be accommodated in such centres for excessive periods of time if it is serious about integrating them into society. Direct Provision centres such as those mentioned above can often lead to stigmatisation and tension within the immediate surrounding community. It can cause the refugees to live in a ghetto like community where they may not mix with locals socially or culturally and instead commune with their fellow refugees.

The new Europeans should ideally be accommodated within the local community setting. Most communities are compassionate to their plight and want to assist them. However, if they are flooded with large numbers and do not have the proper resources to deal with

these people then they will feel as if they are being burdened and bad sentiments can arise.

On the other hand, these people should not be left isolated within a community on their own. While integrating them into the local society is the ultimate aim, respect for their culture should also prevail and leaving one family alone in a large local community may present problems also.

Therefore, housing authorities should ensure that the new Europeans are accommodated in an equally dispersed manner in which the local community is able to cope and welcome the migrants but does not feel under threat from them due to unequal distribution. No more should the people of a particular city or town be able to point to a map and say that is where the immigrants live. They should be immersed and part of the community.

### **Learning of new Languages**

The new Europeans bring with them a host of different cultures and languages. In order to fully integrate these

people, member states should set about teaching them the host nation's language as soon as is practicable. In the UK, politicians of all persuasions have said that speaking English was "the key to full participation in our society and economy" (BBC, January 2017). Indeed, I believe that this is a sentiment that most migrants themselves would agree with as most countries will require a standard of linguistic competency before issuing employment permits or other official permissions. Member states are putting in resources to the education of the migrants and their children. However, they must ensure that these resources are enough to cope with the demand for them.

For migrants socially integrating with the local community by being able to speak the local language is of obvious and huge benefit to them. It is essential in order to break down any barriers in the host community.

## **Sport**

Recreational and sporting activities are not only healthy medically but socially. Throughout the history of sport there are countless instances of migrants becoming national and international heroes thus advancing the relationships in their host communities. The new migrants should be encouraged to get involved in sports clubs. The “Show Racism the Red Card” campaign which is run in the UK and Ireland aims to prevent fans from engaging in racist behaviour. The reality in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is that most professional Soccer teams will contain team members from other nations, many who may be the first-generation citizens of their home countries.

The International Olympic Committee in 2016 recognised the refugee crisis across the globe and allowed refugees compete at the Rio Olympics. Thomas Bach, the IOC president said:

*“Having no national team to belong to, having no flag to march behind, having no national anthem to be played,*

*these refugee athletes will be welcomed to the Olympic Games with the Olympic flag and with the Olympic anthem” (Guardian, 2015).*

Sport in the main has the capability to unite people irrespective of religion, skin colour or nationality and offers a great opportunity to integrate our new Europeans. Funding should be made available to sports clubs in areas where the migrants will be sent so that they can cater for their new members.

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## **Let us calm down for a moment: a focus on humanity and honesty**

Elis Henell

The concept of immigration is nothing new to Europe. Europeans have themselves been moving away from the continent for centuries in search of a more prosperous future. Europeans have also brutally colonized the world and have thus both directly and indirectly caused massive flows of migration around the globe. Xenophobia is also not a new phenomenon in Europe. Nationalism, fascism and racism have flooded Europe more or less in constant waves since antique times. But we do not learn from history. We have yet again entered a period of time where Europeans feel threatened, by fascism on one side and terrorism on the other.

Neither of these fears is groundless. Radical interpretation of religion, no matter which one, should never be allowed to threaten law and order. But the

strikes of radical Islam in Europe do not correlate with refugees fleeing the terror of radical Islamic groups.

What Europe needs is a voice of reason, a voice that dares to take on the difficulties of integration while still not turning their back on people in need of help.

Even though the fears that fuel xenophobia in Europe are in many ways exaggerated, the reasons behind this upswing cannot be ridiculed away. In order to neutralize this movement, we need to acknowledge the actual issues behind the fears and worries of people, get to the roots of the issue. It is not the people that escape war or persecution; it is not people of different colour or background. What people fear is instability and insecurity in society, uncertainty and the loss of control of what happens in your own surroundings. And with every attack on Europe, somebody takes the chance to connect problems that are not related and by doing so purposefully they simplify questions only to gain some cheap points in support of their agenda.

We cannot let the fear of terror cloud our vision while people are escaping war, only to die on our backyard.

But we do not extinguish the hateful right-wing fire in Europe by ignoring the possible issues we might face in this new situation.

Radicalization is a growing threat to Europe, no matter which ideology this happens under. Small, loud groups have gathered on the barricades while the confused mass is left standing in between.

The fear of Islamic terror has awakened an old foe to European security: nationalist extremism. This in turn has strengthened an antipole to the right that ignore many clear issues in the name of tolerance. Both end up oversimplifying the overall situation. As a result, those in need get marginalized in the debate and the real threats to European security and rule of law are ignored. We have way too many marginalized men searching for a place in society, who find their purpose in life in radical preaching on the internet. This has in way too many cases ended up with bloodshed.

We cannot deny that terror is present in Europe today. Some may say that we statistically live in a safer Europe

than during e.g. the 1970's. But terror is not about statistics on how many have been killed or who is behind it. It is a mind-set; a mind-set of fear that closes people and creates a community crackled by distrust. This fear does not listen to reason. The question is: how do we get a Europe that is both sceptical and scared to calm down, and the many new Europeans to feel welcomed to work for a better Europe?

I believe that Europe needs a more humanistic approach to the refugees coming to Europe. After all it is only a question of humans meeting, and eventually working together for a mutual cause.

Integration is without a doubt a complex social issue. The only way for integration to work is finding a way that both society and the individual would benefit from. Society needs to see the worth of the newcomers while the newcomers get a possibility of being useful for society. I believe that liberal values will give us a good start in this process. I would welcome every single person that is ready to help building a better society to live next to me. What we have to offer is a

community free from persecution and war, and a chance for progress. We should offer a place in society, based upon secular values, personal freedom and the rule of law. What nobody gains from is a free meal offered by the state. Different cultural backgrounds cannot and should not be erased; integration does not mean total assimilation. But multiculturalism should not mean cultural segregation without interaction.

The basic steps of an integration process should therefore include: cultural exchange, human interaction, and an open discussion climate; a chance to work for the community and a presumption that everyone who wants to take this chance is welcomed. Way too often integration stumbles on these crucial first steps and causes the whole process to fall face first into the ground, leaving all involved parts unhappy. Integration is interaction, not statistics and paperwork.

What many of the societies that face the struggle of welcoming new members should do, before even beginning to stroll down the two-way road of integration is make a clean table. A chance for

everybody to openly share their thoughts on the situation ahead, their fears and their worries, their hopes and wishes, together. A medium where possible challenges in integration could be neutralized before letting the nature of the social dialogue get inflamed.

This might sound, and even be, utopian and naive, at least on a larger scale. Activating society in to an open dialogue about possible future issues is more than challenging. Keeping that dialogue on track and in a positive and constructive spirit is like juggling all the members of society in the air and hoping that none of them clash mid-air or fall to the ground.

The size of the community makes a big difference when it comes to attitudes towards newcomers. Small societies tend to be stronger collectives and big cities more individualistic. Both have pros or and cons. A city with a long tradition of cultural diversity might not react to newcomers in the same way as a traditionally homogeneous town. These community members are used to seeing a wide spectrum of humanity in the streets, while even one person of a “strange”

background will cause a stir in a society that is not used to cultural diversity. A collective rejection of the newcomer can make the integration into the community close to impossible. Then again, if the newcomer is welcomed to the collectivistic town, they might have a stronger motivation to prove themselves worthy.

During the last years I have followed the public opinion and steps of the integration process of several communities in different parts of Finland. A living proof of what a welcoming community can succeed in is Nagu, a group of islands in the archipelago in South-West Finland. They have a year-around population of barely 1500 people. Still, one year after receiving 150 refugees they have reached a world class integration. The main reason for this is not size, many towns of similar size have instead of success stories been noticed in media because of violent attacks against refugee centres. They reason behind the “Nagu-effect” is the humanistic approach and mutual benefit of migration. It took no more than a warm welcome and a

presumption that these people want to help turning the negative trends in their town.

Nagu is one of many small and remote communities that have for many years struggled with a decreasing and ageing population. This has meant severe cuts in service in the villages and the welfare of the people. The refugee crisis has, in the communities that have taken their chance, offered a solution to this crisis of their own. For Nagu it has been a win-win situation.

The migration flow to Europe is a question of people fleeing persecution and war, people seeking a better future and people being worried about their future. It is a human crisis caused by humans and it can only be solved with human cooperation. It might be too late to start from a clean table, but let us at least do our best to turn this situation into a win-win one. Putting the human in focus, both the new Europeans and those already settled, is central in this process. Putting humans against each other is destructive. Instead of ignoring the worries and fears of people, issues should

be openly tackled while keeping the public discussion on track.

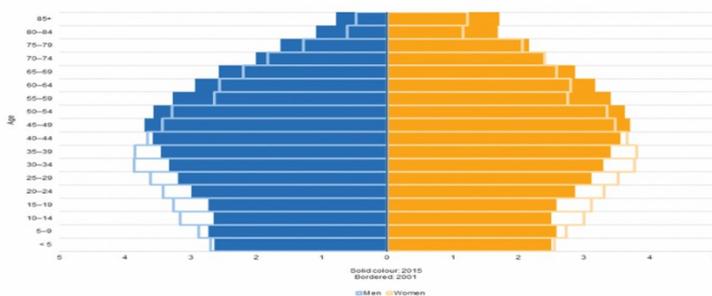
It is a challenging time that we live in, but by taking a step back, keeping calm and focusing on the separate issues we face, we will overcome and face the next challenges as an even stronger union of people.

## **Refugees can be a valuable resource in an ageing Europe**

Niklas Milthers

The past decade, the European Union has been faced with one problem after the other and many of them remain unresolved. The financial crisis has left Europe in a desperate grasp for growth. In the meantime, thousands of young people across Europe stand helpless in search for a job waiting to start living the European dream. Brexit has created cracks in the very foundation of the European Union and thrown it into an identity crisis. Questions are being asked about what direction the collaboration of European nations should now be steered in. In the meantime, thousands upon thousands of refugees, be they economical or from a war-torn country, have fled to Europe in hope for a better future, which is stress testing the European Union even further. There are no easy solutions to these challenges.

At first hand, the demographic transition that Europe is experiencing should speak in favour of bringing immigrants into the European Union to increase the workforce. As the baby boom generation reaches the retirement-age, costs of pensions and healthcare will grow larger than the revenues from social insurance and labour-taxation. Simply put, fewer shoulders will have to carry a heavier burden. When left unchecked, this situation could potentially have disastrous consequences for the welfare states of Europe. If the traditional welfare states are to survive, government bureaucracies are going to have to become more efficient. In other words, Europeans are currently not able to reproduce themselves on a sustainable level.



(\*) Break in series. 2015: provisional estimate.  
Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo\_agegroup)

On a global scale, more than 65 million people are forcibly displaced as a result of violent conflicts, lack of opportunities and natural disasters<sup>11</sup>. With the large amounts of refugees looking for a prosperous future in Europe, they can become part of the solution to the problem of the dwindling number of Europeans. Although it is not as simple as it may sound.

With 65 million global refugees, not all of them can be relocated to Europe. This burden is by far too large and it is not sustainable if the goal is proper integration. Proper integration is for them to participate in the labour force and thus be part of society. Up until now, integration of people with various backgrounds has not been entirely successful with the approaches taken so far by European nations. This can have several causes.

To quote the owner of the company I work for, Enan Galaly, who is an immigrant from Egypt, he would never have achieved, what he has, had the Danish

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<sup>11</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/refugee-crisis\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/refugee-crisis_en)

welfare state in the 70's been as generous as it is in contemporary Denmark. He would not have been as inclined to reshape his future, if it had not been required of him to actively work on improving his own situation instead of living of welfare benefits.

Refugees are humans and not just facts and figures on a sheet of paper. If they are not properly welcomed but kept in temporary housing for far too long, it can have psychological consequences<sup>12</sup>. Not having a job to wake up to and something meaningful to help make the days go by would take the best out of us all. It is imperative that their esteem is nurtured – such as asking where they come from, what they are good at and so on. Basically, making them feel that they matter to the society they now live in. The integration debate will have to be angled in such a way that it will make the “new Europeans” feel more welcome. Doing so will make them feel valuable, which in return will make

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<sup>12</sup> OECD (2016). Making Integration work – Refugees and others in need of protection.

them feel useful – and not feeling like the burden some politicians and medias are trying to portray.

EU has about 1 million dislocated refugees who are actively seeking or has already acquired asylum. With these new Europeans, we have no other solution than to figure out how to integrate them in order for them to form a valued part of our societies.

A lesson that can be learned from Justin Trudeau and his government is to openly welcome the refugees to promote warm welcome by the “old Europeans<sup>13</sup>. This will at the same time send a positive signal to the population of the country. If the population at large is against the refugees, in a long-term perspective it can create conflicts for the integration, e.g. having employers not employing refugees.

The OECD has recently published a report, which in 10 bullet points promotes how integration can be successful. It is a very interesting read and largely

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<sup>13</sup><http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2015/12/566ad0029/syrian-refugees-receive-warm-welcome-canada.html>

supported by the author of this paper. It is imperative to provide integration services as quickly as possible<sup>14</sup>. As mentioned earlier, time spent waiting around is damaging for a human being. This is why a short and quick asylum application is necessary while at the same time providing services to those refugees who seem most apt to stay. Proper integration is best achieved while attending school or having a job where they can have daily interaction with locals in the host country. Secondly, a screening is necessary in order to figure out what qualifications they have achieved in their native country and which can be used directly or built upon in the new country. With this tool, they can take up residence in areas where there is a demand for their specific skills. It makes no sense to place refugees in an area with the least chance of finding a job, which is also the second point of the OECD report<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> OECD (2016). Making Integration work – Refugees and others in need of protection. P. 13-17

<sup>15</sup> OECD (2016). Making Integration work – Refugees and others in need of protection. p. 18-21

Most of the advisory bullet points from the OECD report are all somewhat interrelated and derivate from the first two bullet points. All Europeans are different in each their own way and the same is true for the refugees. Therefore, a one size fits all strategy is a wrongful approach. Instead, a screening of the individual to understand the persons' qualifications and possible lack thereof is an important step to take for a proper integration to be able to take place. Refugees with degrees have very different requirements from those without. In Denmark, the official induction program is one of three years providing language training, with the possibility of a two-year extension for literacy challenged refugees<sup>16</sup>.

When it comes to foreign qualifications and work experience, it is necessary to find ways in order to make them count in the receiving country. If we do not make them count, it will make it harder for the refugees to enter the work force. Many refugees have

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<sup>16</sup> OECD (2016). Making Integration work – Refugees and others in need of protection.

fled their homes without the possibility of bringing along important documents proving their work qualifications or degrees; assessments which could otherwise have come in handy when landing jobs or providing for oneself in a new culture. A level of trust into the statements from the refugees is also important in order to procure new documents that can prove their skills. If they are employed and their work skills do not correlate with what information they give, their new employer will terminate their employment. Knowing this can be a proper reason to not lie about one's abilities – especially if proper help is put at their disposal beforehand.

One of the reasons why Canada has had a good head start at proper integration is the involvement of the civic society and the support of the government<sup>17</sup>. The involvement of the civic society is a factor that the OECD report stresses as being imperative.

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/justin-trudeau-cries-syrian-refugee-reunion-canada-pm-video-watch-a7460166.html>

The last bullet point from the OECD report is that European member states have to accept that integration takes time. Coming from a Middle Eastern country and having grown up with other norms and traditions than the European ones, it does take time to adjust and integrate properly. In a short-term perspective, it will be costly, but the faster the refugees learn the local language and are employed, the faster they will turn from being a burden to society into a resource. For the sake of our welfare states, it is important that the necessary time be taken to integrate the refugees, although we should not be afraid to put forward basic demands.

Another problem to keep in mind where the refugees can also be a part of the solution is the massive brain drain a number of eastern EU-member states have experienced over the past decades. Right now, they are not keen on accepting any of the refugees although they are well aware of the losses they suffer when their young generations move to the west, e.g. resulting in a slowing of their growth. Refugees, if properly screened

and retrained, can help counter the effects of the brain drain<sup>18</sup>.

The OECD's report on how to properly integrate people is considered a very relevant source on how to achieve successful integration. It is the author's opinion that a strong sense of goodwill is needed from the government, government officials and local officials. Without this goodwill, the refugees will feel alienated from society and may therefore be more inclined to live closely together with other of a similar background to their own and stick together instead of interacting with the local population. Keeping in mind the growing problem with the disparity between those leaving the labour force and those entering it, seeing refugees as a resource instead of a problem can on a long-term basis counter the effects of the demographic challenges. If only state leaders in Europe would send the same vibrant and positive energy as Justin Trudeau, we would already be one step closer to

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.wsj.com/articles/emigration-has-slowed-growth-in-central-eastern-europe-says-imf-1462521601>

proper integration. In the end, we are dealing with humans who are no different than you and I – they just happened to be forced to leave their native country.

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## **New Norwegians - a burden or an opportunity?**

Vilde Jakoby

The fall of 2015 was the start of what most Norwegians and Europeans like to refer to as the «refugee crisis». I have never studied politics, but I will write about this as seen through a teenager's eyes, witnessing how his sudden influx of people in need has sparked a debate on integration, cultural differences and the future of the Norwegian welfare state. Some of the biggest concerns we are facing are how to make refugees accustomed to the Norwegian culture and learn the language and how to avoid anyone ending up on the outskirts of society, while simultaneously still taking care of Norwegian citizens.

In 2015 8800 people were granted a permit to stay in Norway. It is within reason to believe that these people will stay in Norway and make it their new home, thus the debate needs to be on how to help these people to become integrated in the Norwegian society. It is my

opinion that Norway should treat refugees as our own people and help them in achieving their dreams of better lives.

One of the most discussed issues is how to integrate refugees in the Norwegian culture. Some people seem to think that successful integration equals assimilation, but these do not necessarily mean the same thing. As I see it, being fully integrated in a society does not mean leaving all your values and culture behind. Integration in my eyes is the process of learning to adapt and partake in the society you're currently living in. In the Norwegian society, this means accepting what the leader of our mother party Venstre (the liberals of Norway) refers to as the contract we have with our society. Whilst only being an imaginary contract, it means accepting our working culture (everyone who can work, should work), learning our language and to try to help improve our society to the best of your ability.

To help refugees – or as one might also call them: the new Norwegians – in understanding and accepting our contract with society, there are some measures that need to be taken. Firstly, we need to make sure that no one is left waiting in a reception center for years to start their new lives. This means starting language training, getting basic knowledge of the Norwegian society and the issuing of work permits as soon as possible as these are all seen as key factors to integrating immigrants. Having basic knowledge helps to participate in society and thus getting a job. Having a job means that you have to get out of your house and also helps in gaining Norwegian friends and a network of people.

An example of starting integration early on is my home municipality Hvaler Kommune, which tried out a new way of integrating minors that had applied for asylum. The method used is often seen as controversial, but in my experience, it worked. In the school years from grade 8-10 the asylum seekers were placed in both a

school group for all the asylum seekers, where they had time set aside in the schedule for learning Norwegian at a more basic level, basic knowledge of the Norwegian society and help to fill in gaps in their knowledge from previous schooling, but also in a regular school group with ordinary teaching. With this model, the asylum seekers were participating in the social life of the class, while also being offered lessons tailored to their prior knowledge. In my class, all of these students passed both in subject Norwegian and other subjects being examined in Norwegian. This means that if they are granted permanent stay permits they already have the basic knowledge needed to participate in the Norwegian society and even if they don't, they still have the knowledge and this learning experience with them in their future life.

Economically Norway should be able to tackle the burden of immigration. According to [worldatlas.com](http://worldatlas.com), Norway was the 7th richest country in the world in 2016, with a GDP of \$64,856. This means that as of

today money should be no hinder in welcoming people in need, but it is often emphasized as something that could be a problem in the future. Norway is a welfare state. This means that we through paying taxes and using a small percentage of oil money each year have access to free healthcare, free schools, free higher education, paid maternity leave and paid sick-leave, amongst other social benefits. A fear people have is that the Norwegian welfare state will not be able to uphold today's high standards in the future. This will probably become a reality eventually. On the other hand, one of the main reasons why Norway will have problems keeping up the standards is the changed proportions between the amount of tax payers and the amount of people receiving benefits, among these the elderly receiving pensions. On the contrary, immigration, especially of younger people, can be seen as a solution to this problem, as these can provide workforce and as a result pay taxes.

Although there are issues concerning cultural differences, we should be able to look beyond this and realize that we are dealing with real people and not just numbers from the newspapers. People coming here should be able to feel safe in their new home. Norway or another country in Europe may never feel like home, but it is important to make sure that immigrants get integrated in society, learn the language, learn the cultural code and get a job. These are all important for maintaining the Norwegian welfare state and making sure that Norway stays the same warm and free country it has always been to me.

In conclusion, I would say that the Norwegian term «der det er hjerterom, er det husrom», roughly translated to «if there is place in your heart, there is place in your house», could be used as a guideline. If we apply this to our society this means that if we welcome refugees with an open mind and with kindness, there will also be a place for them in society.

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# **Challenges of the asylum system and integration through education**

Timinis Achilleas

What is being done in Europe in terms of management of the ongoing refugee crisis? This is a very popular question on European and global level lately. Whoever seeks to find an answer to that question though ends up confused by the plethora of actors involved, the actions having been implemented or those currently in progress. It is certain that Europe is highly activated towards the assistance to asylum seekers and refugees. However, the vast number of measures and actions adopted did not produce the desired outcome in Europe. Many problems still exist and this paper will seek to address the main challenges whilst also propose some possible solutions. On a second note, ways to integrate the refugees within the European societies will be scoped.

As mentioned above, there are an outrageous number of actions taken towards the relief of the refugees. The

quantity of the actions, however, does not come together with the quality of the services provided. Lack of coordination is the first and foremost challenge of the current refugee crisis and it begins from the existence of so many different actors offering more or less the same services. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) possesses the primary position on the field. It has funded many programs, it plays the role of the coordinator and it holds enormous networks around the world. However, when it comes to region-specific plans their expertise might be lacking and delaying the procedures. The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) holds a consultant role with EASO experts dispatched around the reception facilities, borders and the asylum services of the Member States. It is also entitled to conduct training sessions for staff members of Asylum Services in the EU. Additional to those actors are the asylum services around Europe and the inconceivable number of NGOs activated. Consequently, different actors carry out the monitoring of reception facilities

while different actors offer food and shelter and different ones carry out the asylum applications; there is often a lack of coordination and a lack of clarity as to who holds ultimate responsibility.

Another essential challenge causing serious trouble to the asylum procedures is the lack of a common European Asylum System playing the significant role of the regulator. In fact, the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) exists as an idea since the late 1990s, it has been ratified and amended several times but it has never been put into practice due to disagreements among the Member States. Since there is no common ground for its establishment, all the asylum application procedures are being conducted on national level. Each Member State depends on its own legislation in order to carry out the asylum cases, although there are also some European directives and regulations (e.g. Dublin Regulation) applied.

The diversion of the legislative procedures along with the different, in type and size, domestic bureaucracy results to different paces of asylum procedures.

Turning to the essence of the asylum applications and the alternatives offered for refugees in Europe, a major challenge exists towards the future of some regulations and agreements. Programs such as Relocation and the transfers according to Dublin Regulation seem very problematic. Moreover, international agreements such as the Geneva Convention (best known as the Convention for Refugees) should be updated and the EU-Turkey Statement should be secured as it stands on very thin ice. As Gerald Knaus, the architect of the EU-Turkey Statement stated: “I think so far this has been going rather well. The future of the Geneva Convention and the future of liberal Europe will be decided by the way EU responds to this crisis, in Greece”<sup>19</sup>.

Relocation, a plan aiming to relieve Greece and Italy from massive refugee populations, has been proven quite unsuccessful. Indicatively, the program should have seen 66,400 refugees in Greece relocated across

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<sup>19</sup> <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/09/09/can-this-man-save-the-europe-turkey-migrant-deal-gerald-knaus-esi-refugees/>

the EU over two years from 16 September 2015, but to date just over 8,000<sup>20</sup> people have been resettled, meaning that almost 15% of the initial goal has been fulfilled. The failure of the relocation plan is a result of the reluctance of some Member States to accept refugees within their territory. For instance, countries of the Visegrad Group (Hungary, Poland, Czechia and Slovakia) refuse to resettle refugees, which leads to a different but very important challenge, the issue of political will and belief. Right wing leaders or mainstream conservative politicians are unwilling to offer assistance to refugees. A rather strict solution to that problem would be the imposition of sanctions to Member States who do not accept the number of refugees, proportionate to their domestic population. But this demands the creation of a common Asylum System, able to set the legal basis and the criteria to

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<sup>20</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/press-material/docs/state\\_of\\_play\\_-\\_relocation\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/press-material/docs/state_of_play_-_relocation_en.pdf)

host refugees and impose the aforementioned sanctions when necessary.

A notwithstanding element is also the matter of cultural diversity. EU's creation has been based on certain values and norms (democracy, equality, etc.), justifying its dominance as normative power. It has sought to promote its values to other regions of the world, through trade or political agreements but as far as the refugee matter is concerned, its western-oriented norms are blocking the way to beneficiaries of international protection. For example, bigamous and polygamous people together with their families are excluded from Relocation and Dublin Regulation transfers even if vulnerability reasons are applicable. Cultural borders should be alleviated in order to establish a fair asylum system in Europe. EU should develop an outside-in perspective towards the newcomers in order to fully comprehend their needs and guarantee a more efficient handling of their situation.

Having highlighted the main challenges of the refugee crisis it should be mentioned that all of them could be confronted or at least alleviated if there was a stable European Integration policy. Given Europe's size, the number of refugees seeking haven in the continent is ultimately a small fraction, yet the battle over border access in Europe has become fierce, and the handling of the situation is severely criticized. Hence, the pattern remains the same as above. The Member States follow different paces and policies, each depending on its own needs, interests and capacities.

Germany is by far the most progressive Member State on that topic, as it has adopted an Integration Act and a Regulation amending several laws in order to facilitate the integration of refugees into German society. The laws provide for more integration classes, vocational training, employment and training opportunities, assignments of a place of residence to avoid concentration in select areas, and permanent settlement permits for refugees who show that they are willing to cooperate and take integration classes.

However, this is not the case in other Member States. Successful integration requires well-functioning and inclusive cities that provide essential public services, including housing, and social infrastructure. Another requirement is that national governments should work hand-in-hand with regional and local authorities to design and deliver the appropriate services and infrastructure to achieve meaningful and long-lasting integration outcomes<sup>21</sup>. The Southern EU countries, who share the main burden of refugee populations, also suffer from severe economic decline, making their task towards integration of refugees much more difficult. Europeans should overcome those difficulties and welcome new Europeans who could relieve shortages in the labour market and shore up depleted state pension funds through their tax contributions. Refugee integration in the labour market and public life will be critical for ensuring social cohesion in the host country and empowering refugees to function as

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<sup>21</sup><http://www.oecd.org/migration/the-refugee-crisis-challenges-and-responses-for-social-investment.htm>

autonomous, productive, and successful, self-realized citizens. This process could take long time but under right management and structural support it can be achieved.

A first step is the implementation of educational programs aiming to improve literacy and language proficiency, strengthen adult education and vocational training, and streamline the assessment and recognition of foreign qualifications and skills. Member States should also secure the education of refugees' children in special classes where they can acquire new language skills and knowledge always in respect to their prior experiences and beliefs.

It is a fact that many of those fleeing conflict zones have intermediate or higher diplomas. European economies cannot afford to waste this talent and their potential. It should be noted, that integration policies should reflect the diverse origins, profiles and motivations of refugees, and provide adequate support for the most vulnerable groups. For that reason, it is of major significance to raise the awareness of Europeans

towards refugees as well. Education and proper information should be two-way in order to achieve the desired outcome. Educational seminars, events and courses for locals could help eliminate racist behaviour and accept refugees as fellow co-citizens within the European societies.

Education and the provision of safe, stable surroundings are the top priorities for this cohort. Education is the basis for proper integration and a very encouraging step has already been achieved in Greece. Thousands of refugee children have entered the Greek schools and youth centres in order to continue their education. A report by international charity Save the Children states that on average, child refugees stranded in Greece have been out of school for 1½ years<sup>22</sup>. Local students and teachers offered a very warm welcome to the ‘new classmates’, the testimonies of the latter being quite moving and

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<sup>22</sup><http://www.voanews.com/a/refugee-children-prepare-school-greece/3509475.html>

optimistic for the future. Currently around 2,500 refugee children are taking classes in Greece with the goal set to host 20,000 new students. Local and new students are co-existing for a couple of hours in their daily schedule, sharing their knowledge and bonding with one another.

To wrap up, the EU is currently facing a very crucial period where it needs to support its values and its humanitarian nature. It surely has the necessary means and tools to reach that goal. It owns the set rules for border controls, conduct of asylum applications and funding capacities. Top priority should be the guarantee of a stable, fair and well-structured asylum system and the alignment of all Member States towards that end. During this process, effective integration policies should be implemented starting with an open and essential educational system. Europeans should keep in mind that these are the keys to unlocking the hidden social and economic dividends from this refugee crisis.

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# **Helping Syrian teenagers to integrate at school and in European society in general**

Manel Msalmi

This project aims at helping the newly arrived young refugees to integrate at school and avoid the loss of a whole generation, as well as fighting against violent extremism.

In fact, there should be a resettlement program and a legal basis for young people coming from Syria in order to integrate the European society. European governments should take into consideration different levels of integration including:

- level of education and professional experience;
- work experience;
- knowledge of languages;
- religious affiliation;
- Family connections in Europe and/or other specific factors supporting integration in Europe such as knowledge of the English, French or German language.

We should take into consideration the psychological, social and mental situation of these teenagers and the need to have support to be able to follow the classes at school and integrate in society in general. It's important to know the way of life in Europe and the cultural differences between Europe and Syria as well as the efforts that they should make in order to become European citizens especially through learning the language and knowing about the political and legal system of the country.

In fact, schools become the front line of the migration crisis in Europe and if the problem of integration cannot be handled at school, these young people would fail to integrate, have diplomas and find a job later. Integrating young Syrian refugees would need a huge effort on the part of Psychologists, teachers, and educators as well as a well-defined program which accompany these people during the whole process. Teachers are role models and should be a mechanism of social development. Teachers are in need of a great team of translators, psychologists and tutors who

could help them in this mission. We all know that these young people have experienced traumas through their journey and in their home country and try to help them overcome these tough experiences.

It is also important for local Europeans to be with mentally healthy classmates as teachers might worry about the situation in their classrooms once they have different categories of students. For these reasons, extra courses of integration, psychological aid and language courses are really urgent in order to help these teenagers and fight against prejudices and violent extremism. These young people should not be isolated or rejected by the society; on the contrary, they should feel supported and understood.

There is a need for an “institutional and social culture of acceptance of diversity” as Serhat Karakayali, an expert on the political sociology of migration at the Berlin Institute for Integration and Migration Research, puts it.

Integration is still a controversial issue in Europe and building a multicultural society needs a whole process and program of education at school for both refugees and young Europeans in order to fight against prejudices and pre-conceived ideas. Adopting a new approach is the key to a successful integration, both helping and explaining to refugees as well as their classmates the cultural and social differences as well as the challenges towards integration and the benefits of immigration and multiculturalism. Language training as well as emotional and psychological support would help children overcome their past experience and be motivated to study and adapt to the social norms of Europe.

We should avoid that these young people drop school because this means a failure in the integration process and a refusal to be part of this society. It is highly important to stress the fact that many schools do not have teachers qualified to address the unique needs of these students, and lack the specialized resources necessary to help refugee children integrate into

school activities. Where local language courses exist, they are not always sufficient to enable young people to acquire the necessary skills. As a result, these children sometimes drop out of school, and lose faith in the future and in their personal advancement and achievement.

There should be a flexible program which adapts with the need of students such as:

- encourage refugee students to express their thoughts and feelings in written forms such as through diary writing
- teach students about cultural diversity and cross-cultural harmony
- teach refugee students about their new country and its culture
- provide opportunities for refugee background students to process what has happened through visual art, storytelling, drama and role play

- include modules on human rights and refugees within the school curriculum
- provide students with an age-appropriate political understanding of the causes of war and refugee experiences to allay misconceptions and provide a framework for events in their own lives
- enable students with a low level of English/French/German literacy to have other forms of expression in the classroom such as drama, drawing and painting.

To sum up, these activities and programs can be of a great help for the students and would allow them to integrate in the European society as well as overcome the psychological, mental and social difficulties that they have witnessed in the past.

# **Migration and Mental Health in Europe: How much do we know?**

Eleni Vasileiou

## **Introduction**

The migration of people is considered to be an ancient social phenomenon which refers to the relatively long-term re-establishment of an individual or a group in a new social and cultural environment. The causes of migration may be various, but the main ones are related either to the search for better economic and business life conditions or political persecution, war and insecurity. In the latter case migrants are called refugees. At the moment, there are globally more than 200 million migrants living in a country other than that where they were born and it is expected that their number will be increased over the next decades. Many of them originate from poor countries in Asia, Africa or Latin America and are settling in major capitals of economically developed countries. Among those people there is a significant percentage who do not

meet the legitimate criteria for travelling and settling in the host country.

Many disciplines are dealing with the phenomenon of migration, such as Anthropology, Sociology, Economics, Intercultural Psychology and Psychiatry. The latter two scientific disciplines focus their research on the psychological effects of migration on migrants and on the population of the host countries, as well as on problems related to psychiatric morbidity among migrants and how to successfully tackle those by competent psychiatric services. The purpose of this article is to present:

- (a) the psychopathological problems linked to the phenomenon of migration and
- (b) to focus on refugee children and teenagers who have experienced psychological trauma.

## **Migration and Mental Health**

### **General**

Migration is a social change process in which a person moves from one cultural context to another in order to

settle in a different country than that of one's origin. This relocation can be arranged for a variety of reasons, most often economic, political or educational. In any case migrants do not form a homogeneous group as everybody migrates for different reasons, do not experience the same experiences and do not get accepted in the same way by their host societies.<sup>23</sup> There have been several efforts in order to categorize and arrange the migration types with regards to:

- a) the decision-making process (individual choice / enforcement),
- b) the conscious motive (economic, employment, education),
- c) the link between the society of origin and the hosting society (internal / international migration,
- d) the people involved in the process (individual, family, group migration), and

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<sup>23</sup> Bhugra D, Jones P. Migration and mental illness. *Adv Psychiatr Treat.* 2000; 7:216-223

e) the legal aspects of the process.<sup>24</sup>

Regardless of classification, migration submits the person in a sequence of stressful events which sometimes can significantly affect hers/his mental state. The preparation of the migration, the process itself and also the acceptance from the hosting society are macro-factors potentially associated with the burden of mental health. The micro-factors include migrant's personality elements, psychological strength, cultural identity, social support and acceptance of the ethnic group to which she/he belongs.<sup>1</sup>

An inherent process of migration is the continuous interaction and adaptive defense mechanisms. A migrant undergoes a series of losses such as the support of a familiar geographic and social environment, long-term relationships, social values and roles. Even if the person is prepared for the

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<sup>24</sup> Λειβαδίτης Μ. Πολιτισμός και Ψυχιατρική. Εκδόσεις Παπαζήση; 2003

process and complete it easily, they will be forced to confront transitory factors that will influence the perceptions, views and ability to be easily adapted to the new environment.<sup>25</sup>

People who migrate are essentially the 'emblem' of the population movements throughout the history of humanity. They have crossed the double borders of their place of birth and the country of destination. They are caught between the pull of memories and the need to forget, among bonds with a distant homeland and history and the attempt to establish new ties with the host culture and the new part of everyday life.<sup>26</sup>

### **Migration as a stressful experience**

Any change of the way and living condition constitutes a stressful event. In the case of migration this change usually happens in three different phases:

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<sup>25</sup> Bhugra D. Migration and schizophrenia. *Acta Psychiatr Scand.* 2000; 102(suppl.407):68-73

<sup>26</sup> Bibeau, G. Cultural psychiatry in a creolizing world: Questions for a new research agenda. *Transcult Psychiatry.* 1997; 34: 9-41

- a) decision to be released / separated from the environment of origin,
- b) move / establishment to the new environment,
- c) establishment / adjustment to hosting country.

Although each migration attempt has different characteristics, there are some common psychological stressful parameters, which in many cases occur in each of these phases.

The first pre-migration phase includes the decision and planning for migration. Features of the first phase may be ambivalence about the attempt, concerns and hopes which are invested in it, the migrant's guilt for those left behind, rituals of farewell which aim to reduce the guilt or sadness of separation. In case of persecution often dominates the fear, the anguish for the foregone community and homeland and the rage against the pursue and the circumstances.

The second phase is the migration as an action meaning the transition from one place to another along with the necessary psychological and social steps that should be taken. During this process, particularly in

cases involving illegal migration, the migrant is often exposed to hardships and risks, furthermore, is subject to exploitation by traffickers. At this phase, as in the previous one, in order the migrant to cope with the mental and physical hardships confronted, idealises the country and the society in which intends to settle which obtains in mind the characteristics of "the Promised Land".

The third phase, also known as post-migration begins with the contact of the migrant with the new social and cultural context and the efforts to adjust to new roles and be part of a group. The effort of adaptation to the new environment is linked to the phenomenon of acculturation. This term refers to the influences which the person receives due to contact with an unknown community and cultural group and the consequences of these influences on the psychological and social life of the individual. Usually are examined the impacts exerted by the dominant cultural community to the minority of migrants. However, it is not insignificant the impacts and consequences in the reverse direction

(e.g. the effects of the presence of migrants in the general public of a country).

In the following paragraphs we will examine each phase of migration in depth by receiving account that both individual and environmental (dependent) factors combined with major life events and chronic difficulties can sometimes cause potentially inconvenience and discomfort to the person.

### **The pre-migration phase**

The separation, as a psychological phenomenon, starts even before the migrant leaves the place of origin, i.e. at the pre-migration phase. The migrant at this stage faces the fear of losing actual and virtual objects, persons, relationships and goals. In the bibliography is indicated the model of the seven losses: family and friends, language, culture, home, loss of social role, loss of contact with the national group to which it belongs

and exposure to natural hazards.<sup>27</sup> In psychoanalytic terms we are talking about abandoning a containing idea for the loss of precious objects with which the person has been identified. Thus, the migration experience is inextricably linked to the mourning process through which the individual externalize grief and guilt for abandonment in such ways that are acceptable by the cultural context. In those cases, grief is perceived as a purgative and atoner, which activates support systems and creates the conditions for the person to process and accept the losses, search for new items and to adapt to new realities.<sup>28</sup>

The process of separation does not end with the transition to the new place as it often continues for a long time and sometimes is never completed. This has been associated with the fact that the loss in the

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27 Carta M.G, Bernal M, Hardoy M.C, Haro-Abad J.M. Migration and mental health in Europe (the state of the mental health in Europe working group: appendix 1). *Clin Pract Epidemiol Ment Health*. 2005;1:13

28 Λειβαδίτης Μ. Πολιτισμός και Ψυχιατρική. Εκδόσεις Παπαζήση; 2003

migration process is partial, since the object is not really lost, and repeated since any contact with the lost homeland revives any bonds. The weakness to overcome mourning or difficulty to express grief, leaves the migrant vulnerable to chronic depression, intensifies the psychosomatic symptoms and general mental health problems.

Sometimes the migrant not only doesn't experience grief but develops manic reactions to escape. She/he begins the journey overactive, brash and optimistic and demonstrates an easy adjustment to the new environment wherein is established. When such defences are activated without exceeding certain limits, they can help in adjusting and dealing with establishment problems but could also risk creating a gap in the mental life of the migrant.

The renunciation of the past and cultural identity along with facing new, contradictory and vague messages may lead to the collapse of self-protection mechanisms and development of mental disorders. Individual factors such as gender, age, reason for migration,

preparation for the entire process, the structure of personality, the ability to manage separation and external factors such as economic, social and educational level of the migrant seem to affect the smooth completion of the pre-migration stage.

For example, in the case of refugees, who should immediately and without preparation to flee their homeland under the fear of prosecution, the process of mourning is more complex, as they cannot return to their country and thus they experience losses and not simply separations. Moreover, experiences of war and the employment status before migration have been associated with the occurrence of psychiatric symptoms in refugees who appear to be particularly

vulnerable to depression, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and suicide.<sup>29,30</sup>

### **Transition process and adjustment**

The arrival and establishment of the migrant in the host country is an equally critical and difficult period, as she/he is confronted with a series of more or less serious problems in trying to settle. Reducing stress is associated with factors such as knowledge of the language of the destination country, realistic expectations, finding support mechanisms, migrating within a team and getting the opportunity to develop links with other migrants and also the similarities of the host society to the country of origin. When the person comes unprepared in touch with a new cultural reality that differs significantly from its own and that

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<sup>29</sup> Bhui K, Abdi A, Abdi M, Pereira S, Dualeh M, Robertson D, Sathyamoorthy G, Ismail H. Traumatic events, migration characteristics and psychiatric symptoms among Somali refugees – preliminary communication. *Soc Psych Psych Epid.* 2003;38(1):35-43

<sup>30</sup> Ramsay R, Gorst-Unsworth C, Turner S. Psychiatric morbidity in survivors of organized state violence including torture: a retrospective series. *Br J Psychiatry.* 1993;162:55-59

seems incomprehensible, can fall into a state of acute mental and behavioral disorganization with panic symptoms, pain, and “freeze” - a condition described as “cultural shock”.<sup>31</sup> The adjustment to the new cultural context is a long and difficult process in which the migrant will have to build new relationships and habits, to undertake new roles and create new meanings. Cultural identity of any migrant is put into crisis and called to appropriately integrate the earlier data with newly acquired into a new stable mental, coherent, flexible and without contradictions.

### **The post-migration processes**

In the post-migration phase, the migrant experiences the so-called acculturation process. This process should be considered as a multidimensional phenomenon, which reflects to major changes in a person when exposed to a new culture environment. An actual cultural exchange between migrant groups

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<sup>31</sup> Garza-Guerrero AC. Culture shock: its mourning and the vicissitudes of identity. *J Am Psychoanal Ass.* 1974;22(2):408-429

and the host society, resulting in a possible modification of one or both of the initial cultural models while maintaining the uniqueness of each group.<sup>32</sup> Of course there is the objection that in reality usually the dominant group (host society) remains unaffected and the non-dominant group (migrants) is changing culture.<sup>33</sup>

According to researchers, the acculturation process can progress to the following guidelines. The most desirable development is the appropriate integration, wherein the individual creatively synthesizes the attributes of its own cultural identity with new influences and adapts to the new reality. More maladaptive is the process of assimilation which requires complete rejection of the old identity and over-adaptation to the new environment. Usually the

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<sup>32</sup> Bhugra D, Bhui K. Cross-cultural psychiatric assessment. *Adv Psychiatr Treat.* 1997;3:103-110

<sup>33</sup> Bhugra D, Bhui K, Mallet R, Desai M, Singh J, Leff J. Cultural identity and its measurement: a questionnaire for Asians. *Int Rev Psychiatr.* 1999;11:244-249

migrants, who are not keen to changes, tend to separate from others by sticking to the old identity and deny to integrate. Consequently, they are led to marginalization, a natural outcome of the weakness to select a cultural identity (by indifference or failure to maintain the old and / or adoption of new).

Individual factors affecting the expression of a more or less adaptive behaviour is the cultural identity of migrant, the self-determination and also the existence of social support networks.

External factors associated mainly with the host society, are social isolation and racism, unemployment and the presence of a group with the same ethnic background. It would be consequently incorrect to assume that the migrant always has the freedom to choose the progression of the acculturation process. When the host society imposes or limits the choices of individuals, then we refer to a society intolerant to cultural diversity, but when a society widely accepts diversity and allows appropriate integration we should characterize it as “multiculturalism”. In

summary, the appropriate integration presupposes mutual adjustment, with both groups (dominant or not) to recognize the right of the other to cultural heritage. The non-dominant groups need to adopt the core values of the wider society, while the dominant group should adjust the national institutions (education, health, work, etc.) in order to meet the needs of all who live in the new pluralistic society. During the acculturation process inconsistencies and conflicts between the host society (because of ideology or political choices) and migrant groups (because of deliberate acculturation strategy) often cause problems for these groups.<sup>34,35</sup>

### **Acculturation stages**

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<sup>34</sup> Berry JW, Kim U, Power S, Young M, Bujaki M. Acculturation attitudes in plural societies. *Appl Psychol-Int Rev.* 1989;38:185-206

<sup>35</sup> Berry JW. Acculturation and identity. In: Bhugra D, Bhui K editors. *Textbook of Cultural Psychiatry.* Cambridge University Press; 2007; p.169-178

There have been described four types of reactions towards the acculturation process:

a) Isolation: The migrant refrains from communicating with people of a different cultural unless it is needed. She/he fits into groups of people similar to its own cultural and ideological characteristics and sometimes can develop ideas of contempt, rivalry or hostility towards those who are different or outsiders. Some fanaticism events (e.g. terrorist acts) can be explained in the context of social psychology as manifestations of isolation.

b) Over-adjustment: While seeking to integrate with lifestyle of the host country some migrants try to eliminate any characteristic of the oldest cultural identity (e.g. the way of speech, dress code, social habits) and act in a way so that they do not stand on anything from the domestic culture. In fact, it is often to underestimate or despise everything associated with their origin. Sometimes this behavior leads to loss of valuable support systems and conflicts (e.g. between migrant parents and their children).

c) Marginalization: People who have mental vulnerability cannot be sufficiently adapted nor choose consistently one of the previous two ways of managing the acculturation effects. The price is the loss of traditional ties and along with the weakness to develop new ones often results in social marginalization, excessive alcohol consumption or other psychoactive substances and illegal behavior patterns.

d) Integration into the new environment without detachment from the old one.

Integration is considered the most successful way to adapt into the host country and its achievement depends on the existence of migration support mechanisms from both state services and by the organizations created by already settled migrants.

As already mentioned, strong can also be the effect that might be exerted by the presence of migrants to natives. Characteristic is the phenomenon of racism, which is enhanced by the increase of the number of migrants in the local population to the extent that they

are considered a threat to the business, safety, quality of life of the native population. Racism (namely the existence of strong prejudices or stereotypes against a population group in combination with the will or the tendency to impose arbitrary discrimination against them) is an ancient ideological choice which is based on the inherent tendency of people to be part of competing groups to each other and the efforts they make with their team in order to be imposed on rival groups. In modern societies that are constantly affected by the increasing numbers of migration flow, the growth of racism (against migrants or other social groups) can negatively affect the mental health and social status of the victims and on the other hand poses a threat to the cohesion of society and democratic institutions.

### **Unaccompanied minors and Mental Health**

Unaccompanied minors are a particularly vulnerable social group, as they are outside their country of origin, have separated from their parents or guardian and are in need of protection. Most unaccompanied minors

were forced to leave their countries having experienced war and exploitation. They travelled under difficult conditions and often by putting their lives at risk.

In order to study the mental health of unaccompanied minors will present the pre-migration, transition process and post-migration factors that are directly related to the trauma of unaccompanied children.

### **Pre-migration phase and trauma**

Unaccompanied minors in their home countries have experienced war, death of their family, persecution, violence, escaping from forced recruitment into military or paramilitary organizations and forced domestic labor. These experiences combined with other development stress factors in childhood and adolescence, increase the probability of mental health problems.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Bronstein I. Montgomery P. Ott E. (2013) Emotional and behavioral problems amongst Afghan unaccompanied asylum-seeking children: results from a large-scale cross-sectional study. *Eur Child Adolesc Psychiatry* 22: 285-294

According to the Statement of Good Practice (2010) most of the unaccompanied children who travel to or within Europe are in search of asylum due to fear of persecution or the lack of protection in the country of origin. These children seek protection because they may be victims of trafficking for sexual or other purposes, exploitation or abuse victims from their family environment or experience discrimination or abuse arising from and related to their gender. Moreover, a number of unaccompanied children arrive in Europe in order to be reunited with family members already living here.<sup>37</sup>

In a survey carried out in Belgium and Norway regarding the study of the mental health of unaccompanied minors in a sample of 307 people, 247 minors reported as traumatic experience the fact that they "are in danger", 240 reported the death of loved

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<sup>37</sup> Separated Children in Europe Programme, SCEP Statement of Good Practice, March 2010, 4th Revised Edition , available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/415450694.html> [accessed 22 March 2017]

ones while 221 reported physical abuse. 192 children described as traumatic experiences that have witnessed physical abuse. War and armed conflicts were reported by 171 respondents and separation from family was recorded as trauma from 146 children.<sup>38</sup>

From the above it is clear that unaccompanied children have experienced multiple difficulties in their home country and have left it unprotected<sup>39</sup> and most of them are already mentally traumatized before entering the host country.<sup>40</sup>

### **Transition process and traumatising experiences**

The mental health issues acquired during the transition process are associated with the experiences

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<sup>38</sup> Vervliet M. Meyer Demott M.A. Jakobsen M. Broekaert E. Heir T. Derluyn I. (2014) The mental health of unaccompanied refugee minors on arrival in the host country. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology* 55: 35 – 36

<sup>39</sup> Jensen T. Skårdalsmo E. Fjermestad K. (2014) Development of mental health problems – a follow-up study of unaccompanied refugee minors. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health* 8 (29): 3- 15

<sup>40</sup> Nightingale E. (1998) Invisible children. *WJM* 169 (5): 54

faced by unaccompanied minors during their travel from their country of origin in the host country. During their trip that can last for years, minors are living in refugee camps or in abandoned buildings or in makeshift shelters under difficult conditions.<sup>41</sup>

In a recent study on a sample of 150 Afghan unaccompanied minors in the United Kingdom is indicated that their journey takes about six months with almost all children to have travelled by land. Their experiences include troubled sleep, living in confinement and unhygienic conditions, experienced physical violence by traffickers and government officials and have become witnesses of death their friends.<sup>42</sup>

In a smaller research held in the United Kingdom and Norway with a sample of 20 Afghans were reported

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<sup>41</sup> Bora Z. M. (2010) Η Εκπαίδευση των Ανήλικων και Ασυνόδευτων Ανήλικων Προσφύγων στην Ελλάδα. Διπλωματική εργασία. Παιδαγωγικό Τμήμα Δημοτικής Εκπαίδευσης Αριστοτελείου Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης. Διαθέσιμο στο: <http://invenio.lib.auth.gr/record/126520/files/GRI-2011-6676.pdf?version=1>

<sup>42</sup> Mougne C (2010) Trees only move in the wind: a study of unaccompanied Afghan children in Europe. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Policy Development and Evaluation Service. Geneva

living experiences in containers without water and food watching friends die of suffocation.<sup>43</sup>

### **Post-migration phase and mental problems**

As far as concerned the unaccompanied minors at this phase most of them feel lonely in the host country, anxious to get along with the people who will look after them, shame because they are different, guilt for those they left behind or lost, intense pressure to provide support to the remaining family members and an eager need to succeed as survivors because they were given opportunities that others did not have.<sup>44</sup>

The integration process for unaccompanied minors can be particularly stressful because they have no parental figures that provide guidance and protection

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<sup>43</sup> Boland K. (2010) Children on the move: a report on children of Afghan origin moving to western countries. UNICEF. Geneva

<sup>44</sup> Hartwell C. (2011) Former unaccompanied refugee minors: stories of life in resettlement, Dissertation. University of Michigan. Available at:  
[http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/86309/cahartwe\\_1.pdf](http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/86309/cahartwe_1.pdf)

from the new stress factors and / or injuries. Also, it is difficult for these children to create new ties, friendships and support networks in the host country as are often placed in centers with few chances of meeting new people and most of them experience frequent relocations.

### **Stages of unaccompanied children integration to the new society**

At this point of the essay is important to mention the stages of the integration processes witnessed at minor migrants during the acculturation process.

First comes a period of happiness and joy. The new environment is idealized and the young person feels that everything is amazing. New place, new possibilities, new dreams. Adolescence is in any case attracted by the unknown and the new, looking for adventure and change. The joy, however, quickly fades. Slowly begin the practical problems (e.g. how to communicate with others, how the means of transport operate) and all the everyday things do not work the

way that the person knew, and so the person feels helpless. The young migrant, at this stage, still retains its cultural identity, while, however, feels lost.

Then come the period of disorganization. At this stage, the adolescent migrant feels loneliness, anxiety, frustration, anger and fear. Differences between him and the locals are sources of tension and disorientation. The continuous learning of new things and new rules are a heavy burden. The young migrant is forced to suppress the sorrow of separation of loved ones and any cultural habits. Therefore, feels weak to keep up with their local peers and finds it difficult to ask for any help.

The beginning of the migrant's interaction with the local society is called period of reorganization. At this point the anger the migrant was holding inside, now, turns to the locals, as strongly rejects the new cultural environment. The adolescent feels trapped, vulnerable and usually maintains a defensive posture towards everyone. Gradually, begins to consciously getting

informed about similarities and differences between the new environment and the country of origin.

Next comes a period of autonomy when the migrant teenager starts and sees the positive aspects of the new culture and the new state. Eventually starts to relax and enjoy the new culture. Now the minors feel surer of themselves because they understand that their cultural identity has been enriched.

Finally, the young migrants proceed to a period of interdependence, when they feel part of a larger whole, while maintaining their own cultural diversity.

### **Conclusion**

Although in modern times there is a relative spread of ideas that support national purity of societies and strict, police restriction of migration, most of the views of sociologists concur that if a radical reversal of the global democratic order not occur the migration flow will be strengthened and modern societies will become more multicultural. Nowadays, it is a challenge for Europe Represents and for Member-State separately

to formulate clear rules regulating the legal framework of migration.

It is indisputable that the existence of support systems to the host countries protects the migrants mainly from marginalization, other maladaptive forms of acculturation adjustment and illnesses. Such support systems may relate to specialized services, state and volunteer for providing information about the primary establishment, connection with compatriots and relatives, assistance in finding a job, learning the language, protection from poverty and victimization, providing psychological and psychiatric support. These services are primarily referred to adult migrants but there is a need to establish support mechanisms for children and teenagers.

Beyond the humanitarian dimension of the problem, should be taken into consideration that the cost the operation of such services, although unbearable in times of economic crisis, the European Union should invest in those as mental health services act as a precautionary solution against the risk of

marginalization of the migrants and diseases, the subsequent treatment of which can be financially costly and sociopolitical unbearable.

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ΜΕΤΑΝΑΣΤΕΥΣΗ ΚΑΙ ΨΥΧΙΚΗ ΥΓΕΙΑ:  
ΜΕΛΕΤΗ ΤΩΝ ΨΥΧΙΚΩΝ ΔΙΑΤΑΡΑΧΩΝ ΚΑΙ  
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# **The Australian Immigration Model**

Chris Hendrickson

Modern Australia has a rich, yet controversial, immigration history, spanning a relatively small frame of time, when compared to our European forefathers. As we know it today, Australia is a nation born from immigration. However, discussions of land ownership are often heated, between the original custodians of the land, the indigenous people of Australia and the population of immigrants that arrived in Australia in 1788. Even the concept of settlement is disputed in the present day, with many people coming to terms with the idea that Australia was invaded, rather than settled, by the First Fleet and subsequent immigrant arrivals.

## **A Brief History**

Indigenous Australians are thought to have migrated to the continent approximately 50,000<sup>45</sup> years ago, with the most ancient record, a cave drawing, dating back 55,000 years. With the movement of the ancient indigenous to the land, much of the landscape was changed with the influx of humans, theorised to be the result of massive fires<sup>46</sup> and the introduction of human hunting. The population of the indigenous prior to contact with the Europeans is estimated at just under 1 million, with over 400 different tribes and at least 200 distinct languages. Trade between the many tribes and island nations to the north was very common, despite indigenous culture being nomadic in nature; tribes would move locations every 2 - 3 months so that the resources of one area had time to replenish as well

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<sup>45</sup> <https://genographic.nationalgeographic.com/migration-to-australia/>

<sup>46</sup> <https://genographic.nationalgeographic.com/migration-to-australia/>

as to better accommodate for seasonal weather changes.

The decimation of the indigenous population and culture of Australia is sorrowful and still a widespread issue in modern society, although few traditional practices and lands of indigenous tribes still remain.

Since the arrival of the First Fleet, Australia has seen large amounts of immigration, predominantly of British origin. Large events, like the Gold rush of mid 1800's and both World Wars, and government migration assistance programs, further increased the population of Australia with large amounts of immigration. As Australia grew, immigration policies became more restrictive and, as is common knowledge, racist. By the late 1800's, the population of immigrants reached over 3 million.

In 1901, when Australia became an independent commonwealth, immigration was high on the national agenda, however this was also the beginning of the "White Australia Policy". The remnants of this policy

have only recently been totally abolished, in the early 1970's the incumbent government finally dismantled the last of the policy. Prior to this dismantling of the policy, non-European immigration was heavily curtailed, due to underlying racist attitudes many of which are still present in modern Australia.

Both World Wars of the early 1900's resulted in immigration to Australia halting and the interwar Great Depression<sup>47</sup>, where unemployment reached above 30%, which saw attitudes toward non-British migrants harden as they took blame for the crisis and outbreak of war. The exception to the total cessation of immigration, was during the Second World War, when many people sought asylum in countries outside of Europe. The war of the 1940's saw similar policies enacted to those recently enacted by the U.S. president, Trump; the blanket immigration ban of ethnic groups,

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<sup>47</sup> <http://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/great-depression>

although this was due to national alliance uncertainties rather than religious affiliation.

### **Modern Australian immigration**

In the last two decades, Australia's population has climbed past 25 million with immigration accounting for an average annual population growth of approximately 218,000<sup>48</sup>. However, the most contentious issue regarding immigration to Australia is "Illegal Marine Arrivals" (IMAs), or commonly referred to by many "boat-people". The issue primarily revolves around whether those arriving by boat are trying to immigrate without appropriate documentation, illegal, or whether they are genuine refugees, seeking asylum from war in the Middle East. Recent activities from terrorist group has given those with older immigration views, pro White Australia Policy, an avenue to express their racist thoughts regarding immigrants. However, a growing amount of

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<sup>48</sup> <http://stat.data.abs.gov.au/Index.aspx?Queryid=277>

people are seeing those that arrive by boat as people requiring protection, genuine asylum seekers.

After the Global Financial Crisis of 2008, Australia saw a large influx of unauthorised migration, with well over 800 boats, carrying more than 50,000 people, lasting until 2013. In response, the Australian government reopened its offshore processing centres in Papua New Guinea and Nauru island. Those that were assessed to be genuine refugees were resettled in both of those areas while those that were non-genuine were deported to an alternative safe country, if not repatriated to their home country.

Large debates are waged in the political and social realms regarding how to process immigrants, in particular those who immigrate without appropriate documentation. The most debated topic on the “left” side of the political sphere, is the use of offshore detention centres to process the IMAs and the conditions many detainees experience in those centres; which has left some liable for crimes against

humanity<sup>49</sup>. The more authoritarian side, those that are “right wing” but definitely against liberty, see immigrants, especially the IMA’s as job thieves<sup>50</sup>. However, it is widely recognised that immigration has had many positive impacts, socially<sup>51</sup> and economically<sup>52</sup>, on the development of Australia, making it into the prosperous country we know today.

Disregarding the highly racist undertones of Australian immigration policy through its short history, Australia has been highly fortunate and successful with immigration. In 1944, the then Prime Minister, John Curtin, expressed that in Australia's national security interest the country should aim to achieve a population of at least 30 million by committing itself to a strong

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<sup>49</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/jul/25/ferrovial-staff-risk-prosecution-for-managing-australian-detention-camps>

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/victoria/locals-losing-out-on-jobs-because-of-high-immigration/news-story/ab5c44a86aa261959085377b7a076433>

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/migration-population/report>

<sup>52</sup>

<https://www.border.gov.au/about/corporate/information/fact-sheets/04fifty#c>

immigration program. Encouraging high calibre immigrants to create a life in Australia has been a historical focus, despite using highly discriminatory policy during the years of the White Australia Policy. However, by somewhat restricting immigration and giving immigrants high amounts of social support, Australia has avoided many of the potential adverse side effects of unfettered immigration, like social revolt and meltdowns.

### **The Indigenous Australians**

The Aborigine people are often referred to as custodians of the land since it is cultural practice that the land, known as “Country”, is not owned by them they say “The land owns us”<sup>53</sup>. The indigenous are caretakers who live with the land and not off the land. This is partly the reason the European arrivals claimed “terra nullius”, the other was the belief that the indigenous people were subhuman and primitive.

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<sup>53</sup><https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/land/meaning-of-land-to-aboriginal-people>

The arrival of the Europeans also meant the arrival of many foreign animal and plant species, a new form of cultivation as well as disease. The pitfall of European immigration was the destruction to the indigenous people, their land and rich culture. Subsequent government policy regarding indigenous rights, following colonisation, led to further loss of Aborigine heritage.

There have been many efforts to restore the rights and heritage to the indigenous, although backward mentalities have hampered these efforts. Integration of indigenous culture into the social norms of European culture is necessary not only for the survival of indigenous heritage, much of which has been lost, but also to create a social fabric connecting Country to people and form a kinship bond for future generational peace and prosperity.

### **Integration of immigrants**

Cultures evolve and adapt over time, regardless of anyone's intentions. While it is important to preserve

cultural practices and history, allowing new cultures to development and flourish is an important aspect of Australia's multicultural success. By integrating and accepting cultures contrary to that of what the First Fleet's policy makers, Australia has seen great social cohesion and a strong and diverse economy flourish.

A significant driver of social cohesion and integration is the understanding of cultural diversity, which is threatened by ignorance and stereotypes. Education programs combined with frequent, positive, social interactions has been proven to be essential to the successful integration of multiculturalism. Jenson's framework<sup>54</sup> of social cohesion has five important dimensions: Belonging, Inclusion, Participation, Recognition and Legitimacy, each of which has various enablers and barriers. To summarise research<sup>55</sup>, positive intergroup interaction, as well as

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<sup>54</sup> [http://www.cccg.umontreal.ca/pdf/CPRN/CPRN\\_F03.pdf](http://www.cccg.umontreal.ca/pdf/CPRN/CPRN_F03.pdf)

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[https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/01\\_2014/current-emerging-drivers-social-cohesion-division-conflict\\_access.pdf](https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/01_2014/current-emerging-drivers-social-cohesion-division-conflict_access.pdf)

discrimination and prejudice, are the largest enabler and barriers, respectively, to social cohesion.

Belonging is a basic human need, the idea of community is subconscious in nature and hard-wired into our brains. When migrating, this idea manifests into two distinct divergences; build a community of similar individuals and withdraw into a similar way of life pre-migration, or attempt to integrate into the new community by changing behaviour enough to belong. Giving migrants the opportunity and ability to access resources that smooth the transition into a new culture makes this process less disruptive and increases the chances of successful integration.

The mass media plays an integral role in the current generation's interaction with the wider world. Although used for nefarious purposes at times, the rise of technology has opened many channels for education of and connection to the diversity the world provides. It enables both migrants and citizens to access methods to communicate as well as educative information on traditional practices, which allows for

greater inclusion and participation of two diverse cultures.

The major difficulty faced by policy makers in creating social cohesion, is the type of power they use to encourage, or enforce, peaceful interaction. Outlined by Savage & Savage<sup>56</sup>, there are five types of authority that leaders can exhibit: legitimate, reward, expert, referent and coercive.

The most effective way to use this power to encourage unification is with intrinsic factors; by appealing to the inherent desires of people and making them want to change without forcing them. This is referent power. The least effective is forcing people to accept change, which is naturally resisted by the subconscious mind. This is coercive power.

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[https://books.google.gr/books?hl=en&lr=&id=8T5ZBwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=savage+savage+2010+cross+curricular+teaching+and+learning+paper&ots=tRGU1F3nJ-&sig=VOisdly\\_QUHCzNGXGibycWL1pSQ&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=savage%20savage%202010%20cross%20curricular%20teaching%20and%20learning%20paper&f=false](https://books.google.gr/books?hl=en&lr=&id=8T5ZBwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=savage+savage+2010+cross+curricular+teaching+and+learning+paper&ots=tRGU1F3nJ-&sig=VOisdly_QUHCzNGXGibycWL1pSQ&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=savage%20savage%202010%20cross%20curricular%20teaching%20and%20learning%20paper&f=false)

For integration to be successful, a community must willingly change its views and be convinced, rather than forced, to accept differences. The mass media's role is to provide reliable information and encourage the open discussion of cultural diversity to increase social cohesion and understanding between different groups.

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For a full history on Australian immigration visit:  
<https://www.border.gov.au/CorporateInformation/Documents/immigration-history.pdf>

For in depth information about indigenous Australians visit:  
<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/>

For in depth information about multiculturalism visit:  
[https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/01\\_2014/current-emerging-drivers-social-cohesion-division-conflict\\_access.pdf](https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/01_2014/current-emerging-drivers-social-cohesion-division-conflict_access.pdf)

# **How to prevent enclaves – integrating new migrants with small government**

Lex Cornelissen

In the Netherlands, the JOVD proposes that non-Dutch-speakers should be denied social security as much as possible. Social security is meant for people who cannot find a job, even though they want to work and try their hardest to find an occupation. Not being able to speak Dutch to a functional level should not be an excuse to retreat into social security.

There are two dimensions to this position. The first one is obviously the moral dimension: the JOVD believes non-Dutch-speakers have the option of learning Dutch, which would solve the problem of unemployment. The second one is more instrumental and focusses on labour force and societal participation and integration; by forcing immigrants to learn Dutch they are enabled to function in Dutch society without the threat of them ending up on welfare somewhere before participation has been achieved. This counters the disadvantage of

immigrant minorities on the labour market and de-incentivizes the formation of ethnic/cultural enclaves that allow migrants to live in the Netherlands without ever truly integrating into Dutch society.

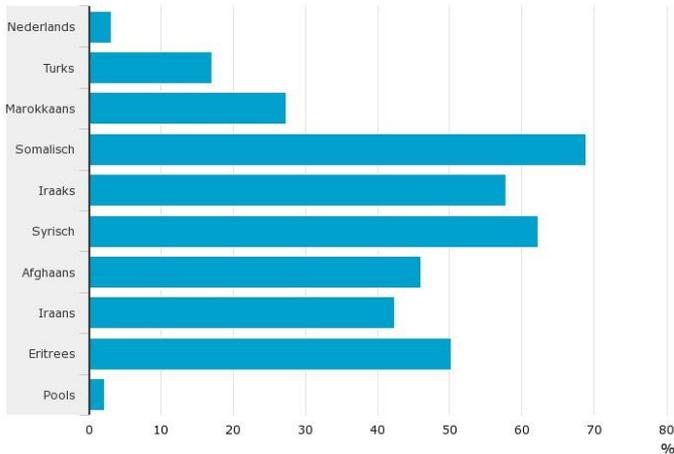
This essay will present a plea to implement this policy Europe-wide, as it can drastically decrease the problems that come with the integration of large new groups of migrants.

The formation of ethnic/cultural enclaves has been a problem in many western European states dealing with migrant influxes since the end of World War II: the Netherlands are typical in that regard. Members of these migrant communities are very likely to be dependent of social security: according to the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics migrant groups from earlier migration waves are often multiple times more likely to receive government aid than native Dutch<sup>57</sup>.

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<sup>57</sup> 'Seven in ten Somalians receive government aid', retrieved from <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2015/31/zeven-van-de->

Aandeel personen in de bijstand naar nationaliteit, eind 2014



*Figure 1: Percentage of Dutch residents receiving government aid, by nationality. From top to bottom: Dutch, Turkish, Moroccan, Somalian, Iraqi, Syrian, Afghan, Iranian, Eritrean and Polish.*

The notable exception in Figure 1 is Polish migrants. Instead of settling in large cities, Polish migrants settle in rural areas specifically for the employment

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tien-somaliërs-in-de-bijstand. Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics, 2014.

possibilities there<sup>58</sup>. According to a report of the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) Polish migrants actually have a significantly higher unemployment rate than native Dutch. They do, however, manage to find new jobs within the time they receive temporary unemployment benefits, before they end up in actual (more “permanent”) government aid, as defined in Figure 1. The SCP report speculates that these numbers are limited further due to some structurally unemployed Polish migrants returning to Poland<sup>59</sup>.

A report by Eddie Nieuwenhuizen, researcher for the think tank *Artikel 1* states that the formation of high concentrations of minorities in large cities does not

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<sup>58</sup> *Recent Polish migrants settled in rural areas*, retrieved from <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2016/47/recente-poolse-migranten-trokken-naar-landbouwgebieden>. Central Bureau of Statistics, 2016.

<sup>59</sup> *Polish migrants - the position of Poles who came to the Netherlands from 2004 onwards*. Netherlands Institute for Social Research, 2011.  
([http://www.scp.nl/Publicaties/Alle\\_publicaties/Publicaties\\_2011/Poolse\\_migranten](http://www.scp.nl/Publicaties/Alle_publicaties/Publicaties_2011/Poolse_migranten))

occur out of an explicit preference of migrants to live among their own groups, but because of the low incomes among minority groups forcing them to low-rent areas<sup>60</sup>. The vicious cycle continues on from that point: the large groups of minority members, often with the high unemployment as documented earlier in this essay, cause real estate values to drop, causing an even higher percentage of minorities to settle there. Segregation only worsens.

The underlying cause of this increasing segregation is failing labour market and societal participation of migrants. Especially asylum seekers are at risk. As stated by CBS: “[Asylum seekers’] distance to the labour market is especially large, considering many of them do not (adequately) master the [Dutch] language and considering a relatively large percentage do not possess .”

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<sup>60</sup> Nieuwenhuizen, E. *Spacial segregation in the Netherlands*. Artikel 1, 2006. ([http://www.art1.nl/artikel/1927-Ruimtelijke\\_segregatie\\_in\\_Nederland\\_Factsheet](http://www.art1.nl/artikel/1927-Ruimtelijke_segregatie_in_Nederland_Factsheet))

The results are very concerning to say the least. Migrant minorities have become very dependent of welfare, often have lacking language skills and are at a disadvantage in the labour market. Additionally, migrant groups have become segregated into their enclave communities concentrated in large cities, which led to the disenfranchisement of the native working class and, in effect, the rise of anti-immigrant sentiments. This pauperization has made formerly safe and tidy cities unsafe and unpleasant to live in. Violent crime rates have actually got worse since the 1970s in Western Europe, now surpassing those in the US<sup>61</sup>. It should be a top priority of European administrators and lawmakers to prevent the same thing from

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<sup>61</sup> *'In 1970 the aggregate crime rate in the seven European countries we consider was 63% of the corresponding US figure, but by 2007 it was 85% higher than in the United States. This striking reversal results from a steady increase in the total crime rate in Europe during the last 40 years, and the decline in the US rate after 1990. The reversal of misfortunes is also observed for property and violent crimes.'* Buonanno, Paolo and Drago, Francesco and Galbiati, Roberto and Zanella, Giulio, *Crime in Europe and the United States: Dissecting the 'Reversal of Misfortunes'* (July 2011). *Economic Policy*, Vol. 26, Issue 67, pp. 347-385, 2011.

happening with this new wave of immigration reaching Europe.

### **Small government Texas vs. big government California - a case study**

By minimizing social security for unintegrated migrants, they are forced to quickly adapt to their new societies. Possessing skill in their new home countries' languages allows them to create social contacts within mainstream society and find jobs more easily. Combined with the better economic prospects employment provides enclave formation could be eliminated. If we look towards the United States of America there is the interesting case of Mexican immigrants who settled in California and Texas<sup>62</sup>. Although both states contain roughly the same percentage of Mexican immigrants (about 38%)<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> The following case study was done in detail by Heritage Foundation fellow Mike Gonzales. He has published an article about his research, which can be found here: <http://dailysignal.com/2014/09/13/why-hispanics-thrive-in-texas-but-not-in-california/>

<sup>63</sup> 2010 US Census. <http://www.census.gov/2010census/>

Texas is thriving while California is faring far worse. Unemployment of Mexican immigrants in Texas was only 6,9%, compared to Californian Mexican immigrants' 10,2%<sup>64</sup>.

Additionally, Texan Mexicans are more entrepreneurial: Texas' rate of Hispanic-owned businesses as a percentage of the Hispanic population is 57%, whereas California's is 45% (note: "Hispanic" and "Mexican" are used interchangeably in this essay, because according to the 2010 US Census the overwhelming majority of Hispanics in Texas and California are of Mexican descent<sup>65</sup>). Apart from that, the percentage of Hispanic house owners in Texas is higher and the achievement gap between students with a Mexican immigrant background and non-immigrant students is smaller compared to California.

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<sup>64</sup> 2010 US Census. <http://www.census.gov/2010census/>

<sup>65</sup> *'Redistricting Data, First Look at Local 2010 Census Results'*.

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The reason that Texas is such an interesting case is the approach of Texas when it comes to the integration of Latino immigrants. Texas believes in a small government that lets society grow organically and therefore creates plenty of opportunities for immigrants to start their own business or otherwise find employment. Texas gives out very little government aid: with 8% of the national population, it only distributes 3% of the national government aid. California on the other hand has a sizeable welfare state: with 12% of the total population, it distributes a whopping 34% of the national government aid<sup>66</sup>. Immigrants in Texas are far less likely to be on welfare than immigrants in California, and as the aforementioned statistics suggest they are more successful due to that fact and due to the state's friendly economic climate with low taxes and low regulatory burdens for anyone to start a business.

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<sup>66</sup> 2010 US Census. <http://www.census.gov/2010census/>

## **Social security earned through contribution**

To allow migrants an organic path to social security whilst preventing them from ending up under perpetual government aid it is important to also look at the way social security should ideally work. University of Amsterdam researcher Monique Kremer investigated the relation between immigration and the functionality of the welfare state. Among her findings she concludes that a majority of Dutch citizens (including naturalized migrants) think migrants should not have access to social security from day one. Instead they should earn it, by working and paying taxes and premiums<sup>67</sup>. Kremer then proposes a 'contribution state', in which solidarity goes both ways: the more taxes people pay, the more social security privileges they receive. This could be achieved by either expanding the in the Netherlands already

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<sup>67</sup> *'Strangers in the welfare state. How to combine labour migration and social security'. Chapter 4: 'Strict Solidarity: the Dutch welfare state regime'*. Kremer, M., 2013. ([https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282339783\\_Vreemden\\_in\\_de\\_verzorgingsstaat\\_Hoe\\_arbeidsmigratie\\_en\\_sociale\\_zekerheid\\_te\\_combineren](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282339783_Vreemden_in_de_verzorgingsstaat_Hoe_arbeidsmigratie_en_sociale_zekerheid_te_combineren))

existent obligatory individual unemployment assurance or by installing a system of individual unemployment accounts (IUA's). Employees, employers or both monthly deposit a certain percentage of the salary on a government-supplied savings account. If someone becomes unemployed the saved up funds can be used for several ends, for example financial compensation or retraining<sup>68</sup>.

Although Kremer's proposals are mostly focused on sustaining the societal solidarity within the welfare state even as migrants enter society, but they would also compliment the solution to the problem of enclave formation because they encourage migrants to work and participate in society as much as possible. They also form a viable realistic application of the principle of 'as little social security as possible'; this way, it would be possible to prevent migrants from ending up

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<sup>68</sup> *'Strangers in the welfare state. How to combine labour migration and social security'. Chapter 8: 'Conclusions: another kind of migration, another kind of welfare state'*. Kremer, M., 2013.

in perpetual welfare whilst still protecting them from the worst excesses of unemployment and poverty.

To summarize: migrant enclave formation has been a huge barrier to the integration of migrants in Europe in the past. To prevent this enclave formation, it is key to allow migrants to flourish economically. The case study of Texan Mexicans compared to Californian Mexicans provides hints in the direction that welfare dependency is detrimental to the wealth development of migrants, and that a small government approach is far more successful in that regard. To force migrants to integrate, less social security should be provided, at least until they reach a language proficiency level in their new countries that is on a functional level. Only then can migrants truly integrate into society. New systems, like the IUA's, could provide a viable way to achieve this in an orderly manner.

# **Successful integration boosting European economics**

Saara Jokela

When talking about the refugee crisis, expenses are one of the many reasons countries refuse to take refugees alongside with the fear of how to integrate a mass of people successfully into a different culture.

Are refugees going to be only a burden to us? Or could they give us more awareness of new cultures and maybe also at the same increase our economics? Could they be the answer to our problem of our population aging? For that to happen, we have to think of ways to rapidly employ and integrate a great deal of people efficiently. Meaning not only financial profit, but also succeeding to join refugees as a part of our communities. Additionally, we should also be aware of the time it takes to procedure the asylum applications.

Now that there are more applications than ever and more to come every day, the procedure times have also risen drastically. With this there are a plenty of people

with the ability and the motivation to work and integrate, but are forced to wait if they get the permission to stay. This will cause difficulties later when granted asylum. When e.g. people have already lived for a long time in the country but still neither know the language nor have found a safety net.

According to a report of the IMF the refugee crisis is already boosting the economics in the EU. To have long lasting effects there has to be taken rapid actions in integrating the refugees and asylum seekers into labor market. Especially countries, which have received a large number of asylum seekers, have potential rises in their GDP e.g. Austria, Germany and Sweden. Immigrants are trying to effectively employ themselves. When looking at the statistics the truth isn't always clear. Economic immigrants are often lowering the employment statistics of all immigrants. The report says that economic immigrants choose their destination to maximize employment outcomes, when asylum seekers are choosing a safe place to stay. Furthermore, asylum seekers prefer destinations with

low unemployment rates.

The report also says that access to financial service and rapid employment seems to result a more successful integration. Biggest problems seem to be “inactivity traps”. Those are e.g. long procedure times, without the possibility to access language classes or have the right to work<sup>69</sup>.

Many of the EU countries are having trouble with the elderly people to form the biggest half of the population. They will need young people to pay for the expenses. In Finland and Germany, you can see that soon most of the working people are going to be retired. There is no way we can keep our living standards that high if we don't get new workers to pay for them. Alone the immigration inside the EU won't help the aging countries to cover their needs. So, Europe desperately needs immigrants in working age. Refugees and asylum seekers could be the solution for

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<sup>69</sup>

<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/sdn/2016/sdn1602.pdf>

this problem.

Unfortunately, the average time for asylum procedures in many countries often take up to a year. As a result, numerous people are simply waiting, without the possibility to become a part of the society, when they could already begin to build their lives to become more independent and a part of the community. The longer it takes for the asylum procedures the longer asylum seekers have to wait for being allowed to integrate and get employed.

A fast integration and employment not only makes the new citizen of Europe feel more warmly welcomed, but also decreases fears that the communities have towards the new habitants. Bringing people together can break down walls. Walls which cause prejudices and even hate, people are already having towards the asylum seekers. The working environment is a place where it's easy to meet, get to know people and shows also how most of the refugees are willing to bring their input to the community. A warm welcome encourages becoming a part of the society.

What could be the key to opening the labor market quickly not for only refugees but also for asylum seekers?

Reducing bureaucracy is one solution to make it easier for businesses to hire asylum seekers. That would also bring up questions how to make sure that the rights of the asylum seekers are granted.

Different kinds of start-up projects targeted for asylum seekers and refugees might then be one quick solution. There have been some successful start-ups and there are even some concepts which soon are easily possible to copy to other countries. For example, in Finland there is a concept called Start-up refugee. The concept tries to connect refugees with mentors and investors. The aim is to have refugees to come up with their own innovations and find their talents. Resulting both to profit from each other. There are already 350 companies, organizations, universities, research institutes, PR agencies and individuals who are participating. Big companies are donating money and small businesses and people their time to train and

support the refugees<sup>70</sup>.

One problem has been how to pay the asylum seekers who don't have bank accounts due to missing a passport. In Finland, the Finnish immigration center (Migri) has agreed to an experiment with a start-up from MONI. It allows salary payments to existing MONI accounts with prepaid Mastercards using Migri's digital identification system. The system involves vetted and approved employers who can pay the salaries to the prepaid Mastercards. This experiment might be the solution for a problem many countries are facing when trying to employ the refugees<sup>71</sup>.

There are also a lot of good examples with employing refugees and having an open welcoming culture.

A bakery in London employed refugee women who couldn't find a job. Some had no proper language

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<sup>70</sup> <http://startuprefugees.com/en/>,  
<http://www.goodnewsfinland.com/feature/startup-refugees-turns-reception-centres-into-startup-hubs/>

<sup>71</sup> <https://moni.fi/en/how-moni-works/>,<http://arcticstartup.com/article/next-from-moni-lets-refugees-to-receive-salaries-in-finland/>

knowledge and other didn't have enough skills to find a job. There were also some women who couldn't find job even though they had a university diploma. The bakery gave their new employers three-week training and put them to work. It resulted in putting a businesslike mindset in the refugees. This is just one example in how often potential workforce gets wasted<sup>72</sup>.

Refugees and asylum seekers are seen as opportunity for companies to grow and ensure long-term prosperity in Germany. Due to the population drastically aging, companies lack personal and skilled people. Many companies have seen the refugees and asylum seekers as an opportunity to fill that gap. There is a concern as it isn't certain if after training an asylum seeker for a position to them still being granted a residence permit<sup>73</sup>.

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<sup>72</sup> <http://www.economist.com/news/britain/21676366-charities-team-up-local-business-generate-jobs-new-arrivals-london-bakery-offers-refugee>

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/refugees-are-an-opportunity-for-the-german-economy-a-1050102.html>

In Finland, there have also been good experiences in employing refugees to local businesses. Actually, so favorable experiences that when the refugee center was decided to be closed down the people started to protest for the asylum seekers to be able to stay.

When it was decided that a reception center would be based in a small town called Kyyjärvi, the people first objected. After the refugee center was opened the people had to accept the decision and decided to make the best out of it. They took the refugees as a part of their community and spent time with the residents. Many of the refugees got an opportunity to work at local businesses. That seems to be an attestation for integration to work, through actively taking asylum seekers as a part of the community through work.

There also is a small town called Nagu which got known for successfully integrating refugees. When the refugee center got closed the local people arranged accommodations for the refugees. Every new inhabitant was given a support family. The support family would then help with moving in, transportation

and practical things.

Taking the refugees as a part of the community was the aim of the local people. That was accomplished with activities at the community center of the town. Sport activities, art clubs and friendship café and many other activities would take place there and around the town.

Many of the refugees have already found a job and are speaking not only good Finnish- but also good Swedish for the town being bilingual.

These examples should show us that the integration isn't only up to the new residents but also up to us. We have to actively take the new people arriving as a part of our community and also change our attitude to welcome the people warmly<sup>74</sup>.

So in conclusion, if we make decisions soon enough our

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[http://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/central\\_finland\\_town\\_recognised\\_for\\_embracing\\_asylum\\_seekers/9443230](http://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/central_finland_town_recognised_for_embracing_asylum_seekers/9443230),  
<https://svenska.yle.fi/artikel/2017/03/15/nagu-har-natt-varldsklass-i-integration>,  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/23/refugees-nagu-finland-giles-duley-photography>

economics could actually profit from getting new habitants. There are already some good experiences with different kind of projects and there are at the present some models of start-ups which soon could be copied to other countries. Those could be a part of the solution.

Many countries are also avoiding sudden problems with the population aging too drastically, since the new Europeans are mostly in working age.

There are also good examples of successful integration. We have the opportunity to not only help people in need but also profit at the same time when endorsing the talents and giving opportunities to the refugees.

The number of asylum seekers and refugees will bring a lot of challenges but it is up to us to make the best out of it. We already know that sending all the people back is not an option. That is why we have to come up with quick doable solutions.

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# **Creating the best possible European asylum system**

Freja Fokdal

In the past few years it has become clear that the European asylum system is ineffective and needs changes. The countries at the EU-boarder has received massive amounts of refugees despite the fact, that they do not necessarily have the needed resources compared to other EU member states. Refugees from the MENA-region, primarily Syria, have been travelling through the dangerous and unpredictable Mediterranean Sea, which has caused 3.771 deaths in 2015<sup>75</sup> and even more in 2016. Many people have been seeking towards the countries with the most attractive legislations<sup>76</sup>, which has made the European countries tighten their regulations on the immigration and

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<http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/10/580f3e684/mediterranean-death-toll-soars-2016-deadliest-year.html>

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911>

integration matters which has caused a race to the bottom effect and closed borders.

I believe, that this can be done in a better, more effective and solidary way. But it does require a stronger EU that agrees on working together in one of the most important international matters at the moment. It does not seem possible as the situation is right now, but there is nothing wrong with being ambitious.

I think that we should create a system where refugees seek asylum at safe UNHCR camps in their own region. As the situation is right now that would mean that Syrian refugees would seek asylum in camps in for instance Turkey, Lebanon or Jordan. From there UNHCR or EU will process the application. In this way, we will prevent people from taking the dangerous travel over the Mediterranean Sea and we will be able to control the amount of refugees arriving at the EU.

It is important for me to underline, that this system should not result in EU receiving fewer refugees than

they do now. This system will just change the way refugees seek towards Europe. With this system we will make sure, that the people with the greatest need for protection will get asylum in contrast to the system we have today where the people with the most resources and with the ability to flee gets protection in the EU.

With this system we will make sure, that all member states of the EU will take responsibility for the refugee crisis. Countries like Ireland and Czech Republic<sup>77</sup> will take a greater responsibility, while countries like Hungary will be relieved. That will make a fairer distribution and share of responsibility.

In September 2015, the EU forced through a refugee quota plan. This plan should relocate 160.000 refugees from Italy and Greece to other EU countries<sup>78</sup>. In December 2016 only 8.162 refugees had been

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<sup>77</sup>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/datablog/2015/may/11/which-eu-countries-receive-the-most-asylum-seekers>

<sup>78</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/08/eu-met-only-5-of-target-for-relocating-refugees-from-greece-and-italy>

relocated. This disappointment shows that EU currently do not have the ability to work together on this important matter. But it should be possible! International problems need international solutions.

The EU should create a fair distribution key. This key should be based on economic resources and the existing number of refugees in the country. The refugees apply for asylum at the UNHCR camp and will be located by UNHCR or the EU. They will therefore not be able to choose which country they want to go to, but sense of belonging to a specific country will be taken into consideration as well as family members living in a specific EU member state.

The EU already tried to do something like this. They have made the EU – Turkey agreement, where refugees arriving at Greek islands will be sent back to Turkey. In return EU will receive one refugee from a Turkish refugee camp per. refugee sent back from Greece to Turkey. And in addition to that, EU has given Turkey a relatively large amount of money to take care of the great number of refugees living in Turkey.

But that agreement is unsustainable. It is problematic to send refugees back at the coasts without screening them. Turkey is an unstable country, who produces refugees itself. The Turkish government undermines their own minorities, primarily the Kurdish minorities but also several other minorities<sup>79</sup>. In lack of freedom of speech also journalists flee from Turkey to avoid getting arrested for writing critical about the Turkish government<sup>80</sup>.

When we immediately send people back when they reach the Greek coast, we risk sending Turkish refugees back to a country where they are personally persecuted. That is absolutely unacceptable!

In addition to that we can see that the refugees just find alternatives routes to Europe. After the agreement was in force the exceptionally dangerous route between

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<http://miris.eurac.edu/mugs2/do/blob.pdf?type=pdf&serial=1101210931437>

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<http://www.commondreams.org/news/2016/07/28/journalists-flee-turkey-government-purge-targets-media>

Libya and Italy became very popular<sup>81</sup>. So, to sum up, we have not stopped the refugees we have just forced them to take a longer and more deadly route.

Why do we not just make the same agreement with Libya, you might ask. After the civil war ending in 2014 the political situation in Libya has been unstable. The country has three competing “governments” with great conflicts of interest<sup>82</sup>. Therefore I find it very unlikely that it will be possible for the EU to establish such an agreement with Libya.

Last but not least it is problematic to make a such agreement before EU has agreed on a good and fair distribution key. Otherwise the relocating will be ineffective.

This system is not perfect cause there are no perfect solutions. Many millions of people are fleeing from their home countries and even though we want to save them all we do not have the resources. I believe that

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<sup>81</sup> <http://europe.newsweek.com/europe-refugee-crisis-libya-italy-central-mediterranean-446528?rm=eu>

<sup>82</sup> [http://www.ecfr.eu/mena/mapping\\_libya\\_conflict](http://www.ecfr.eu/mena/mapping_libya_conflict)

this solution, even though it is not perfect and it probably is not realistic at the moment, is a way better and more solidary system than the one we have today.

This system will prevent deaths in the Mediterranean Sea, stop the “race to the bottom”-effect in European asylum systems and make sure that the people with the greatest need for protection goes to the EU. I believe that this system in contrast to the Turkey – EU agreement is a step in the right direction as the situation is right now.

# **The European Union as a refugee camp**

Alexander Bjørn Jensen

Millions of people are fleeing their home country. Some from wars and a tyrannous regime. Others from climate changes, starvation and the uncertainty of the future. Even though refugees is not an unusual thing, refugees on this scale is.

There has not been a humanitarian crisis this big, since the second world war.

What makes this crisis different, is the involvement of the European Union. As a central player on the global stage, the union has dealt with wars, civil uprisings and rebellions all around the world, many times before.

It has been a central figure in the establishment of peace in these revolting countries, but never before have the union been this paralysed, and unable to act. As a symbol of humanism, prosperity and security, the European Union has become the most sought to, refugee camp of the world.

The Countries of the EU has developed an asylum system with a humanitarian approach as its core value, thus making the perfect system for those in need of safety. While this system may be preferable for the people using it, it is not at all preferable for the European member states.

The recent collapse of the Dublin Regulation, has proven that a huge pressure of refugees, will make the EU countries change their priorities, and set their own wellbeing above the functionality of the European Union.

Fact is, that though the European Union now cope with the consequences of their failure handling this crisis, climate changes and uncertainties around the world, will send more refugees toward europe. The real question is, how can the EU adapt to its new position as a refugee camp?

First of all, the Union must re-establish the trust of its

citizens. While there are many steps to take before reaching such goal, an important one must be to create a sustainable asylum system.

A common distribution key is a necessary implement, as well as moving the asylum-seeking process to third world countries and neighbouring regions. But all this doesn't solve the problem on a long-term scale. It might even cause a jump in refugees seeking asylum in Europe.

What really is needed to cope with this crisis and the ones predicted in the nearest future, is a European Marshall Plan 2.0.

After the second world war, the American secretary of state enforced a plan to rebuild Europe. The position of the united states needed to be clear. They could not ignore the aftermath of such devastating war, nor did they want to stand alone in the fight for liberty and democracy. As such, the US congress began an ambitious strategy to invest in Europe with billions of dollars, trading agreements and

military support. The plan helped create, what would later be known as the European Union. The Marshall plan bound the two continents together and insured a strong alliance, that would later be proven useful during the cold war.

This ambitious investment plan ensured the EU today, as one of the world's biggest economies.

A central problem of the refugee crisis, is in part the many people who are fleeing from poverty. Immigrants would be the proper term, and thousands of them are using the chaotic events to flee to Europe. While this is a big problem now, it seems likely it will grow in force with the coming climate changes. Many peoples' homes is predicted to be destroyed by the changes of the environment, causing extreme storms, floods and even deserts.

While these changes affect us all, they will have more dire consequences for the poorest and unstable countries. A new Marshall plan for Africa and the

MENA region, will be the best tool to avoid this forthcoming wave of refugees.

The EU needs to create an investment plan, with billions of euros at its disposal. A central part of the original Marshall plan, was to invest in the biggest countries that was already provided with a growing industry. Countries like Algeria, South-Africa and Libya should be of high priorities. Ensuring strong industrial states, would affect the whole continent, and hopefully start a way of economic growth in the regions. While this was a successful part of the original Marshall plan, Africa is in a different state than Europe was, and the support of the smallest and poorest of countries is likewise needed.

An investment plan on this scale, will cost a great deal of money from the EU member states, and many would argue that the EU already contributes enough through the development aid.

It is of course true, that the EU is the biggest contributor of development aid in the world, but most of the African countries, is no longer in a state where help to establish the most basic for a national economy, is needed. They need investments, trading agreements and support, to ensure jobs, growth and stability.

Together with an investment plan, the European union would also need to establish thorough trading agreements with African countries. While this would create more completion, especially for the European farmers, it would also start a new adventure for European investors, hopefully ensuring growth in the EU as well.

At last, military support from the EU member states would be required. Not to go to war in Africa, but ensure the stability so desperately needed. With the original Marshall plan, huge amounts of military defence systems were established in Europe. This ensured peace between the western world and the

growing Soviet Union, and at the end, this peace was an important step to ensure, that the European countries could rebuild in the proper pace.

Providing such peace in Africa, would help a continent with continuous conflicts, to heal.

At the end, a Marshall plan 2.0 established by the EU, would contribute to peace and prosperity in the poorest of regions, and hopefully lessen the number of refugees and immigrants seeking towards Europe.

The EU would be the first refugee camp in the world, to properly secure a home for its fugitives.

## The Authors

**Leonard Björnsson** is Swedish. He is a member of LYMEC member organisation Liberala ungdomsförbundet (Liberal Youth). He is in the second year of high school and has an interest in both domestic and international politics.

**Soroush Rezai** is Swedish. He is a member of LYMEC member organisation Liberala ungdomsförbundet (Liberal Youth). He is also an individual member of both LYMEC and ALDE since 2016. Soroush is currently getting his high school diploma (focus on European studies) and working for the Liberal Party in Western Sweden.

**Keith Henry** is Irish. He is the International Officer of LYMEC member organisation Ógra Fianna Fáil. He is a Secondary School Teacher of History & Geography. Keith is also a Councillor in Sligo and a member of the Northern & Western Regional Assembly in Ireland.

**Elis Henell** is Swedish. He is the International Officer of LYMEC member organisation Svensk Ungdom. He holds a Bachelor of Arts from Abo Akademi in Turku in South-Western Finland.

**Niklas Milthers** is Danish. He is an individual member of LYMEC and long-time member of LYMEC member organisation Venstres Ungdom (the Danish liberal

youth). Niklas has also been active in the Danish European Movement for many years.

**Vilde Jakoby** is Norwegian. She is a member of LYMEC member organisation Unge Venstre.

**Achilleas Timinis** is Greek. He is an individual member of LYMEC. Achilleas studied political sciences and has completed his master in European studies in KU Leuven. He is currently working as a case worker in the Greek Asylum Service.

**Manel Mselmi** is Belgian. She is a member of LYMEC member organisation Jeunes MR and an individual member of Alde Party. She has an MA in American studies and Ecocriticism and she is currently working on a PhD in Environmental humanities at ULB university in Brussels.

**Eleni Vasileiou** is Greek. She is the Secretary General of LYMEC associated member organisation Young Liberals Greece.

**Chris Hendrickson** is Australian. He was an intern at ELF member organisation KEFiM - Markos Draougmis, sent by the Mannkal Economic Education Foundation in Perth that he is an alumni member of. Chris studied at the University of Western Australia, majoring in Economics and Chinese.

**Lex Cornelissen** is Dutch. He is a regional president of the LYMEC member organisation Jongeren Organisatie Vrijheid en Democratie.

**Saara Jokela** is Finnish. She is a member of LYMEC member organisation Finnish Centre Youth.

**Freja Fokdal** is Danish. She is the Vice-President of LYMEC member organisation Radikal Ungdom.

**Alexander Bjørn Jensen** is Danish. He is the Vice-President of LYMEC member organisation Radikal Ungdom.

**Danica Vihinen** (editor) is a Swedish-speaking Finn. She is the Secretary General of LYMEC.

## The Publishers

**The European Liberal Forum (ELF)** is the foundation of the European Liberal Democrats, the ALDE Party. ELF consists of several European think tanks, political foundations and institutes and operates as an umbrella organization for them. The foundation issues publications on Liberalism and European public policy issues and offers space for the discussion of European politics.

**The European Liberal Youth (LYMEC)** is a pan-European youth organization seeking to promote liberal values throughout the EU as the youth organization of the ALDE Party and its parliamentary group in the European Parliament. LYMEC is made up of Member Organisations and Individual Members and it is active across the breadth and diversity of the European continent. LYMEC's central aim is the creation of a liberal and federal Europe.