CRISIS

Introduction

This Issue of the Interdisciplinary Journal of International Studies (IJIS) discusses the topic **'Crisis'**. The idea of focusing an Issue on 'Crisis' came as a result of extensive discussions among the editing team and colleagues from the Department of Politics and Society. Currently, we are experiencing crises in different forms and situations. Alan McConnell (2020) refers to "the politics of crisis" as follows:

> "Crisis is an "umbrella", under which resides a multitude of terms such as accidents, emergencies, fiascos, disasters, and catastrophes, as well as variations such as natural disasters, transboundary crises, and mega-crises."

In this Issue, we explore the concept of crisis, which does not have a commonly accepted definition even if it is a widespread term (Acuto, 2011). The term could refer to specific events and situations, such as conflicts, population displacement, poverty etc. However, it also refers to more abstract concepts, such as gender inequality and democracy failure. Therefore, we believe that this topic cannot be conceptualised by a single discipline.

There have been many scholars who have investigated the concept of 'crisis'. It has been studied both as an emergency, but also "as a notion, condition and experience [that] refers to and operates at various societal levels" (Bergman-Rosamond et al, 2020). At the same time, scholars like Roitman (2013, 2020) have criticized the use of crisis and connected it with proliferation, power and structural intervention. Roitman in her work asks: "how do we account for the world – or for specific situations and practices – in terms of crisis?" and "What are the effects of the claim to crisis?" (Roitman et al, 2020). It is true that both in the media and in the academic environment, one can encounter the term crisis multiple times. Is it a political decision to use this term or a specific characteristic that makes this term acceptable?

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We acknowledge that the word crisis has a negative connotation and a provoking sound which connects to alarming emergencies. Nevertheless, this term has been popularized by the media and is still the expression most often used to refer to current events. The term is also used to refer to so-called crises, such as the 2015 so-called refugee crisis. Since then, the vast majority of stakeholders, including politicians, NGOs, international organizations, journalists and academics have used the expression.

We also acknowledge that positionality plays an important role when investigating crises. As Jensen and Schneidermann (Forthcoming) problematize, "how can we take seriously that what for some appears like a crisis, is hardly relevant to others, when faced with multiple kinds of emergencies at once?" (Jensen and Schneidermann, forthcoming: 4). In fact, there are some cases where one could argue that there is a crisis within a crisis, and what is experienced as a crisis could be both a temporary or a long-term situation. We may understand this argument better by analysing the so-called refugee crisis. Although it was repeatedly referred in the media and by politicians as a refugee crisis based on the 'unprecedented number' of arrivals on the Greek islands (Greussing and Boomgaarden, 2017), it has also been referred to as a 'crisis *of* Europe', a 'crisis *in* Europe' or more generally *'the* crisis' (Tazzioli and de Genova, 2016).

As in every Issue, we welcome contributions from different disciplines. IJIS hosts contributions from Gender Studies, Global Refugee Studies, Development and International Relations Studies. This Issue is benefitted in particular by this interdisciplinarity, as the concept of crisis is relevant for political scientists, migration scholars, economists, and scholars of gender studies, psychology and development studies.

Although each of this Issue's contributions tackle a different perspective and discipline, they all have in common the exploration of 'crisis'. Understanding the problem referred to as 'crisis' is one thing, but some contributions go a step further and analyse solutions to these problems by the state. Heimstad (2022) explores the policy of 'sustainable immigration' as a solution to the 2015 so-called refugee crisis in Norway. Throughout the article, it is argued

that the solution offered by the Norwegian immigration policy is not sustainable and the term is lacking value.

Gadrezi and Ahmad Hassan (2022) offer a political contribution on the junction between PPP and financial inclusion through the lens of a case-study between the Pakistani state and the micro-finance organisation. The contribution raises important questions regarding poverty and economic crises, and provides practical policy prescriptions and solutions.

Our aim with this Issue is to also look deeper than the words and investigate the way that these situations are used in the political agendas and discourses. Berzins (2022) in his contribution uses the theory of 'Hybrid Warfare' to explore the situation in Eastern Europe and more specifically in Belarus. The crisis he is exploring has to do with the increasing number of refugees crossing the Belarussian border to the EU and the politicization of this crisis by the Belarussian government. His contribution also shows how this incident could destabilize the EU once more and he criticizes the EU's preparedness for another so-called refugee crisis. On that note, the essay by Berg (2022) discusses the way that a crisis can become a political debate by using the case of the Syrian conflict and the Responsibility to Protect.

The contribution of Vinter (2022) focuses on a subject of the crisis, the refugee woman. By using an intersectional lens and the notion of women's agency, she argues that "women fleeing on their own are likely to have a vastly different experience of the journey than women travelling with a man" (Vinter, 2022). Sierro Fernandez (2022) also writes on the subject of crisis from the gender perspective. In her essay, she discusses the LGBT + group of refugees and how the vocabulary we use to describe their situation may affect their identity. She argues that there is a need to allow a reconsideration of the identities, interests, and needs of specific categories of refugees, such as LGBT+ refugees.

On the topic of so-called crises or 'imagined crises' contributes the article by Christensen (2022). Zooming in on the Danish context, and developments within the Danish counter

terrorism policy, the contribution analyses the way that specific groups of people are being falsely portrayed as the reason for a crisis and how this affects policy-makers.

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Crisis and Credit: The Case for Running a Financial Inclusion Program through a Public-Private Partnership as a Method of Poverty-Alleviation

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Abstract

The globally-prevalent crisis of financial exclusion ails millions especially in developing countries, by trapping low-income households in a vicious cycle of poverty. One public policy measure to address this is through the provision of low-cost microfinance under countrywide financial inclusion programs. This paper explores one such financial inclusion program launched as a public-private partnership (PPP) across Pakistan in October 2021, titled "Kamyab Pakistan Program" (KPP). More specifically, it explores the role of AIM, a high-impact Pakistani microfinance organization, as one of the implementing partners under this PPP, and posits this as an ideal PPP with potential for success. This hypothesis generating case study is analyzed through a principal-agent framework by identifying the factors under which the expected success of this PPP is predicated on. Resultantly, three hypotheses are generated that identify the following three factors: 1) ideological confluence between the government-led Program and the microfinance institution, 2) past involvement in design of the Program by the microfinance institution, and 3) creation of subjectively perceived social responsibility by the microfinance institution. This paper reaches the conclusion that a public-private partnership of the nature explored in the case-study – such that there is a certain level of confluence between both parties involved in terms of both a philosophical basis as well as operational processes – is an effective method by which to achieve financial inclusion, which is aimed specifically at poverty-reduction.

Acronyms

AIM   Akhuwat Islamic Microfinance

KPP   Kamyab Pakistan Program

NGO   Non-governmental Organization

PPP   Public-private partnership

PPP Solution   Public-private partnership solution

Introduction

Financial inclusion has increasingly been hailed as "a key enabler to reducing poverty and boosting prosperity" (The World Bank, 2021) of a region, and as a tool for poverty and inequality reduction (Demirguc-Kunt, Klapper, & Singer, 2017). For this reason, it has been prioritized as a policy-objective for governments and multilateral institutions globally in recent times (Arun & Kamath, 2015). Since 2011, over 1.2 billion previously unbanked adults have gained access to a formal bank account and as a result, 68% of adults now have bank accounts globally (The World Bank, 2021). Despite this global trend of increased access to banking, Pakistan lags far behind, with 53% of the population financially excluded (State Bank of Pakistan, 2021). To address this concern, the Government of Pakistan over the last decade has launched various nation-wide initiatives to mainstream the provision of financial services, including the Prime Minister's Interest-Free Loan Scheme (2014) and the National Financial Inclusion Strategy (2015). While these aforementioned programs are ongoing and have met with some success, this paper will explore a different initiative, the "Kamyab Pakistan Program" (KPP). Launched in October 2021, the KPP is the Pakistani government's most recent, and ambitious, umbrella initiative yet (Haider, 2021). The KPP aims to be the largest of its kind in the world (Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan, 2021), and is envisioned to provide PKR 1.4 trillion in microfinance loans to 3.7 million households across Pakistan over the next five years (Haider, 2021). The KPP is one model of a public-private partnership, by which the government of Pakistan will be the prime financier and manager, and various private-sector organizations will be the implementers in a bid to reach marginalized populations (Business Recorder, 2021).

This paper posits that a dedicated public-private partnership (PPP) in which both the financing and implementing parties share common values and operational methods is the ideal manner to approach financial inclusion, which is aimed at poverty-reduction. This addresses the ongoing crisis of financial exclusion that is exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic with consequences including unstable and stressful living, especially for low income households (Arun & Kamath, 2015), and many others that are beyond the scope of this paper. In addition to this public policy contribution of the paper, the aim of this paper is also to provide a theoretical contribution in the form of generating novel hypotheses for future studies on the subject. Since this is a new area for PPP solutions and financial

inclusion, this paper is based as a hypothesis generating case study, which will be explained further in the next section.

The reason that PPP was chosen to address poverty resulting from financial exclusion for very low income households – hereafter referred to as "the PPP Solution" – over a fully-government-implemented solution or fully-private entity (usually, a Non-Governmental Organization) solution was due to reasons of inefficiencies occurring in either case, which is discussed in the literature review; this paper takes-off from this plateau of literature.

The case study chosen to explore this thesis is the case of the public-private partnership between the Government of Pakistan and Akhuwat Islamic Microfinance (AIM) under the Kamyab Pakistan Program (KPP), and the only aspect of financial inclusion explored is through interest-free microloans (AIM's model). AIM is a non-bank microfinance organization – which is therefore inherently more motivated by its poverty-alleviation mandate, which AIM also works to synonymize with its name, rather than profit-gain from beneficiaries who already belong to very low income households and may be unbanked in the first place.

In this case, the government is the financing party and AIM – the world's largest interest-free microfinance organization (Games, 2020)– is the implementing partner. The shared values include the philosophy behind their approach to the program (a social-welfare model shared by the Government of Pakistan and AIM, as explored in the section 'Shared Values and Goals' in the case-study section), and the shared operational methods include the process by which microloans are disbursed. It merits mentioning that the contribution of this paper through the case-study method is not just identification of certain factors in a specific case but rather their larger applicability to the "PPP solution" studied through the lens of the principal-agent theory.

To put it clearly, this paper serves a dual purpose, with the first being to provide policy-makers working on KPP in specific, and the PPP solution in general, with a prescriptive analysis for designing their own most effective PPP solutions. The second purpose is to generate hypotheses through discussion (hypotheses are therefore presented towards the end of the paper) for the PPP solution in financial inclusion programs, which can then be tested in future studies.

Methodology and Case Selection

This paper is based on a case study approach in which KPP is used as a starting point to engage with literature on the two separate topics of financial inclusion and PPP. The KPP case is uniquely positioned in this sense as it bridges the gap between the two topics while also yielding both theoretical and public policy insights. From a public policy perspective, the case is used as a reference point to identify the ways through which a government-led financial inclusion program can be best synergized with a private, high-impact microfinance organization, in which the former provides the overarching framework and financial capital while the latter is the executing agency (or implementer).

From a theoretical perspective, this paper is a hypothesis generating case study in which the single case of KPP-AIM partnership is qualitatively analyzed for identifying factors that suggest causal relationships for the successful implementation of the PPP for a country-wide financial inclusion program. A hypothesis generating case study is different from a hypothesis testing case study since in the case of the former, the aim of the researcher is to look for "relationships and patterns, and then… [propose] hypotheses which may then be tested in subsequent study" (Hartwick & Barki, 1994, p. 447), while in the latter, the hypotheses that are already specified are put to test using a new data set or empirical evidence (ibid.). Therefore, the various aspects of the KPP-AIM partnership case are sifted closely for revealing novel aspects of the partnership that would contribute to the success of the PPP, and those novel aspects would be presented in the form of three hypotheses that will be generated at the end of this paper. Since these hypotheses are being generated within the limitations of this study at this early stage of the KPP's implementation, and in addition to this paper serving as a reference-point for policy-makers, it will be interesting to note how these predictions fare as KPP progresses. It is hoped therefore that this article can also provide insights into how theory is translated into practice in real-time by laying the groundwork for future study.

Since this is a hypothesis-generating case study, the case of AIM-KPP partnership is chosen because it is an extreme case (Gerring, 2008), which refers to a situation in which items of inquiry such as shared values and goals, process and model effectiveness, and extended network of the microfinance institution are present in their extreme values. Here, extreme values do not imply that the explanatory variables identified are simply rare. Rather, it means that in this particular case they are present in such a clear manner that they are very close to

the ideal types by which 'concepts are often defined' (Gerring, 2008, p. 653). An extreme case illuminates causal pathways involved and allows the researcher to clearly identify the crucial determining factors in the case. This, in turn, enables the development of hypotheses, which can then be tested in other studies with multiple cases that contain the explanatory variables identified here to develop theory. This naturally means that through close inspection of the case, this paper will generate hypotheses that stem from it towards the end.

The overarching framework of analysis in this paper is the principal-agent problem as developed by Ross (1973) according to which the agent, who acts on behalf of the principal, cannot be actively monitored due to information asymmetry between the two. The principal in this case is the government of Pakistan (financier for KPP), while the agent is AIM (implementer). The problem here arises with the uncertainty of the microfinance institution disbursing the loans under KPP in accordance with the original vision and objective of the government in its design of the KPP. The case study shows how the features identified here overcome the principal-agent problem, thereby expressing this papers empirical contribution to a theoretical problem.

Literature Review

A distinction can be made between two types of modern states in terms of their provision of public goods: the interventionist state and the regulatory state. While the former centralizes administration and directly engages in the provision of public goods, the latter "relies on extensive delegation of powers to independent institutions" (Majone, 1999, p. 1). For the regulatory state, PPPs provide a unique advantage in the provision of public goods, as the state is able to benefit from the efficiencies afforded by the private-sector, such as avoiding the strict "line of hierarchical control by the departments of central government" (1999, p. 2), without foregoing the regulatory oversight provided by state institutions. Numerous other benefits of public private partnerships highlighted in literature include replacement of centralized planning with better metrics of economic viability (Glaister S., 1999), shared goals that optimize partnership (Wang, Xiong, Wu, & Zhu, 2018), and diversification of responsibilities and risks by distributing them between the public and private sector entities (Koppenjan, 2005).

However, where the efficiencies arising from PPPs have been valorized in academic discourse, there is also literature suggesting the contrary. For instance, Barnard (1968) argues

that an incongruence of goals between parties engaged in a PPP may lead to issues in cooperation, which has the potential to jeopardize its success Similarly, Savas (2000) suggests that regulatory glut by greater government involvement may create a disincentive for private organizations to engage in PPPs. Another potential inefficiency of PPPs may arise where the high costs of regulatory oversight may offset the expected benefits of lower-cost service delivery by the private organization (Sparer, 1999). Despite the potential inefficiencies including the aforementioned, the promise of PPPs still largely holds in discourse and the debate has moved in favor of the results that such partnerships can potentially foster.

Financial inclusion refers to "the process by which access to and the use of formal financial services are maximized, whilst minimizing unintended barriers, perceived as such by those individuals who do not take part in the formal financial system", and has been abundantly discussed in relevant literature (Zulfiqar, Chaudhary, & Aslam, 2016). Approaches to financial inclusion usually begin with a discussion from the ethical lens. For instance, Figart (2013) treats financial inclusion as an instrumental freedom borrowing from Amartya Sen's capability approach to development (Sen, 1999) . Another approach concerns the debate over the effectiveness of financial inclusion in poverty alleviation, as explored by many including Bateman and Chang (2012) who claim that microfinance results in disconnected, disparate and duplicated growth of enterprises which do not contribute to the overall growth of an economy which is usually based on mutually reinforcing networks of industries which enjoy economies of scale. However, this position has been countered by theorists including Demirguc-Kunt, Klapper, and Singer (2017), who instead stress that financial inclusion does in fact play a positive role in poverty alleviation by "helping people invest in the future, smooth their consumption, and manage financial risks" (Demirguc-Kunt, Klapper, & Singer, 2017, p. 2).

In this regard, this paper suggests that financial inclusion leads to poverty-reduction in two prime respects: firstly, by leading to "education, increased self-employment and human development" (Zulfiqar, Chaudhary, & Aslam, 2016), and secondly, by allocating resources more efficiently. Conversely, financial *exclusion* actively both discourages economic growth and leads to increases in income inequality. The paper also holds that financial inclusion must be considered a public-good for the onus of provision to be on the government, which is then

further made more efficient through a public-private partnership. In summary, Ozili (2020)suggests that in order for financial inclusion to be considered a public good, it must:

1.   Be available to all in an unrestricted manner

2.   Not exclude anyone from access

3.   Be accessible to all without payment

Any costs that arise as a result of providing these services must therefore be borne in the form of subsidies by the government (Ozili, 2020).

As previously stated, this paper stands at a nexus between literature on financial inclusion and PPP – research and writing on which is sparse – and works towards the second aim of serving as a starting point for further studies.

Kamyab Pakistan: The Case for a Successful Public-Private Partnership

Akhuwat Islamic Microfinance (AIM), the world's largest interest-free microfinance institution (Games, 2020), has made immense strides in poverty alleviation, including in its role as an implementation partner for various government of Pakistan initiatives over the last two-decades of operations. AIM operates on the principle of zero-interest. Its immense success is evidenced by data: AIM has thus far disbursed over 4.8 million interest-free loans amounting to over PKR 145 billion (approximately USD 850 million), with a sustained loan-repayment rate of 99.9% (AIM, 2021).

The Kamyab Pakistan Program (KPP) has five Programs under its umbrella, namely: Kamyab Kissan, Kamyab Karobar, Naya Pakistan Low-Cost Housing, Kamyab Hunarmand and Sehatmand Pakistan. However, the programs most relevant to this paper include the first three, which deal with the provision of microloans (Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan, 2021). The Program is intended to generate employment, encourage economic activity, work towards poverty alleviation, encourage Gross Domestic Product growth and most pertinently for this paper, encourage financial inclusion of the un-banked and very low income households – in other words, poverty-alleviation.

There are several factors which have the potential to foster success for the KPP - evaluated only to the extent of AIM's role, in this paper - and they will be discussed below.

Shared Values and Goals

Ideological confluence between a principal and an agent naturally reduces information asymmetry due to an alignment of the incentive structure between the two parties. More concretely, if the overarching belief system is one that is shared, the agent is intrinsically motivated to achieve the same results as the principal. As this ideological confluence exists between the government and AIM, it is reflected in the KPP. The KPP is underpinned by Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision of "Naya Pakistan," the hallmark philosophy of Pakistan's ruling party, the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf. The KPP reflects Prime Minister Khan's vision of "Riyasat-e-Madina," a welfare-state model originating from nascent Islamic history in present-day Madina, Saudi Arabia. This welfare-state model is vital to Prime Minister Khan's philosophy of "Naya [New] Pakistan" (Hoodbhoy, 2018).

Shared philosophical leanings inspired by Islamic understandings of fraternity between AIM and the government's "Riyasat-e-Madina" outlook work to underpin the KPP in a shared ideology. A defining feature of AIM is the concept of "Mawakhat," an Islamic concept loosely translated to "fraternity." Mawakhat is based on the welcoming of the Mujahideen (people of Mecca) after they fled Mecca to escape religious persecution by the Ansars (people of Medina) in which they shared their resources with them (Khan, Siddique, & Muhammad, 2018). Mawakhat stresses upon a shared bond of solidarity in which the financially more affluent help the financially constrained members of the society. The very act of loan disbursement is presented as a practical manifestation of the concept that binds the borrower in a subjectively perceived spiritual relationship with the organization in addition to the formal contractual relationship.

There is considerable overlap between Riyasat-e-Medina and Mawakhat, for which reason there is ideological confluence between the two parties engaged in this PPP solution. At the level of the state, the ideology of Riyasat-e-Madina is an overarching value system in which KPP is one of many welfare state oriented policies achieving redistribution of wealth. This overlap has also publically been announced by Prime Minister Imran Khan in a tweet in which he recognized AIM as a move in the direction of "creating a welfare state based on Riasat e Madina Model." (Khan I. , 2021).

This complementary relationship of harmonized ideological beliefs and instrumental manifestation of those beliefs is expected to create a confluence on the goals of the principal

and the agent, therefore aligning incentive structures and decreasing friction on the subject of the agent acting on behalf of the principal.

Synergies Through Process Overlap

In addition to the ideological confluence, there is also considerable operational overlap regarding the requirements of borrowers and in the loan-disbursement process itself, between AIM's model and KPP. This process overlap makes the operational relationship between the principal and the agent more streamlined, as it obviates the need to create new processes solely for KPP. The reason for this overlap is because the KPP is inspired by the Akhuwat model (Khawar, 2021).

With regard to process overlap in this case study, for both AIM and under KPP, the prospective borrower is expected to have a valid CNIC, a valid bank account, be a resident of Pakistan, and meet certain financial requirements. Additionally, and for illustrative purposes, the following is a generalized and simplified process for both AIM and KPP: the prospective beneficiary first expresses their interest in availing a loan, following which staff (either AIM or KPP-implementing partner) then verify the case by checking documentation and screening potential borrower, as well as by conducting what may be loosely classified as social and business appraisals. The funds are then disbursed and loan recovery begins the following month (Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan, 2021). This process overlap also results from the fact that microfinance institutions provide a model for the government to use as guidelines for their own financial inclusion programs. Even if the models of microfinance institutions are not replicated exactly in government programs, technical input through participation in steering committees finds its way into the design of these programs. For example, the Founder of AIM (Dr. Ajmad Saqib) was a member of the steering committee constituted by the government on KPP for providing "support in design, launch and implementation of KPP at the technical side" (Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan, 2021, p. 22), which naturally creates synergies, thereby further solidifying the grounds on which this PPP has the potential to translate to future success.

Moral Hazard and Adverse Selection

When it comes to financial inclusion programs run by the government, the risks of moral hazard and adverse selection are amplified. This is because of the incentive structure created

by the low-cost loans provided by the government with a number of features. First, it is reasonable to expect that borrowers are less likely to invest low interest loans wisely (Harper, 2012). This moral hazard of risky spending behavior thereby increases the chance of default. Second, if the borrower also has borrowed money through either informal channels of microfinance institutions that charge higher interest rates, then they can be expected to give precedence to repayment of those loans as they incur higher costs as compared to the low interest loan thereby creating another moral hazard (ibid). Finally, in the absence of an elaborate web of specialized microfinance networks for disbursing funds, government executed financial inclusion programs run the risk of attracting those borrowers most likely to default as low or zero interest loans are more likely to be taken by those who are most financially constrained. In essence, government owned institutions are likely to do "inefficient credit allocation that results in high credit losses" (Beck, 2015, p. 4).

These issues of moral hazard and adverse selection are addressed through AIM's group lending used in KPP. While traditionally it is believed that group-lending models increase the risk of moral hazard, AIM's experience over the last twenty years has certainly shown otherwise through its sustained loan-repayment rate of 99.9% (Ahmed, 2021). The case illustrates certain intrinsic factors at play which have contributed to AIM's past success, and which is predicted by this paper to have the same impact in the KPP Program thereby making it an effective PPP. The first is the sense of ownership fostered in AIM's borrowers, resulting from AIM's principle to convert borrowers into donors. This subjectively perceived responsibility in the borrower ascribes to the loan a social value that cuts across conventional systems of checks and balances. Another such factor stems from the sense of religious value instilled in the borrowers from the start of the process by holding disbursement ceremonies for microfinance loans in places of religious worship (mosques, churches, others). However, this does not mean that loans are restricted to those who belong to these religions – even though they account for approximately 99% of Pakistan's population (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2020)– AIM is a religiously impartial organization, for which reason this is not a point of concern (Akhuwat, 2022). When combined with the expectation that borrowers will use their loans to help themselves and ultimately those around them and remain honest in their dealings, this mechanism fosters a kind of normative pressure which is reflected in AIM's remarkable success. The unique advantage conferred onto AIM by its strategic social value and dynamic incentive structure for its borrowers is predicted to have a positive impact on the outreach, impact and sustainability under KPP as it rolls out across Pakistan in the years to come.

Finally, KPP is also predicted to solve the issue of adverse selection through AIM's extensive network of over 800 microfinance branches in over 400 localities across Pakistan (Akhuwat, 2021) .This naturally provides the kind of on-ground expertise which ensures a check on borrowers thereby reducing the risk of default. Moreover, this is also undergirded by an extensive social network that creates an additional linkage with borrowers and obviates adverse selection.

Hypotheses

The Hypotheses generated from this case study have multiple applications. For instance, they may act as tentative theoretical guidelines for analyzing the KPP as a PPP which addresses the crisis of financial exclusion. Additionally, they hold prescriptive value for analyzing the PPP solution for financial inclusion in other cases. Therefore, their public policy value is relevant beyond the limitations of the case study. They also act as a set of predictions for KPP which gives both policy professionals and academics qualitative parameters to track the success of the program, by a process-tracing study for instance. Theoretically, these hypotheses ultimately provide generalizable predictions for the PPP solution for financial inclusion. This is also a starting point for future studies that can test these hypotheses.

The first hypothesis generated in this paper stems from the ideological confluence between the underlying principles of AIM and the government's overall guiding philosophy. As illustrated in this case study, this confluence comes very close to an ideal-type concept level agreement. Placing this in the theoretical framework of the principal-agent relationship, the first hypothesis generated in this paper is: Ideological confluence decreases the impact of information asymmetry of the principal-agent relationship by aligning the incentive structure of the government and the microfinance institution.

The second hypothesis generated in this paper works at implementation-level by the agent identifying the role of involvement in process design of the financial inclusion Program by the microfinance institution. Here, instead of making a causal claim, the factor of involvement in design of the financial inclusion Program by the microfinance institution is claimed to have an intervening role of increasing process overlap between the financial inclusion Program and the microfinance institution that would consequently increase the chance of smooth execution thereby contributing to successful implementation. The second hypothesis is therefore: past involvement in design of the financial inclusion Program by the

microfinance institution acts as an intervening variable for successful implementation by creating process overlap between the Program and the microfinance institution.

The third hypothesis generated in this paper relates to the creation of a relationship between the borrower and the microfinance institution to address the risk of moral hazard and adverse selection that may exist in government-led financial inclusion programs. Borrowing from AIM's own model that uniquely addresses these issues, the hypothesis is: Creation of subjectively perceived social responsibility in loan repayment decreases chance of default for government-led financial inclusion programs.

Conclusion

Government-led financial inclusion programs are an essential part of poverty alleviation strategies of developing countries. Access to finance remains a prime hurdle for the often low-income and financially excluded to overcome this crisis by investing in sustainable and self-determined means out of poverty. This paper therefore has made a policy relevant contribution by identifying features of a PPP that are predicted to achieve successful implementation of a financial inclusion program, in the sense of providing an analysis of this particular case which can be used by policy makers for further action. Furthermore, this paper has posited that the PPP of the Government of Pakistan with AIM to provide financial inclusion as a public good holds promise for a large-scale and efficiently-delivered intervention with potential for scalability and international replication in countries, which face resource-constraints similar to Pakistan.

At the theoretical level, this paper has bridged the gap between literature on PPPs and financial inclusion. It has made a theoretical contribution by generating hypotheses for a PPP aimed at financial inclusion, paving the way for future studies to explore financial inclusion through the lens of PPP in a systematic manner by using the hypotheses generated here as a starting point. Fundamentally, this paper's use of the principal-agent framework acts as a guideline on future work that may take place on the subject. Its hypotheses will also contribute to understanding other such cases of PPPs for financial inclusion programs around the world, specifically in the context of developing countries.

Furthermore, this paper is a unique attempt at setting the stage for seeing how theory is translated into action. It extracts theoretical principles from a case during the start of a

Program under study thereby giving a starting point for a future study to see how these principles turn out towards the end of the Program. This has a great deal of relevance to public policy because it illuminates the relationship between theory and practice, and how they influence each other. Specific to the case, this paper has provided a theoretical guideline for both policy professionals and academics to understand the KPP and focus on explored factors as they evolve over the course of its implementation.

Finally, it merits mentioning that this paper is bound by limitations which leaves a gap for future studies to fill. While financial services hold immense potential, as explored, large-scale and publically-available data remains outdated and scarce; future studies conducted after a new census may allow for better monitoring and evaluation, as well as more effective post-program analysis. Further, such studies may also factor into account disparities between genders, and rural and urban areas for a more "inclusive" approach. Specifically for studies on KPP, it may be productive to note the impact of charging interest on microloans, as according to some Islamic beliefs (presumably held by a majority of KPP beneficiaries), charging interest is prohibited (Germani, 2012).

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The Magical Realism of Danish Counter Terrorism Policy, the Hunt for Witches and How to resist it

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Abstract

This article explores what perception of the terror threat legitimized the ongoing imprisonment of 6 Danish women and their 19 children in the Kurdish led imprisonment camps Al-Hol and Al-Roj in Syria. It argues that by framing the terror threat as an incomprehensible threat, the state successfully instills fear that can only be handled by exceptional measures. The article reads Danish counter terrorism policy as a text of magical realism to identify how the War on Terror speaks to an in-betweenness of realism and supernatural in the performance of threat. The framework enables scholars to point out states' unreasonable security claims, and thereby resist counter terrorism policy.

Introduction

For someone to be labelled as a terrorist threat does not imply an actual act of violence - the perception of intention of one is enough in itself:

> The senses perceive the events, yet magical thinking provides the explanation. The hidden knowledge provided by a secret source reveals the evil of witchcraft – or terrorism. The feared future dominates the explanation of the current state of the events.

- (Zulaika, 2016, p. 45)

This article explores what perception of the terror threat legitimized the ongoing imprisonment of six danish women and their 19 children in the Kurdish led imprisonment camps Al-Hol and Al-Roj in north-eastern Syria. It argues that by framing the threat of terror as an inevitable barbaric evil, the state can legitimize keeping its citizens detained in camps frequently referred to as "hell on earth". Hence, the threat of terror is framed within a crisis terminology enabling the state to successfully instill fear that can only be handled by exceptional measures, which is a general feature of governments' use of crisis narratives (McConnell, 2020). Empirically I zoom in on a specific type of crisis, the type of crisis that seems to be looming around every corner, yet only very rarely revealing itself in western contexts, and thus taking the form of an "imagined crisis" (Long, 2014). Long argues that states invoke laws of exception upon claims of national security when justifying border closure to prevent refugee entry. This article expands the argument by arguing that the crisis narrative, in relation to terror threats, not only legitimizes keeping foreign nationals out, but goes to the extent of keeping its own nationals out. Furthermore, the article explores a space for resisting Danish counter terrorism policy. Charlotte Heath-Kelly (2012) suggests reading counter terrorism policy as a text of magical realism to identify how the War on Terror speaks to an in-betweenness of realism and supernatural in the performance of threat, an in-betweenness which is characteristic of magical realism's assault on the basic structures of rationalism, and help us "point to the absurdity which we are obliged to accept" (Heath-Kelly, 2012, pp. 344–345). Magical realism utilises juxtapositions between the fantastic supernatural and the modern rationalist paradigm, and allows us to engage with the fantasy of counter terrorism policy, which seems to require us to believe in a "witchcraft-like possession", and highlight how its claims of security appear ridiculous (Heath-Kelly, 2012, p. 343). The analysis focuses on developments within Danish counter terrorism policy leading up to the public discussion regarding the 6 Danish women and their 19 children. The material

examined consists of official committee hearings; hearings in the parliament; newspapers; program proposals; policy papers; television and radio broadcasts; and institutional reports and range from 2002 until present.

Ontological commitments

The approach lies within the literature of critical terrorism studies (CTS). CTS adopts the ontological position of terrorism as a social fact rather than a brute fact, since the definition of a terrorist act does not rely on any objective characteristics but relies on judgements about the context, circumstances and intent of the violence (Jackson et al., 2011, p. 35). Terrorism was created to describe the actions undertaken by the French state against dissidents and dissenters in their own population during the time of the French revolution. In 1880 the Russian revolutionary Nikolai Morozov called for arms stating that: "Terroristic struggle which strikes at the weakest spot of the existing system will obviously be universally accepted in life" (cf. Jackson et al. 2011, p. 101). Today, it seems unimaginable that any one political actor would apply this label to themselves. This differentiation and transformation of the meaning of the word 'terrorism' is what Jackson describes as 'the definitional quagmire'; that no universal definition of terrorism exists, instead literally hundreds of different definitions are applied, and thus even the closest allies such as the USA, Canada, UK and Australia have different lists of proscribed terrorist organizations (Jackson et al., 2011, pp. 100–104). Because the understanding of terrorism shifts, so too does the understanding of *who* the terrorists are in any historical or political context, hence four Nobel Peace Prize winners has formerly been labelled as terrorists. The relationship between the historical context and the meaning of terrorism reminds us that it is a social construction (Jackson et al., 2011, p. 105). This does not mean that the acts of violence labelled as 'terrorism' are not brute physical facts for the victims and onlookers, indeed they are! Nevertheless, deciding which events count as 'terrorism' "depends upon a series of social, cultural, legal and political processes of interpretation, categorization and labelling" (Jackson et al., 2011, p. 35). Heath-Kelly argues that a constructivist approach enables us to engage in the politics of terrorism by exploring the creation of a discursive reality "where the term terrorism is used to delegitimise certain actors, achieve policy goals and conceal ambiguities at work" (Heath-Kelly, 2016, p. 60). Constructivist scholars are interested in investigating the political elite's application of labelling, and how this labelling affects a juxtaposition of the evil-doer and the legitimate power, functioning to emphasise the labellers position within legitimate politics.

I follow Zulaika's claims that "the ontology of terrorism has to look at the dynamics between form and formlessness intrinsic to the metaphysical powers and dangers of ritual, magic, pollution, taboo and the like studied by anthropologists" (Zulaika, 2016, p. 45). I suggest that reading Danish counter terrorism policy as a text of magical realism help us understand the perception of a supernatural mystified terrorist threat, which legitimizes imprisonment of Danish citizens. I contribute to Anja Kublitz's *Omar is dead: Aphasia and the escalating anti-radicalization business* (2021) by applying a constructivist approach. While Kublitz offers an analysis of how the perception of the 'new threat' of foreign fighters has surged a materialistic anti-radicalization industry, my approach offers an analysis of the construction of the threat that drives the industry. As accounted for below, the industry has materialized through increased government spending on Danish intelligence services and new public institutions aiming to prevent radicalization and extremism. Furthermore, it also accelerated radicalization businesses in the private sector including consultancy firms, and publishing of books and movies (see Kublitz 2021).

Danish Counter Terrorism Policy

Countering terrorism can be considered to entail policies that seek to eliminate terrorist environments and groups (Lindahl 2016, p. 214). Ronald Crelinsten argues that "how we conceive terrorism determines to a great extent how we go about countering it and what resources – money, manpower, institutional framework time horizon we devote to the effort" (Crelinsten cf. Jackson et al., 2011, p. 223). This perspective fits Danish counter terrorism efforts, since its policies have developed from specific events. In response to 9/11, Denmark adopted its first counter terrorism policy (Anti-terrorpakken) in 2002. Following the London bombings and the Danish cartoon controversy in 2005, Denmark adopted a second counter terrorism policy package (anti-terrorpakken II) in 2006 , and in 2015 the latest counter terrorism policy package ('Terrorpakken III') was presented. With a budget of approximately $152 million, 'Terrorpakken III' was more than seven times bigger than the two previous, money of which the majority was allocated to the Danish intelligence services, PET and FE (Kublitz, 2021, pp. 66–67). 'Terrorpakken III' came in the wake of the 'Copenhagen shooting' where Omar el-Hussein, a Danish-Palestinian, killed two people and was shot dead by the police. It was deemed a terrorist attack and not only increased government spending on intelligent services, but also accelerated an anti-radicalization industry that did not target the problem. Rather than focusing on immigrant youth in deprived neighbourhoods in which

Omar el-Hussein was brought up, the 2015 counter terrorism package mainly targeted Danish foreign fighters, despite the fact that Omar el-Hussein was not a foreign fighter. Hence, 'Terrorpakken III' did not only surge an acceleration of the anti-radicalization business but also forged a radical link between the terrorist attack in Copenhagen and returned foreign fighters (Kublitz 2021, p. 68).

In 2016 Denmark adopted its National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Extremism and Radicalisation (Regeringen, 2016), which strengthened the authorities' overall efforts for countering extremism and radicalisation at home. To sum up, Danish counter terrorism policy has recently been prioritized in terms of increased funding to both intelligence services and plans for countering radicalisation and extremism, which are influenced by the 'Copenhagen shooting', and increased focus on foreign fighters as the dominant terror threat to national security, despite the fact that the 'Copenhagen shooting' did not involve foreign fighters.

The slippery tung and the signs of the witch

In her article *Can We Laugh Yet? Reading Post-9/11 Counterterrorism Policy as Magical Realism and Opening a Third-Space* (2012), Heath-Kelly compares counter-radicalisation policies within the United Kingdom, to knowledge of the 'signs of the witch' as seen in *Malleus Malificarum* (Kramer & Sprenger, 1486) during the Middle Ages, as "both fantasies revolve around the notion that a secret society exists within, and threatens, the greater society – a feature noted of witchcraft discourse in the Middle Ages" (Heath-Kelly 2012, p. 347). Below, I investigate some of the similarities carried out by Danish counter terrorism policy to expose a juxtaposition of a supernatural and modern rationalist paradigm from a Danish perspective.

The Malleus Malificarum contains information for use in identifying witches. Malleus Malificarum was used as a judicial instrument to detect and persecute witches, and to specify the rules of evidence (Kramer & Sprenger, 1486). The comparison of anti-radicalization policy to medieval ages is not a farfetched line of thought in a Danish context. In fact, Muslims have in Danish public discourse been compared to medieval societies before. In 2004, the minister of culture, Brian Mikkelsen, introduced a 'battle of culture' stating that "a medieval Muslim culture will never become as valid as the Danish culture…" and that "in the midst of our country a parallel society is developing in which minorities are practicing their medieval norms and undemocratic mindsets" (Brian Mikkelsen cf. Kublitz 2010, pp.

112-113). The perception that a parallel society is developing within the greater society as a threat to 'our' values, shares similarities to how Malleus Malificarum frames the vulnerability of women to the supernatural threat of witches:

> Therefore a wicked woman is by her nature quicker to waver in her faith, and consequently quicker to abjure the faith, which is the root of witchcraft… …No might of the flames or the swollen winds, no deadly weapon, is so much to be feared as the lust and hatred of a woman who has been divorced from the marriage bed.

- (Kramer and Sprenger 1487: 1:VI)

The quote highlights the threat of witches within communities of women and suggests that, women divorced from the marriage bed have an innate risk of becoming a supernatural danger. Likewise, 'parallel' Muslim communities are practicing medieval norms and undemocratic mindsets in parallel societies 'divorced' from democratic values like democracy, equality, and human rights, and hence subjects are in risk of being radicalised individuals. Danish strategies for countering radicalisation and potential terrorists are focused on specific parallel societies that are in opposition to the hegemonic values of Danish society, in similarity to investigators of medieval Europe searching for secret societies and looking for patterns within communities of women (Heath-Kelly, 2012, p. 348).

As a part of the 2016 National Action Plan, the Danish government entered an agreement on stricter measures in relation to religious representatives (Regeringen, 2016). These measures are to prevent and ban foreign 'hate preachers' from undermining Danish democratic values and promote parallel conceptions of law and justice. The agreement includes a number of measures, such as a sanction list of hate preachers, criminalisation of voicing approval of certain criminal acts and mapping of mosques. Inherent in the perception of hate preachers within this legislation is an unseen power of words, which seems similar to the power of witches' spells:

> Religious preachers have a special position in terms of affecting its congregations. Therefore, it is especially problematic if they through their behaviour counteract and undermine Danish law and values.

- (*L 48 Forslag Til Lov Om Ændring Af Udlændingeloven.*, 2016)

Danish counter terrorism's focus on the slippery tongue of hate preachers expose a juxtaposition of the supernatural and modern rationalist paradigm. This power of words, as Heath-Kelly points out, bears resemblance to the era of spell casting (2012, p. 349), which is seen in the Malleus Malificarum's interest in how the greater society can protect itself from witches' words and their effects:

> …they distract the minds of men, driving them to madness, insane hatred, and inordinate lusts. Again, he continues, by the terrible influence of their spells alone, as it were by a draught of poison, they can destroy life… …by the terrible power of their evil spells, without any actual draught or poison, kill human beings.

- (Kramer and Sprenger 1487:1:II)

The legislation against the slippery tongue of religious preachers and their connection to hate or evil, has clearly targeted Muslim communities, since it contains a 'mapping of mosques' as part of the strategy. Malleus Malificarum stated that if people were properly educated, the power of witches would be redundant (Heath-Kelly 2012, p. 349). Likewise Danish counter radicalization policy includes "…providing children and young people with democratic skills, honing their critical thinking and social competences, and thereby preventing the development of risk behaviour" (Regeringen, 2016).

The part of Danish counter terrorism policy addressing radicalization shares similarities with the medieval hunt of witches in a number of ways. The similarities discussed, such as situating the threat community as parallel society within a greater society, and the slippery tongue of religious preachers resurrecting the notion of spell-casting witches, expose how Danish counter terrorism policy engages in a hunt for a supernatural entity that is incomprehensible.

The 'new challenges'

The premise for applying effective counter terrorism policy is itself exposing a juxtaposition of the modern rationalist paradigm and the supernatural. Most policy papers on countering terrorism presents a narrative of the threat as something inescapable or incomprehensible, as seen in the government's 2015 anti-terror package: "In the fight against terror we can never guard ourselves 100 pct. It will always be possible, no matter what we do. There is always a risk that one fanatic person will succeed in carrying out an attack" (Regeringen, 2015, p. 2) or

in the standard sentence of Centre for Terror Analysis' (CTA) risk assessments that "Terrorist attacks may occur with no prior intelligence indications, even when the perpetrators have previously been known to sympathize with militant Islamism or political extremism" (Center for terror analyse, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020, 2021). The narrative of an incomprehensible threat that we can never fully grasp, while simultaneously requiring evermore developed preventative strategies and security measures, exposes a juxtaposition of the supernatural and the modern rationalist paradigm. Read as a magical realist text, this example shows how the *magical* of counter terrorism policy is not obvious but an ordinary matter of everyday occurrence – "admitted, accepted, and integrated into the rationality and materiality of literary realism" (Zamora & Faris, 1995, p. 3).

Central for all Danish counter terrorism policy efforts is CTA's Assessments of the Terror Threat to Denmark (VTD). Two things strike me when reading through the VTDs. Firstly, the terror threat to Denmark has remained on the level of 'significant' (level 4 out of 5) since 2012, and it seems although the threat of terror is developing in character and mode, the level of the threat stays the same, and thus no matter how much money the government has put into its counter terrorism efforts throughout the years, it has never managed to bring down this level of threat. Secondly, I do notice a development of the reports, not of its content but of the layout. Up through the 2010's the report was published in a quite boring fashion. But the two recent VTD's are more presentable, including a guide on key concepts in the introduction of the report for, and a more presentable layout including pictures showing what I assume to be possible targets of terrorist attacks, such as Christiansborg (the parliament building) with its 85 balls of granite set up to secure the building from terrorist vehicles.

Figure 1: picture from CTA's VTD 2020

Furthermore, the newest reports highlight quotes of the most central threats to Denmark such as the foreign fighters.

It is CTA's assessment that a number of factors may have a particular impact on the potential intent of individuals in other countries, including Denmark's neighbouring countries, to attack targets in Denmark: Denmark's international military involvement, including Denmark's participation in the international coalition against IS in Syria/Iraq, current or previous cases where Denmark is portrayed as a "nation of offenders", prior knowledge of Denmark, awareness of the fact that preparations for an attack in one country against targets in another country may be particularly difficult for the authorities to uncover and thus to prevent, unwillingness to attack in one's own country and Denmark's geographical proximity.

"The threat may come from returned foreign fighters or individuals who are released after having served terror-related sentences."

Figure 2: picture from CTA's VTD 2020

The development in CTA's VTDs highlight the institutionalization of the 'War on Terror'. Jackson argues that the narrative about the existential terror threat has been repeated so many times by authoritative actors, and acted upon as if it were indeed a truth, that it has become an unquestioned truth. In addition to this, it has taken an external reality that can be seen and touched, including institutions such as PET, the airline industry and even the architecture of the Danish parliament building, making the terror threat warnings very real (Jackson et al., 2011, pp. 142–143). The authoritative voice of The Danish intelligence service is also established within this truth regime about terrorism, and their risk assessments are within discussions of security politics seen as extremely valid. The VTDs function as an important guideline for counter terrorism policy, although this perspective has also been challenged by

the government's policy of not evacuating the women and their children from al-Hol and al-Roj, which will be elaborated in the following section.

Responding to foreign fighters

The current government's position on Danish foreign fighters is that they are 'unwanted', that they have 'turned their backs on the Danish democratic values', and that they have "admitted themselves the face of terror and committed monstrous crimes against the humanity" (Frederiksen 2021, p. 14.40). This shows that, in the reality constructed by politicians, Danish foreign fighters have already been convicted of 'crimes against humanity' although they have not been put to trial yet - a tendency resembling how prisoners in Guantanamo was detained to provide "the proof that the worst of the worst were being kept under control and punished" (Zulaika, 2018, p. 211). In fact, the detainment of a Danish prisoner in Guantanamo was the subject of political discussions in 2004. Present Danish foreign minister, Jeppe Kofod, advocated for bringing him home by arguing that "it is about critical principles and values" (Kofod, 2004) and that we must defend citizens against being detained for years, having no access to a lawyer, and not being put to trial to determine legal status. On the 6th of September 2019, Jeppe Kofod stated that because their parents have turned their backs on Danish democratic values, the children in al-Hol and al-Roj are in a tragic situation: "There exists no forgiveness for the parents that brought their children to Islamic State's empire of the dead". Following Jeppe Kofod, and the current government's argumentation, the same principal values of democracy are used to argue the advocation for bringing home a foreign fighter imprisoned at Guantanamo Bay, and then 15 years later, to legitimize the detainment of not only alleged foreign fighters, but also their children. This tendency to portray the other in order to define one's own identity, is what Michael Taussig calls the Columbus Quincentenary:

> A formative influence on the precise constitution of this mixture and its tension is paranoia, as if the make-up of knowledge, the Self, and the very principle of identity itself cannot exist without the fantasmic presence of a feared other

- (Taussig, 1992, p. 37)

Hence, Jeppe Kofod, in these examples, provides a depiction of the national democratic identity in opposition to a fantasmic presence of a feared other, although the opposite has changed from being the ones detaining, to becoming the detainees.

At the core of the government's argumentation is the prioritization of 'national security' which is unequivocally linked to the aforementioned VTD's of CTA (Hækkerup, 2019b) - at least until most recently. In the 2020 VTD it was assessed "that the risk of indoctrination and other types of influence increases with the time spent by the children in a radicalized environment such as the camps in north-eastern Syria" (Center for terroranalyse, 2020, p. 16). To this, the minister of justice, Nick Hækkerup stated that "PET has made their assessment and that is fair enough. Nevertheless, it does not fit the government's policy…" (*Åbent Samråd Om Hjemtagelse Af de Danske Børn Fanget i Teltlejrene i Syrien*, 2021). What these turns and twists in the current government's policy illustrate is how the construction of the perceived threat, and the response to it, changes and is legitimized in accordance to the cultural hegemony. The change in argumentation and policy of the current government from 2004 until now, reaffirms the perception of the terrorist as something so magical that the government's own intelligence services' modern rationalist response to it, can be ignored or occluded (Stoler, 2016).

Kublitz argues that Omar el-Hussein has been stripped from the specific historical and social context he grew up in, enabling the government to turn him into an empty signifier of the Islamic terrorist, including returned foreign fighters. This contradicts the fact that he was a Danish citizen growing up in Danish housing projects, going to Danish primary schools, involved in Danish gang-related conflicts and spending time in Danish prisons (Kublitz, 2021, pp. 70-72). From a similar perspective, also highlighting a form of occlusion of knowledge, Zulaika & Douglass argue that "By turning terror into a projective fantasy of bizarre plots and utter anomaly dreamed up by others wholly unlike us, the real terrors in our daily lives are concealed and granted normalcy" (1996, p. 187). From these perspectives, reading Danish counter terrorism policy as a magical realism text offers an ontological disruption which "serves the purpose of political and cultural disruption: magic is often given as a cultural corrective, requiring readers to scrutinize accepted realistic conventions of causality, materiality, motivation" (Zamora & Faris, 1995, p. 3). These insights helps us see the 'accepted realistic conventions of causality' inherent in Danish counter terrorism policy, and especially in regards to the perception of foreign fighters following the 'Copenhagen shooting'. Furthermore, the ironic dichotomy encoded in the critical term "magical realism" is also exposed. The term implies a clear opposition between the reality and magic that exists in a magical realism text – "For the characters who inhabit the fictional world, and for the

author who creates it, magic may be real, reality magical…" (Zamora & Faris, 1995, p. 3). Hence, the authors of Danish counter terrorism policy (the state) through the construction of the threat of foreign fighters and the ongoing institutionalization of the 'War on Terror' makes the 'magic' of terrorism very real, while, when scrutinizing this text, it becomes apparent that the state's 'real' has become 'magical' for the inhabitants of this fictional world.

Closing remarks

With this article, I aim to contribute to a better understanding of the mystique of something, that while it is statistically less fatal than choking to death on one's lunch, has been perceived as one of the greatest public threats (Zulaika & Douglass, 1996, p. 6). I find that situating parallel societies of Muslims within the greater democratic Danish society and the magic spells of religious preachers, bear resemblance to the hunt of witches written in the Malleus Malificarum. Secondly, juxtaposing the supernatural with a modern rationalist paradigm does not only, nor necessarily, open up a third space of laughter, but is useful as a concept to scholarly resist the absurd security claims of Danish counter terrorism policy (Heath-Kelly, 2012, p. 345). By zooming in on a specific type of crisis, the article argues that laws of exception do not only apply to foreign nationals (refugees) (Long, 2014), but extend to nationals as well. I suggest that the occlusion of knowledge (Stoler, 2016) seen in the aftermath of the 'Copenhagen attack' (Kublitz, 2021) is driven by the construction of the 'terrorist' as something so barbaric and evil that 'the attack' cannot simply be caused by specific historical and social conditions, but must be caused by a supernatural power, that not even our intelligence services can fully grasp. Conclusively, I find that what drives the anti-radicalization industry is the states' construction of some people (including children!) as ultimate evil-doers having witchcraft-like possessions, that by all means possible must be countered - no matter what the costs and consequences.

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Hybrid warfare: weaponized migration on the eastern border of the EU?

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Abstract

After a forced landing of a Ryanair flight which was carrying a journalist and opposition activist highlighting the human rights violations in Belarus, the EU decided to expand the sanctions against the Belorussian regime. The sanctions have been increasing since the disputed re-election of President Alyaksandr Lukashenka. After the introduction of the last wave of sanctions, the Belarus-EU migrant crisis started. This article provides an overview of the migrant crisis on the Belorussian border with the EU, in the beginning of summer 2021. The research explores the possibility that this increase in irregular migration is an attempt to destabilize the states receiving the migrants. The theory of hybrid warfare suggests that striking a state's weakest link is an efficient way to destabilize it. This article seeks to answer if Belarus is using tools of hybrid warfare as a response to the EU sanctions.

Keywords: Belarus; Poland; Latvia; Lithuania; European Union; Hybrid warfare; irregular migration.

Introduction

The eastern border of the European Union has been gradually shifting eastward ever since the end of the Cold War (Ikonomou et. al 2017, p. 2). The external border progressed to the east when Finland joined the alliance in 1995 and created an EU-Russia land border for the first time (ibid. p. 27). It took 9 more years until the "Eastern enlargement" pushed the border even further to the east, causing the EU to gain two new neighbors in Belarus and Ukraine (Ceka & Sojka 2016, p. 483). The 2007 enlargement saw Moldova become a neighbor of the EU as well, yet after this, more than 14 years have passed since the last shift of the eastern border of the EU. This has caused this border region to become more established and concrete, giving more opportunity both for cooperation and antagonism to the direct neighbors.

Historically, the EU has had troubled cooperation with Russia, when comparing it to the rest of the neighboring states, since it has similar ambitions in the region to the EU (Klinke 2012, p. 930). While 'The West' still views Russia as a threat (European Parliament 2019, p. 3), a new concern has been emerging in the last few years – Belarus. Although the state has been led by the same leader since 1984, the EU-Belarus relations have rapidly deteriorated in the last two years (Whitmore, 2021). The tensions between the sides have only been escalating since the heavily disputed 2020 presidential election of Belarus, which is widely believed to be fabricated (Simmons 2021; Bayhan 2020; Mills 2021, p. 7). Not long after the election, the EU decided to impose sanctions against Belarus, as its leader Alyaksandr Lukashenka showed no signs of stepping down or having another election that could be proven to be legitimate (Council of the European Union, 2020). As the situation after the election only worsened in Belarus, with mass riots and protests emerging all across the state, both sides took action. The EU kept increasing sanctions, while Belarus detained increasing amounts of opposition activists (Yahorava and Gadina, 2020).

The constant sanctions and condemnation of the disputed regime pushed Lukashenka even further, forcing him to show his power in unprecedented and unexpected manners. One of the ways the Belorussian leader demonstrated his capabilities was by forcing a commercial *Ryanair* flight to land in Belarus on the 23rd of May, 2021. The plane intended to fly from Greece to Lithuania, briefly crossing the Belorussian airspace, yet it got intercepted by a Belorussian fighter jet ordering it to land in the capital of Belarus immediately. After the forced landing of the flight, a couple were arrested and detained – a dissident journalist

Roman Protasevich with his Russian girlfriend (Quemener, 2021). This was not taken lightly by the West, causing nearly all flights over Belarus to cease, as well as a new round of sanctions to occur from the EU, and other western-aligned actors like the UK, Canada, the US, and Norway (Smith et.al, 2021). Soon after this wave of Western retaliation to Lukashenka's regime, the Belarus-EU migrant crisis started. An unprecedented amount of migrants started flowing from Belarus to Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia (Grzywaczewski, 2021).

This article will explore the reasons behind the Belarus-EU migrant crisis, how it started, and try to investigate the possible correlation between the sanctions against Belarus and the start of the crisis. To further understand the current situation, the conditions that led to the tensions between the EU and Belarus are briefly examined. Inspecting events like the disputed Belorussian presidential election, the widespread protests afterward, as well as the imprisonment of hundreds of opposition activists, are crucial for understanding the case. Using the theory of hybrid warfare, the paper intends to either affirm or deny the possibility of this being a hybrid attack from Belarus to the EU. The article relies both on qualitative and quantitative data to analyze the possible correlation between the two events.

Statistical data is used to compare the migratory trends on the borders between Belarus and the EU, while statements from Belorussian politicians are taken into consideration to determine whether or not the crisis is manmade. The hypothesis of the paper is that the Lukashenka regime has deliberately supported and made the situation opportune for a migration crisis to occur on the border to the EU as an act of revenge against the sanctions imposed on the state of Belarus. Thus, the article's research question is the following: *Has the Belorussian regime aided the development of the migration crisis in a significant way, and if it has – can this be considered hybrid warfare?*

The last dictatorship in Europe

Oftentimes the current ruling regime of Belarus is called a dictatorship - and its president, the last dictator in Europe (Nikolayenko 2015, p. 231; Frear 2021, pp. 1470-1473). Although on paper the framework of the Belarusian government indicates that the country is a presidential republic with a bicameral parliament, the reality seems rather different. The head of the state,

Alyaksandr Lukashenka, holds nearly unlimited power within the country. His authoritarian ways allow him to imprison those who oppose the regime, as well as control the economy, and media (Marples 2009, p. 756).

Lukashenka's reign started after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The authoritarian rose to power by defeating the candidate of the Communist party, gaining 80% of the vote in the 1994 presidential election (Merkushev, 1994). While he was perceived as both a populist at the time, he did not come to power completely without a plan. He introduced many elements of the now-collapsed Soviet Union, ensured close collaboration with Russia, and gradually increased political repression (Nechyparenka 2011, pp. 12-14). All of this was done to construct a system that can only function with him at the top of the pyramid.

The assumption that Lukashenka is the last dictator in Europe has been around at least since 2001 (Mulvey, 2001). Despite this, only recently the pressure from the West and the citizens of Belarus had escalated to such a level that forced Lukashenka to demonstrate his power internationally (Staheev, 2021). The Western pressure did not come randomly – in fact, it had been there all along (European Parliament, 2006). The EU has been condemning the regime for a long time, yet the recent increase of Belarusian opposition activity demonstrated that the people have grown tired of the dictatorship. Already before the 2020 presidential elections, protesters against human rights violations and the current regime were detained (Viasna, 2019). This only riled the masses more, as information about Lukashenka's atrocities was being spread through various social media platforms like "Telegram" (Gerdziunas, 2020). Social media was not only used to put Lukashenka under a magnifying glass, it was also a way to organize protests. Both before and after the 2020 presidential election, mass riots took place all around Belarus. This led to an ever-increasing number of political prisoners, which led to even more demonstrations (Buzgalin & Kolganov, 2021). Svjatlana Tikhanovskaya was forced to flee after she tried to claim victory in the 2020 Presidential elections (Hopkins, 2021).

The repression of dissidents does not stop with detaining rioters. Torture, humiliation, and even murder are some of the allegations made against the regime. A well-known opposition activist Vitold Ashurak suddenly died from a heart attack while imprisoned. Beforehand, he had written a letter stating that political prisoners are forced to wear yellow patches to distinguish them. After two weeks, he collapsed in his cell, without any previous health concerns (Bialiatski, 2021). Gender-based torture, like sexual violence against female

detainees, has also been reported by several prisoners (HFHR, 2021). Due to this situation, an international reaction was provoked and sanctions invoked. On the 21st of June, 2021, the EU imposed more restrictive measures – the 4th package of sanctions towards Belarus (European Council, 2021).

Hybrid problems call for hybrid solutions

The 21st century has seen the least amount of state-based battle-related deaths in history (Koehrsen, 2019). Conventional warfare as we know it has been eradicated almost entirely. Since World War II, there have been only a handful of conflicts where global superpowers have been involved. Conventional warfare is no longer the main form of settling disputes, as states seek new ways to influence global affairs. One of the strategies that has emerged in the 21st century is called hybrid warfare. It is believed that the term first was coined less than 15 years ago when the military strategy was described by Frank Hoffman in his "Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars" (Hoffman, 2007). Although this particular theory is very recent, others are rather similar. Concepts like asymmetric warfare, irregular warfare, or ambiguous warfare carry a similar meaning to hybrid warfare. Thus, some scholars argue that the theory is "neither new nor unusual" (Paul, 2016). Others have even gone as far as saying that hybrid warfare and asymmetric warfare are actually the same concept – two sides of the same coin (Weissmann 2019, p. 19). Albeit this theory does not lack critics, it can be useful in explaining modern and past conflicts. For this article, it is perceived that hybrid warfare and asymmetric warfare fits well.

Hoffman has stated that hybrid warfare "incorporates a range of different modes of warfare including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder" (Hoffman 2007, p. 8). This implies that the concept of "hybrid warfare" is adaptable depending on the situation and current needs. What makes it so versatile and dangerous is that the strategy can be implemented on different frontiers at the same time, effectively striking a state's weakest links. As this approach can be both regular and irregular, it can be hard to counter it. The Russian example of annexing Crimea demonstrated that the combination of both regular and irregular warfare methods can reap great rewards. Albeit in this particular example, it seemed like the events unfolded in an extremely short period, but it was only the tip of the iceberg. In reality, it was a carefully sculpted plan designed to strike the weakest parts of the system with

varying levels of intensity, culminating in the annexation of a part of Ukrainian territory (Rusnakova, 2017).

The whole essence of hybrid warfare is to use the state's strengths, simultaneously taking advantage of the opponent's weaknesses. Modern-day military capabilities are vast, especially for great military powers. So, the concept explains how attacking less developed points can be beneficial, even though they are not viewed as traditional ways of offense. This strategy is especially convenient for states that are smaller, weaker, or economically less developed than the opponent, as it focuses on gradual destabilization rather than swift conquest.

The theory emerged as one of the "leading" theories of modern warfare when it was widely used to explain the Russian success in annexing Crimea in such a short period (Renz 2016, p. 284). With the majority of scholars writing about hybrid warfare in Russia, many states that have also used and are using similar elements of the strategy have been left unseen (Renz 2016; Friedman 2018; Eberle & Daniel 2019).

Common tools for hybrid warfare include cyber-attacks, as well as information warfare (Rusnakova 2017, pp. 359; 361). Usually, cyber-attacks focus on infrastructure, while information warfare is directed towards the masses. Both means are effective tools to destabilize a state. These are only a couple of examples, as theoretically there are innumerable ways to wreak chaos, thus weakening the state. The dangerous nature of hybrid warfare relies on hybridity itself – it is versatile and can adapt.

As targeting the weak spots is the focal point of the strategy, according to Dr. Viljar Veebel, controlled migration can be used as a tool of hybrid warfare (Veebel 2020, p.47). Although it is hard to prove that a state is blatantly using migrant flows as a tool to weaken another state, in theory it can be used as one of the paradigms of hybrid warfare. If a state is forced to receive numerous migrants it had not been anticipating, the system can slow down or even stop functioning. This can potentially lead to public unrest, which is one of the goals of hybrid warfare (Ibid.)


European migrant crisis part two?

In 2015, the EU had to deal with something it was not politically and structurally prepared for. Approximately 1.3 million people requested asylum in the EU, Norway, and Switzerland

(Connor 2016, p. 4). Most of them arrived via sea through the Mediterranean or by land through Turkey (Buonanno 2017, p. 100). The EU was not prepared to sustain such levels of immigration and several states like Hungary were not willing to work with the EU to accommodate the migrants (Weaver & Siddique, 2015). It caused one of the most prominent crises the EU has had to endure, which is referred to in the media as the 'refugee crisis'. According to the UNHCR, within two years (2015 - 2016), approximately 5.2 million refugees arrived in Europe (UNHCR, 2019). Based on the 2015 example, a refugee crisis is a way to destabilize an entire union of countries. Not only were the European and national migration response systems overloaded, but it also wreaked chaos between member states with different opinions and ideologies (Erlanger & Bilefsky 2015).

Although migration to the EU and especially the wealthier states like Germany has decreased drastically, it is still ongoing. Migrants and refugees of various backgrounds keep finding new ways to reach the EU (Grieshaber & Gera, 2021).

## Figure I. Migration routes to the EU
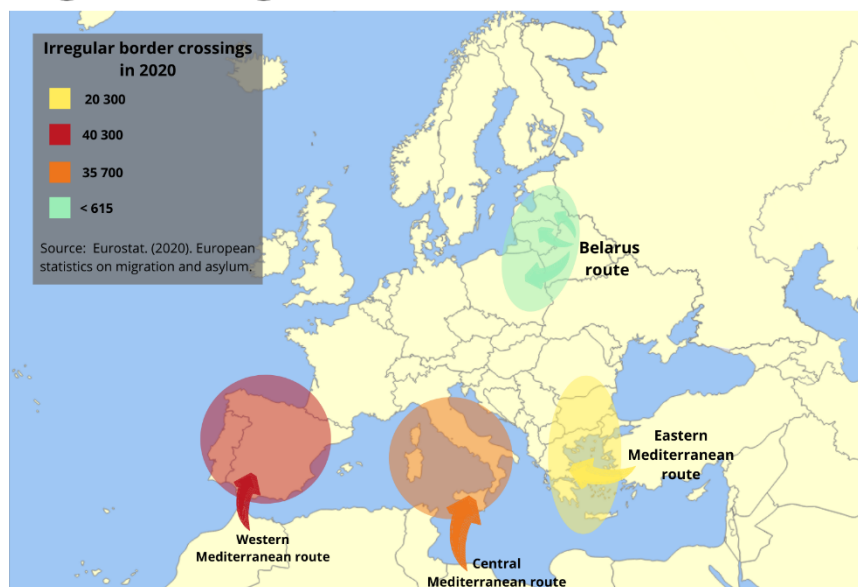
Source: Eurostat,
https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/statistics-migration-europe_en

In Figure I, one can see an illustration of the most common irregular migration[1] paths to reach the European Union. The Mediterranean was still the most commonly used way to reach the EU in 2020. According to Eurostat, there were less than 615 documented cases of irregular migration towards the EU through the Belarus route. The number seems vague, as the EU did not have a particular focus on this area in 2020. Instead, the 615 migrants were all

documented to be using the "Eastern Border Route", which includes reaching the EU through Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova. This indicates that the Belarus route was used rarely, especially in comparison to the three routes in the Mediterranean. Eurostat has also observed that irregular crossings on the Eastern Border route have decreased by 4% when compared to data from 2019 (European Commission, 2020).

If we focus on the Belarus route in particular, and take data from respective national border guard databases and independent news sources, we can get a clearer picture regarding the developments in irregular migration patterns.

Figure II. Irregular migration trends through the Belarus route
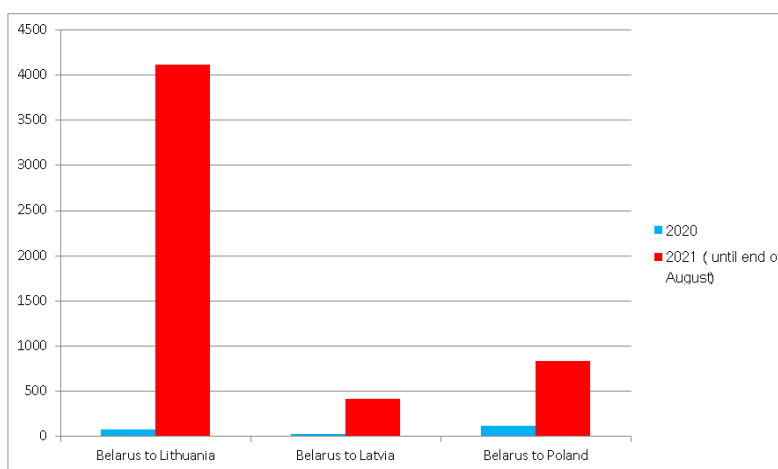
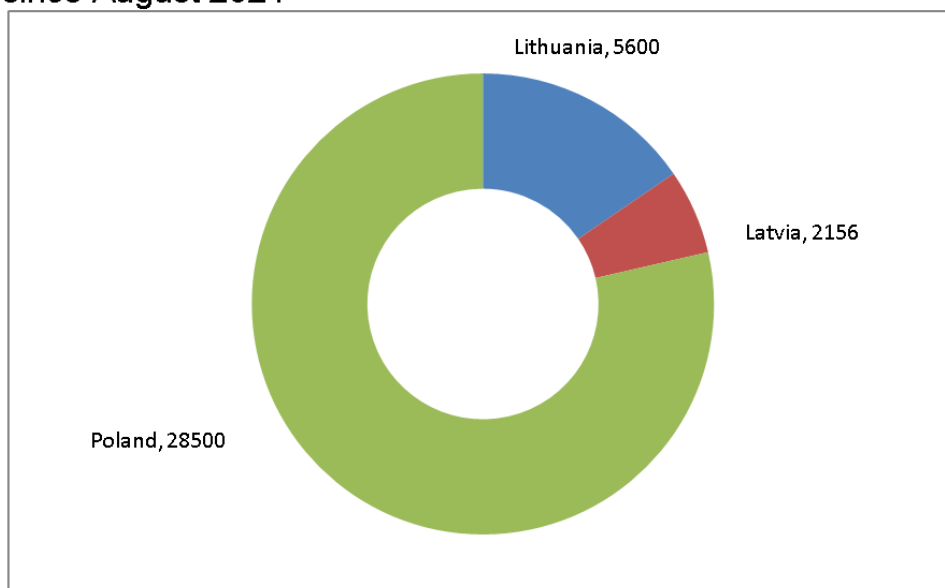Source: Reuters, Latvian State Border Guard

As stated in Figure II, the number of documented cases of irregular migrants increased drastically in 2021. We can observe that there is a 1700% increase in documented cases of irregular migration from Belarus to Latvia, almost 600% increase to Poland, while nearly a 5000% increase in irregular migration to Lithuania. The 2020 figures were the recorded cases throughout the entire year, while the 2021 figures represent only 8 months. Based on the information provided by the media, the highest number of these cases has been observed in the summer months of 2021 (Thiebault & Dixon 2021; BBC 2021). It is also worth noting that even though the percentage increase might seem unusually high, it likely marks the start of a pattern, as previously there were drastically less irregular migrants arriving through the Belarus route.

Most of the data available are divided into two categories: before and after August 2021. This is due to the fact that all three states receiving the migrants declared a state of emergency at different times in August (Kaczynski 2021; Henley et.al 2021). This changed many things, but the most relevant for the international audience is how the migrants were treated

afterwards. Due to the overload of the system, all three states decided to stop accepting migrants. Temporary fences were built up to stop the migratory flows. As stated in Figure III, since August 2021, thousands of migrants were told to turn back. Since the three states made the decision to refuse entrance to these irregular migrants, the data seen in figure III is only for the months of August, September, and October. Thus, in a quarter of a year, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland have seen disruptive amounts of migrants. Although from a human rights point of view it is devastating that the migrants are told to turn back, the EU firmly believes that this sudden influx of irregular migration is Belarus-made (Shotter & Seddon 2021). According to the theory of hybrid warfare, this is a way to create chaos in the EU, as there were previously no problems with irregular migration in these states, thus it was uncharted territory. By striking a less developed part of the system, the offender has a good chance to disrupt it and wreak havoc.

At this point in the paper, we have pinpointed that the migration flow through Belarus has increased drastically in 2021, but that is not enough evidence to state that the regime of Lukashenka is practicing hybrid warfare against its neighbors. To further examine the situation, we have to analyze what the authoritarian leader is stating, and practicing. First of all, there have been a number of videos and photographs taken of Belorussian soldiers forcing migrants towards the borders of the EU (Berkhead 2021; Latvian Army 2021; Roth 2021). This indicates that there is a Belorussian involvement in forcibly motivating the migrants to breach the EU borders.

Figure III. Irregular migrants who were denied border crossing since August 2021

Lithuania, 5600

Latvia, 2156

Poland, 28500

Although it was not clear how these numbers of third-state migrants arrive in Belarus, the Lukashenka regime has made it easier for migrants

Source: Polish National Border Guard, Latvian State Border Guard, Infomigrants

arriving from Iraq, Syria, and other third-states to acquire visas by outsourcing the visa applications to numerous travel agencies (Mudge, 2021). This not only has greatly increased the number of visas distributed but also made it seem like it is not the fault of Belorussian embassies. Albeit outsourcing visa applications is not unheard of, it does raise questions why it happened right after the EU sanctions were imposed. This might imply that it was a reaction to the sanctions. A hybrid adversary needs to adapt quickly, responding to every single provocation to maintain the irregular momentum of the conflict.

Lukashenka himself indirectly has affirmed that the recent migration flow is impacted by Belarus. He stated: "We will not hold anyone back. We are not their final destination after all. They are headed to enlightened, warm, cozy Europe" (Lukashenka in: Kuznetsov, 2021). By stating this, he at the very least indicates that the migrants are not his immediate concern. While comments like this would not be significant in a vacuum, when the context is taken into consideration, it can be perceived as a warning. By saying "We will not hold anyone back", Lukashenka is testing the limits of the 'gray zone' between war and peace. His implication is expressed neutrally, as if it was not his concern. One could assume that if he had used a different tone to express the same thing, he might have angered his Western neighbors even more. This is important because Belarus needs to remain in the gray zone. They do not want active warfare, they want to 'poke' the other side, as if waiting for retaliation from them. Hybrid warfare tends to fluctuate in activity, thus the authoritarian needs to balance the amount of pressure he applies.

If Belarus was using hybrid warfare, they would be attempting to destabilize Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, as well as the European Union. Lukashenka has been recorded blaming the three aforementioned states by noting: "But in fact, these (migration) centers are transit points. They deliberately release these people from the camps, knowing that their final destination is not Poland or Lithuania. Nor Belarus. They have reached this point and want to go further. They are bound for Germany, 'warmer' countries, as they say," (Lukashenka in: BELTA, 2021). Whether or not the leader of Belarus is speaking the truth, if such phenomena are proven, it would most definitely destabilize the relationship between the three states and the rest of the EU. This statement from Lukashenka highlights a key part of hybrid warfare – to create internal distrust. The goal of a hybrid adversary is to slowly weaken the structure. Therefore, his announcement does not blatantly advocate for Lithuania and Poland to be expelled from the EU. It more implies that there should be caution between Germany and 'warmer countries,' and the easternmost members of the EU.

Conclusion: Hybrid warfare or basic retaliation?

This article has explored the following key arguments: Firstly, the irregular migration levels on the Eastern border of the EU have reached levels that can be compared to those of the Mediterranean migration route of 2015-2016. This is an extremely alarming fact since the migration crisis of 2015 destabilized the EU by costing the member states financially (Park, 2015). The 2015-2016 refugee crisis was addressed by the EU with the enforcement of the EU-Turkey deal. One lesson from the 2015-2016 refugee crisis would be that the EU needs to get in control and act faster. They must either adopt a stance that the migrants are not welcome and declare that they will not be accepted or the exact opposite – open the borders for the migrants to safely cross into the EU. Albeit the latter might be an improbable scenario, it would support the humanitarian narrative the EU is sculpting.

Secondly, it has been observed that Belarus is not setting any obvious obstacles while these migrants are trying to reach the EU. By relieving the issuance of visas, and its support for the migrants' attempts to reach the border, the Belorussian regime is showing its position towards the EU and its neighbor states.

Thirdly, based on the statements from president Lukashenka, we can assume that the authoritarian leader has no intent to stop the migrants from coming to Belarus. Even though the EU member states bordering Belarus are refusing entry to the migrants, Lukashenka's regime is still amassing more people whose target is to get to the EU. If this continues, numerous people can lose their lives, as the weather conditions in eastern-northern Europe are getting harsher by the day. If this is a deliberate attempt to destabilize the EU as a response to the sanctions, it will only benefit the Belorussian case, as the EU will be portrayed as the villain for not rescuing the migrants.

In conclusion, we have explored how the Belorussian regime is aiding the migration crisis in a significant way, thus confirming the first part of the research question. All signs point to Alyaksandr Lukashenka using this strategy to knowingly direct the migration flows towards the EU, as he witnessed what the last migration crisis did to the EU.

Analysing the connection of whether Lukashenka is waging hybrid warfare against the EU is harder. Albeit he is weaponizing the migrants, hybrid warfare is a complex strategy consisting of several streams of offense, but we have only pinpointed one. Something that

does support the hypothesis is the forced landing of the Ryanair flight back in May 2021. Although it happened before the border crisis started, it was a breach of jurisdiction, causing the EU to look weak. If this is the case, then the hybrid war had started before, and the migration crisis was not the first strike. Another incident supporting the hybrid warfare argument took place recently – Lukashenka threatened to cut off the gas supply to the EU (Treeck, 2021). Currently, it might be too early to completely confirm that Lukashenka is waging hybrid warfare against the EU, but if the threats of cutting off the gas materialize – that could be a whole different story.

Endnotes

1. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), irregular migration is movement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulations, or international agreements governing the entry into or exit from the State of origin, transit or destination.

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Balancing 'the heartless head and the headless heart'

Averting from chaos and crisis to a policy of sustainable immigration in Norway

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Abstract

Originally a master's thesis, this narrowed-down article aims at examining the term sustainable immigration by applying it to a Norwegian context. It concludes that the term lacks value due to its vague nature and finds that it is difficult to measure. Further, by assessing Norwegian immigration policy in terms of sustainability, the article showcases that i) Norway rescues fragile societies from mass despair by providing humanitarian aid, but by doing so, it promotes brain drain; ii) Norway assists and protects refugees on paper but rather doubtful in practice; iii) Norway's voting patterns reveal citizens' preference of restrictive immigration policies but opinion polls and surveys indicate a nuanced picture; iv) Norway makes an effort to inform would-be migrants but migrants still seek to be returned to their country of origin v) Norway disregards the origin state when drafting immigration policy and; vi) Norway bases its immigration policy on long-term demographic, economic and social forecasts.

Keywords: Sustainable immigration; Norwegian immigration policy; migrants

Introduction

Starting in late 2014 and culminating in 2015, Europe witnessed a growing number of arrivals of African and Asian migrants. Most migration scholars referred to this phenomenon as the 'migration influx', while the media, the political and public sphere rapidly titled it the 'refugee crisis'. Naming the phenomenon a crisis contributed to a discourse of chaos and disorder. The so-called refugee crisis sought immediate attention and had to be addressed. In Norway, this meant a reassessment of the current immigration policy (Hagelund, 2020, p. 2). In order to deter crisis-like migration, there was an increasing call for a policy of sustainable immigration (Matlary, 2015; Solberg & Listhaug, 2016; Støre, 2018; Gjerde, 2019). It was a matter of balancing "the heartless head and the headless heart" (Betts and Collier, 2018) ; to avert from crisis and chaos to a policy of sustainability. However, the question rose: what is sustainable immigration? Actors across the spectrum claimed it and made it part of their discourse, ultimately diluting the meaning of the term. For example, both the Progress Party and the Christian Democratic Party declared a platform of sustainable immigration, even though their immigration politics differed significantly (Blaker, 2019). When parties with conflicting stands on immigration all seek a policy of sustainable immigration, it is reasonable to question what this term entails. This article aims to examine the term sustainable immigration by applying it to a Norwegian context.

Sustainable Migration Framework

The research field of sustainable immigration is characterized as relatively new and modest but growing. Despite prominent research by Erdal, Carling, Horst and Talling (2018), Betts and Collier (2018) and Jaer (2020) among others, no universal definition of the term exists. Nevertheless, this article utilizes a theoretical framework shaped by the definition put forth by migration specialist Alexander Betts and economist Paul Collier. It was selected because of its tangibility and for being the only framework which operationalizes sustainable immigration known to date. This Sustainable Migration Framework holds that sustainable immigration is 1) Immigration based on basic ethical obligations 2) Immigration based on democratic support in the receiving state, and 3) Immigration which leads to 'no regret' situations (Betts & Collier, 2018, p. 7). Each of these elements are further operationalized by several criteria. While sustainable immigration as a theme has been addressed in academia, its application to national immigration policies is arguable yet to be studied. This article is a

contribution to bridge this gap.

Methodologically, the article relies on document analysis and single case study. These methods combined promote research built upon critically examined data and in-depth studies with attention to detail (Grønmo, 2004; Wæhle & Dahlum, 2018). The selected data originate from an assortment of sources; Standpoints from the international sphere have been collected from inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations like the Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers, United Nations and Amnesty International; Political points of view derive from official press releases announced by political parties or the government; Informative and popular reports are provided by media outlets such as the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation, Aftenposten and Klassekampen; A legal aspect is added by the Norwegian Immigration Act and; Statistics stem from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and Statistics Norway. The selected sources are considered useful contributors to the sustainable immigration debate. By selecting data from international, governmental and popular sources, different sides to a story are told. They challenge each other and together create a greater understanding of the term. Combined, the sources say something about the value of sustainable immigration and Norway's relationship to such a policy. What these sources do not tell, however, is to what extent the findings for Norway can be generalized to other countries. Neither do the sources question the content of the Sustainable Migration Framework. How can the framework simply refer to aid as rescue from mass despair in fragile societies? If a policy of sustainable immigration must include a democratic mandate, doesn't that exclude a significant number of governments? And is it realistic to expect states to take other states into account when drafting a policy of sustainable immigration? Questions like these further enhance the development of the sustainable immigration term.

Norway's basic ethical obligations

The Sustainable Migration Framework suggests that a sustainable immigration policy bases immigration on basic ethical obligations. These ethical obligations are i) to rescue fragile societies from mass despair and ii) to assist and protect people who flee dysfunctional societies (Betts & Collier, 2018, p. 8). Referring to the first criterion, the duty to rescue fragile societies from mass despair is in practice to assist poor societies with humanitarian

and development aid. Norway established an aid fund in 1952 and has devoted a few percentages of its annual budget to assist developing countries since then. Tanzania, Mozambique and Afghanistan represent the greatest receivers of Norwegian aid, each receiving over 10,000 million NOK in total throughout the decades (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, n.d). The top three receivers of Norwegian aid today are Syria, Afghanistan and Ethiopia (Ibid.). This speaks of aid contributions aimed at war-torn, malfunctioning and unstable societies. At a global scale, Norway is one out of five that donates 0,7 % or more of its Gross National Income, a target set by the United Nations (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2020). It is evident that Norway generously allocates financial assistance to poor societies, but by doing so, is the country promoting brain drain? This is a phenomenon described as a region's "loss of skilled workers or students" (Cavallini et al., 2018, p. 5). Norway is a potential destination for foreign skilled workers due to its high wages and welfare benefits. By scrutinizing the Norwegian Immigration Act, Norway's active choice of prioritizing foreign skilled workers is apparent; A work permit is only granted if the applicant has received a specific offer of employment which is within an acceptable field according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' fixed quota and the position cannot be filled by domestic, European Economic Arena or European Fair Trade Association laborers (Immigration Act, 2008, §23). When Norway simultaneously aids fragile societies out of poverty while granting immigration permits to its skilled workers, Norway promotes brain drain. As it cannot be sustainable to drain a fragile society of its intellect, this criterion is thus questioned to work against its end goal of a policy of sustainable immigration. It appears ambiguous to achieve sustainable immigration by a non-sustainable solution.

Addressing the second criterion of the basic ethical obligations, the state's effort to protect and assist forced migrants require another examination of the Norwegian Immigration Act. The extent of protection of forced migrants is arguably far-reaching policy-wise. While international treaties often are interpreted in a narrow sense globally, Norway expands refugees' rights beyond its international commitments. For example, the categories of persecution which gives grounds for asylum are enlarged and specified in Norwegian law to include physical violence, mental violence, sexual violence, punishment defined as disproportionate or discriminatory, and acts of gender and child specific nature (Ibid., §29a-f). Further, the Act clarifies that it is not only states that persecute: organizations,

groups and non-state actors can be perpetrators too. In theory, Norway is protecting forced migrants, but how well does Norway protect and assist forced migrants in practice? The question results in a compound picture. Norway seems to uphold its obligations towards the refugees – as long as they are on Norwegian soil. For while Norway can showcase grants of asylum based on homosexuality, persecution by non-state actors and fear of genital mutilation, honor killings and forced prostitution for women (Skjeggestad, 2012; Selmer, 2015), the country has made it increasingly difficult to reach its border to apply for asylum. The only border crossing to Norway is through Russia if one wants to avoid the risk of being returned to its first Schengen country of arrival. When the so-called refugee crisis reached Europe, and eventually Norway, the Parliament decided to alter the Immigration Act in such a way that all refugees could be returned to Russia without processing their claim of asylum in Norway (Flyktninghjelpen, n.d). In practice, Norway shut down the asylum institution on the Norwegian-Russian border and put a stop to the flow of asylum seekers on this route (Austenå, 2018). This decision, along with other immigration restrictions, received international attention and was criticized by more than 150 organizations, academic institutions and individuals, among them the United Nations Refugee Agency, Amnesty International and several state departments (Regjeringen, 2015; Crouch, 2016). Instead of providing protection to refugees in Norway, the country sought to financially support them through the United Nations Refugee Agency in their neighboring areas (Alfa, n.d). Norway prioritized United Nations' quota refugees as an alternative to welcoming asylum seekers.

Despite Norway's relatively good merit in upholding refugees' rights within its borders, controversies have taken place. For instance, when the Directorate for Immigration doubted asylum seekers' claims regarding their age, medical examinations of teeth and hands were institutionalized. These tests were labelled 'problematic' and 'unreliable' yet affected the outcome of asylum applications (Malmo & Strøm, 2017). Furthermore, the Norwegian government was criticized for forcefully repatriating the so-called 'October children' to Afghanistan in 2017 (Amnesty International, 2017; Norwegian News Agency, 2017). These persons arrived as single minors during the so-called refugee crisis of 2015, and by 2017 many of them had turned 18 years old and were hence legal to return. The Norwegian government considered parts of Afghanistan safe, and thus, did not regard repatriation as problematic to the non-refoulment principle (Tjernshaugen & Olsen, 2017). Even though the

government saw no wrongdoing of its own, a French court stopped a return of an Afghani asylum seeker to Norway. It regarded Norway in breach of European minimum standards for cessations and returns, and ultimately, international human rights law (Norwegian News Agency, 2017). Due to these controversies and critics, Norway's practice of providing protection to refugees is questionable. Sub-conclusions like these create doubt about the value of the sustainable immigration concept. Is it a useful term when its core elements are so challenging to measure? By stating that on the one hand, yes, Norway assists and protects refugees, but on the other hand, no, Norway hinders asylum seekers from reaching their border, no clear answer is given to whether Norway fulfills its basic ethical obligation. Unmeasurable core elements speak of a term which simply falls short.

Norway's democratic support

According to the Sustainable Migration Framework, a sustainable immigration policy must take citizens' preferences into account. If it does not, the policy will not endure, and chaos and crisis might erupt. Betts and Collier suggest evaluating democratic support through i) voting patterns and ii) opinion polls and surveys (2018, p. 17). In Norway, the right-wing Progress Party is known to have 'ownership' of the immigration issue with its strict immigration policies (Stand, 2017). The Party has seen a steady rise in voter turnout since it changed its campaign to an anti-immigration tone in the municipality election of 1987. With the exception of the 1993 and 2021 election, the Party has held the position as the second or third biggest political party in Norway (Polls of polls, n.d). It first came to power in 2013, after two record-high years of immigration. Throughout its period in government, the Party managed to implement "the most restrictive asylum and immigration policies ever taken place in Norway, resulting in the lowest inflow of asylum seekers of 20 years" (Fremskrittspartiet, n.d). The Party has often been the center of attention; In the span of six years, no more than six of its Ministers of Justice resigned. Their responsibility was withdrawn, among other issues, due to critic-worthy administration of children repatriations and disputed social media campaigning aimed at foreigners (Prestegård, 2020). The Party leader Sylvi Listhaug has attracted considerable media attention, for example by stating how "foreigners are being carried into Norway on golden chairs", swimming in a survival suit by the Greek islands to "understand the refugees better" and actively participating in a search for illegal immigrants together with the police and a television crew (Zaman, 2016; Prestegård, 2018). The Party's immigration policy has been concluded as the main reason for its electoral

success (Gjerde et al., 2015). In the so-called climate election of 2021, the Party lost voters leaving it the fourth largest in Norway. However, in the 2021 national high school election, its youth party saw the greatest increase of voter turnout (Aas & Lunde, 2021). Even though it's the Progress Party which is known to have restrictive immigration policy at its core in Norway, other parties have increasingly followed its path. Norway's largest party, the Labor Party, described their immigration politics as 'human, fair and consistent' during the election of 2009 (Arbeiderpartiet, 2009, p.65). Today, 'consistent' has been replaced by 'strict' (Arbeiderpartiet, n.d). The Party has been accused of copying the immigration policy of the Progress Party (Krosby, 2018), and it's been questioned if a 'race to the bottom' in immigration policy is beginning to take shape in Norway (Johnsen, 2018). The fact that Norway's been conducting a restrictive approach to immigration at least since the Progress Party came to power in 2013 is an expression of citizen's preferences.

Voting pattern is a measure of public opinion, but it only depicts a nation's preference every four years and disregards the details of the political scenery. Opinion polls and surveys have the opportunity of providing a more nuanced picture by asking the right question at the right time. According to Statistics Norway, 52 % of the population believe that the access to the country should stay the same as today for asylum seekers and migrants (Statistics Norway, 2021). Those who desire less restrictive access make up 20 % and those who want more restrictive access results to 16 % (Ibid.). These numbers show that even though a slight majority agree to government policy, the rest of citizen's preferences range as both less and more restrictive. It is a reminder of the individuals behind the democratically supported government with the restrictive immigration policies. Further survey results reveal the range of Norwegian public opinion. For instance, in the 2017 repatriation case of the Afghani 'October children', 77 % of Norwegians supported reopening their application claims while staying in Norway (Støbakk & Karlsen, 2017). Another example of range is the public's attitude towards forced returns to Afghanistan in general. Opinion polls show how only 22 % of the public was in favor of the Afghan repatriation policy, while 41 % wanted to stop all forced returns to the country (Gullestad & Skårderud, 2017). These examples illustrate that the picture is not black and white. Even though there is democratic support for restrictive immigration policies in Norway, not all policies are of the majority's preference. Betts and Collier warn that "there are particular challenges relating to establishing which aspects of citizen preferences are fixed and which ones are malleable and can be influenced by political

leadership" (Betts & Collier, 2018, p. 17). These challenges add to the account of a comprehensive and unmeasurable term of sustainable immigration.

Norway and situations of 'no regrets'

The Sustainable Migration Framework stresses that a policy of sustainable immigration promotes situations of 'no regrets'. It is not preferable if a migrant is regretting the journey, the origin state is suffering from the departed migrant or the immigration harms the receiving country. Situations of 'no regrets' are operationalized as situations when a state i) provides sufficient information to would-be migrants, ii) regards origin states when implementing policy, and iii) bases policy on long-term demographic, economic and social forecasts (Ibid.). First, Norway's main channel for communication to would-be migrants is through the internet. Governmental websites offer concise information in English about migration to Norway. The authorities have additionally experimented with other information platforms of less formal character. For example, it has been revealed that millions of Norwegian kroners have been invested in governmental information campaigns aimed at discouraging migrants to come to Norway (Ramnefjell, 2017). During 2014 and 2015, the Ministry of Justice financed a 94-page Somali cartoon that portrayed Norway as cold, brutal and racist (Brandvold, 2017). It is reasonable to question whether this type of information is regarded as reliable and accurate, or simply a scare tactic with misinformation from the government. Since the Norwegian authorities started using social media as an information platform, would-be migrants have been reached on a greater level than with previous conventional approaches (Beyer, 2017, p. 6). The Ministry of Justice's 2015 Facebook campaign "Stricter asylum regulations in Norway" reached 11 million people and its videos were viewed over 21 million times (Brandvold, 2017). The page showcased videos with dramatic footage of journeys in rubber boats across the Mediterranean with voiceovers explaining that people seeking economic fortune in Norway would be forcefully repatriated. It also informed about potential return agreements with Eritrea and Iraq, indicating how there was no reason for these nationals to even make the journey to Norway (Gjerde et al., 2015). The Ministry's use of social media campaigns has raised questions regarding government communication on social media, specifically regarding "transparency, communication format and rhetoric, norms of dialogue and target group identification" (Beyer, 2017, p. 6).

Despite the government's effort to inform would-be migrants, there have been cases where migrants have returned to their country of origin due to a mismatch of expectation and outcome. Following the record-high year for asylum applications in 2015, the International Organization for Migration assisted 1,500 people in leaving Norway voluntarily, allegedly due to unexpected realities (Reinholdtsen & Alayoubi, 2017). For instance, there were reports of Afghani asylum seekers coming from Russia who believed that all applicants were granted asylum in Norway. They were hence in for a surprise when they discovered that most Afghanis were rejected asylum and indeed at risk of being returned to Afghanistan (Strand, 2015). The asylum seekers in question decided to retract their application and rather stay in Russia. Another example is the family of forced migrants who were granted residence in Karasjok, Northern Norway. According to the family, they were promised a paradise, but were confused when they arrived in a small town where the sun never rose and with temperatures down to 40 minus degrees Celsius. The family preferred the refugee camp in Lebanon over the spacious house in Norway (Reinholdtsen & Alayoubi, 2017). Norwegian authorities cannot be completely satisfied with their effort to inform would-be migrants for as long as migrants seek to be returned.

Turning to the second criterion, a state should take the origin state into regard when implementing a policy of sustainable immigration. It has already been concluded that Norway does promote brain drain through its cherry picking of skilled workers in low and middle-income regions. It does not regard the origin state when creating immigration policy. The bright side of brain drain is the remittance economy. When skilled workers are hired in more developed countries, it often includes a higher wage and the opportunity to send money home. Economically, a migrant is able to gain substantially in Norway and transfer remittances to their country of origin. The relationship between brain drain and remittances and whether they balance each other out is precarious (Betts & Collier, 2018, p.6). A way to counter for Norway's brain drain-supported policies, is to restore pride and purpose in countries of origin. What is necessary is to empower origin states to such a degree that people see opportunities and prefer to stay. By investing in education, entrepreneurships, private companies, job creation and youth, Norway can restore some of the damage it has imposed by draining low and middle-income countries for talent.

Lastly, situations of 'no regrets' are advocated through immigration policy based on long-term demographic, economic and social forecasts. Demographic statistics predict that in the decades to come, Norway will witness an increasingly aging population and a decreasing birth rate (Leknes et al., 2018, p. 126). Simultaneously, long-term economic forecasts are predicting that there will be a 20-90 billion NOK increase in social security costs in the decades towards 2060 (Stavrum, 2018). The disproportionate relationship between the number of workers and amount of elderly demanding their pension can cause problems for the survival of the welfare state. There will not be enough people to take care of the elderly and not enough money to support them due to the decreased number of taxpayers. Some argue that issues predicted in the long-term forecasts are reduced by admitting more migrants and that immigration is a prerequisite for the wellbeing of the welfare state (Hultgreen, 2013). More migrants will increase population growth, and if integrated properly, result in net contributions to the state. Migration specialist and chairman of the Norwegian Welfare and Migration Committee, Grete Brochmann, however, underlines that immigration is not a solution to the sustainability issues of the welfare state, it is rather a measure to postpone the welfare dilemmas (Lorentsen, 2019). It is emphasized that in order for Norway to address future welfare challenges, the solution is increased fertility rate, not immigration rate. These arguments indicate that Norway does base its immigration policy on long-term forecasts. But, like previous criteria evaluations, situations of 'no regrets' remain difficult to measure. There is no index displaying a state's regard of other states or the coherency between policy and forecasts. This element touches upon grand issues beyond this article, such as empowerment of states and welfare state survival. The term sustainable immigration is proving to be complex.

Conclusion

Through the theoretical lens of Betts and Collier's Sustainable Migration Framework, this article has examined the term sustainable immigration by applying it to the case of Norway. It found that i) Norway rescues fragile societies from mass despair by providing humanitarian aid, but by doing so, it promotes brain drain; ii) Norway assists and protects refugees on paper but rather doubtful in practice; iii) Norway's voting patterns reveal citizens' preference of restrictive immigration policies but opinion polls and surveys indicate a nuanced picture; iv) Norway makes an effort to inform would-be migrants but migrants still seek to be

returned to their country of origin v) Norway disregards the origin state when drafting immigration policy and; vi) Norway bases its immigration policy on long-term demographic, economic and social forecasts. Based on these findings, it is concluded that the term sustainable immigration is a term lacking value due to its vagueness and unmeasurable elements. Throughout the article's assessment of sustainable immigration criteria, the findings have promoted an understanding of a deficient term. One of the framework's criterion has been proven contradictory as it seeks to achieve sustainable immigration through non-sustainable solutions (i.e., brain drain). Other criteria have forwarded confusion and doubt concerning the term's importance due to its lack of measurable elements. It is questioned whether the term holds value as long as there are great challenges with measuring a state's fulfillment of basic ethical obligations, a people's democratic mandate and situations of 'no regrets'. The difficulties related to the term's vagueness and ability to measure depicts how sustainable immigration is more than just a popular word but rather multifaceted and complex.

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Sexual and Gender-Based Violence on Refugee Women's Journeys

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Abstract

In the wake of the refugee 'crisis', an abundance of anti-refugee sentiments can be found in the mass media. Curiously, the focus is centred on men, and refugee women are largely ignored in the media, yet this is not the case in the academic literature. Through a literature review, I uncover that the agency of these women is often forgotten by scholars. Focusing on the refugee 'crisis', I explore the obstacles that refugee women face on their journeys regarding sexual and gender-based violence. I pose the question: *How does sexual and gender-based violence affect refugee women's journeys?* To avoid representing refugee women as passive victims, I employ a gendered lens on the autonomy of migration approach. Overall, I argue that refugee women should be decoupled with notions of vulnerability and should instead be reframed as resilient women who constantly navigate difficult and dangerous pathways to fight for a better future.

Introduction

"Did you know that since the beginning of the immigration crisis the harassment of women has risen sharply in Europe?"

Government sponsored billboard in Budapest, Hungary (Bayer, 2016).

"This repulsive criminal must not only be convicted, but also deported straight back to Afghanistan after his imprisonment"

Government official Joachim Stamp, in response to an alleged rape of a German girl (Stickings, 2020).

Sentiments like the above seem to abound in European mass media. In the wake of the refugee 'crisis', the male refugee is painted as a foreign invader posing a threat to the European woman. Lutz (1997) and De Genova et al. (2018) indicate that "Fortress Europe" manifests these fears to protect notions such as national sovereignty (pp. 105-106), yet few mass media articles seem to consider refugee women, unless they are portrayed as affiliated with incorrigible men (see for example Dudman, 2018; Zeuthen & Sahgal, 2019).

Unlike the mass media, scholarly attention to migration and gender is far from lacking. I will now present a brief literature review of these combined fields with a focus on agency. Nawyn (2010) shows that after the seventies the experiences of migrating gendered beings started to be explored (p. 750), rather than just looking at the differences between men and women (Herrera, 2013, p. 476). Nawyn (2010) explores the feminisation of labour migration and points to migrant women as being "more exploitable" in the international labour market (p. 754). Herrera (2013) explores economic factors when discussing women and migration in relation to migrant care work (pp. 477-479). Importantly, Herrera (2013) criticises the tendency to view "family and the household as homogenous units" (p. 481), and although there may be "negotiations between husband and wife" (p. 480), it is usually "men [who] control remittances" leaving their wives in a less powerful position in relation to "gendered household dynamics" (p. 474).

Unlike Nawyn (2010) and Herrera (2013), Byrskog et al. (2014) and Freedman (2016) have a specific focus on refugees when exploring migrating women. Byrskog et al. (2014) explore refugee women from Somalia and the challenges these women face in relation to sexual health and violence. Byrskog et al. (2014) portray refugee women as controlled gendered beings: controlled by their violent husbands (p. 3), by the fear of state violence (p. 4), and by

fear of stigmatisation (p. 6). Similarly, Freedman (2016) explores a case study of a refugee woman who is scared of the men at her accommodation in France, so she wanders the streets to pass the time, yet little attention is paid to the woman's previous imprisonment "for opposing the government" (pp. 22-23) – in this way the woman is presented as fearful and powerless although she could have been reframed as a woman who defies laws to protect herself.

Overall, the literature on gender and migration seems to be saturated with terms and ideas connoting victimhood or docility regarding female migrants. Literature within the "field of gender and international migration has expanded dramatically" (Herrera, 2013, p. 472), yet it seems that the women portrayed are discussed as victims in a one-dimensional manner, where their agency is largely ignored. This does not mean that women do not face extreme hardship on their migratory journeys, and particularly refugee women seem to face a multitude of obstacles during flight, as indicated by Byrskog et al. (2014) and Freedman (2016).

Considering Byrskog et al. (2014) and Freedman's (2016) work, it seems that many of these obstacles have a gendered nature. Both exemplify that sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is a serious, almost omnipresent concern for fleeing women, therefore, I see this as a factor which must be thoroughly addressed. With these considerations in mind, I pose the research question: *How does sexual and gender-based violence affect refugee women's journeys?* I aim to explore this question in a manner that pays attention to the agency of women, particularly through a gendered lens on the autonomy of migration (AoM) approach, as will be discussed below.

I acknowledge that this is a rather broad question, so I must impose a few limits to allow for a more specific exploration. Firstly, I choose to focus on the refugee 'crisis', which, through European eyes, began in 2015 when over one million people attempted to reach Europe by sea (Clayton & Holland, 2015, para. 3). When I employ the term refugee 'crisis' I use inverted commas to highlight that refugees should not be seen as constituting this condition, but rather that the socio-political response to the situation constitutes this perceived crisis. This approach is in line with Freedman (2016; 2019) and is informed by De Genova et al.'s (2018) considerations that the "unrelenting proliferation of official discourse of 'crisis'" is designed to justify nationalist projects (p. 2).

The second limit that I construct is a focus primarily on refugees from the Middle East coming to Europe, although I acknowledge that such migratory flows are rarely simple or

one-directional, especially because EU countries "bounce [refugees] around" (De Genova et al., 2018, p. 246). With this geographic limitation in mind, it is important to remember that refugees coming from the Middle East represent a heterogenous group, with diverse experiences based on country of origin, class, race, religion, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, age, etc. To engage with some of these differences, I take an intersectional approach, as will be outlined below.

An implicit limit in the research question is the focus on SGBV, although a multitude of other factors also affect refugee women's journeys. I choose to focus on SGBV to provide as thorough an insight into this aspect as possible. Overall, I avoid presenting female migration as one homogenous experience for all migrating women, but rather focus on one aspect of a large and complex process.

Framework

Sex vs. Gender & Intersectionality

My research question implicates certain concepts which must be unpacked before I can embark on the analysis. Firstly, my focus on how *women* experience migratory journeys necessitates a conceptualisation of gender. As Nawyn (2010) states, gender can be understood "as a practice or ideology rather than a fixed biological category[sex]" (p. 751). But sex and gender may be linked, as is made clear from Carling's (2005) statement that "gender produces and institutionalises asymmetries on the basis of sex" (p. 2) Further, Carling (2005) states that "the most common weakness in gender research is the focus on *women* rather than on *gender*" (p. 3). To avoid this, I aim to unpack 'women' as a social category in a manner that sees women as gendered beings situated in complex power dynamics and navigating a multitude of dynamic gender relations.

Carling (2005) notes that "gender relations are always mediated by other socially constructed categories such as class, age, 'race', and ethnicity" (p. 3). Carling here begins a discussion of intersectionality. Collins (2015) presents a commonly accepted definition of this term when explaining that intersectionality "references the critical insight that race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age operate not as unitary exclusive entities, but as reciprocally constructing phenomena that in turn shape complex social inequalities" (p. 2). In this case, it can therefore be understood that the inextricable categories 'refugee' and 'woman' co-construct and maintain each other, shaping a complex web of inequality.

Taking an intersectional approach when discussing migration and women seems necessary considering Silvey's (2006) statement that "there is a variable porosity of borders, and the unequal geographies of spatial control reflected and created through these borders are intertwined with social hierarchies of gender, race, nation, and class" (p. 72). Here, the social identity markers a person holds are shown to have a crucial importance to migration.

Migrant vs. Refugee & AoM

The category 'refugee' is another underpinning concept implicated in the research question. One way to understand the term 'refugee' is as "a rarefied and exclusionary legal category", allowing states to produce asylum as a scarce resource (De Genova et al., 2018, pp. 244-245). In line with this, Crawley & Skleparis (2017) note that "choosing to label […] someone a 'refugee' is a powerful, and deeply political, process, one by which policy agendas are established and which position people as objects of policy in a particular way" (p. 52). This is a top-down approach where states determine who is a 'genuine' refugee compared to those seen as 'economic migrants' (Zagor, 2015, p. 380).

I take the approach of De Genova et al. (2018) as they "irrespective of migrants' status […] mobilize the term refugees […] as a strategic essentialism" (p. 245). This is a bottom-up approach, as strategic essentialism takes departure from the experiences and assessments of the people actually affected by real and concrete impacts of being a refugee. I use this conceptualisation of the term refugee when discussing refugee women to include those who would otherwise be excluded by the political elite.

Such strategic essentialism can be seen as a "necessary methodological reorientation" within the AoM approach (De Genova et al., 2018, p. 258). AoM avoids "the objectivism of economic models in migration studies that treat migrants as effectively inert objects at the mercy of 'push' and 'pull' factors of structural forces" (De Genova et al., 2018, p. 241). In addition, AoM scholars criticise the "humanitarian reason that has long dominated refugee studies by which refugees or 'asylum seekers' are treated as pure victims" (De Genova et al., 2018, p. 241). Rather than feeding into either of these narratives, AoM "insists on the analysis of migratory movements as exercising a significant measure of autonomy" (De Genova et al., 2018, p. 241).

A cornerstone of AoM is the decoupling of the image of the refugee with non-choice and as subjects who cannot but accept the conditions they face (De Genova et al., 2018, p. 248). Zagor (2015) suggests that this is "another way of characterising the refugee" as a person

who has "without authorisation or documentation" fought for their safety, thereby constituting "the quintessentially autonomous human being" (p. 378). Therefore, it can be said that refugees are seen as "the protagonists of migration", that is, their experiences and agency are placed at the centre (Scheel, 2019, p. 43).

Although AoM scholars ask how "migrants challenge, defy, and subvert border controls" (Scheel, 2019, p. 46), the approach is not "a romanticization of the migrant exercise of freedom of movement as a purely subversive or emancipatory act" (De Genova et al., 2018, p. 241) – therefore, I acknowledge the "coercive emplacement and immobilisation" imposed on refugees in precarious situations (De Genova et al., 2018, p. 248).

Merging Frameworks

In the literature review, I outlined how gendered approaches to migration studies tend to view women as victims without agency. AoM, while putting a focus on the agency practiced by migrants, initially seems to pay little attention to the impact of gender in this process. I suggest that these approaches might be merged in a way that combines 'the best of both worlds' – that is, a focus on how gender impacts the way a person is able to practice autonomous migration. In this way, I aim to address refugees as the protagonists of their own migratory journeys (to use the terminology of Scheel, 2019), while also having an intersectional focus that acknowledges the interconnected web of social categories that shape complex social inequalities. Therefore, I aim to view women as gendered beings situated in complex power dynamics and navigating a multitude of dynamic gender relations, who exercise a significant measure of autonomy in their migratory movements.

In this paper, I do not collect and analyse empirical data, rather, I aim to present theoretical reflections based on works published in scientific journals and academic books, as well as using findings and discussions from case studies. This paper will discuss somewhat broad themes identified in the literature concerning refugee women's journeys in relation to SGBV, rather than aiming to make narrow or specific reflections, as would be possible with empirical data.

Analysis

Throughout the analysis, it is important to bear in mind that while the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that around 21% of the one million refugees arriving in

Europe during the refugee 'crisis' were women (EP, 2016, p. 8), this statistic is highly approximate "due to the lack of gender-disaggregated data" (Freedman, 2016, p. 18). Also, many instances of such violence are likely to be undocumented (see: Byrskog et al., 2014; Pittaway & Pittaway, 2004; Baklacıoğlu, 2017). Therefore, the magnitude of the problem is likely larger than found in the literature and statistics.

With this in mind, I first explore how SGBV affects women differently based on whether they travel alone or with a man, then I will look into SGBV in relation to authorities, and finally I will reflect on how the EU may be exacerbating the risk of SGBV.

SGBV When Travelling Alone vs. With a Man

Women fleeing on their own are likely to have a vastly different experience of the journey than women travelling with a man, such as a husband or a male relative. Freedman (2016) suggests that "a greater proportion of women are now travelling alone, or with just their children" (pp. 18-19).

Freedman (2016) shows that women flee as a last resort compared to men who often leave earlier (p. 20), indicating that conflicts in the Middle East are reaching a critical point (Freedman, 2016, p. 20; Tastsoglou & Nourpanah, 2019, p. 39). One reason that women leave later than men is explained by Byrskog et al. (2014). They underscore that refugee women are aware of the risks of SGBV during flight, hence they may be more apprehensive of fleeing. Although Byrskog et al.'s study is based on Somali women, the awareness of the risks can be assumed to be held by Middle Eastern women too, an assumption I make based on scholarship produced by for example Asaf (2017), or Baklacıoğlu (2017), who both discuss Middle Eastern women who knew of the risks of SGBV before fleeing (p. 8; p. 88 respectively). In this way, women, aware of the risks they are taking, make a calculated risk, weighing their bodily autonomy against their future safety.

Women travelling with a man may travel with less insecurity concerning SGBV. As a case study by Freedman (2016) shows, the husband of one refugee woman had been killed so she fled alone with her two children – here, the woman experienced "another layer of insecurity as a woman alone without her husband" (p. 21). This indicates that travelling with a male companion provides a level of security in relation to the risks of SGBV. This can also be seen in Baklacıoğlu's (2017) work, where a Syrian mother expresses "I wish she [her daughter] do

not undergo her menstruation soon, because we will have to marry her in order to protect her" (p. 95), thereby underscoring not only the protection a man may be able to offer, but also how the status of marriage can be protective.

Travelling with a man does not de facto reduce the risk of SGBV. This is especially the case when the person committing the violence is the husband of the woman in question. In line with Byrskog et al. (2014), I use the term Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) to refer to this. In this paper, I include IPV in the exploration of SGBV because IPV often manifests within unequal gender relations and as such ought to be considered a type of gendered violence (in line with Gray, 2019). Both Byrskog et al. (2014) and Tastsoglou & Nourpanah (2019) highlight that IPV is frequently regarded as a 'private issue' (p. 7; p. 41), and especially Byrskog et al. (2014) show that their interviewees considered this an issue to be "solved within the marriage and within the larger family" (p. 7), a solution that must be harder to implement during flight, where many families become separated. Freedman (2016) notes that during flight, women "find it impossible to leave their abusive husbands or partners" either because of the increased risks of SGBV by other men (p. 20), or because of the fear of being delayed on their onward journey (p. 22). Freedman (2016) argues that they consequently "find themselves stuck in a violent relationship with no hope of escaping" (p. 22). However, this phenomenon can also be seen as women weighing the violence they undergo by their husbands against the violence in their home countries, and as such are not passive victims but rather make an autonomous choice to endure IPV to be protected from other forms of SGBV, and to be protected from the violence in the countries from which they are fleeing. Significantly, Yuval-Davis (2011) reminds us of "the differential situatedness of different social actors" that plays an important role in how such phenomena affect women (p. 4). In line with this, it should be considered that there are likely to be substantial differences within groups of refugee women, and while some may be practicing autonomous migration in this instance, others may, as Freedman suggests, be 'stuck' with little choice. The latter may be more likely in cases where categories like age or ability constrain the woman's relative power within the family.

SGBV by Authorities

Refugee women must also navigate the SGBV practiced by authorities. Attention to this problem is prominent in the literature, but the scope is likely to be larger than indicated, as there is no authority to report this to (Pittaway & Pittaway, 2004, "The Case Study").

Pittaway & Pittaway (2004) refer to reports of security forces and border-camp guards who take advantage of refugee women's dire situations by offering goods and services in exchange for sex ("Introduction"). This 'exchange' is so coerced in nature, that few scholars use the term prostitution to refer to it. Instead, Charles & Denman (2013) call it "survival sex" (p. 106) and note that this may be an 'option' considered on the "family level" (p. 106), yet Herrera's (2013) assertion that the family may not be a "homogenous unit" (p. 481) underscores that the measure of choice in this scenario must be seen as severely limited.

Freedman (2016) uses data from Human Rights Watch to discuss cases where "women were promised priority treatment of their cases and fast release [from border-camps] if they agreed to sexual relations with male guards" (p. 20). This data is backed up by Freedman's (2016) own interview data from Kos where women "had been victims of [SGB-]violence at the hands of Turkish police and coastguards" in exchange for 'privileges' (p. 22). Here, an intersectional perspective is particularly useful since the social category of class plays a significant role. Often, it is women in dire economic situations who face these issues (as indicated by Charles & Denman, 2013; Alsaba & Kapilashrami, 2016), while women with greater economic resources may be able to pay for safer travel in monetary rather than bodily terms. This underscores that the social categories to which a woman belongs have monumental effects on the obstacles she faces during flight.

SGBV Exacerbated by The EU

Pittaway & Bartolomei (2018) and Freedman (2016), indicate that the SGBV against refugee women is widely recognised, suggesting that the EU must have some awareness of this issue. Yet, as Freedman (2016) states "the EU's current policies may be acting to increase the vulnerability […] of these women" (p. 19). The ungendered nature of the UN's 1951 refugee convention (as explored by Tastsoglou & Nourpanah, 2019) or the Dublin Regulation (as explored by De Genova et al., 2018) serve as good illustrations of such policies, however, I here focus on how the EU is making the journeys of refugees more precarious and examine the gendered effects of this, to provide an example fit for the scope of this paper.

Freedman (2016) suggests that "as more and more EU member states […] attempt to close their borders to prevent passage or influx of refugees, the journey is becoming […] more dangerous" (p.18). This makes the journey of all refugees, regardless of gender, more strenuous. Baklacıoğlu (2017) provides one example of an EU attempt to prevent the passage

of refugees, namely "the [2015] EU borderization policies at the Libya-Italy route", which caused this route to become "the most dangerous […] in the Mediterranean" (p. 91). In 2014, "Syrian women were the main passengers" of this route (Baklacıoğlu, 2017, p. 89), so in 2015 it is likely that these women had to find an alternative route. Baklacıoğlu (2017) suggests that this "constant shift" causes changes in smuggling channels, which increases transportation fees paid to smugglers, thereby "forcing thousands of women into debt bondage" (p. 97). Such debt may be paid using survival sex, a term discussed above in relation to authorities, but it should be noted that the literature does not confine the notion to just this setting (as seen e.g., by Charles & Denman, 2013). Here, the importance of an intersectional perspective becomes clear, as women with better economic resources are more likely to be able to avoid this debt bondage, thereby decreasing the SGBV risks they face.

Furthermore, subsequent to the 2015 securitisation of borders along the Italian, Greek, and Spanish shores, refugees had to find new points of entry into the EU (Baklacıoğlu, 2017, p. 88). The refugees who succeeded in leaving their camps had to walk "hundreds of kilometres through dangerous conflict zones" to reach new smuggling hubs (Baklacıoğlu, 2017, p. 87). Bearing in mind the increased risks of SGBV when leaving refugee camps (Özdemir, 2015, pp. 53-56), and when sleeping without proper shelter (Freedman, 2016, p. 23), it must be considered that this forced "zigzag towards their aspired destination" (De Genova et al., 2018, p. 251) exacerbated the precarious situation of refugee women. However, Yuval-Davis (2011) asserts that "we cannot homogenize the ways any political project […] affect[s] people who are differentially located" within categories of belonging (p. 4), so we must remember that these refugee women represent a heterogenous group of people and that a multitude of other categories also impact the ways in which the journey may unfold. For example, ethnic belonging may further the precarious situation of refugee women partaking in this forced 'zigzag', as the mutually constitutive categories of ethnic belonging and gender can cause men from 'enemy groupings' to "rape and sexually torture women from other [ethnic] groups" (Pittaway & Pittaway, 2004, "Identity and Intersectional Oppressions"). This demonstrates that consequential distinctions in SGBV risks exist even within groups of refugee women.

Conclusion

From my analysis, it is clear that SGBV has an immense effect on refugee women's journeys. I am inclined to agree with Pittaway & Pittaway (2004), who suggest that the label "refugee

woman" is "a dangerous label" ("Refugee Woman"), precisely because of the two social categories evoked by this label. In this paper, I found that as a *refugee*, a refugee woman must navigate EU policies and design new pathways for flight. As a *woman*, a refugee woman must manoeuvre the SGBV risks posed by fellow refugees, by husbands, and by the authorities. However, these two categories are intricately connected, and a refugee woman must constantly manage both categories, thereby always calculating and weighing her bodily autonomy against her future safety.

In this paper, I have combined intersectionality and AoM, such a framework has proven to be useful to unpack the ways in which refugee women may practice autonomy on their journeys. Nonetheless, the differences within groups of refugee women must not be forgotten and may result in some refugee women being able to practice autonomy to a greater extent than others. Future studies could benefit from focusing on the factors which play a role in this regard.

In the literature review I point to the tendency to view refugee women as docile victims. Based on my findings in this paper, I rather propose that these women should be reframed as resilient women who are the strong protagonists of their own migratory journeys, and who constantly navigate the difficult and dangerous pathways and precarious situations created and exacerbated for example by unequal gender relations, authorities practicing SGBV, or ungendered anti-immigration EU policies.

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Parallel discursive arenas and LGBT Asylum: enhancing the protection of LGBT+ people on the run outside of Europe

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Abstract

More than 70 countries in the world criminalize same-sex sexual activity or the "promotion" of such activity (ILGA, 2017, as cited in Vitikainen, 2020, p. 64). Beyond criminalization, LGBT+ people across the world are subject to stigma and other disadvantages and dangers (Vitikainen, 2020, p. 64) that might force them to flee and seek protection as "refugees" in a different country. However, discourses of "crisis" that are often used when addressing humanitarian emergencies, such as the so-called "refugee crisis" of 2015, might conceal the diversity of displaced populations and the specific needs of different categories of refugees, including LGBT+ refugees.

This essay discusses the problems of the "crisis" vocabulary and the potential of the categorization of "LGBT+ refugees" to recognize the specifics of their plight and develop humanitarian responses better adapted to their needs. Furthermore, it presents the example of a workshop which can be considered as a "parallel discursive arena" where students and professionals working with refugees could reflect on the identities, interests, and needs of LGBT+ refugees and work towards rights-based humanitarian strategies to tackle the challenges faced by LGBT+ people on the run outside of Europe.

The "crisis" vocabulary and the "refugee" label

At the beginning of 2015, the increase in the number of migrants entering Europe was commonly referred to as "refugee crisis" in the media, political debates, and even in scientific output (Krzyżanowski et al. 2018; d'Haenens et al. 2019; Betts and Collier, 2017, as cited in Rea et al. 2019, p. 16) in the context of apocalyptic statements about an exodus described as "unprecedented" (Rea et al., p. 17). The "crisis" framing has been linked to "securitization" practices (Neal, 2009, p. 352) which allow for the implementation of "exceptional politics of speed and enemy exclusion" (Aradau, 2004, p. 388). In the case of the so-called "refugee crisis" of 2015, this logic of exception and emergency contributed to the creation of moral panic and the perception of migrants as threats (Rea et al., p. 17).

On the other hand, it has been argued that security approaches have an attention-catching potential that might contribute to the mobilization of more political support and economic resources to address humanitarian emergencies (Aradau, 2004, p. 394). This could be seen as an advantage in terms of managing situations deemed as "emergencies" and considering the way it connects the urgency of a "crisis" with a sense of moral obligation (Nyers, 2006, p. 4). In this vein, some scholars have re-named the 2015 migration flow as a "refugee protection crisis" (Orchard 2014, p. 33), a "refugee reception crisis" (Rea et al., p. 16) or a "crisis of European solidarity" (ibid, p. 19) in order to highlight the need of coherent and convergent policies to effectively manage migration in Europe.

However, the "crisis" vocabulary remains uncritical of the regulatory role of the "refugee" label, which differentiates between "citizens" (seen as the "proper" and "enduring" form of political identity), "refugees" (seen as a "temporary aberration to the norm" [Nyers, 2006, pp. 7-9] which disturbs the "national order of things" [Malkki, 1992, as cited in Nyers, 2006, p. 9]) and "economic migrants" (who are not considered to qualify for refugee status [Nyers, 2006, p. 13]). In addition to that, this type of discourse tends to promote a view of refugees as sharing a common humanity that masks their individuality as well as "the historical and political circumstances that forced them into this identity" (ibid, p. 16), and portrays them as "invisible, speechless, and non-political" in opposition to citizens with "visibility, agency, and rational speech" (ibid, p. 3).

The particularity and universality of LGBT+ refugees

In a move of "emancipation" (Aradau, 2004, p. 402) from the general category of "refugee", the categorization of "LGBT+ refugees" allows for a more situational and specific consideration of the complexity and polymorphism of forced displacement, while also invoking the universal right of "equality and non-discrimination" which "applies to all people, regardless of sex, sexual orientation and gender identity" (UN, 2017, p. 1). This is not to say that LGBT+ refugees are more deserving of protection than other refugees, but rather to recognize the specifics of their plight and argue for the development of more inclusive responses in accordance to their needs.

Refugees worldwide face common challenges, such as security, food and housing (Gillespie et al., 2016, as cited in Dhoest, 2019, p. 1075). In the case of LGBT+ refugees, these problems intersect with issues related to their sexual and gender identity, including stigma, criminalization, and structural injustice (Vitikainen, 2020, pp. 64-65). Even after achieving the official status of refugees and being guaranteed protection in a given host state, LGBT+ refugees might still face the disadvantages and systematic power imbalances associated with typically heteronormative societies (ibid, p. 69) in addition to potential harassment, violence and discrimination from families, other refugees, communities, and religious leaders (Alessi & Kahn, 2017, p. 23). In fact, it has been argued that the very same process of establishing the "genuineness" of LGBT+ asylum claims exposes LGBT+ refugees to often invasive methods (ranging from physically degrading, such as phallometric testing of physical arousal, to privacy-invasive interrogation and interviewing methods) which aim at "proving" their sexual or gender orientation in order to achieve the status of "deserving" refugees with a "well-founded fear of persecution" on the basis of "membership of a particular social group" (Vitikainen, 2020, p. 67).

A workshop to enhance the protection of LGBT+ people on the run outside of Europe

In this context, the constitution of "subaltern counterpublics", defined as "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses", represents a tool for LGBT+ refugees and their allies to "formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (Fraser, 1990, p. 67) and move towards a "rights-based humanitarianism" (Harrell-Bond, 2002, p. 52) that recognizes the agency, visibility and narrative authority of LGBT+ refugees.

An example of such parallel discursive arenas is the "Leave No One Behind: Migration Policy Lab" held in Aarhus (Denmark) on October 15th, 2021, and in Copenhagen (Denmark) on October 18th, 2021. These workshops were organized by LGBT Asylum, an NGO that "works for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons in the Danish asylum system and for the rights of LGBT+ refugees in Denmark" (LGBT Asylum, 2022) and invited students from different disciplines and universities to "develop innovative strategies that would help to enhance the protection of LGBTQ+ people on the run outside of Europe and present them to a panel of experts" (LGBT Asylum, 2021).

The workshops started with presentations by academic professors (Jesper Lindholm in Aarhus and Marlene Spanger in Copenhagen) and NGO workers (Mads Ted-Drug Jensen, LGBT Asylum, in Aarhus; and Sigrid Bjerre Andersen, LGBT Asylum, and Rikke Enggaard Olsen, DRC, in Copenhagen). They presented some reflections on the situation of LGBT+ people on the run outside of Europe as well as some protection gaps identified by NGOs, which include collecting information about the specific needs of LGBT+ refugees in order to develop more inclusive responses and the development of social networks for LGBT+ refugees to rely on.

Additionally, "the students had the opportunity of watching an interview with Mohamad Sourity, a Syrian refugee in Denmark who talked about the challenges of being queer outside of Europe" (LGBT Asylum, 2021), and "ask him questions in order to gain more insights on his personal story as a queer refugee" (ibid). Finally, the "students watched a video about the Cameroon-based NGO 'Working for our Wellbeing' and a short movie by the director Anne Eline Friis-Rasmussen" (ibid).

Inspired by these presentations, the students began to think about strategies to tackle some of the challenges faced by LGBT+ refugees. While working cooperatively and engaging in various interactive activities, the students came up with different strategies. Regarding the gap on collecting information about the specific needs of LGBT+ refugees, the students thought about a possible educational program for humanitarian staff working with LGBT+ refugees. In addition to that, other students focused on the development of social networks for LGBT+ refugees and thought about a potential mobile app for queer migrants to communicate with diaspora communities and an LGBT+ network to establish a local safe space for queer students. Additional strategies tackling other areas of intervention included the creation of a quota for LGBT+ refugees and a program with social media influencers that

could advocate for the rights of LGBT refugees across the world. These ideas were presented to a panel of experts composed by academics, NGO workers and politicians, who discussed the strategies and provided feedback to the students.

In sum, these workshops, seen as a parallel discursive arena, served to move away from a vocabulary of "crisis", "emergency" and "securitization" to focus on the particular category of LGBT+ refugees and the universality of their plight in terms of "equality and non-discrimination […] regardless of sex, sexual orientation and gender identity" (UN, 2017, p. 1). Taking into consideration the interests and needs of LGBT+ refugees, it was possible for students to conceive of rights-based humanitarian strategies that could contribute to the protection of LGBT+ refugees and share these reflections with various professionals who can implement these considerations into their work with refugees.

Conclusion

Questioning the vocabulary that we use is necessary if we want to be critical to ahistorical and de-politicized portrayals of refugees while avoiding "securitization" practices and "exceptional politics of speed and enemy exclusion" (Aradau, 2004, p. 388). In this sense, the constitution of parallel discursive arenas or "subaltern counterpublics" (Fraser, 1990, p. 67) allows for a reconsideration of the identities, interests, and needs of specific categories of refugees, such as LGBT+ refugees. The example of the workshops organized by LGBT Asylum shows the potential of such parallel discursive arenas to mobilize students and professionals working with refugees and move towards a rights-based humanitarianism that is more aware of the complexity and polymorphism of forced displacement.

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The Crisis in Syria and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

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Abstract

When the Syrian regime failed to protect its population, an intervention by the International Community would be deemed necessary according to the obligations set under the "Responsibility to Protect" norms. The intervention would have changed the nature of the war though not necessarily ended it. The Responsibility to Protect came about to address the dilemmas that powerful countries face when they decide to prevent war crimes and genocides. The crisis in Syria can be an example of how countries become hesitant to intervene when there is no foreseen direct threat or economic and geographical interest in the concerned country.

The Syrian Civil War

The case of the Syrian crisis is a modern civil conflict that evolved rapidly from peaceful demonstrations to a fight against an authoritarian regime (Richmond et al, 2016, p. 401). The Syrian civil war broke out in 2011 and left around 560,000 people dead. This conflict has displaced around 13 million Syrians, among whom 6.7 million left the country (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 2020).

As the conflict had escalated, the international community was hesitant to interfere due to the fear of inflicting negative consequences rather than positive ones on the country (Chandler, 2017, p. 202). However, to understand and analyze a conflict, such as that of Syria, and the role of the international community in escalating or resolving this conflict and the humanitarian crisis, one can consider a concept such as that of the "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P), which will be tackled in the following section.

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

The concept of the "Responsibility to Protect" has first appeared on the scene as an idea introduced by the International Commission for Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) in 2001. The idea consisted of making a "shift" from the "right of intervention" to the "responsibility to protect" (Chandler, 2017, p. 75). The "right of intervention" on the one hand, "put the emphasis on the international interveners to justify and legitimise their actions," while the "'responsibility to protect' sought to avoid this 'attention on the claims, rights and prerogatives of the potentially intervening states'" (ICISS, 2001a, p. 16, cited in Chandler, 2017, p. 75). This idea, therefore, became a norm in 2005 that many governments around the world sought to adopt (Bellamy, 2011, pp. 8-9). This means that the concept of R2P has come to prioritize individuals over states to ensure the states' obligations to protect human rights and prevent mass killings (Richmond et al, 2016, p.188, 253). Nevertheless, the evolved norm of the R2P, on the one hand, was seen as revolving around the obligation to keep peace and prevent violence, which can be done through cooperation between states and non-state organizations, for instance (Bellamy, 2011, p. 8). An example of this case can be of preventing a genocide like that of the Assyrians in the 20th century.

On the other hand, the R2P concept can be conceived as a "response to the dilemmas of humanitarian intervention" (Bellamy, 2011, p. 8). The example of Rwanda can best describe a

case where such a dilemma had hindered powerful states from intervening, and hence could not prevent the genocide of Rwandans (Richmond et al, 2016, p. 144).

Nonetheless, what marks the evolution of this norm in 2005 is the "strategy" and "tools" set by the United Nations in a form of three "pillars" to help prevent states' potential "misuse" of the R2P concept. The first pillar highlights states' obligations and responsibilities to protect individuals from "genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity" (United Nations, 2009, p. 1). The second pillar involves providing "assistance" by the international community to the concerned states in "exercising that responsibility" if they fail to do so (ibid). The third pillar revolves around "tak[ing] collective action" by the international community in a "'timely and decisive manner' … in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations" in case the concerned state cannot protect its population (United Nations, 2009, p. 1-2).

This means that the R2P can be exploited by states in a way that can influence other states' sovereignty negatively, as it could legitimize the use of force in cases where an intervention is unnecessary but taken as an excuse by a more powerful state. The criticism of the concept of R2P underlines primarily the issue of an "abuse" that could be exercised by greater powers (Bellamy, 2011, p. 19).

Analysis

When the civil war broke out in Syria, the Syrian regime did not hesitate to use military force to suppress the protests spread across the country. If we take the concept of R2P into account, the Syrian government can argue that it took responsibility to protect its population by waging war on 'terror', as it only considers rebels and other opposing groups as terrorists (The Guardian, 2011). However, if we look from the viewpoint of the international society, the Syrian government was depicted as a violent and criminal regime that has been killing its own people (Hubbard, 2018). This means that the international society should intervene in this case as the Syrian state has not only failed in protecting its citizens but has also intentionally committed crimes against its own people.

The first two years of the Syrian civil war have not marked any military intervention on part of the international community (BBC, 2019), despite the humanitarian crisis that necessitated an intervention. Some countries have expressed concern over the possibility of worsening the

conflict rather than resolving it. The international society found itself in a dilemma of whether an intervention will worsen the conflict or not (Chandler, 2017, p. 202). However, one of the perceptions about the R2P is that it evolved as a "response to dilemmas of humanitarian intervention" (Bellamy, 2011, p. 8), as argued above. This means that an intervention in the case of Syria is necessary to prevent a similar scenario to that of Rwanda from happening.

The Syrian regime has already "failed" to protect its citizens in the eyes of the international community from the very first day the government bombed its population. From an R2P perspective, the international community should have intervened against the Syrian regime as it had been committing "crimes against humanity" against its own people, according to the opposition (Rhodes, 2018).

Therefore, we can argue that because the international community did not intervene to stop "war crimes" in Syria, it has caused the conflict to progress and escalate. For example, an intervention in Syria would have stopped the Syrian regime from conducting more atrocities against its own population. It would have probably changed the dynamics of this conflict. From a R2P perspective, the international community's obligation is to intervene in the case of "genocides" and "war crimes" (United Nations, 2009, p. 1). Not intervening in Syria can be argued to have negatively affected the ongoing conflict in the country. This is because the Syrian regime could have considered the non-intervention as a green light to continue its military campaign against its own people.

However, as an intervention would have changed the dynamics in the Syrian conflict, it would not necessarily mean that it would have ended the conflict, whether now or in the future. Even if the international community intervened immediately and toppled the Syrian regime, there would be still a chance that extremist groups seize power. This might create a more complicated situation and further drive the country into the unknown and prolong the conflict.

In other words, using the R2P to explore the "causes, dynamics and/or the aftermath" of the Syrian conflict would yield different explanations. Taking the R2P into account offers the assumption that countries' fear of the consequences of intervention renders them hesitant to react to a humanitarian crisis, despite the perception about the responsibility to protect in preventing future genocides. This would mean that the humanitarian reason is only part of the reason why countries intervene in most cases, and states' obligations might only come onto

the scene if it is in their interests to intervene. This is seen when the US and its Arab allies first intervened in Syria when ISIS rose into power (BBC, 2019). The attack against ISIS cannot be explained as an R2P to prevent a humanitarian crisis. A possible reason for the attack is that these countries feared that an extremist organization like ISIS would expand further throughout the region, which would threaten their national security. This is also seen in the case of Russia's backing of the Syrian regime to protect its strategic naval base in the Middle East, as mentioned by Gardner (2012).

As a conclusion, the use of the R2P theory shows that the international community has been oblivious to its obligation to protect the population of Syria when the Syrian government "failed to do so," which could have been one of the reasons the war is still going on in the country. The lack of interest in replacing the Assad government, as it does not directly pose a threat to some of the concerned countries, could have contributed to a decision of non-intervention against the Syrian regime.

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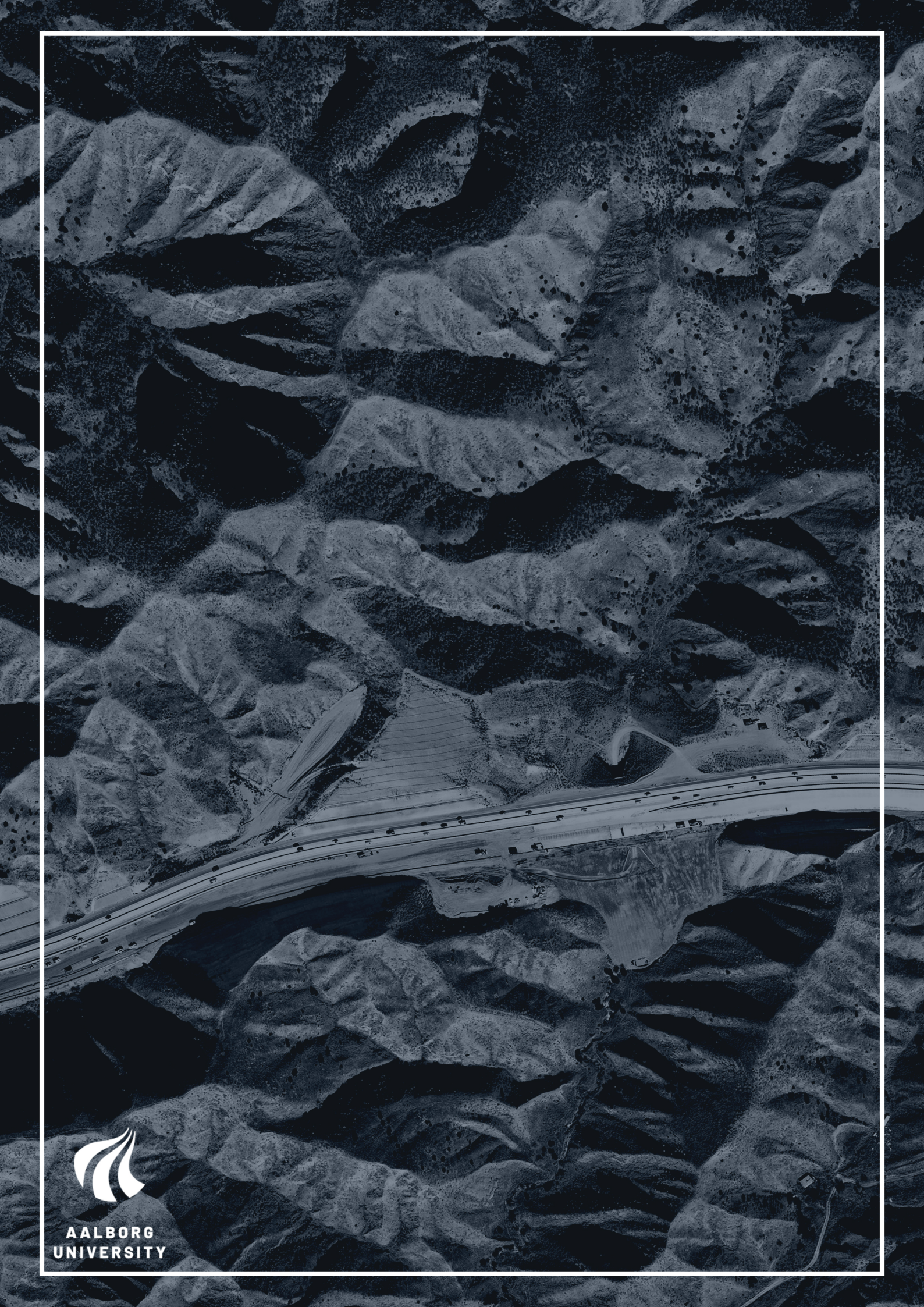
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