

Refugees and forced displacement

[Sociology](#), [Immigration](#)



The issue of refugee has been lingering in the world for a long time since the war phenomenon was discovered; refugees are people that flee from their countries if they see the condition of their original countries are unfavorable. The fleeing can be caused by unfair treatment, discrimination or many other small and large factors like employment opportunities.

The recent surge in the number of refugees who cross international borders in pursuit of protection has propelled interest in evaluating policies that reach the possible endpoints of the phenomenon. As prescribed by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there steps to follow when a refugee crisis emerges; they are; integration of the refugees in the country of destination, their relocation in a third country if the number grows and return to their origin country when the situation is controlled.

This topic has always been discussed on humanitarian grounds that are most of the time sentimental to the affected; refugees and does not consider the economic effects of that the refugees have on the host economies and the lives of the natives. This is the main focus of the paper and it will further propose and weigh policies that should be implemented so as to ease the bad effects or maintain if not grow the positive effects.

In this paper we are going to examine the economic effects of refugees on host countries. The European Union has estimated that over a million refugees have been rejected asylum seekers and been ordered to return to their original countries; this is a statistics from Europe alone. To these could be added refugees that have been given temporary shelter but who could be asked to return once conditions in their home country improve.

The debate on returning asylum seekers and refugees is nearly always cast in political, legal and humanitarian terms. This paper looks at the question of return strictly from the economic perspective in the advanced countries that receive refugees: is return in their economic interest? When we consider all main economic aspects – economic growth, fiscal, and labor market impact – the obvious answer that most advanced countries have is no. The hosting cost of refugees is considerable as the benefits are more when looked at from a long term perspective.

This paper also argues that; basing on economic grounds alone, the statistics show that mass voluntary return of the refugees to their original country is highly unlikely even when conditions averagely improve. The main focus of host countries has now shifted from one that is totally inclined to return of the refugees to one that is more considerate of the economic advantages that they come with.

According to the latest EU Action Plan on Return done in 2017, during 2014-2015 just over 1 million unplanned for migrants were rejected in the European Union alone. The EU received around 2.6 million asylum applications for refugee from war torn states; below 60% were accepted in the first case, showing that maybe as many as 1 million asylum applicants could be ordered to return. According to the latest World Bank migration brief (2017) in the EU, the number of potential returnees – those denied asylum and other detected undocumented migrants – rose from 1.4 million in 2011 to over 5 million in 2016. In the United States, the stock of potential returnees rose from around 1.5 million in 2011 to 3 million in 2016.

At the same time, actual return rates remain well below prescribed return line. Though not the main object of this paper, return policy also deals with large blocks of immigrants who come irregularly for family or economic reunification reasons and do not apply for asylum and further touches to the return of migrants who arrive legally but refuse to go back after their visas expire. It is important we touch on this issue as it is the employability factor that decides if the asylum seeker is accepted by the host country or not.

If we look beyond the fraught politics, appropriate policies towards refugees acceptance and retain, of which return policy is part; entails 3 considerations: legal humanitarian, and above all, economic. This paper will stick mainly to the economic effects of the refugees on host countries and also the economic effects of return policy if it is passed by the host country; while recognizing that the humanitarian and legal policies are an integral part of decisions to be made. More specifically, the main question that I choose to address is whether it is in the economic self-interest of host states to return refugees forcibly.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE AND HYPOTHESIS

The objective of this research is twofold. First, the paper seeks to synthesize existing academic and popular literature and case studies in order to present a holistic picture of the economic benefits and detriments that refugee crises can have on host countries. While the paper does not presume to tackle every conceivable facet of this discussion, it does seek to provide an overview of some of the most salient and relevant issues on both sides of the conversation.

Second, the research turns to the contemporary refugee crisis in Lebanon. At this stage, the paper examines the relevance of existing academic literature to the Lebanese case. The paper also briefly proposes broad policy responses for the Lebanese case that may serve to magnify the positive economic impact of refugees while mitigating the negative consequences. In this way, the entirety of the research seeks to establish a theoretical framework—grounded in historical and contemporary case studies through which policymakers and scholars can analyze the current crisis in Lebanon.

RESEARCH TARGET & SIGNIFICANCE

The issue of refugee crises is a particularly significant topic in today's geopolitical climate. As the world faces its most extreme refugee crisis in over 60 years, the international community has begun to take note. The issue has gained incredible traction at all levels of society. Policy makers in Europe and the United States have had to rethink strategies and adapt to a sudden influx of people, and international publications such as the New York Times and Wall Street Journal have brought the issue to the attention of millions of average citizens around the world.

The topic is as contentious as it is relevant; many see refugees as threatening their very livelihood, while others appeal for compassion and humanity for the over 60 million displaced persons. As this is such a relevant and contemporary issue, the target audience is very wide. This paper targets popular readers, development scholars, and policymakers. It will be especially relevant for individuals with an interest in developing regions

(particularly the Middle East) as the paper examines the contemporary Lebanese case.

Within that subset, however, the target audience includes those people who have an interest in the economic side of these crises. Much of the popular discourse in the media focuses on humanitarian issues and understandably so, but this paper seeks to address the economic components and effects of refugee crises, and attempts to do this through an unbiased lens. The target audience will be expecting to see a fair and balanced perspective of the issues.

The economic impact of refugees on host countries is certainly debatable; there are advantages and disadvantages, and both sides of the argument have valid points. The audience will be expecting to see historical case studies that illustrate and provide evidence for the aforementioned arguments. Additionally, refugee crises don't occur in a vacuum, but rather are heavily impacted by the underlying social and political fabric of a country. In this sense, the audience will expect the analysis of the current Lebanese crisis to incorporate these components into the broader economics-centered discussion.