



# PERSPECTIVES

from the Humanity in Action Network | Volume I

## ON MIGRATION:

### Historical Reflections for New Perspectives

Judith S. Goldstein

**H**umanity in Action is pleased to initiate a publication for sharing perspectives authored by Senior Fellows and other writers close to the organization. We will provide a varied set of research, opinion articles, and interviews that are at the center of Humanity in Action's work. With this new publication, we invite our community to discuss most complex issues of democracy and pluralistic aspirations.

The two articles in this first volume derive from the Diversity and Diplomacy Fellowship Program for 24 Fellows, which took place in 2016 in Washington D.C., Berlin, and Warsaw. We asked each participant to write a research article drawing upon the themes of their program. Today we present two of these: "The EU-Turkey Agreement: Erecting Barriers on Our Borders and in Our Minds" by Hanya Riedl and "(Mis)Representation: Unraveling the Narrative of Immigrants As Contemporary Economic Threats" by Jennifer Kuklenski. Both articles focus on challenging some of the negative rhetoric in discourses about migration and integration. They, so we hope, will contribute to steering these discourses into a direction that is inclusive, democratic, and sustainable.

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of contemporary mass migration from the Middle East and many African countries. Refugees need to escape political peril, and many migrants want to improve their lives. European populations struggle to find a balance between providing a safe haven for those in need and a desire to preserve and protect traditional European socio-political practices and cultures. Europe has thrown itself into uncertainty and fear. Post-war

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European institutions, predicated on human rights doctrines and the avoidance of international conflicts, no longer ensure stability.

This should hardly be surprising. And yet it is. We respond to the pressures in a state of shock and political disarray. Despite the movement of so-called guest workers in the 1950s and 1960s, despite the influx of populations drawn from former or existing colonies, and despite the seemingly open acceptance of refugees seeking political asylum in many European countries through the 1990s, the sheer presence of diversity and pluralism has not caused politicians to address—sufficiently or imaginatively—the pluralistic tensions in European

countries. Many European societies regarded themselves as comfortably and safely homogenous, despite the long-standing reality of diversity. Most ignored or repressed the memories of massive migration and displacement that engulfed Europe from the 1920s through the late 1940s: strict border restrictions of the 1930s based on fears of migration from Poland, World War II that displaced and eradicated entire populations, ethnic

“Many European societies regarded themselves as comfortably and safely homogenous, despite the long-standing reality of diversity.”

cleansing from 1945 to 1949, or the impact of decolonization. The conflicts in the 1990s in the Balkans, even with the outflow of refugees to the West, seemed out of step with the spirit of equanimity in the new Europe. The public and their leaders avoided the hard questions—unquestionably without easy resolution—imbedded in integration, assimilation, and sustaining unified civic cultures in advanced social welfare states.

What have we learned about the fragility of states and social cohesion? In *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century*, Timothy Snyder asserts the following thought in the Prologue: “History does not repeat, but it does instruct.”<sup>1</sup> It is a warning of sorts from a great historian. Matters of migration and immigration, however, might be an exception to Snyder’s contention. Movements of populations are endemic to human history. History repeats itself in this regard: migrations consistently take place and continue to be driven largely by conquest, wars, explorations, commerce, and environmental forces. The circumstances of movements differ in terms of causes and outcomes, but migrations are inherently and inevitably challenging to the stability of a society. No matter the gains or losses, population changes introduce different languages, religions, cultures, and identities. They may intrude on established patterns of life and challenge definitions of national



and religious histories and customs. They require societal change among host populations and newcomers. We resist change brought on by ‘Others’ as we know ourselves, in part, because we differ from those who are different.

Many of us have forgotten that we have all too frequently immersed ourselves in racist and xenophobic beliefs and actions. The United States exemplifies this all too well when confronted by real or imagined migrations. In the 1920s, the country shut its borders to all immigrants except white Christians blessed to have been born in Western Europe. The rest of the world’s population was considered unsafe, unhealthy, and unworthy of the benefits of American life. In the early 1920s, in a spectacle of frenzy and hatred, the country deported thousands of suspected foreigners and traitors. Over the ensuing four decades, the United States integrated millions who had entered before the restrictive laws were in place. By the 1960s, the country—awake to its historic tradition of refuge—was ready once again to open up to those it had once feared: immigrants from Asia, Africa, Central and South America, and Eastern Europe.

And now the traditional cycle of acceptance and rejection is once again in full force. History repeats itself. The United States is engaged in another xenophobic run. But history also instructs. In America, some of us remember the shameful events of 1920s, and resist the current orders to ban Muslims and the outbursts against Hispanics in our midst. In Europe, Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Emmanuel Macron refuse to engage in immigrant baiting as they seek to confront the crosscurrents of conflicting pluralistic forces. The recent French election presented competing versions of national identity that in large part derived from diversity and France’s former domination of Algeria. Max Fischer and Amanda Taub reported in the *New York Times* on those tensions: “The National Front...draws subtle parallels between the Algerian independence fighters and disorder in immigrant neighborhoods today. The left also uses Algeria as a metaphor, drawing a parallel between colonial-era abuses and the policing of Muslims today.” The writers conclude starkly: “...the heat of



## THE DIPLOMACY AND DIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP

Humanity in Action’s Diplomacy and Diversity Fellowship engaged nearly 400 foreign policy experts in discussions on pluralism and human rights from 2014 to 2016. The fellowship sponsored the study and research of 72 graduate student Fellows from the United States and Europe. The Fellows convened in Berlin, Paris, Warsaw and Washington. The articles constitute the original work of Fellows in the 2016 Diplomacy and Diversity Fellowship.



those arguments might obscure a deeper problem: Debates over integration of immigrants cannot be resolved without agreement over the core values into which new arrivals must integrate.”<sup>2</sup>

Thus the vexing problem and contemporary democratic challenge: to define and ultimately to adhere to core values that form the basis of integration for migrants and their children. This process evolves within the histories—in the shadows—that all too often involve conflicts over national heritages, different cultures, and identities. The morning after Emmanuel Macron’s victory for the French Presidency, Anne Applebaum of the *Washington Post* wisely observed:

“Macron can only succeed if he accepts that this is now the essence of politics in Western democracies: An open fight against the toxic appeal of false promises and divisive, nativist nostalgia. There is no point mourning the “normalization” of populism, or in trying to silence Le Pen and her many like-minded colleagues in Europe and the United States. They are here to stay, and they will only be defeated through open confrontation, a growing economy and better security, not censorship and shocked faces.”<sup>3</sup>

It is the responsibility of Humanity in Action to remember the history of racist and xenophobic fury that was often—but not only—aimed at refugees and immigrants; resist the inertia of civic bystanders, provide scholarly and civic leadership and open confrontation, as Applebaum demands. The two articles by Riedl and Kuklenski focus on the immediate impact of migrations—the opportunities and the resistance they provoke. Although the authors do not dig deeply into the past nor speculate about the future, they skillfully challenge the efficacy and fairness of the current attempts to create protective barriers on national and collective borders. The articles raise stark questions about core values, purposes, needs, and social cohesion. We welcome their work as well as articles that will follow. With this new publication we invite our community of Senior Fellows and others interested in these issues to discuss the enduring complexities of democracy and pluralistic imperatives and aspirations.

**JUDITH S. GOLDSTEIN** founded Humanity in Action in 1997 and has served as its Executive Director ever since. Under Goldstein’s leadership, Humanity in Action has organized educational programs on international affairs, diversity and human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, France, Germany, Poland, the Netherlands and the United States. She received her PhD in History from Columbia University and was a Woodrow Wilson Scholar for her MA studies. Goldstein has written several books and articles about European and American history, art, and landscape architecture.



# THE EU-TURKEY AGREEMENT: Erecting Barriers on Our Borders and in Our Minds

Hanya Riedl

To “replace disorganised, chaotic, irregular and dangerous migratory flows by organised, safe and legal pathways to Europe” is the declared goal of the EU-Turkey Agreement.<sup>1</sup> Paradoxically, one of the core provisions of the Agreement requires that those who had previously arrived in Greece, safely and legally, must be deported. Surely, such deportations contradict rather than support the goal of creating pathways to Europe. Given this apparent discrepancy, how is the deportation of these people nevertheless considered an appropriate measure?

To better understand why a policy of deportation is part of the Agreement, one must be familiar with the logic of deterrence and the assumptions underlying it. This is a logic worth deconstructing, because it erects barriers, not only on our borders, but also in our minds. In the case of the Agreement, the logic of deterrence constructs a narrative that helps to justify deportations. Deterrence logic leads us to think that migration is illegitimate, that migrant and asylum-seeking persons are a homogenous group that deserves to be deterred, and that Europeans are entitled to decide what is best for them. If we uncritically adopt these assumptions, deportations appear to be an appropriate or even a necessary measure.



## NEWS FROM THE NETWORK

Congratulations to US Senior Fellow **Alice Minor** (Copenhagen 2011), who was awarded the Danish Human Rights Prize in December along with 19 other activists for her involvement in trans rights activism!

## THE LOGIC OF DETERRENCE

The Agreement was concluded in March 2016 as a reaction to the so-called ‘European migration crisis,’ which saw an unprecedented arrival of asylum-seeking persons in Europe and an overwhelmed European asylum system.<sup>2</sup> According to the Agreement, all persons arriving in Greece from Turkey should be deported and for each Syrian among those persons, one Syrian will be resettled from Turkey



to the European Union (EU). Rather than replacing a ‘dangerous’ with a ‘safe’ pathway, the Agreement, thus, appears to aim at closing the pathway across the Aegean Sea completely, leaving only the much narrower pathway of resettlement, which is open exclusively to a specific quota of Syrian nationals. In order to stop crossings of the Aegean Sea, the EU detains individuals in Greece under the threat of deportation, seemingly irrespective of their need for international protection due to the designation of Turkey as a ‘safe’ country. This threat with the intent to dissuade certain behavior is an essential part of deterrence logic.

Generally speaking, deterrence can be described as the attempt to influence someone’s decision-making by employing means that instill fear in that person. It is a concept that is commonly referenced, and also criticized, in the context

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of crime prevention, where punishment is intended to deter criminal behavior, and of national defense, where military buildup is supposed to discourage attacks or even war. It is striking then that deterrence is also used in the context of migration. And yet, deterrence logic is inherent in many migration policies all over the world.

The Agreement was preceded by several other deterrence policies in Europe. Hungary, for example, erected razor-wire fences along its borders with Serbia and Croatia. Austria also erected fences and introduced controls, notably on its borders with member states of the Schengen Area. Denmark allowed police to search and seize assets from asylum-seeking persons. Moreover, politicians in several EU states publicly rejected the reception of Muslim refugees. All these measures and actions, be they physical or procedural, are deterrence policies and intend to scare and to prevent refugees from coming. Not surprisingly then, the specific deterrence measures of detention and deportation in Greece and Turkey in the Agreement are not new. People are often systematically detained or accommodated under precarious conditions, while their claims for asylum are being processed. Until its deletion in 2013, a German law prescribed that asylum-seeking persons should be living under conditions that would render them “willing to return to their country of origin.”<sup>3</sup> Deportation is also very common as a deterrence policy, and it is particularly concerning that those with refugee status face a threat of deportation.

Since its implementation in March 2016, much attention has been given to assessing the Agreement’s legality, effectiveness, and stability. Serious concerns



have been raised regarding compliance with international refugee and human rights law, in particular the assumption that Turkey is a ‘safe country’ for refugees and that it can provide an adequate level of protection to them. In viewing the unaddressed root causes and the changing migration routes, the effectiveness of the Agreement has been called into question. Moreover, recent tensions between the EU and Turkey raise doubts that the agreed-upon conditions for the maintenance of the Agreement will be met.

While these are important facets of the Agreement, too little attention has been dedicated to scrutinize the Agreement’s reliance on the logic of deterrence. Over one year after the Agreement’s conclusion, it is important to carefully investigate the assumptions underlying and the conclusions resulting from the logic of deterrence and, in particular, to raise awareness about the effects it could have on our thinking about migration more generally. How does the logic of deterrence, as the rationale of the Agreement, frame the general phenomenon of migration? How does it portray individuals who attempt to cross the Aegean Sea? And what role does the logic of deterrence attribute to Europeans?

## THE ILLEGITIMACY OF LEAVING FOR EUROPE

In the case of the Agreement, the allegedly wrongful conduct is the attempt to cross the Aegean Sea from Turkey to Greece. As a major press release of the European Commission explains, “EU Heads of State or Government and Turkey agreed [...] to replace disorganised, chaotic, irregular and dangerous migratory flows by organised, safe and legal pathways to Europe.”<sup>4</sup> Taking this statement at face value illustrates how migration is framed pursuant to the logic of deterrence. First, the four negatively connoted adjectives ‘disorganised, chaotic, irregular and dangerous’ portray people’s decisions to cross the Aegean Sea as problematic. Second, by contrasting this alleged problem with a supposedly ‘organised, safe and legal’ solution, the statement insinuates that the current migratory flows are not only disorganised and dangerous, but also illegal.

“The ominous term ‘irregular’ has come to refer to the fact that a person does not have the required travel authorization to enter the country.”

Contrary to what the Agreement suggests, however, the crossing of the Aegean Sea to seek asylum is not *per se* illegal. On the contrary, a right to seek asylum is enshrined in Article 18 of the European Charter on Fundamental Rights and



the punishment of irregular entry or presence to seek asylum is, in principle, prohibited by the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. The ominous term ‘irregular’ in the immigration context is a term without a specific legal meaning. It has come to refer to the fact that a person does not have the required travel authorization to enter the country, but it does not necessarily include what is considered ‘illegal immigration’ such as smuggling or trafficking.<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, a perceived wrongfulness of the targeted behavior is an essential part of policies that are based on the logic of deterrence. The wrongfulness justifies that deterrence measures can be used in the first place. If there were no wrong to be corrected, interference by any state, especially through such drastic measures as detention or deportation, would seem disproportionate. The European Commission explains that it introduced what it refers to as “returns [of persons] from the Greek islands to Turkey to make clear that this is a dangerous route and the wrong route.”<sup>6</sup> On the basis of the Agreement, even people who would be

granted refugee status by EU member states are, thus, returned to Turkey, if the authorities decide that the country is safe for them. This has the consequence that not only the attempt, but also the feat of reaching Europe is presented as illegitimate.

Presenting this route as ‘wrong’ obscures and ignores the reasons why so many individuals put their lives at risk in the attempt to reach Europe. The logic of deterrence does not leave room to question why a certain behavior is wrong. It does not encourage us to ask why such great numbers of individuals feel compelled to leave their family behind. It does

not force us to put ourselves in the shoes of other persons. It does not question what reasons would be legitimate or illegitimate and who should and could decide about their legitimacy. All these considerations are silenced when following the logic of deterrence. Accepting the logic of deterrence, thus, leaves us convinced the decision to cross the Aegean Sea is illegitimate and that the only legitimate migration to the EU is the narrow path of being chosen for resettlement.

## TURNING A BLIND EYE TO INDIVIDUALS

The logic of deterrence may not only lead us to think of a certain conduct as inherently wrong, but it also portrays asylum-seeking and migrating persons as one

**NEWS FROM THE NETWORK**

Danish Senior Fellow **Sara Ridder** (Copenhagen 2016) worked together with the organization Ungdomsbureauet to publish a collection of stories told by recently arrived refugees who recently arrived in Denmark..





homogenous group, which is defined by this wrongful conduct. This observation does not come as a surprise. The logic is familiar to the criminalization of conduct, which paves the way for labeling persons as ‘criminals’—a label that can stick with them for a lifetime and that can change the way they are treated by society. The casting of ‘irregular migration’ as a problem and as wrong has a similar effect. It gives rise to the label of ‘irregular migrants,’ to describe those who are the alleged wrongdoers and supposedly the source of the problem. By ignoring the agency and diversity of all the individuals who are subsumed under this label, it creates a presumption of culpability of all those who cross the Aegean Sea ‘irregularly.’

According to the logic of deterrence, once the wrongful behavior and the culprits have been identified, measures should be taken to effectively discourage such behavior by penalizing those who committed the wrong. “All new irregular migrants or asylum seekers whose applications have been declared inadmissible [...] will be returned to Turkey,” explains the European Commission.<sup>7</sup> Because the Agreement is based on the assumption that the ‘irregular’ crossing of the Aegean Sea is wrong, it logically follows that its deterrence measures target all those who crossed ‘irregularly.’ The Agreement, thus, effectively allows the deportation of all individuals, except those who it considers would be unsafe in Turkey.<sup>8</sup> It foresees a penalty for nearly everyone who is crossing the Aegean Sea, regardless of their need for international protection.

“Even those whose reasons for flight are legally recognized as legitimate are deported to Turkey.”

These measures also apply to all those who would be granted refugee status and would be allowed to stay, if they had arrived, for example, in Italy instead of in Greece. In other words, even those whose reasons for flight are legally recognized as legitimate are deported to Turkey. More specifically, the Council of the European Union has declared, regarding the resettlement of Syrians from Turkey to the EU, that “priority is given to migrants who have not previously entered or tried to enter the EU irregularly.”<sup>9</sup> The logic of deterrence, thus, leads the European Commission to make distinctions or even a hierarchy among those who are found to be in need of international protection.

Worse still, the Agreement’s deterrence measures arguably portray migrating and asylum-seeking persons as attempting to take advantage of Europeans. In the words of the European Commission, the Agreement “removes the incentive to seek irregular routes to the EU.”<sup>10</sup> The statement presumes that irregular routes are attractive pathways to Europe and posits that reaching Europe is the main goal for



those crossing the Aegean Sea. It, thus, starkly simplifies the reality and dismisses alternative explanations. This depiction of the situation falls short of grasping the complexity of the causes and the goals of migration. In the absence of available legal routes to Europe, migrating and asylum-seeking persons have very few options aside from ‘irregular migration’ to come to Europe. Family reunification, the possibility to legally bring one’s family into the country of asylum, has been drastically limited. Airplane carriers face drastic fines for transporting persons without valid travel authorizations. For many, irregular migration is thus the only remaining option.

Moreover, reaching the EU might not in and of itself be the goal. What the Agreement disapprovingly refers to as ‘incentive’ to come to Europe, might in fact be the desire and need for protection. Europe might be perceived as a safe haven

“ It seems paradoxical that the same body that so forcefully rejects ‘irregular migrants’ presents itself as their savior.”

for freedom of speech, security, freedom from persecution, financial stability, and much more. Yet, the Agreement does not mention or address underlying push factors of migration. Instead, its underlying logic of deterrence encourages the European public to think of migrating and asylum-seeking persons as illegitimate intruders. The fact that the European Commission considers the “possibility to detain asylum-seekers

and irregular migrants, in particular if there is a risk of absconding,” encourages Europeans’ suspicion and resentment towards them.<sup>11</sup> Overall, the logic of deterrence, thus, makes us blind to the humanity of the persons for whom the Agreement has a tangible meaning and real consequences.

## HUMANITARIANISM AS A DISGUISE

Aside from the wrongful act of ‘irregular migration’ and the need to penalize the wrongdoers, the Council of the European Union brings forward another justification for its deterrence policy: the supposedly humanitarian nature of the Agreement. The return of all ‘irregular migrants’ “will be a temporary and extraordinary measure,” it explains, “which is necessary to end the human suffering and restore public order.”<sup>12</sup> It seems paradoxical that the same body that so forcefully rejects ‘irregular migrants’ presents itself as their savior. Yet, a European domestic audience, to whom this statement is likely addressed, might feel reassured by this assertion of a moral high ground and control.



Such a cloak of humanitarianism serves not only as a justification for deterrence policies, but also functions as a shield from critical questions. European constituencies are told to conceive of the EU's actions as sacrifices based in the goodness of their countries. As the European Commission explains, resettlements of Syrians from Turkey to Europe were introduced "to underline that this is how Europe lives up to its responsibilities as a continent committed to providing protection to those in need, as well as the Geneva Convention and to the fundamental right to asylum."<sup>13</sup> However, responsibility in an interconnected world requires more than responsiveness to persons when they are already in need. It entails acknowledging one's own role in contributing to inequality, exploitation and violence. To give a concrete example, the continuation and increase in European funding of the World Food Program could have given forcibly displaced persons in Jordan stability and prevented them from fleeing to Europe.<sup>14</sup>

Actions in the disguise of humanitarianism allow the European Commission to impose a 'public order' in line with its own vision and to present this order as the right one. However, it is questionable whether deterrence policy will prevent people from fleeing from war or overcrowded refugee camps in the long term. The narrative of control bears the risk of disappointment because it creates unrealistic expectations about the EU's ability to regulate the phenomenon of migration in the long run. The European Commission's assertion of control and order is not a self-fulfilling prophecy, particularly if the EU does not engage in critical self-reflection on the adequacy and limits of its policies in addressing root causes and the possibilities to also reap benefits from migration. Most concerning, both 'humanitarian' interventionism and deterrence policies deprive the persons at whom they are addressed of their agency. They are presented not as bearers of rights, but as passive beneficiaries of European generosity.<sup>15</sup>



**NEWS FROM  
THE NETWORK**

German Senior Fellow, director, and filmmaker **Josephine Landertinger Forero** (Berlin 2005) produced the documentary film "HOME - the land of illusion," which focuses on migration, identity, and affiliation. It tells the remarkable story of a meeting between mother and daughter.

## CHALLENGING BARRIERS

As the above examination of the Agreement illustrates, deterrence logic can lead us to think that migration is illegitimate, that migrating and asylum-seeking persons are one homogenous group that deserves to be scared away, and that



Europeans are entitled to decide what is best for them. Unfortunately, it is difficult to challenge such seemingly ‘logical’ conclusions and self-evident representations, once they are in place. It might help that the legality of the Agreement, particularly the presumed ‘safety’ of Turkey for deported persons, is currently being contested in front of the European Court of Justice.<sup>16</sup> Yet, even if the Agreement were legal and perceived as effective, in view of fewer persons attempting to cross the Aegean Sea, challenging the logic of deterrence remains of utmost importance. For one, the logic of deterrence will continue to be a part of EU migration policy. As German Chancellor Angela Merkel has already expressed, similar agreements with Egypt and Tunisia will be concluded in the future.<sup>17</sup> Most significantly, however, the barriers erected by the logic of deterrence on our borders and in our minds will keep influencing how we think about migration and persons who migrate.

### *Acknowledgements*

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# (MIS)REPRESENTATION:

## Unraveling the Narrative of Immigrants As Contemporary Economic Threats

Jennifer Kuklenski

In liberal democracies today, immigration is one of the most contested issues on the public agenda. Images of immigrants as a ‘threat’ to national security, identity, and economic development are propagated by politicians, both in the United States (US) and Europe, who seek an easy scapegoat to their nations’ most pressing problems. However, the scale of international mobility makes immigration one of the most complex and difficult policy issues to address. The power of mass media to politicize some issues, while depoliticizing others, has deepened uncertainties about the impacts of migrant flows in receiving countries and has staged claims that cannot be easily verified or refuted. The result has been an oversimplification of the issue and public amnesia regarding the well-documented benefits of immigration.

Immigration is beneficial, perhaps even necessary, for contemporary liberal societies with advanced economies. When countries industrialize, birth rates decline as people have better access to contraception, more women enter the workforce, and young people, focused on their professional careers, start families later. If birth rates remain at current levels in the European Union (EU), for example, the region will experience a shortfall of 20 million workers by 2030.<sup>1</sup> Migrant workers, accounting for approximately 150 million out of the world’s 244 million international migrants,<sup>2</sup> ease the economic impacts of significant population declines. According to Gary Freeman, author and professor at The University of Texas at Austin Department of Government, labor migrants have become a “structural requirement” for advanced capitalist economies.<sup>3</sup>

“If birth rates remain at current levels in the EU, the region will experience a shortfall of 20 million workers by 2030.”

Yet, immigrants are often accused of stealing jobs, driving down native wages, and draining the welfare state. Even political agents, who often concede to employer



demands for more liberal immigration policies, provide a public narrative of toughness on immigration. ‘Stump speeches’ promising to curb immigration may meet short-term political goals, but tough immigration policies are a mistake for

nations seeking coherent economic strategies.<sup>4</sup> Such policies slow the pace of innovation, reduce the supply of workers, and make it more difficult for regional economies to respond to business-cycle fluctuations.



## NEWS FROM THE NETWORK

Bosnian Senior Fellow  
**Sunčica Bruck**

(Copenhagen 2016)

recently gathered local Shanghainese high school students to explore the atrocities of World War II through lectures on Holocaust Remembrance Day, the Holocaust and Shanghai’s history in the WWII Jewish refugee crisis.

Continued focus on socio-cultural issues ‘caused’ by immigration is also misguided, and many of the social concerns, such as immigrant criminal activity or access to welfare programs, can be addressed through targeted economic policy. If immigrants and natives alike possess better labor market outcomes, they are less likely to engage in criminal activity or use social resources. Moreover, improved job prospects for immigrants facilitate interactions between people of diverse cultural backgrounds, which

builds tolerance and understanding. Intermingling in the labor market may also mitigate the possibility that immigrant communities become marginalized, which in turn may help curb potential conflict between native and immigrant groups.

## CONTEMPORARY MIGRANT IMAGE AND THE IMMIGRANT “THREAT”

Discourses about immigration are constructed by political actors in an effort to shape perceptions in ways conducive to their own preferences and interests. The discursive construction of immigration as a threat to national identity is one of the most powerful tools used by anti-immigrant actors because it resonates with deeply-rooted in-group favoritism. Once an image of immigration as a threat to national identity is established, it becomes self-reinforcing and is very difficult to dispel. Unlike the claim that immigration depresses wages, the idea that immigration threatens national identity is not easily disproven. The national in-group has become increasingly important among European countries since the 1980s, as evidenced in the World Values Survey, which feeds into anti-immigrant mobilization.<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, ingroup favoritism among European countries corresponds with increasingly diversified populations, reinforced by the processes of EU enlargement and integration.<sup>6</sup> The contemporary debate is ‘double-faced,’ with official rhetoric



underscoring the importance of diversity (as evidenced in diversity charters across the EU) on one hand, and mass public perception of problematic immigration on the other.<sup>7</sup> Far-right political actors have capitalized on the dichotomy between official discourse and public opinion and have enjoyed unprecedented victories in many recent European elections. Political parties running on anti-immigration and xenophobic nationalist platforms have managed to ‘hijack’ the immigration agenda in the Netherlands and Denmark, control the government in Poland, help drive the United Kingdom’s exit from the EU, and most recently secure the presidency in the United States.<sup>8</sup> The common thread among these platforms is a conviction that immigration undermines the nation. The fusion of anti-immigrant frames based on cultural, religious, and security concerns is remarkably potent because it engages deeply rooted anxieties about identity in an era of globalization and links these anxieties to one of the state’s core functions: collective security.<sup>9</sup>

Anti-immigrant political framing, which depicts immigrants as a tool of the international elite conspiring to undermine the average citizen and build a new social order, where borders and sovereignty cease to exist, is most obviously linked to populist rhetoric of far-right political actors. However, the economic framing is often used to justify more stringent immigration controls by moderate and even liberal political actors. Since the global economic crisis that began in 2007, public rhetoric increasingly portrays immigrants as a drain on scarce resources, stealing native jobs, depressing wages, and burdening social welfare programs. These perceptions are troublesome, since they are not necessarily based on facts or reason. Moreover, contemporary migration flows are a product of globalization and despite some political actors’ best efforts, globalization is an actuality that cannot be reversed.<sup>10</sup>

## IMMIGRATION AS A REALITY: ACCEPTING AND BENEFITING FROM THE INEVITABLE

Evidence from the US and Europe increasingly suggests that on average, native citizens are more productive in culturally diverse environments.<sup>11</sup> The diversity in life experiences, education, training, and problem solving brought by immigrants produces potential benefits by increasing the variety of skills, goods, and services available for production, consumption, and innovation. Immigrants’ skills are also complementary to natives since immigrants often perform different tasks or bring different abilities and skills to the same task. Using their ‘cognitively diverse’ abilities,<sup>12</sup> immigrants bring different perspectives for solving problems and have access to different resources, which may ultimately create more productive, creative, and satisfying workplaces.<sup>13</sup>



For example, prior to the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), Soviet scientists were prohibited from freely exchanging ideas with their Western colleagues. Soviet and Western scientists began to specialize in very different fields within their respective disciplines. After the collapse, many of those scientists emigrated to Western countries and began working with their intellectual counterparts. A third of the mathematicians who emigrated ended up in the US and, according to Harvard mathematician Persi Diaconis, the new interactions were ‘fantastic.’ As reported in the *New York Times*, Diaconis claimed he was introduced to a “totally fresh set of insights and results,” which helped him solve a problem he had been working on for twenty years.<sup>14</sup> Of course, mathematicians in today’s globalized world can share ideas without emigrating; however, evidence suggests that the benefits afforded by culturally diverse environments are most rewarding when natives work closely with immigrants.<sup>15</sup> In other words, foreigners have the most positive impact on workplace creativity and problem solving when they are working beside their native counterparts.



## NEWS FROM THE NETWORK

2017 Humanity in Action Senior Fellow Grant winners **Heather Lord** (Copenhagen 1997) and **Michael Kunichika** (Amsterdam 1999) from the US recently wrapped up #MY100DayPlans — a civic action campaign aimed at inspiring the US public to respond to President Trump’s agenda with their own 100 Day Plan.

According to University of Michigan professor Scott E. Page, diversity may even trump ability. He developed a series of agent-based models to represent individuals within two economies trying to solve simple and hard problems. One economy consisted of only the best performing (similar) agents and another economy consisting of random, but high performing, agents. The results indicated that the economy composed of better (but similar)

agents performed worse. Specifically with regard to problem solving, the models suggest that heterogeneity trumps homogeneity time and again, even when the homogenous group is composed of the best and brightest and regardless of whether the problem is easy or difficult to solve. Put differently, his findings suggest that a group of high performers from diverse backgrounds will outperform a group of the most skilled who come from similar backgrounds.<sup>16</sup>

Immigration also causes market expansion. George Borjas, Professor of Economics and Social Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School, found that the total contribution of immigrants to native incomes may be upwards of 55 billion US dollars. Although such predictions may be slightly exaggerated and are arguably





small in the context of multi-trillion dollar economies, immigration introduces new interactions between firms and workers, allowing both to gain knowledge for free.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, workplace diversity allows firms to access new markets, and studies have shown that increases in trade produces external returns in a nation's aggregate wealth. Immigrants also tend to be entrepreneurial. In the US, immigrants are thirty percent more likely to start a business, which in turn creates jobs.<sup>18</sup> Thus, rather than reducing jobs for native citizens, immigration may actually lead to a greater number of job opportunities through international trade and domestic business. Immigrants in the US are also three times more likely to file patents than native-born citizens.<sup>19</sup>

From an economic perspective, the rewards associated with a diverse labor force are clear and easily acceptable, although this is not to suggest that immigration has no costs. National income tends to increase when immigrants enter the country; however, Borjas cautioned that the average wage of workers in the US may actually decrease. He contended that property owners and investors reap many of the benefits associated with the increase in national income and while efficiency may increase, the trade-off is large wealth transfers away from native workers.<sup>20</sup> If true, this may explain why US policy-makers more often discuss the labor market impact of immigration as opposed to the aggregate economic benefits. More recent findings contradict those of Borjas, indicating that on average, immigration causes a slight increase in the average wage in the US, while simultaneously keeping prices down.<sup>21</sup> Immigration may therefore help increase the standard of living in advanced economies while also providing a necessary check on inflation.

“ In the US, immigrants are thirty percent more likely to start a business, and three times more likely to file patents than native-born citizens.”

Even migrants performing low-skilled jobs, who are often perceived as the largest drain to fiscal resources, add value in advanced economies. As previously discussed, much of the evidence suggests that unskilled immigrants complement a largely skilled native labor force. In fact, Borjas argues that low-skilled immigration “greases the wheels” of the labor market.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, some industries, such as farming in developed economies, simply could not compete with foreign rivals without the cheap labor afforded through immigration. Immigrants in low-skilled jobs also tend to be more mobile than natives, and this mobility helps dampen fluctuations in the economy, easing the burden on native workers when



unemployment rates rise.<sup>23</sup> However, the human capital investment necessary to integrate lower-skilled immigrants into the broader labor market does require large government expenditures.<sup>24</sup>

That said, adult immigrants, skilled or unskilled, arrive at the prime level of their productivity, and the costs associated with raising them, such as health care and public schooling, are not born on the receiving society. Evidence also suggests that taxes paid by both regular and irregular immigrants exceed the costs of the services they use in the US.<sup>25</sup> Given the fact that the number of low-skilled immigrant workers in the US is greater than those in other high-receiving countries, and recognizing that tax revenue is lower in the US than most of its European peers, it is hard to accept the argument that low-skilled immigration drains the economies of modern European welfare states.



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The socio-cultural costs of immigration are perhaps more problematic. Negative effects of immigration include the costs of communication problems, based on language or cultural differences, among individuals within the workplace and greater society. Additionally, diverse perspectives inherently

produce less agreement on public goods and policies, as well as possible political unrest (and potentially civil conflict) that may result from oppression of minorities. Such problems are heightened in poorer countries, where institutions are unable to manage conflict intrinsically associated with diversity.

## ON INTEGRATION: THE IMPORTANCE OF ECONOMIC POLICY

Today, liberal states are largely concerned with integration, which is a multifaceted process with social, cultural, economic, and political dimensions. Social integration involves friendships, residential patterns, and intermarriage rates between natives and immigrants. Cultural integration includes language acquisition and acceptance of the native majority's beliefs and values. Economic integration entails educational outcomes and labor market participation. Political integration involves participation in public life, such as voting, in the receiving country.<sup>26</sup> Although social and cultural integration seem to dominate public and media agendas, Randall Hansen, a political scientist and historian at the



University of Toronto, makes a compelling case that the preoccupation with cultural integration, particularly in Europe, is misdirected. He argues that “work, not culture, needs to be the basis of immigration policy.”<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the types of integration are not mutually exclusive. For example, economic integration can help advance social, cultural, and political integration.<sup>28</sup>

Immigrant employment is a vehicle for social cohesion in major receiving countries. Unemployed persons are more likely to be involved in criminal activity<sup>29</sup> and use welfare programs. Moreover, employed immigrants interact with natives more frequently, which helps in building relationships, tolerance, and an understanding between people of different cultural backgrounds. Labor market integration gives migrants a sense of self and a connection to the wider community. It helps them to learn about local customs, bridging intercultural divides. It makes individuals economically self-sufficient, which enables them to participate more in local activities and helps to facilitate a positive integration for children.<sup>30</sup>

Therefore, the high rates of immigrant unemployment in many European countries is alarming. In 2010, the relative unemployment rate for foreign-born workers across wealthy European countries was sixty-five percent higher than native-born unemployment. In Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Sweden, foreign-born workers were more than twice as likely to be unemployed than natives. In contrast, foreign-born workers in Australia, Canada, and the US were less likely to be unemployed than native workers.<sup>31</sup> The reasons for immigrant unemployment are complex and difficult to disentangle; both demand and supply side factors play a role.

“The high rates of immigrant unemployment in many European countries is alarming.”

On the demand side, factors such as non-recognition of foreign qualifications, labor market regulations, racial discrimination, and the residential concentration of immigrants in depressed areas account for varying degrees of immigrant inactivity in the labor market. On the supply side, levels of education, training, and skills, in addition to the ability to speak the language, affect immigrant labor market outcomes. Individual factors, such as country of origin, gender, education level, and age, are recognized as the most influential characteristics for immigrant employment outcomes, although Meghan Benton, Senior Policy Analyst with the Migration Policy Institute, stresses that they are “by no means an overwhelming determinant.”<sup>32</sup> In fact, employment outcomes vary for different groups of immigrants across countries. From a policy perspective then, the key



question regarding economic integration of migrants is why so much variation in immigrant unemployment exists among countries with advanced economies.

One important factor at the aggregate level suggests that countries with a lower foreign-born unemployment rate have immigration policies that respond to labor market needs. For instance, Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom, which has the highest level of immigrant employment among European countries, all have point-based systems that match immigrant skills with labor market needs. Alternatively, immigrant unemployment is highest in European countries with large amounts of forced or family migration. This may seem unsurprising; however, it is striking that the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member country with the lowest level of immigrant unemployment, the US, has an immigrant population overwhelmingly made up of family migrants. Immigration policy is clearly not the sole factor for immigrant labor market

outcomes. It is thus necessary to consider the effect of non-immigration institutions and policies on labor market outcomes.<sup>33</sup>

“Developed countries with the lowest levels of immigrant unemployment are those with liberal market economies, less generous welfare programs, and deregulated markets.”

Developed countries with the lowest levels of immigrant unemployment are those with liberal market economies, less generous welfare programs, and deregulated labor markets. Alternatively, those with the highest levels of immigrant unemployment are coordinated market economies with more generous welfare programs and greater labor market regulation. Indeed, it appears that national

political economy may play a crucial role in immigrant integration.<sup>34</sup> Local and regional contextual factors also play an important role. For instance, Scandinavian countries have very few low-skilled jobs available, which makes it difficult for unskilled immigrants to find work.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, the language of Scandinavian countries is seldom spoken outside of Scandinavia, which hinders language mastery prior to immigrant arrival. That said, even in the US, where migrant employment outcomes are strong, the nature of immigrant work may impede integration. If migrants are working long hours in low-skilled jobs, they are often segregated from native populations and the level of integration is much lower.<sup>36</sup>

Education is another important policy area. Education policy first and foremost must address the availability of schooling and training opportunities for immigrants and their children, which is generally lower and of lesser quality



than for natives.<sup>37</sup> Educational opportunities for marginalized or minority groups may help address grievances rooted in economic inequality. For example, changing entrance policies for universities can dramatically change the distribution of economic opportunities and offer an avenue of empowerment for marginalized portions of the population. Subsidized programs that promote human capital development in immigrant communities are also important, especially for older migrants.

For instance, bridging programs help migrants ‘plug gaps’ in their skills, so their work experience can better translate to desired skills in receiving countries.<sup>38</sup> A combination of vocational language training has been demonstrated as most effective. Bridging programs may prove particularly beneficial in European countries receiving large amounts of refugees, many of whom possess skills that are not directly transferable to receiving countries. Additionally, programs that facilitate the involvement of migrant parents in their local school systems, to include educational (such as language) classes, lead to improved integration outcomes.<sup>39</sup> Better education can also help challenge the status quo and demystify myths about immigration propagated by anti-immigrant political actors. Finally, on the socio-cultural level, education facilitates the intermingling of people from different cultures, which helps build productive relationships.

## CONCLUSION

Many modern liberal democracies are struggling with the issue of immigration, which is increasingly framed by the mass media, political elites, and greater public as a negative phenomenon. Natives in the US and Western Europe, in particular, seem to be increasingly concerned with the ‘threat’ of immigration to national security and identity, as well as the alleged economic burden posed by migrants. Although identity and security concerns dominate anti-immigrant rhetoric on the far right, moderate and even liberal political actors publicly depict immigration as a drain on resources and a threat to native livelihoods. Careful examination of economic literature, however, indicates that this economic ‘threat’ is imagined. Immigration is a beneficial and perhaps necessary part of coherent economic strategies.

Further, the continued focus on socio-cultural integration is largely misguided and many of the social concerns, such as immigrant criminal activity or access to welfare programs, can be addressed through targeted economic policy. As a final thought, differences between coordinated market economies and liberal market economies likely affect immigrant participation in the informal economy,



the protections enjoyed by immigrants compared to native workers, the level of self-employment among migrants, and the level of workforce discrimination.<sup>40</sup> The finding that immigrant unemployment is lowest in liberal market economies means that political economic policies may have an indirect, but profound effect on immigrant integration. The connection between political economy and immigrant integration requires further research; however, the evidence suggests that political economy structures, combined with immigration policies, may help explain why some countries are better able to integrate immigrants into labor markets, as well as greater society, than others and should be taken into consideration, particularly in countries where immigration is currently the most contested issue.

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## NEWS FROM HUMANITY IN ACTION

### THE UNITED STATES

#### *Global Dispatches Podcast*

Humanity in Action is excited to announce a new partnership with Global Dispatches, a podcast on foreign policy and world affairs hosted by Senior Fellow Mark Goldberg (Amsterdam 2001). Named by The Guardian as “One of 27 Podcasts to Make You Smarter,” Global Dispatches will now feature Humanity in Action community members every month.

#### *Executive Education Leadership Program*

In March 2017, 20 Senior Fellows convened in New York City for Humanity in Action’s inaugural Executive Education Leadership Program—an innovative course on leadership and ethics in collaboration with The New School.

#### *Professional Fellowships for Senior Fellows*

Humanity in Action is now offering five US-based professional Fellowships for Senior Fellows this year! Senior Fellows can apply to intern with the NAACP, the ACLU of Ohio, Seattle’s Virginia Mason Medical Center and Capitol Hill Housing, and the Office of California State Senator and Senior Fellow Ben Allen (Amsterdam 1999).

#### *Save the Date: 2017 Humanity in Action New York Conference*

The 2017 Humanity in Action New York Conference will take place this fall on October 20 - 21. Details and registration will open soon!

### BOSNIA AND HERZGOVINA

#### *Save the Date: Encouraging Democratic Values and Active Citizenship among Youth — 2016/17 Civic Campaigns*

Encouraging Democratic Values and Active Citizenship among Youth is a project Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina has been implementing since 2012 with the support of the National Endowment for Democracy. Each year, the program gathers fifteen first and second year students from across the country, who learn about democracy, human rights, and activism through nine months of educational trainings, conducting individual research with assigned mentors, and finally implementing their own group civic campaigns. Keep an eye out in the media around the end of August for this year’s civic campaigns!

### GERMANY

#### *The Trump Effect — Race, Regression & Restoration*

John Lewis Fellowship Program Director Tanya Washington gave a public lecture in Berlin on how the election of Donald Trump brought to light the realities of racial inequality and systemic racism that many believed were a



## NEWS FROM HUMANITY IN ACTION

thing of the past. The event was hosted by Humanity in Action Germany in cooperation with NYU Berlin.

### *Save the Date: Fall Study Trip on Asylum, Migration, and Integration*

Humanity in Action Germany is excited to announce a 10-day study trip for Senior Fellows on asylum, migration, and integration to take place from November 10 to November 19 in Berlin, Germany. Look for our Call for Applications to be released in late summer 2017!

## THE NETHERLANDS

### *The All Inclusive Dinner*

Humanity in Action Netherlands held a charity dinner titled 'All Inclusive Dinner' raising over 15,000 Euro. With a wide range of inspiring speeches by Senior Fellows, politicians, and guest speakers, it emphasized the importance of human rights, diversity, and active citizenship for Dutch society and how the Humanity in Action network can contribute to shaping these.

### *The Human Rights Academy*

Humanity in Action Netherlands brought back the Human Rights Academy, a project in collaboration with Amnesty International. This course, organized by and for refugees and asylum status holders, opens discussion on human rights and democracy while touching these topics at a deeply intimate level, as most of the participants have personally dealt with a violation of their human rights. Courses were taught in English and Arabic.

### *Farewell to Christel Groot*

Humanity in Action bids farewell and congratulations to former Dutch Program Director Christel Groot who after a decade of shaping the Dutch Fellowship program has taken up new duties as the International Program Manager at COC, the largest LGBT organisation in the Netherlands. Christel will specifically be supporting queer rights organizations in Tanzania and South Africa.

*"My favorite Humanity in Action memory? That's a hard one. Probably on the beach of Scheveningen with 12 Fellows last year, in the evening, exchanging hilarious and touching love stories from our lives. Aside from connecting through a shared sense of human rights advocacy, I always found it great to connect with the Fellows on more personal grounds." – Christel Groot*

Humanity in Action will miss you dearly, Christel!

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