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Sebastian Paul

The Impact of Refugee Camps on the Process of Migration Towards Europe:
An Assessment

Ph.D. Dissertation

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Supervisor:
András Tétényi, Ph.D.

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1. Research Background and Justification of the Topic

The influx of millions of immigrants from the Middle East and the African continent in 2015 was a turning point in EU migration policies. Since then, migration has become a highly controversial topic in civil societies and policy-makers, politics, and migration studies. The topic divided and polarized the EU into countries that are willing to accept asylum seekers and refugees and the member states that are not. Consequently, the conflict can stop the European integration process, which itself is already damaged after the Eurozone crisis (Manners and Murray 2016)[1]. Other authors even see the Brexit movement as a consequence of anti-immigration agitation in British media (Goodman and Kirkwood 2019)[2]. The process of migration to Europe has become a significant challenge for the EU.

Thus, to contain and control refugee movements[3] to Europe, EU member states are building fences and walls, border controls are standard again, and Frontex intensifies its surveillance. However, these measures can never solve the problem. Military conflicts in the Arabic world will probably continue into the following decades, and many refugees try to escape the danger. Many are coming who are not directly affected by war but by poverty. More and more people from these third-world countries attempt to find a better life in EU countries that provide residents with financial benefits. Also, global warming, droughts, and other climatic changes will produce more refugees as well. It is not reasonable to believe that walls and fences will permanently stop refugees from coming to Europe. All these developments lead to the conclusion that the current migration movements are just the beginning and have, without a doubt, the potential to end the integration process in Europe. The EU is facing a significant challenge to integrate millions of non-Europeans into European society, a society far from being homogenous and cohesive.

However, many people talk about asylum seekers and refugees, but only a few talk with them. Who are these people? Where do they come from? Moreover, what were their motives for coming to Europe? What are the characteristics of those coming to Europe, and are they economic migrants or refugees? The background and journey of migrants coming to Europe are of extraordinary importance if we want to understand the process of migration in the year 2020. In this context, refugee camps play a vital role as a safeguard for asylum seekers and refugees. Many migrants have had to live or are still living in refugee camps. Due to their location, the Mediterranean Sea countries are profoundly affected by the influx of fleeing persons. Outside of the EU, the neighboring countries of (civil) war zones (e.g., Syria) are the primary destination for refugees. Greece and Italy, as EU countries, and Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan, as non-EU countries, are essential transit countries and the 'new home' for a large number of migrants. Unfortunately, many of these people end up in improvised shelters or camps with inadequate nutrition, health care, security, and other factors. Devastating conditions in camps harm asylum seekers and refugees and do not provide incentives for staying; in actuality, they increase the probability that people will continue their journey to other destinations.

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[1] Manners, I. and Murray, P. (2016). "The End of a Noble Narrative?" Europe Integration Narratives after the Nobel Peace Prize. *JCMS* 2016 Volume 54. Number 1. Pp 202.

[2] Goodman, S. and Kirkwood,S. (2019). "Political and media discourses about integratingrefugees in the UK." *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 49, 7, (1456-1470).

[3] Movement in the sense of migration (movement of people; not political movements).

The consequences are constant inflows of fleeing persons from crisis regions, who are, understandably, continuing their journey until their basic needs get satisfied, or until their living conditions improve considerably. Camps have the potential to soften (mass) migration or, at least, to regulate and manage movement since providing livable conditions to people in camps can improve their situation. In some cases, they may even eliminate the reasons for leaving.

Nevertheless, camps' importance is often undervalued, and the situation in camps after 2015 is only barely covered by the literature in migration studies. This dissertation's groundbreaking character is its in-depth research regarding camps by interviewing a significant number of asylum seekers and refugees with the camp experience. Thus, I contribute to migration and asylum seekers and refugees studies by investigating camps in the EU, the Middle East, and Turkey. I aim to capture the whole complexity of the topic by providing a comprehensive and coherent approach in terms of camps, covering multiple dimensions of the discussion. The dissertation's universal character differentiates it from previous research in this field and makes it stand out. In this context, the dissertation provides explanations and insights for living conditions in camps, the characteristics of camps' inhabitants, their journey to the camps, and their motives for leaving the camps and continuing their journey to the EU.

2. Methodology and Research Design

The dissertation aims to analyze migration and refugee movements due to the miserable and inhumane conditions in refugee camps. The research is built around two questions:

- 'How does the devastating situation in the perceived reality of asylum seekers and refugees in camps (including undernourishment, poverty, disease, et cetera) affect migration movements to Europe?' and
- 'How does the camp experience [experiences gained in camps] contribute to refugees' and asylum seekers' decision-making process in the context of migration to Europe?'.

The dissertation hypothesizes that reasonable living conditions in refugee camps in the EU and outside of the EU can potentially reduce (mass) migration movements.

To achieve this goal, I started with a literature review in migration studies which establishes the camps' niche. The next chapter focuses on EU policies and their implications for asylum seekers and refugees. After that, I analyzed the conditions in non-EU and EU camps. This last part is the interview section, where I conducted quantitative and qualitative research. Thus, each chapter builds on the one before, and everything follows a clear structure. The different chapters interact and complement each other.

Literature Review	This chapter covers migration studies, asylum seekers, and refugee studies and establishes refugee camps' niches.	Conceptual framework
EU Migration Policies, Borders and Security, and Policy Situation	This chapter explains EU migration policies (including the legal framework) and their implications for asylum seekers and refugees. The debate of	Context and conceptual framework

	camps can only be fully understood in the context of burden-sharing, weak policy measures, and the union's internal dividedness.	
Conditions in Camps	Based on the previous chapters, the conditions in camps outside and inside the EU can be evaluated. The literature review and the policy chapter provide the conceptual framework for the analysis of conditions in camps.	Case studies and context
Interviews	The interviews provide an in-depth perspective on the conditions in camps. For this purpose, I conducted quantitative and qualitative research, which builds on the previous chapters and provides some new insights and findings.	Quantitative and qualitative research

Table 1: Structure of the Dissertation

The research findings indicate that poor living conditions in refugee camps definitely affect migration movements to Europe. People flee mainly because of severe threats to their life and health. Many various aspects and push factors in the camps are considered, including nutrition, health care, education, job opportunities, income, security, political participation, and spare time activities. The improvement of the situation in the camps could significantly diminish the crisis. Overall, the research provides a comprehensive overview of asylum seekers' and refugees' experiences in camps, their characteristics, and their journey.

Literature Review. The essential question in migration studies is 'Why do people move?'. There is no one universal answer to this question since there are countless reasons and different circumstances, which influence individuals and their decision-making processes in terms of migration. The following sections include the most important theories that are aiming to approach this field. The neoclassical model, transitions and development, historical-structural models, systems and networks, and The New Economics of Labor Migration provide the best answer to this question since all these models substantially focus on the push factors (why do people move) of migration and economics. Notably, early scholars like Ravenstein (1885; 1889) or Lee (1966) emphasized their research on these factors and the macro dimension. Later works in this field build upon their foundation, and more contemporary approaches provide more comprehensive answers to more complex questions (e.g., aspiration and ability model or drivers of migration).

Compared to earlier works in migration studies, the case of asylum seekers, refugees, and IDPs has gained more attention and importance in the last 20-30 years. The framework of the aspiration

and ability model (Carling 2002) allows a more detailed look. Many researchers have approached this field by asking the question 'Why and where do asylum seekers move?'. Thus, the works of Davenport et al. (2003), Melander and Öberg (2007), Neumayer (2004, 2005), Moore and Shellman (2004), Tétényi et al. (2018), and others will be covered in this section by evaluating the micro-level of the debate.

Both the micro and macro dimensions build the foundation for the discussion about refugee camps, their unique position as a safeguard, and their role as a fleeing destination in the context of migration decision-making processes. Overall, the literature review establishes the role of camps in the conceptual framework of migration studies.

EU Migration Policies, Borders and Security, Policy Situation. The EU aims to apply humane asylum procedures but struggles to define and establish universal standards throughout Europe. Whereas the Mediterranean sea countries and Northern EU states are most affected by migration inflows, other EU states such as Hungary are unwilling to accept any asylum seeker (Tétényi et al. 2018). Thus, the EU asylum system is operating inefficiently and burdens member states unevenly. This chapter examines the analytical framework behind EU policy measures on asylum seekers and refugees. It emphasizes the deficits in terms of legal and irregular migration, the EU asylum system approach, and the Schengen and Dublin regimes. I argue that these EU policy measures have become more restrictive and are continuously undermining human rights; I critically reflect on the ongoing and current debates in EU policies regarding migration to Europe.

This chapter provides the contextual framework for the following chapters, which focus on camps. The situation of camps is only plausible in the discussion of (EU) policies. It explains the dividedness of the EU and its inconsistent and insufficient asylum policies. Hence, I address three major categories that demonstrate the dilemma in terms of inconsistency: EU migration policies, borders and security, and policy situations. Each variable is tested by its efficiency, and I elaborate on different aspects of the discussion in asylum seekers' and refugees' policies. The table below gives an overview of the chapter.

Consequently, the EU is in an identity crisis and incapable of responding adequately to significant challenges like the influx of migrants from the Middle East. Inconsistent policy measures and non-uniform approaches to migration weaken the stability of the EU significantly. Burden-sharing and security issues due to growing populism divide the union, hurt the EU-Turkey Statement, and lead to its failure from an EU perspective. There is still a need for a common approach regarding asylum seekers and refugees.

Conditions in Camps. This chapter describes the conditions of refugee camps inside and outside of the EU by completing the contextual framework necessary for understanding the interview section in the next chapter. Due to financial and time limitations, I was unable to visit any of these camps myself. A proper field study could not be conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic.[4] Therefore, I used mainly official information from aid organizations like the UHNCR.

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[4] I finished this dissertation during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was, of course, a significant event. However, since most of this work was already written in the pre-pandemic era, this topic is only barely covered in my work.

The idea behind the case selection was to pick some of the current refugee hotspots inside and outside of the EU and make them, to a certain extent, comparable. Many refugees flee to geographically close countries. Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan are all countries neighboring Syria, which was, and still is, one of the primary sources for asylum seeker flows. On the other hand, Greece and Italy are, because of their access to the Mediterranean sea, usually one of the first arrival destinations for refugees in the EU. According to the Dublin system, this is also where people have to apply for refugee status to get asylum. The location of the country and the EU policy implications make these cases significant.

This section aims to identify the differences between camps in these countries. For this purpose, I applied an analytical framework based on UNHCR data, insights of the European Commission, and coverage from credible reporters and media. The evaluation results allow conclusions that emphasize the importance of living conditions in camps in the context of migration to Europe. The table below explains the evaluation criteria.

Evaluation of living conditions in camps	Turkey	Lebanon	Jordan	Greece	Italy
Figures, Numbers, and Statistics	The first section provides essential data regarding asylum seekers and refugees in Greece and Italy, including the number of migrants and their countries of origin. Additionally, the data shows the current trend of migration movements to these countries.				
Funding	Usually, refugee camps are dependent on funding from international organizations, states, or private donors. Whether the camps fulfill their funding requirements or not says something about the camps' situation and the living conditions provided.				
The Situation in the Camps	The last section of the case studies elaborates on camps' living conditions using media, NGOs, and other researchers' insights. The focus is on satisfying basic human needs such as nutrition, health care, education, and housing conditions.				

Table 2: Evaluation of non-EU and EU camps

The chapter concludes with a comparison between refugee camps in the EU and refugee camps in non-EU countries. The main objective is to determine how people's lives in camps can be improved, but it is also significant what differences there are between camps in EU or non-EU countries. What are the impacts on migration flows? Can they be interrupted, and push or pull factors be reduced? The basic approach is "if people are not satisfied with their situation in camps in non-EU countries, why should they be happy with their stay in camps in the EU, especially if the conditions are devastating there as well?". Keeping people in no man's land and preventing them from leaving the camps can be a sustainable long-term solution neither from a human rights perspective nor from a development perspective. There is still much research that needs to be done in this field.

Some data regarding figures, numbers, and statistics or funding is more straightforward and easier to compare than the situation in the camps, which can be perceived very differently and is, of course, subjective. Nonetheless, the chapter provides some valuable findings. It is a high starting point for further discussions before going into the last section of the dissertation, which

contains some unique firsthand information from people who have experienced refugee camps during their journey to Europe.

Interviews. The interview section consists of two parts: fully structured interviews (quantitative research) and semi-structured interviews (qualitative research). First, I conducted 192 fully-structured interviews with asylum seekers and refugees in Germany. After that, I also had the opportunity to conduct 17 semi-structured interviews to get a more in-depth look at camp conditions. Thus, qualitative research builds on quantitative research.

Fully-structured Interviews. The research is quantitative and based on interview questionnaires with asylum seekers and refugees in Germany who migrated to Germany in 2015 or later. The study was conducted in Germany's Bavarian region. Regarding the sample size, I used the snowball method. My mother, a certified teacher for German as a foreign language, works with asylum seekers and refugees in Germany and organized contact with some of her students. Thus, the only other person who was involved in the interview process is my mother. Without her contacts, the whole research probably would not have been possible, and it is one of the reasons why the research was conducted in Germany. The other reasons are the high number of refugees and asylum seekers in Germany and, of course, the home country of the dissertation's author. From this point, participants of the research project recruited friends and community members for further interviews. The only prerequisites were that participants had to be of legal age and a legitimate asylum seeker or refugee in Germany, making the preselection process homogenous. However, these were the only restrictions that existed in terms of sample size. In general, I followed a maximum variation/heterogeneous approach.

The interviews were fully structured, consisted of 23 closed-ended questions, and every participant received the same questions. Overall, 103 interviews were conducted in person and orally in German or English (pre-pandemic). Another 89 interviews were conducted over Skype due to the worldwide pandemic but followed the same approach. Usually, the interviews took place in small groups (e.g., with families) and in private spaces (e.g., the flat of an asylum seeker). Because of language barriers that existed in many cases, various people from the same country as the respondents helped with translation during the face-to-face interviews. I asked the questions and filled in the questionnaire. In total, I conducted 192 interviews with asylum seekers and refugees from spring 2019 until the end of summer 2020. There were no financial incentives for the interviews, and every participant was at least 18 years old. The results of the research are 100 percent anonymous and kept confidential.

The objective was to analyze and understand refugee movements due to poor living conditions in camps in the Middle East and Mediterranean countries. At this point, a primary goal is to conduct as many interviews as possible with people who had that experience and are willing to share this information to get a deeper understanding of their journey and the conditions in camps. At the end of the research, we should identify indicators for (mass) migration to Europe, at least these indicators related to camps (e.g., poverty, hunger, limited resources, et cetera). Since I used standardized questionnaires to make the results comparable, the research should also allow some comparisons between camps (for instance, living conditions of camps in the EU compared to living conditions of camps in non-European countries).

However, not all participants of the interviews spent time in camps. Their answers, for two reasons, are included in this section: 1.) People who were not in camps are of importance as well. It tells us

something new about their experience and journey to Europe. Thus, the information that people have not been in camps is valuable. 2.) Some questions are not camp-specific. The questionnaires are structured so that answers from people with no camp experience can be integrated into the research. Again, these people have something to say, and it would be a missed opportunity not to take note of their unique experiences.

Semi-structured Interviews. After the quantitative research, I also had the opportunity to conduct 17 semi-structured interviews with asylum seekers and refugees from the same sample as in the previous section. This was a unique opportunity to get a more in-depth look at the topic. The semi-structured interviews were built on the fully structured interviews and aim to provide a more comprehensive overview of conditions in camps, migration decisions, and the journey to Europe. Despite that, quantitative research does not necessarily capture the topic's whole complexity because of its limitations in research design. In order to fill in this gap, I extended the research by qualitative research. Because I had already conducted a significant number of interviews, I knew which topics and sections I would like to cover comprehensively. In general, I followed a similar approach since all the participants had already participated in fully structured interviews.

The semi-structured interviews took place between May and August 2020. Because of the ongoing pandemic, all the interviews were conducted online via Skype. I followed a purposeful sampling approach in the framework of criterion-i (Patton 2002; Marshall et al. 2008)[5]. The focus group was people who stayed in both non-EU and EU camps during their journey to Europe. Again, people had to be asylum seekers or refugees in Germany, and the minimum age for participating was 18 years. However, all 17 participants came from Syria and fled to Germany in 2015 or after due to Syria's civil war outbreak. The interviews were conducted individually, and all the participants came from the same asylum-seekers' hostel in Bavaria. Every interview lasted about 25 to 45 minutes, and the same Syrian translator accompanied each interview partner. Thus, the interviews were conducted orally and in German (every participant had studied German). If necessary, the translator helped with the translation. All the data were coded, analyzed, and categorized. However, sometimes a language barrier existed. Neither the interview partners nor the translator spoke perfect German. Therefore, I had to edit occasional sentences to the degree that they sound fluent and smooth in German. After that, I translated my German notes into English.[6]

Unfortunately, I did not have permission to record and transcribe the interviews, even though I have anonymized the interviews' results.[7] Therefore, I took notes during and after the interviews. After each interview, I reviewed the material and showed it to the participant for permission purposes. Some interview partners feared state authorities and negative consequences for themselves. Obviously, this is a highly sensitive topic. Since I promised not to record the interviews through my webcam, I could only make notes. The whole COVID-19 situation was, in

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[5] Patton, M. (2002). Qualitative research and evaluation methods. 3rd Sage Publications;Thousand Oaks, CA: 2002; Marshall, T., Rapp, C.A., Becker, D.R., and Bond, G.R. (2008). Key factors for implementing supported employment. Psychiatric Services. 2008;59:886–892.

[6] The interviews were in German language. Due to time and practical reasons, my notes were also in German before I translated them.

this context, not helpful either. In real meetings, complete transcriptions might have been provided and authorized.

I informed all the participants about their rights, including withdrawing from the interviews at any time they want. Every interview was entirely voluntary, and I made sure everyone understood the purpose of the research. The recruiting process was a mix of snowball and network methods since all the participants had already participated in the quantitative analyses.

Overall, it was my goal to let the participants speak freely without interruption. I had only minimum involvement in this process by asking the questions and clarifying misunderstandings. The notes of the interviews are attached in the appendices of this dissertation.

3. Findings

Literature Review. While states are following migration policies and trying to control the in- and out-flow of migrants and citizens, camps are improvised solutions, often run by international institutions. Although camps are mainly outside of the country where the armed conflict takes place, they are, in fact, small complex socio-microeconomics in themselves and often referred to as "a state in a state." In particular, the examples of refugee camps in Lebanon and Jordan show that these countries are entirely overwhelmed by significant refugee movements from Syria and can no longer control their borders. Thus, local governments in these neighboring countries are incapable of adequately dealing with this situation, while camps are developing their infrastructure and identity. Extended versions of the push and pull model are now considering more migration drivers, but the issues remain the same.

Therefore, a more profound approach is required, which considers short-term settlement, i.e., camps and transit zones, as an identifiable entity in the model. Additionally, this approach offers new opportunities in spatial planning as a part of urbanization processes. It can transform short-term into long-term sustainable solutions by satisfying basic needs (nutrition, freshwater, security, et cetera) and making cultural, political, and economic participation for its inhabitants possible.

Hence, I took the existing shortcomings in terms of camps and developed and designed an approach that considers camps' unique situation. The classic push-pull model could be added to by the factor 'stay,' which is supposed to reduce flight causes. The following table illustrates this model:

	Push Factors	Stay Factors	Pull Factors
Push, Stay, and Pull Factors	Socio-economic Political Environmental	The satisfaction of Basic Human Needs Development Program / Urbanization Process Cultural, Political, and Economic Participation Employment	Economy Society Demography Politics

Area	Country A	Transit-zone / Refugee Camp	Country B
Timeframe	Long-term / Short-term	Temporary with the Outlook for long-term	Long-term
Direction of Migration	→	With Obstacle (↓ ; →)	↓
	→	Without Obstacle (→)	↓

Table 3: Push-Stay-Pull Model

EU Migration Policies, Borders and Security, and Policy Situation. In general, this chapter analyzed the main EU policy measures and debates on asylum seekers and refugees, including legal and irregular migration, the CEAS, and the Schengen and Dublin regulations. The findings show that the EU's initial efforts promoted migration for the domestic labor market and reduced asylum seeker movements. Many member states approach migration as part of their sovereign rights and do not apply conventional European approaches. In the past 20 years, migration, both internal and external, has continuously been a significant issue among EU member states. Whereas some European countries benefit from well-educated, young, and skillful migrants, other member states are suffering from brain drain and intellectually 'bleed out.' Notably, the Southern and Eastern European nations are negatively affected by this migration. Hence, migration in the 21st century is highly selective, and the competition is for the most exceptional talents in every discipline. Migrants are evaluated by their economic exploitability and their value on the domestic labor market.

On the other hand, asylum seekers and refugees are often 'not welcome,' and even EU member states with old demographics do not accept them because of cultural, religious, or economic reasons. Therefore, the EU is in the paradoxical situation that some parts of the EU are proportionally overburdened by migration influx from the Middle East and the African continent, while others desperately suffer from out-migration.

The EU aims for partnership programs with non-EU countries as an instrument to reduce migration movements significantly. These programs grant beneficial treatment in terms of economic advantages in exchange for agreements on migration issues. Partnership agreements have become crucial geopolitical tools and are one opportunity to influence foreign governments, decision-makers, and politicians. Regarding irregular migration, the EU focuses mainly on smuggling and human trafficking and seeks to destroy their business models. However, the smuggling business is not a black and white situation since many migrants have a close relationship with their smugglers.

Moreover, the EU consistently worsens asylum seekers' situation by implementing restrictive policy measures to enter the EU legally and push them into irregular migration. Some of these actions even have a contradictory effect and increase irregular migration instead of decreasing it. The consequences are human rights violations of asylum seekers and insufficient policy measures.

Consequently, the application of a functional CEAS does not exist. EU institutions and actors are not speaking with the same voice as member states, making the EU's approach to migration

inconsistent. Nevertheless, authors like Zaun (2016)[8] see some slow progress concerning human rights in the long-run, whereas others, e.g., Thornton (2014)[9], emphasize the negative aspects of asylum seekers' treatment in the EU. Overall, the 'Schengen crisis' (Börzel and Risse 2018)[10] and the inadequate Dublin regime need reforms towards more consistency, fair burden-sharing, and solidarity.

Conditions in Camps. Comparison between non-European Camps. The best camp conditions are in Turkey. The Turkish state anticipated the upcoming crisis in Syria very early and prepared for it properly. However, Turkey also had the financial resources to do so as one of the region's wealthiest countries, which is probably the main advantage compared to Lebanon and Jordan. These countries are highly dependent on international organizations and funding, while Turkey is not, or only to a certain degree. Thus, the living conditions in the camps are on a relatively high level. There is enough nutrition and freshwater, children can attend schools, and there are some opportunities for free-time activities. By no means is living in a camp in Turkey a luxury lifestyle, but compared to Lebanon or Jordan, where it is often a daily fight for survival, at least some minimum standards are fulfilled in a secure environment. Starvation, diseases, and other disastrous developments are unknown in Turkish camps. The more significant issue is with refugees and asylum seekers outside of the camps. Many of them end up homeless on the streets, and exploitation, child labor, and prostitution are common. Finally, Turkey financially benefits from the EU Turkey deal, another advantage that the other countries do not have.

Lebanon, on the other hand, was utterly overwhelmed with the crisis. Although the state has a long tradition of hosting Palestinian refugees, the best experience and preparation do not help if 20 or 25 percent of the population are refugees. Even international aid organizations have given up and moved their activities to Turkey. Nevertheless, the supply of nutrition and freshwater in the camps is still highly dependent on their work. Only a minority of children can visit schools because the child labor force is needed to support their families. Another difference is the level of repression by state authorities. Undeniably, Turkey has changed the rhetoric and policy practices, but the camps' situation is not profoundly affected. At least for the moment, refugees and asylum seekers are safe in the camps. On the contrary, in Lebanon, Syrians fear state repression, rising xenophobia, and deportation back to Syria. The level of insecurity is tremendously high.

The most interesting case may be Jordan. It is hard or even impossible to say if the camps' situation is worse in Lebanon or Jordan. The situation for refugees and asylum seekers in- and outside camps is devastating. Nevertheless, it seems like the people in the camps have accommodated themselves to a certain extent in their situation. The Zaatari camp is an excellent example of that. In only a few years, a completely new 'city' has emerged. A city that was supposed to be an improvised camp with tents and shelters has developed its own infrastructure, market economy, and social life. Frankly, it is still far from being a perfect scenario since even terror attacks occur in the camp. However, it shows that people can transform the short-term problem into a long-term solution by

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[8] Zaun, N. (2016). Why EU asylum standards exceed the lowest common denominator: the role of regulatory expertise in EU decision-making. *Journal of European Public Policy* Volume 23, 2016 - Issue 1.

[9] Thornton, L. (2014). "EU Asylum Policy: Reception Conditions for Asylum Seekers" in Lewis, T. *Report on coherence of human rights policy making in EU Institutions and other EU agencies and bodies* (September 2014), pp. 105-111.

[10] Börzel, T. and Risse, T. (2018). From the euro to the Schengen crises: European integration theories, politicization, and identity politics. *Journal of European Public Policy* Volume 25, 2018 - Issue 1: SI: THEORY MEETS CRISIS.

improving the living conditions, of course, with aid organizations' help. Thus, the Zaatari camp is a unique case with a distinctive character. That is probably the main difference from other camps in the region, respectively, to camps in countries neighboring Syria: the temporary solution is no longer only a temporary solution.

Comparison between Camps in the EU. The situation in Greece is alarming, and many riots have already occurred in Greek refugee camps. All camps are entirely overcrowded, the conditions are adverse, and doctors are even warning of the outbreak of diseases. Experts state that the conditions are worse than in Turkey. Only if people can make it to the Greek mainland can they improve their living standards. However, usually, people have to stay for months in the camps.

On the contrary, Italy's camp conditions are relatively high compared to Greece, but that does not mean they are sufficient. Although the conditions are on a deficient level, sometimes below that, there are at least no distribution battles over scarce resources. The Italian state has still not lost its control over the 'official' camps. The main issue in Italy is the situation of homeless refugees or asylum seekers who have lost their right to proper accommodation (due to Dublin regulations, for instance) and live in improvised camps. These persons' situation is as concerning as other people's situation, who have to live on Lesvos, for example. The differences that we can identify between camps in Greece and Italy are the following:

- Economy: The Greek economy is still suffering from the austerity policy during and after the 'Euro crisis.' Debts are still high and harm the development of the country. Greece simply does not have the resources to manage the enormous migration inflows by itself and is highly dependent on EU funding. Italy, on the other, is one of the biggest economies and industries in the world. Indeed, Italy has suffered from the debt crisis in the past, and the overall condition of the economy is not good, but the country is still in tremendously better shape than Greece. Thus, it is not surprising that Italy can provide better living conditions in camps and reception centers.
- Geography: This is the apparent reason. Greece is located much closer to Turkey, and Turkey is a significant transit-country for many Syrians on their way to Europe. Therefore, Greece is more affected by the (armed) conflicts in the Middle East.
- Origin of refugees and asylum seekers: The composition of migration flows is entirely different between Italy and Greece. While most immigrants in Greece are coming from the Middle East, Italy is profoundly affected by migration flows from the African continent (many asylum seekers are also coming from Pakistan).
- Policy implications: Greece is the most important country in terms of applying the EU-Turkey deal. The EU has a keen interest in controlling, managing, and limiting migration through this agreement. Hence, this policy measure directly influences the situation in Greek camps. On the contrary, Italy is not affected by the EU-Turkey deal, but the country applies its domestic policies, including making many Dublin returnees homeless.

Comparisons between non-European and EU Camps. In general, we can distinguish between Italy and Turkey on the one side, and Greece, Lebanon, and Jordan, on the other. Compared to the other case studies, Italy and Turkey provide the highest living conditions in refugee camps. As mentioned before, Turkey was well prepared for the crisis and invested a lot in managing and coordinating migration flows from Syria. Whereas Italy has always struggled with its role as a destination for migrants, Turkey showed political motivation to manage the crisis, at least at the

beginning of the civil war in Syria. Italy, on the other hand-side, has never accepted its role. However, because of its economic power, Italy was still able to run sufficient camps and reception centers compared to other countries. Italy's and Turkey's situation is far from perfect, but at least people can survive there.

On the contrary, in Greece, Lebanon, and Jordan, it is a daily fight for survival. Maybe the most shocking finding here is that a member state of the EU is running refugee camps that are in the same condition. Some would even argue that they are worse than countries such as Lebanon or Jordan.

Nonetheless, there are some significant differences between non-European and EU camps. The differences are in the following areas:

- The number of asylum seekers and refugees: It often gets forgotten, but non-European countries are still hosting significantly more refugees and asylum seekers than EU countries. Turkey is currently the number one host country worldwide, Lebanon is hosting the most people per capita, and the small state of Jordan is hosting over 650,000 refugees and asylum seekers.
- The political system: Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan are autocratic regimes, while the EU is still, in most cases, democratic and provides liberal values, freedom, and protection. Indeed, this can be an advantage but also a disadvantage. The EU entails much bureaucracy, and the processes are slow since they usually have to pass many institutions. However, at the end of the day, the EU stands for stability. On the other hand, autocratic regimes can change overnight, and decisions are made quickly, which can cause immediate consequences for inhabitants of camps and reception centers, negative and positive.
- Security: Even though the perceptions of many countries and societies of the EU are different, terrorism and radicalization are the exceptions in Europe. Every single terroristic act is one too many, but they happen only very rarely. On the contrary, Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan are all surrounded by war and conflict zones. It is more likely to become a victim of terrorism in these countries. The security situation is arguably better in Europe. Unfortunately, further escalation in European camps could change this fact.

Interviews. In total, I conducted 192 fully-structured and 17 semi-structured interviews with asylum seekers and refugees in Germany. Even though everyone had his own story to tell, there are some findings and conclusions that we can derive from the interviews. The average age of the interview participants was very young, and the majority were male. Migration is a discipline of the youth and requires a lot of health, endurance, and resources. As people become older, they are less likely willing to move.

In many cases, young males migrate first on very insecure routes and try later, after they have successfully migrated to their destination, to encourage their families and friends to follow them (network theory). Increased mobility and communication infrastructure fuel this development. The actual (mass) migration movements that started in 2015 mainly originated from the Middle East and the African continent. By far, the biggest group of migrants are currently Syrian refugees in this context. Other countries, such as Iraq, Afghanistan, or Eritrea, are also profoundly affected by people's mass exodus. The main fleeing reasons for asylum seekers in Germany are wars, armed conflicts, and political persecution. In contradiction to nationalistic governments' claims in the EU

economic reasons, there was a relevant pull factor, but not a significant push factor. Most of the migrants who moved to Germany had to face severe threats to their lives. Thus, people are seeking peace, stability, and (long-term) prospects in the EU.

According to the Dublin system and their Mediterranean geographic position, Greece and Italy are the most affected states in the EU by migration from the Middle East and Africa for first-time arrivals by sea, which is the most common way to enter the EU for fleeing persons. Hence, on their journey to Europe, migrants are forced to pay smugglers to cross the EU border. Outside of the EU, Syria's neighboring countries are the primary destination for refugees: Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan. A large portion of refugees ended up living in camps in these countries. Consequently, the role of refugee camps is of extraordinary importance in terms of migration to Europe. The interviews aimed to shed light on the camps' living conditions by asking people about their personal experiences there.

Moreover, the conducted research makes a comparison between non-EU and EU camps possible. Were camps able to soften the crisis? Did they stop or accelerate migration to the EU? Did camps improve the living conditions of people or not? The interviews provide a unique insight into the life of asylum seekers and refugees and their journey to Europe.

The findings of the study correspond to the research questions 'How does the devastating situation in the perceived reality of asylum seekers and refugees in camps (including undernourishment, poverty, disease, et cetera) affect migration movements to Europe?' and 'How does the camp experience [experiences gained in camps] contribute to refugees' and asylum seekers' decision-making process in the context of migration to Europe?'. The questionnaire's first 17 questions of the fully structured interviews are camp-specific topics and evaluated the situation in the non-EU and EU camps in terms of nutrition, health care, education, labor market, income, spare-time activities, political participation, and crime rate. In both cases, the overall perception of the camps was overwhelmingly devastating. Indeed, there are exceptions, and the ratings vary from camp to camp and from country to country (Italy and Turkey usually received better grades). Still, most camps fail to provide at least minimum living standards for their inhabitants. Often, people find themselves under lockdown and have to survive somehow without proper accommodation, nourishment, and medical treatment. The push factors in the camps remain high, and even if people can enter the EU, their situation does not change tremendously. If people move from Turkish to Greek camps, the situation might become worse. Until this day, the EU has not found a solution to improving living conditions in camps, and member states are left alone with this issue. The other interview questions evaluated why people left the camps and under which circumstances they would have stayed in the camps.

Additionally, I conducted additional 17 semi-structured interviews concerning conditions in non-EU camps, conditions in EU camps, the journey to Europe, reasons for leaving the country of origin/Syria, and reasons for coming to Germany/Europe and stay factors in the camps. These questions address, among others, the hypothesis of the research that people would not flee to Europe in significant numbers if the situation in refugee camps in the EU and outside of the EU (Middle East) were reasonably livable (reduce the push factors). The interviews show evidence that camps' appropriate living conditions can reduce the push factors and significantly impact migration decisions. Therefore, improving living conditions in refugee camps could be a long-term approach to stop (mass) migration movements to Europe by increasing migrants' life quality. In the past, the case of refugee camps has been widely ignored by the literature and researchers with

some rare exceptions, such as the work of Fafo (2019a; 2019b)[11]. However, the research sample sizes are still too small since I had only limited financial and personal resources. Indeed, interviews and questionnaires with hundreds or thousands of people with camp experience should be the goal, as well as more actual field studies in the camps. A higher budget and more human resources would be a valuable contribution to the study of refugee camps, not only in the context of migration movements to Europe but worldwide. There is a further need for research. Hopefully, future scholars will get this opportunity and enhance the discussion with new findings.

Summary of the Interview Results. The following section provides an overview of the interview results:

- The average age of the interview participants was very young, and the majority were male.
- Migration is a discipline of the youth and requires a lot of health, endurance, and resources. As people become older, they are less willing to move anymore.
- In many cases, young males migrate first on very insecure routes and try later, after they have successfully migrated to their destination, to encourage their families and friends to follow them (network theory).
- The actual (mass) migration movements that have started in 2015 mainly originate from the Middle East and the African continent.
- By far, the biggest group of migrants are currently Syrian refugees in this context.
- The main fleeing reasons for asylum seekers in Germany, respectively Europe, are wars, armed conflicts, and political persecution.
- In contradiction to claims of nationalistic governments in the EU economic reasons, were, indeed, a relevant pull factor, but not a significant push factor.
- According to the Dublin system and their Mediterranean geographic position, Greece and Italy are the most affected states in the EU by migration from the Middle East and Africa.
- Sea arrivals are the most common way to enter the EU (over 50 percent paid smugglers).
- Outside of the EU, Syria's neighboring countries are the primary destination for refugees: Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan.
- The questionnaire's first questions (fully structured interviews) are camp-specific topics and evaluated the situation in the non-EU and EU camps in terms of nutrition, health care, education, labor market, income, spare-time activities, political participation, and crime rate. In both cases, the overall perception of the camps was overwhelmingly devastating.
- Indeed, there are exceptions, and the ratings vary from camp to camp and from country to country (Italy and Turkey usually received better grades).
- Still, most camps fail to provide at least minimum living standards for their inhabitants. Often, people find themselves under lockdown and have to survive somehow without proper accommodation, nourishment, and medical treatment.

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[11] Fafo (2019a). Syrian refugees in Jordan: better off than before but still vulnerable. Fafo. [online] Online: https://www.fafo.no/images/pub/2019/2019-Oct-Brief-Syrian-ref.pdf [Accessed 06.11.2020];

Fafo (2019b). The living conditions of Syrian refugees in Jordan Results from the 2017-2018 survey of Syrian refugees inside and outside camps. Fafo-report, 2019:04.

- The push factors in the camps remain high, and even if people can enter the EU, their situation does not change tremendously. If people move from Turkish to Greek camps, the situation might become worse.
- The interviews show evidence that appropriate living conditions in camps can reduce the push factors and significantly impact migration decisions (see 'Under which conditions would you have stayed in the camps?').
- The majority of refugees and asylum seekers in the interviews are unwilling to move back since they have already established their new life elsewhere.
- The semi-structured interviews can confirm these findings and provide an in-depth analysis.

4. Conclusion

This dissertation aimed to elaborate on the role of refugee camps in the context of migration to Europe. I conducted 192 fully structured (quantitative research) and 17 semi-structured (qualitative research) interviews with asylum seekers and refugees in Germany. The interviews provide a comprehensive overview of asylum seekers' characteristics in Europe and their journeys, aspirations, and motivations. The interview findings confirm the devastating conditions in camps in- and outside of Europe and make them comparable. The vast majority of the interview partners evaluated the camps' situation in terms of nutrition, health care, education, job opportunities, income, security, political participation, and spare time activities negatively.

Additionally, I could not find any evidence for nationalistic European governments' claims that asylum seekers are not refugees but economic migrants. Hence, most people fled to Europe because of severe threats to their life and health. On the other hand, the study found evidence for the hypothesis that reasonable living conditions in refugee camps in the EU and outside of the EU have the potential to reduce (mass) migration movements. Since I asked why people leave the camps and under which circumstances they would have stayed, the responses indicate improved living conditions, long-term prospects, and security are a sustainable approach for reducing mass migration movements to Europe.

The current research can be only a starting point for further research. There is always room for improvement, and I am quite sure that I have only scratched the surface of a field that is still barely covered by scholars. Migration movements have always existed, do exist, and will continue to exist. According to several studies, e.g., climate change will have a severe impact on migration worldwide in the future. Therefore, refugee camps' role needs to be globally reconsidered since camps are a sustainable approach to weaken forced displacement. The outbreak and spread of the Coronavirus Sars-CoV-2 also raise attention to security issues and how inhabitants in camps can be appropriately protected. Moreover, the consequences of pandemics on migration will very likely become an essential discussion in migration studies.

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