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**The Positions of the Visegrad Countries
Towards the European Policy on Illegal
Immigration and Asylum**

Master's Thesis

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Abstract

Illegal immigration is one of the current problems that occupy the European agenda. With the beginning of the revolutionary movements called 'the Arab Spring' in the Middle East and North Africa, Europe has faced massive uncontrolled migration waves. In this period, the asylum applications in European countries have broken a record in the history of the EU. This situation has impelled the European Union and its member states to take certain measures. However, political disagreements were observed over some of the measures taken by the EU. In light of these developments, this thesis will focus on illegal immigration movements from the Middle East and North Africa region to Europe right after the beginning of the Arab Spring (in other words from at the end of 2010 to now). In this context, this master's thesis aims to give the immigration and asylum policies of the European Union aiming to prevent these illegal immigration waves and to evaluate the political positions of the Visegrad countries during this period.

Keywords

Visegrad Group, European Union, Immigration, Asylum, Refugee, North Africa, Middle East, Arab Spring

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Declaration of Authorship

1. The author hereby declares that he compiled this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature.
2. The author hereby declares that all the sources and literature used have been properly cited.
3. The author hereby declares that the thesis has not been used to obtain a different or the same degree.

Prague, July 13, 2019

Bilal Bahadır Karaca

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List of Abbreviations

AFSJ:	Area of Freedom, Security, and Justice
CEAS:	Common European Asylum System
EASO:	European Asylum Support Office
ECJ:	European Court of Justice
EEC:	European Economic Community
EU:	European Union
EURODAC:	European Asylum Dactyloscopy Database
EUROPOL:	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
EUROSTAT:	European Statistical Office
FRONTEX:	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
ISIS:	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
MENA:	Middle East and North Africa
NATO:	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
SEA:	Single European Act
UN:	United Nations
V4:	Visegrad Four (Visegrad Group)

INTRODUCTION

Migration is one of the oldest phenomena whose roots go to the beginning of human history. In the course of history, people have migrated to different continents, countries, and cities. However, this phenomenon has become one of the most popular issues in the world in recent years, with unmanageable migration flows, especially becoming a major problem that countries must deal with.

In this context, European countries under the European Union's roof have become the target of immigrants and asylum seekers and started to suffer from the problem of illegal immigration. With its politically, economically, and socially stable structure, European countries were the center of attraction for immigrants and asylum seekers in the past, and it can be seen that this situation continues exponentially now. Although many migration movements can be observed in European countries from different regions of the world, such as from Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa; the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the revolutionary movements in North Africa and the Middle East region which is called 'the Arab Spring.' (as a result of this, the civil wars in Libya and Syria) have triggered the mass migration movements in recent years.

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries have had political, economic, and social problems for many years. The population explosion and as a consequence of this, poverty and unemployment have been the main issues for this region. Also, unsuccessful economic policies have deepened the problem in time. The problems in the economic field have reverberated on social life and led to massive deterioration and inequality in the countries. Adding the desperate political structures and the civil right problems to all other factors, a social explosion has occurred, in the form of peaceful democratic protests, which have been named 'the Arab Spring.' In time, these protests have evolved into chaos, violent actions and civil war in countries of the region.¹ In this environment, thousands of people have left their homes and migrated to nearby countries and Europe in pursuit of a better life.

¹ Salameh, 2019: 245-251.

The migration waves from the MENA rose gradually every year in Europe after the beginning of the Arab Spring. In 2010, the number of migrants from the MENA region to European Union countries was 284,975, and this figure increased to 341,795 in 2011. The peak was in 2015, and the total number reached 1,393,285 people. In this period, the major immigrant flows to Europe came from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, respectively.² The number of immigrants in 2015 was the top immigration flow in EU history. The number of immigrants was 697,000 in the second top flow in 1991 after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Moreover, since 1985, a total of 11.6 million people have applied to Europe as asylum seekers, and with 1.3 million in 2015, the number has become equal to one-tenth of all applications in the thirty-year period between 1985 and 2015.³

In light of all these developments, the migration phenomenon has turned into a crisis in the European Union, which involves political, economic, social, and security concerns. At this point, this crisis has led the EU to think about its policies and restructure them appropriately for the conditions of the situation. As a short term response plan to uncontrolled migration flow, the EU has followed the path of developing cooperation with the countries in the MENA region where the source of the problem lies. The main objective was to provide a smooth economic and political transformation in these countries, as appropriate to the EU's foreign policies.⁴ However, with the worsening situation in the MENA and increasing illegal migration, the EU has advanced its action plans, which contains strong border control, new migration, and asylum policies in time. The importance of border management has been increased, and the role of Frontex and the Union's common standards for borders tried to be developed.⁵

All these political action plans have brought some extra burden on the economic field in Europe. As a result, economic concerns have become one of the hot topics which are highly debated in connection with illegal immigration. The high number of immigrants and asylum seekers and the action plans to control this situation lead to a requirement for a high quantity of human and budgetary resources. For instance, the steps taken to strengthen border management and the improvement of reception and detention centers require budget increases and trained personnel. In this context, the European Union fund for asylum, migration, and integration between 2014-2020 is €3.137 million, and this amount corresponds to almost half

² Ilina, 2017: 33.

³ Pew Research Center, 2015

⁴ Salameh, 2017: 54-55.

⁵ Ilina, 2017: 34.

of the total home affairs fund.⁶ In addition to these financial issues related to migration, another factor increasing the economic concern is the thousands of immigrants and their possible effects on the labor market in the EU. The immigrants who are seeking jobs in the EU countries are not seen favorably from the viewpoint of the European public.⁷

Another vital point is that the irregular migration flows from the MENA countries after the Arab Spring have led to many questions from social and security perspectives. Especially after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Islamophobia has been an increasing trend in the world in connection with radical terrorist groups. After the beginning of the Arab Spring, political disorder in the MENA region has given radical Islamist groups more movement space and promoted Islamophobia. Furthermore, terrorist attacks on European soil committed by radical Islamists associated with groups in MENA have brought the Islamophobia in Europe to full froth. In this regard, security concerns, along with the Muslim identity of the immigrants from MENA, have become one of the main talking points in debates about the immigration crisis. The increase in Islamophobia has also become a hazard for the values and the democratic atmosphere of the EU. Hostile approaches to a specific identity bring a risk of damage to the peaceful environment. However, the security dilemma compels some member states to move to stricter measures. In this context, the national governments of Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Poland have declared that they are against accepting refugees related to security concerns. The Polish Prime Minister Beata Szydlo stated in 2016 that Poland could accept Christian refugees from Syria, but not Muslims due to the security threat.⁸

From the social viewpoint, the cultural identity of the immigrants reflects Islam and the MENA region. These people's integration to the European cultural life and social values also generates a problem for the EU. When the education problems in MENA are taken into account, the low educational level of immigrants can be explicitly seen. It is acknowledged that, while well-planned integration processes give beneficial outcomes in the long term, the process is demanding and costly.⁹ On the other hand, these immigrants generally come from the civil war zones with psychological traumas, and they have a cultural discrepancy that can complicate the integration process in some areas such as human rights and women rights in Europe.

⁶ Coşkun, 2015: 54.

⁷ Barry, 2012.

⁸ Osiewicz, 2017.

⁹ Vision Europe Summit, 2016: 86.

As mentioned above, immigration to Europe from the MENA region involves many factors that make the situation very complex and significant, and which must be considered attentively in the EU agenda. In this regard, the research topic of this thesis is the illegal immigration and asylum policies of the EU from the MENA. More specifically, this thesis will aim to examine the illegal immigration and asylums from the Middle East and North Africa region towards the EU from the beginning of the Arab Spring (2010) up to now. Besides this, this thesis will focus on four member states of the European Union; Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, and Slovakia, called the Visegrad Group, and identify their positions within the EU's policies in general aimed at illegal immigration and asylum. In other words, the exact period of this research will be from 2010 till now, and its space will be Europe and the MENA region (the Middle East and North Africa) in the context of immigration.

The thesis will answer these research questions;

1- What are the approaches and policies of the EU towards illegal immigration and asylum from the MENA region after the Arab Spring?

2- What are the policies of the Visegrad countries regarding the migration crisis and are the political positions of the Visegrad countries compatible with the EU's policies or not?

In light of these research questions, the hypothesis " the political positions of the Visegrad countries are incompatible with the EU at some points in illegal immigration and asylum field, but in the general sense, the positions of these countries are compatible with the EU policies for the solution of the current migration crisis." will be tested in this research.

This master's thesis is composed of four main chapters as follows;

In the first chapter, the historical background of the Visegrad Group, EU and their geopolitical aspects will be given. Moreover, the definition of the concepts related to immigration 'illegal immigration, asylum, immigrant and refugee' will be explained. In this chapter, the aim is to give the reader basic knowledge about the Visegrad countries, the EU and immigration concepts, and to provide a basis for the in-depth analyses in further chapters.

In chapter two, for the analysis of the immigration phenomenon in a theoretical framework, three theoretical approaches, realist, institutionalist and push and pull factors respectively, will be given within the concept of immigration. Thanks to the theoretical background provided in this chapter, the reasons for the immigration flows from MENA and

the policies and positions of the EU and Visegrad countries can be better understood in the international system. The main attitudes of the actors will be examined in light of these theories in chapters three and four.

The third chapter will be deeply focused on the European Union and immigration movements from MENA, and the immigration crises in Europe. The situation will be analyzed in all its aspects. Under this chapter, the attraction centers for immigrants in the EU will be given, along with the factors that have led to this situation. Moreover, the political, economic and social structures in MENA, in this context, the Arab Spring and immigration flows, will be analyzed.

The last chapter will analyze the general approaches of the EU to illegal immigration and asylum after the Arab Spring. At this point, the regulations and directives of the EU will be reviewed, and based on this point of view, the EU's political positions will be demonstrated. Secondly, in this section, the positions of the Visegrad Group countries will be identified by focusing on their policies. These positions will be examined against the background of general EU policies and interpreted in terms of the congruence and non-congruence principle.

As mentioned above, immigration is an important phenomenon in the global level and a topic that keeps the European agenda seriously busy in the last years. By considering all these factors and my interest in this topic,¹⁰ this master's thesis aims

- . to contribute to the understanding of migration phenomenon in Europe and the policies of the EU associated with this phenomenon
- . to scrutinize the MENA region and the factors which are affecting the immigration flows towards Europe
- . to demonstrate the positions and approaches of the Visegrad Group specifically in the European Union about migration issue.
- . to analyze immigration and the positions of the actors on the basis of international relations theories for better evaluation at the global level.

¹⁰ I am the scholarship student of Turkish Ministry of National Education and Istanbul University in the field of 'Eastern-Central Europe and Slavic Studies.' The expectation of institutions from me to do academic research in this field.

The indirect aim of this master's thesis is to draw the attention of researchers to Central Europe and the migration phenomenon and to contribute to further studies in Turkey focusing on the Visegrad countries in the field of political science.

This project will rely on primary sources and secondary sources. As primary sources, the statements of government officials, the Commission's reports, regulations, and directives of the European Union will be used. As secondary sources, the academic studies of scholars, the statistical data of reliable institutions and newspaper articles will be used to analyze the topic.

The mixed method approach was chosen for this master's thesis. By using the descriptive and explanatory approaches, the regions, and the political and geographic structures of the actors will be analyzed. The immigration phenomenon will be identified, and the trends and factors in the background of this phenomenon will be examined. By using a comparative approach, the positions of the European Union and the Visegrad Group countries in the immigration field will be interpreted. With the congruence and noncongruence analyses, the coherence between the policies of actors, and the applications of the theories on their positions will be reviewed. With the content analyses from the primary sources and secondary sources, the political approaches and decisions of the actors will be evaluated more strongly. Collier holds the view that the process tracking approach is indisputably useful for explaining social and political phenomena and the evaluation of causal claims.¹¹ Thanks to process tracking, the evolution in policies within the scope of migration phenomena will be determined, and strategic position changes will be observed.

¹¹ Collier, 2011: 823.

CHAPTER 1

THE VISEGRAD GROUP IN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE KEY TERMS OF IMMIGRATION

1.1. History of the Visegrad Group and the Geopolitics of the Visegrad Countries

The geographical location of the Visegrad countries, 'Central Europe' has had strategic importance throughout history. In this context, when the historical background and progress of the Visegrad Group is given, the geopolitical aspects of Central Europe must also be evaluated.

Geopolitics can broadly be defined as the interactive relations between geography and politics. On the geographical side, geographical features and patterns constitute the geographical settings. On the political side, the forces at the international level, which also affect domestic politics and shape international behaviors, constitute the political processes. These geographical settings and political processes influence each other. Geopolitics comes to exist as a result of this interaction.¹² In other words, geopolitics is the relation between applied policy in a region and its geography.

However, the dimensions of the geopolitical concept of Central Europe is a highly debated subject, including different historical and political aspects. Although differences of opinion still exist, there appears to be some agreement that the geopolitical concept of this region refers to the buffer zone between the West and East. In this regard, the geographical

¹² Cohen, 2015: 16.

view of Central Europe alludes to the circle which encompasses Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, and Slovenia.¹³

With its elements such as natural condition, economic potential, political-geographical strategic position and resources, Central Europe has had large geopolitical importance and been subject to the power struggles of the great powers of the area, the Germans and the Russians historically.¹⁴ In this regard, the Germans' geopolitical thought on Central Europe defines it as the Germans' cultural, political and economic domination space. In this direction, by 1830 the German politician and philosophers had already defined “Mitteleuropa” to secure the German economic hinterland, and works about *Mitteleuropa* were also developed before and during the First World War. Friedrich Naumann contributed to the concept of *Mitteleuropa* with his work of the same name in 1916. *Mitteleuropa* depended on the pan-German movement, focusing on German-centered economic space.¹⁵ The Second World War became one of the important points in terms of the history of Central Europe and its geopolitical conception. With the *cordon sanitaire* approach, Central Europe had the meaning of a barrier against the West and its capitalism from the viewpoint of Stalin. The victory of the USSR as a result of the Second World War launched the sovietization process in the region and enhanced the influence of the Soviets. With the communization of societies and the institutional developments in the countries, Central Europe became part of the Soviet Bloc for almost 45 years. Thus, the geopolitical concept of Central Europe turned into an object in the bipolar international system during the Cold War.¹⁶

After the fall of the Iron Curtain, the Central European countries showed their aim to be part of the EU and sovereign players in the international system. On the other hand, when we look at the neo-imperial perspective of Russia, it can be seen that their conception of Central Europe still has the Soviet block approach. For Alexander Dugin (the Russian political analyst), the separation of the concepts of Central and Eastern Europe does not signify an accurate fact. From the Russian perspective, Eastern Europe and Central Europe overlap with the geopolitical space of Russia.¹⁷ This remark shows that despite Central European countries' aim to become a geopolitical player rather than a geopolitical object, the geopolitical object role of these countries stays the same in Russia's thought.

¹³ Iordachi, 2012: 44.

¹⁴ Kučerová, 2015: 171-174.

¹⁵ Tamás, 2016: 134.

¹⁶ Kučerová, 2015: 181-183.

¹⁷ Metelkina, 2018.

The integration aim of Central Europe's post-socialist states to the EU coincided with the geopolitical approach of the European Union. Especially when Russia's sphere of influence is considered, the EU's aim to integrate these countries into the core of the EU has a meaning. In this regard, according to Kučerová, Central European countries are perceived as a dam against Russia, and these countries maintain their geopolitical object role rather than being a geopolitical player and subject.¹⁸ In this direction, the attitude of the EU and also NATO to the three states of Central Europe (Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia) was different when compared to the other post-communist Soviet bloc states. For example, Europe's visa requirements were lifted for these three states together, and the U.S. terminated its arms selling restriction to these three states before the other post-communist states.¹⁹

In the light of all these geopolitical aspects and historical developments, in 1991, Central European identity was reflected on the diplomatic scene with the Visegrad Group. On 15th February 1991, three countries (Hungary, Poland, and the Czechoslovak Republic; after the separation of Czechoslovakia, the number of the member states of the Visegrad Group became four with Slovakia and the Czech Republic.) met in the town of Visegrad in Hungary, published a joint declaration, and laid the foundations of the Visegrad Group. Furthermore, the meeting in Visegrad, Hungary symbolized the historic meeting in 1335, held by the kings in the Central European region in the name of regional cooperation and friendship. According to the declaration, the main aims of the Visegrad Group were to remove the remains of the Soviet era, improve the friendship between countries in Central Europe, increase cooperation among these countries, achieve European integration, and provide closeness between the ideas of political elites. In this context, thanks to meetings between ministers and experts, cooperation in many fields such as security, science, education and so on can be achieved among countries. On the other hand, the Visegrad Group doesn't have any institutional structure and any binding character. In the Visegrad Group structure, the representatives of the countries come together in periodical meetings. During these meetings, one of the Visegrad Group countries holding the presidency is responsible for drafting a one-year action plan.^{20,21} With its flexible structure and nonbinding character, the Visegrad Group gives the

¹⁸ Kučerová, 2015: 190.

¹⁹ Fawn, 2001: 52.

²⁰ Visegrad Group, "History of the Visegrad Group", 2019.

²¹ Visegrad Group, "Aims and Structure", 2019.

member countries a political space to show their different strategic positions, political priorities, interests, and ambitions.²²

The Visegrad Group, which was founded to facilitate the integration of the Central European countries to the EU and improve cooperation among states in the region, has continued its existence under the European Union's roof since the accession of these countries to the Union. Alexander Dugin, who has the neo-Eurasianism ideology (which can be linked with the ideological part of Russian neo-imperialism), evaluates the Visegrad Group as a Greater Eastern European Project in the European Union context. From his perspective, the Central European countries have their own identities, cultures, values, traditions and so on. The EU, with its ultra-liberal approach, ruins the national identities and values of these countries. The Visegrad Group is important to defend the more traditionalist and conservative vision of the Central European states, and as a result of this, it can be a center for an alternative Europe.²³

Apart from the Neo-Eurasianist views of Dugin, from the other perspective, the Visegrad Group provides a better chance for closer coordination among Central European states. With this better coordination and synchronization possibility, the Visegrad countries have stronger representation ability and more endurance against the economic, political and psychological pressures of the powerful member states of the EU. Instead of the representation of the self-interests of a state, thanks to Visegrad Group, these states can show their power and present their collective position for an objective. In other words, the Visegrad Group can be evaluated as an important base for the Central European countries for better representation in the EU context.²⁴

²² Kořan, 2012: 208-211.

²³ Metelkina, 2018.

²⁴ Törő, Butler and Grüber, 2013: 11-25.

1.2. The History of the European Union and its Geopolitics

It has commonly been assumed that the roots of the establishment of the EU go to the years following the end of World War II. World War II brought mass destruction to Europe. After this point, Europe was in search of a new economic and political model that could develop the region and prevent possible wars between the great powers in Europe. Moreover, with the Marshall aid, because of the search for new markets after World War II, the funds of the US started to flow into Europe. As a result of this, the economic dependency of Europe to the US increased in this period, and the integration of the economic potentials of the European countries was thought to extend the European market and prevent this one-sided economic dependency.²⁵

In 1951, with the important role of Robert Schuman (French Foreign Minister), the treaty for the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was signed by six countries, West Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg. The main aim of this organization was to provide for the integration of the coal and steel industries and coordinate French-German production in these areas. This union, which was established with economic concerns, has evolved into a union that is influential in political areas in time. In 1957, the Treaty of Rome was signed, and the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) were established. The main goal of the EEC was to create a common market that allowed free movement of capital, persons, and services, and develop integration in the economic and political areas. In 1973, with the first enlargement, England, Ireland and Denmark joined the union. Following this, with the second enlargement, Greece in 1981 and with the third enlargement, Spain and Portugal in 1986 became members of the union. The Single European Act (SEA) also was signed in 1986 and made some changes in the legislative procedures. With SEA, the goal was to complete the common market by 1993. This agreement also brought a political cooperation system in the area of foreign policy, and the cooperation in the other fields was strengthened. In 1992, the Maastricht Treaty was signed and came into force in 1993. The European Economic Community was transformed into the European Union at this point. This treaty brought some comprehensive reforms, including completion of the monetary union by 1999 which involved a single currency, the creation of European citizenship, the creation of common foreign and security policies, and cooperation policies in the fields of justice and

²⁵ Çinar, 2018: 332.

home affairs. The three pillar structures were created with the Maastricht Treaty. The first pillar reflected the European Communities, and the second and third pillars constituted the common foreign and security policies and the justice-home affairs policies respectively. In 1995, the fourth enlargement took place and Austria, Finland and Sweden became the part of the union. In 1997, with the Treaty of Amsterdam, some reforms were adopted on democracy, personal freedom, and European citizenship issues. In 2004 and 2007, with the fifth enlargement, the highest number of accessions took place in EU history, and a total of 12 countries joined the union, including the Visegrad Group countries as well. The Lisbon Treaty, which gave the union its final form, was signed in 2007, and it was aimed at solving the obstructions in the decision-making processes and creating a more democratic-efficient structure. The accession of Croatia in 2013 in the sixth enlargement process increased the number of member states to 28.²⁶²⁷

In the period from the end of the Second World War to 1989, the concept of Europe was by definition accepted as Western Europe by the union. Eastern Europe was seen as a different part representing the Communist Bloc with its own economic and ideological structure against Western Capitalism. The south was seen as the third world, Africa. However, the collapsing of the Iron Curtain has changed the world political order and the regional borders of Europe. Regarding this, the concept of Europe has shifted in direct proportion with the enlargement of the EU.²⁸

Totally, with six enlargement processes, the EU has obtained a geographical space which is almost 4,5 million square kilometers and more than 510 million inhabitants. The borders of the European Union have reached the depth of the Eastern Mediterranean with the accession of Cyprus; in the east, the borders have reached Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia beyond Eastern Europe, and in the south-east, they have reached Bosnia, Macedonia, and Turkey; in other words, the Balkans and the Middle East. This enlargement of the geographical space with economic and cultural growths have made the EU a great geopolitical actor. Befitting its status as a major geopolitical actor, the EU has become one of the dominant players in international politics in terms of economic, cultural and political influence.

²⁶ WISE/NIRS Nuclear Monitor, "Short History of the European Union", Nuclear Monitor, 1998.

²⁷ Republic of Turkey Ministry for EU Affairs, "History of the EU -A Brief History of European Integration-", 2013.

²⁸ Busch and Krzyzanowski, 2007: 108-109.

In this direction, three regions play a significant role in the EU's geopolitical approach. In terms of oil and gas resources, and their transportation to Europe, Central Asia, and the Caucasus have importance. Secondly, Central-Eastern Europe and the Balkans play a role in the political power struggle of the EU in the world stage, and also, these regions mean new markets from an economic perspective. Lastly, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East are important in terms of oil resources and energy dependency. Moreover, North Africa and the Middle East regions have had political disorder for many years, and the irregular migration problem from this region to the EU makes these regions geopolitically important areas.²⁹

In light of all these values, goals, and geopolitically important regions, a possible explanation for the geopolitical behavior of the EU might be that the EU has mixed geopolitical aspects. In other words, the geopolitical approach of the EU consists of the traditional *realpolitik*, self-interests, and its European identity, moral values, and character. In this context, when the EU pursues its political, economic, and security interests, it aims to export its identity and values at the same time.³⁰

²⁹ Duran and Sezgin, 2007: 156-163.

³⁰ Scott, 2009: 232-47.

1.3. Definition of Illegal Immigration, Immigrant, Asylum, And Refugee

Immigration in a general sense can be defined as the movement of people to new countries, new places in order to settle there for the short, long or permanent term. In this direction, immigration can include many different aims such as economic, religious, ethnic, political, health, and education. Also, this phenomenon can be categorized differently according to types of immigration. At this juncture, the important terms about immigration relevant to this study must be given.

Every country has its regulations and norms for immigration as corresponds to international law and agreements. Immigration movements conforming to these legislative regulations are accepted as legal. On the other hand, immigration movements which are out of the regulations and norms are seen as illegal. In other words, **illegal immigration** shows up in contradictory situations to the legislation such as traveling to or living in a country without permission or legal documents. Furthermore, illegal immigration is also termed as irregular immigration. The debates over the use of the term 'illegal immigration' are ongoing. In general, because of the negative meaning of 'illegal', the use of this term is not preferred. However, the European Commission, being an institution of the EU, has been using the term 'illegal immigration' for a long time.³¹ Therefore, the term 'illegal immigration' is preferred for use in this study.

In the scope of immigration, the **immigrant** is defined as a person who leaves his-her home behind and moves within a country or crosses the international borders in order to settle. Without considering the status of a person, his-her length of stay, the reasons for movement, all people who are in the immigration action are accepted as an immigrant. In general, immigrants seek the economic situation, education, job opportunities and language of the country where they plan to move. Immigrants in legal status are free to return to their countries whenever they want. Moreover, these people can be a permanent resident or citizen of the country where they move in time.³² On the other hand, immigrants who move involuntarily and do not have a chance to return to their home are defined under the status of 'asylum seeker' and 'refugee.'

Asylum refers to protection by another country of a person who applies for international protection for reasons of violence, danger, and serious harm in the his-her home

³¹ European Commission, "Irregular Migration", 2019.

³² IOM, "Key Migration Terms", 2019.

country. The people who request international protection are named an asylum seeker, and these people must prove the reasons for their asylum applications. At the end of the process, the people whose applications are not accepted must return to their home country. Therefore, not all asylum seekers are recognized as a refugee, but all refugees are recognized in the asylum seeker status.³³

In this context, a **refugee** is defined as a person who flees from the his-her country because of the violence, war, and security- persecution threats (aimed at his-her race, religion, social group, etc.) Refugees are not able to go back to their home country until the current situation becomes safe for them. People who are in refugee status obtain international protection based on international law and conventions.³⁴

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ International Rescue Committee, "Migrants, Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Immigrants: What's the Difference?" 2018.

CHAPTER 2

ANALYSIS OF IMMIGRATION IN THE FRAME OF THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter, three important theories, will be given and applied to the immigration phenomenon to provide better analysis about the policies, positions, and intentions of actors. For this theoretical framework; (neo)realism, liberal institutionalism (grand international relations theories) and push-pull factors theory were chosen. The phenomenon of immigration has a deep scope; as a consequence, it can be interpreted and analyzed with several theories. However, considering the structure of the actors in this research and their existing positions, the approaches of these three theories to this phenomenon will be given. (Neo)Realist and institutionalist approaches are claiming divergent points for interpretation. On the other hand, with different perspectives, these two theories complete each other in terms of their inadequacies. While the (neo)realist approach considers the security, sovereignty, and survival of the state as the main determinants for the immigration analyze; in connection with the cooperation logic, institutionalism addresses the roles of the states, international organizations, and NGOs within the scope of immigration. Moreover, these two theories provide actor-oriented theoretical approaches, the EU and the Visegrad Countries are dominant and sovereign actors on current immigration policies researched in this thesis. The third theory, push and pull factors, gives an approach concerning the social, economic, and cultural factors affecting the migration tendency of immigrants. Considering the migration flows from the MENA to especially Europe; the movement of immigration can be interpreted and understood profoundly in the frame of this theory.

2.1. (Neo)Realist Approach

Realism is one of the grand and central theoretical approaches in the international relations field. It relies on the power struggle among nation-states in the international arena. From this aspect, it produces a security and nation-states oriented view towards migration, which is based on the national interests of the states.

Although the realist perspective sees in the broad sense the states as the main actors of international relations and it considers the national interests as the root of the self-centered behavior of the states in the general sense, classical realism and (neo)realism have distinctions at some points. To put it more clearly, classical realism has the normative elements for interpretation of international affairs, and it explains the behavior of the states by mixing two levels (the domestic and the international). On the other hand, the neo(realist) approach develops a more analytical perspective, and it analyzes the behavior of the state by considering the system level in international relations.³⁵

When we examine the (neo)realist theory in depth, it mainly claims that in the international system, there is no single central authority above national states and this absence leads to an 'anarchic system' in the world arena. In this anarchic system, the nation-states show up as the main actors, and they are seen as unitary structures. In this system, there is no possibility to understand the intentions of other states with one hundred percent accuracy. Therefore, states don't have confidence in each other, and a state always has a fear that another state can have the motivation and capability to attack it. In this direction, the main aim of the actors (states) is to survive; in other words, to preserve their sovereign structure and territorial integrity. For this, states act in a self-centered manner; they try to maximize their power and minimize their losses. In the realist assumption, the priority is survival. Hence, states as rational actors can push other goals such as human rights or prosperity into the background to maintain their survival. By behaving with the relative gain understanding, states make an effort to sustain the balance of power. This situation limits long-run cooperation in international politics.^{36,37}

Concerning the (neo)realist theoretical perspective above mentioned, national security and strategic concerns are accepted as the essential parts of the survival principle. Supporting

³⁵ Betts, 2009: 21-22.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Dunne, Kurki, and Smith, 2013: 79-80.

this, Meyers says that national security and strategic concerns are evaluated within the high politics and being considered as vital issues by realists.³⁸

In light of all these, when the neorealist narratives review the global migration issue; it focuses on the importance of national security and national interests. Hollifield says that the realist response to the migration accepts the social and economic issues within the security-national interests frame. For instance, issues such as protection of the national identity and culture from undesirable cultural effects of immigrants, protection of the national economy from foreign workers are accepted as a part of the national interests.³⁹ In other words, the economic and social issues are considered in the scope of the security and national interests of the state.

In this direction, two points come to the forefront in the (neo)realist perspective to the migration. These are; the potential terrorism-organized crime threats from immigrants, the economic and social (national identity) threats arising from immigration in the frame of the security, national interests, and sovereignty.

Since the sovereignty of the state and its territorial integrity are vital for survival, immigrants pose a potential threat for the receiving state's national security. The immigrants and refugees can take terrorist actions against the host country in time. The reason for these actions can rely on varied reasons. For instance, these groups may become dissatisfied with the political structure and regime in the host country and try to change it by using arms, or these groups may be used by the domestic-external opposition to commit some illegal actions against government *de jure* in the country.⁴⁰ Moreover, the immigrants can get involved in some organized crime, such as human smuggling, drug trafficking, and spoil the existing stability in the receiving country. For the realist approach, these threats must be perceived as serious, and states must develop policies that secure their interests and struggle with migration

In terms of economy, the important factor is the immigrant absorption capacity of the receiving country. If the economic structure of the states is stable, the unemployment rate is low, and the financial resources are enough, these states deal with the migration phenomenon easily compared to the states having economic problems.⁴¹ However in the long term,

³⁸ Meyers, 2000: 1263.

³⁹ Hollifield, 1992: 582.

⁴⁰ Weiner, 1992: 109.

⁴¹ *Ibid*: 104.

especially in the high rate of immigration flow conditions, the economic structure of states can be affected in a negative direction. The high number of immigrants, in other words, the new foreign workers, affects the domestic worker's wage and working conditions. The high number of people in the labor market can raise the unemployment rate and lead to economic crises. As a result of these developments, the urban environment and the stability of the states can be spoiled.⁴² All of the possible negative economic effects of migration prompt the states to see the migration also as an economic threat for their national interests.

Furthermore, migration also has an impact on the social structure (culture and national identity), apart from the economic and political field. This impact can be in a negative way. Therefore, states take some steps in order to preserve their identity and domestic culture. At this point, the state's decision to approve the people as a migrant or not can be evaluated as a part of the sovereignty of the state. The preserving of national sovereignty is the significant point for survival, as we mentioned above.

Alongside all the security-oriented approaches of realism, migration is also evaluated positively for the national interests of the states from time to time. In the realist perspective, the national interest is essential, and the states pursue their national interest. In some conditions such as economic recessions, the deficit in the labor market, or necessity of demographic change, migration is seen as a positive factor and supported.⁴³ Also, during the power struggle, migration can be used as a pressure instrument for the rival states and reflect foreign policy.⁴⁴

The main critique against the realist approach is that realism sees the states as a unitary actor. However, the main weakness of this theory is that realism neglects the domestic actors, international bodies, and the interests group during the policy formation about migration.

⁴² Zogata-Kusz, 2012: 7-12.

⁴³ Meyers, 2000: 1265.

⁴⁴ Weiner, 1992: 100.

2.2. Institutional Approach

Institutionalism came into the prominence as an outstanding international relations theory especially at the end of the 1970s, to explain the important role of the institutions and the international regime in the global arena. Increased cooperation among states thanks to institutions and, as a result of this, the consisting mutual benefits have motivated scholars to make in-depth analyses. In this context, institutionalism has also become one of the prominent theoretical approaches for analyzing the global migration phenomenon and policies. To evaluate the institutionalism approach in the context of the migration phenomenon, firstly, the general assumptions of this theory must be given.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the realist approach considers states as a self-centered actor, and in this direction, states pursue their self-interest and try to maximize their gains. In other words, states as the main actor apply the relative gains logic. Underlying this logic is the state's fear that others (rival states in the power struggle) can gain more. Also, states have another fear for the possible cheating behavior of other states during cooperation, which can be explained with 'prisoner's dilemma.' For instance, in the migration issue, in the case of the lack of transparency and communication, states stay away from the possible cooperation which can be beneficial for both sides and they can move with the logic of gain by considering their benefits. (This can be resulted in with more lose for all sides.) In this regard, the cooperation of the states and the mutual benefits are not seen as possible by the (neo)realists in an anarchic system. At this point, liberal institutionalism, like realism, accepts states' self-interested and rational character, and their behaviors for power maximization in an anarchic system. On the other hand, the vital discrepancy between these two theoretical approaches is that institutionalism asserts that states have an absolute gains logic instead of relative gains. It gives a different perspective on international cooperation and from this perspective, thanks to cooperation, the actors can gain mutual benefit with the absolute gain logic. Stated in other words, although the realists have a 'zero-sum game' understanding, world politics is a 'positive-sum game' for the liberal institutionalists.⁴⁵

Institutions give information to the states with its transparent pattern to deal with the possible obstacles such as cheating acts and the distribution of the gains among the states as an outcome of the cooperation.⁴⁶ Thus, the main fears of the states can be solved by

⁴⁵ Betts, 2009: 25-26.

⁴⁶ Keohane and Martin, 1995: 45.

international institutions. Institutions promote meetings between statespeople playing key roles in the decision-making; states can know the intentions of the other states and exchange their information reciprocally.⁴⁷

Apart from these, another important question about the autonomy of institutions is asked by realists. Realists claim that institutions have no independent structure; they are created to serve in the direction of the powerful states' interests and governed for this purpose. In this situation, with their dependent structures, institutions cannot play a key role to overcome an anarchic system.⁴⁸ However, two functions of institutions have a significant role in dealing with this problem. These functions are 'compliance' and 'enforcement.' Liberals claim that with these functions, institutions acquire autonomous characteristics in time, despite the fact that they were established by states. For 'compliance,' states are stimulated by institutions to comply with the international agreements that they are part of. For 'enforcement,' institutions play a role to punish the states that don't comply with the agreements. The monitoring function of the institutions come into prominence at this point; states are observed in terms of their behaviors, and this forces states to keep away from possible incompliance.⁴⁹ In other words, from the viewpoint of the liberals, institutions have autonomous characteristics affecting every state. The rules – the outcomes of the institutions and international regimes – are shaped by not only the powerful states but also the others, effective on a par for all.

Lastly, another significant feature of institutions is their role in global issues. States are not willing to be a precursor to deal with global issues such as climate change, migration, weapons of mass destruction and so on in terms of the burdens of responsibility. They prefer to take a 'free rider' position. However, thanks to institutions, the burdens of responsibility on global issues can be shared by the states in a collective logic and states are pushed to act.⁵⁰

With all the general assumptions mentioned above, the liberal institutionalist theory gains importance for the interpretation of the migration phenomenon and related policies. According to Meyers, some scholars see institutions and international regimes as non-effective on the migration issue. For them, the political costs of collaboration are high, and the distribution of the outcomes is not equal for states. On the other hand, contrary to this, some

⁴⁷ Dunne, Kurki, and Smith, 2013 : 120.

⁴⁸ Stein, 2008: 206.

⁴⁹ Dunne, Kurki, and Smith, 2013: 123.

⁵⁰ Betts, 2009: 26.

supranational organizations, especially ones such as the EU, are generally highly effective in generating policies about migration and these organizations show high cooperation among member states within their bodies.⁵¹ Bhagwati says that the institutional approach instead of self-centered policies of the states is necessary to overcome backwardness in the migration issue such as the economic and social integration of the immigrants.⁵²

The application of the institutionalist approach to international migration reflects two important components. Firstly, thanks to institutions and international regime, states form a common attitude towards migration and distribute the joint gains and burdens among themselves. It suits the 'mutual benefits' logic and strengthens cooperation in the long term. For instance, the creation of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention relies on the interests of all the states that are part of this convention. Secondly, Institutions solve the insecure attitude problem of the states in the migration area. With the monitoring and enforcement powers, states feel obligated to accept common values and rules. Otherwise, states will begin to have a bad reputation as a violator and feel the fear of the ceasing of cooperation affecting their absolute gains.⁵³

⁵¹ Meyers, 2000: 1266.

⁵² Bhagwati, 2003: 98–104.

⁵³ Betts, 2009: 27.

2.3. Push and Pull Factors Approach

The push and pull factors theory is categorized within the modern migration theories which are developed by taking into account some subjects such as social structure, cultural structure, and economics and it tries to explain the complex structure between migration and immigrants. As opposed to realism and institutionalism, this approach attends to the economic, cultural, political and sociological dimensions of the migration phenomenon, and gives a theoretical analysis of migration movements and their typology in light of these factors. In this theoretical approach, the factors that motivate the people for immigration are defined as 'pull factors,' and the factors that affect people negatively are called 'push factors.' With the main lines, push factors include economic instability and crisis, high unemployment rates, the rapid population growth, internal conflicts, civil wars, the violation of human rights, ethnic and religious discriminations and so on. On the other hand, pull factors can be described as positive factors in countries of destination (for instance, the European countries, the US); on the contrary to mentioned negative factors in countries of origin (for instance, the MENA countries and the Sub-Saharan countries).⁵⁴

The main body and the formulation of the push and pull factors theory was first given by Everett Lee in 1966 in his study 'A Theory of Migration.' In this study, he categorized the factors that are effective in migration in four groups. These are factors related to the country of origin; factors related to the countries of destination, intervening obstacles, and factors are related to the persons. In this context, the migration has positive '+' and negative '-' factors in both the countries of origin and the countries of destination. Also, there are neutral factors '0' that don't affect migration positively or negatively and are not different for people. They don't constitute a difference for people when push and pull factors are compared in order to migrate. Although the factors are generally the same for all immigrants, they can be varied in terms of the personalized features of the immigrants such as social-cultural roots, socioeconomic level, age, sex, education and so on. For instance, a good climate is a positive (pull) factor for all immigrants; on the other hand, the quality of the education facilities in the country of destination can be a positive (pull) or negative (push) factor for the immigrants who have children. The same logic applies to the intervening obstacles.⁵⁵ In other words, the migration phenomenon must be evaluated with its all aspects; from a community to a person.

⁵⁴ Stanojoska and Petrevski, 2012: 3-4.

⁵⁵ Lee, 1966: 50.

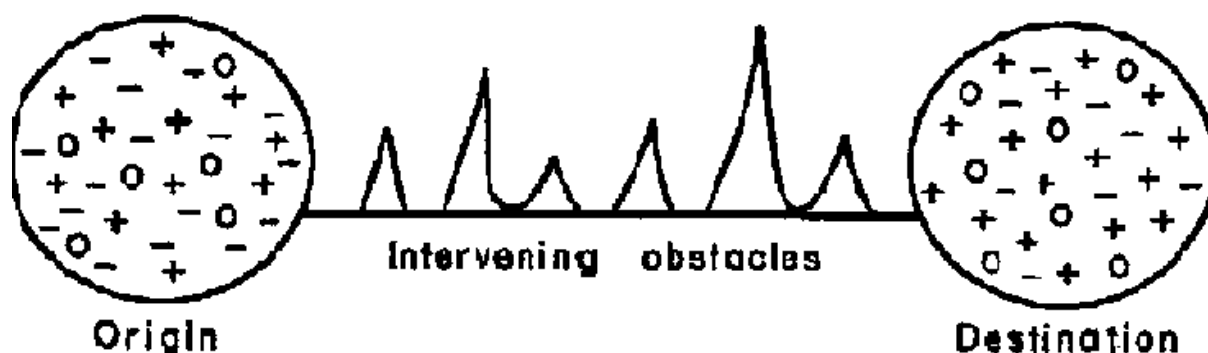


Figure 1: The Push and Pull Factors and Their Interaction⁵⁶

In light of push and pull factors, migration volume is related to both the diversity within a country and diversity between the countries of origin and the countries of destination. A higher diversity leads to higher migration movements to specific areas. At this point, the economic structure can be given as an example. The diversity of job opportunities, wages, and incomes between countries lead people to migrate. Also, a high discrepancy in the distribution of income within a sending country plays a role as a push factor for people.⁵⁷ Secondly, the diversity in a community, such as ethnic, religious and social-cultural differences, affects migration volume. Communities having a high level of heterogeneity have more tendency to migration. In heterogeneous communities, some social groups obtain privilege and social status. This situation can lead to social discrimination and encourage people to migrate. Thirdly, the intervening obstacles determine the migration volume. The difficulty rate of the obstacles hinders the movement of people. Lastly, if the migration movements to a destination (a country, a specific region) are not prevented by political authorities, the migration volumes are in a tendency to increase in time, since the diversity between countries can increase and the obstacles for migration can diminish over time. Moreover, observations show that immigrants prefer to follow well-defined routes used by former immigrants. This shows that the tendency of immigrants to move is towards the same destinations.⁵⁸

Lee's explanations about the factors and the migration movements-volumes rely on structural differences. On the other hand, Hear, Bakewell and Long claim that '*identifiable*

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷ Velazque, 2000: 139.

⁵⁸ Lee, 1966: 52-54.

events' are also important as a factor for migration movements apart from structural differences. According to them, these events can be distinguished in two spheres: economic and political. In the economic sphere, events such as crises, increase in unemployment, excessive taxation and collapse in the health or education systems are taken into account. In the political sphere, political power struggles, conflicts, and as a result of this, wars and violent actions play a part.⁵⁹

In connection with the push and factors, Petersen asserts four typologies for migration movements. He says that all factors have a different effect on the migration characters. Petersen's migration typologies are primitive migration, forced/impelled migration, free migration, and mass migration. Primitive migration considers the ecological factors as a push effect. The natural factors can be in a position that people can't struggle with them. In this situation, people show a migration tendency. This migration type is generally popular among the people who are living in primitive conditions. In this regard, these people try to remain their old lifestyle in the new countries that they move, but it couldn't be possible in every condition and the essential cultural changes can be observed among these people after migration. The forced/impelled migration defines a situation that the immigrants are forced to migrate. They must abide by the migration movements which are imposed by states or institutions. In this type of migration, the push factors are related to politics, and people are forced to leave the locations where they live. However, there is a small difference between forced and impelled migration. In forced migration, people have no choice to stay in their countries. In impelled migration, people are forced to leave their home, but they can decide to leave or not. For instance, the political pressure on a specific community in a country (policies, laws) to lead them to migrate can be considered in the impelled migration. On the other hand, the violence actions (life threat) towards some group people or relegation of them by an authority is associated with the forced migration. As apart from the previous two migration types, in free migration and mass migration, the immigrants play a key role for initiating to the migration movements. In free migration, people act individually, evaluating the push and pull factors; they decide to migrate and select their destination. On the other hand, in mass migration, the migration phenomenon turns into the collective consciousness. The developments in some areas such as technology, transportation lead to less intervening obstacles in migration. Especially, the developments in the transportation field have massive impacts on mass migration movements. The developed rail systems; sea transports triggered

⁵⁹ Hear, Bakewell, and Long, 2018: 933.

this migration type. The dramatic population increase can be considered as another important factor for mass migration. Overpopulation in some countries plays a role as a push factor for people. Also, the pioneer immigrants and their achievements in the destination countries attract people as a pull factor, and people reflect collective migration movements.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Petersen, 1958: 256–66.

CHAPTER 3

EUROPE AND IMMIGRATION

3.1. Immigration Trends and Attraction Centers in Europe

Although the immigration phenomenon takes a serious part in the European agenda after the Arab Spring with the illegal migration movements and refugee crisis from the MENA region, the immigration trends in Europe in the 20th century (especially after the Second World War) have shaped the general features of continental Europe. The attitudes of the European countries towards migration have shown different characteristics in the course of time; in this context, their political positions have changed as well.

Until 2010 (the beginning of the Arab Spring), the evaluation of the migration trends in Europe and the attitudes of the European countries towards the migration in the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century can be divided three periods. These periods are; from the end the Second World War (1945) to the mid of the 1970s, from the mid of the 1970s to 1990 (the economic recession time) and from 1990 to 2010 (from the collapse of the Soviets to the Arab Spring). Within these periods, some migration features shaped the migration trends in Europe. These are the migration of the labors and the reunification of the immigrants' families. Also, political migrations from the Iron Curtain countries, which was effective, especially before the collapse of the Soviets, can be assessed in these features.⁶¹⁶²

Until the end of the Second World War, the immigration trends in the European continent had the opposite character compared to the migration trends after the war. In this period, Europe had a migration giving position. Almost 50 millions of European people migrated to different countries and continents such as the United States of America, Canada, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, and so on, the years between 1815 and 1930.⁶³ The war was also effective on the migration giving position of Europe. Almost 60 million people were displaced as a result of the devastating impact of the Second World War.⁶⁴ However, the

⁶¹ Hansen, 2003.

⁶² Mol and Valk, 2016.

⁶³ Rica, Glitz and Ortega, 2013: 5.

⁶⁴ Zampano, Moloney, and Juan, 2015.

ending of the war (post-war period) led to the economic revival in the European continent, for instance, the level of the industrial production escalated by 30% in Europe between 1953 and 1958.⁶⁵ After this point, the trends for the migration in Europe reversed and Europe became an attraction and the destination center for the immigrants from all around the world. Although there was an economic boom in Europe, the devastating effects of the World War hit the population structure, and there was a deficiency in the workforce in the meantime. Moreover, local people in Europe didn't have the willingness to work in low-paid jobs, and this was another reason for the necessity of laborers in the European market. The European countries (West and North European countries), in order to maximize their benefits in the economic area, supported the migration of workers from different countries. This point shows that the European countries' attitude towards migration has the realist approach related to maximizing their benefits. In this direction, many immigrants came to Europe as guest workers, and Germany, France, Belgium, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Sweden were the favorite destinations for these immigrants.⁶⁶ From the perspective of the immigrants, the European countries were providing job opportunities and better wages compared to their countries of origin. It was one of the important pull factors for these people to migrate to West and North Europe.

Some European countries met their labor shortage with immigrants who have guest-workers agreements from Turkey, Southern Europe, North Africa, the Balkans. For instance, Germany and Turkey signed the guest worker agreement '*Gastarbeiter*' in 1961, and as a result of this, Turkish workers migrated to Germany as a large labor force. (The change in the agreement in 1964 let Turkish workers stay in Germany for more than two years.)⁶⁷ On the other hand, the countries having colonization history met this shortage with the immigrants from their old colonies. In this direction, Algerians migrated to France and Indians went to the UK.⁶⁸ The immigration flows from the Central and Eastern European countries, which were under the domination of Soviets, are seen as political migrations in this period related to the political crises in the bipolar international system.

Until the middle of the 1970s, immigration was seen as a tap by European countries for meeting the shortage in the workforce and sustaining the economic developments in Europe. The logic was simple. In the case of necessity, the tap can be turned on to meet

⁶⁵ Mol and Valk, 2016: 32.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Prevezanos, 2011.

⁶⁸ Martiniello, 2006: 301.

worker shortages; on the other hand, during an economic recession, the tap can be turned off, and the immigration movements can be blocked.⁶⁹ This naive logic didn't work, and the immigration level continued to increase during the economic recession period.

The period which started with the oil crisis at the beginning of the 1970s led to a transformation trend in the economic-industrial area not only in Europe but also in the world. As a result of this, investments and jobs were distributed in different parts of the world, and a cheap labor force was obtained. Developments in technology decreased the importance of unskilled workers in industrial production. Lastly, the decrease in industrial production in some areas slowed down the booming economic effect, and economic recession showed up.⁷⁰ This situation in the economic field was a sign for European countries to turn off the migration tap. The immigrants who came to Europe as a result of the economic revival after the Second World War started to be seen as an economic burden. On the other hand, the immigrants didn't prefer to return their home countries during this period. Contrary to the expectations of European countries, immigrants brought their families from their home countries, and with the family reunification trend in migration, the immigrant communities continued to increase in the European cities.⁷¹

The increased population of immigrants reached the level of a real threat in the perception of Europe. Although newcomers took the vacant jobs during the high industrial development period, the recession period brought unemployment problems. The high immigrant population started to affect the domestic workers and market negatively. With this economic threat, the political positions of the migrant-receiving European countries also changed. The anti-immigration discourse rose in the political field. For instance, the French politician Jean-Marie Le Pen used the term "invaders" for the immigrants, and he presented a calculation between immigrants and the French economy. According to his calculation, "*2 million immigrant workers = 2 million unemployed Frenchmen.*"⁷²

Another threat to arise in this period for European countries was the increasing population of immigrants and their possible effects on national identity. The number of these people and their high birth rate changed the demographic structure in Europe, and Europe

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid: 302.

⁷¹ Parsons and Smeeding, 2006: 7.

⁷² Singer, 1998.

obtained a heterogeneous shape and multicultural identity.⁷³ In this context, the integration of these people into the European culture started to be considered as a serious problem.

The beginning of the 1990s, the world witnessed big political changes and crises. As a result of these, Europe has come across important migration flows again. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the war in Yugoslavia, the people from Eastern Europe and the Balkan region started to migrate to Western Europe. Between 1989 and 1992, the number of asylum applications rose from 320.000 to 695.000.⁷⁴ On the other hand, with the economic developments, the Southern European countries such as Italy and Spain became the attraction centers, and the migration movements from Latin America and North Africa also increased.⁷⁵

Moreover, internal migration movements took place in Europe after the 2000s with the enlargement processes of the European Union. Thanks to the enlargements in 2004 and 2007, many countries became part of the Union. This situation triggered migration movements from East Europe to West Europe.⁷⁶

Another outstanding point from the 1990s to 2010 was the escalation of illegal immigration movements in Europe with the EU's strict border policies. The abolition of the borders with the Maastricht Treaty (1992) allowed European citizens to travel within European borders easily; on the other hand, the border policies of the Union were strengthened after this point, and this led to an increase in illegal migrations from non-European countries.⁷⁷

To sum up, as it is seen in the figure below, with the booming effect in the economy in the post-war period, the migration rates start to increase and even during the economic recession in the 1970s; people remained to migrate Europe. After 2000, we can see that the migration movements to Europe gathered speed.

⁷³ Hansen, 2003: 27.

⁷⁴ Mol and Valk, 2016: 37.

⁷⁵ Rica, Glitz, and Ortega, 2013: 7.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Mol and Valk, 2016: 38.

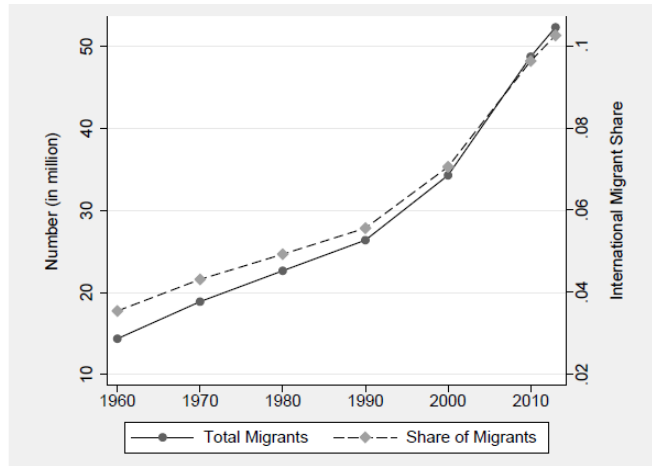


Figure 2: Migration Rates in Europe after World War II⁷⁸

The year 2010 became a breaking point for Europe and migration relation, the revolutionary movements in the MENA countries which is called the Arab Spring led to political instability, and the people's migration movements from this region have put Europe in the most challenging situation in its history in terms of migration.

⁷⁸ Rica, Glitz, and Ortega, 2013.

3.2. The MENA Region

The MENA (the Middle East and North Africa) region where the Arab Spring showed up, covers the area from the Mediterranean Sea (from the North) to the Indian and the Atlantic Sea (to the East and the West). The countries in this region are Algeria, Bahrain, Tunisia, Egypt, Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Israel, Libya, Lebanon, Jordan, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Sudan, Djibouti, United Arab Emirates, Palestine.⁷⁹ The MENA region comes into prominence with its rich natural resources and rapidly growing population. After the second half of the 20th century, the pace of population growth escalated dramatically. Between 1950 to 2000, the total population of the region increased from around 100 million to approximately 380 million people, and in another 50 years, it is expected to increase 280 million more.⁸⁰ Covering over 15 million km² and constituting 6% of the world population, the MENA region also has more than 60% of the world oil reserves.⁸¹

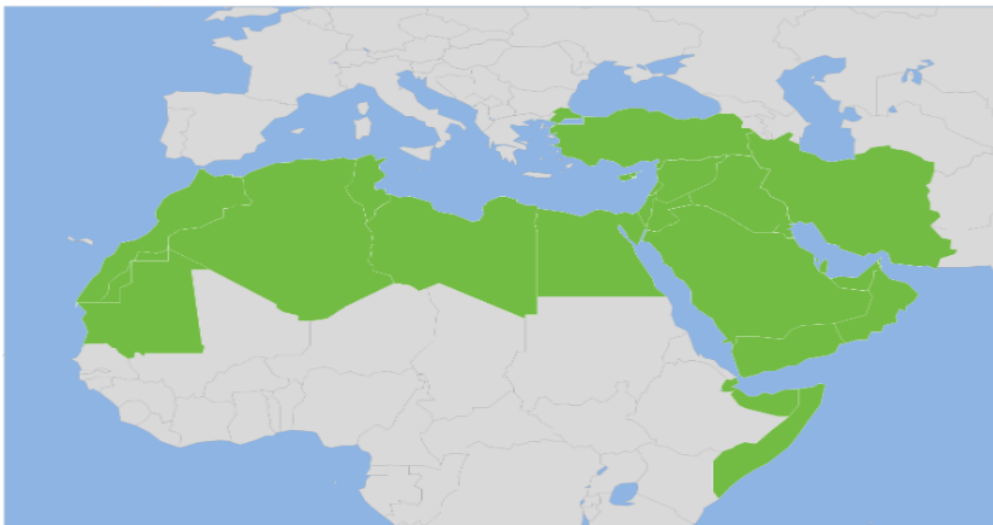


Figure 3: The Map of the MENA Region

Although the region has a high level of natural resources and a young population in the workforce, the living standards are low, the poverty rate is high, and the distribution of wealth is unjust. Although 'oil rich' countries such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar have a high

⁷⁹ Geographical definition and the countries located in the region vary depending on different academic sources and the institutions doing the surveys in this region. For instance, in some sources, Turkey is accepted as one of the MENA countries, but in some sources, it is accepted as a European country.

⁸⁰ Fahimi, 2001.

⁸¹ Alamoudi, 2017: 16.

level of GDP income, other MENA countries suffer from economic problems. This situation leads to general economic and poverty problems in the region when considered in a broad perspective. According to data, before the beginning of the revolutionary movements (Arab Spring) at the end of 2010, the economic growth level was 4.8% between 2000 and 2010 and the growth level in GDP per capita was 2.5%. The gap between the GDP level and GDP per capita level is the highest compared to other regions in the world except for sub-Saharan Africa.⁸² This data shows that there is a serious imbalance in the economic structure in the MENA region.

The reasons for the economic imbalance in the region can be interpreted with different elements. First of all, the region has a high level of natural sources; as a result of this in the MENA, the oil industry is developed, but other sectors are in a really weak position. Therefore, job opportunities for the population are limited. The unemployment rates high and the living standard is low in many MENA countries.

The political instabilities in the region are another important factor affecting not only economic structure but also social life in negative ways. Factors such as denominational, religious, and political differences have been triggering wars and disorders. In the MENA region, devastating wars have been taking place since 1945; also military coups and sanctions imposed by the West are important parts of the region's political history.⁸³

Lastly, the political systems in the region have destructive effects on social and economic life. In many countries, authoritarian political regimes are effective on administration, and parallel to this, the institutional structures of the states are weak, corruption levels are high, and transparency levels are low. According to the corruption index of the "Transparency International" in 2010, the MENA region countries have a high corruption level in the world. Among the 19 MENA countries, only four countries were above the world average (above the 5 points out of 10) considered clean in terms of corruption; other 15 countries were below the average, and they were in the corrupted countries group. According to the data, the five most corrupted countries in the MENA were Syria, Iran, Libya, Yemen, and Iraq.⁸⁴

⁸² O'Sullivan, Rey, and Mendez, 2011: 10-11.

⁸³ Dahi and Demir, 2008: 527.

⁸⁴ Transparency International, 2010.

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

RANK	REGIONAL RANK	COUNTRY / TERRITORY	CPI 2010 SCORE	90% CONFIDENCE INTERVAL		SURVEYS USED
				LOWER BOUND	UPPER BOUND	
19	1	Qatar	7.7	6.6	8.6	7
28	2	United Arab Emirates	6.3	5.4	7.3	5
30	3	Israel	6.1	5.7	6.6	6
41	4	Oman	5.3	4.1	6.4	5
48	5	Bahrain	4.9	4.1	5.7	5
50	6	Jordan	4.7	4.0	5.5	7
50	6	Saudi Arabia	4.7	3.3	6.0	5
54	8	Kuwait	4.5	3.3	5.9	5
59	9	Tunisia	4.3	3.0	5.6	6
85	10	Morocco	3.4	2.9	3.9	6
91	11	Djibouti	3.2	2.1	4.7	3
98	12	Egypt	3.1	2.9	3.4	6
105	13	Algeria	2.9	2.6	3.2	6
127	14	Lebanon	2.5	2.0	2.9	4
127	14	Syria	2.5	2.1	2.8	5
146	16	Iran	2.2	1.6	3.1	4
146	16	Libya	2.2	2.0	2.4	6
146	16	Yemen	2.2	2.0	2.5	4
175	19	Iraq	1.5	1.2	1.9	3

Figure 4: The Corruption Levels of the MENA Countries⁸⁵

At the end of 2010, the factors mentioned above, such as poverty, social and economic injustice, authoritarian political regimes led to uprisings, and these uprisings resulted in regime changes and civil wars in some MENA countries

⁸⁵ Ibid.

3.3. The Arab Spring

As mentioned in the last subtitle, the MENA region has economic and social problems and political instabilities. Almost two years before the beginning of the Arab Spring, the economic problems in the MENA countries which were affected by these revolutionary movements, reached a serious level. The unemployment rates were in an uncontrollable position, and the inflation rates had reached almost 25-30% with economic crises.⁸⁶

One of the outstanding points apart from the economic problems was the changing social structure of the MENA countries. Over the last decades, the educational level was in a growing trend in the countries of the region. The growing young generation with a developing educational level tended towards democratization. In other words, higher education levels trigger more modernization and democratization logic in societies.⁸⁷

As an uprising against economic problems, authoritarian regimes, and social injustices; the protests began in Tunisia. On the 19th of December, 2010, a 26-year-old Tunisian man, named Mohamed Bouazizi, burned himself to death to protest the government. After this point, protests arose in Tunisia, and the government tried to suppress the protests using violence. Following hundreds of deaths, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali left his presidency after 23 years. The first democratic elections in Tunisia were organized in October 2011. The uprisings, now called the Arab Spring, showed a domino effect and spread to various MENA countries. Protests took place in Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria, and Bahrain. Countries such as Saudi Arabia and Morocco restrained the protests by making promises of structural reforms.⁸⁸

With all these expansive protests, in some countries the head of the autocratic regimes such as Hosni Mubarak and Muammar al-Gaddafi, were overthrown by the public; on the other hand, the uprisings failed to reach their main goals. For example, in Libya, after Gaddafi's regime, a civil war broke out. In Egypt, Mohamed Morsi (elected president after Mubarak's regime) was overthrown by the army in a military coup. In Syria, the process took a different path, and Bashar Al-Assad resisted the protestors using violence with the support of the army. The most destructive civil war showed up in Syria during the Arab Spring.

⁸⁶ Mushtaq and Afzal, 2017: 2-3.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Tahir, 2018.

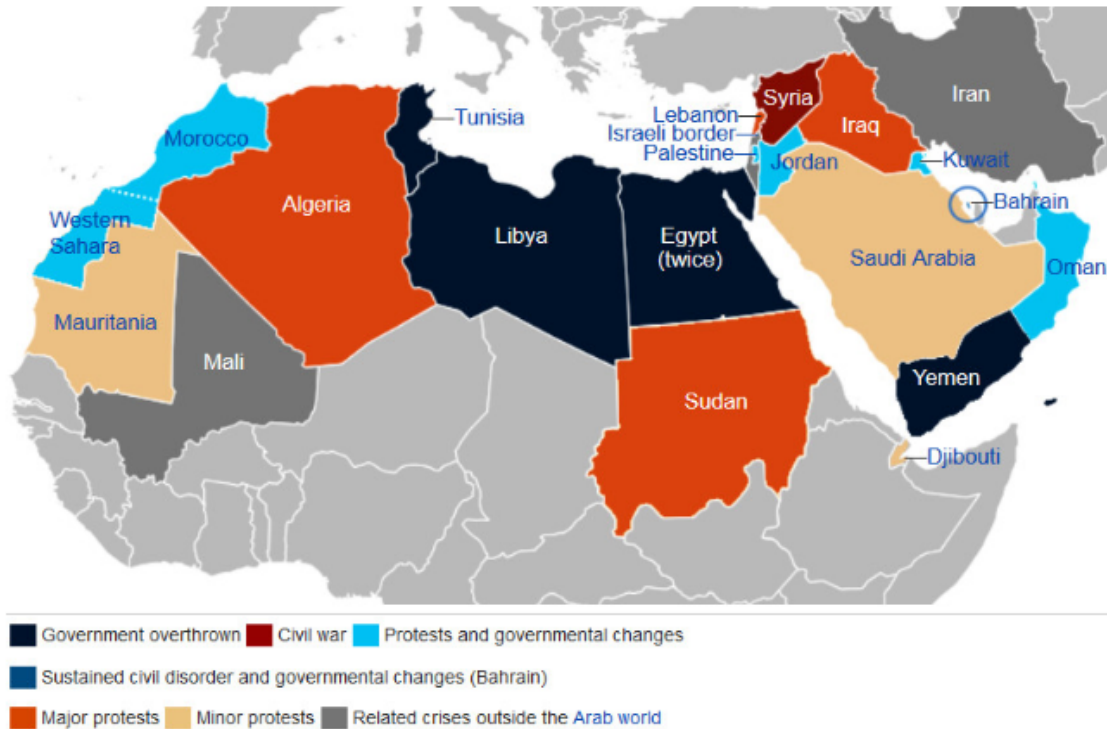


Figure 5: The Map of the Arab Spring in 2014⁸⁹

In a broad sense, the Arab Spring didn't bring political stability and the desired democratization in the MENA region. Although the strengthening of the states was expected in the beginning as a result of the process, the states weakened, and the social structures in the MENA countries were affected negatively in the short term. With the newly formed authority gaps, the people in the region became more fragmented along ethnic and sectarian lines.⁹⁰

With these authority gaps, many different armed groups came to exist and started to control some territories in civil war areas. At this point, radical Islamist terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda obtained a chance to grow strong and revive. Also, new dangerous radical Islamist terrorist organizations such as ISIS were derived from Al-Qaeda. Because of the weakness of the intelligence services and armies of the MENA countries during the Arab Spring, radical Islamist groups obtained field to move freely. Thousands of armed fighters joined these groups.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Perego, 2014.

⁹⁰ Hinnebusch, 2014: 10.

⁹¹ Walton, 2011: 6.

All these developments directed the civilian people to immigration movements. Although many people migrated to countries in the MENA region; for instance, Turkey has been the most affected country with these migration waves; Europe became the attraction center for the immigrants as it was in the past. In short, the democratization movements in the MENA region have resulted in a big problem in a different continent, Europe, in the form of the immigration issue.

3.4. Immigration Trends in Europe with the Arab Spring

The migration trends in Europe before the beginning of the Arab Spring were generally related to economic reasons and family reunification. The many immigrants from the MENA region came to Europe as a workforce following the economic boom trend, and then they brought their families. In this sense, the free migration type was in effect, and the immigrants were coming to Europe by evaluating the push and pull factors in the countries of origin and destination. With the economic recession period in the 1970s, European migration policies took a more strict stance towards migration flows. After this point, Europe was not keen on new migration waves.

Although the EU supported and focused on the democratization movements in the MENA region with the Arab Spring for the propagation of democracy in the region, it was not ready for the possible migration movements as a result of these revolutionary movements. Acts of violence, especially civil wars such as in Libya and Syria and terrorist organizations such as ISIS forced people to leave their homes and migrate to different countries. At this point, the migrations from the MENA turned into forced-impelled migration type with political reasons. The refugee crisis occurred in Europe, and this led the EU to produce new policies to deal with this problem.

Before the beginning of the Arab Spring (at the end of 2010), there were almost 8 million 'first-generation' immigrants from the MENA region in all around the world. %62 of them in other words, almost 5 million immigrants were living in European countries, %38 were living in the other Arab States and different countries in the world.⁹² After the beginning of the Arab Spring in December 2010;⁹³ the immigration movements from the MENA countries took upward trends. However, when the immigrant stocks in the four European countries (Germany, the UK, Italy, and Spain) are examined, it can be seen that there were no big quantitative differences between 2011 and the past five years trends. For instance, in these European countries; the increase in the immigrant stocks was 90.839 in 2011. This number was 67.214 in 2010.⁹⁴

The conflict in Libya and Syria as a result of the Arab Spring triggered massive migration flows from the region. In 2012, not only EU member states were faced with a high

⁹² Fargues and Fandrich, 2012: 1.

⁹³ Tahir, 2018.

⁹⁴ Fargues and Fandrich, 2012: 2-3.

number of immigrants, but also other countries in the region were affected by the immigrants in negative ways. For instance, right after the beginning of the crisis in Syria, Turkey accepted almost 2 million refugees. Lebanon also took above 1 million people as refugees.⁹⁵ On the other hand, these countries didn't have a strong economic structure and high living standards. As a result of this, these immigrants are faced with various economic and social problems in these countries. At this point, the push factors (economic, social problems) in the countries where people had already migrated and the pull factors (high social, economic standards) in the EU countries influenced the immigrants to set new migration destinations. Thus, a high number of immigrants from the MENA region started to arrive on European soil using different migration routes.

During the ongoing process, the number of immigrants increased systematically, and in 2015, it reached a peak. In 2014, the number of asylum application in Europe was 625.000. Syrians constituted 20% of these applications, with almost 123,000. The number of asylum applications was almost 300.000 in Europe in 2011, and the number approximately doubled in 3 years. In terms of the registration of asylum applications, Germany was in first place with 32% (202.700 applications), and Sweden, Italy, France, and Hungary came after Germany in turn.⁹⁶

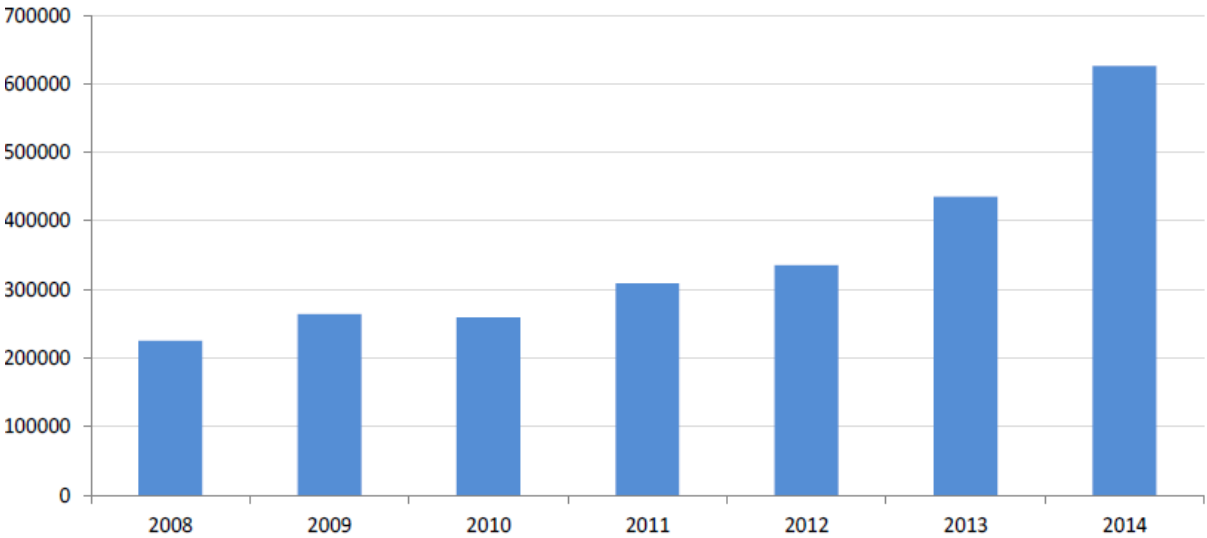


Figure 6: Number of Asylum Applications in the EU between 2008-2014⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Sessa-Hawkins, 2015.

⁹⁶ Eurostat, 2015.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

According to the FRONTEX, five main routes are used by immigrants to arrive in Europe. These are the Western Mediterranean route, the Central Mediterranean route, the Western Balkan route, the Eastern Mediterranean route, and the Eastern Borders route. In 2015, the Eastern Mediterranean route, the Central Mediterranean route, and the Western Balkan route were most preferred by immigrants. The number of immigrants who used these three routes in 2015 was 885.386, 181.376 and 764.033, respectively.⁹⁸ Generally, the immigrants who used the Eastern Mediterranean route were refugees coming from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Somalia. Central Mediterranean route was popular for immigrants coming from North Africa. Many Libyans and Tunisians preferred this route to reach Italy and Malta. The Western Balkan route was used by the immigrants to reach Central European countries. Migrants generally aimed to arrive in Germany and Austria passing through countries located en route such as Slovenia, Hungary, Macedonia, and Serbia.⁹⁹

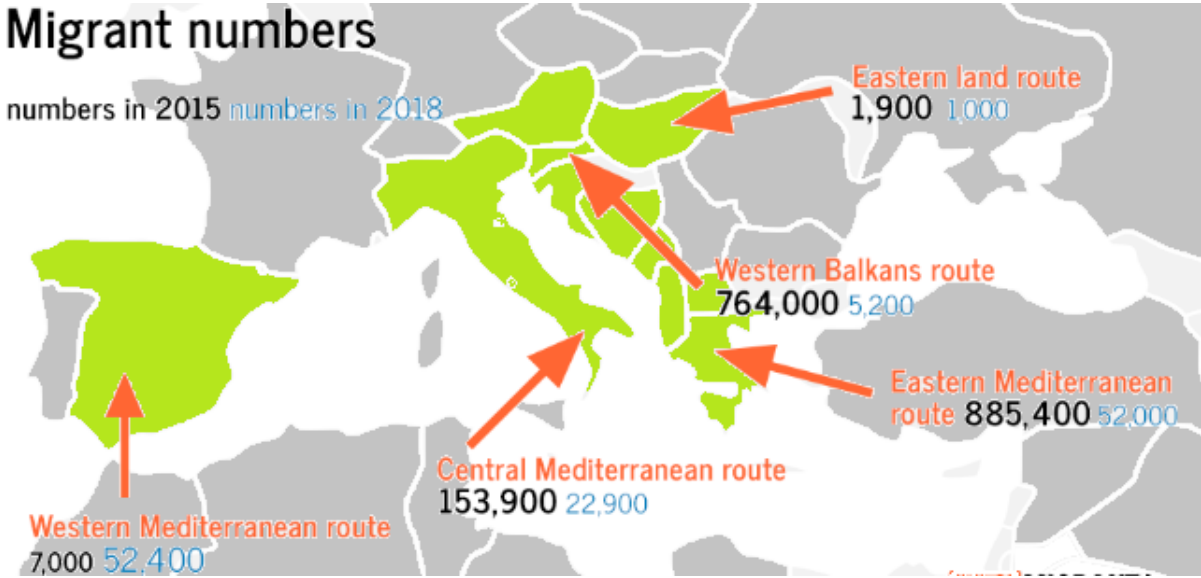


Figure 7: Migration Routes and the Numbers of Immigrants in 2015 and 2018¹⁰⁰

Parallel to the migration boom in Europe in 2015, the number of asylum seekers broke a record in EU history. According to Eurostat data, 1.255.600 people applied for the protection of EU member states as a first-time asylum seeker. The striking point in this total number was that citizens of three countries (Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan) constituted over half of the total number of asylum applications in 2015. Syrians were in the first place with

⁹⁸ Frontex, 2019.
⁹⁹ MacGregor, 2019.
¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

362.800 applications (29%); Afghans (178.200; 14%) and Iraqis (121.500; 10%) were in second and third place, respectively. Germany was the country in Europe which got the highest number of asylum applications in 2015, as in 2014. After Germany; Hungary, Sweden, Austria, and Italy received a high number of asylum applications.¹⁰¹

In light of all these developments, the immigration-refugee crises gained momentum and led to mixed reactions among member states. The EU tried to handle this problem with newly created policies in the migration field, and one of these policies was the readmission agreement with Turkey. It was one of the important steps for the EU to control this illegal immigration flow. According to the readmission agreement, which was put in force in 2016, the EU countries could send back the refugees who arrived on European soil via Turkey. At this point, Turkey played a significant role in controlling immigration flow towards Europe. In return for this agreement, the EU gave a guarantee to Turkey for an aid package of a total of 6 billion Euros to spend on improving the refugees' conditions. Also, the EU agreed on the visa-free travel of Turkish citizens.¹⁰²

Although there are some disputes about the terms of the agreement now (Turkey claims that it couldn't get the promised financial aid packages and visa-free travel benefit) after this agreement, the number of the refugees arriving in Europe decreased sharply. In 2018, the number of asylum applications was 580.800. This number was almost 1 million in 2016 (the date that the refugee agreement was signed between the EU and Turkey). In the 2 years following the agreement, it can be seen that there is approximately a half million decrease in the asylum applications in the EU countries.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Eurostat, 2016.

¹⁰² Şahin, 2017.

¹⁰³ Eurostat, 2019.

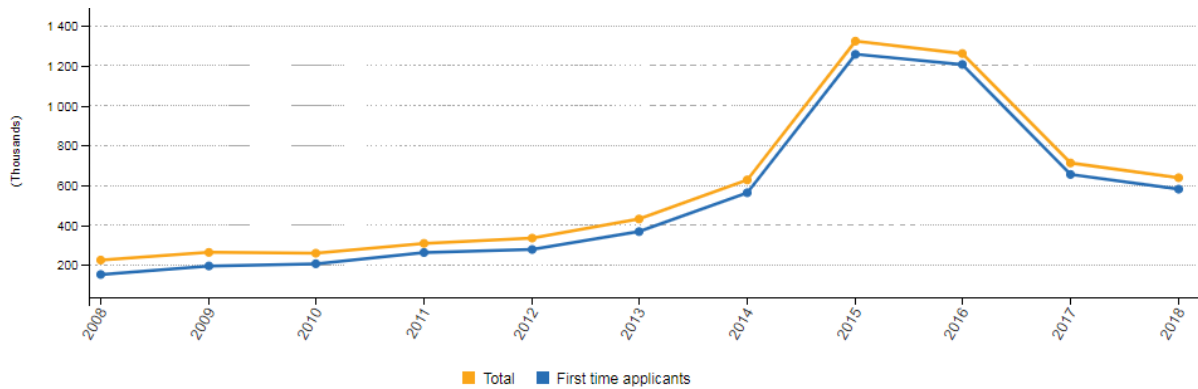


Figure 8: The Number of Asylum Applications between 2008-2018¹⁰⁴

The migration problem in Europe, which started with the Arab Spring, reached a peak in 2015 and has been brought under control partially now by the EU. During this process, the EU has regulated some of its policies and also created new policies in the migration field to better deal with this problem. At this point, some disputes have come into existence among the EU member states on how to solve the migration problem, and in this direction, the political positions of some member states have shifted.

In the final chapter, the policies of the EU towards the illegal migration problem after the Arab Spring will be given, and then specifically the political position of the Visegrad Group countries on the migration issue will be evaluated in the context of the EU's policies.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

Chapter 4

MIGRATION POLICIES IN EUROPE TOWARDS ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION AFTER THE ARAB SPRING

4.1. The Immigration Policies of the European Union

The immigration-refugee crisis in Europe after the Arab Spring became the biggest and most urgent problem to be dealt with in the European political agenda. Especially since 2015 (when the highest number of immigrants and asylum applications were recorded in the EU history), the EU has started to take serious measures in order to overcome this problem. For this purpose, some revisions were carried out on current migration policies, and new regulations and agreements regarding the protection of the member states' interests were put in practice. During the establishment of common policies towards the migration crisis, serious debates among the member states took place, and different political positions have emerged. On the other hand, the EU made an effort to make policies which try to strengthen the common political position of the Union. Before we mention these policies, revisions, and new agreements, the important phases creating the current migration policies of the EU must be given for better analyses, as the essential starting point of the EU throughout establishing solution packages towards the migration crisis after the Arab Spring was the policies and regulations which were developed for many years.

In the EU history, the serious cooperations among member states in the areas of immigration, asylum, judiciary, and police started in 1975 and continued to increase. However, this cooperation between member states didn't have a strong, legally binding character. The character of the cooperation was ad hoc groups – initiatives and non-binding agreements – between member states. In this context, the establishment of the TREVI, which consisted of 12 different member states' ministers of home affairs, had the aim of police

cooperation among member states against terrorism, and this can be given as an instance of intergovernmental cooperation among member states after 1975.¹⁰⁵

The Schengen Agreement which was signed in 1985 for abolishing the borders in order to provide free movement among European countries and the Single European Act which was signed in 1986 with the purpose of the establishment of a single internal market in Europe, prompted European countries to take more serious steps in the field of immigration and asylum in order to create common policies. For this purpose, the Dublin Convention was signed in 1990 (which came into force in 1997 and was later revised as the Dublin II Regulation and the Dublin III Regulation). The main goals of this convention were the prevention of multiple asylum applications made by the same asylum seekers in different member states, and giving responsibility to member states to examine asylum applications, thus preventing the sending of the asylum seekers to another member state without examination of their asylum applications.¹⁰⁶

The signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 was a turning point for the establishment of common European immigration and asylum policies. With the Maastricht Treaty, the immigration and asylum field was put in the legal framework of the EU administrative structure. Matters of immigration and asylum were subsumed under the "third pillar" of the EU's decision-making structure, and in this way, the immigration and asylum field was transformed from informal cooperation into formal intergovernmental cooperation. The role of the European Commission became joint initiator with the member states for the adoption of political positions, action plans, and resolutions in the immigration and asylum field. On the other hand, the Maastricht Treaty didn't bring a certain solution to deal with immigration and asylum issues. It was criticized in terms of its deficiencies in two important points. Firstly, the resolutions and recommendations which were held under the "third pillar" didn't have a legally binding character, and secondly, there were no judicial and parliamentary controls in the area of immigration and asylum, and this created a deficiency in terms of monitoring.¹⁰⁷¹⁰⁸

In 1999, with the coming into force of the Amsterdam Treaty, the objective of the establishment of an "area of freedom, security, and justice (AFSJ)" was propounded and some revisions were held after the Maastricht Treaty. It was decided to transfer immigration

¹⁰⁵ Wiesbrock, 2016: 162.

¹⁰⁶ Groen, 2015: 9-10.

¹⁰⁷ Wiesbrock, 2016: 163.

¹⁰⁸ Scipioni, 2018: 1361.

and asylum policies, along with judicial cooperation on civil matters and border control, into the first pillar (the European Community pillar). On the other hand, police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters were left under the third pillar. As a result of the Amsterdam Treaty, the EU took an important step towards the creation of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). The Lisbon Treaty, which came into force in 2009, gave the immigration and asylum fields their final form in the European Union's decision-making structure. With the Lisbon Treaty, the AFSJ was placed under Title V in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TEFU). The three pillar structure of the EU was abolished with the Lisbon Treaty, and all matters carried out in the three different pillars were compounded. Thus, all matters about the Justice and Home Affairs, which had been divided between the first pillar and the third pillar with the Amsterdam Treaty, obtained a communitarian character in the EU structure. In other words, the decisions about immigration and asylum matters, politically dependent on Justice and Home Affairs, are taken by the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament jointly with the "ordinary legislative procedure" after the Lisbon Treaty.¹⁰⁹

After the Amsterdam Treaty, a meeting was held in Tampere where is in Finland by the EU's member states in October 1999. The main goal of this meeting was the determination of the political framework of the AFSJ.¹¹⁰ As a result of this meeting, the Tampere Programme was adopted by the member states, and the creation of the CEAS officially started with this political move. According to the Tampere Programme, the CEAS consisted of two phases. The first phase of the CEAS covered the years between 1999 and 2004, and related to the creation of common minimum standards for asylum in Europe. In general terms, the CEAS tried to bring some solution to problems such as "asylum shopping," which means multiple applications by asylum seekers in various European countries, incompatible outcomes for asylum applications from different member states, and different social benefits of asylum seekers staying in different European countries.¹¹¹ After the accomplishment of the first phase, the Hague Programme in 2004 started the second phase in the CEAS. The main target in the second phase was creating a single asylum procedure and going beyond the minimum standards which were discussed in the first phase.¹¹² In other words, the second phases were focusing on the determination of the developments in the current CEAS

¹⁰⁹ Wiesbrock, 2016: 163-164.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Raithel, 2016.

¹¹² European Parliament, "Migration and Asylum: A Challenge for Europe" 2018.

mechanism and instruments. To this end, in 2007, the Green Paper had an importance for the consultation of the public. In 2008, the Policy Plan on Asylum presented three important points for the developments. These are; more harmonization in asylum standards, high cooperation in the practical area among member states for the immigration and asylum matters, and enhancing the responsibilities of all member states while also strengthening the relations between the EU and the non-EU countries in this field.¹¹³ As a result of these efforts, the five important components framed the CEAS. These are,

- . the Asylum Procedures Directive (creation of common procedures for member states to grant or withdraw international protection to people)
- . the Reception Conditions Directive (providing harmonized standards for all asylum seekers in different EU member states such as housing, education and so on)
- . the Qualification Directive (determination of the reasons for international protection)
- . the Dublin Regulation (determination of the responsible member states in terms of the examinations of asylum applications)
- . the EURODAC Regulation (the establishment of a fingerprints database for asylum seekers).¹¹⁴

All these historical developments in the field of immigration and asylum in the EU, beginning with the Schengen Agreement (1985) and the Single European Act (1986) have brought the common EU policies to a level within the general institutional structure of the Union. On the other hand, the migration crisis after 2010 triggered the EU to take some urgent measures in the immigration and asylum area, which still had some deficiencies in dealing with this problem. In this context, on 20 April 2015, the European Commission's proposal, called the "Ten Point Action Plan on Migration," reflected the seriousness of the migration-refugee crisis in Europe and the effort of the EU to respond to this problem urgently. As mentioned in the previous chapters, 2015 was the peak of the crisis. Accordingly, the action plan was presented with the joint statement of Migration, Home Affairs, and Citizenship Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos and High Representative-Vice President Federica Mogherini. They stated that "*We need to show that same collective European sense of urgency we have consistently shown in reacting in times of crisis...*"¹¹⁵ This statement was a

¹¹³ European Commission, "Common European Asylum System" 2019.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ European Commission, "Joint Foreign and Home Affairs Council: Ten Point Action Plan on Migration," 2015.

sign that the EU would be taking steps collectively against the crisis in the near future. In this action plan, the outstanding points out of the ten items were reinforcement of the operations in the Mediterranean, and enhancing the collaboration and efforts among the member states and the agencies of the EU such as EUROPOL, EASO, EUROJUST, and FRONTEX for prevention of human smuggling. Also, determination of the options in terms of the relocation of immigrants and the creation of a new return program to provide for the return of illegal immigrants are points of note in this action plan.¹¹⁶

Four days after the Commission's action plan on migration, German Chancellor Angela Merkel's criticism on the EU's current migration and asylum system had importance in terms of reflecting the member states' individual concerns about the crisis. As it is given in the previous chapters, Germany was the most preferred attraction center for the asylum seekers during the crisis, and it was one of the EU states suffering from these migration waves the most. In her statement, Merkel focused on the lacks in the EU's policies on migration issues and emphasized the profound changes in the EU system, especially in the Dublin rules.¹¹⁷ It was a sign of the forthcoming general revisions in the EU migration system, and also an expression of serious criticism on the EU's monitoring system and compliance of the member states to EU rules. As it stands, the Dublin III Regulation gives refugees the right to apply for asylum in the member state where they first entered, and it receives serious criticism for this point. The member states located in the eastern and southern borders of Europe are the first to face the refugees entering European soil and are given extreme responsibilities to deal with the asylum applications. As a result of this, these states tend to disregard the Dublin rules, and this leads to some systematic problems.¹¹⁸

A European Agenda on Migration, presented in May 2015, put forward a framework for revisions in the system and policy changes in the migration and asylum field to address the concerns of the member states. Therefore, this agenda can be interpreted as a guidebook for the political position of the EU on this issue.

In A European Agenda on Migration, the Commission specifies two points. The first point is immediate action on the migration crisis, including fighting against smuggling and the urgent creation of a relocation mechanism in the EU. The second point is that the Commission has brought forth four pillars for the achievement of stronger EU policies in this field in times

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Huggler and Marszal, *The Telegraph*, 2015.

¹¹⁸ Groen, 2015: 16.

to come. The first pillar is "*Reducing the incentives for irregular migration*," which has recommendations to determine the roots of the migration crisis, strong action plans on smuggling and third countries to fulfill their responsibilities and strengthening the role of the FRONTEX. The second pillar is "*Border Management*," which aims to strengthen the border controls of the EU via FRONTEX, smart border systems, and collaboration among member states. The third pillar is named "*A strong common asylum policy*" to reflect the recommended revisions in the existing CEAS. For this purpose, a new monitoring and evaluation system in the CEAS is adopted, and the necessity of revision in the Dublin System is emphasized. The fourth and last pillar is "*A new policy on legal migration*," and in it, some revisions and changes are foreseen in the Blue Card scheme and the economic field related to migration.¹¹⁹

As it is mentioned in the institutional approach on migration chapter, the institution provides a stage to its member states in order to share the responsibilities equally, and it tries to prevent the free-rider positions of the states to establish a collective position against the crises. In this direction and also considering the recommendations of the immediate actions in the migration agenda published by the European Commission, the Council adopted in September 2015, the proposal for relocation of 40.000 refugees then additional 120.000 refugees from Greece and Italy to the different member states.¹²⁰¹²¹ Greece and Italy were suffering from huge immigration waves because of their geographical locations, and according to this decision, the EU established a temporary relocation mechanism for two years. When considering the distribution of the refugees among the member states, four elements were taken into account for fair distribution. These are the population size of a country, the total GDP of the states (these elements were effective as 40% +40% for distribution), the number of asylum applications, and existing refugees in a country between 2010 and 2014 (10%), and the unemployment rate in a country (10%).¹²²

As specified in the migration agenda, cooperation between third countries, and solving the crisis out of the EU's borders was one of the main targets of the EU. In this context, the EU-Turkey joint action plan on the crisis reflects this ambition of the Union. In November 2015 the agreement was made by both sides, and an important step was taken to solve a big issue in the Eastern Mediterranean migration route. According to this agreement, cooperation

¹¹⁹ European Commission, "A European Agenda On Migration", 2015.

¹²⁰ Council Of The European Union, "Relocation of 40 000 Refugees from Greece and Italy Agreed by Council", 2015.

¹²¹ European Commission, "European Commission Statement Following the Decision at the Extraordinary Justice and Home Affairs Council to Relocate 120,000 Refugees", 2015.

¹²² Šabić, 2017: 5.

between Turkey and the EU was desired, and Turkey took on more responsibility to prevent the access of refugees to Europe. To this end, the EU promised Turkey about 3 billion Euros in financial support to be spent to increase the socio-economic situation of the refugees staying in Turkey. In March 2016 the leaders of both sides agreed "*to tackle irregular migration*" and two key principles were propounded. Firstly, new illegal immigrants arriving in Greece are to be sent back to Turkey if their asylum applications are not accepted, and secondly, for every Syrian sent back to Turkey, the EU resettles another Syrian within EU borders. Moreover, the EU pledged to mobilize an additional 3 billion Euros in financial support at the end of 2018.¹²³

The biggest essential reforms started in 2016, and the European Commission took action to update the existing CEAS in accordance with the deficiencies revealed with the migration crisis. With this aim, seven legislative proposals were adopted by the European Commission within the frame of CEAS reform in the period after 2016.

The proposal for revision on the Dublin Regulation presents targets for better determination of the member states that will be responsible for asylum applications, fair distribution of asylum seekers among the member states and prevention of movements of asylum seekers in different EU countries.

The proposal for the reforms on Eurodac tries to extend the scope of the data in the system, such as putting the data of third countries' citizens staying irregularly in Europe and adding facial images of people. Also, easy access to the system by authorities is another goal of the proposal.

The proposal for the establishment of a new EU asylum agency presents an ambition to transform EASO into this new agency. Thereby, technical and operational support to member states can be enhanced, and harmony can be provided among the member states in terms of the examinations of asylum applications

The proposal for a common asylum procedure aims to change the asylum procedures directive as regulation and provide a simple procedure to member states instead of different procedures. Also, it tries to create stricter rules to prevent possible violations.

The legislative proposal for the unification of rules for asylum applications presents the goal of establishing common criteria in member states for identification of people who

¹²³ European Council and Council of the European Union, "Eastern Mediterranean Route" 2018.

need international protection. The establishment of common rights for these people in different member states is another goal.

The proposal for providing standard reception conditions for member states aims to establish common standards for all asylum seekers in Europe, to give working rights to asylum seekers in 9 months after they have made their applications, and to give education rights to the children of asylum seekers.

Lastly, the proposal for the establishment of a permanent resettlement framework tries to prevent possible big migration crises in Europe in the future, to determine common rules for resettlement in EU states, to contribute initiatives for resettlement in the global level, and to give support to third countries in order to host asylum seekers.¹²⁴

This chapter has focused on the developing policies of the EU as a response to the migration crisis. Now, in the last chapter, we will interpret the political positions of the Visegrad Group countries on the migration issue within the frame of the EU policies.

¹²⁴ European Council and Council Of The European Union, "EU Asylum Reform", 2019.

4.2. The Political Positions of the Visegrad Group Countries

The migration crisis in Europe has led to varied reforms and changes in the EU's migration and asylum policies as mentioned in the previous chapter. During this process, the methods and policies used as responses to these illegal migration waves have been debated among member states and some member states' political positions differ from the EU's policies in certain ways. Now, we will take a look at the political positions of Visegrad Group countries in this context and try to identify them. Hence, we can interpret the political compatibility or divergence between Visegrad Group countries and the EU

As we have mentioned several times in the previous chapters, the peak of the migration crisis after the Arab spring was in 2015. The number of first time asylum applications was 1.3 million. Of this total number, when we look at the proportion of the Visegrad Group Countries (V4) in terms of the asylum applications received in 2015, we can see that this rate consisted of 14.4% of the total. Because of its geographic location when we consider the Western Balkan migration route, Hungary's share was 13.4% in 14.4% (total share of the V4 countries) in 2015. Poland's contribution to this ratio was 0.9%; the Czech Republic and Slovakia only contributed to this ratio with 0.1%.¹²⁵ In other words, three of the V4 countries were affected by this crisis marginally except for Hungary. On the other hand, with their strict approach to this crisis, these countries became one of the focal points of the debates in the EU.

The main disagreement between the EU and the V4 countries occurred after the immediate action plan of the Union was mentioned in the "A European Agenda on Migration," released in May 2015. In this context, the European Commission's proposals for the relocation of 40,000 refugees from Greece and Italy followed by an additional relocation of 120,000 with established obligatory quotas wasn't well received by the V4 countries. With the adoption of the proposal by the Council of the EU in September 2015, the political positions of the V4 countries and their statements against the EU's political move became more clarified.

Before the adoption of the proposals, the prime ministers of the four V4 countries and France made a joint statement after the summit held in Bratislava in June 2015, and they displayed the attitudes of their states to the planned relocation mechanism for the refugees from the MENA region by the EU. In the statement, the prime ministers said that the imposed

¹²⁵ Pachocka, 2016: 106.

national quotas by Brussels are not acceptable and the EU must find better ways to focus on the roots of the migration in order to solve the crisis.¹²⁶

Parallel to this, the heads of the Visegrad Countries released another joint statement after the extraordinary summit of the Visegrad Group in Prague on 4th of September, 2015. In this joint statement, the noteworthy items were the recommendations of the V4 countries to the EU for possible measures and political moves for tackling the migration crisis. In general terms, Visegrad Group countries showed their willingness to fulfill their responsibilities in terms of the collective European response to the migration issue. They declared that the Visegrad Group would support the EU in terms of financial aids such as financial assistance to vulnerable people as a result of the migration crisis (orphans, families with children) and third countries which have high numbers of immigrants after the Arab Spring. Also, Visegrad countries remarked that they would take responsibilities in the technical field for border protection and asylum procedures.¹²⁷

In the same statement, the recommendations of the Visegrad Group were about more effective border management and the revision on the EU's migration and asylum system (especially adjustments on the Dublin Regulation and return policy in order to provide better fulfillment of the responsibilities by the member states). Moreover, the decision for the obligatory quotas for relocation was criticized, and voluntary basis cooperation among the member states was recommended.¹²⁸

The joint statement, presented in Prague, 2015, reflected the position of the Visegrad Group towards the EU's migration and asylum policies. In the broad sense, the Visegrad countries demonstrated their aspiration for collaboration in the EU frame; on the other hand, they pointed out the deficiency in the existing EU migration and asylum system. The crucial point was that Visegrad countries emphasized their certain opposition about the obligatory quotas again.

On 22nd of September 2015, the decision for the relocation of 120,000 refugees from Greece and Italy was adopted by the Council by a majority vote. At this point, three out of four Visegrad countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia) voted against this decision. After the government change in Poland at the end of 2015, the Polish government took the same position against the quotas with other Visegrad Group countries. Also during

¹²⁶ Lopatka and Jancarikova, Reuters, 2015.

¹²⁷ Visegrad Group, "Joint Statement of the Heads of Government of the Visegrad Group Countries", 2015.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

the voting, Romania voted against, and Finland abstained. After the adoption of the decision, firstly Slovakia then Hungary applied to the Court of Justice of the European Union for annulment of the decision.¹²⁹ However, the application of the Slovakia and Hungary was rejected by ECJ in 2017.¹³⁰

According to the decision of the EU, it was planned that in the two years from 2015 to 2017, 2691 refugees would be relocated to the Czech Republic, 1294 refugees to Hungary, 6182 refugees to Poland and 902 refugees to Slovakia. On the other hand, in September 2017, reports showed that the Visegrad Group countries did not implement the decision of the EU; in other words, Poland and Hungary didn't accept any refugees from Italy and Greece; 16 and 12 refugees in total were accepted by Slovakia and the Czech Republic respectively.¹³¹

To understand the insistent position of the V4 group against the quotas better, we must focus on the statements of the Visegrad states more deeply. In this regard, the joint statement of interior ministers of the V4 states, presented after the meeting in Warsaw in November 2016, gives the general frame of this opposition. In the statement, Visegrad countries opined that the relocation of the refugees and quotas are just a temporary solution for the migration crisis, and it doesn't focus on the main reason for the crisis. Also, this approach of the EU doesn't abolish the pull factor; on the contrary, this policy attracts more immigrants to move to Europe with the thought that they can get a right to asylum. For the solution of the crisis, Visegrad countries recommended cooperation with third countries for hosting the refugees on their soil (solving the problem out of the EU borders), improvement in the asylum application procedures, strengthening the protection of the EU borders, and not accepting a high number of refugees with the applicable return policy.¹³² . In other words, the V4 countries had the opinion that the resettlement policy of the EU was not effective and didn't meet the requirements for the solution of the crisis. This was the main argument of the Visegrad Group for the opposition.

Furthermore, another point in the joint statement which must be paid attention is the security concerns of the V4 group. Part of the statement reads "*We acknowledge that uncontrolled mixed migration movements are a threat to the EU and Member States security.*

¹²⁹ Pachocka, 2016: 118.

¹³⁰ Kroet, 2017.

¹³¹ Šabić, 2017: 6.

¹³² Visegrad Group, "Joint Statement of V4 Interior Ministers on the Establishment of the Migration Crisis Response Mechanism", 2016.

Concerned with the safety of our citizens, we agree that it is a threat that cannot be underestimated."¹³³ which reflects this concern outrightly.

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US, the radical Islamist terror phenomenon gained ground in the perception of the states, especially in Western countries. After the beginning of the Arab Spring, the appearance of ISIS in the MENA region was not only a threat for the countries in the region but also in Europe. Especially terrorist attacks in Europe carried out by the people affiliated with ISIS proved that the concerns were not for nothing. The migration crisis and the arrival of a large number of people from the MENA provided a movement space for ISIS and radical Islamists in Europe. In this context, the uncontrolled movements of immigrants within the EU borders and the relocation of them in the EU countries received a reaction from the Visegrad Group.

From the perspective of the (neo)realist narrative, the most important thing is survival for a state and to enable survival, security is considered an essential component. For their interests, states take self-centered positions. In this regard, the Visegrad countries' opposition to the relocation decision of the EU can be interpreted with the possible terrorism and security threats. The political campaign, "*Let's stop Brussels!*" in Hungary was remarkable in this respect. In 2017, the Orban administration came to the public with some questions. All questions contained criticisms for the EU in terms of its decisions on the illegal migration issue. One question mentioned the terrorist attacks in Europe, and asked the public; "Should Hungary allow the settlement of illegal immigrants as said by Brussels, or should Hungary provide its safety against this illegal migration movements?"¹³⁴ With this question, Hungary (in the broad sense, all Visegrad countries) was reflecting how it must act considering its national interest and survival.

Another point for the opposite position of the Visegrad countries in the relocation decision can be interpreted with national economic interest and securitization of it. According to data, the GDP growth in the Visegrad countries was in the 3-4% level between 2014 and 2018, and this was the over the EU average (2%.) Parallel to this, the unemployment rates had a downward trend.¹³⁵ In this context, settlement of the refugees can bring an economic burden to the Visegrad countries and the arrival of new immigrants in the future can change the balance in the labor market and economic structure in a negative way.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Hungarian Spectrum, 2017.

¹³⁵ Steenland, 2018.

Social norms are an important aspect that cannot be overlooked when evaluating the position of the V4 countries. These four countries have a homogeneous social structure and they don't have a multicultural population when compared to Western European countries. As a result of this, the arrival of immigrants from the MENA region (especially the majority of the immigrants of Muslim faith) produces questions in the mind of the Visegrad countries in terms of the integration of these people to society and their possible effects on the existing social structure. The statement of Robert Fico, the prime minister of Slovakia, can be evaluated in this respect: "*Since Slovakia is a Christian country; we cannot tolerate an influx of 300,000-400,000 Muslim immigrants who would like to start building mosques all over our land and trying to change the nature, culture, and values of the state,*".¹³⁶ Fico also pointed out that Slovakia had no responsibility in the bombing of Libya, referring to the operation of NATO in Libya in 2011 against Gaddafi. Czech president Zeman spoke in this sense when he said that the cultural background of the refugees was totally different; therefore the arrival of refugees in the Czech Republic could be problematic for Czech society.¹³⁷ In addition to these, in his 2017 speech, Lubomír Zaorálek, the Czech Foreign Minister, declared that Western colonial history was influential in the radicalization of Muslims. This point of view reflects the idea that Western European countries with a colonial past have a responsibility in the existing situation in the MENA (and as a result of this, the migration waves). Countries which didn't get involved in the colonization race such as V4 countries don't have responsibility.¹³⁸ It can be evaluated that the V4 countries don't want to face the radicalized Muslim population threat in their society when they don't have any responsibility in the current immigrant influx.

In June 2018, an important decision was made in favor of the Visegrad Group countries after the summit of the European leaders in Brussels. In the summit, European leaders reached an agreement that the obligatory quotas and relocation measure wouldn't be in use anymore and detention centers for refugees would be established in third countries. Also, the tightening of the EU borders and giving financial support to third countries such as Turkey and Morocco in terms of refugees were the other decisions made.¹³⁹ This was a success for the Visegrad Group as a result of the political position taken as a bloc.

In light of the points mentioned above, it can be said that the Visegrad Group showed strong opposition to the decisions of the EU in terms of the relocation of the refugees and

¹³⁶ Tharoor, 2015.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Sayyid, 2018: 420.

¹³⁹ The Guardian, 2018.

obligatory quotas. The Visegrad Group focused more on the roots of the crisis and the security of the EU borders and communities. The latest developments show that the political position of the V4 group became successful and with its political position, the Visegrad Group was one of the important determinants of the EU policies in the migration issue

CONCLUSION

Having started at the end of 2010, the Arab Spring showed a domino effect in the MENA region and influenced several states in terms of administrative changes and democratization. On the other hand, these revolutionary movements have failed in some countries and resulted in administration crises and civil wars such as in Syria and Libya. In terms of its outcomes and effects, the Arab Spring has been effective in the politics of the states not only in the MENA region but also in the world. As one of the outcomes of the Arab Spring, a high level of immigration movement started from the countries in MENA, and it has led to the current migration crisis. In this master's thesis, we have tried to analyze the policy of the EU towards the illegal immigration and asylum crisis and the political positions of the Visegrad Group countries as a result of this current migration crisis.

In this context, these two questions were set out and were attempted to be answered in this master's thesis.

- What are the approaches and policies of the EU towards illegal immigration and asylum from the MENA region after the Arab Spring?
- What are the policies of the Visegrad countries regarding the migration crisis and are the political positions of the Visegrad countries compatible with the EU's policies or not?

To better answer these questions, the historical background of the Visegrad Group and the EU were given; the political and socioeconomic structure of the countries in the MENA region and migration trends in Europe before and after the Arab Spring were considered; the (neo)realist, institutionalist and push and pull factors approaches were employed.

In light of these, our findings indicate that the migration phenomenon is a living topic on the European agenda after the end of World War II. Since the end of World War II, the migration trends have been divided into three different periods, and this shows that the EU took different political positions during this process. Although European states supported migration movements with the booming economic effects in the beginning, in the proceeding periods with the economic recession, they took more strict positions against increasing migration movements. Also, the developments in the EU institutional structure allowed the

establishment of more concrete migration and asylum policies to protect the interests of its member states and distribute the responsibilities among them.

However, the migration crisis demonstrated that the policies in the migration and asylum field were inadequate to deal with full-scale illegal immigration and asylum issues. At this point, we concluded that the EU's policies which were put into the practice mainly focus on revisions in the existing EU policies to provide better cooperation among member states and provide a strong compliance mechanism to the EU rules by eliminating the concerns of the member states and the deficits in the immigration and asylum field.

In short, for the first question, it was found that the EU policies and approaches towards this crisis contained the actions that have a collective character considering its member states' interests. Also, the EU aims to instaurate of its deficiencies in the existing policies in immigration and asylum field for a long term solution in the migration issue.

For the second research question, in light of our findings, it is seen that there is a strict political opposition on behalf of the Visegrad countries towards the open gate policy for immigrants and the relocation of refugees in different EU member states with obligatory quotas. In other words, the Visegrad Group countries present opposing political positions to the EU in terms of certain decisions regarding the migration crisis in Europe. On the other hand, the attitudes and statements of the Visegrad countries show that these four countries aim to meet their responsibilities such as technical and financial support within the EU structure for collaboration to deal with the migration problem. Also, for the escalation of cooperation among the member states, the Visegrad countries support revisions in the existing migration and asylum policies of the EU, and they have a political position in parallel to the EU in this regard.

The main criticism of the Visegrad countries towards the open gate policy and the relocation of refugees is the deficiency of these policies in terms of addressing the roots of the migration problem. Also, the Visegrad countries point out that these policies make the pull factors in the EU for immigrants more attractive and trigger future illegal migration waves.

The main criticism of the Visegrad countries towards the open gate policy and the relocation of refugees is the deficiency of these policies in terms of addressing the roots of the migration problem. Also, the Visegrad countries point out that these policies make the pull factors in the EU for immigrants more attractive and trigger future illegal migration waves.

Therefore, the Visegrad Group countries share opinions that the current problem should be solved out of the EU borders (through collaboration with third countries) in the first stage for protection of the EU borders and by developing policies. By enhancing the border management and crisis management of the EU, the problem can be solved completely in the long term. In addition to this, the Visegrad countries bring certain concerns to the forefront that can be explained by (neo)realist narratives and social norms. Terrorist activities committed by radical Islamists have shown upward trends in Europe. If the general ethnic background of the immigrants coming from the MENA region is taken into account, the Visegrad countries perceive security threats to their survival in the long term with the relocation of refugees and open gate policy. Also, uncontrolled immigration is interpreted as a threat to the economy. From the viewpoint of social norms, the Muslim faith of the vast majority of immigrants generates concern for Visegrad countries in terms of the integration of these people into society and their possible negative effects on existing values-norms.

To sum up, our hypothesis in this research was "the political positions of the Visegrad countries are incompatible with the EU at some points in illegal immigration and asylum field, but in the general sense, the positions of these countries are compatible with the EU policies for the solution of the current migration crisis." The analyses prove this hypothesis, and this research indicates that there are incompatibilities in the relocation system and obligatory quotas between the Visegrad countries and the EU. On the other hand, especially in the last years, the policies adopted by the EU, for more secure external borders and stronger cooperation among the member states (also cooperation with third countries) reflects the same aspirations between the EU and the Visegrad Bloc. In addition to this, the political position of the V4 countries aimed at the complete solution of the migration problem and the EU's policies addressing the main deficiencies in the EU mechanism to eliminate the illegal migration problem is another point of compatibility.

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APPENDIX



**FACULTY
OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**
Charles University

Master Thesis Proposal

Name: Bilal Bahadır Karaca

Language of Diploma Thesis: English

Supervisor: PhDr. Irah Kučerová, PhD

Field of Study: International Relations

Academic Year: 2017/2018

Title of Work: in English: The Positions of the Visegrad Countries Towards the European Policy on Illegal Immigration and Asylum

Key Words: Migration; Asylum; European Union; Visegrad Group; Czech Republic; Slovakia; Hungary; Poland, Arab Spring

Outline of Topic

The European Union is one of the existing unique regional organizations and economic power in the world now. It is consisting of 28 European states and continuing its enlargement process. Lastly, the involvement of Croatia in 2013 has formed the last version of the Union. In the current situation, the member states' of the European Union are the center of attraction for the people of the third world countries with their high democratic environment, the administrative structure which considers to the human rights and high welfare level. In this context, the migration in Europe is the promotive position for people of the third world countries.

The migration waves in the Europea has started after the Wolrd War II, because of the loss of many laboring people during the war. As a result of this, in many sectors, the necessity for the workforce has begun and in this period, the European countries such as Germany, France, Belgium have accepted the immigrants from Turkey, Northern Africa, and their old colonies as the labor force to meet the deficit of workforce. Then these immigrants got citizenship and became part of these countries society. After 1980, the migration wave in Europe has been limited by some regulations. Until the beginning of 1990 which is the years of the end of the Soviet Union and collapsing of the Eastern Block, the European Union could maintain its regional population control policies. After the beginning of the 1990's, the new migration waves have started but it was not as big as the last waves.

When we evaluate the migration and asylum policies of the European Union after the 1990s, we can see a dilemma. In this dilemma, on one side the European Union consider the human rights and democratic values, on another side national sovereignty, security, and economy. In this regard, now, the European Union try to prevent the new potential migration and also provide the integration for existing immigrants in Europe.

The revolutionary movements in the MENA region which is called 'the Arab Spring' led to new migration waves towards Europe and it caused migration crisis in the EU.

The Visegrad Group Countries (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland) are constituting some part of the Central European countries. These countries which have both geographical and political importance in the European Union are in a significant position for common solutions to this long-term problem that will shape the future of Europe. These countries are contributing to the current migration and asylum policies of the EU regarding

safeguarding the EU's external borders and reducing the flow of illegal migration. Even, from time to time these countries' national policies and approaches have a contrary position to the European Union policies. For instance, the V4 countries have shown opposition to the mandatory relocation scheme for refugees in 2015 which were decided by the European Union. Even, Slovakia and Hungary filled a court case against this mandatory relocation. In the general sense, the approaches of the Visegrad Group countries are more strict when compared with leading countries of Europe.

In this M.A. thesis, the migration, and asylum policies of the European Union towards the migration crisis after the Arab Spring will be analyzed and the political positions of the Visegrad Countries will be evaluated.

Theoretical Framework

In this study, two grand international relations theories will be used to understand and analyzing of the European Union's illegal migration and asylum policies and the positions of the Visegrad countries. Also, push and pull factors theory (one of the modern migration theories) will be used. The main international relations theories such as (Noe)realism and liberal institutionalism will be applied because the neorealist approach gives the security-oriented view in the migration issue. When we are evaluating the concerns of the Visegrad countries towards the current migration crisis after 2010, we can benefit from this theory. On the other hand, liberal institutionalism can help us to analyze the policies of the EU as an International Organization.

Push and Pull Factors approach considers the economic, sociologic, and cultural factors to analyze migration movements and types. In this regard, this theoretical approach can be beneficial to understand migration patterns towards Europe from the MENA region. We can evaluate the migration trends in Europe since the end of the Second World War in the light of this theoretical perspective.

Methodology and Data

The research of the topics mentioned above will be carried out by qualitative methods. The congruence and nonconcurrency analyses that its essentials were presented by philosopher John Stuart Mill, will be used in order to infer from coherence between different theories and migration and asylum policies. In addition to this, by doing content analysis, the decisions and regulation which are made by European Union and Visegrad Countries will be assessed, and the implementation of these policies and the position of the countries will be evaluated. Process tracing analysis, which is systematized by Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, also will be beneficial during this study. Thanks to process tracing, the previous and current policies, strategies, and formats of migration will be explored. Lastly, the interview method can be used to analyze the opinion of the citizens of the Visegrad Group countries and the immigrants about the migration and asylum policies.

In this research, we will resort the primary and secondary sources. The main primary sources will be decisions and regulation which were declared by the European Union and the Visegrad Group Countries. As secondary sources, academic research, articles, newspapers, books, journals about the migration and asylum will be used.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

In this master's thesis, we will have two research question,

1- What are the approaches and policies of the EU towards illegal immigration and asylum from the MENA region after the Arab Spring?

2- What are the policies of the Visegrad countries regarding the migration crisis and are the political positions of the Visegrad countries compatible with the EU's policies or not?

Thanks to this research question, we will test our hypothesis " the political positions of the Visegrad countries are incompatible with the EU at some points in illegal immigration and asylum field, but in the general sense, the positions of these countries are compatible with the EU policies for the solution of the current migration crisis."

Development Principles

In this Diploma Thesis, in the first part, the geography, political structure, and historical background of the Visegrad countries and the EU will be viewed, and terms and definitions about migration will be given.

In the second part, the theoretical approaches will be given related to the migration phenomenon. The third part will analyze the migration trends in Europe after the second world war, and the general information about the MENA region and the Arab Spring will be given. In the last part, the policies of the EU and Visegrad Countries will be analyzed.

Content

Abstract

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1.2. History and Geopolitics of the EU

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2.2. Liberal Institutionalism

2.3. Push and Pull Factors

Chapter 3- Europe and Migration

3.1. Migration Trends in Europe Before the Arab Spring

3.2. The MENA Region

3.3. The Arab Spring

3.4. Migration Trends in Europe after the Arab Spring

Chapter 4- Policies of the EU and Visegrad Group

4.1. Policies of the EU

4.2. Policies of the Visegrad Countries

Conclusion

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