Resolved: In response to the current crisis, a government should prioritize the humanitarian needs of refugees over its national interests.
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Definitions

*Difference Between Refugees and Migrants*. ABH


The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) was created by the UN general assembly to oversee international action to assist refugees.

The 1951 Refugee Convention spells out that a **refugee** is someone who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country."

Since then, UNHCR has offered protection and assistance to tens of millions of refugees, finding durable solutions for many of them. Global migration patterns have become increasingly complex in modern times, involving not just refugees, but also millions of economic migrants. But **refugees and migrants**, even if they often travel in the same way, **are fundamentally different**, and for that reason are treated very differently under modern international law.

**Migrants**, especially economic migrants, **choose to move in order to improve the future prospects of themselves** and their families. **Refugees** have to move if they are to save their lives or preserve their freedom. **They have no protection from their own state** - indeed it is often their own government that is threatening to persecute them. If other countries do not let them in, and do not help them once they are in, then they may be condemning them to death - or to an intolerable life in the shadows, without sustenance and without rights.

A lot of the literature against accepting refugees, especially regarding modern day Europe, groups refugees and migrants together, but distinguishing the two should help mitigate some of the “harms” CON will discuss.
**Difference Between Refugees and Internally Displaced People. ABH**


Internally displaced persons, or IDPs, are among the world’s most vulnerable people. Unlike refugees, IDPs have not crossed an international border to find sanctuary but have remained inside their home countries. Even if they have fled for similar reasons as refugees (armed conflict, generalized violence, human rights violations), IDPs legally remain under the protection of their own government – even though that government might be the cause of their flight. As citizens, they retain all of their rights and protection under both human rights and international humanitarian law.

There is a distinct difference between IDP’s and refugees under international law, and both sides can make the argument that the resolution focuses only on refugees, not IDP’s.

**Definition of refugees doesn’t include climate or economic refugees. ABH**


Sharon Russell was a senior scholar at the MIT Center for International Studies.

The international legal definition of the term "refugee" also excludes those who move not as a result of persecution, but as a consequence of natural disasters (such as drought, floods, or earthquakes), environmental factors, or famine. They are excluded even though they may need international protection and assistance because their home country cannot or will not provide these things. The terms "forced migrants" or "forced displacement" are used to describe people in these circumstances. Similarly, the term "refugees" also excludes people who move primarily for economic reasons. Even when they are leaving conditions of extreme poverty, they fall under the rubric of "economic migrants."

Teams may try to broaden the debate by discussing migrants and climate refugees. This evidence can be used to limit the scope of the debate to political refugees, based on the definition of a refugee under international law.
Examples of Current Refugee Crises. ABH


The UNHCR report detailed how in region after region, the number of refugees and internally displaced people is on the rise. In the past five years, at least 15 conflicts have erupted or reignited: eight in Africa (Côte d'Ivoire, Central African Republic, Libya, Mali, northeastern Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and this year in Burundi); three in the Middle East (Syria, Iraq, and Yemen); one in Europe (Ukraine) and three in Asia (Kyrgyzstan, and in several areas of Myanmar and Pakistan). "Few of these crises have been resolved and most still generate new displacement," the report noted, adding that in 2014 only 126,800 refugees were able to return to their home countries -- the lowest number in 31 years. Meanwhile, decades-old instability and conflict in Afghanistan, Somalia and elsewhere means that millions of people remain on the move or -- as is increasingly common -- stranded for years on the edge of society as long-term internally displaced or refugees.

This can be used to broaden the debate beyond the Syrian refugee crisis, as any of these examples would constitute a current humanitarian crisis involving refugees.
The distinction of asylum seekers. DAT


The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international economic organisation of 34 countries.

'Asylum seekers' are persons who have formally submitted a request for asylum but have not yet completed the asylum procedure, i.e. whose request for asylum is pending. They are still candidates for humanitarian migrant status. In practice, only a minority of asylum seekers obtains some form of humanitarian migrant status and the others have the obligation to leave the country. If people remain after being denied such status they become undocumented migrants.

The term 'humanitarian migrant' refers to persons who have completed the asylum procedure with a positive outcome and have been granted some sort of protection (refugee status or another form of protection) or have been resettled through programmes outside the asylum procedure. For the sake of simplicity this brief considers all recipients of protection – whether refugee status, temporary protection, subsidiary protection, etc. – to be humanitarian migrants.

In addition to migrants formally filing an asylum request, there are many people who have not filed an asylum request, either because they do not want to file it in the country through which they are transiting, or because there is a long wait to apply for asylum (either due to large inflows, as in Germany, or understaffed asylum systems), or because they know their prospects for obtaining humanitarian migrant status are slim. These people are also considered as undocumented migrants.

The term migrant can therefore be used as a generic term to describe a situation where flows are mixed. Clearly not all people who currently enter the EU illegally will claim asylum and, among those who will do, only a fraction will be granted refugee status. This is why this brief uses the term migrant. However, it would not be entirely correct to refer to this crisis as a 'migration crisis'. Legal migration systems that enable people to enter with valid visa/permit are in place and tend to be adequately managed. What is currently observed would therefore be better described as a as a ‘refugee’ or ‘asylum crisis’ because it concerns specifically the European asylum system.

This has operational significance for debates: while teams will be tempted to reference migrant flows into Europe, the real metric by which to measure the refugee flow is relative to historical trends of asylum seekers.
I hope you’re ready to put on your LD hat and go on an adventure, because this month’s resolution is a fun one. In all seriousness, at first glance this resolution looks like a massive LD resolution with some PF sprinkles garnished on top. For both teams, this merits consideration right off the bat. Going through the resolution piece by piece is an exercise in putting together wild ambiguities. That leaves plenty of research pathways and plenty of argumentation pathways, but not necessarily a clear route to a victory. But before we talk about that road, let’s get caught up on the Middle East/Africa and, more particularly, Syria.

What and why

It’s important to know why you’re debating a resolution. What made a particular topic important enough to justify subjecting thousands of debaters to untold hours of research, preparation, and competition over it? For this one, it’s pretty straightforward: it seems like Syria, and everything within a sizable radius of the failing state, is a mess.

Let’s look at the issue more tactically. My first instinct on reading the resolution was that its “crisis” was the Syrian refugee crisis. Granted, Syria is only one of many crumbling states in the region, all of which are supplying more refugees than what stable governments in the region have ever been equipped to handle. It is also glib to assume that Syria constitutes the only source of refugees flooding into Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, and Europe. Swathes of refugees—from Eritrea, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Central African Republic (CAR), and more—are inundating countries near and far. Many attempt to cross by boat from Libya, creating this generation’s equivalent of the Vietnamese “boat people” crisis in the 1970s.

We conveniently think about each country as a separate puzzle piece. All those pieces fit together somehow, but each piece is generally self-contained. The reason the Syrian conflict seems so exceptional is that it wildly defies this conceptualization of our international system. Nearly half of Syria’s population is displaced. There’s essentially a puzzle piece missing, and all its contents are spilling everywhere.

Inherently, the international system is anarchic. This is to say that there are few enforcement mechanisms at the international level. When Hungary decides to shut its borders to torrents of refugees, there is no overseeing authority with the powers to literally force Hungary into an about-face. A sovereign government has autonomy over how it conducts its business, short of forceful intervention by another sovereign power.

Governments, as actors, have agency. Governments have the freedom to act in ways that are immoral. Governments have the freedom of self-interest. Let’s go back to the self-contained puzzle piece analogy. If every person is under the jurisdiction of some sovereign government, governments theoretically only have to concern themselves with what is best for their own citizens, to a large extent. Without getting too far into the philosophical underpinnings of governmental legitimacy, this means we can typically classify a government’s obligation as a function of what is best for its people.

Refugees are the wrench thrown into this idealized model. Suddenly, there’s a piece effectively missing (Syria, essentially) and a huge stateless population. By definition, refugees are going somewhere. Any refugee left in
Syria isn’t actually classified as a refugee—these individuals are technically classified as “internally displaced persons,” and in compiling this brief we have not acknowledged IDPs as falling into the category of refugees.

This is why the resolution is actually so interesting. We can define, with relative clarity, the obligations of a government to its own people. Philosophers have been chiseling away at this topic for centuries, and many LD topics constitute some nitty-gritty component of this idea. But here, we are dealing with people who arrive on another sovereign nation’s land (or at their borders). We cannot apply the principles of governments’ obligations to the governed for this situation, but the physical logistics of refugees—persecuted individuals arriving on governments’ doorsteps—begs the implementation of some kind of active solution.

The scope of crisis

The Syrian crisis alone represents the largest international movement of displaced populations since WWII. Thus far, I haven’t provided any hard numbers, and I hesitate to do so now—the population figures drastically increase every day. The problem is not simply the number of Syrian refugees, as data from the UNHCR (UN Refugee Agency) explains:

Note that this is just asylum seekers (a term that is frequently lumped in with refugees, but has distinction—see our Definitions section for more details). The outflow from Syria is likely greater than what is represented here. Still, the data shows something clear: Syrians take up a decent chunk of the asylum-seeking population. Nearly half of asylum seekers come from areas of active, well-publicized conflict.
Strategy 1: Keep it PF

As I said at the beginning of this analysis, this looks like an LD resolution. It verges a little too close to philosophies, and embraces ambiguities a little too tightly. With that said, however, it should still be treated as a PF round. It will be difficult, if not impossible, to steer around all issues of morality with this resolution. That’s fine. When it comes to refugees, the idea of what is “moral” plays strongly into policy considerations. There is a difference, however, between debating what is moral and what is right, especially in a PF debate.

The problem is that the international system is a bit like a highway—it’s designed to handle most scenarios most of the time, but never peak current. Imagine everyone who owns a car trying to take the same couple highways at the same time: that is what the Syrian refugee crisis has effectively done to the international asylum system. The international system simply does not have the logistical or legislative tools to successfully deal with the flood of people coming from the Middle East and Africa.

If all the refugees dispersed evenly, this still might potentially not be a problem. The issue is that, due to geographical logistics, this is not the case. Many refugees attempt to cross to Europe by sea, leaving their receiving/rescuing countries (Italy and Greece, typically) on the hook for processing them.

I’ve thus described the resolution as a resource allocation problem: what is the best way to utilize limited resources to handle a relatively intractable problem? That’s solidly in PF terms. That runs to the core of most PF resolutions: what is the best way to secure the most benefits over the fewest harms?

For Pro teams in particular, this shouldn’t be a particularly rigid guideline—the idea of what is inherently moral has a place in the argument, just not as a centerpiece. Oftentimes when prepping for a resolution, I would start forgetting who I was debating for. You’re not debating to convince your opponents that you’re right—all you need is a lay judge on your side. From a lay perspective, there’s something that feels inherently moral in making the starved, huddling masses of refugees a sovereign governmental priority. Pro teams can play on that, so long as that doesn’t become the centerpiece of argumentation (which is a recipe for terribly muddled debates).

Strategy 2: Watch the causation

You could take almost every cut in this brief and make a compelling case that it belongs on the opposite side. The issue is, again, with ambiguity. Take, for instance, the argument that greater numbers of refugees cause economic harms to their host nations. On the surface, that’s a Con argument—a nation does itself economic harms by prioritizing the humanitarian needs of refugees; providing for millions of people takes a heavy financial toll. For a global Pro advocacy—that is, an advocacy that every government, globally, should be prioritizing the humanitarian needs of refugees—this just feeds into the assertion that more refugees need to be widely distributed across a greater number of states. Indeed, my first instinct for Pro arguments is relativistic—to ignore individual governments and take the resolution as advocating simply that more governments prioritize the humanitarian needs of refugees to some greater extent.

With a good understanding of the evidence, Con teams can outplay the Pro at their own game. As a start, Con teams need to understand their own evidence. More particularly, they need to recognize where articles and studies are suggesting correlations instead of causalities and shore up their rhetoric to either compensate for or
justify the use the particular evidence. As far as an attacking strategy goes, Con teams should be conceptually aware of the ideas of balance and compensation. That is to say, any emphasis on humanitarianism inherently creates cuts and problems elsewhere. By framing the resolution as a simple allocation of resources issue—how do governments best allocate their resources to achieve the most good with the fewest harms?—Con teams can set themselves up to consistently balance Pro assertions of positive impacts with complimentary negative ones. Assuming that Con teams can establish a logical baseline that governments are, at the least, equally responsible for their own citizens’ well-being as for refugees’ (and likely more than refugees), the logical conclusion is that any measures to tilt the resources balance away from citizens and toward refugees carry a net harm.

**Strategy 3: Stick to the impacts**

This resolution will make it incredibly simple for teams to speculate wildly as both a defensive mechanism and as a means of advancing advocacies. You will likely see Pro teams fantasizing about how much better things will be for everyone when governments start prioritizing humanitarian needs. You will likely see Con teams predicting the crumbling of sovereign governments from the weight of hosting refugees. Predictions are important, but oftentimes teams walk out a limb unsupported by evidence to make a prediction that backs a point.

Teams should be looking to replace speculative predictions with history-backed analysis. For instance, over 2,000 people have died trying to cross the Mediterranean, as opposed to under 100 refugees last year. The spike coincides with the EU cutting costs and operating only in a 50km radius of the Italian coasts as a replacement for a sovereign Italian operation which pulled in over 140,000 refugees from the Mediterranean Sea in just one year. As a Pro team, that’s a huge impact in case study form that requires no predictive verbal gymnastics: when governments undercut humanitarian efforts in the name of short-term sovereign interests, thousands of people die. With definitive, history-backed causations, it’s much easier to get a definitive win.

It’s another year and another chance to make great things happen. As always, have a good time with the resolution, and good luck!

- Daniel Tsvankin
The U.S. Should Take In Syrian Refugees

_Taking in Refugees Would Increase American Soft Power. ABH_


Kathleen Newland is a senior fellow and co-founder of the Migration Policy Institute.

The first reason is leadership. The United States has been a leader in humanitarian response since it emerged from isolationism in World War II. Since then, and starting with the aftermath of the war and the clanging down of the Iron Curtain, the United States has routinely resettled more refugees than the rest of the world combined, every year.

Of course, in the current crisis, we are protected by geography from the huge inflows of refugees arriving directly to the neighboring countries and to Europe to seek asylum. But we can still exert our traditional leadership by resettling refugees from zones of conflict across the Middle East and Africa.

The trouble is, our resettlement program remains mired in bureaucracy and timidity. We have never recovered from the post-9/11 fear that a terrorist may infiltrate our refugee resettlement program -- despite the fact that it has not happened in 15 years and the laborious, heavily scrutinized resettlement program is the least likely route for a would-be terrorist. With this in mind, it would be foolish for the United States to give up the soft power advantage that we earn from being the world leader in refugee resettlement for a nightmare that we can -- and do -- easily protect ourselves against.

The argument can be made that the U.S. is losing soft power in today’s world, and taking in refugees would be a great way for the U.S. to climb back to its historic level of soft power.

Kathleen Newland is a senior fellow and co-founder of the Migration Policy Institute.

The second reason we should take in more refugees is a matter of responsibility. The Syrian crisis in its current phase, where as many people are fleeing from ISIS as from the brutal Bashar al-Assad regime, is tied to the Iraq war and its aftermath.

The reality is that many of ISIS' leaders and backers are remnants of the Baathist army that the U.S. occupation insisted on disbanding after the fall of Saddam Hussein. The chaos of Syria and its spillover into Iraq's Sunni heartland provide the chance they have been waiting for to gain a new territorial foothold. In addition, the U.S. tolerance of the divisive Nuri al-Maliki government allowed the poison to spread into Iraq, and Iraqis are now joining the flows of Syrian refugees in the hundreds of thousands.

The United States took responsibility for the refugee aftermath of the Vietnam War and led the resettlement of almost a million Indochinese. We can at least manage a fraction of that for Syrians and Iraqis -- to say nothing of the continuing refugee outflows from Afghanistan -- who are among the largest groups seeking asylum in Europe. We helped to break it, so we should help to fix it for at least some of the people who are bearing the cost.

PRO can argue that the U.S. contributed to the Syrian refugee crisis, and therefore has an obligation to assist in resettling the refugees.

The U.S. would benefit from accepting refugees. ABH.


Kathleen Newland is a senior fellow and co-founder of the Migration Policy Institute.

The third reason the United States should take more refugees is a matter of pure self-interest. We have largely benefited from the refugee populations we have resettled. German refugee scientists helped us win World War II; Eastern European scholars fleeing communism staffed the faculties of our finest universities for decades during and after the Cold War era. Hungarian refugees like Andy Grove, former Intel chairman, Cuban refugees like Carlos Gutierrez, former secretary of commerce and Kellogg CEO, and the Vietnamese and Chinese refugee valedictorians who went on to found high-tech companies have led the United States to industrial dominance in their sectors.

PRO can use the U.S. as an example to show that accepting refugees doesn’t necessarily conflict with a country’s interests.
The U.S. has successfully resettled refugees in the past. ABH


Lily Rothman is the archive editor at *Time.*

By 1979, *TIME* observed that, though the transition hadn’t necessarily been a smooth one, most of the Vietnamese immigrants who had come to the U.S. in 1975 had adjusted well. Employment was actually higher among that group than among the entirety of the American population, and the number who depended on the government for help was sinking. Nearly three-quarters of those 1975 families earned $800 a month or more, which is about $2,775 in today's dollars. The Vietnamese immigrant population in the United States remains relatively well-off. Despite the fears felt in 1975, the U.S. had easily absorbed those 120,000 refugees—twelve times the number of people currently being discussed. But, had they looked back a few decades, the Americans of the 1970s shouldn’t have been surprised. After all, 120,000 is a relatively small number too: as *TIME* explained in 1975, about 400,000 Eastern Europeans came to the U.S. after World War II and 650,000 Cubans were resettled, mostly in Florida, when Castro came to power.

**PRO** should use historical examples to show that most of the fears about resettling refugees are unfounded, and that accepting refugees in the US has been largely successful.
The EU Should Take In Refugees

Refugees would balance the EU’s aging population. ABH


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But in this current atmosphere, too little is made of the opportunity presented by the migrants and refugees heading to Europe by train, truck, and raft. Among the refugees attempting to get in are the remnants of Syria’s middle class: doctors, engineers, and teachers fleeing Assad’s barrel bombs in Aleppo, or the reign of terror ushered in by the Islamic State. They bring vitality and opportunity to an aging European continent that badly needs it.

According to the European Commission, the graying of Europe is among the EU’s most serious social and economic challenges. More than one-fifth of Europeans will be 65 or older by 2025, placing great strain on social services and health care.

Integrating young migrants could provide a much-needed demographic boost. And unlike Jordan, Turkey, or Lebanon, Europe has far more resources to integrate them. As reported by CNBC, Pierre Moscovici, European commissioner for economic and financial affairs, has stated that the current migration and refugee crisis should not just be seen in terms of cost, but opportunity.

“It is also a resource—a human resource,” Moscovici said. “Our countries need migration … the economic impact should not just be looked at in a negative way as populists would have it.”

The EU is rapidly aging, and accepting an influx of younger refugees would increase the working population that supports the growing elderly population in Europe.

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The share of the population aged 65 and above in the countries of Central Europe and the Baltics increased by more than a third between 1990 and 2010. Unlike in Western Europe, where people are living longer, aging in Central Europe and the Baltic countries has been driven significant emigration, especially of young people of child-bearing age and often to Western Europe, and by substantial drops in fertility. Fertility rates in Central Europe and the Baltic countries today are generally below 1.6. They are as low as 1.3 in Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia—far below the replacement fertility rate of 2.1. Population projections suggest that aging and demographic decline will continue and even accelerate, putting economic growth at risk and adding to fiscal pressures through a greater reliance on old age pensions and health services.

Figure 1: Low fertility and high emigration have led to falling or stagnating populations in Central Europe and the Baltics

Cumulative population change 1990-2010, in percent

Source: Based on United Nations’ Population Division (2013). Definitions: (i) Natural increase in the population: births minus deaths; (ii) Net migration: total number of immigrants less the number of emigrants.
Examples of successful refugee integration in Europe. DAT


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Many migrants arriving in Europe today come with the skills and motivation to be successful and to make a contribution to their host countries’ economies. Many come with children. They have the potential to not just alleviate declining numbers of workers but also to boost innovation through bringing fresh ideas and perspectives. Integrating migrants is challenging. I can think of plenty of examples across Europe where integration has not been successful. But there are others. Take the example of the Vietnamese community that has been living in the Czech Republic for decades. There are more than 60,000 ethnic Vietnamese in the Czech Republic today—20 times more than the European Commission’s refugee quota would allocate to the country. Many Vietnamese have excelled in education and are active in the business community. Examples of both failure and success of integration provide lessons to inform policy about how to make Europe’s response to the refugee crisis not just an essential humanitarian act but also a smart investment in its economic prosperity.
European governments’ recalcitrance will end up backfiring. DAT


As a classic collective-action problem, the migrant crisis looks tailor-made for the European Union. But the scene is set for even greater rows, because Jean-Claude Juncker, president of the European Commission (the EU’s civil service), has abandoned the time-honoured method of slow consensus-seeking and alighted on a new tactic: brute force. Under a plan unveiled by the commission on September 9th, 160,000 asylum-seekers arriving in Greece, Hungary and Italy, the three main EU points of entry, would be relocated with little choice to most other EU countries over two years. Each would have to accept a quota of asylum-seekers, determined by a formula that incorporates population, GDP, unemployment and previous asylum efforts: Germany, for example, would take 31,000; France 24,000. (Britain and Denmark are allowed to opt out of such matters, and under the plan other countries will be able to skip their obligations in “exceptional” circumstances by paying a fee.)

The scheme will do only so much to relieve the burden on front-line states: more than 400,000 illicit migrants are expected to enter Italy and Greece this year alone. But by EU standards the change is ferociously ambitious—few national governments appreciate Eurocrats telling them whom they must accommodate inside their borders. Mr Juncker’s plan is strongly opposed by several countries in central and eastern Europe, including the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia. None of them has much recent history of immigration, none is keen on more of it and none has been overburdened with asylum claims (although Hungary is traversed by thousands making their way to Germany from Greece and the Balkans). Viktor Orban, Hungary’s prime minister, says the migrants are Germany’s problem, not Europe’s, because it is to Germany that they are largely headed.

For European governments, efforts to turn away asylum seekers will simply harm national interests. With the European Commission hanging over them, those states risk losing the autonomy of deciding how to best process migrants, creating greater harms for their internal interests in the process.

Europe alone has the capacity to contain the crisis. DAT


When the fear that few of the migrants will qualify as refugees proves unfounded, it is likely to be followed by a fear that too many of them will—especially now that Germany has put out the welcome mat. There are 4m Syrian refugees outside Syria. Even if they all came to the EU they would amount to a small demographic change in a club of more than 500m people—if evenly spread. Under the Dublin rule Greece and Italy have handled a share of asylum-seekers they see as deeply unfair, but Germany has already put those rules to one side as far as Syrians are concerned, and the rest of the EU is working on a quota system to make the distribution more even.
European governments need to take the pressure off Syria’s immediate neighbors. DAT

http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/34904/MPC_2015-02_PB.pdf?sequence=1

The Migration Policy Centre (MPC) produces advanced policy-oriented research on global migration, asylum and mobility.

However, notwithstanding the importance of advocacy, the EU’s messages to the Government of Jordan are likely to remain unheard if not combined with the implementation of more durable solutions. The protracted Syrian civil war and the endless arrival of refugees threaten the stability of Jordan and further accentuate the extremely poor conditions of Syrian refugees and vulnerable hosting communities in the country. Jordanian infrastructure is sagging under pressure. Over 600,000 registered Syrian refugees now reside in the Kingdom – the equivalent of 10 per cent of its entire population. The relationship between host communities and refugees is progressively deteriorating. In order to reduce the pressure on Jordan and other countries bordering Syria, the number of refugees temporarily relocated or resettled in EU member states needs to increase.

In this sense, the EU response to the Syrian crisis has been inadequate. As of December 2014, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt were hosting 95% of the overall refugee flow. With very few exceptions, EU member states have enacted a politics of containment by providing assistance to the countries bordering Syria and by reinforcing Europe's borders. As a matter of fact, only a very small number of refugees have found an abode in Europe. The amplification of the flow of Syrian refugees to European countries after the outbreak of the civil war has actually ushered a progressive contraction of EU borders: the overall number of refugees accepted in Europe has dramatically fallen from 29.4 percent in 2011 to 2.3 percent in 2013. The response has not only been limited it has also been uneven. Out of the 28 Member States, Sweden and Germany has pledged the vast majority of resettlement places for Syrian refugees.
Greater Scope Demands Greater Action

The scale of the current crisis is too big to justify pushing humanitarian concerns to the side.

DAT


The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international economic organisation of 34 countries.

The large variety of migration routes, countries of origin and underlying motives for migration make this refugee crisis particularly difficult to address. Not only do migrants come from diverse countries and territories of origin, but the top asylum countries also vary significantly across the EU. In Germany, in the first 6 months of 2015, Kosovo and Syria each accounted for 20% of the total asylum seekers, followed by Albania (15%). In Sweden, Syrians accounted for 27%, followed by Eritreans and Afghans, at just over 10%. In France, Kosovo was the first origin (10%) followed by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Russian Federation. In Italy, Gambia was first followed by Senegal and Nigeria. In the United Kingdom, Pakistan and Eritrea (9% each) were followed by Iran. This diversity to a large extent reflects the size of established communities, language and historical ties, geographical proximity and to some degree also differences in recognition rates by country of origin/destination. But it also reflects the different routes taken and the use of smuggling networks for some nationalities.

One way of showing the greater diversity of the inflows is to calculate the number of origin countries that combined reach at least 60% of all applications. In a number of countries, diversity has significantly increased when compared with the 1990s. This is particularly striking for example in France (the number of countries of origin accounting for 60% of the flows increased by 40%) and even more in Germany and Switzerland where the number of countries doubled. By contrast, in Austria and Sweden, diversity in terms of countries of origin is lower and stable. Such diversity across the EU is obviously very challenging because it requires dealing with different issues in terms of both tackling the flows and subsequent integration of diverse groups of people.
Legal Obligation to Accept Refugees

Turning refugees away from Europe violates international law. ABH


Geoff Gilbert is a professor of law at the University of Essex.

Refugee status, therefore, is not necessarily permanent, although states can grant a right of permanent residence to recognized refugees. The right that Convention refugees do possess is non-refoulement under Article 33, the right not to be sent back to a state where the refugee’s life or liberty would be threatened. However, if refugee status is accepted to be declaratory rather than constitutive, as is generally acknowledged, then preventing a refugee from accessing the status determination procedures within a state can be the equivalent of refoulement; as such, Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with its right to seek asylum, is a necessary adjunct to non-refoulement. Additionally, non-refoulement is custom and protects anyone whose life or freedom would be threatened, not just Article 1A.2 refugees who are the beneficiaries of Article 33.11 Customary non-refoulement draws on Article 3 of the UN’s Convention against Torture12 and Article 3 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Returning anyone to where they would face torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment from within Europe would breach the state’s international human rights law obligations. In sum, if Europe is to be in breach of international law in the field of refugee protection, it is the standards mentioned above that will be the measure of that breach.

Under international law Europe cannot turn away Syrian refugees, as they would face terrible treatment in their homeland, so European Countries have a legal duty to resettle the refugees that have already made it to Europe’s borders.
Taking refugees without properly providing for them verges on crimes against humanity.


Greece is the gateway into Europe for thousands of refugees from Syria and Afghanistan. They cross into Turkey and hire smugglers who transport them into Greece, but more importantly into Europe. It costs thousands of Euros, but it's worth the promise of freedom. Still, the economically derelict and unwelcoming landscape that refugees like Reema and Samer find here is often far less hospitable than they had hoped.

Greece has enough problems of its own. The anti-immigrant Golden Dawn is now the third largest political party in the country, on track to become the second. The party wants "Greece for Greeks" and blames economic troubles on refugees and immigrants. Supporters routinely attack refugees in the street, beating them, spitting on them, and calling the authorities to collect them.

The Arab Spring and the Euro crisis have met head-on here, and it's proving to be a toxic mix.

Most refugees don't have a government-issued pink card - the document they need to stay in the country legally for a few months. Without it, many are arrested and thrown into detention centers where they are given little food, no clean clothing, or bed linen. They have no soap to wash themselves, no opportunity to call family or friends. They are beaten.

When released after six to 18 months, they must leave the country; but having fled their own, most don't have authorization, and trying to leave Greece without papers is also illegal. They can't stay in Greece; they can't leave.

It's impossible to totally stop the physical presence of refugees. Without emphasizing the humanitarian aspect of handling refugees, countries risk taking the Greek route and subjecting refugees to unconscionable treatment for the sake of national interests. The image of refugees being beaten in the streets of a democratic European state can be enough on its own to tip a debate for a lay judge.
Humanitarianism Can Progress National Interests

*Improving the lives of natives and refugees alike is doable. DAT*


Tens of thousands of asylum-seekers flowed towards Germany by rail, bus and on foot, chanting “Germany! Germany!”, to be welcomed by cheering crowds. Germany is showing that old Europe, too, can take in the tired, the poor and the huddled masses yearning to breathe free. It says it can absorb not thousands, but hundreds of thousands of refugees.

Such numbers will inevitably raise many worries: that cultures will be swamped by aliens, economies will be overburdened, social benefits will have to be curbed and even that terrorists will creep in. Anti-immigrant parties have been on the rise across Europe. In America, too, some politicians want to build walls to keep foreigners out.

Yet the impulse to see migrants as chiefly a burden is profoundly mistaken. The answer to these familiar fears is not to put up more barriers, but to manage the pressures and the risks to ensure that migration improves the lives of both immigrants and their hosts. The starting point is a sense of perspective.

*Ignoring the refugee crisis creates economic and security problems. DAT*


Tensions between Syrians and Jordanians are still a worry. Four out of five Syrian refugees live in Jordan’s cities and towns, where, being banned from working, they take black market jobs for low wages. The government says this has pushed down pay for Jordanians too. “The potential seeds of conflict are really there,” says Musa Shteiwi, who heads the University of Jordan’s Centre for Strategic Studies. A poll he ran late last year found that 73% of respondents were against hosting more refugees—up from 64% in 2012.

Jordan is asking donors to give it the $1 billion it says it will spend on additional security over the next three years as a result of the refugee influx—about as much as it has asked for education and health services for the refugees. It may also like to see a larger proportion of Syrians in controlled areas such as Azraq. Plans are already under way for a third refugee camp. Current urban dwellers are unlikely to be moved, but newcomers will find it harder to leave the camps.

This lays the foundation for Pro teams to argue that it is impossible to advance national interests without a humanitarian approach to the refugee situation.
The current Syrian crisis echoes the Vietnamese boat people crisis. DAT


Success also depends on who does the absorbing. European nation-states have been coping with acute refugee flows at least since the Protestant exoduses of the Thirty Years’ War—that is, for as long as there have been European nation-states. But the immigrant nations of the Americas and Australia have tended to do a better job, and any resolution of the Syrian crisis should probably involve them as well.

One model might be the Vietnamese “boat people” crisis that started in the late 1970s and unfolded in much the same way the Syrian diaspora has. Initial uncontrolled emigration led to resistance from neighbouring countries and tragic drownings that mobilised public opinion in the West. So the international community set up camps for processing and distributing asylum applicants. Some were repatriated, while deals with Vietnam let others leave legally. Some 1.3m refugees from Indochina ended up in America; many others went to Australia, Canada and France, and some to other parts of Europe.

The boat people had fewer skills than the refugees who had first fled the fall of South Vietnam in 1975, and less ideological identification with the West. In Australia they became the first large group of Asian immigrants in an overwhelmingly white colonial population sensitive to preserving its ethnic identity. Yet today the boat people are for the most part a success everywhere they ended up. Vietnamese-Americans have lower levels of educational attainment and English proficiency than the average American immigrant, but higher income levels and naturalisation rates.

This card also helps to address the misconception that handling refugees and advancing national interests are somehow a zero-sum game.
Europe can decrease its potential long-term responsibilities by taking short-term humanitarian measures. DAT


The Migration Policy Centre (MPC) produces advanced policy-oriented research on global migration, asylum and mobility.

Whilst providing significant humanitarian assistance for refugees in those countries is laudable, the EU policy of containment is dangerous as it threatens the stability of the countries bordering Syria. Moreover, the case of Jordan clearly demonstrates that open border policy can easily become a mere rhetorical device which a country can use for domestic priorities: for example, to secure the conspicuous flux of money channelled through humanitarian aid. Paradoxically, European countries can enforce a genuine open-border policy only by accepting more refugees currently hosted in Jordan in Europe – and helping Jordan to scale down its burden. In this context, European countries should implement a range of measures largely, but not only, centred on temporary protection: these are easier to implement than resettlement and, thus, best suited to address the Syrian refugee emergency. As other studies have argued, this can be done by simply reinforcing pre-existing norms and policies: extending humanitarian admission/temporary protection regimes for refugees (not only Syrians) in the EU; expanding European countries’ resettlement programmes; exempting Syrian refugees from visa requirements; and by developing alternative legal routes for refugees, such as family reunification, university fellowships and scholarships, training programmes, private sponsorships, and labour mobility.
Syrian Refugees Deserve Humanitarian Aid

Globally, countries are obligated to take Syria’s refugees in. DAT


Policymakers need to think about three groups: refugees, economic migrants and voters at home. Start with refugees. Syrians make up the largest contingent of asylum-seekers in Europe. Oppressed by the barrel-bombs of Bashar al-Assad’s regime and the jihadists of Islamic State, Syrians meet any standard for recognition as refugees with a “well-founded fear of persecution”, under the terms of the UN convention on refugees of 1951. Helping Syrians is a clear moral duty.

That responsibility falls not on Europe alone, but the world as a whole. It needs a co-ordinated policy to manage the Syrian crisis along the entire chain of displacement. There must be a concerted effort to contain the war, starting with the creation of protected havens. UN agencies, buckling under the strain, must be properly funded. Syria's neighbours, which have taken in the largest share of refugees, need help to provide education and jobs, not just camps in the desert. America, Western countries and especially the rich monarchies of the Gulf should resettle many more Syrians—just as 1.8m Indochinese refugees were resettled in the 1970s and 1980s. Transit countries need help to manage human flows and absorb at least some people. Refugees should be able to apply for asylum in Europe without risking their lives at the hands of people-smugglers; that may mean establishing processing centres in transit countries. In Europe refugees should be shared across the EU fairly (see article); other migrants denied entry should be speedily repatriated. The countries of the western Balkans (Albania, Kosovo, Serbia) should be deemed safe.

Not only is there a clear humanitarian mandate for decisive action, but the problem gets worse for every nation as they let the situation escalate. For Pro teams, the resolution is a matter of appreciating not only current national interests, but future ones.
**Humanitarianism now enables national interests later. DAT**


Whereas states may not be able to pick who comes in search of protection, they want to choose who comes to work. A willingness to accept legal migrants gives countries more scope to turn back the illegal sort; issuing more work visas gives neighbouring countries a stake in the system and hence a reason to co-operate in curbing illegal flows. But the fundamental point is that Europe needs economic migrants. It has too few workers to pay for its citizens' retirement and to provide the services they want. Migrants are net contributors to the public purse. They inject economic dynamism. They are, almost by definition, self-starters.

Voters may not be so sanguine, though. Newcomers need housing, schools and health care. There is evidence that they depress wages for the low-paid—though barely. Where labour markets are rigid, migrants can become an underclass. Yet this strengthens the case not for fortress Europe, but for good public policy—and especially for the sort of open, flexible labour markets that Europe needs whether or not it accepts migrants.

Voters fear that immigrants will not fit in. An old idea of Christendom still lurks within modern European identity. Since the 9/11 attacks on America, and terrorist murders in Europe, relations with Muslim minorities have become strained. Yet compassion towards needy Muslims is part of the antidote to a hateful jihadist ideology. By contrast, millions of brutalised Syrians left to fester on Europe's fringe would be a source of extremism that will not respect any border.

This potentially leads to an argument that is confusing from a resolitional perspective: that humanitarian and national interests are one and the same thing. For Pro teams, this boils down to creating a one-way causality: done right, humanitarianism always benefits national interests, but narrowly pursuing national interests is not necessarily the humanitarian thing to do.
Conditions in Jordan and Lebanon are functionally as brutal as Syria. DAT


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The other, more urgent, phenomenon is the tragedy of poorer refugees in Jordan and Lebanon, desperate to escape a rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation. Here again, Europe beckons, so poorer families often pool their resources by getting a passport for a male family member, hoping for eventual reunification in Europe. For most, however, worsening conditions in Jordan and Lebanon bring further misery as support structures start to crumble and the U.N. faces serious funding shortfalls. The UNHCR faces a budget shortfall of 65 percent for 2015and the United Nations Syria Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan, which brings together humanitarian agencies and covers development aid for the countries bordering Syria, had as of August received just 37 percent of the $4.5 billion appeal for needed funds this year. The over 2 million refugees in both countries face “tightening restrictions, growing tensions with locals, and decreasing support from international aid agencies.” With savings gone and the World Food Program facing funding shortfalls, food rations are down to 50 U.S. cents daily in Jordan and Lebanon. Food delivery to 230,000 Syrian refugees in Jordan was terminated in mid-2015 due to a lack of funds. The influx into Syria from Jordan reached 200 persons a day in September—many then going to Turkey. Aside from being a transit point for Europe, many Syrians previously hosted elsewhere or coming directly from Syria now head to Turkey since they have access to greater resources. Even there, the politicization of the refugee issue and the economic slowdown have made the country less welcoming.

Clearly there is a moral responsibility to assist those fleeing war and persecution in their countries. Yet, if the flow to Europe is to stop, the focus should be on assisting Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. Even if Germany does take in 800,000 refugees and other countries take in more, there are over 4 million refugees and some 8 million internally displaced Syrians. If something urgent isn’t done to focus on the plight of this stock of refugees, next spring and summer could make this year look easy.
Syrian refugees will likely be strong economic contributors. DAT


The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international economic organisation of 34 countries.

Contrary to public perception, refugees are generally not the poorest of the poor in their country of origin and tend to have higher skill levels than the general population in origin countries. There are however variations across countries of origin and destination as well as across migration waves.

Looking at the education distribution of people residing in the EU who came as humanitarian migrants between 1988 and 1993, a large number of whom are from the former Yugoslavia, reveals that on average 15% have a tertiary degree (33% in Sweden, compared to less than 10% in Austria and Germany).

Among the recently arrived Syrian nationals, the share of people with a post-secondary diploma appears to be much higher. According to Statistics Sweden, more than 40% of Syrians in the country in 2014 have at least upper secondary education, compared to 20% of those from Afghanistan and 10% for those coming from Eritrea.

In the case of Germany, there is no systematic recording of the educational level and qualifications of asylum seekers, but they are asked (on a voluntary basis) about their education and occupational skills during the application procedure. On average for those who came in 2014, 15% of the asylum seekers had a tertiary degree, 16% had upper secondary education (Gymnasium), 35% lower secondary education, 24% attended only primary school and 11% had not attended school at all. Syrian refugees, however, were on average better educated: 21% of the Syrian asylum seekers who came to Germany between the beginning of 2013 and September 2014 said that they had attended university, 22% had received upper secondary education and 47% had obtained either lower secondary or primary education.

In the case of France, based on survey data (ELIPA), in 2010, 14% of all refugees had attained tertiary educational level and 43% at least secondary education. The percentage of tertiary educated was slightly higher for those coming from Europe (20%) and lower for those originating from sub-Saharan Africa (10%).

Refugees have skills (many of them have college degrees) even if they are less highly educated than the general population in the welcoming countries and in most cases also less than migrant workers. Enabling refugees to become language-proficient, to get their educational and professional credentials recognised and in some cases to complement their skills with additional training, will be critical for their successful integration as well as for a positive economic impact of these flows in destination countries.
Rejecting Refugees is Immoral and Counterproductive

*Bottlenecking refugees simply creates new humanitarian crises. DAT*


In recent weeks, British news coverage of the camp—and the nightly treks from it to Calais’s Channel Tunnel entrance and port area, where hundreds of migrants have risked their lives trying to board vehicles, trains, and ferries headed for England—has reached saturation. **On a single day in July, around 2,000 attempts were made to enter the Eurotunnel terminal, causing severe traffic delays for travelers and truck drivers in France and England. Since June, nine migrants have died trying to reach Britain from Calais.** With the support of the British government, French authorities are now building more fences around the perimeter of the Eurotunnel entrance.

The Jungle is home to approximately 3,000 migrants, many of whom are seeking asylum from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Somalia, and Sudan. It is a makeshift refuge. But it’s also a repository for deep-seated anxieties in Europe about change, identity, and social contamination. **Together with the Italian island of Lampedusa, where over the past year thousands of migrants have been arriving after perilous sea voyages originating in Libya, and the Greek island of Kos, where roughly 7,000 migrants are waiting to be processed, Calais has become one of the focal points of Europe’s ongoing migrant crisis and moral panic over immigration.** The camp may also be a presentiment of a darker Europe of new walls and barbed wire and perennial outcasts.

**The idea that governments can focus on their own priorities and functionally “ignore” the migrant crisis is a fictional one. Pro teams can present the current refugee crisis as a choice between proactively handling it and having to handle it anyway while migrants die at countries’ borders.**
Unless developed nations attack conflicts head-on, the conflicts will attack them. DAT


In the Syrian crisis, millions of children and young adults inside and outside the country will not receive an education, despite an effort by humanitarian agencies to mount an initiative to ensure education for Syrian refugees under the banner of “No Lost Generation.” The campaign, started in October 2013, was spurred by the urgency of dealing with the trauma and educational needs of Syrian children, many of whom have known little other than war. The goal was to reduce the risk that some, in their despair, would end up “replicating the hatred and violence they had experienced.” The initiative raised only 34 percent of the $885 million calculated to be needed in 2014. In the absence of more robust funding, millions of Syrian children — and now Iraqis — are missing years of schooling. As one civil society activist in Erbil told me, “We have seven internally displaced camps here, which equals seven time bombs, as people sit without work or education for year after year.”

That these protracted crises are now spilling into Europe underscores the danger of assuming that the problems of violence, conflict, poverty, and oppression elsewhere in the world can be ignored. European countries struggle to find a solution to the volume of refugees that has shown up on their doorstep. The United States has offered to take in 10,000 over the next year. But there are immediate and long-term solutions in the critical conflict zones that cannot be ignored.

Italy and Greece have already been learning this lesson for two years as boats full of migrants drown off their shores: there is no way to reasonably ignore a humanitarian conflict, and there is no way not to make it a priority.
Inadequately providing for refugees will make matters worse for Europe. DAT


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Of course all of this attention to refugees in Europe must not distract from a more basic fact: that nearly all Syrian refugees are not in Hungary or Germany but, instead, are in countries that neighbor Syria. Many aid workers and refugees are concerned that the renewed focus on Europe will pull attention and resources away from countries like Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan, which together host more than 4 million displaced Syrians.

If this were to happen, it would only exacerbate mounting funding problems for the refugee response. The United Nations has only received 37 percent of the funds needed to support Syrian refugees in 2015. This has real, tangible effects. The value of food vouchers the World Food Programme provides to each Syrian refugee in Lebanon each month, for instance, has fallen from $30 to only $13.50, despite the fact that each refugee needs roughly $50 worth of food per month to get by. The aid cuts are also evident in Jordan and across the region.

These aid shortfalls mean that families will go hungry, that young children will be forced to leave school and take menial jobs, that young girls will be pressured into “early marriages,” and that spending on health and education will fall by the wayside. More Syrian refugees will, as a result of inadequate assistance in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and elsewhere, head for Europe.

Supporting Syrian refugees in the Middle East—and supporting the host communities and governments in Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon, in particular—cannot become a second-tier priority. If anything, donor governments around the world need to do far more to finance food, healthcare, education, and shelter for refugees in these countries, and for those Syrians who remain in Syria.

The operative word here is “inevitable”—given that at some point governments will be forced to confront grave humanitarian issues, either economically or physically at their borders, being proactive immediately is the superior option.
Too many refugees are minors to ignore the problem. DAT


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A particularly striking and worrying characteristic of the current refugee crisis is the large number of unaccompanied minors (UAMs) among asylum seekers. Regardless of whether unaccompanied minors are considered asylum seekers or not, responsibility for them falls on the state – and often the municipality – where they are identified. Even when minors come from countries from which asylum applications are rarely successful, they often go into the asylum process. In 2014, the 24 000 unaccompanied minors applying for asylum comprised 4% of all asylum seekers in the EU.

Not all unaccompanied minors go into the asylum system. In Italy, for example, of 10 500 UAMs under state care in 2014, only 24% had applied for asylum. The situation is similar in Greece, where prior to the reform of the asylum process almost none of the minors applied for asylum. In France, the number of UAMs applying for asylum actually fell in 2014 – to fewer than 300 - while the number under state guardianship was close to 4 000. Since UAMs live in open centres, many move out, including to other European countries to meet up with family. About one-third of the UAMs in Italy vanish from the reception centres, often shortly after arrival. Other countries see minors staying. Sweden was already struggling with the rising numbers of UAMs in 2012 before it received about 4 000 UAMs in 2013 and 7 500 in 2014, almost all of whom went into the asylum system.

UAMs represent an enormous challenge in terms of providing housing, supervision, schooling and support measures for minors. In Greece, for example, more than 2 000 minors needed to be placed in housing in 2014, in the midst of a dire economic crisis and an overwhelmed asylum system.
Syrian Refugees Face a Humanitarian Crisis

The humanitarian situation is getting worse. ABH


The humanitarian situation has continued to deteriorate with uninterrupted violence and conflict from Government forces and Armed Opposition Groups. Hostilities have damaged and destroyed emergency field hospitals, schools, water, and electricity services in densely populated areas where both local communities and the internally displaced reside. The total number of people in need of humanitarian assistance in Syria has reached 12.2 million, approximately 7.6 million of whom are internally displaced; the largest number of internally displaced persons in any country in the world. Civilians continue to be the primary victims of the conflict. Rape and sexual violence, enforced disappearances, forcible displacement, recruitment of child soldiers, summary executions and deliberate shelling of civilian targets have become commonplace.

This is one of the world’s largest refugee situations. ABH


Scott Neuman is a digital news writer and editor at NPR.

The U.N. estimates that more than 4 million Syrians have fled the country since the start of the civil war there four years ago, making it the worst refugee crisis in a quarter century.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees says the total number of refugees that have left Syria could be more than 4.25 million by the end of the year. An additional 7.6 million people are internally displaced.

"This is the biggest refugee population from a single conflict in a generation," U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres says in a statement. "It is a population that deserves the support of the world but is instead living in dire conditions and sinking deeper into abject poverty."

PRO can use these cards to show that the Syrian refugee crisis is topical (‘the current crisis’), and to paint the picture of how awful a situation Syrian refugees face.
Even if Syrians make it to Europe, self-interested governments compound harms. DAT

Italy’s Mediterranean migration crisis is dire: Some 170,000 people were rescued from the sea last year, while more than 50,000 have arrived this year so far. As Italy confronts its massive humanitarian challenge, the task of looking after the new arrivals claiming asylum has become a lucrative business and has created new opportunities for corruption. This month, one of the most notorious corruption cases popped back into headlines when Italian police arrested 44 people, including prominent politicians, who they suspected of corruptly allocating contracts to run migrant reception centers. “Do you know how much I earn from immigrants?” one of the alleged ringleaders boasted in a wiretap recording from the investigation released in December. “Drug trafficking is less profitable.”

The migrants, fleeing war and poverty around the world, seem to be arriving at the worst possible time, in a country only now making its way out of economic crisis, on a continent where the outsourcing of vital services, from prisons to schools to healthcare, is a growing trend. Indeed, it would be a mistake to see the case currently being investigated in Italy as just a symptom of the country’s historic problems with corruption and organized crime. A lack of accountability and the mistreatment of vulnerable refugees are present in many European countries: These issues are made worse by outsourcing, particularly when the services are run for-profit.

When countries fail to place humanitarian priorities first, they can often have the same economic social consequences as if they prioritized caring refugees, with the spending funding corruption instead of the improvement of human lives. When Pro teams frame the debate as one regarding the inevitable spending of aid resources, this is a straightforward conclusion to derive.
The current commitment of resources to aiding refugees is woefully inadequate. DAT


The five-year Syrian war is contributing to a global humanitarian crisis that is forcing record numbers of people from their homes. According to the U.N., globally there are now some 60 million people — roughly equivalent to the entire population of Italy — displaced either internally or as refugees due to violence, conflict, and repression. And this sustained level of crisis is draining resources and attention. The U.N. has been able to raise only 38 percent of the $7.4 billion it says is needed this year to care for Syrians fleeing the fighting and only half of the $704 million appeal for Iraqis displaced by the Islamic State. The needs in Yemen, Sudan, South Sudan, and the Central Africa Republic fall even further from public view.

The result is that millions of people who’ve fled violent conflict now living lives of desperation, in camps of tents or containers, or squatting in vacant buildings; many have depleted any savings they may have had. Few find work — they’re typically prohibited from working by host country policies for refugees — and often, health care is inaccessible and their children are barred from schools. They battle the recurring trauma of their escape, and they swallow the daily indignities of trying to survive.

An activist in Erbil told me that the risk of domestic violence in the Iraqi camps is pervasive because of the psychological toll of the conflict and the hopelessness of being stranded in a camp for years on end. No wonder so many are taking tremendous risks to escape to Europe, she said. “They choose death in the sea to get out of their conditions here,” she told me.

This card brings up two compelling points for the Pro. The first is that when nations fail to address humanitarian crises adequately, the resulting conditions (squalor, violence, the psychology of hopelessness) are fertile grounds for extremism and future security risks. Potentially more important is the concept of dignity. Yes, this isn’t strictly a PF point, but neither is the resolution. Even if a lay judge is not convinced of the need to provide health care, jobs, housing, etc. to refugees, the idea of basic human dignity is transcendent.
Refugees Contribute to Economic Growth

The cost of resettling refugees is worth the benefits. ABH


Andrew Soergel is a reporter at US News.

But such a stance may ultimately prove to be Germany's loss. While a huge number of refugees could potentially strain host countries' capital and resources, a growing pool of research suggests refugees aren't necessarily the economic leeches they're often made out to be. In Cleveland, for example, local refugee services agencies spent about $4.8 million in 2012 as they helped refugees get established in the area, according to a study conducted by Chmura Economics & Analytics. But the economic impact those refugees had on the community weighed in at about $48 million, roughly 10 times the initial resettlement costs. "Refugees are more likely to be entrepreneurial and enjoy higher rates of successful business ventures compared to natives," the report said. "At the local level, refugees provide increased demand for goods and services through their new purchasing power and can be particularly revitalizing in communities that otherwise have a declining population."

But such a stance may ultimately prove to be Germany's loss. While a huge number of refugees could potentially strain host countries' capital and resources, a growing pool of research suggests refugees aren't necessarily the economic leeches they're often made out to be. In Cleveland, for example, local refugee services agencies spent about $4.8 million in 2012 as they helped refugees get established in the area, according to a study conducted by Chmura Economics & Analytics. But the economic impact those refugees had on the community weighed in at about $48 million, roughly 10 times the initial resettlement costs. "Refugees are more likely to be entrepreneurial and enjoy higher rates of successful business ventures compared to natives," the report said. "At the local level, refugees provide increased demand for goods and services through their new purchasing power and can be particularly revitalizing in communities that otherwise have a declining population."
**Refugees financially outperform economic immigrants. ABH**


Kalena Cortes is an assistant professor at Syracuse University.

I find that refugee immigrants in 1980 earned 6 percent less and worked 14 percent fewer hours than economic immigrants. Both immigrant groups had about the same level of English skills. By 1990, the two groups had made substantial gains; however, refugee immigrants had made greater gains. Refugees in 1990 earned 20 percent more, worked 4 percent more hours, and improved their English skills by 11 percent more than economic immigrants. The relative gain of refugee immigrants is 26 percent in annual earnings and 10 percent in the improvement of English skills. In addition, from the regression results, I observe that about two-thirds of the faster growth in annual earnings of refugees is attributable to faster growth in annual hours and about one-third is attributable to faster growth in hourly wages. The higher rates of human capital accumulation for refugee immigrants contribute to these findings. English improvement accounts for a 7 and 5 percent gain in earnings for refugee males and females, respectively; whereas for economic immigrant males and females, English improvement accounts for a 6 and 4 percent gain in earnings, respectively. This study demonstrates how the implicit difference in time horizons of immigrants does, in fact, have a significant effect on their labor market performance. The striking comparisons between refugee and economic immigrants are not attributable to any single country of origin or ethnic group.

**Syrian Refugees have contributed to economic growth in Lebanon. ABH**


Massimiliano Cali is a trade economist at the World Bank.

In fact, the inflow of refugees has arguably helped the Lebanese economy withstand the negative effect of its neighbor's civil war. Refugees have been an important source of demand for locally produced services in Lebanon, funded from own savings and labor income, from remittances of relatives abroad and from international aid. In a recent World Bank report we estimate that an additional 1 percent increase in Syrian refugees increases Lebanese service exports by 1.5 percent. And the UNHCR and U.N. Development Program estimate a similar economy-wide impact from the $800 million that the U.N. spends annually on Syrian refugees in Lebanon. These effects are not unique to Syrian refugees. Burundian and Rwandan refugees fleeing war in the 1990s have generated net economic gains for their Tanzanian host communities.
Syrian Refugees have increased wages in Turkey. ABH


This paper combines newly available data on the 2014 distribution of 1.6 million Syrian refugees across subregions of Turkey with the Turkish LFS, to assess the impact on Turkish labor market conditions. Using a novel instrumental variable we find that the refugees, who overwhelmingly do not have work permits, result in the large-scale displacement of informal, low educated, female Turkish workers, especially in agriculture. While there is net displacement, the inflow of refugees also creates higher wage formal jobs allowing for occupational upgrading of Turkish workers, while for women there is also an increase in school attendance. Average Turkish wages rise, primarily as the composition of the employed changes due to the inflow of refugees. In other words, the resulting average wage increase is likely due to the fact that those who would have experienced wage losses as a result of the inflow of refugees exited the labor market.

Syrian Refugees have had a positive economic impact in Jordan. ABH


Omer Karasapan is a regional knowledge and learning coordinator at the world bank.

The ILO notes that, so far, unemployment has not increased in the Jordanian Governorates that host the most Syrian refugees. The ILO expects that “enterprising and resourceful Syrian refugees, driven by their difficult livelihood conditions, will inexorably be pulled into the orbit of the Jordanian economy.” Indeed, the economic activity rate of Syrians (48.5 percent) is higher than the hosting Jordanians (36.5 percent). Overall, small and medium-sized enterprises in Jordan, which comprise the vast majority of Jordanian firms, have been boosted by the lower wages. In the meantime, Syrians and their entrepreneurial ways have boosted many parts of the Jordanian economy as they create new firms, new jobs and enhance products and services in parts of the economy. Numbers are difficult to come by, but the Jordanian Investment Board stated that in 2013 some $1 billion was invested by Syrians. Also noted is that these investments, as well as the redirection of investment from neighbors fearing further instability and the economic inputs of the refugees themselves, have probably played a large role in the country’s nearly 4 percent growth rate in 2013.

PRO should use all this evidence to demonstrate that refugees are likely to have a positive economic impact on their host country, and therefore won’t threaten that country’s national interests. PRO should emphasize that this has been true across different refugee populations in different host countries. Additionally, the warrant for this economic growth has been that often times the refugees tend to be skilled workers with a spirit for entrepreneurship.
Refugees will balance out Germany’s aging population. ABH

Groden, Claire. “Here’s Why Germany is Welcoming Migrants With Open Arms.” 

Claire Groden is a reporter at Fortune.

“We will profit from this, too, because we need immigration,” German Labor Minister Andrea Nahles said. “The people who come to us as refugees should be welcomed as neighbors and colleagues.”

Part of Germany’s rationale for allowing hundreds of thousands of migrants through the doors lies in demographics. Germany has one of the world’s most rapidly aging and shrinking populations. With one of the world’s lowest birthrates, the country relies on immigration to plug a growing workforce hole. According to one expert quoted in Deutsche Welle last year, the German economy needs to attract 1.5 million skilled migrants to stabilize the state pension system as more Germans retire. An influx of young migrants could improve the country’s dependency ratio, a measure of those over 65 compared to those of general working age between 15 and 64. According to current official estimates, every third German could be over 65 by 2060, leaving two workers to support each retiree.

PRO can argue that refugees would economically benefit Germany (along with many other Western countries), as they tend to be young and would offset the rapidly aging population.
Accepting Refugees Improves National Security

Settling Syrian refugees decreases the likelihood they become terrorists. ABH

Anne Speckahrd is an adjunct associate professor at Georgetown University.

Meanwhile, the vast majority of war-torn Syrian refugees are fleeing terrorist groups. But they are at risk. Experience from many conflict zones teaches us that the longer these refugees are left to languish in despair in camps the more prone they become to radicalization. Just as gangs attract youth in inner cities, terrorists are adroit at exploiting the most vulnerable who might turn to them for security, justice and even hope. Young men, in particular, gravitate to perceived models of strength and protection. In my book “Talking to Terrorists,” I wrote about a young Chechen in a refugee camp in the Russian Republic of Ingushetia, who explained that his father had been crippled by the conflicts and the youth wanted to join the “Islamic brothers” (meaning Chechen terrorist groups) because they, unlike his father, “were real men.”

CON may claim that accepting Syrian refugees is dangerous, because there may be terrorists and ISIS operatives mixed in to the refugee population. However, PRO should focus on the harms to American national security that would occur if these refugees are left in camps where they can easily be radicalized. By accepting refugees, the US (or other countries) can reduce the likelihood that refugees turn to terror as a means of survival.
A glut of refugees will further destabilize the Middle East. DAT


The Harvard International Review is a quarterly journal and website of international relations published by the Harvard International Relations Council.

Not only does the radicalization of refugees threaten Lebanon and Jordan individually, but it also is likely to affect the broader regional stability of the already tumultuous Middle East. With the potential of terrorism to proliferate across the region, nearby countries face the threat of violence and consequently need to focus more on their military and border security. And as the reverberations of radicalization are felt, nearby leaders begin to wonder whether they too will need to crack down or face overthrow. As long as Syria continues to spawn extremism, the entire Middle East faces the threat of terror and violence, if not further destabilization and state destruction.

But it is not only the Middle East that is affected by this phenomenon. With the loss of accountability of state officials comes an increasing reliance on smaller, more sectarian groups, who are unaccountable to the international community. Moreover, the instability of regimes results in the insecurity of vital resources in the area and the depreciation of the overall area's economy. Similarly, extremism coupled with fluid borders leads to weapons dispersion and proliferation, which can be potentially crippling if very dangerous weapons, such as chemical and biological weaponry, were to be found in the hands of terrorists.

The problem of radicalization of refugees is a critical one, and must be quickly addressed. The international community should view the plight of the refugees not merely as a humanitarian concern, but as a strategic and political crisis. Consequently, United Nations calls to increase aid to border areas cannot be ignored. Instead, increased money and resources should be funneled into the area, to provide refugees with adequate resources to remain where they are and not return to Syria. Moreover, such action would preclude their joining a militant group, which many do in order to procure funds and assistance for themselves and their families. And if there were enough resources, local citizens would feel less threatened by the influx of refugees who seek to compete with them for the already strained resources of the countries.
Iraq: conflict and refugee flows feed each other. DAT


European Institute of the Mediterranean is a Mediterranean relations think tank based in Barcelona.

The United Nations estimates that ISIS’s campaign has displaced 1.2 million people in Iraq. The vast majority of these are now IDPs, and while most are able to rent accommodation or stay with a host family, many are now living in public buildings as well as two IDP camps recently established by the KR-I government. Some Iraqis, however, have reportedly escaped to Jordan to join the already sizeable Iraqi refugee population there – some 30,000, according to UNHCR – that are part of the fallout of the 2003 American invasion of Iraq. Others have chosen to escape the violence in Iraq by crossing into Syria’s al-Hasakeh province, even while many in al-Hasakeh are attempting to cross into Iraq to escape the violence in Syria.8 Thus the turmoil is spreading, and fighting in both countries has created cross flows of refugees and is generating hundreds of thousands of new IDPs with few good options.
Moral Obligation to Accept Refugees

*Refugees suffered the loss of political belonging in their home country. ABH*


Serena Parekh is an assistant professor of philosophy at Northeastern University.

Michael Walzer was one of the first philosophers to discuss our moral obligations to refugees and he initiated the debate by stressing that refugees differ from immigrants in general because of the moral dimension of their claims. Refugees, he writes, ‘make the most forceful claim for admission. “If you don’t take me in,” they say, “I shall be killed, persecuted, brutally oppressed by the rulers of my own country”’ (Walzer, 2008: 163).

Walzer defined refugees as people whose moral claims ‘cannot be met by yielding territory or exporting wealth, but only by taking people in’ (ibid.). Because he understands refugees as suffering a political loss, the loss of political belonging, he argues that our moral obligations to them can only be met by admitting them to our country. This definition laid the foundation for the contemporary debate around moral obligations to refugees in philosophy.
The benefits to refugees outweigh the potential harms to citizens. ABH


Peter Singer is a professor for bioethics at Princeton University.

If as a community we allow these other factors to have their impact on the environment, while appealing to the need to protect our environment as a reason for restricting our intake of refugees to its present level, we are implicitly giving less weight to the interests of refugees in coming to Australia than we give to the interests of Australian residents in having holiday houses, roaring around the countryside in four-wheeldrive vehicles, going skiing, and throwing away their drink containers without bothering to return them for recycling. Such a weighting is surely morally outrageous, so flagrant a violation of the principle of equal consideration of interests that I trust it has only to be exposed in order to be seen as indefensible. The other arguments are even more problematical. No one can really say whether doubling Australia's intake of refugees would have any effect at all on the numbers who might consider fleeing their own homes; nor is it possible to predict the consequences in terms of international relations. As with the similar argument linking overseas aid with increased population, in a situation in which the definite consequences of the proposed additional intake of refugees are positive, it would be wrong to decide against the larger intake on such speculative grounds, especially since the speculative factors point in different directions.

Singer uses a consequentialist framework (and Australia as an example) to evaluate the moral argument of taking in refugees. He argues that accepting refugees does a tremendous amount of good to the refugees, as their lives are effectively saved. On the other hand, the impact on residents of the country will be negligible compared to the good done for the refugees, and refugees might even benefit the country accepting them.
Governments are capable of fulfilling moral duty to refugees. ABH


Peter Singer is a professor for bioethics at Princeton University.

It would not be difficult for the nations of the developed world to move closer towards fulfilling their moral obligations to refugees. There is no objective evidence to show that doubling their refugee intake would cause them any harm whatsoever. Much present evidence, as well as past experience, points the other way, suggesting that they and their present population would probably benefit. But, the leaders will cry, what is moral is not what is politically acceptable! This is a spurious excuse for inaction. In many policy areas, presidents and prime ministers are quite happy to try to convince the electorate of what is right – of the need to tighten belts in order to balance budgets, or to desist from drinking and driving. They could just as easily gradually increase their refugee intakes, monitoring the effects of the increase through careful research. In this way they would fulfill their moral and geopolitical obligations and still benefit their own communities.

PRO can use this to argue that governments should accept refugees first, and only if there is a clear harm then they can begin to reject them. This entire argument revolves around two ideas. First, that the risk of refugees being harmful is not enough ground to reject them, as in many scenarios they actually benefit their host countries. Second, it is morally acceptable for citizens of a host country to lose their luxuries, if it means saving refugee populations.
Con Evidence
Humanitarianism and Logistics Are At Odds

*Germany’s efforts to take in refugees go beyond their means to provide for them.* DAT


The numbers are dramatic. More than 200,000 migrants are believed to have arrived in Germany in September alone. For the year, official forecasts had already risen in August from 450,000 to 800,000. This week Bild, Germany’s largest tabloid, cited estimates that the number could reach 1.5m—equivalent to the population of Munich. New refugees keep pouring in, and those granted asylum have the right to bring family later. No end is in sight.

**Processing centres exceeded capacity weeks ago.** Local authorities are struggling to find housing, since temporary tent cities will not suffice in winter. The government of Hamburg has begun seizing empty office buildings to house refugees, raising constitutional questions. Berlin and Bremen are considering similar measures. Schools are struggling to integrate refugee children who speak no German.

**Fights have broken out inside overcrowded asylum centres, often between young men of different ethnic or religious groups.** There have been more arson attacks on migrant centres. In Dresden, a xenophobic movement called Pegida is growing again: about 9,000 protested this Monday against refugees.

**Ideally, prioritizing humanitarianism advances national interests as well. However, in the case of Germany, it has turned into a zero-sum game between two ideals.**
Prioritizing refugees generates instability. DAT


When Til Schweiger, a movie star, called on his Facebook page for private donations to buy and convert a former army barracks into an asylum centre, he was inundated with comments that were vile and racist. Especially in eastern Germany, where locals often have little contact with foreigners, there are incidents of right-wing and neo-Nazi rallies in front of refugee homes, and even arson. The refugees are dividing German society and testing its tolerance.

As a result, it is getting harder for politicians to nuance their reactions between what is necessary to cope with the crisis and what crosses the line of good taste. It is clear that municipalities need more money, especially as winter comes and makes the temporary tent cities uninhabitable. A consensus is also growing that countries such as Albania, Montenegro and Kosovo should be declared “safe”, on the assumption that people seeking asylum from there are really economic migrants. About a third of asylum applicants in Germany come from the Balkans. Almost all of their applications are denied, but they still clog up the system.
When countries without adequate take in refugees, it’s a negative-sum game. DAT


In late 2013, 12,000 refugees, most of them Syrian, arrived in Bulgaria via its southern border with Turkey, catching the government in Sofia completely by surprise. The global NGO Doctors Without Borders, which normally operates only in developing countries, found the conditions in Bulgaria’s hastily built “overflow” camps — in the first few months of their existence, tents with no electricity or running water — so poor that it decided to set up medical clinics there to treat the migrants. Greece’s government-run detention centers have also long been condemned by NGOs like Human Rights Watch for their “inhumane” conditions. In interviews, inmates at these centers say they have been detained for well over the EU’s limit of 18 months. And earlier this year, Greek newspaper To Vima reported on a confidential police report regarding torture by guards at the Amygdaleza detention center just outside Athens. Although the current Greek government has pledged to close these centers, for the moment they remain open.

Yet as the crisis in the Mediterranean demonstrates, desperate people will take extreme measures to reach safety. Around 600,000 people arrived in Europe to claim asylum last year, a number that is sure to rise in the years to come. This week, European interior ministers have been squabbling over a proposed quota system to resettle refugees and take the pressure off Italy. But the migrants themselves are still being talked of as a burden.

Providing refugees is an arena where “making an effort” does more harm than good. The issue that Con teams should be bringing up in debate is that expecting governments to provide for refugees uniformly is a recipe for disaster, and those who do provide for refugees are those whose domestic interests (economics, political stability, a welcoming social climate) have already been taken care of. In other words, the resolution upends the reasonable order of caring for refugees—take care of the problems at home, then start addressing those coming in from abroad.
Refugees Are a Trojan Horse

*Massive refugee populations present a correspondingly huge security risk.* DAT


JORDANIANS are quick to note that hosting more than 600,000 Syrian refugees has put a strain on their economy, government services and scarce water supplies. But a different threat keeps officials up at night. The refugee crisis “is turning into a security situation,” says Abdallah Abu Romman, a former minister of information.

The authorities worry that armed fighters, regime intelligence agents and smugglers hide among the refugees. Security services in the largest refugee camp, Zaatari, blamed riots there in April on "Assad sleeper cells", according to the Saudi-owned daily Al Hayat. A resident who liaises between refugees and the Jordanian police says anyone who causes trouble in the camp is investigated. Someone deemed a moderate rebel is sent back to Syria but “if they suspect he is from an extremist group, he is immediately detained,” says the resident.

Smuggling networks have built up around Zaatari. Some 400,000 refugees have entered the camp since 2012, but only 85,000 remain. About 110,000 of those went back to Syria, and another 50,000 left for Jordan’s cities legally with the sponsorship of a relative or local. But 150,000 more departed Zaatari in a way the UN's High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) cannot account for, says Kilian Kleinschmidt, who heads the agency’s operation in the camp. Human trafficking is enough of a concern, but the authorities fear the same networks could be used to move weapons too.

While a nation has moral imperatives, they are typically not an excuse to endanger any of its citizens by taking on excessive security risks.
Accepting Refugees Causes Political Instability

Forcing European nations to accept asylum seekers will fracture the EU. DAT

In June, by uniting with other sceptics such as Spain, the easterners saw off an attempt by the commission to impose (far smaller) quotas, triggering in the process a screaming match between the Italian prime minister and the Lithuanian president. But in recent months, as the winds of European opinion have shifted and Germany, a strong backer of Mr Juncker’s plan, has found its voice, the sceptics have begun to look isolated. Although governments must vote on the relocation proposal, the naysayers will struggle to muster the votes needed to block it, and EU officials say this time they are minded to ignore them. In other words, Brussels will order governments to accept asylum-seekers that they do not want. Most will be Muslims.

That would be a “political disaster”, says Radko Hokovský of European Values, a Czech think-tank. Populists will grow emboldened and citizens disillusioned. There will be emergency summits and bitter arguments; some fear splits as wide as those over the Iraq war. The row could spill over into other touchy subjects the EU must manage this autumn, notably the renewal of sanctions on Russia for its invasion of Ukraine, which expire in January. In the meantime the refugees flowing up through Greece, the Balkans and Hungary will keep up the pressure. Moreover, EU officials are discovering that their relocation plan is a lot harder to implement than they had imagined (a voluntary element is due to begin next month in Italy). No one has a convincing answer to the easterners’ strongest retort: many migrants will simply leave countries they do not want to be in.

By prioritizing the humanitarian needs of refugees, the EU risks not only failing to follow through on its promises but also severely negatively impacting its efforts in other (crucial) humanitarian arenas.
Accepting Refugees fuels the rise of xenophobic political parties. ABH


Max Rosenthal is a national security reporter at Mother Jones.

That contrasts sharply to much of the rest of Europe, where right-wing parties from France's National Front to Greece's Golden Dawn are important players. In liberal Sweden, the refugee crisis has fueled support for the country's anti-immigrant party, which has gained a huge amount of support, according to a poll taken last month. Hungary, where the xenophobic Jobbik party is the third largest in the legislature, helped fuel the current refugee crisis by building a fence to block refugees and passing tight restrictions on those caught in the country. Denmark, another prominent opponent of taking more refugees, saw the anti-immigrant Danish People's Party ride the refugee issue to a major victory in elections just three months ago. Germany could find itself in a similar situation if the country's pro-immigrant mood changes. One sign of a potential shift came on Sunday. After a summer of welcoming refugees, denouncing nativist violence, and even suspending EU regulations to allow all Syrians to apply for refugee status in Germany, Merkel's government abruptly closed its border with Austria in an attempt to stem the daily flow of thousands of refugees into southern Germany. The website of Der Spiegel described the border closure as "the end of the summer fairy tale." The Washington Post also reported on Thursday that the German government may introduce a law that would streamline deportations, cut benefits, and possibly roll back Merkel's declaration that all Syrian refugees were welcome to apply for asylum in Germany despite EU rules to the contrary.

Given the current political climate in Europe, accepting refugees could give power to right wing, xenophobic, anti-immigration parties that would impose very stringent policies against refugees, and likely immigrants as a whole.
Syrian refugees have radicalized against the Lebanese government. DAT


The Harvard International Review is a quarterly journal and website of international relations published by the Harvard International Relations Council.

Since the outbreak of the violence, approximately one million Syrian refugees have fled to Lebanon, becoming almost a quarter of the population of that country. Though they have found there a respite from the war, they are still lacking basic necessities. Lebanon has neither the resources nor the capacity to assist its new inhabitants. It lacks a strong central state, sustainable institutions, and a single national security apparatus. The government itself is rent apart between Hezbollah and groups seeking to exclude the organization from the Lebanese governmental body. Political assassinations and targeted car bombs are common. Weaponry is widely proliferated and uncontrolled. Moreover, minimal legal framework exists to address the refugee problem, and many are barred from working. Impoverished and homeless, thousands of refugees live on streets or in abandoned buildings. Consequently, crime has risen, as have acts of violence and racism against Syrians, increasing tensions.

In many areas in Lebanon, this hostility has festered into radicalism. Anger toward Hezbollah for aiding the Assad regime, coupled with desperation and disappointment due to inadequate assistance from Hezbollah as part of the governing Lebanese body, has led some Syrian refugees to join opposition forces or other radical Sunni groups, such as Mustaqbal and the Al-Nusra Front, that are fighting against Hezbollah and Assad. Kidnappings, murders, and bomb attacks have abounded. The Iranian embassy in Beirut was destroyed in what was the first bombing of an embassy in Lebanon since the civil war. Tripoli, the largest city in northern Lebanon, has likewise been attacked. With a porous border with Syria and an open flow of arms and militants between the two nations, Lebanon hovers on the brink of chaos.

Con teams need to combat the image that refugees lack agency. While this is relatively true, they nevertheless are capable of having substantial impacts on both politics and conditions wherever they end up.
Case Study: Destabilization

_The growing dysfunction in Lebanon._ DAT


European Institute of the Mediterranean is a Mediterranean relations think tank based in Barcelona.

Lebanon's central state is weak and dysfunctional, and in the current context it is noteworthy only for its near-total absence in the crisis response. It operates in parallel with myriad private, quasi-state and extrastate actors, most notably Hezbollah. The country's politics is further fractured by its deeply sectarian system, with power distributed in state institutions on a confessional [religious affiliation] basis and most (formally) non-state political actors are organised along confessional lines.

The influx of Syrian refugees has the potential to greatly destabilise Lebanon's politics, primarily because it alters the relative populations of Lebanon's confessional groups. The vast majority of refugees are Sunni Muslims and they have migrated to communities that share that religious/communal identity. This increases the demographic weight of Sunnis, unofficially the third largest confessional group in Lebanon today, and directly threatens the clout wielded by the political actors of other confessional groups. The group most threatened is Shi'ite Hezbollah, which is further motivated by the rise of a particular type of Sunni extremism in the region, specifically groups that view Shi'ites as infidels (takfiri groups), and the challenge to Syrian President Bashar Al-Asad, Hezbollah’s patron in Damascus. The violence destabilising Lebanon today has escalated in parallel with Hezbollah's increasingly open support for the Syrian regime. After Hezbollah announced its direct, cross-border cooperation with the Syrian military in April 2013, Sunni extremist and Syrian rebel groups promised reprisals against Hezbollah, its patrons, and Shi'ite civilians. Syrian refugees have the potential to further destabilise the situation by joining this fight against Hezbollah on Lebanese soil. Not only are most refugees Sunni, but many have links with the Syrian opposition forces, and at times militants who have faced off against Hezbollah in Syria are directly mixed in with refugee flows.

Today the northeast border regions remain extremely unstable, with occurrences of cross-border shelling of Lebanese villages by the Syrian regime, inter-factional fighting, and a near complete lack of Lebanese state presence. Lebanon has suffered 21 car and suicide bombings since Hezbollah openly declared its support for the Syrian regime in April 2013, 17 of which targeted Hezbollah or Shi’ite neighbourhoods.

Most recently, Lebanese territory has been threatened – and parts of it captured – by the militant group Islamic State of Iraq and as-Sham (ISIS).

**Due simply to the logistics of the crisis, Lebanon has been forced to accept more of the burden that in ought to be. This creates something of a sinkhole effect as all the byproducts of refugee flows hit countries with massive force due to the size of the migration.**
The Economics of Accepting Refugees

Providing for refugees from foreign aid budgets is counterproductive. DAT


Britain's commitment to accept the equivalent of 4,000 Syrians a year is 0.8% of the annual number that Germany's vice-chancellor has said his country could accommodate. About as many refugees were welcomed by Germany on a single recent weekend than Britain has agreed to take in the next five years. And the plan to take refugees directly from camps in Syria, instead of helping to lighten Europe's load, will lose Mr Cameron goodwill as he seeks to renegotiate the terms of Britain's EU membership ahead of an in/out referendum next year.

The government proposes to cover the cost of housing and looking after refugees with money from the foreign-aid budget, which is Europe's largest. Although this has stirred controversy, the idea is not new: most countries use some foreign aid to provide for their refugees, and Britain spent £100m ($154m) in this way in 2014. But diverting aid to the home front undermines Mr Cameron's argument that the refugee crisis should be tackled at its source, rather than in Britain (see article).

And the money may not be available for long. If it is to count towards the 0.7% of GDP Britain has pledged in foreign aid, the money can be used to help refugees only during their first year in the country. Local authorities usually pick up the slack where refugees are concerned. But with their spending power reduced by one-quarter since 2010, and further cuts ahead, councils have little cash to spare. Because the prime minister plans to prioritise children, especially orphans, the cost will be particularly high and unlikely to fall after just one year.

It is disingenuous to accept refugees without an economic plan (or the means) to care for them. For countries where this is the case, governments risk doing more harm than good by failing to properly scout the economics of hosting large refugee populations.
Refugees distort government budgets and impact average citizens. DAT


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The presence of large numbers of refugees especially in cities along the Syrian border has mixed economic consequences. The government spends large sums for the upkeep of the refugee camps as well as for health and other services for both camp and urban refugees. This fuels resentment among locals who feel that this undermines their own access to especially health services (that are funded by their taxes) while health personnel feel increasingly overwhelmed by increasing demand. The presence of an ever-growing number of urban refugees has inevitably pushed prices up in general and especially for housing, causing additional complaints among locals. Furthermore, many refugees are employed in the informal economy and work for lower wages than Turkish citizens; they do not pay taxes or make contributions to social security. This not only makes the Syrian refugees vulnerable to exploitation, but also generates resentment especially from Turks employed in the informal economy.

Refugees present an economic shock that is larger than what most governments and communities can absorb. The issue with this—something Con teams should be hammering home—is that the situation drags everyone down—refugees and locals alike.
Unwilling Hosts Harm Refugees

Much of the debate will likely focus on the impacts on host nations. More important are the impacts on refugees. By focusing on the refugees themselves, Con teams humanize what can otherwise come off as a crass argument to lay judges. Here, we explore what happens when governments essentially follow the Pro advocacy against the will of either their people or the government institutions which enforce general mandates.

Eastern European countries have mistreated incoming asylum seekers. DAT

This handful of nations on the EU’s eastern periphery aren’t the only ones that view the union as a white Christian fortress against the world’s have-nots or that have conveniently brushed aside their own histories of migration, as well as the spirit and values that make the EU more than just a glorified trading zone. Their tone is just an octave or two shriller than that of some of their western neighbors; the United Kingdom’s grudging compromise of accepting a paltry number of Syrians — just 20,000 — over five years stands out as particularly pathetic.

Yet the Central Europeans have been among the loudest and most unequivocal about rejecting the kind of mandatory quota system that would allocate refugees to all of the EU’s 28 nations based on population size, GDP, and unemployment rate. (The EU and Germany belatedly added the last criterion, which the Central Europeans and other poorer-than-average countries have every right to demand.) And their explanations for these rejections are deliberately disingenuous, relying on the claim that the bulk of the influx is made up of economic migrants, not genuinely persecuted refugees.

Slovakia and Hungary have explicitly stated that Muslim refugees are not welcome and do not belong in a Europe that they claim is white and Christian. In August, Slovakia’s Interior Ministry gave the preposterously weak justification that Muslims wouldn’t feel comfortable in a country without mosques.
Asylum seekers will face persecution and hostility in many host countries. DAT


In the Czech Republic, a new poll found that 94 percent of Czechs believe the EU should return refugees to their home countries. A third of those polled said this should happen at once, without providing any aid or refuge at all. More than three-fourths said they would like to abandon the EU’s Schengen Agreement, which allows passport-free movement within the EU. Another sign of the Czechs' insensitivity: They had been detaining asylum-seekers in prison-like facilities until they filed for political asylum, as well as writing identification numbers in indelible marker on their forearms, a practice so reminiscent of Nazi concentration camps — in which many Czechs suffered — that Prague has since abandoned it.

Poland, a country of 38 million whose economy has fared comparatively well of late, has used softer language — perhaps because a Pole, Donald Tusk, is currently the European Council’s president. Warsaw says it will take in 2,000 migrants, though it too rejects a quota system. But two-thirds of Poles share unvarnished hostility toward immigrants, who they say don’t belong in (very white, very Catholic) Poland, and a 2013 study found that nearly 70 percent of citizens say nonwhites are not welcome in the country.

Countries cannot be muscled into accepting refugees. DAT


Given the fraught atmosphere in Central Europe at the moment, it would in fact be a grave mistake for the EU to force these countries to accept unwanted refugees. This would put the newcomers themselves in danger. If reluctant governments, as outspoken as they’ve been, are muscled into it, there’d be a green light for right-wingers and populists to abuse the new arrivals. There’d be shelters burned down within a week, just as happened in eastern Germany in the early 1990s. (Refugee shelters still burn in Germany today, but anti-foreigner sentiment remains on the margins of public opinion, not smack in the center.)

But there could be voluntary quotas for all of the EU’s 28 countries: higher than those currently proposed, with provisions for EU aid for countries with lower-than-average GDPs that take in refugees. The money would enable the leaderships of these countries to put a positive spin on accommodating those in need. There shouldn’t be penalties attached to noncompliance — but the lack of empathy shouldn’t be forgotten when it comes time that these nay-sayers are in need, either.
The Humanitarian Costs of Reneging

As refugees strain nations’ resources, those governments typically must begin to renge on promises or cut back. This risks eventually worsening the situation for refugees to the point of delivering substantial harms and creating further humanitarian crises. Thus, humanitarian-first policies actually risk turning a predictable problem (displaced persons) into an unpredictable, intractable one (refugees trapped by formerly receptive governments).

_Jordan: issues with too many refugees. DAT_


The Migration Policy Centre (MPC) produces advanced policy-oriented research on global migration, asylum and mobility.

Tightened restrictions for refugees trying to enter the Kingdom are also a side-effect of the new policies implemented by the Government of Jordan to curtail the ever-growing urban refugee community. Approximately 16% of the entire refugee registered population reside in the five official refugee camps, the largest of which (Zaatari camp) is home to over 80,000 people. More than 520,000 of refugees live dispersed in host communities, concentrated around Jordanian urban centres, mostly in the central and northern governorates (see table 2). In north Jordan, the governorates of Amman, Irbid, Mafraq and Zarqa alone host more than the 70% of registered refugees outside the camps (see figure 3).

Here, about 20% of refugees live in substandard accommodation, such as garages, chicken houses, and tents. In addition, a smaller number of refugees reside in informal tented settlements (ITS) spread through the country, often lacking basic services such as health, education, water and food.

Although there are not exact figures on ITS in Jordan and their population, a recent assessment carried out by REACH in five governorates revealed that the number of ITS is on the rise: 7000 individuals as of June 2014. Since the second half of 2014 the Jordanian authorities have progressively restrained Syrian refugees’ freedom of movement in urban areas. Refugees used to be able to register with UNHCR no matter the status of their documentation. The government has, since 14 July 2014, though instructed UNHCR to stop issuing Asylum Seeker Certificates (ASCs) to Syrian refugees that have left the camps without proper “bail out” documentation. Without a valid ASC, refugees cannot access UNHCR and its implementing partners’ (IPs) services such as cash and food assistance.
As Jordan has become unable to fulfill humanitarian obligations, refugees suffer again. DAT

http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/34904/MPC_2015-02_PB.pdf?sequence=1

The Migration Policy Centre (MPC) produces advanced policy-oriented research on global migration, asylum and mobility.

It seems evident that the goal of the government is twofold: restricting refugees’ freedom of movement in urban areas, while making it more complicated for them to leave the camps. To enforce this new agenda, a “verification” exercise in urban areas has been announced and is currently being implemented by the Jordanian government. Syrian refugees are expected to present themselves to local police stations and go through a biometric scanning procedure. The objective of the urban verification exercise is to issue new MOI Cards to all Syrians residing outside of camps in Jordan and to return original Syrian documents to their owners. However, the real goal of the verification exercise remains unclear. The same verification, previously carried out in Zaatari Camp seems to have resulted in a number of forced returns to Syria. The current verification process is understandably creating anxieties and fears of refoulement and deportation to camps among refugees living in host communities.

A bleak scenario is playing out against the backdrop of the Jordanian government’s new policies. The encampment policy has affected most Syrian refugees in Jordan at three interrelated levels: it has shrunk the humanitarian space and raised considerable protection concerns; it has increased the number of ITS evictions, refugee deportations to camps, and refoulement to Syria; and it has forced refugees into negative coping mechanisms. These developments are all the more worrying as resources are already declining. At the end of 2014, WFP announced a cut in food assistance and the danger that it would have to suspend its programme in urban areas for lack of funding23. The Jordanian government interrupted, at almost the same time, the provision of free health care to Syrians.
Refugees Harm Developing Countries

Refugees Compete for Resources. ABH


From the moment of arrival, refugees compete with the local citizens for scarce resources such as land, water, housing, food and medical services. Over time, their presence leads to more substantial demands on natural resources, education and health facilities, energy, transportation, social services and employment. They may cause inflationary pressures on prices and depress wages. In some instances, they can significantly alter the flow of goods and services within the society as a whole and their presence may have implications for the host country's balance of payment and undermine structural adjustment initiatives. One example of market disturbances would be the need to rent accommodation for office and residential purposes, not just for expatriates, but also for locally engaged staff, in response to a refugee situation. Increased construction activity results, but this is usually accompanied by increases in rent, benefiting those who are property owners, but adversely affecting the poor and those on fixed incomes, such as government officers. Purchase of large quantities of building material may make them scarce or unobtainable for local people, while also generating inflationary effects. Likewise, increased demand for food and other commodities can lead to price rises in the market which will stimulate local economic activity, although, again, not benefiting the poorest.
Refugees damage local eco-systems. ABH


9. Modifications of eco-systems can be controlled or uncontrolled. If a modification of one or more factors is carried out to serve a special goal, such as land clearance for crop cultivation or land levelling for irrigation, and if this modification is based on sound planning, taking into account the impact on environmental conditions, the newly established eco-system is not necessarily inferior to the old one. The development of the new system can, in this instance, be called a controlled development. But, if a sudden and unplanned change takes place, it may lead to a serious, uncontrolled imbalance with an impact on the whole eco-system, both in the directly affected area and beyond. The mass movement of refugees is an example of a situation where the impact on the ecology is not fully under control, because the emergency character of the movement normally does not allow for early and proper planning of the new habitat. 10. The addition of a sizable group of refugees to an existing population creates a sudden and massive demand for scarce natural resources such as land, fuel, water, food and shelter materials, with long-term implications on their sustainable re-generation. Other longer term problems relate to erosion, decreased soil fertility and landslides. Problems related to rural wood consumption are invariably serious. Estimates of rural wood consumption in Somalia indicate that the wood requirement for a family of five, for hut construction, is 2.4 m per head per year for cooking. Assuming that the wood consumption of refugees would be modest, say half the normal consumption, a camp of four thousand refugees would consume approximately 10,000m of wood a year for cooking. The standard volume of wood in the savanna-type woodlands of Somalia was estimated to be about 50 m per hectare, which means that the average refugee camp would deplete 600 hectares land in the first year of its establishment and 400 hectares for every year thereafter. In and around refugee camps, entire settlements have been completely cleared of all trees and shrubs. Inhabitants of 3-4 years old camps had to walk for several hours to find trees and shrubs to cut.
Refugees cause social strife. ABH


13. If refugees are from the same cultural and linguistic group as the local population, there is often identification with and sympathy for their situation. There are many examples of refugees being given shelter in local people's houses. Over 400,000 refugees have been housed with family or friends in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Different ethnicity, however, can be a basis for problems. Traditional animosities may exist between groups. Even if it is not the case, failures in communication and understanding caused by language and/or culture can form serious barriers. In some cases, the presence of one (ethnic) group of refugees may affect ethnic balances within the local population and exacerbate conflicts. 14. There are commonly complaints that refugees have added to security problems in general and crime rates, theft, murder etc., in particular. Concomitantly, other social problems such as prostitution and alcoholism are also claimed to rise in the refugee areas. On the one hand, enforced idleness and poverty within a refugee camp may cause an escalation of such tendencies, particularly if there are groups of young men who are not meaningfully occupied. On the other hand, refugees, as an "out" group, can be blamed for all untoward activities. Incidence of crime may rise no more than would be expected in a population group of the new size, but in a remote and previously quiet area, this would not go unnoticed. If the area has become a hub of economic activity, as the presence of large scale aid would indicate, it may have attracted a group of people who will profit from the current situation and may not be constrained by the social and legal safeguards of the region. In a border area, this could include cross border problems.

PRO Can use these cards to show that developing countries are severely harmed by taking in refugee populations, and would be justified in prioritizing their own interests.
Refugees Increase Crime

Refugees have had a high crime rate in Germany. ABH

Soeren Kern is a senior fellow at the Gatestone Institute.

Asylum seekers are driving a surge in violent crime in cities and towns across Germany. German authorities, however, are downplaying the lawlessness, apparently to avoid fueling anti-immigration sentiment. A confidential police report leaked to a German newspaper reveals that a record-breaking 38,000 asylum seekers were accused of committing crimes in the country in 2014. Analysts believe this figure — which works out to more than 100 a day — is only the tip of the iceberg, as many crimes are either not resolved or not reported. The current spike in crime — including rapes, sexual and physical assaults, stabbings, home invasions, robberies, burglaries and drug trafficking — comes amid a record-breaking influx of refugees from Africa, Asia, the Middle East and the Western Balkans.

Con can argue that the civil unrest and potential increase in crime caused by accepting refugees would endanger a country’s national interests enough for that country to reject refugees.
Refugees Are a Financial Burden

*Refugees take jobs away from local populations. ABH*


Khalid Al Wazani is the Chairman of Issnaad Consulting.

The cities of Mafraq and Ramtha have long been a major point of trade between Jordan and Syria. The crisis in Syria weighed heavily on the two cities, the bulk of whose commercial activities (around 80%) was dependent on this cross-border trade. That trade came to a halt after the situation deteriorated in the Syrian border cities. Against this background, Jordanian workers started to face tough competition from Syrians for jobs, especially given that there was a rise in unemployment even before the crisis broke out, especially among women, estimated at 23.3%. According to official sources, no less than 30,000 Syrian refugees are employed in many occupations; nearly half of them work in Irbid and Mafraq. The main impacts of the Syrian refugee issue on workforce and investments can be summarized as follows: • Syr **ianns are competing with Jordanian workers for jobs. They are accepting lower wages and have advantages over Jordanians in crafts in which they are more skilful;**

This is a very straightforward argument for CON. Any country that hosts refugees will have to deal with refugees competing with citizens for jobs, and Jordan is just one example of this happening with Syrian refugees.

*Turkey has spent billions to host refugees. ABH*


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According to UNHCR, by May 2014, in addition to the 747,000 Syrians living in Turkey as refugees, some 100,000 to 150,000 had crossed the border with their passports and were illegally extending their stay.3 This study will analyze the impact of the Syrian refugees in the five southern Turkish provinces bordering Syria—Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, Mardin, and Sanliurfa—where 622,864 of the 747,000 registered refugees are concentrated. In other words, these five provinces collectively host 83 percent of Turkey’s registered Syrian refugees. This study will refer only to registered refugees in these provinces, since estimates of unregistered refugees are unavailable. Relatedly, there is a strong sense that many, if not most, of the unregistered refugees have made their way to big cities in western Turkey where economic opportunities are significantly better than in southern Turkey. At the time of this writing, Turkey has done a commendable job in welcoming the Syrian refugees, setting up entire cities equipped with clinics and schools at an overall cost that had risen to as much as $4 billion by June.4 However, with prospects suggesting a further intensification of fighting, the number of Syrians in Turkey will likely increase, presenting Turkey with even further challenges.

*In addition to discussing the competition refugees create for jobs, CON can focus on how expensive it is for a host government (in this case Turkey) to accept refugees.*
Syrian Refugees will cost Germany Billions of Euros. ABH


Claire Groden is a reporter at Fortune.

A German official said Tuesday the country can sustain up to 500,000 or more new asylum-seekers every year, a comment that comes as hundreds of thousands of people from war-torn countries across the Middle East and Africa are making their way to Europe to chase the promise of a better life.

But what's the economic effect of so many migrants streaming into Germany? The country expects to receive 800,000 refugees and migrants by the end of 2015. That could cost as much as 10 billion euros, according to local government estimates. Next year, German officials estimate that as many as 460,000 more people could be entitled to social benefits.

While PRO can debate the long-term effects of accepting refugees, CON can make a very strong argument that in the short term refugees are a major financial strain for even the wealthiest European nations.
Public services are diverted from Lebanese citizens to pay for refugees. DAT

http://www.inss.org.il/uploadImages/systemFiles/adkan17_4ENG_7_Berti.pdf

Berti is a TED Fellow and a member of the UN Alliance of Civilizations "Global Experts."

In the case of Lebanon, a 2013 World Bank assessment found that the Syrian civil war had strained Lebanon’s already frail public finances and widened the fiscal deficit, with the state needing to spend an additional $2.5 billion simply to restore access and quality of services to pre-Syrian civil war levels, and with the Lebanese trade and tourism sectors especially suffering.36 Given the rising prices and unemployment, ordinary Lebanese families are paying directly for the Syrian crisis, with the resulting estimate that at least 170,000 Lebanese will have been pushed into poverty by the end of 2014.37 The situation is worsened by the fact that a large number of refugees have settled in areas of Lebanon such as the Bekaa Valley and the north of the country that have historically been more economically marginalized and underdeveloped in terms of social services and infrastructure.

Economic and political pressures in host countries have led in turn to tensions at the social level, both between the refugee population and the local residents and, especially in the case of Lebanon, between different politico-sectarian sectors of society that support opposite sides in the Syrian civil war, resulting in a general deterioration in social cohesion.

This goes back to governmental obligations: a government has a moral obligation to its own people before the people of other states. To glibly accept refugees irrespective of the consequences is a dereliction of duty for any sovereign government.
Pro Counters
Refugee Populations Must Be Spread Out

For any one government, handling a huge influx of Syrians, Afghans, etc. presents too big a hurdle to jump. If a majority of eligible nations open their borders, so to speak, they can each handle their own limited allotment of refugees and still pursue national interests. This is likely the most “humane” advocacy with the greatest overall positive impacts for Pro teams, and it also deflects potential Con criticisms related to the costs (for any one government) to harbor refugees.

*Restrictions on refugees’ employment creates inhumane conditions.* DAT


Over the past year Lebanon has put into place tortuous rules that require its 1.5m Syrians either to pledge not to work or to find Lebanese sponsors—which often means getting exploited as unpaid labour. Jordan, with 629,000 refugees living mainly among local communities, has been ramping up restrictions that seem aimed at squeezing them into camps or forcing them to leave. Lacking the convention’s protections, most Syrians in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey are unable to work legally, and live in dire poverty. The World Food Programme has halved its assistance to the neediest Syrian refugees, providing just $13.50 per person per month. In Turkey, Kurdish Syrian refugees are vulnerable to the government’s renewed war against its own Kurds. Arrivals in Europe have rocketed this year not so much because the civil war is worse than ever—though it is (see article)—as because the situation in the countries neighbouring their homeland has grown desperate.

By attempting to squeeze out migrants, countries make the refugee situations in other countries worse. This amplifies the scale of the crisis without creating any beneficial ways out. As fewer nations deal with more refugees, the overall harms increase.
Increasing the global refugee flow is morally and economically beneficial. DAT


The overwhelming majority of would-be immigrants want little more than to make a better life for themselves and their families by moving to economic opportunity and participating in peaceful, voluntary trade. But lawmakers and heads of state quash these dreams with state-sanctioned violence—forced repatriation, involuntary detention, or worse—often while paying lip service to “huddled masses yearning to breathe free.”

Wage differences are a revealing metric of border discrimination. When a worker from a poorer country moves to a richer one, her wages might double, triple, or rise even tenfold. These extreme wage differences reflect restrictions as stifling as the laws that separated white and black South Africans at the height of Apartheid. Geographical differences in wages also signal opportunity—for financially empowering the migrants, of course, but also for increasing total world output. On the other side of discrimination lies untapped potential. Economists have estimated that a world of open borders would double world GDP.

Even relatively small increases in immigration flows can have enormous benefits. If the developed world were to take in enough immigrants to enlarge its labor force by a mere one percent, it is estimated that the additional economic value created would be worth more to the migrants than all of the world’s official foreign aid combined. Immigration is the greatest anti-poverty program ever devised.

And while the benefits of cross-border movements are tremendous for the immigrants, they are also significant for those born in destination countries. Immigration unleashes economic forces that raise real wages throughout an economy. New immigrants possess skills different from those of their hosts, and these differences enable workers in both groups to better exploit their special talents and leverage their comparative advantages. The effect is to improve the welfare of newcomers and natives alike. The immigrant who mows the lawn of the nuclear physicist indirectly helps to unlock the secrets of the universe.

This card has applications for the refugee crisis in Europe. Currently, the flow of refugees is in one direction—toward Europe, typically Italy or Greece. It is also choked, with border restrictions in the EU and pileups in Turkey, Jordan, and other countries. The solution is to create flow in every direction—to North America, Europe, Great Britain—and make that flow open. This would create a natural flow to areas in need of economic revitalization, creating global economic growth in the process.
Huge refugee concentrations have massive negative impacts. DAT


The Harvard International Review is a quarterly journal and website of international relations published by the Harvard International Relations Council.

In Jordan as well, the situation of the refugees is rapidly deteriorating. The refugee population there, totaling over half a million or almost ten percent of the population as of last summer, is straining government resources and growing the budget to unsustainable levels. Survival is difficult in many of the overcrowded camps. For instance, the refugee camp Zaatari which holds the most refugees, is considered Jordan’s fifth-largest city by population. In this camp, there is no running water, and refugees are not always allowed to work. Those who do work illegally face the potential of being thrown out of the country. Others, who have taken up residence in Jordan’s cities and towns, strain government resources by overpopulating already poor areas. Concurrently, the regime is facing domestic political instability as it attempts to navigate new political reforms aimed at increasing government transparency and effectiveness, alongside the long-term issues that arise with the attempts of the Palestinians and the Israelis to negotiate peace along its border. Consequently, tension and violence are rampant, threatening a regime that is already unstable as a result of domestic protests and demands for far-reaching reform.

Pro teams need to separate the impacts inherent to refugees from the impacts of having massive displaced populations. Many of the Con’s demonstrable impacts can likely be linked to ancillary factors like overcrowding and countries’ legislation on refugees, not the inherent issues with accepting refugees themselves. Any arguments relating to these ancillary factors actually flow into the Pro—if more countries accept refugees and treat them well, most of the problems go away.
Economic and Security Fears Are Unfounded

_Historically, mass refugee migrations have had little long-term impact._ DAT

But every wave of immigration has been accompanied by fears. In 1709 the War of the Spanish Succession sent thousands of refugees from lower Saxony down the Rhine and across the North Sea to London. Believing that they would then be offered free passage to America, the so-called “Poor Palatines” instead ended up in refugee camps. Daniel Defoe and other Whigs argued that they were Protestant refugees from Roman Catholic oppression and should be settled in England—an argument that suffered a blow when, on closer inspection, half the Palatines turned out to be Catholic themselves. A Tory faction meanwhile argued that they were economic migrants, low-skilled undesirables who would prove an endless burden on the Crown. Ultimately, investors were found to put some of them on boats to America, where they founded Germantown, New York.

America itself, though often welcoming, has also had its periods of doubt. The millions from southern and eastern Europe who arrived at the end of the 19th century provoked fears that the “English-speaking race” could not withstand such pollution. After 1945 America refused for years to accept any refugees from eastern Europe: Senator Chapman Revercomb of West Virginia warned it would be “a tragic blunder to bring into our midst those imbued with a communistic line of thought”. These fears, like those over Islamist terrorism today, were not baseless. In the 19th century some eastern European immigrants in Western countries engaged in anarchist terrorism; in the 20th some spied for the Soviet Union. But these were not, in the end, huge problems.

In one respect, though, today’s refugees and migrants truly are different from those of earlier eras. Many have some higher education, material resources and networks of family or friends already in Europe with whom they can keep in touch through phone and Facebook. Some are working out their plans as they go, others have coherent strategies. In a word, they have agency.

This card pulls double duty in dispelling the notion that the current crisis is somehow “different”; if anything, taking refugees from Africa and the Middle East now is more a benefit for governments than many other refugee populations, historically.
Refugees are an opportunity. DAT


The Brookings Institution is a nonprofit public policy organization based in Washington, DC.

Given the vast size of emigration from countries in Central Europe and the Baltics over the last two decades, immigration will not make up for the decline in working-age populations. But with refugee numbers in Europe surging, immigration will gradually become an element of the policy response. **The real policy question for the countries of Central Europe and the Baltics today is therefore not whether to accept migrants or not but, rather, how to turn the challenge of today’s refugee crisis into an opportunity. At a minimum, the examples of Turkey and Jordan show that hosting far larger numbers of refugees than Europe need not be an economic drag.**

Given the terrible and intractable conditions in their countries of origin, refugees from Syria, Iraq, and Eritrea arriving in Europe today are likely to stay for a while. This suggests that once short-term humanitarian emergency needs are met, they require stable housing, schooling, health, and employment solutions for the medium term. For example, since large numbers of refugees are coming with children of schooling age, schools need capacity for introductory classes to allow children to learn the language of the host country and to get integrated into general classrooms. **Education systems in countries in Central Europe and the Baltics are adjusting to declining student numbers, so there should be infrastructure and teacher capacity to accommodate incoming refugee children and youth.**

**Pro teams need to take the sting off the term “crisis.”** Instead of looking at refugee flows independently, the crisis needs to be contextualized with the rapid population shifts happening naturally across Europe.
Cooperation Negates the Harms of Refugee Influxes

_The source of harms is governments’ unwillingness to collectively embrace humanitarianism._

DAT


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Most EU member states have to deal with shaky public finances. Between 2011 and 2014, the government deficit to gross domestic product (GDP) ratio of the EU as a whole shrank from -4.5 percent to -2.9 percent: getting better but still too high. **Over the same period, the average government debt to GDP ratio for the 28 member states increased from 80.9 percent to 86.8 percent:** soon to stabilize but still a drag on the economy on the long term. Meanwhile, and while gathering momentum from a puny 0.2 percent in 2013, GDP growth for the EU as a whole in 2014 was still a subdued 1.4 percent.

Moreover, the financial burden that comes with welcoming migrants is distributed too unevenly. Some countries are doing the heavy lifting in absolute terms: Germany’s readiness to take over 40,000 migrants in 2014 being a case in point. Other member states are displaying exceptional generosity by accepting very significant intakes relative to the total number of applications received—witness Sweden’s 74 percent recognition rate of refugee or subsidiary protection status in 2014. **However, other member EU countries or other member states show little solidarity both toward their fellow EU member states and toward asylum seekers worldwide. Applications lodged in Hungary, Croatia, and Greece, for instance, are almost always rejected.**

As is to be expected, states with weaker administrative and financial capacities struggle to cope with the recent migrant flows. Italy’s navy has for too long been left alone running its own operation Mare Nostrum—it is only now being supported by some fellow member states through Operation Triton. Greece is experiencing an ongoing economic, financial, and social crisis of historical proportions of its own. **By the European Commission’s own admission, such a state of affairs has left the country unable to effectively police the EU’s southeastern external borders. A number of Western Balkan states, meanwhile, see growing diplomatic tensions emerge as they all become part of a broad transit corridor for tens of thousands of migrants attempting to reach Mitteleuropa.**

The refugee crisis is a mix of countries shouldering more than their fair share of the burden, and others recalcitrantly pushing the responsibility to their neighbors and allies. The harms we’re seeing in nations with high refugee populations are not a function of the refugees themselves but the number of them. An affirmative advocacy that pushes states to uniformly embrace refugees in a sustainable away actually manages to advance national interests while clearing the refugee backlog. It’s a win-win for the Pro.
The Burden of Supporting Refugees Has Precedent

*Gulf states have historically invested massive sums in regional stability.* DAT


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Many commentators have noted the vast wealth of the GCC countries, which have so far helped Gulf countries to weather the storm of collapsing oil prices. **Saudi Arabia and Qatar have provided some $900 million in humanitarian aid to Syrians. The United Arab Emirates have donated $530 million in aid since 2012.** Problematically, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees' Syria Regional Response Plan has requested another $4.5 billion, to ensure basic dietary and sanitation conditions in the refugee camps.

This catastrophic funding crisis risks condemning generations of refugees to live in camps indefinitely. If the GCC could match aid for Syrians to the economic assistance it donates to friendly governments, the impact could be huge.

Consider economic aid. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) offered $4.9 billion in economic assistance to Egypt when their economy was in crisis which formed part of the $20 billion aid package the GCC block committed to stabilize Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi’s economy, which is substantially bigger than the total U.S. aid to Jordan since 1951. This aid package dwarfs other recent foreign aid to the Middle East; Japan recently loaned $196 million to Jordan. **The GCC has an exemplary and consistent historical record of its willingness and capacity to provide sanctuary and employment to citizens of troubled Arab and African nations since their independence from Western colonial powers.**

**Pro teams should be working to combat images of exceptionalism—by putting the economics and logistics of the current situation in context, Pro teams’ arguments against the harms of putting humanitarianism first gain context and credibility.**
It's more efficient to invest large amounts into complete solutions. DAT

http://www.inss.org.il/uploadImages/systemFiles/adkan17_4ENG_7_Berti.pdf

Berti is a TED Fellow and a member of the UN Alliance of Civilizations "Global Experts."

Ensuring legal, physical, and psychological protection to the refugee population is a sine qua non in meeting the ongoing crisis. Indeed, lack of basic security takes a direct toll and exerts a negative impact on virtually all assistance programs: for example, lack of security keeps children out of school – leading parents to prevent them from traveling alone to the educational facilities; or forces women to stay at home and forego education and employment opportunities. Even access to basic health care can be substantially impaired by an insecure environment.

As such, providing security for the vulnerable refugee population is a challenge both within and outside refugee camps. Refugee camps can present significant security challenges by providing the breeding ground for organized criminal groups as well as for the recruitment of fighters. At the same time, securing a widely dispersed refugee population – often living in informal settlements – represents a different but just as daunting task. Vulnerable groups are especially affected, with women and girls, particularly women who fled Syria alone or with their children, vulnerable to sexual and verbal harassment outside the home, as well as to a heightened risk of domestic violence or abuse. Children, particularly unaccompanied minors, are another especially vulnerable group: with insecure and impoverished living conditions, children are exposed to various forms of exploitation, from child labor to sexual violence, to recruitment and employment by armed and criminal groups. Child marriage has also become increasingly common among Syrians since the beginning of the war: for instance, a Save the Children 2014 report stated that “early and forced marriage among Syrian refugee girls in Jordan has doubled since the onset of war,” growing from 13 percent to 32 percent between 2011 and 2014.

By investing in security, countries can maximize the impact of their international development investments in refugees. This helps Pro teams deflect evidence on the failures of refugee assistance programs—proper implementation, not just throwing money at the problem, is important.
Europe has a history of dealing adequately with mass migration. DAT


The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development(OECD) is an international economic organisation of 34 countries.

No exact comparison can be made to the crisis Europe is facing today, but the continent has already experienced several other large-scale population movements in the not-so-recent past. The immediate post-Second World War period was marked by large population transfers, in particular to Germany and Poland, the post-colonial period saw large repatriation movements to France in 1962 (almost one million people), to Portugal in the mid-1970s (about 600 000 people in three years) and to a lesser extent to the United Kingdom and Belgium. All of these population movements were absorbed by these countries with very limited impact on their labour markets.

Large migration movements based on ethnic migration were also recorded, for example, in Greece between 1989 and 1993 (up to 160 000 Pontian Greeks from the Former Soviet Union) or in Germany between the late 1980s and the early 2000s (more than 3 million Aussiedler and Spät-Aussiedler). Outside Europe, Israel received about a million Jews from the former Soviet Union with their families in the decade following 1989.

Inflows of economic migrants of comparable magnitude have occurred in recent years as well: notably in Spain, which has witnessed a tripling of its foreign-born population (+4 million) between 2000 and 2010; in the United Kingdom where the EU-born population alone rose by 1 million since EU enlargement in 2004; but also in Germany which became, even before this refugee crisis struck, the second most important immigration country in the OECD after the United States, with more than 500 000 expected permanent legal entries in 2014 - twice the 2007 figure.

Con teams can use the resolution’s wording—“crisis”—to create arguments stemming from notions of exceptionalism—that the current conflict is uniquely intractable and thus would ruin any country attempting to tackle its humanitarian side. Pro teams should be quick to expose this line of thinking as limited and borderline lazy, especially if Con teams fail to back their assertions with stats more advanced than simply the raw refugee flow numbers.
Exceptional Measures Are Required For This Crisis


The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international economic organisation of 34 countries.

In 2014, 630 000 asylum requests were registered in EU member countries, a number last reached during the conflict between Bosnia and Serbia in 1992. According to most recent available data, up to 700 000 asylum applications have been already filed so far this year1, and the number could reach 1million by the end of the year. Between 350 000 and 450 000 people could be granted humanitarian protection in Europe in 2015 (refugee status, subsidiary protection status, or permission to stay for humanitarian reasons).

![Graph showing number of new asylum seekers 1980-2014 in the OECD, the EU and Germany](source: UNHCR)

In Europe, most people who seek asylum have entered through illegal border crossings. According to Frontex data for the first eight months of 2015, 500 000 illegal border crossings were detected, compared with 280 000 for all of 2014. More than 330 000 people have crossed the Mediterranean this year already. According to UNHCR data, 15% of them were children and more than 80% of the adults were men2.

It’s impossible for nations to justify focusing on national interests when the scale of the problem is so overwhelmingly large. For Pro teams, this is an important distinction to make when combatting the (usually correct) notion that, by default, governments’ primary concern ought to be “their own” citizens.
Con Counters
The Perverse Harms of Aiding Refugees

*Boat rescue programs for refugees coming by boat are getting more people killed.* DAT


The obvious reason for the recent increase in deaths is that less is being done to avert them. In October 2013, after 366 migrants lost their lives off Lampedusa in another disaster, the Italian government launched an ambitious search-and-rescue operation, Mare Nostrum. It made use of an amphibious warship and two frigates, and had five naval vessels on patrol at all times as well as support from the coast guard. The navy claims the operation led to the rescue of more than 150,000 people and the arrest of 330 smugglers.

But a year after Mare Nostrum’s launch by the government of Enrico Letta it was shut down by Angelino Alfano, interior minister in Matteo Renzi’s new left-right coalition. Mr Alfano, who leads the New Centre Right, a conservative party, was in an uncomfortable position given the outright rejection of Mare Nostrum by the other parties of the Italian right. They complained that it had the effect of making the navy part of the smugglers’ business plan. The smugglers did not need to get their cargoes to shore, merely to abandon them where the ships of Mare Nostrum would pick them up.

The programme’s critics in Italy and elsewhere in the EU went on to argue that although it seemed to save people, by encouraging people to risk their lives it actually led to more deaths. *As the British government put it, there was “an unintended ‘pull factor’, encouraging more migrants to attempt the dangerous sea crossing and thereby leading to more tragic and unnecessary deaths”.*

**In matters of foreign policy, the big question is: “will this get more people killed?”** While it’s counterintuitive, more “humane” refugee programs can have the unintended effect of increasing the number of people taking untenable risks, which creates both more casualties and greater costs for nations executing the refugee rescue efforts in question.
Opening Europe to more refugees will get more of them killed. DAT


Part of the recent rise in the death toll may be due to the fact that the smugglers are already running short of boats and forcing ever more people onto the ones that remain. Twice this year, armed smugglers have taken back their vessels after a rescue operation—a sign that boats are becoming more valuable. As boats get scarcer, ever more people are forced onto each of them, often at gunpoint. Flavio Di Giacomo of the IOM says one recent arrival showed him scars on his arms and legs where he had been slashed with a knife to force him onto the boat.

This is not the first brutality they will have faced on their journey. Some migrants are forced to work until they earn the smuggler’s fee, which invariably rises. Others are imprisoned in half-built houses or held in the desert until their families back home agree to pay ransoms. Just as ancient forms of networking co-ordinate smuggling trails across different countries, so modern networking allows a Libyan smuggler to get a Sudanese counterpart to collect payments from a migrant’s family in Khartoum. Many migrants are tortured, sometimes while on the phone with relatives for greater effect. Women face the additional risk of sexual violence.

The smuggling networks are highly lucrative. An Eritrean’s passage to Libya may cost $6,000, though a Malian might only pay a tenth of that. The UN says shipping migrants towards Europe from Libya is a $170m industry. The smugglers combine criminality and tribal loyalty and are very adaptable to changes in circumstance. So although better-shared intelligence on the part of the EU and local states may get some results, it is highly unlikely to shut the trade down. Control of Libya’s ports could do more, though it would leave the problem of more than 500,000 would-be migrants stuck in a country that does not want them and with no way back home.

Opening Europe’s floodgates to refugees would simply make passage more lucrative for African migrants. This, in turn, would simply exacerbate the “boat people” problem which is already pressuring Greece and Italy.
The huge opportunity costs of unwilling governments taking large refugee populations. DAT


“People, even as refugees, still want and need to have some agency over how they cope and manage their lives,” says Dawn Chatty, director of the Refugee Studies Center at Oxford University. That’s why most don’t linger long in refugee camps. Syrians crossing the border are immediately registered and brought to either the Zaatari or Azraq camp. But more than 80 percent of Syrians then leave, moving to urban areas along with non-Syrian refugees.

Outside the camps, Syrians receive a set monthly amount in food coupons and access to free primary health care. Non-Syrians get medical subsidies and are evaluated on a case-by-case basis for other assistance. No one is allowed to work, but they do anyway, risking detention to make informal incomes. Walking around Amman, you see Syrians manning coffee stands, Iraqis working in restaurants, and Sudanese in construction uniforms. Former engineers and lawyers wash cars and sweep streets—on days when they’re lucky enough to get hired. The strain of refugee existence isn’t just that your life and home were destroyed by war, but also that after that, you’re forced into indefinite victimhood. Suddenly you are and must remain passive, dependent—your hands tied no matter how capable they are.

“My working hours are 10 p.m. to 4 a.m.,” one Sudanese man told me in perfect English, shushing the 3-year-old daughter climbing on his back. He used to teach comparative literature in Khartoum, but now takes a nightly bus to his shift as a janitor at a mall in western Amman.

Still, 90 percent of Syrian refugees in Jordan are in debt. More than half are children, who can legally attend Jordanian schools but rarely do. Instead, they work, often more than 12 hours a day in jobs like scrap-metal collection or construction. More than one in four Syrian refugee women in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt head households alone, struggling to pay rent while suffering anxiety, isolation, and fear of both sexual violence and the stigmas of reporting it. Meanwhile, rates of child marriage among Syrians in Jordan have more than doubled since the start of the conflict, as desperate families marry off teenage daughters to fend off poverty and risk of rape.

Jordan represents a terrifying case study of the Pro advocacy: a nation does enough to meet its humanitarian obligations, but does little else. The result is the picture painted here: high-skilled refugees being wildly underutilized while their families suffer. While the situation is technically “humane”, its result is that temporary refugees become permanent wards of the state instead of functioning members of society. Even if states prioritize humanitarianism, they tend to try to balance this as much as possible with national interests. The result—refugees stuck in flux as they waste their lives away—shouldn’t comfort anyone.
Refugees Are Fundamentally a National Interest Issue

By straining local resources, refugees are inherently part of governments’ domestic calculus.

DAT


More refugees mingle with local people and more than 80% flee to poor countries already struggling to provide for their own citizens. Helping them increasingly resembles development aid, explains António Guterres, the head of UNHCR. Rather than providing services just for people registered with it, the agency works ever more closely with the governments and populations in countries that people flee to.

Before the war started in Syria, the UNHCR gave money to the country’s government to employ more teachers and doctors in schools and hospitals frequented by Iraqis. To prevent people getting envious, some charities set up services for all locals. The 2,800 people who took part in activities in Damascus for traumatised children set up by International Medical Corps, a California-based charity, were a mixture of Iraqis and Syrians.

David Apollo Kazungu, Uganda’s Commissioner for Refugees, says it no longer makes sense to treat refugees as a humanitarian issue. “Those who stay for years throw up developmental problems for us, such as how to find enough land, water and jobs for everyone,” he argues. Uganda has already tried to improve the lot for the nearly 200,000 refugees it hosts by placing them in settlements rather than camps, and by giving them land to farm.

The humanitarian issue of helping refugees short-term inevitably bleeds into the national issue of situating them long-term. Fundamentally, stable nations must preserve their long-term prosperity; short-term considerations need to fall into that plan.
The international focus on humanitarian aid turns countries like Jordan into profiteers. DAT


Would it help if refugees were formally employed? “When people can work, they cope better,” Chatty says. “They provide for families better. They’re far better psychosocially. They’ve got to work, as a positive coping strategy if nothing else.” Refugee employment also usually helps the economy of the host country, Chatty adds, referring to a recent Oxford study that advocates drawing on refugees' wealth of human potential to create jobs and innovation, rather than corralling them in endless dependence.

But Jordan is unlikely to grant such employment any time soon, one Jordanian NGO worker tells me, largely because the kingdom survives off international funding it receives for hosting refugees. Donor countries aren't likely to give as much if they think refugees actually help the host economy. “Jordan is really about seeking money, not integrating people,” says the worker, who asked to remain anonymous. “Otherwise there’s no excuse to keep asking for money from donor countries. That’s what they’re living off of.”

If supporting national interests was an international priority, governments would instead be incentivized financially to better integrate their refugee populations, increasing the net benefit for everyone involved. The current situation in Jordan is reflective of a global emphasis that tends toward the Pro--
The U.S. Cannot Follow Germany’s Lead

_While the U.S. can accept “refugees,” the current crisis is mostly asylum-seekers._ DAT


There’s no clear parallel for this sort of influx in the United States. On paper, the U.S. is a giant in the refugee-acceptance business, taking in more refugees than every other country in the world combined, according to Kathleen Newland, a senior fellow and co-founder of the Washington-based Migration Policy Institute. But there’s a difference, she pointed out, between the refugees the United States resettles and the asylum-seekers arriving in Germany. In the former case, individuals are carefully vetted outside the destination country and only then resettled in that country. In the latter, people are flowing over the border—effectively presenting themselves on the ground—and then asking for state protection.

“I think [the distinction is] not widely appreciated,” said Newland. “When Germany says, ‘We’ll get 800,000 people this year,’ these are not people Germany has selected or invited in any way. These people are just turning up.” In contrast, those accepted by the United States have first been chosen on grounds of particular vulnerability or special ties to the U.S., and then additionally “have been through the most lengthy, exhaustive, laborious security screening that you can imagine,” according to Newland. “It usually takes one to two years for someone to get through that process once they’ve been referred for resettlement.” Germany, she added, is confronting a tremendous immediate challenge to provide these asylum-seekers with food, housing, and “weather-appropriate clothing.”

In order to take in asylum seekers, the United States would essentially have to relinquish control over what kind of people flee to it. Because the United States already accepts more refugees than the rest of the world (and this historically has consistently been the case), accepting asylum seekers from the Middle East and Africa would not be particularly more humanitarian-oriented than what the U.S. already does, but it would impose huge national costs. This is a net harm.
National Interests Breed Humanitarian Impacts

Countries can embrace humanitarianism and still play only to their strengths. DAT


The Brookings Institution is a nonprofit public policy organization based in Washington, DC.

While all able countries, including Israel, have a moral obligation to support refugees and those affected by global catastrophes, all countries do not necessarily have to contribute in the same way. In the case of the Gulf states, they have opted to provide large-scale humanitarian contributions in lieu of hosting refugees. This not only represents political and security realities in the region (as discussed below) but also the basic fact that Syrian refugees have demonstrated little interest in heading southward down the Arabian Peninsula.

Countries like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are unwilling to accept more than a token number of refugees beyond those that they have already let in as part of their support to the Syrian opposition. These countries’ tiny populations renders them uncomfortable about hosting large numbers of inevitably long-term refugees, particularly given their already sky-high levels of unemployment (e.g., at 29 percent in Saudi Arabia) and their direct involvement in the conflict. There is little to gain in chastising them for this basic political reality. Instead, the media and international community must push the Arab Gulf to continue supporting assistance to Syrian refugees elsewhere in the region.

Since 2012, the United Nations reports that the tiny nation of Kuwait has provided nearly $1 billion in humanitarian aid to Syria and the main refugee-hosting countries. Saudi Arabia (with $586 million), the United Arab Emirates ($405 million), and Qatar ($236 million) have likewise contributed. Those are huge sums relative to the size of population in these countries and their economies. It will be important that they maintain and, wherever possible, increase these contributions.

Con teams need to actively combat the notion of mutual exclusivity—that national interests and humanitarian objects somehow conflict. By showing how countries can focus on maintaining their stability and still contribute solutions to the crisis, Con teams present a pragmatic front.
The Crisis Is Overblown

*Europe hasn’t been inundated with needy refugees. DAT*


The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international economic organisation of 34 countries.

Much of the recent public focus has been on the large inflows of Syrian refugees in Europe; in reality, however, the origins of refugees are very heterogeneous. In 2014, the main countries and territories of origin of asylum seekers in the European Union were Syria (21%), Kosovo (9.6%), Eritrea (6.4%) and Iraq (2.6%). In 2015, the composition shifted. Now, Syria, Eritrea and Iraq, the only nationalities covered by the relocation scheme proposed by the European Commission on 9 September 2015, together represented only about a quarter of all asylum claims in the first six months of the year. However, this share increased to more than one third in June 2015, and is expected to continue to grow both as the inflows from the Eastern Mediterranean route increase and as fewer asylum applications are made by Western Balkan nationals.

**While the refugee situation is by no means trivial, the traditional narrative that Europe is suddenly being slammed by refugees fleeing Syria and northern Africa is not quite correct. Because of the heterogeneity of the refugee sources, it’s difficult for countries to implement humanitarian programs that are simultaneously coherent and effective.**
Pro Case

Introduction

“Give me your tired, your poor/Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.” These words are etched at the base of the Statue of Liberty for a reason. The flow of refugees—young men and families, the poor and the persecuted—is defined by giving. Refugees’ new nations give them resources, opportunities, and security. Refugees bring with them their educations, their cultures—human capital. The flow of refugees, from instability to security, is not a zero-sum game. Both states and refugees have something to gain from the relationship. It is for this reason that my partner and I affirm that Resolved: In response to the current crisis, a government should prioritize the humanitarian needs of refugees over its national interests.

Contention One: Accepting refugees is politically and economically advantageous

First, some context. The “current crisis” is a massive glut of refugees flooding out of the Middle East and Africa. Syria alone accounts for the greatest population exodus from a nation since World War II. While this migration has been to a few select European hubs, it’s actually a huge opportunity for the Western World. We begin in the United States. For many, it’s difficult to how refugees half a world away are relevant. Of course, the United States has no obligation to take more refugees than it has thus far promised (a small number). Functionally, however, it has huge advantages. Kathleen Newland of the Migration Policy Institute explains further: “We can still exert our traditional leadership by resettling refugees from zones of conflict across the Middle East and Africa…. it would be foolish for the United States to give up the soft power advantage that we earn from being the world leader in refugee resettlement for a nightmare that we can -- and do -- easily protect ourselves against.” The United States has been trying for decades to make useful allies out of Middle East (particularly Gulf) states. A huge stepping stone would be to take the refugee load of heavily-impacted countries like Jordan and Saudi Arabia. This, in turn, would increase America’s leverage with those countries toward its own national interests. For Europe, the imperative to fast-track acceptance, support, and integration of refugees is even more pressing. Put simply, Europe is on an empirically predictable path to economic stagnation and decline without an influx of the kind of young, potentially well-educated that conflict states like Syria are driving away. As Christian Bodewig of the Brookings Institution points out, “Fertility rates in Central Europe and the Baltic countries today are generally below 1.6. They are as low as 1.3 in Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia—far below the replacement fertility rate of 2.1. Population projections suggest that aging and demographic decline will continue and even accelerate, putting economic growth at risk and adding to fiscal pressures through a greater reliance on old age pensions and health services.” For Europe, the economic future is guaranteed to be decline without any outside factors influencing populations. By attacking refugee crises head-on now, the EU can empirically guarantee economic—and, by extension, social—stability for another generation.
Contention Two: Unresolved refugee situations quickly turn into national issues

Implicit to the resolution is the idea that national interests and the humanitarian needs of refugees are somehow separate issues. My partner and I maintain that the two are more interrelated than this. Let’s take Jordan, home to a massive Syrian refugee population as a case study. According to The Economist, “four out of five Syrian refugees live in Jordan’s cities and towns, where, being banned from working, they take black market jobs for low wages. The government says this has pushed down pay for Jordanians too. “The potential seeds of conflict are really there,” says Musa Shteiwi, who heads the University of Jordan’s Centre for Strategic Studies. In an effort to curb the costs of hosting refugees—that is, to advance domestic economic interests—the Jordanian government locked most Syrians from the job market and cut back services. On the surface, this was potentially a financially prudent move. However, the result has had two different consequences: the humanitarian situation got worse, and national interests—specifically security—were harmed as well. Humanitarianism and national interests are thus demonstrably a one-way avenue: approaching the refugee crisis with a humanitarian approach has positive outcomes for domestic interests, but focusing narrowly on domestic interests actually has negative consequences for every facet of the refugee management process.

Contention Three: Minimization of costs to refugees

While we have thus far shown that countries benefit from focusing on assimilating refugees and face consequences for prioritizing narrow domestic interests (e.g. economics), we have not covered the other half of the equation: the refugees themselves. A world in which governments, as a collective, prioritize their humanitarian needs is a better world for refugees. Foreign Policy’s Nancy Lindborg explains what happens when this ideal is perverted: “The U.N. has been able to raise only 38 percent of the $7.4 billion it says is needed this year to care for Syrians fleeing the fighting and only half of the $704 million appeal for Iraqis displaced by the Islamic State…. An activist in Erbil told me that the risk of domestic violence in the Iraqi camps is pervasive because of the psychological toll of the conflict and the hopelessness of being stranded in a camp for years on end.” Nations far away from the conflict—North American and European powers—do not necessarily have to heavily invest in improving conditions for refugees. They may not see the harms of failing to do this. But on the Pro, we are not concerned solely with the finances and stability of sovereign governments; as a PF resolution, the imperative here is total cost. And as far as total costs go, the robbing of human dignity, as people waste away in refugee camps, is one of the largest imaginable.

My partner and I do not wish to convince you that for any given government, a humanitarian-first approach minimizes all cost. Instead, it is for all governments, as a collective, that costs are reduced. The savings fuel the generation of both tangible economic opportunities and standards of human dignity, which stand to be impactful for generations into the future.
Con Case

Introduction

People do not achieve greatness spontaneously. It takes time, effort, and some degree of savvy. To show someone a piano one day and expect the Rhapsody in Blue the next is lunacy. For any accomplishment to have feasibility, then, it requires a solid foundation. It is for this reason that my partner and I negate today’s resolution that Resolved: In response to the current crisis, a government should prioritize the humanitarian needs of refugees over its national interests. Providing for the humanitarian needs of refugees is beneficial only if the benefits of providing the aid outweigh the total costs of doing so—this is the calculus of good public policy. We are negating the resolution precisely because it entails the greatest harms to both refugees and the nations that take them in.

Contention One: Nations destabilize themselves by accepting refugees

In a vacuum, accepting refugees—taking them in, or at least providing for them—is laudable. On the surface, is seems like the obvious choice. The truth actually goes the opposite direction. Lebanon is a powerful case study of what occurs when a regime places refugees ahead of its own interests. Cameron Thibos of the European Institute of the Mediterranean elaborates on the issues: “Today the northeast border regions remain extremely unstable, with occurrences of cross-border shelling of Lebanese villages by the Syrian regime, inter-factional fighting, and a near complete lack of Lebanese state presence. Lebanon has suffered 21 car and suicide bombings since Hezbollah openly declared its support for the Syrian regime in April 2013, 17 of which targeted Hezbollah or Shi’ite neighbourhoods.” Accepting a huge refugee problems was not quite Lebanon’s choice—the nation was forced into the role of being a humanitarian by its proximity to Syria. The issue here is of capability: without the economic infrastructure, political stability, or basic stability required to properly integrate refugees, Lebanon has passed costs to its people in the forms of further reduced security and political stability. A blind advocacy of humanitarianism—of putting refugees before national interests—does not, holistically, improve things. The costs and burdens are simply distributed for more people.

Contention Two: For many governments, the humanitarian needs of refugees are a logistical impossibility

Lebanon, of course, is a rather particular example. Most countries have a choice: to accept refugees or not, to fund refugee programs or not. And for most countries, the humanitarian option is, ironically, borderline suicidal. Our first case study is Germany. For any given state, stability is paramount—it is, almost literally, the foundation upon which successful governments are built. The Economist explains the impacts that refugees have had on this front in Germany: “Especially in eastern Germany, where locals often have little contact with foreigners, there are incidents of right-wing and neo-Nazi rallies in front of refugee homes, and even arson. The refugees are dividing German
society and testing its tolerance.” It is difficult to quantify the principle of social division. Our point is primarily to illustrate that assimilating refugees has potential hidden costs for societies. The unpredictability of social responses to refugee influxes is, in itself, a cost. But what about the tangibles? Benedetta Berti explores the economic repercussions of Lebanon’s hosting of refugees: “Given the rising prices and unemployment, ordinary Lebanese families are paying directly for the Syrian crisis, with the resulting estimate that at least 170,000 Lebanese will have been pushed into poverty.” Again, we don’t see an amelioration of harms. Instead, the harms are passed on for the short-term. For the long-term, governments hosting large refugee populations are guaranteed larger numbers accessing social services and greater strains on their societies. It’s a negative-sum game.

**Contention Three: When nations aren’t equipped meet humanitarian needs, refugees suffer**

Thus far, we have only looked at the impacts on governments. Perhaps more fundamental to our opposition of the resolution is the idea that when governments overcommit to humanitarian objectives, it is refugees who bear the costs of their failures. This exact situation is currently playing out in Jordan, as Luigi Achilli explains: “Here, about 20% of refugees live in substandard accommodation, such as garages, chicken houses, and tents. In addition, a smaller number of refugees reside in informal tented settlements (ITS) spread through the country, often lacking basic services such as health, education, water and food.” Countries have finite limits on their resources. As humanitarian obligations stretch those resources, governments’ citizens inherently come first, as they ought to. This leaves refugees in the lurch, as governments are forced to pull back services they never had the foundation to provide in the first place. The greatest consequence of the current crisis would be setting up refugees to fail for generations down the line, and this is exactly what an emphasis away from national interests represents. Foreign Policy’s Paul Hockenos explains further: “If reluctant governments, as outspoken as they’ve been, are muscled into it, there’d be a green light for right-wingers and populists to abuse the new arrivals. There’d be shelters burned down within a week, just as happened in eastern Germany in the early 1990s.” Hockenos’ prediction is not simply a conjecture—it has historical precedent. People become refugees in the process of fleeing persecution and instability. The harms of doing so—of wasting governments’ resources while failing to improve refugees’ overall prospects—outweigh the low ceiling for success.

More importantly, it would be sickening to introduce refugees to functionally the same lives in their new countries as the ones they are fleeing. Just because a nation accepts refugees or diverts focus toward them and away from its national interests in some way does not mean that refugees benefit. The more likely result is wasted resources and, more damningly, wasted lives.