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Economic Implications of Syrian Refugee Acceptance to the United States Amidst the Rise of Ethnocentrism

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Abstract

The potential economic contribution of refugees to their host countries is determined in this study by analyzing the English literacy rates, education levels, types of jobs held by immigrants and refugees, evaluated as independent variables specifically for Syrian immigrants resettled in America. These factors positively influence the income levels of Syrian immigrants to the U.S. upon their resettlement, and all of these factors summarized can be understood as an indicator of potential economic contribution.

Throughout the paper, both the concepts of liberalism and constructivism are explored to assess the issues. In general, the movement of people as an economic resource across borders is better understood when considered the movement of supply and demand. Through liberalism, the free flow of refugees represents increased international cooperation. When ignoring humanitarian issues, refugees are nothing more than economic migrants that succumb to the push-and-pull of the market. Under constructivism, however, this very fact reiterated the imbalance of world power, as valuable resources (the educated labor force) flows from the periphery state to the core.

Understanding the economic impacts of refugee movement is crucial to understanding this incredibly important issue. This study aims to create a clear and accurate picture of Syrian immigrants and refugees by evaluating their economic contribution to the United States, as well as furthering understanding of the repercussions in both the host country and the country of origin through critical evaluation.

Keywords: Syrian Civil War, economic migration, refugee crisis, Syrian refugees in the U.S., Syrian immigrants, liberalism, constructivism, dependency theory, free market economy

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Introduction

The recent surge in migration, specifically in refugee migration, is a hot topic in today's world. With twenty people forcibly displaced from their home every minute, the implications of forced migration are felt worldwide (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). Refugee acceptance often becomes incredibly stigmatized, especially in Western economies where rising ethnocentrism creates narratives that 'lesser developed' people are entering developed nations and undermining the economy. When examining the facts, however, one begins to understand better how forced migration effects the economies of countries accepting refugees and allows for the debunking of myths associated with the 'free-loading refugee' stereotype. This study examines the types of jobs, education levels, and English literacy rates as independent variables specifically for Syrian migrants resettled in America, which contribute to their income levels and ultimately, economic contributions of Syrian migrants. The interpretation, furthered by an analysis based on both liberalist and constructivist theories, delves into the ways that refugee migration fits into each perspective of international relations.

The issue with understanding the economic implications of refugee acceptance stems from a lack of understanding of who refugees are. Stereotypes often lead to citizens of western countries creating and continually reinforcing the idea that refugees cannot possibly be contributing citizens to their societies, which upon evaluating the data is proven to be just opposite the truth. Despite popular beliefs, refugees often supply labor in sectors of the American economy which lack sufficient numbers of native workers (Indiana.gov). Immigrants and refugees often "create jobs for U.S. workers because they have a high propensity to start new businesses," and these groups have contributed heavily to the urban renewal of many large U.S. cities (Indiana.gov). Aside from the clear humanitarian argument for refugee acceptance, migration is the most

authentic and purest form of international cooperation and represents total embodiment of the free market economy. As migrants cross borders in hopes of jobs and better lives, they are executing the pushes and pulls of supply and demand, and furthering free and open competition in the American markets.

The acceptance of refugees into The United States, Germany, and other European Union nations has become an increasingly controversial issue for many reasons but despite this controversy, has increased the population of Syrians living in the United States by 43 percent (Zong, 2017, p. 1). As ethnocentrism and right-wing populism are on the rise, public support for governments with liberal refugee acceptance policies is quickly falling (Lamont, 2017, p. 154). A sort of anti-immigrant, anti-refugee movement has very obviously begun, as embodied in the U.K. decision to exit the European Union, the election of Donald Trump, and the rise of the Alternative for Germany party (Hauslohner et al., 2017; Hockenos, 2018). Each of these expressions of opinion has been driven by a rising ethnocentrism that is standing directly opposite the increase of refugees worldwide. This sentiment is not unique to the 21st century, however. During previous large-scale issues of displacement, Europe, and North America maintained a shared recognition that "...refugee movements were not only a consequence of insecurity but also could be a cause of instability for the host states..." (Isotalo, 1985, p. 64). It is crucial, however, to understand that the lowering of Syrian refugee acceptance rates is primarily an issue of ethnocentrism, not grounded in a factual analysis of refugee effects on host states.

The specifically economic implications of forced migration and refugee acceptance are essential for one apparent reason; when the general American population of those with lower political sophistication vote, they vote based on their interpretation of the economy (Godbout et al., 2007, p. 541). When Americans, Germans, and Brits embrace ethnocentric dialogues that

perpetuate stereotypes about how refugee acceptance impacts their national economies, they take those stereotypes to the voting booth. In turn, their votes result in administrations which enact policy that makes life more difficult for already struggling populations, evident in the most recent elections in each of the respective nations (Godbout et al., 2007, p. 552). Godbout et al. discuss economic voting as an issue of information acquisition, describing that "...issue voting increases as a function of political expertise" (2007, p. 542). That is, those with more political expertise tend to make voting decisions based on "social utility rather than their utility," or society judgments rather than individual opinions (Ansolabehere et al., 2008, p. 2). Those less politically sophisticated considered their personal economic outlook primarily, and often limit their reliance on national economic outlook (Godbout et al., 2007, p. 552).

For these reasons, it is essential to have a population educated about the realities of refugees' contribution to their societies in order for voters to make informed decisions regarding the policies effecting forced migration issues. With a better understanding of the economic implications of refugee acceptance, ethnocentric and stereotypical myths about refugees can begin to be dispelled, and people will begin to vote based on their societal, economic judgments rather than personal economic outlook (Godbout et al., 2007, p. 552). Although this is perhaps an idealist view, educating even a portion of the population could begin to change the national narrative associated with refugees. In a time when so many people are fighting for their basic human rights, it is a moral duty as a global citizen to advocate for the betterment of these individuals' lives. Creating this accurate depiction begins with the incredibly crucial task of fully understanding and accurately representing the economic implications of Syrian refugee acceptance.

Background on Syria

Syrians in the United States

Although the most recent wave of Syrian immigrants to the U.S. has been as a result of the ongoing civil war, the first and earliest wave to arrive to the United States were Christian immigrants fleeing violence in the Ottoman province of Syria between the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Zong, 2017, p. 1). Another wave of immigration took place when the U.S. abolished national-origin quotas in the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (Zong, 2017, p. 1). This wave marked the beginning of Syrians, primarily Muslims, migrating to seek safety from war and persecution, education, employment, and family reunification. As a result, between 1960 and 2010, the population of Syrians in the U.S. tripled from 17,000 to 60,000 (Zong, 2017, p. 1). The final and ongoing wave from 2010 to the present marks the fastest period of growth as a result of the civil war (Zong, 2017, p. 1).

Syrian Civil War

The Syrian Civil war has been a driving force of refugee migration in the past ten years, along with many other disasters around the world displacing people from their homes. The oppressive, one-party regime of Hafez al-Assad enacted emergency laws in 1963 which eliminated any possibility of civil political organization in Syria (Davis, 2015, p. 65). Further, violence among the government's secret police force resulted in fear among citizens, so when Hafez passed away, his son Bashar al-Assad took power in 2000 (Davis, 2015, p. 66). The shift gave hope to the possibility of potential economic and political liberalization (Davis, 2015, p. 66). This new economic structure, however, unevenly effected the already-elite and only strengthened divides among political and economic classes (Davis, 2015, p. 66). Issues compounded, including a four-year drought and the continuation of extreme regime-security,

eventually leading to calls for change that echoed the peaceful demonstrations of earlier Arab Springs movements (Davis, 2015, p. 67). The government, however, responded with their typical arrests, interrogations and torture, and use of the secret police, but the uprising continued, and protestors eventually developed into the Free Syrian Army (FSA) during the summer of 2011 (Davis, 2015, p. 67). This FSA uprising gained traction, and the division between rebels and the government of Bashar al-Assad rapidly widened, leaving many Syrians outside Damascus and Aleppo with no water, electricity, healthcare, or education (Davis, 2015, p. 67). Today, much of the country stands in ruins as the war rages in its' eleventh year.

Although local factors play an undoubted role in the civil war, it is impossible to understand the conflict without the consideration of regional and international influences as well (Al-Assad, 2012, p. 87). A variety of outside forces have undoubtedly exacerbated the situation in Syria, including Iran, Hezbollah, Russia, and even the United States. Extremist groups like ISIS and ISIL have received support from the Syrian government to oppose the FSA rebel group (Davis, 2015, p. 66). Russia has backed Bashar al-Assad, providing gas-masks, sea-to-shore missiles, and increased naval presence among other things (Al-Assad, 2012, p. 87). Under President Barack Obama, the U.S. provided non-lethal support to the FSA, trained and armed moderate rebels, and launched a coalition to bomb ISIS (Davis, 2015, p. 66). As recently as early April 2017, President Donald Trump has launched targeted military strikes with 59 tomahawk missiles aimed at Syrian fighter jets, hardened aircraft shelters, radar equipment, ammunition bunkers, sites for storing fuel and air defense systems (Gordon et al., 2017). This willingness to intervene militarily is alarming when considering the recurring unwillingness to provide safety and welcome those displaced by the war to the U.S., as only 11 Syrian refugees allowed to enter

the country in the first 3.5 months of 2018, a stark comparison to the 790 admitted during the same period in 2016 (Amos, 2018).

Growing Anti Refugee Sentiment in America

Understanding this background and the reason for the sudden increase of refugees fleeing Syria is vital to understanding the crisis at hand. The essential proxy-war that has developed as a result of so many state and non-state actors present in the country has created a situation unlivable for many of the citizens of Syria, all as a result of calls for lessened corruption and increased freedom (Al-Assad, 2012, p. 87). The citizens of Syria forced to flee their country to escape the long and complicated war are often demonized in their host countries, many times even before they arrive, solely because of their title of refugee. Recent U.S. actions are disturbing amidst the demonization of refugees, and specifically the Trump-administration executive order which barred the entry of Syrians, and suspended the issues of visas to the nation along with 5 other Muslim-majority countries for a 90-day period, and even suspended the entire U.S. refugee program for 120 days (Hauslohner et al, 2017). The order also cut Obama's 110,000 refugee admittance cap more than in half, setting the number at 50,000 per year (Hauslohner et al., 2017). The decision took action on March 16, 2018, cited national security risks as the driving factor and included the refugee program in its suspensions despite the nearly one-and-a-half to two years of screening that each refugee accepted to the U.S. undergoes (Hauslohner et al., 2017).

Trump aimed to please his voter base through this order. The president himself issued this statement following the ban: "As your President, I made a solemn promise to keep America safe, and I will NEVER stop fighting until we implement the policies you — and millions of Americans like you — voted for" (Hauslohner et al., 2017). The data and analysis presented in

this paper, work to dispel myths like those which drove the ban and continue to drive the idea of free-loading refugees in America in hopes of creating a better understanding and accurate depiction of the economic implications of Syrian refugee migration.

Analysis

Literature Review

Though no specific studies evaluating the potential economic contributions of refugees about the chosen variables, many previous studies discuss the role of individual variables in the "success" of refugees upon resettlement, though none explored the explicit economic implications of Syrian refugee acceptance. One of the factors evaluated in other studies included English language skills given that most American-based jobs require these skills. The ability to speak and understand English is thus viewed as an indicator of potential economic success (Beaman, 2012, 147). It has been demonstrated in a study done by Ryan Allen that "English language skills are an important determinant of employment status," evaluated and demonstrated once again in this study of wage as an indicator of economic contribution (2009, p. 335). Allen also considered the differences between those who arrived in the U.S. with already strong English language skills and those who took English as a second language (ESL) courses (Allen, 2009, 335). He found that those who take "survival English" ESL courses were provided no significant benefit in the labor market through these skills (Allen, 2009, 337). For this reason, this variable was chosen to be understood as an indicator of the potential economic success of Syrian migrants settled in America.

Another notable finding in the studies by Allen and Beaman was the concept that social capital and networks often played a significant role in refugee success upon resettlement. Allen found that access to social capital by female refugees (although the study evaluated a notably

small population) hurt this group's wages in the longer term (Allen, 2009, p. 358). Allen also found that this group benefitted from sponsorship of families outside of the Portland refugee community (Allen, 2009, p. 359). The study by Beaman evaluates social networks explicitly and concludes that networks allow for the more significant transmission of information, and sometimes has positive effects on labor market outcomes but also creates increased competition that has a substantial adverse impact on overall labor market outcomes (2012, p. 155). Although these prior studies were not directly cited in the following research, the information discovered informed decisions about variable selection and the concept of the education overall.

Hypothesis

The relationship between refugee acceptance, economic impact, and anti-refugee sentiment requires a multi-faceted evaluation. To determine the potential economic contribution of Syrian refugees to their host country, types of jobs held by Syrian migrants to the United States, their education levels, and English literacy rates will be evaluated as independent variables specifically for Syrian migrants settled in America. The combination of these factors influence the income levels of Syrian immigrants to the U.S. upon their resettlement, and all of these factors summarized can be understood as an indicator of potential economic contribution. If the data collected regarding Syrian refugees shows good types of employment, high education levels, and, high English literacy rates, then refugees will have relatively strong income levels, can be said to offer a positive economic contribution to the countries who host them.

Empirical Evidence and Data Analysis

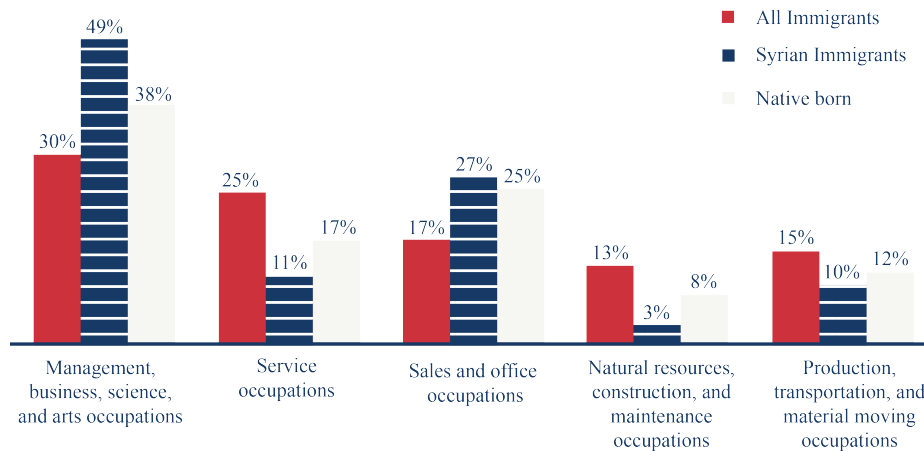
Wage is understood in this study to be representative of potential economic contribution, as wage is an indicator of how much money a person can contribute to stimulating the economy of their place of residence through purchases and investments. By evaluating the key factors as they

relate to Syrian immigrants in this study, a fuller picture of the typical Syrian immigrant develops. This image does not necessarily align with the stereotypical immigrant persona portrayed as job-stealing economic burdens that "take away resources from deserving Americans" during the 2016 election (Lamont, 2017, p. 157). The relationship between these variables and a median household wage nearly on-par with that of native citizens proves the potential economic contribution of Syrian immigrants, and more specifically of Syrian refugees, and is an indicator of their value in our society. Although the group of Syrian immigrants was a mere 86,000 in 2014 when the data in this study was collected, the groups median wages establish their ability to contribute to the American economy at a rate competitive with that of those native-born, and significantly more so than the overall immigrant group (Zong, 2017, p. 1).

Syrian immigrants to the U.S. over the age of 16 held more management, business, science, and arts occupations (49%) than native-born citizens (38%) and than the average of all immigrants (30%) during 2014 (Zong, 2017, p. 5). They also held more sales and office occupations (27%) than both groups (25% natives born, 17% all immigrants) during the same period. These types of jobs are considered to be those of skilled laborers and require some amounts of training to be completed effectively. The latter, unskilled labor, includes jobs that do not require specialized training or skills. These types of jobs are represented here by natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations, of which Syrian immigrants participate at extremely low rates (3%) (Zong, 2017, p. 5). Figure 1.0 displays the levels discussed, as well as the levels of participation in the sectors of labor by native-born citizens, Syrian immigrants, and the average of all immigrants.

Figure 1.0

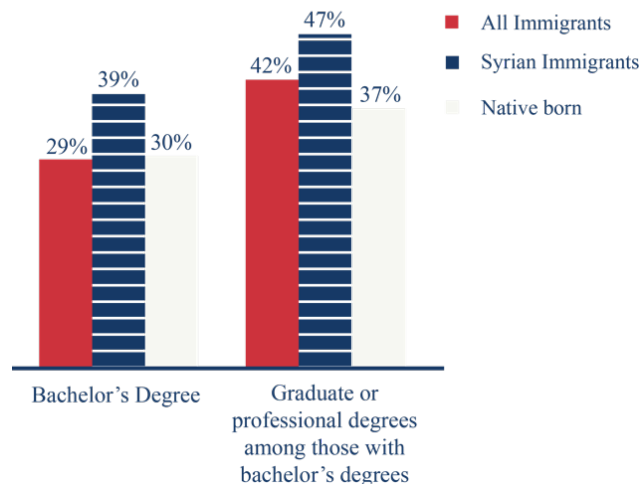
Employed Workers in the Civilian Labor Force (ages 16 and older) by Occupation and Origin, 2014



Syrian immigrants held higher education levels than that of all immigrants, as well as native-born Americans. Displayed in figure 2.0 it is observed that 39% of Syrian immigrants have bachelors' degrees, nearly 10% more than the later groups of all immigrants (29%) and the native born (30%) (Zong, 2017, p. 5). Nearly half (47%) of those Syrian immigrants with bachelors' degrees also held masters or professional degrees, compared to only 42% of all immigrants and only 37% of the native born (Zong, 2017, p. 5). Although better educated regarding higher education, Syrian immigrants do have a lower high-school graduation rate than the overall immigrant group (Zong, 2017, p. 5).

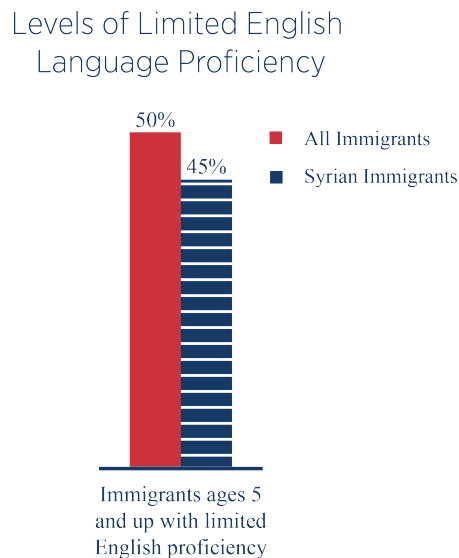
Figure 2.0

Higher Education Levels



English language skills are also seen as an indicator of potential success and economic contribution to the host economy. Although 50% of the all immigrant group above the age of 5 reported limited English proficiency, only 45% of Syrian immigrants reported the same level (Zong, 2017, p. 6). This data means that 45% of Syrian immigrants did not have sufficient English language skills, or that more than half (55%) had better-than-limited English language skills, as displayed in figure 3.0 (Zong, 2017, p. 6). These English language skills are critical to success upon resettlement, to help them expand their networks and gain employment upon their arrival to the United States, as previously discovered in the literature review.

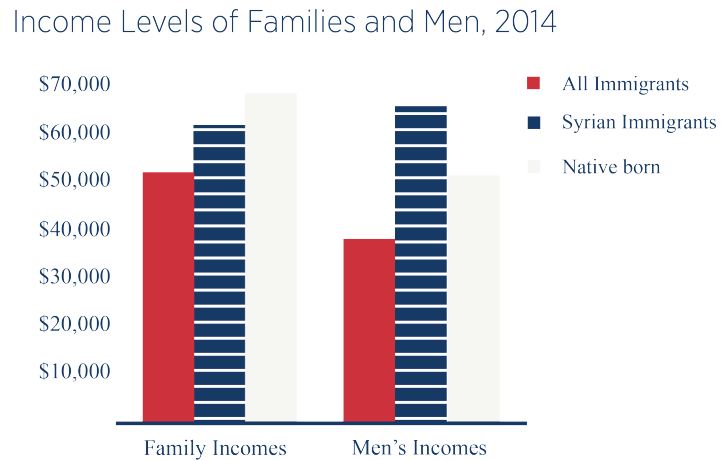
Figure 3.0



These factors collectively led to the above-average income levels for households headed by Syrian immigrants. The median income of these households was \$62,000, and although this median household wage is \$6,000 less than the average family headed by a native-born citizen, it is significantly higher than the median household income of \$38,000 for the all-immigrant group (Zong, 2017, p. 6). Further, Syrian men employed full-time and year-round out-earn American men on average by \$15,000, whose median wages were \$66,000 and \$51,000 respectively, as

displayed in figure 4.0 (Zong, 2017, p. 6). The discrepancy between household income and men's income is likely a result of cultural and religious differences which result in Syrian-immigrant women participating in the labor force at lower rates.

Figure 4.0



It is notable that 66% of Syrian-born children (under 18), 88% of whom came to the U.S. since the start of the civil war were living in poverty (Zong, 2017, p. 6). These rates are more than twice that of all immigrant children (29%), and three times more than native-born children (21%), perhaps as a result of the difficulties attaining education during the process of refugee admission (Zong, 2017, p. 6).

Although the data evaluated captures the entire Syrian immigrant population in the U.S., background knowledge of the Syrian wave migration as discussed previously and the simple fact that Syrian immigrants are twice as likely to have entered the U.S. since 2010 contribute to the understanding that the immigrant population is representative of Syrian refugees and migrants alike. This data provides the background profile for the evaluation of the economic contribution of Syrians to the United States.

Theoretical Analysis

Refugee movement increases the flow of people, labor, and resources in ways that promote the free market in the world economy as well as specifically in the American economy, which so greatly values the open markets (Gold et al., 2017, p. 47). Under the concept of liberalism, the addition of skilled laborers to the free market increases competition and promotes the efficiency of the market. The economic theory of free markets further reinforces the idea that migration, whether forced or voluntary, help to regulate the market. The supply of skilled labor that exists within Syria, including the 39% of Syrian immigrants who hold bachelors' degrees, has partially migrated to the United States and filled jobs, namely in the management, business, science, and arts occupations, primarily as a result of supply and demand flows. The war in Syria radically lowered demand for skilled labor, freeing up these resources to move where the need is higher, in the developed world. The Syrian population is significantly more qualified by higher education than the American native population, so the influx of these types of migrants are helping to encourage and regulate competition within the market.

Liberalism

Obvious moral factors contribute to the politics surrounding refugee policy, but evaluating Syrian migrants as primarily a resource of the international market furthers ones understanding of their potential economic contributions. The concept of liberalism enhances ones understanding of the relationship between economics and international cooperation. Gold et al. describes in her piece on the theories of international relations that, "proponents (of liberalism) argue that organizations (or individuals) are valuable in assisting states in formulating decisions and helping to formalize cooperation that leads to peaceful outcomes" (2017, p. 47). She explains Immanuel Kant's view of the democratic peace theory, which "posits that democracies do not go to war with each other" (Gold et al., 2017, p. 47). In a loose interpretation of the democratic

peace theory, it can be understood to mean that states which cooperate with one another are less likely to go to war (Gold et al., 2017, p. 47). Further, Gibney poses an essential question in the eyes of liberalism, "why should something as arbitrary as where one is born determine where one should be allowed to live?" (1999, p. 172). With this in mind, viewing refugees not just for the social justice aspect of their migration, but also considering the economic implications and increased cooperation that comes with refugee migration leads ultimately to the concepts of liberalism and free-market collaboration.

Traditional liberalism regarding international relations explains the idea that each actor in the international system benefits from international cooperation. The theory argues that economic and political power (soft powers, as opposed to hard military powers) are valuable in the international system (Gold et al., 2017, p. 48). The U.S. has historically maintained an incredibly strong soft-power, and ability to attract economic migration, refugee migration, and international students, among other things (Nye, 2004). This exercise of soft power dramatically benefits the United States, but has appeared to be on the decline as the U.S. role in the international system is declining (Nye, 2004). With this in mind, the idea that Syrian immigrants and refugees statistically become economically successful by earning wages nearly equivalent to that of natural born citizens should encourage the acceptance of refugees with the desire to increase American soft power. Not only would raising Syrian refugee acceptance better our economic situation, but it also increases the attractiveness of migration to the U.S. in the eyes of Syrian immigrants. This would, in theory, draw more immigrants and thus further strengthening the soft power of the United States.

Constructivism

Analyzing the issue through the lens of constructivism, however, the very movement of resources that is understood to be incredibly valuable under liberalism can be seen as a reiteration of dependency theory. Although refugee migration is beneficial to the free market, the values of a free market economy are defined not by all states, but primarily by developed nations. Known constructivist theorist Alexander Wendt argues that the international system is based mainly on a structure of roles, and the concept that roles are properties of structures rather than of agents of the international system (2003, p. 251). He argues that the structure of the international system is based upon state actors each playing roles in the system. In this study, periphery states exist in their position of periphery states merely to play that role (Wendt, 2003, p. 251). The core states, therefore, simply exist as core states, and the flow of resources from periphery states to core states. The blind acceptance of these roles raise issues that echo the concentration of power in the core states and the overall imbalance of the world order (Wendt, 2003, p. 251). Core states control resources, and their ability to attract refugee migration from periphery states only provides them with more resources and maintain their role as core states. Periphery states will remain periphery states so long as significant resources continuously leave their country, making the outlook of post-war Syria rather grim.

Proxy wars in developing countries in the Middle East have essentially ravished the nations, making living environments in these countries unpleasant at very best, and more often than not extremely dangerous. These wars have exacerbated the refugee crisis and resulted in a significant number of people attempting to flee their countries. Not all people have equal access to the means which allow them to escape their unstable homelands, and those who have access to resources and can afford to flee their country are often the well-educated among the native

population, as is demonstrated by the data presented previously. When those well-educated leave, they escape to the developed world and perpetuate the exploitation of less developed countries (LDC) by the developed world, through the extraction of valuable resources.

Inherently, among Syrians fear for their lives as a result of the war, those who have the means to leave their dangerous homes and make their way to developed countries ultimately contribute to their host economies in positive ways. These economic contributions are exploitative of LDC by the developing world, as developed nations are so often the reason for the wars that force financial contributors to flee their own country (Wendt, 2003, p. 251). The role of America in the Syrian conflict is an example of this, where the nation-states have contributed to and exacerbated a hostile situation and forced Syrians to seek a safer life and to drive skilled labor to its own country. Those refugees which American helped to create and have accepted are now contributing to its' developed economy rather than their developing one.

Implications

These multi-faceted and extremely complicated issues surrounding the Syrian Civil war and refugee crisis are incredibly important to understand, especially now as anti-refugee sentiments are becoming increasingly main-stream around the world. These sentiments have culminated in the global rise of nationalist sentiments displayed primarily through elections in the U.S. and Germany. In the U.S., the presidential election resulted in a refugee-ban precisely one week after the new Commander in Chief was sworn into office (Hauslohner et al., 2017). In Germany's 2018 election, the AFD party became the third largest in the German parliament after campaigning on an openly anti-immigrant platform (Hockenos, 2018). A better factual

understanding of the economic contributions that refugees can make to our country dispel these bigoted and ethnocentric myths.

Upon the evaluation of the data presented in this study, it becomes increasingly evident that the refugee-targeting narrative that fueled the 2016 election and subsequent policy decisions, like the executive order enacted by President Donald Trump in March 2017, is based almost entirely on xenophobic sentiments rather than on a factual analysis (Hauslohner, 2017). The strong wages of Syrian immigrants to the U.S. prove their potential economic contribution and the idea that refugees are expensive to the U.S., and emigrate solely to survive on our welfare system, not to become productive citizens, is ultimately dismissed as myth. Humanitarian concerns aside, Syrian refugees become effective economic players upon their emigration and should thus be treated as so.

The data previously discussed indicates the potential economic contribution of Syrian refugees to America, and proves that in most circumstances, refugees become positive economic contributions to the United States. Forced migration of Syrians to the U.S. provides America with additional labor sources and is an expression of the free market. Through the lens of liberalism, the migration is an example of increased global cooperation and movement towards peace. Through the lens of constructivism, this flow of resources from a periphery nation to a core nation is yet another reiteration of global roles and the world order. For this reason, the theoretical implications for Syria regarding the future of their country as many of those with the means to flee have done so seem grim.

Recommendations

This clarified understanding of the economic implications of refugee acceptance is important to de-bunking the myths that have developed about dangerous and "freeloading"

refugees among the American voting populations and should be used to inform humanitarian decisions regarding the U.S. role in the refugee crisis. For this reason, an additional analysis should be repeated when more data for Syrian refugees to the U.S. is updated further. In the meantime, the study can be repeated for refugees from other nations in an attempt to determine the potential economic contributions of those originating in states other than Syria.

As more and more citizens flee a country that has become increasingly war-torn, those left behind will struggle to rebuild. All of these factors considered begin to explain the complexity surrounding the Syrian Refugee Crisis and help to further the understanding of a general population who often believe that refugee acceptance means fewer jobs for native citizens. Despite the constructivist view of potentially harmful outcomes for post-war Syria, the study of Syrian immigrant data has proven that core countries have no economic grounds to restrict Syrian migration to their nations significantly, as has been the case in recent months and years (Hauslohner et al., 2017). Syrian immigrants do not become economic burdens upon arrival, but instead become economic contributors to host economies.

Creating a clear and accurate picture of Syrian immigrants and refugees is of the utmost importance in a time when rising anti-immigrant, anti-refugee narratives are adversely affecting U.S. policy through lowered refugee admittance caps and a "Muslim-Ban" (Hauslohner et al., 2017). These policies have prohibited the immigration of those deemed dangerous to our society and economy and are not only harmful to the individuals targeted, but also harmful to the free market economy, and to the soft-power of the U.S. (Hauslohner et al., 2017). Regulations on migration and economy are important, but not when those regulations are based on biased narratives rather than on a factual analyses of the potential economic contribution of refugees to

our society. To better the future of Syrian refugees and the U.S. economy, their admission should be based solely on this factual analysis rather than narratives primarily driven by xenophobia.

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