



BACKGROUND PAPER

Development Cooperation and its Impact on Migration Flows

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FACES OF MIGRATION

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Development Cooperation and its Impact on Migration Flows

The current refugee crisis has forced many of the leading representatives and authorities to start taking into consideration the effects that this crisis brings with it, which ultimately could result in the flow of unmanaged migration onto the European continent. Even though migration is old as the human race itself, ongoing conflicts, climate change, hunger, economic crisis or political instability is forcing substantially large amounts of people to migrate to seek shelter, protection or looking for the opportunity to improve their lives somewhere else.

The refugee crisis has had and still continues to have such an effect and impact on European states, in such that the crisis in itself was able to split the ideologically and historically united European Union into two camps, either for or against migration. One camp recalling the solidarity over the refugee crisis represented mainly by the German approach and another camp partly represented by the Visegrad countries often portraying migrants as a threat to their culture, sovereignty, stability and economy. Despite the differences between their approach both camps were trying to answer several common questions such as, how to prevent such a crisis and how to stop and manage the flow of refugees and migrants entering Europe. All countries involved in dealing with the crisis have different ways of dealing with these questions, some more radical than others, but there is one common tool, which is quite often being overlooked, which is the humanitarian aid and development cooperation.

In Between Development and Migration

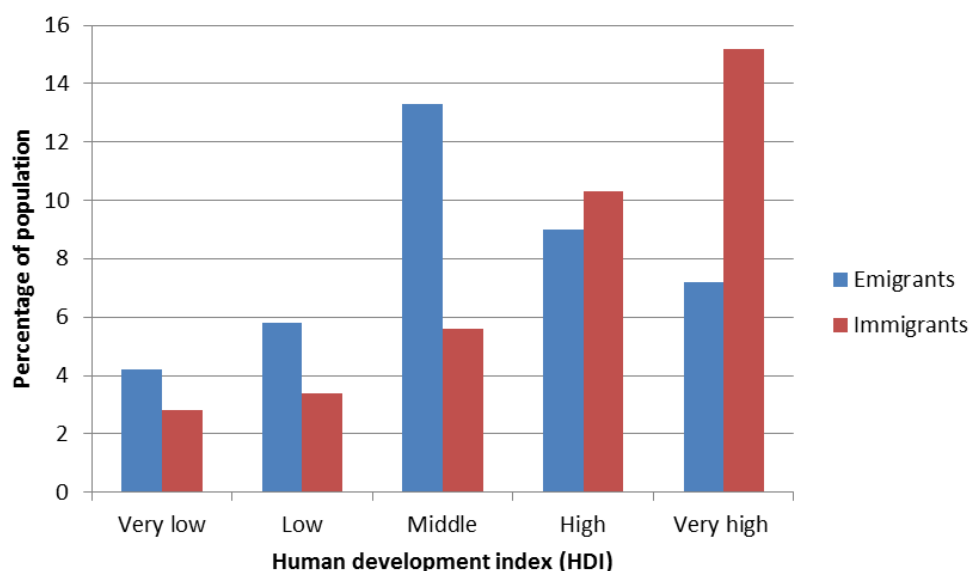
In 2015 the European Union faced an enormous challenge, which raised more concerns than any of the other previous issues. Since then the number of migrants crossing the borders into The European Union by land or sea has dropped significantly, however we can assume that this has left scars on the image of The European Union as an open, liberal and united body. This also had an influence on the development of the future plans and precautionary measures that would be used, which was proposed and put into action not only by the European Union itself but also by the single national states. The migration crisis was pushed aside amongst the other problems such as climate change, nationalism etc., which was also visible during the survey carried out by the European Council on Foreign Relations and YouGov, showing that migration was no longer the voters' chief concern. That of course doesn't mean the panic which was spread by the migration crisis all over Europe should be ignored (Siegel, 2019). The interest of the authorities, policymakers and also that of the public shifted towards the causes of the mass movement of migrants, which very basically translates into creating conditions and supporting migrants in their home countries, so they would not be willing or tempted to migrate to Europe. As a result, the member states should get involved in some kind of "Marshall Plan for Africa", with the requirement from each member state to dedicate 10 percent of the Neighbourhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument to directly address issues of migration and where they begin. Part of the EU's next Multi-annual Financial Framework is dedicating support for "addressing the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement" and to "support migration management and governance including the protection of refugees and migration rights". This idea however, is of course not welcomed by everyone and just as the migration crisis did, these proposals created a lot of questions and denial by single member states (Lanati, Reiner, 2017). The idea to expand management of migration outside the EU borders gained its clear contours in 2016 by signing a deal with Turkey on the technical cooperation initiatives and for example the training of Libyan border guards. In a bid to reduce reasons to migrate directly due to incentives to the shores of Europe has led European governments to spend billions of euros in aid to achieve these goals.

Even though the idea was widely promoted and positively received by many politicians and also by the general public, the fact is that the relationship between European aid and migration motives are far more complicated and complex, than simple economic injections to specific poor countries. The policy brief produced by the European Council on Foreign Relations briefly introduces some of the problems of this concept. Firstly, the economic situation can be seen as a major influence for driving migration, secondly, interaction between border security and development aid, non-developmental humanitarian aid and remittances can also work against long-term development objectives. The fact is that not all migration is driven by a poor economic situation, many refugees are fleeing persecution, conflict or war zones and or threats, also border restrictions are complicating the mobility and run directly against the facilitation of legal migration and stability as the aims of the EU's Sahel Regional Action Plan for 2015-2020. Humanitarian aid, which is more popular than development cooperation is concentrating more to meet basic needs rather than long-term sustainable goals, while remittances can account for more than 20 percent of GDP in the countries such as Comoros, Gambia or Liberia, which tend to work against development objectives.

Financial support

Let's take a closer look at the economic side of the problem. Extreme poverty has for a long time been considered to be the main driving factor for migration. At first sight, we can agree with this statement as it is very natural for any human being to seek a better life and better living standards and so follows the hypothesis that aid raises disposable incomes and that higher incomes in turn reduce emigration. To argue with this statement, when aid is distributed to increase domestic incomes, there is a high possibility that migration will increase as well, since more people can then afford to use their money for the purposes of migration. This shift only changes when the living standards, wages and conditions inside domestic countries can match the condition which would be offered to an individual working abroad.

CHART 1: Association between development and migration



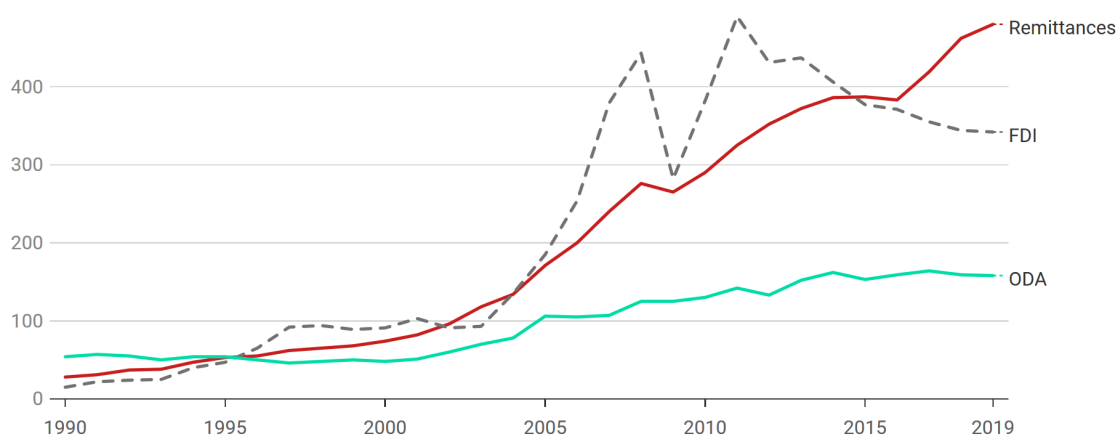
Source: de Haas, H. 2010. *Migration transitions: a theoretical and empirical inquiry into the developmental drivers of international migration.*

This relationship was clearly indicated by De Haas (2010) or OECD (2017) study on the relationship and link of the development aid and its influence on migration. As we can see on the chart above the relationship between these two looks like an inverted U-shape. As the development increases, stocks of emigrants begin to rise until reaching a tipping point, where the level of the stock of emigrants decreases but still does not come close to the level of less developed countries. As we know, this is a long-term process as there are still inequalities not only within the European and African continents, but inside the euro-zone as well. The research conducted by Lanati and Thiele from the period of 2004 to 2014 focusing on 25 donor and 129 recipient countries also proves the point, that to achieve long-term goals, there is the need to redistribute aid towards non-monetary objectives, such as education, healthcare, environment or reliable state institutions. This research provides clear evidence, that aid towards non-monetary objectives can be one of the answers for the goals of the development aid since it is influencing and reducing emigration from the country.

Influential Remittances

There is also another way the financial situation of individuals living in donor states is being influenced and this is by remittances. Remittances are a stable and resourceful income, which brings higher amounts of external finances to the development countries than Official Development Assistance and Foreign Direct Investment as we can see in the chart below.

CHART 2: Remittances in comparison with ODA and FDI



Source: Barne, D. Pirlea, F. 2019. *Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD)*

Migrant remittances are a significant income of migrant home countries. The opinion about the negative and positive impact of remittances differ from researcher to researcher. As for example authors such as Stojanov and Strielkowski (2013) assumed that remittances have a higher impact on raising of GDP per capita than foreign aid. Glystos (2002) had a different opinion, who assumed that remittances have both negative and positive effects on the domestic countries. The fact is that in some cases of smaller countries remittances can reach from one-third to one-half of the national income, which is the case for e.g. in Liberia or Tajikistan. The remittances are sent directly from individual to individual and they are basically personal funds, therefore governments cannot facilitate the flow, investment and expenditure of this money (Barne, Florina, 2019). The positive impact of the remittances is, that they are relatively steady and long-term in comparison with large-scale development projects, which often change their goals and focus. On the other hand since it is person to person transaction, the money is usually spent on daily consumption needs such as food, clothes, repayment of debts, which have no investment potentials, this is however shifting especially in the countries such as Latin America or Asia with money used for education, small businesses or other long-term goals. In addition, the remittances networks, which are created between donor and recipient countries, bilateral contacts created by humanitarian and development aid offers the recipient country valuable information on the donor country. Implementation of aid projects and sufficient information implies lower transaction costs for migrants, which has positive impacts in migration.

Humanitarian militarism

The relationship between migration control and humanitarian and development aid is currently on the rise as a result of inability to control the migration flow coming to European states. New strategies, which are going “hand in hand” with the humanitarian and development priorities created so called humanitarian borders (De Lauri, 2018). Humanitarian borders are focusing on migration control outside of territories of single member states, supporting these borders with financial, technical and human resources. This led Europe to multiple border barriers, detention centres and shelters but also led them to intensify maritime and border control and deportations. The relationship between the humanitarian and patrol search lead to the dynamic model called humanitarian militarism, which allows the overlapping of search and police operations. An example of this humanitarian militarism can be the construction of the border between Bulgaria and Turkey in an attempt to stop the migration flow. However, borders and fences often displace migrants between borders resulting in many migrants getting stuck between the Turkish-Greek and Bulgarian-Turkish border. Securitization of EU politics currently leads to criminalization of migrants, forcing them to become a vulnerable labour force.

Different approach

As we mentioned at the start of the article there are countries, which did not fully cooperate with other member states of the EU during the migration crisis as it was expected. Visegrad countries were among the followers of the common European policies and tried to “fit in” with all the bigger players on the European level, 2015 brought hard changes in their behaviour. The Visegrad countries lacking the influence on shaping the policy on the European level became a cohesive group, which needed to be taken into account. Generally, it was surprising, that states campaigning mostly against accepting refugees into the European Union were the states which not such a long time ago were producing significant migration flows moving towards western Europe. In the case of Slovakia, the migration policy was highly influenced by the migration policy of the EU over the last couple of years setting up similar areas and striving to reach common goals. An interesting fact is, that even when the Slovak Republic was one of the states which declined the quotas, when presiding over the Council of the European Union as one of its priorities it defined sustainable migration and asylum policy with the aim to consolidate the asylum systems and also to harmonize the protection of external Schengen borders. Migration started to be a “hot” topic after the announcement of obligatory quotas. Political parties, which were very close to the forthcoming elections followed the directions of public opinion polls, which showed highly negative attitudes towards migrants in society. One of the key figure of this “hate” movement was undoubtedly former prime minister of the Slovak Republic Robert Fico using words such as: “*We monitor every single Muslim in Slovakia*” or “*Islam has no place in Slovakia*”. This strategy paid well for the leading party, only partially, since the Slovak public were not directly influenced by the migration crisis, they got tired of the anti-refugee rhetoric constantly being repeated before the elections. However, one of the unpleasant results of the aggressive rhetoric directly influenced the votes for fascist LSNS party to gain entry into the Slovak parliament (Cuprik, 2016). After the elections the topic of the migration crisis has never been brought back to the fore in Slovakia in the same intensity as it was before the elections. Even though, one of the main points for the rhetoric of many political figures was that, the problem with migration should

be solved in the countries of origin, the fact is that the Slovak Republic is on the tail between donor states of ODA (only 0.13 % of GNI, while the average is 0.32 % of GNI) (Euractiv, 2016). This shows not only, that all the constructed “drama” about the migration crisis and its security and economic threats to Slovakia, was only a topic which should target electorate, but also that the support for the countries of origin is not taken seriously taking into consideration more trade and economy than development aid.

Conclusion

To be fair towards development and humanitarian aid, it is a well-known fact that ODA has been stagnating over the last couple of years. In the case of the Slovak Republic, although it is slowly increasing, with the current ODA 0,13 % of GNI it will be difficult to reach 0.33 percent of GNI in 2030 (MZV, 2020). Significant amounts of the aid under the humanitarian aid is used for those affected by the conflict and also to mitigate the influx of refugees to Europe. One of the real concerns of the current and future face of ODA is Donald Trump's presidency and Brexit, which could both influence the future of financing for humanitarian and development activities. That means that ODA, which is already highly depending on the European Union as its main donor can even intensify this dependency relationship, which could be high risk in the shadow of raising popularity of right-wing and extremist parties. The European Union is also starting to focus mostly on the functioning of humanitarian borders, preventing refugees and migrants coming through the borders of Europe. Even though European Union adopted in 2015 UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs with the goal “no-one should be left behind” the panic created by the migration crisis led to taking many steps backwards in the development cooperation and migration control as well. The link between these two is clear and there is lack of data, research and evidence on how much each segment of the humanitarian or development aid influence positively or negatively the migration towards Europe. We can just assume, that the character and prediction about migration movements to the EU will have to be answered in the very close future.

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