



Migration is International, and so Should Response Efforts



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Alessandro Cercaci is always eager to enrich his set of know-how by exposing himself to new experiences. To craft his works, he draws on his diverse skill set, conferring them a unique interdisciplinary perspective. He produces works with the wish to stimulate new thoughts in the visitors.

Sweden was historically a country of emigration. In recent decades, Europeans have shown, through their vote, their worry about migration. In virtually all EU countries, far-right anti-migration parties are leading polls (Adler, 2023). This commentary will use Sweden as a reference point to represent EU perceptions. People who migrated and their children comprise 19.7% of the Swedish population, one of the highest in the EU (Holloway et al., 2021). While EU populations often feel that Europe is shouldering the world migration issues, this perspective ignores realities beyond the Schengen borders. Instead, Jordan has been facing structural security threats from migration for decades. Instead of looking inward, Europeans should begin to look outwards and help other countries manage their migratory fluxes.

1. History of Swedish migration

By the 1930s, more than one million Swedish citizens moved to the Americas. After WW2, the trend reversed, and Sweden welcomed migrants and refugees. Today, Sweden has become an established destination country. 20% of the Swedish population is born abroad, and the majority comes from Middle Eastern countries (Governance of migrant integration in Sweden, 2022). However, Sweden has faced challenges in integrating these individuals. As Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson said, "Sweden has failed to integrate the vast numbers of immigrants it has taken in over the past two decades, leading to parallel societies and gang violence" (Reuters, 2022, para. 1).

2. Sweden Today

Nowadays, the Swedish democrats, sitting in the far-right section of the parliament, are gaining more votes by running a tough anti-immigration campaign (Duxbury, 2023). Migration is the top 1 issue for the Swedish public (Traub,

2021), and 85% of the population feels that the number of crimes has increased in the last three years (Swedish Crime Survey, 2023). Homicide rates have been growing since 2013, transforming Sweden from one of the safest to one of the most dangerous countries in Europe (BRA, 2021). Violence is found chiefly in socially disadvantaged areas, which are often populated by migrants (BRA, 2021), and violence is linked with criminal drug activities (Gerell et al., 2021). The Swedish prime minister explicitly linked the failure to integrate immigrants to the rise in violence from gang crimes (Reuters, 2022).

Schengen borders:

Schengen borders refer to the boundaries of the Schengen Area, a zone comprising 27 European countries that have abolished passport and other types of border control at their mutual borders. This allows for the free and unrestricted movement of people, goods, services, and capital across member countries.

3. Jordan

Meanwhile, Jordan sits between two active warzones and hosts millions of refugees. The first waves were Palestinian refugees in 1948 and 1967, then 1991, 2003, and 2015 (Khawaldah & Alzboun, 2022). Today, people who immigrated account for 33% of the population, most of whom are refugees (Refugees and migrant health country profile: Jordan, 2023). The high number of refugees pressures Jordanian society. In terms of education, health, housing, water, municipal services, and electricity, the government is struggling to provide equal services for all (Khawaldah & Alzboun, 2022). Despite economic difficulties, the Jordanian government has provided direct and indirect financial aid to the refugees, straining the country's economy

(Khawaldah & Alzboun, 2022). Furthermore, Jordan is a water-scarce country, and the influx of refugees led to freshwater shortages for refugees and inhabitants alike (Khawaldah & Alzboun, 2022). Following suit, increased demand for food drove up food prices, led to inflation, and put more pressure on public services. Unemployment rose from 12.5% in 2010 to 18.5% in 2017, GDP growth fell by 70.5% since the 2011 Syrian civil war, and GDP to debt ratio grew from 65% in 2011 to 96% in 2017 (Khawaldah & Alzboun, 2022).

4. Comparison

This article is not meant to give a detailed ac-

count of migrant's impact on Jordan and Sweden, but rather, a bird's eye view to glance upon the main effects. Comparing the two cases, it is apparent that Jordan suffers significantly more than Sweden. Already after WW2, when the Swedish were emigrating to the US, Jordan was

receiving refugees. Today, Jordan has to manage a population of migrants per capita 10% higher than that of Sweden, while Jordan's GDP per capita is 1/15th of Sweden (World Bank Open Data, 2022). While the Scandinavian country faces substantive challenges related to crime and gang violence, Jordan's are far more serious. The kingdom faces shortages of vital supplies like water and volatile prices of food in an already impoverished country, along with deep resource strains on fundamental services like health and education.

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5. Considerations

In light of what has been said so far, one must question whether Europe's and Sweden's security issues linked with migration justify the claustrophobic attention that European citizens have reserved them. Gang crime, homicides, and gun violence are serious issues that must be confronted by Sweden. Especially given Sweden's history of low crime rates. But while it does so, Swedish and EU citizens alike should rethink the extent of the issues we face. While migration in Sweden, but more generally in Europe, has caused issues, these seem relatively manageable phenomena compared to the challenges

that countries such as Jordan have to face. Yet, Europeans completely lack this vision. To return to the Swedish case, the Swedish Democrats, a party running mostly on an anti-immigration campaign, recently became the most popular party in Sweden (Holloway et al., 2021).

Framing Europe as the global victim of migration will only ostracise Europe in the international scene. To manage the ever-increasing migratory phenomena, the world needs to adopt cooperation. Considering the grave issues Jordan is facing with migration, Europe could fund programmes to integrate the migrants into Jordan's job market if Jordanians wish to. Targeted labour programmes would integrate the migrants into the kingdom, generating resources for themselves and embedding themselves in the country.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, Sweden does have major issues connected to migration and integration of immigrants, which have to be readily addressed. But in perspective, these seem relatively minor compared to what Jordan faces; structural security threats stemming from its refugee population have shaken the country for decades. Consid-

ering its resources and expertise in managing migration, Europe could help Jordan improve its living situation and avoid another outflow of people. However, to manage migration, the world needs cooperation. Europe cannot do this alone, and it needs partners. Yet, will partners want to collaborate with the EU if it portrays itself constantly as the only victim?

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