

**Western European Arms Export and Asylum Immigration: A Connection? On the
Determinants of Asylum Immigration to Western Europe**

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Abstract

My contribution is focused to a modest framework creation for asylum-immigration theory. By means of arms-export data from 17 Western European countries, tested against inflow of asylum seekers to these countries, covering the past 26 years, it is clear that arms-export from these countries do not contribute to their own asylum-inflow. The main theoretical contribution to existing literature on arms export and migration is therefore that I separate plausible causes of outgoing migration (arms export to countries from where asylum flows are generated) from determinants of asylum immigration. Empirically, I disprove such hypothetical indirect connections put forward both within academic literature and by NGOs like Amnesty International. Instead, I find the counter-intuitive, namely that increased arms export leads to less asylum immigration. Also, in contrast to previous literature on asylum immigration, I build on Granovetter (1973) and propose that diffusion of information through asylum networks depend on weak social connections as opposed to close relationships like ethnic bonds, family ties and friendships. In addition, I problematize the tendency of existing literature to treat asylum seekers as labor migrants and argue for a framework founded on principles which account for the unique circumstances and life situations faced by asylum seekers. In doing so I also extend on previous quantitative works and find that crucial determinants for inflow are signified by the generosity of the welfare state, absence of far right sentiments, and religious diversity. The wealth of a country, its general quality of life, its linguistic and ethnic fractionalization, do not appear to matter.

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Introduction

Since the beginning of the 1980s, Western Europe has seen a remarkable increase in asylum applications. Between 1980 and 1985, the European Union – 15 (EU-15, pre-enlargement) received roughly 540,200 asylum applications, which can be compared to approximately 1,489,000 filed applications between 2000 and 2003. Out of all claims logged in industrial countries, Western Europe has received 2/3. The main inflow comes from Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia. A peak in total number of applications can be noted in the early 1990s, following the fall of the Soviet Union, with most coming from Eastern Europe and going to Germany. In part, the close geographical proximity of Germany to the east can explain the main country destination. By contrast, the numbers of African and Asian applications display a continuous and firm increase over time (Hatton, 2005:106-107).

In reaction to the large inflow, a general xenophobic perception of refugees as hazards to the economy and its welfare distribution have emerged (Lindstrom, 2005:588-589). Though EU states are obligated by the Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees¹ to grant asylum, states have undertaken restrictive unilateral measures to tackle the large inflow. As a consequence, tensions between EU members have developed, since such policies are believed to have deflected asylum flows to some countries. Therefore,

¹ According to the Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees, an asylum seeker is a person who has applied for asylum under the 1951 Refugee Convention on the Status of Refugees on rightful grounds. To qualify as an asylum seeker, an application has to be filed based on the claim that, if returned to the country of origin, a well-founded fear exist of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, political belief, or membership of a distinct social group. One remains an asylum seeker as long as one's application is pending, or until an appeal against a refusal of the application is resolved. In this respect, a refugee is an asylum seeker whose application has been successful (UNHCR, 2007).

in 1992, Germany proposed a EU-wide asylum-burden sharing system. While the agreement was unsuccessful, due to differing opinions between member states, other smaller measures have been implemented to harmonize asylum policy across EU. Among them are joint visa regimes and a common refugee definition. Concurrently, states have enhanced their unilateral deterrence measures to further defer asylum applications. Example areas covered by such policies are access, status determination and the integration of asylum seekers. With respect to access, the so-called “safe third country provisions”, initially implemented in Germany in 1993, is considered one of the more successful policy implementations. In practice, this allows border guards to deny asylum seekers entry if they arrive via another “safe” country where they could have applied for asylum and been likely to achieve it (Thielemann, 2003:6-8). Another restriction on entry comes from demanding that asylum seekers obtains visas before entering the country to file their claim and by fining airlines that allow passengers traveling without such documents (Bloch, 2000:34; Hatton, 2005:108). As an example, in 1998, British Airways was fined 2.5 million pounds to be paid out to the UK government for allowing passengers with incomplete or false documentation onboard their aircrafts (Bloch, 2000:34). Concerning status determination and integration policy, common approaches are to restrict access to work permits and social security benefits during the process of treating the asylum claim, i.e. before the status of the asylum seeker has been determined, and to extend the time-frame for processing such cases, inhibiting integration by creating differences in social rights between asylum seekers and citizens (Bloch, 2000:36; Hatton, 2005:108-109).

Nevertheless, while a boost in overall inflow to Western Europe for the past two and a half decades is notable, the main destinations vary greatly over time (Hatton, 2005:106-107). This thesis analyzes the causes of this variance and investigates what factors contribute to larger inflows received by some countries compared to others. In this context, I note that while theories of migration traditionally have focused on helping us understand migratory movements within their broader political and economic contexts, it is only recently that researchers have turned the eyes to explaining destination choices of asylum seekers. As part of this focus, some studies have noted patterns between arms trade from asylum receiving countries to the same destinations as the origins of their refugee communities and argued for an indirect connection between these variables. I address the lack of empirical evidence underlying these studies and the broader political discourse put forward by NGOs like Amnesty International in this context. Using western European arms-export data, covering 26 years (1981 to 2007), I find that arms-export from Western European countries do not contribute to the number of asylum seekers in those countries. In this regard, my main theoretical contribution to existing literature on arms export and migration is that I separate plausible causes of outgoing migration (arms export to countries from where asylum flows are generated) from determinants of asylum immigration while also disproving such claims empirically. Instead, I find the counter-intuitive, namely that increased arms export leads to less asylum immigration. This is attributed to the so called “guns for butter trade off” where social expenditure, one of the found significant determinants for asylum-immigration, is negatively associated with arms export but positively associated with asylum inflow. Moreover, in contrast to previous literature on asylum immigration, I build on

Granovetter (1973) and propose that diffusion of information through asylum networks depend on weak social connections as opposed to close relationships like ethnic bonds, family ties and friendships. In addition, I problematize the tendency of existing literature to treat asylum seekers as labor migrants and argue for a framework founded on principles which account for the unique circumstances and life situations faced by asylum seekers. In doing so I also extend on previous quantitative works and find that crucial determinants for inflow are signified by the generosity of the welfare state, absence of far right sentiments, and religious diversity. The wealth of a country, its general quality of life, its linguistic and ethnic fractionalization, do not appear to matter.

Destination Variance

Between 1980 and 1990, the overall recorded inflow to the EU-15 mounted to 1,642,000 applicants. Out of these, 432,000 were from Eastern Europe, 227,000 were of African origin, and 742,000 were Asians. The top seven destinations for this period are Germany followed by France, Sweden, Austria, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Belgium. During the following decade, the inflow peaked to 4,033,000. At this point, 1,647,000 applicants were from Eastern Europe, 745,000 were Africans, and 1,349,000 were of Asian origin. In short, between 1990 and 2000, the inflow from Eastern Europe alone exceeded the total inflow of the previous decade. For this period the ranking of the top seven destinations appear in a slightly different order. Germany remains the most popular destination but is followed by the UK, the Netherlands, France, Sweden, Belgium, and lastly Austria.

One notes an even greater variance when looking at five years intervals. As can be seen in Table 1 on the following page, while Germany maintains its popularity throughout both decades, the ranking among the top 10 countries fluctuates surprisingly for each time point over the past two decades. Take the Netherlands, for example, which moves from being the 8th most popular country in the first period (1980 to 1984) to being ranked as the 3rd most common destination in the last period (1995 to 1999). Conversely, Austria moves from 3rd place in the first period down to 8th in the third period. Another case in point is Sweden, which steadily increases in popularity during the first three periods from 4th place (1980 to 1984) to 3rd place (1985 to 1989) and then 2nd (1990 to 1994) but drastically falls to 8th place in the final period (1995 to 1999).

Table 1: Ranking of Top 10 Destinations Between 1980-2000 (in rounded hundreds)²

| R | 1980 - 1984 | 1985 - 1989 | 1990 - 1994 | 1995 - 1999 |
|----|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Germany (249 600) | Germany (455 300) | Germany (1 374 700) | Germany (749 600) |
| 2 | France (106 300) | France (178 700) | Sweden (197 000) | UK (223 300) |
| 3 | Austria (63 200) | Sweden (97 100) | France (184 500) | Netherlands (170 400) |
| 4 | Sweden (41 900) | Austria (64 400) | Netherlands (151 100) | France (112 200) |
| 5 | UK (17 500) | Netherlands (46 400) | UK (150 800) | Belgium (93 400) |
| 6 | Italy (16 500) | Denmark (42 100) | Belgium (87 000) | Austria (53 500) |
| 7 | Belgium (14 500) | Belgium (32 100) | Denmark (76 400) | Italy (48 800) |
| 8 | Netherlands (8 800) | UK (28 500) | Austria (76 100) | Sweden (48 500) |
| 9 | Greece (6 400) | Italy (26 300) | Spain (53 100) | Denmark (36 000) |
| 10 | Denmark (5 600) | Greece (24 000) | Italy (40 800) | Spain (30 400) |

This thesis examines the variance noted in these patterns by investigating *which* factors explain *why* asylum seekers go where they go. This has important policy implications on what destination countries can do to handle the growing inflow. In particular, a better understanding of the expectations that influence asylum applicants in their choice of destination is crucial for the design of successful asylum policy and, perhaps even more so, for integration policy. To explore what factors may cause inflow, I here put to the test what appear to be undetermined causal factors and incoherent findings.

² Source: United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees' (UNHCR) Statistical Database.

Arms Export: A Determinant for Asylum Destination?

To my knowledge, three qualitative studies can be found that implies a possible connection between arms export from Western European countries to countries from where asylum flows are generated to specific country destinations in Western Europe. The first one comes from Westander (1995) who focuses on the magnitude of Swedish arms export to countries in war between 1980 and 1994. He identifies a pattern between export destinations and origin countries of refugees living in Sweden: between 1980 and 1994, two out of three asylum applicants in Sweden had left recipient countries of Swedish exports.

Hermele (1997) expands on Westander (1995) in a section of his overarching work on migration and development. Hermele sees arms export as one of the root causes of refugee flows, where export to developing countries is viewed as a contributing push factor to outflow from South to North. Noting how “governments in the North close their eyes to such connections” (p. 154), Hermele outlines how some of the most prominent immigration countries also are major exporters of arms. In 1992 seven top immigration countries accounted for 72% of the global trade in arms, which mounted to 18 billion US dollars. Out of these, the US represented 46%, Germany 10%, France 6%, UK 5%, the Netherlands 2%, Italy 2%, and Sweden 1%. In this context Hermele refers to Westander (1995) and points to how 65% of all refugees entering Sweden between 1983 and 1994 came from war zones where one of the warring parties had received Swedish arms.

Building on the findings by Westander (1995) and Hermele (1997), Mezey, Suter, Fich and Miran (2003) examine its applicability in two separate cases. Drawing on *migration systems theory* they stress macro and micro connections between Sweden and

Iran and Sweden and former Yugoslavia to explain sequential asylum-immigration from these countries to Sweden. To realize a *migration system*, two or more countries have to be linked. If this is the case, migration is believed to arise from these links. Examples of such links are colonialism, political influence, trade, investment or cultural ties. In this context Mezey et al. (2003) stress that an “indirect connection” (Mezey et al., 2003:30) exist between Sweden and Iran and Sweden and former Yugoslavia. In short, they view Swedish arms transfers to the two countries in question as a macro linkage, while informal social networks established by previous Iranian visiting student programs and Yugoslavian labor migration to Sweden constitute links on the micro level. During both conflicts, the Iran-Iraq conflict and the breakdown of former Yugoslavia, asylum applications from Iranians and Yugoslavs filed in Sweden rose dramatically. Their study is limited to immigration data from the 80s and early 90s and to export data by the major Swedish arms manufacturer in this period.

Migration Theory

The field of migration studies presents a few well-known theories and models of international migration, though none of them focus on asylum-immigration. For instance, the theoretical appraisals of *labor migration models* from neo-classical economics have been put forward both on macro (Ranis and Fei, 1961; Harris and Todaro, 1970; Todaro, 1969) and micro-levels (Sjaastad, 1962; Borjas 1990), along with the *segmented labor market theory* by Piore (1979), and the more recent *new economics of labor migration theory* as described by Stark (1991), as well as the theoretical approach of *hegemonic stability theory* coming from the field of political economy (Poston and Micklin, 2006:

359). They all share the view of individual economic maximization via labor opportunities as a determinant for destination choice, with the exception of Stark (1991), who views unemployment insurances as an additional factor that will minimize the risks of labor migration.

Apart from economics, theoretical elucidations include the *international immigration policy theory* (Meyers, 2000); *the world society approach* (Hoffmann-Nowotny, 1989); *social capital theory* (Massey, Goldring, and Durand 1994); *world-systems theory* (Wallerstein 1980; Sassen, 1988)³; *theory of cumulative causation* (Massey, 1990); *network theory* (Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino, and Taylor, 1993); *institutional theory* (Massey et al., 1993); and finally the *migration systems theory*, which largely builds on the previous four theories, (Kritz, Lim, and Zlotnik, 1992; Zolberg and Smith, 1996). From these theories a few possible determinants for destination choice of labor migrants can be drawn. These include immigration policy (not to be confused with asylum policy) in the host country and cultural and linguistic similarities between sending and receiving countries. Other factors are historical, linked to colonial and industrial development, which has provided economic imbalances between countries that are considered to pull migration to where greater economic opportunities exist. Also, ethnic enclaves in destination countries are considered to pull based on close relationships and informal networks. Besides from such networks, advice for immigrants also come from humanitarian groups aiding in obtainment of legal documents and the access of foreign labor markets. In short, most

³ For a more comprehensive outline on the similarities between *World System Theory* and *Marxist theories* as well as its derivative of *dependency theory*, see Andre Gunder Frank 1966; Cardoso and Faletto 1986; Karns and Mingst, 2004:35-57 among others.

theories stress prior links between countries as explanatory factors of why labor migrants choose to go where they go. Often, these links relate to trade or external politico-economic influences exerted by some countries in others.

Quantitative Works on Asylum Destinations

To my knowledge, the following summary of key findings in seven different quantitative studies summarizes all quantitative research on determinants for asylum destination choice among Western European countries.

Böcker, in a small quantitative study, focuses on one time point from a larger qualitative study with Havinga (Böcker and Havinga 1998). Though she does not report which year she looks at, her study consists of 44 origin countries and 10 destinations in Western Europe. She examines the impact of colonial, cultural, and language ties, as well as geographical proximity and trade relations on the choice of destination. Only colonial and language ties, as well as geographical proximity shows an impact on the choice of destination. The first two are positively related while the latter, surprisingly, is negative. In the qualitative section Böcker and Havinga (1998) examine patterns of origins and destinations for asylum seekers in the EU between 1985-1994. They find that asylum seekers from a specific country of origin tend to choose a specific country within the EU. This trend is credited to historical links between the sending and receiving country, such as colonial or labor migratory connections. When the patterns of origin and destinations are compared for separate years, however, it becomes clear that destination targets constantly change. Moreover, some cases are also found to speak against the logic of colonial ties. This is particularly prevalent when EU countries with non-colonial links to

the home country of the applicants receive more applications from these countries than the actual former mother country. Nevertheless, the authors attribute some of the shifts in inflows, from one EU country to another, to changes in policy measures in the more popular destinations. Though, in the end they find such restrictions to have very limited effects. They also conclude, for the 10-year period in question, that no simple linear relationship exists between numbers of applications and the population size of the host country or its gross national product (GNP).

Vogler and Rotte (2000), building on an earlier study by Rotte, Vogler, and Zimmermann (1997), examined asylum inflow from 86 Asian and African countries to Germany for the period 1981 to 1995. Two significant relationships were found: 1) with stock of foreign nationals, which had a positive association; 2) with trade, which is contrary to Böcker (1998), who had a negative relationship. No correlation was found with German aid expenditure to the countries of origin of applicants.

Holzer and Schneider (2002), examine the determinants of all asylum applications filed in Western Europe, EU, and 20 OECD countries between 1980 and 1995. They find negative correlations with higher unemployment, inflation rates, and the economic growth rate. Clearly, the latter result is both unanticipated and contrary to previous findings by Böcker and Havinga (1998). Holzer and Schneider find no association with the ideological orientation of governments, extremist right-wing electoral success, or, contrary to Vogler and Rotte (2000), with the stock of foreigners in the total population of each destination.

When examining the total inflow of asylum seekers to Germany and Switzerland between 1990 and 1995, Holzer, Schneider, and Casey (2002), finds stock of foreign

nationals as well as geographical proximity to exert a positive influence. While the first confirms findings by Vogler and Rotte (2000), contrary to Holzer and Schnider (2000), the second is opposed to Böcker (1998) who found a negative relationship.

Thielemann (2003) analyze 20 OECD countries between 1985 and 1999 and finds two negative relationships with inflow: 1) the total number of registered unemployed people; 2) deterrent policy measures (based on a constructed index). The first is in line with previous findings by Holzer and Schneider (2002). Thieleman explains the correlation by an awareness of economic opportunity and the second by transfers in knowledge of denied entries, via informal asylum networks, to new applicants. Contrary to Holzer and Schneider (2002), however, a strong positive association is shown with historical factors, measured by the share of foreign inhabitants from the top five origins of asylum seekers. This is explained by a general importance of ethnic bonds and that information about the target country reaches asylum seekers via ethnic networks. Actually, this is also somewhat implied by Böcker (1998) and Böcker and Havinga (1998), where historical factors such as colonial and language ties were pointed out to have an impact on destination choice. Another significant and positive relationship by Thielemann is host country aid expenditure in third world countries, relative to the gross national product, suggesting that reputational factors, of how generous a country is, are important. Unlike Holzer and Schneider (2002) but like Böcker and Havinga (1998), Thielemann finds no association with the economic growth rate. Contrary to Böcker (1998) and Holzer, Schneider, and Casey (2002), he finds no correlation with geographical distance.

Eric Neumayer (2004) builds on Böcker (1998), Böcker and Havinga (1998),

Holzer and Schneider (2002), and Thieleman (2003), when he explores determinants for inflow to Western European countries between 1982 and 1999. Surprisingly, and contrary to previous findings, by Holzer and Schneider (2002) and Thieleman (2003), he finds no association with the unemployment rate. The same is true for levels of social and welfare expenditures. Nevertheless, unlike Böcker and Havinga (1998) and Thielemann (2003), but exactly like Holzer and Schneider (2002), he finds a negative association with the economic growth rate. Moreover, contrary to Holzer and Schneider (2002) he finds a negative relationship with extremist right-wing electoral success and a weak, albeit positive, association with left-wing dominated governments, suggesting that the ideological orientations of governments do matter. Moreover, like Thielemann (2003), but contrary to Holzer and Schneider (2002), there is a strong and positive correlation expressed by the presence of existing refugee communities, which he suggests is due to ethnic bonds that continue to pull over time. Similarly he also finds positive associations with colonial links, common language with the host country, and geographical proximity. While the first two confirms prior findings by Böcker (1998), Böcker and Havinga (1998), and Thielemann (2003), the latter is contrary to Böcker (1998) and Thielemann (2003) but confirms Holzer, Schneider, and Casey (2002). Neumayer also notes that the Schengen Convention countries managed to lower their inflow during the same period.

In 2005 Neumayer improves on his 2004 study of Western Europe from 1982 to 1999 and builds on findings by Vogler and Rotte (2000) and Holzer, Schneider, and Casey (2002). Among the important determinants for inflow is geographical proximity. Also, lagged sum of asylum seekers is significant, which he explains by asylum networks as a pull factor for continued inflow. No correlation was found with tourism of nationals

from asylum receiving countries to the countries of origins of applicants, religious similarity, or colonial links. In addition, neither aid nor trade is significant, as these factors probably are “too casual to have a significant impact upon asylum migration” (p. 405). In conclusion, the significance of asylum stock confirms Neumayer (2004) and Thielemann (2003) but remains contrary to Holzer and Schneider (2002). For geographical distance, he confirms his own findings from 2004, as well as Holzer, Schneider, and Casey (2002) but remain contrary to previous findings by Böcker (1998) and Thielemann (2003). The significance of asylum seekers and ethnic bonds also confirms his 2004 findings as well as Thielemann (2003) but remains contrary to Holzer and Schneider (2002). That colonial links are insignificant, however, is contrary to his 2004 findings and thus also to Böcker (1998), Böcker and Havinga (1998), and Thielemann (2003). The insignificance of aid expenditure is contrary to Thielemann (2003) and the insignificance of trade confirms Böcker (1998) but is contrary to findings by Vogler and Rotte (2000).

Assessment of Previous Findings

When reviewing previous works I recognize two areas to explore. The first concerns the hypothetical relationship between arms export and asylum inflow and the second an under theorized framework for asylum-immigration. From research on arms export there is a general pattern between Swedish arms export and asylum inflow. The first thing to do is to see if there is a more specific pattern and to see if it holds more generally. If it does, then, it is likely to be spurious. The reason for this is the absence of a casual mechanism to explain *why* out-flow asylum-migration from arms-importing

countries would go directly to the source of arms export. In my view, such an obscure connection does not make sense since out-flow can go anywhere. It seems that a connection cannot be explained unless other factors are taken into account, as in the case by Mezey et al. (2003) where they refer to previous establishment of social networks. Therefore, if a correlation is found it ought to depend upon other factors than arms export. In short, from a theoretical point of view I argue that causes of outgoing migration should be separated from determinants of asylum-immigration. To illustrate this point I use an example from the asylum-immigration discourse presented by Amnesty International that builds upon the assumption of an indirect connection between these two variables. Contemplate the following statement by Amnesty International in the context of EU:

In stark contrast with the enormous obstacles that refugees have to overcome to find refuge and protection in the EU, is the ease with which arms continue to find their way from Europe to fuel violent conflict... Deficiencies [sic] in EU policies on third countries, such as inadequate controls of small arms exports from and through EU member states to third countries, may contribute to the conditions which force people to flee their countries and seek refuge in the European Union. (Amnesty International, 2001:2,7).

In this case EU is seen as an aggregated actor whose export may have an indirect impact on asylum-immigration going to EU. Like in previous examples, however, there is no explanation as to *why* a possible contribution to out-flow migration would generate inflow back to the source of arms. Moreover, one can think of an example that provides an opposite logic to any assumed indirect connection between these variables. A case in point is China. Judging from arms transfer data ranging from 2000 to 2007, China qualifies as the fifth largest supplier of arms in the world (Grimmett, 2008: 69). However, China's overall registered asylum applications from 2000 until 2005 show a mere 191

cases (UNHCR, 2005: 290). Following this logic, the reasons for the large asylum-immigration to Western Europe ought to depend on other factors.

Furthermore, the importance of a causal mechanism to explain correlations in all sociological research is well documented and commonly established practice. It is one thing to note trends between two variables, but it is another to explain how they connect. And if one cannot think of a reasonable explanation as to why the one variable would explain the other, then the correlation is likely to be spurious. Hedström and Swedberg (1996) provide a good example of the importance to explain macro level connections by means of individuals in their macro-micro-macro approach. In following their model, first, on the macro-level there has to be an observed correlation between A and B and, second, this correlation has to connect to a micro level explanation. To note a correlation between arms export from A to B and sequential asylum-inflow from B to A cannot infer to micro from macro. It is therefore merely a macro level phenomenon lacking a micro level explanation as to *why* asylum-immigration arises to the same destination as the source of arms. In fact, once an individual has become an asylum seeker the destinations to choose from are many and could therefore possibly lead to C, D, E, F and so on. For that reason, to thoroughly examine the relationship between these variables I will proceed to test the hypothesis provided by Amnesty International on the aggregated level of the EU. To do so, I test arms-export data from 17 Western European countries, covering 26 years (1981 to 2007), against data on asylum-inflow to these same countries. In addition, I also perform disaggregated country level tests for direct correlations.

The second thing to do is to develop a specific framework for asylum-immigration theory. This is necessary as much of existing quantitative research, by drawing on

migration theory, tends to treat asylum seekers as labor migrants, which, because of their rather different life situations, is problematic. Because of this tendency, however, most theoretical propositions have already been examined in the existing body of quantitative studies. Though, the findings are often uncertain given the frequency of contradictory results. Moreover, for two of the studies generalizations are difficult. For example, Vogler and Rotte (2000), focuses exclusively on Germany, while Holzer, Schneider, and Casey, (2002) look at Germany and Switzerland. With respect to the remaining works, the periods under scrutiny extends to 17 years at most. In view of this, I will add to existing literature by examining what factors, as different from those presupposed by labor migration theory, explains destination variances in asylum-inflow. I look at 17 Western European countries over 26 years and outline three factors that I argue will hold to explanation the variance in destinations. Next, I formalize these factors as variables for the statistical analysis. In doing so, I diverge from migration theory while drawing on previous quantitative works. This is how my study makes a contribution.

What Determines Inflow and Why?

Once an asylum seeker has left the home country and intends to seek asylum somewhere in Europe there are 17 possible countries to choose from. Considering the high levels of insecurity that asylum seekers are exposed to in their countries of origin, while exiting their home country, as well as in their journeys to Europe, what ought to be important for determining their choice of destination are aspects that indicate the opposite of these experiences. Of theoretical relevance therefore are levels of security, hospitality, tolerance for diversity, and opportunity in the potential host countries. In particular, the

generosity of the welfare state, absence of *far right politics*, and accommodation for *religious diversity* are conditions that can be assumed to have a real sway in the cost benefit analysis of destination choices made on the individual level of each applicant respectively.

In contrast to a how wealthy a country is, which spread can be uneven over a population, a very *generous welfare state* decreases inequalities among the population through redistributive policies. It generates greater equality of opportunity to education and healthcare with documented outcomes in higher levels of literacy and life expectancy (Sen, 1996). While varying in their cover of traditional social risks such as unemployment, illness, disability and old age, today the European welfare states are primarily concerned with streamlining policy and responses to new challenges. Of particular importance are social justice and inclusion, full employment for both women and men, support for single parenthood, and the upholding of an active and knowledgeable population in an era of demographic changes faced by a large and aging population (Esping-Andersen, Gallie, Hemerijck & Myles, 2002). With respect to asylum-inflow, the *generosity of the welfare state* is likely to matter because of all these reasons, primarily because together they signify security. Accordingly, if a welfare state is very generous, its possibility of being selected in the trade off between potential destinations can also be assumed to be larger as its attraction value ought to increase.

The absence of *far right politics* in a potential host country can be implicitly understood to influence the choice of destinations among asylum seekers because far right party-platforms have tendencies to violence, neo-fascism, and anti-immigration. Political leaders of European extremist parties are also very blunt and outspoken in their

support for halting further immigration and ending all programs in favor of multiculturalism (Eatwell, 2000:407). The more prevalent such ideological sentiments are, the greater the projected message of an insecure environment for asylum-seekers. Also, hostile attitudes go along with indirect effects on asylum policy, as higher concentrations of right wing populism in potential host countries are indicative of restrictive asylum-policies (Hatton, 2005:112-113). As a result, such countries are likely to appear less attractive among applicants as it implies that the chances of having their application rejected increases, while if successful, their chance of accessing general welfare decreases.

Religious diversity can be assumed to matter for two reasons. First, on a more general level, it gives an image of how pluralistic a society is. Varying degrees of state support for religious diversity also indicates actual possibilities to practice ones culture. Likewise, pluralistic countries imply a greater openness towards asylum-seekers compared to less pluralistic ones and indicates an acceptance of foreigners. Second, and more importantly, I argue that higher levels of religious diversity are indicative of pre-established networks that pull inflow. In order for welfare, far right, or religious diversity to enter a cost benefit analysis at all, the information about their relevance has to reach the asylum seeker. In explaining the second aspect of why religious diversity matters, therefore, I will partly build on network theory proposed by Granovetter (1973).

It must to be noted that my approach differs from *network theory* presented within previous literature on migration theory for three reasons: (1) previous theory focuses on close social connections presented by family and friendship ties in migration for job opportunities to minimize risks of migration (Poston and Micklin, 2006: 358); (2)

previous theory also hold ethnic ties as unique network characteristics in the establishments of ethnic entrepreneurial enclaves among immigrant groups (Valdez, 2002:1-2); and (3) previous theories stresses a connection between immigrants and non-migrants for employment at the destination; (Massey et al., 1993). By contrast, my approach differs in all three aspects.

First, I argue that close connections in relationships are not crucial for asylum migration, as I hold the opposite to be true, for reasons that I will elaborate on below. Second, I argue that is not important what ethnic groups inhabit a country in order to decide for a destination since asylum seekers can be assumed to not primarily be on the move because they intend to rejoin with a specific community or advance their job-opportunities within ethnic entrepreneurial enclaves. Their situation differs in this respect from other migrants, as they are assumed to flee persecution. As such, close ties used to advance job opportunities are not a crucial determinant for destination. In particular since the most important thing for an asylum seeker ought to be to reach a safe and secure environment that denotes the opposite of what has been experienced in the home country. Prospects pertaining to job advancement are therefore irrelevant in this context. In this respect, some of the previous literature also stresses the importance of language for destination choice of asylum seekers. This goes hand in hand with the argument for job enhancement where colonial ties and language similarities are seen as crucial determinants for labor migration. While linguistic similarities between the country of origin and country destination may be important for job advancement, this argument can hardly be relevant for an asylum seeker since their situation is quite different from labor migrants. It is therefore, from a theoretical point of view, problematic to apply labor

migration theory to the context of asylum-immigration. Moreover, keeping in mind the variance in targeted destinations, regardless of destination, if one intends to settle in a foreign country, language training is unavoidable in the long-term perspective. Language, therefore, like access to work, should not matter for inflow. Third, knowing that refugee communities tend to be segregated from communities by nationals and rarely integrate to the job market efficiently, the aspect of migration theory which stresses a connection between immigrants and non-migrants for employment at the destination is not likely to be applicable in the context of asylum-immigration. Instead, by following Granovetter (1973), I will argue that efficient intra-group networking within alienated refugee communities occurs for other purposes than job search. And, that how efficiently information is diffused through these networks depends on the degree of religious diversity within each community. This last point also ties in to my argument about how close connections in relationships are not crucial. I begin to address the first and the second point will follow.

Now, it is commonly known that information concerning possible destinations reaches asylum seekers via informal networks. Essential information is received from acquaintances, family or friends, or friends of friends and family, as well as agents or traffickers that assist in travel arrangements. Agents, in turn, are connected with local refugee communities in Europe and are able to stay up-dated on crucial information regarding policy changes and the like (Robinson and Segrott, 2002:1-4). In this respect, I view the refugee community of a destination country as a distinct group that forms part of aggregated networks of “*weak ties*” (Granovetter, 1973) that link people across national borders. The refugee community can be regarded as distinct because of two reasons.

Firstly, it rests on a foundation of similar life experiences, which stands in contrast to that of the rest of the population. And secondly, while having a geographically clustered and gathering character within the community it has a segregated nature separating it from the rest of the population (Kelly, 2003). The boundaries between communities are therefore defined. Moreover, in terms of religious diversity, it is fair to assume the refugee community to be heavily pluralistic as its members come from a plethora of different backgrounds. Accordingly, what connects this group of individuals is not their religious similarity but the “weak ties” constituted by the commonalities of their many life experiences. Additionally, the religious demography of Western Europe has with respect to past 500 years, or so, been rather homogenous, signified by Christianity as the main religion. Population wise, it is therefore reasonable to assume that religious diversity is indicative of a recent demographic change, such as that of emerging refugee communities. In this respect, linguistic and ethnic diversity cannot constitute an equivalent measure of diversity since the history of Western Europe is colored with wars that have altered national boundaries. Historically, this has allowed for many changes whereby differing European ethnicities, also speaking their own mother tongue, have been incorporated into new territories. Likewise, continuous intra-European migration also blurs linguistic and ethnic diversity from being able to differentiate between old and recent add-ons of diversity, such as that provided by the refugee community.

Granovetter (1973) is important in this respect specifically because he defines “the strength of weak ties” strictly in terms of how fast information can diffuse through weak interpersonal ties and regards them “as indispensable to individual’s opportunities and to their integration into communities” (1973:1378). As such, the segregation of

refugees in European society is, on the one hand, essential in diffusing intra-group information across national borders. On the other hand, the internal aspect of religious diversity of the refugee community is vital in the establishment of numerous weak ties between smaller groupings of intra-groups.

To illustrate the importance of weak ties Granovetter uses a case study of job search. If you are looking for a job it is far more beneficial to contact acquaintances (weaker ties) rather than a close friend (strong tie), as a friend is unlikely to provide you with information that you do not have. As such, a strong tie between individuals, if it is their only tie, is far less valuable when it comes to the diffusion of information compared to those who have several weaker ties. As a result, if individuals all have strong ties and are all friends then there is a lack of new information reaching the group. Conversely, a weak tie can form a bridge between groups, realized by the mobility of an individual from one group to another via a new job obtained in the new group (1973:1372-1373).

In applying this theory to the asylum seeking community, the strength of how fast information transcends through the network of acquaintances, friends, family, friends of friends and family, and agents can be regarded in relation to how religiously fractionalized that community is. Instead of networking through casual linkages when looking for a job, as in the example provided by Granovetter, refugees can be assumed to network within its community in search for information that is essential for their purposes. The mobility of an asylum seeker from its origin to a destination, can therefore be assumed to often constitute a bridge between smaller groups of the refugee community, which if maintained properly will aid in the diffusion of information through the many weak ties connected to both sides and therefore further diffusion of information.

In following Granovetter (1973), therefore, I argue that while the segregation of refugee communities in European countries may give an appearance of alienation, the degree of religious diversity within each community is rather indicative of a greater likelihood for “weaker ties”, such as acquaintances, to appear specifically between smaller intra-groups. Accordingly, the greater the religious diversity within each community, the more likely it is for crucial information to diffuse efficiently across national borders. Consequently, while it intuitively is tempting to think that religious similarity between applicant and destination would be of importance for determining larger inflow, the opposite is true. Indeed, this is in line with previous findings by Neumayer (2005:405), who also confirms findings by Böcker (1998), showing religious similarity between origin and destinations in the EU to be insignificant determinants for destination choices among asylum applicants.

When added to the cost benefit analysis of destination choices made on the individual level of each applicant respectively, religious diversity can thus be assumed to contribute to a more cognizant decision for two reasons. Firstly, a country with high diversity has a stronger pulling force because of its ability to efficiently diffuse crucial information via informal channels. Also, such countries possess a greater knowledge-stock of asylum application procedures, general information concerning educational prospects, as well as information pertaining to access to health care and the like. Secondly, on a more general level, diversity is indicative of tolerance and pluralism, and this too is likely to transmit through the same channels of many “weak ties”.

Accordingly, while individual preferences concerning *welfare* and absence of *far right* are likely to influence asylum applicants in their choices of destinations, they are

also linked to the proposed diffusion mechanism captured by *religious diversity*. The more religiously diverse a country is, therefore, the greater the stock of essential information as well as its ability of being efficiently diffused. A religiously diverse country is therefore a country which asylum seekers can be assumed to have greater knowledge about in comparison to countries that are less diverse. Nevertheless, on the whole, while *religious diversity* seems to have a key function for inflow, both *welfare generosity* and absence of *far right* ought to matter. Their relevance, however, can somewhat be assumed to depend on how diverse a country is.

Case Analysis: Some Examples From the UK, Sweden, and the EU

In considering the potential significance of a *generous welfare state*, it is interesting to note that previous research accord this aspect to play a rather influential part in the choice of destination among asylum seekers. For instance, Robinson and Segrott (2002) found that potential access to state funded education had a strong influence on the choice of destination among asylum seekers in the UK. In their survey, the general perceptions of European welfare levels and economic opportunity were found to be more or less the same among all applicants. The understood access to education, considered as part of the generosity of the UK's welfare state, however, was a stronger determinant in deciding for possible destinations than the perceived opportunity to obtain work (Robinson and Segrott, 2002:3-4). In fact, "most respondents thought that they would be able to undertake educational courses when they arrived in the UK and that this would significantly alter their options for the future" (Robinson and Segrott, 2002:3).

Similarly, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2004:17-18) explains the phenomenon of single asylum seeking children that arrive in Sweden by its well established and largely generous levels of welfare. In many cases the actual reason for the asylum claim are to access education or universal healthcare. Frequently, claims of asylum put forward by single children have been found to be fraudulent. Instead, poor economic conditions in the country of origin, or lack of possibilities to treat a medical condition of the child, may be real reasons underlying the claim. Often, these children have been found to send parts of their Swedish social security income as remittances to relatives in the home country. And, occasionally, single refugee children have also functioned as an anchor, which has been utilized by relatives to enter the country at a

future point in time, claiming family ties with the child (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2004:17-18). Nevertheless, while these examples are specific to refugee children, there is good reason to believe that the reputation of Sweden as a generous welfare state holds the same attraction value for most asylum seekers.

Moreover, previous research that examines effects of *far right* sentiments on inflow also indicates that hostile sentiments towards immigrants deter inflow and impacts on asylum policy. In particular, policy changes are designed to account for the assumed attraction values of generous welfare provisions in host countries. For example, Bloch (2000) points out that to “deter those who might come to Britain on account of the perceptions of generous welfare provisions ... most recent reforms [have aimed to] ... curtail welfare” (Bloch, 2000:32). And more importantly, that the introduction of such policy measures effectively has eroded access to welfare provisions by asylum seekers, “creating greater inequalities between asylum seekers and others” (Bloch, 2000:33). Also Burnett and Peel (2001) emphasizes this point when they write that the UK “policy of fining airlines and transport companies found to be carrying people without the correct documents means that it is becoming increasingly difficult for refugees to travel and forces them to depend on human traffickers” (2001:486). Clearly, in the shaping of recent policy trends, UK authorities are implementing a more restrictive policy aimed to reduce the attraction value of welfare in the hope of achieving less asylum-inflow. Accordingly, the UK exemplifies the previously mentioned theoretical relationship between hostile sentiments towards refugees and inflow as well as that of the generosity of the welfare state with inflow, as they go hand in hand with recent policy changes.

Furthermore, the same policy trends as in the UK can be seen on a general scale across the EU where some studies indicate actual effects on inflow of such measurements. According to this research the level of antagonism in a potential host country do seem to indirectly impact on inflow of asylum seekers. Indeed, Hatton (2005:112-113) among others, argue that it is commonly acknowledged that intolerant public opinion towards refugees has caused European policy makers to restrain policies. Consequently, Hatton finds that stricter guidelines have contributed to a reduction in “the number of applicants, particularly among those with weaker claims” (2005:113). Also Böcker and Havinga (1998) found similar results, where stringent policy measures in the European Union “seem[ed] to indicate that policy measures may have marked effects [on number of incoming applicants]” (1998:263). In addition, Thielemann (2003:27-29) and Neumayer (2004:176) support that firmer asylum policies have deterred total number of applicants in the EU. One example of sterner policy that seem to have been particularly effective is “enforced physical reallocation of asylum seekers” (Neumayer, 2004:176), now implemented by some of the most popular destination countries, like Germany.

On the individual level of each asylum seeker, research by Neumayer (2005:392) accounts for the trade-off between potential access to welfare benefits and hostile attitudes towards immigrants in deciding for a particular destination within the EU. He argues that images of “generous welfare provisions” in the destination country on the one hand increase the benefits for asylum seekers. While, on the other hand, “detering measures such as restriction on welfare benefits and working rights, the risk of ones application becoming rejected because of low recognition rates, limited appeal

opportunities and the threat of forced removal all raise the cost of migration” (Neumayer, 2005:392).

As asylum policy within the EU is becoming more streamlined and stringent, asylum seekers are increasingly forced to rely on *informal networks*. Many often end up traveling without proper documents, such as visas now commonly required to prevent further inflow (Burnett & Peel, 2001:486). Consequently, asylum seekers are becoming increasingly dependent on informal channels in their journeys and application processes for asylum. Crucial information of changes in asylum policy, increased rejection rates, or an increased likelihood of being accepted because of specific circumstances, are therefore very likely to cause adaptations in their strategies and perhaps even alter their choice of destination. Efficient dissemination of information can thus be assumed to be more crucial in determining levels of asylum-inflow. In this respect, Thielemann (2003:29) argues convincingly that information about cases of denied entries in the EU “do reach asylum seekers either directly or indirectly through their agents or traffickers ... and that the likelihood of asylum seekers ... to remain in the host country should they wish to do so, ... is of ... utmost importance [in their choice of destination]” (2003:29). This is also in line with findings in a survey conducted by Robinson and Segrott in the UK (2002:1-4), which found that while most asylum seekers are *unable* to stay updated with changes in policy, general information about denied entries do transcend through many of the informal networks that asylum seekers rely on. In particular, agents and traffickers are more likely to be well versed on policy changes in terms of rejection rates and the like (Robinson and Segrott, 2002:1-4).

Quantitative Analysis

Because this is a quantitative study, the previous case analyses are limited in scope since they are rather case specific than generally applicable. They do, however, serve to illustrate how certain factors play out on the individual level of an asylum applicant in the context of asylum-immigration to specific destinations. Having said that, the strength of my explanatory model, presented on the following pages, is its general applicability. Therefore, by testing variables on a general scale, on the aggregate, across 17 Western European countries over a period of 26 years, and finding them to hold, or not to hold, may very well allow for some cases where the opposite is true, or where my findings are not applicable. This is because the model indicates the pooled average size of effect of each variable on inflow, drawn from 17 countries, across time, for each country respectively. Accordingly, to assume the aggregate average effect of each variable to be the same for each country would be an ecological fallacy since the spread may very well be uneven between countries. The aggregate coefficient may therefore conceal a variance, visible only when disaggregating the data (Liebersson, 1985:107). As such, on the aggregate, the average trend for each factor, such as the relevance of how generous a welfare state is, the level of right-wing extremist politics in a country, or the degree of religious fractionalization, is drawn from the regression coefficient in the model. The limitation of the model, therefore, is that the results may only be robust on a general scale.

The statistical modeling technique employed is pooled time series analysis. Two effects are controlled for: (1) Unit effects (a problem that occurs when number of countries > number of years so that there are more units than average observations per

groups) are controlled for by the estimation technique of Random-effects GLS regression; (2) Serial correlation effects (occurs when the number of years > number of countries so that there are more average observations per groups than units) are controlled for by the Prais-Winsten regression, correlated panels-corrected-standard-errors (PCSEs) estimation technique. In the case of this study, however, it matters little which effect is controlled for since the number of units is almost equal to that of the number of groups, the number of units are 15 (t-2; 17-2)⁴. I lose two units because I examine across time and the time series analysis approached employed mathematically demands a reduction of two units. The average number of observations per groups is 16.7.

Variables

To measure the *dependent* variable of asylum-inflow to Western European countries, I use time series data of submitted asylum applications from the *United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees' (UNHCR) Statistical Database*.⁵ Only applications where the origins of the asylum seekers were known are included. The number of years for which data is available differs depending on which country is examined and ranges from 1964 to 2008. There are certain limitations with this data. As it is often held that economic migrants claim asylum under the 1951 Refugee Convention, some of the claims may be incorrectly accounted for. However, since it is impossible to

⁴ The 17 countries included in the study are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Malta, Norway, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Kingdom.

⁵ See Table 2 for information on variable measurements and data collection.

know exactly how many claims are legitimate, I have been unable to differentiate between economic migrants and asylum seekers in the data.

In order to see if arms export from Western European countries has an impact on received inflow of asylum seekers, this *independent* variable is measured using conventional arms export data from *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Arms Transfers Database*. Time series data is presented as Trend Indicator Values (TIVs) listed in US\$ million at standard 1990 prices and provide an indication of the volume of arms transferred. Data availability differs depending on country and ranges from 1950-2008. Trade within Western Europe is excluded from the model.

As suggested earlier, a correlation between arms export from Western European countries and its received asylum-inflow, if found, is likely to be spurious. Instead, I have argued that what ought to matter for inflow are (1) *generosity of the welfare state*, (2) levels of *far right* and (3) *religious diversity*.

For the first independent variable (1) I use *Source OECD Aggregated Data on Social Expenditure*, ranging from 1980-2005. The data is in time series measured in % of GDP and is obtained from official government statistics.

Because of problems with reversed causality, independent variable (2) is an *instrumental variable* for which I use *World Development Indicators Dataset* on unemployment as a % of total labor force. Reversed causality appears when the observed causation moves in the opposite direction of what is intended. In this case, inflow is likely to increase far right politics in a country, since percentage of votes for extremist parties are known to increase in reaction to inflow. This creates a problem with respect to using percentage votes for extremist parties to measure the impact of far right sentiments

on inflow. The problem emerge since it is not perfectly clear if what is captured in the analysis is the effect of inflow on right wing extremist parties or the effect of right-wing sentiments on inflow. More than likely, these variables reinforce each other in a synergetic process. To circumvent this dilemma I use a so-called instrumental variable. An instrumental variable is a variable that moves in the same direction as the independent variable while not being affected by the variable one seeks to explain. However, instrumental variables are imperfect substitutes because, with them, we lose the opportunity to directly observe the real impact of the variables they are replacing. For this reason, they should not be used unless absolutely necessary, which is the case here. For a more complete and technical treatment on this issue see Bartles (1991), Angrist, Guido and Rubin (1996) and Dunning (2008). Concerning the data, for the instrumental variable I use the *World Development Indicators Dataset* on unemployment as a % of total labor force. Unemployment tends to move in the same direction as popularity of far right parties (i.e. when unemployment is high the popularity for right wing extremist parties increases). This is often seen in the context of political propaganda that scapegoat immigrants for taking jobs away from nationals or for parasitizing on the welfare system. Availability of time series data on unemployment varies per country from 1980-2008. Concerning the suitability of this data, it could be argued that employment opportunities might affect migration decisions more generally and as a result there might be a measurement error when using this data. In this study, however, I have maid the point of not treating asylum seekers as labor migrants as their life situation differs greatly from that of labor migrants. Following the line of my previous argumentation, it is therefore highly unlikely that when a refugee picks countries, she/he looks at the unemployment

rate in that country, so this particular variable of unemployment should work as an instrumental variable.

To measure the proposed diffusion mechanism of “weak ties”, *independent variable (3)*, I use time invariant data from the *Alesina, Devleeschauwer, Easterly and Kurlat Dataset* on religious fractionalization, measured nationwide. This is because there is no time series data available for this variable. Instead, it shows only one observation for a particular time point. In this situation, the only thing to do is to treat the fractionalization variable as time-invariant. This is acceptable since it is a relatively reasonable assumption that fractionalization changes very slowly, if at all. Also, as argued previously, religiously, Western Europe has been rather homogenous for the past 500 years or so, which allows for the assumption of religious diversity as a good measure of recent demographical changes in fractionalization, such as that provided by recently emerging refugee communities. In this respect, ethnic and linguistic diversity cannot be regarded as good of a measure because they display historically inherited variances of Western Europe.

As mentioned previously, in contrast to welfare, the wealth of a country is not likely to affect inflow since asylum seekers, theoretically, ought to be mainly interested in accessing social security. Welfare, as opposed to wealth, guarantees a more even access to health care provisions, education, and social security benefits due to redistributive policies. Wealth, therefore, seems to be an unlikely determinant for inflow, as it can be concentrated to a small portion of the population. To show this logic I use two different independent variables. *Independent variable (4)* consists of GDP/capita measured in constant 2000 US\$, retrieved from the *World Development Indicators*

Dataset. Availability of GDP data differs among countries going from 1960 to 2008. For independent variable (5) I use the *Human Development Index Trends* provided by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Index data is available from 1975 to 2008.

Moreover, I have also argued that ethnic and linguistic diversity, as opposed to religious diversity, are theoretically unimportant for inflow and do not constitute good measures of diversity within refugee communities. This is because, historically, Western Europe been rather religiously homogenous while displaying great variances in ethnicities and languages within each country. To illustrate this point, for independent variable (6) and (7), I use the *Alesina, Devleeschauwer, Easterly and Kurlat Dataset*, which displays time invariant data on ethnic and linguistic fractionalization respectively, measured nationwide. For the same reasons as with religious fractionalization this is because there is no time series data available for these variables. In this case too it is a relatively reasonable assumption that fractionalization changes very slowly, if at all.

Table 2: Measurements of Variables and Data Collection

| Variable | Data set | Measurement |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Asylum-inflow | <i>United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees' (UNHCR) Statistical Database Stockholm</i> | Time series data of total numbers of per person filed asylum applications, excluding applicants of unknown origin. Data is obtained by the UNHCR from member states official records. |
| Arms export | <i>International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Arms Transfers Database Source OECD</i> | Time series data is presented as Trend Indicator Values (TIVs) listed in US\$ million at standard 1990 prices and provide an indication of the volume of arms transferred. Trade within Western Europe is excluded from the model. Data is originally collected from official government statistics. |
| Generosity of the welfare state | <i>Aggregated Data on Social Expenditure World Development Indicators Dataset</i> | Time series data of aggregated social expenditure, measured in % of GDP. Data is obtained from official government statistics. |
| Far right | | Time series data on unemployment as a % of total labor force. Data is obtained from official government statistics. |
| Weak ties | <i>Alesina, Devleeschauwer, Easterly and Kurlat Dataset on religious fractionalization</i> | Time invariant data on religious fractionalization among population, bounded between 0 and 1. Level of aggregation of religion varies across countries. Muslim, for example, is sometimes subdivided and other times not. Data is originally “from the Encyclopedia Britannica (2001). The distinctions in this data are perhaps less controversial and subject to arbitrary definitions than the data on linguistic and ethnic fractionalization, since the boundaries of religions are more clear and definitions consistent across countries” (Alesina et al., 2003). |
| Wealth of a country | <i>World Development Indicators Dataset</i> | Time series data on GDP/capita measured in constant 2000 US\$. |
| Wealth of a country | <i>Human Development Index Trends, UNDP</i> | Time series data bounded between 0 and 1. It includes three aspects, (1) “life expectancy at birth, (2) knowledge and education, as measured by the adult literacy rate (with two-thirds weighting) and the combined primary, secondary, and tertiary gross enrollment ratio (with one-third weighting), (3) standard of living, as measured by GDP per capita in PPP terms in US\$” (UNDP, 2007-2008). |
| Ethnic fractionalization | <i>Alesina, Devleeschauwer, Easterly and Kurlat Dataset on religious fractionalization</i> | Time invariant data bounded between 0 and 1. Some of the ethnicity data for European countries “such as Belgium, Luxembourg, and Switzerland largely reflects languages (for example, the “ethnicities”... identified in Switzerland include: German 65 percent, French 18 percent, Italian 10 percent, other Swiss 6 percent and Romansch 1 percent. The definition of ethnicity combines racial and linguistic characteristics. Data is originally from Encyclopedia Britannica (2001)” (Alesina et al., 2003). |
| Linguistic fractionalization | <i>Alesina, Devleeschauwer, Easterly and Kurlat Dataset on religious fractionalization</i> | Time invariant data bounded between 0 and 1 “based exclusively on data from Encyclopedia Britannica (2001), which reports the shares of languages spoken as “mother tongues,” generally based on national census data” (Alesina et al., 2003). |

Data and Findings

I begin to examine the argued relationship between arms export and inflow of asylum seekers. First, I perform a test of direct correlation between export and inflow on country levels. For arms export, I use a lag of 3 years since it is reasonable to assume export to have an impact on inflow first after some time. In total, the test covers a period of 26 years (1981-2007). The results are presented in Table 3, which shows a notable between-country variance. With respect to Sweden, where some have claimed an indirect connection, the correlation is weak and shows a value of $r = .06$ ($N=26$). Likewise, Austria indicates an even weaker correlation of $r = .05$, while Spain displays no correlation at all $r = .00$ ($N=26$). In contrast, Portugal displays the strongest direct correlation of $r = .51$, and, similarly, Greece shows a strong correlation of $r = .50$ ($N=26$). Comparatively, France shows an intermediate value of $r = .19$, while increasingly stronger correlations are displayed by Germany: $r = .25$, Belgium: $r = .26$, Denmark: $r = .27$, Switzerland: $r = .27$, and the Netherlands: $r = .32$ ($N=26$). Interestingly, and counter intuitively, however, strong negative values are found for Norway: $r = -.52$, UK: $r = -.32$, and Finland: $r = -.29$, whereas Italy displays a comparatively weaker negative correlation of $r = -.13$ ($N=26$). For the countries with negative values, this implies that greater arms export generates less inflow of asylum seekers.

Table 3: Country Level Effects of Arms Export on Inflow 1981-2007

| Country ⁶ | Direct Correlation |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Austria | .05 |
| Belgium | .26 |
| Denmark | .27 |
| Finland | -.29 |
| France | .19 |
| Italy | -.13 |
| Netherlands | .32 |
| Norway | -.52 |
| Sweden | .06 |
| Switzerland | .27 |
| UK | -.32 |
| Spain | .00 |
| Portugal | .51 |
| Greece | .50 |
| Germany | .25 |

Next, I conduct the same test in the aggregate of 17 Western European countries. As such, the average trend for arms export on inflow, across time, is drawn from the regression coefficient in the model. This indicates the pooled average size of effect of export, from each country across time, on its own inflow. Like in the previous case, I use a lag of 3 years for arms export (xlag3). The period covered remains 26 years (1981-2007). The aggregate direct correlation is $r = .28$ ($N=26$), clearly strong. As mentioned earlier, it would be an ecological fallacy to assume the aggregate coefficient to hold for each country alone (Liebersson, 1985:107). This becomes particularly evident by looking at the uneven spread between countries in Table 3, which, clearly, is not indicated by the

⁶ Malta and Ireland have been excluded due to lack of data on arms export.

pooled average effect. The aggregate coefficient therefore conceals a variance, visible only when disaggregating the data.

Next, I test the robustness of the aggregated correlation in an extended multiple regression model adding the seven independent variables. As seen in Tables 4 and 5, when adding the variables the correlation between arms export lagged three years (xlag3) and inflow (y) diminishes. Indeed, as argued previously, this indicates a spurious relationship between arms export and inflow. Moreover, clearly in line with my theoretical presumptions are significant values for levels of welfare (social expenditure), far right political parties (unemployment), and religious diversity (religious fractionalization). In this respect, in contrast to welfare, the wealth of the country (measured by GDP/capita and HDI) is shown to be insignificant for inflow. This is because, from the perspective of an asylum seeker, welfare matters since redistributive policies guarantees a more even spread of welfare across the population in comparison to wealth. Accordingly, the more even the spread the greater the possibility of accessing health care provisions, state funded education, and social securities. Wealth, on the other hand, is a measure that often conceals an uneven spread. Even if the indicated overall wealth is high, in reality it may actually be concentrated to a small portion of the population while the rest is rather poor. Nevertheless, regardless of the estimation technique used, these findings remain robust, as indicated in both Table 4 and 5. For social expenditure and religious fractionalization the coefficients show positive relationships with inflow, with religious fractionalization as the strongest determinant. Accordingly, while the generosity of the welfare state certainly can be assumed to have an impact in the cost benefit analysis of each applicant respectively, the many “weak

ties”, constituted by the commonalities of the various life experiences within the refugee community, can too be understood to have a real sway in the dissemination of information. Also, as expected, unemployment is negatively associated with inflow. The greater the level of far right sentiments in a country the lesser the inflow.

Ethnic and linguistic diversity (ethnic and linguistic fractionalization) shows inconclusive results between the models. Because the two different estimations denote lack of robustness for these variables their significance can be regarded as relatively weak. By contrast, religious diversity remains highly significant for both models. Certain similarities exist between religious diversity and ethnic diversity, which in view of the findings indicates that these variables may slightly overlap in their measurements. That is because ethnic diversity often coincides with religious diversity, also shown by the positive sign of their respective coefficients (Table 4 and 5). Still, implicitly, religion ought to be more socially cohesive than ethnicity, since it is more common to belong to different ethnicities while sharing the same religion than to share ethnicity but not religion. This is also exemplified by the inherited ethnic diversity of Europe but rather religious homogeneity of the past 500 years or so. Religion thus tends to bridge ethnic cleavages. In terms of fractionalization, therefore, religious diversity can be assumed to hold a more robust measurement compared to ethnicity and, as such, it is a more important determinant of inflow. This, too, is supported by the differences in R^2 between the models, where ethnic and linguistic fractionalizations exhibit significant values in the second model but not in the first. In this regard, the explanatory power of model 1 (Table 4: $R^2 = .26$) is much stronger than model 2 (Table 5: $R^2 = .12$). For linguistic diversity, the negative coefficient (seen in both Table 4 and 5) denotes measurements of the actual

languages spoken in a country i.e. mother tongues spoken in the household. It shows that more private languages spoken in a country lessens the inflow. However, the values for both ethnic and linguistic fractionalization are inconclusive between the models, which is in line with reasons discussed previously i.e. that neither linguistic nor ethnic diversity ought to matter for inflow of asylum seekers.

In sum, contrary to previous studies and discourses put forward by NGOs like Amnesty International, I find arms export from Western European countries not to impact on their received asylum immigration. Instead, conclusive determinants are social expenditure, religious fractionalization and absence of far right politics. In view of social expenditure as a significant determinant for asylum inflow one can further hypothesize a counter-intuitive relationship between arms export and inflow by drawing on literature stressing the “guns for butter trade off” (Russett 1970; Wilensky 1975:74-80; Huber, Ragin and Stephens 1993:14, 16, 26-28 among others). These literatures indicate military expenditure to be positively linked with the size of the total public sector, but to have a negative association to transfer payments and social benefit expenditure. As such, every year’s government resources spent on the military are direct diversions from what could have been allocated to social expenditure. Social expenditure, therefore, ought to be negatively related to arms export. To test this presumption I perform a test in the aggregate for direct correlation between these variables, without lag, as the relationship should be contemporaneous. The correlation is $r = -.1486$. Consequently, given that greater arms export leads to less social expenditure, which in turn reduces inflow, policy implications on asylum-immigration ought to be the counter-intuitive of what is argued

by NGOs like Amnesty International. Moreover, it also disclaim of any positive connections between arms export and asylum-immigration stressed in previous literature.

Table 4: The Determinants for Refugee Inflow to Western Europe 1981-2007

| Independent Variables | Random –effects GLS regression (control for unit effects) ⁷ |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Arms export (xlag3) | -1.56(4.95)⁸ |
| (1): Social expenditure | 2,304(1081.92)** ⁹ |
| (2): Unemployment | -3,290(926.19)*** |
| (3): Religious fractionalization | 12,7164(44470.86)*** |
| (4): GDP/capita | .24(1.86) |
| (5): Human Development Index | -23,2264(157254.2) |
| (6): Ethnic fractionalization | 109,682(78331.36) |
| (7): Linguistic fractionalization | -121,919(74713.79) |
| Constant | 158714.9(119666.6) |
| rho | .48308968 |
| R-squared | .2578 |
| N | 250 |

*** p<0.01 ** p<0.05 * p<0.1

⁷ The random-effects (RE) GLS regression is a control for unit effects, which is used to deal with situations “where some omitted variables may be constant over time but vary between cases, and others may be fixed between cases but vary over time. By using RE both types can be included” (Princeton University, 2007: http://dss.princeton.edu/online_help/analysis/panel.htm#models). When employing RE GLS regression the assumption is that the variation across entities is random and uncorrelated with the independent variables. RE is thus used if there is reason to believe that differences across entities may have some influence on the dependent variable. In this case, geographical differences and differences in population size for the 17 countries in the study may influence on the dependent variable. I therefore use RE GLS to control for such possible effects. One advantage of the RE is that time-invariant data can be included in the model without being absorbed by the intercept. Since “RE assumes that the entity’s error terms are uncorrelated with the predictors, time-invariant data is allowed to play an explanatory role. RE allows generalizing the inference beyond the sample used in the model” (Torres-Reyna, n.d:24-27). Stata’s random-effects estimator is a weighted average of fixed and between effects (Princeton University, 2007: http://dss.princeton.edu/online_help/analysis/panel.htm#models). For a general explanation on control for unit effects please see the quantitative analysis section.

⁸ For all the variables in the Table, the first value shows the coefficient and the second (within parentheses) displays the standard error.

⁹ Values show the dependent variable measured by population in thousands.

Table 5: The Determinants of Refugee Inflow to Western Europe 1981-2007

| Independent Variables | Prais-Winsten regression, correlated panels-corrected-standard-errors (PCSEs), (control for serial correlation effects) ¹⁰ |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Arms export (xlag3) | -1.60(5.54)¹¹ |
| (1): Social expenditure | 3045(1111.35)*** ¹² |
| (2): Unemployment | -2,637(895.80)*** |
| (3): Religious fractionalization | 118,832(40642.76)*** |
| (4): GDP/capita | -.80(.51) |
| (5): Human Development Index | -134,077(119625.8) |
| (6): Ethnic fractionalization | 108,642(40924.03)*** |
| (7): Linguistic fractionalization | -112,633(51078.97)** |
| Constant | 68204.02(94271.9) |
| rho | .7405953 |
| R-squared | .1153 |
| N | 250 |

*** p<0.01 ** p<0.05 * p<0.1

¹⁰ Prais-Winsten (PW) is a method employed to deal with (temporal) serial autocorrelation, which occurs when there is serial dependence along the time dimension of the data. For the fractionalization data, for example, it can be expected that the values of the units from one time period are associated with the values from another. To control for such temporal autocorrelation I use the PW technique. The Panels-corrected-standard-errors (PCSEs) approach is used to deal with panel heteroskedasticity in panel/time-series-cross-section (TSCS) analysis by adjusting the standard errors instead of weighting the data. Panel heteroskedasticity appear because error variances for a given unit may display time dependence. In TSCS data this may affect whole units simultaneously (Worall and Pratt, 2004:37-38). For a more complete outline on this approach see Beck and Katz (1995, 1996). In brief, “PCSEs inflate the standard errors in light of the panel structure of the data. The PCSE approach leaves the data in their original form and so is desirable for those who do not wish to engage in empirical weighting of the data. Some regression routines in population statistics packages (e.g., STATA) allow researchers to weight the data by the square root of a specified variable as well as opt for the PCSE approach. This means that any heteroskedasticity remaining after weighting can be “controlled” for with panel corrected standard errors” (Worall and Pratt, 2004:38). For general explanation on control for serial correlations effects please see the quantitative analysis section in this thesis.

¹¹ For all the variables in the Table, the first value shows the coefficient and the second (within parentheses) displays the standard error.

¹² Values show the dependent variable measured by population in thousands.

Finally, Table 6 illustrates the cross-time country averages for each variable as well as the pooled average.

Table 6: Pre-Pooled Cross-Time Country Averages in Unrefined Numbers

| Country | Asylum inflow | Arms export | Ethnicity | Language | Religion | Social ex | Far right | Unempl. | GDP/cap | HDI |
|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|------------|
| AUS | 12759.47059 | 35.42857 | 0.1068 | 0.1522 | 0.4146 | 25.94589 | 10.87708 | 3.877692 | 16842.54 | 0.8954242 |
| BEL | 10153.36364 | 33.24138 | 0.5554 | 0.5409 | 0.2127 | 25.77881 | 3.718518 | 8.7512 | 16193.16 | 0.9013031 |
| DEN | 5795.724138 | 65.47369 | 0.0819 | 0.1049 | 0.2333 | 26.05423 | 2.30625 | 6.5408 | 21824.34 | 0.904 |
| FIN | 1662.904762 | 23.82759 | 0.1315 | 0.1412 | 0.2531 | 25.33646 | 4.10625 | 8.380357 | 16519.13 | 0.8986667 |
| FRA | 29877.92593 | 1244.517 | 0.1032 | 0.1221 | 0.4029 | 26.45219 | 4.432759 | 9.661072 | 16444.97 | 0.902 |
| GER | 82417.35135 | 636.8889 | 0.1682 | 0.1642 | 0.6571 | 24.90142 | 0 | 8.622353 | 18471.66 | 0.8975 |
| GRE | 4312 | 9.75 | 0.1576 | 0.03 | 0.153 | 16.85831 | 0.1793104 | 8.58 | 9013.455 | 0.8753939 |
| IRE | 3895.875 | | 0.1206 | 0.0312 | 0.155 | 16.50661 | 0 | 10.70308 | 13735.38 | 0.8770303 |
| ITA | 5039.3125 | 443.9184 | 0.1145 | 0.1147 | 0.3027 | 21.61735 | 1.998276 | 9.9825 | 13662.5 | 0.8890303 |
| MAT | 387.9333333 | 20 | 0.0414 | 0.0907 | 0.1223 | | 0 | 6.94 | 5285.39 | 0.8186061 |
| NET | 18004.88462 | 201.2641 | 0.1054 | 0.5143 | 0.7222 | 23.65154 | 0.7982758 | 6.8376 | 16962.06 | 0.912697 |
| NOR | 5839.608696 | 28.03846 | 0.0586 | 0.0673 | 0.2048 | 22.62375 | 5.881818 | 3.756072 | 24854.8 | 0.9164848 |
| POR | 408.1111111 | 52.93333 | 0.0468 | 0.0198 | 0.1438 | 15.03208 | 0 | 6.3175 | 6991.57 | 0.8501818 |
| SPA | 5225.961538 | 87.5814 | 0.4165 | 0.4132 | 0.4514 | 19.55204 | 0 | 16.215 | 9846.074 | 0.8935454 |
| SWE | 18534.92593 | 86.01887 | 0.06 | 0.1968 | 0.2342 | 30.15373 | 0.4368421 | 5.379286 | 20902.11 | 0.9108485 |
| SWZ | 11752.40476 | 87.93478 | 0.5314 | 0.5441 | 0.6083 | 16.52092 | 17.025 | 3.430588 | 29060.24 | 0.9151515 |
| UKM | 24781.27586 | 1384.466 | 0.1211 | 0.0532 | 0.6944 | 19.34138 | 0 | 7.55375 | 17857.63 | 0.8940303 |
| Pooled average | 14167.59 | 277.58 | 0.17 | 0.19 | 0.35 | 22.27 | 3.05 | 7.74 | 16145.12 | 0.90 |

Limitations

The findings are limited to its general applicability since the modeling technique uses the pooled average effects from each country. As illustrated by the country level tests for direct correlations, the large between-country variance was concealed in the test performed on the aggregate. Another trade-off between levels of analysis appears with respect to the validity of causal inferences, where the benefit of aggregated testing gives good external validity as opposed to country level analysis which implies good internal validity (Adcok and Collier, 2001:529; Cook and Campbell, 1979:50-59, 70-80). This applies to both model 1 (Table 4) and model 2 (Table 5). For these models, however, disaggregation implies yet another tradeoff, as some of the key variables will have to be dropped because of the nature of the data. The problem appears for the time invariant data on ethnic, linguistic, and religious fractionalization, as they do not vary within a country. To employ time invariant data is perfectly fine when using time-series-cross-section (TSCS) analysis, as it allows for the inclusion of variables that may be constant over time but vary between cases. For country level analysis, however, these variables cannot be included. Moreover, availability of time series data on fractionalization is to my knowledge limited, which is why I used the time invariant data. To perform 17 independent country level tests, and drop the fractionalization data, might therefore end up miss specifying the model due to omitted variables bias. This would be particularly problematic with respect to religious fractionalization, which from a theoretical point of view signifies one of the most important variables in the models.

Nevertheless, while my theoretical proposition of applying Granovetter's "weak ties", as opposed to close relationships, is an innovative approach within the field of

asylum-immigration, the operationalization of the concept has limitations of its own. In essence, religious fractionalization does not tap Granovetter's theory to perfection because it measures fractionalization on a national scale and not within the asylum seeking community solely. And, overall, it constitutes an imperfect substitute for non-existent data that measures diffusion of information within the asylum seeking community. Nevertheless, in absence of such data, I have argued that due to the diverse backgrounds of asylum seekers, within each country, religious fractionalization ought to be heavily concentrated within the refugee community. In particular as Western Europe has been mainly Christian for at least 500 years. Population wise, it is therefore reasonable to assume the religious fractionalization, captured in model 1 (Table 4) and model 2 (Table 5), to be indicative of a concentrated diversity within the rather recently added refugee communities. In this respect, linguistic and ethnic fractionalization cannot constitute an equivalent solid measure of fractionalization since the history of Western Europe has been colored with wars that have altered national boundaries, allowing for new national incorporations of different European ethnicities, also speaking their own mother tongue. In addition, continuous intra-European migrations also blur these measures from being able to capture recently added fractionalization.

Another data limitation concerns asylum inflow, where I have been unable to account for a plausible portion of economic migrants incorporated into the numbers. It is, however, impossible to know exactly how many asylum claims are fraudulent. And, to use other options such as the rejection rate as a proxy for telling apart economic migrants has at least two apparent problems of its own. Firstly, the availability of such data is very limited and secondly, there are many reasons for why applications are being rejected.

Two examples are recent restrictions on visa requirements and policies on “safe third country provisions” that allow border guards to deny asylum seekers entry if they do not possess of proper documentation, which does not necessarily mean that their intentions are fraudulent or that they automatically are economic migrants. On the other side of the spectrum, many unofficial immigrants are likely to qualify as asylum seekers, but because of the inability to present right documentation they have obtained illegal residence. These are also individuals not accounted for in the data on asylum applicants. Moreover, since the data only captures documented claims reported by governments, the actual numbers of asylum seekers reaching European soil may be significantly higher compared to official statistics. This is likely the case for Malta where reported claims are very low compared to the numbers of people known to have arrived via water from Africa.

But, perhaps, the greatest limitation of the study is the ability of the model to explain only 26% of the variance in destination choice, Model 1 (Table 4), and 12% for Model 2 (Table 5). This may be because of omitted variables. There are two additional variables that potentially could have been useful determinants, but were omitted due to limited availability of data, or because the analysis was performed in the aggregate. These are geographical proximity and country policies on asylum immigration. For geographical proximity, the origin of applicants has to be accounted for to calculate distances between origins and destinations, which implies disaggregation of the data on country levels. This becomes problematic since the analysis performed here is in the aggregate and total numbers of applications have been used. For policy on asylum immigration, time series data on restrictive policy measures is limited. It seems plausible,

however, for both these variables to have an effect on inflow. Long distances to destinations, like restrictive policies, can both be assumed to decrease inflow.

Case Analysis of Omitted Variables and Model Robustness

Because the model is limited in its explanatory power and the findings to a general applicability, a plausible large between-country variance can have been concealed in the test performed on the aggregate and explanatory power may thus have been deprived due to omitted variables. I will therefore perform yet another case analysis of omitted variables to examine their role on the country level. The case for analysis will be Germany. As was shown by Table 1 in the beginning of the thesis, Germany has remained the top 1 destination for asylum inflow. The disproportionate inflow to Germany is often attributed to that the German Constitution up until 1993 used a much broader definition of asylum in comparison to other European countries. Conversely, Germany's recognition rate of asylum seekers as refugees is among the lowest in Europe (Böcker and Havinga, 1993). Another explanation for Germany's large inflow might be the close geographical proximity to Eastern Europe (Böcker and Havinga, 1993:249-250 and Hatton, 2005:106). Indeed, as can be seen from Table 1 there is a sharp increase in applications in the early 1990s as Germany received 1,374,700 applications following the fall of the Soviet Union and the Berlin Wall, associated with a large inflow of Eastern European applicants. In this respect, Austria also experiences a peak in total number of applications for the same period, 76,100 applications, which likewise can be attributed to its Eastern border (Hatton, 2005:106). However, Table 1 conceals that the majority of applications filed in Germany were logged between 1990 and 1992. In 1993, amendments

yielding restrictions to the German Basic Law and the legislation concerning foreigners introduced the concept of ‘safe third country provisions’. Consequently, many asylum seekers were denied entry at the German border, which possibly could explain the following 71% drop in claims between 1992 and 1994 (Thielemann, 2003:8-9). In view of the German case, it is fair to believe that both asylum policy and geographical proximity are variables that ought to be useful determinants for inflow. As mentioned previously, however, due to the aggregation level used in the model and because of limited availability of data, I have been unable to include these variables in the model.

Another concern raised by the disproportionately large inflow to Germany is the bias that this may cause in the modeling process. While, Germany can be considered an outlier, its inflow is nevertheless so large in comparison to other countries that a possible bias in the model may occur. I therefore perform a robustness test of the Model where Germany is excluded, which led to a loss of roughly 20 observations. The output is almost identical to when Germany was included, as well as the standard errors associated with the output and the Model can therefore be considered robust.

Results

Returning to the significant findings. While the respective coefficients hold general properties and differs in applicability on a case-by-case basis when looking at relationships across countries, it is interesting to note the differences in a 1% increase per variable on inflow between country blocks such as north Europe and continental Europe. For example, consider average social expenditure, displayed below in Table 7, because of variations in expenditure between northern and continental Europe, this variable ought to have a greater impact on Scandinavia (Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland) where the concentration of generous welfare states is higher. Based on the total inflow of 7,640,206 asylum seekers to Western Europe between 1981 and 2007, by Table 4, a 1% increase in social expenditure generates an additional inflow of 2304 asylum seekers to Western European countries. Out of these, 837, 751 alone has gone to Scandinavia, where a 1% increase in social expenditure signifies an additional inflow of 600 asylum seekers to this block. By Table 5 the same 1% raise constitute an additional Western European inflow of 3045 people out of which 793 persons would go towards Scandinavia. For the same period, Southern Europe (Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Greece) has received a total of 428,888 asylum seekers. For this region, the same 1% boost in social expenditure yields 420 more asylum seekers by Table 4 and an increased inflow of 556 for Table 5. With respect to Table 4, thus, the difference in inflow based on a 1% increase in social expenditure between north and south Europe is 180 persons and for Table 5 it is 237.

Table 7: Social Expenditure Averages as a % of GDP ranging from 1980 to 2005¹³

| Scandinavian: Average | Continental: Average | Sweden: Average | Portugal: Average |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 26.04 | 18.26 | 30.15 | 15.03 |

Among the northern and continental blocks the most dramatic difference is displayed between Sweden (with the highest average social expenditure) and Portugal (with the lowest average social expenditure). For Sweden, which received a total of 500,443 asylum seekers between 1981 and 2007, a 1% increase in social expenditure yield an additional inflow of 695 people by Table 4 and by Table 5 the same increase generates 918 more applicants. On the others side of the spectrum, Portugal received a total of 11,019 asylum applications during the same period and for a 1% increase in Portuguese social expenditure, inflow boosts with 346 asylum seekers by Table 4 and for Table 5 the same 1% raise produce an additional 458 applicants. The pair wise difference for Table 4 thus constitutes 349 applicants and for Table 5 the same variance is 460.

In the same way, for religious fractionalization, see Table 8 below, the discrepancy between the five most religiously diverse countries (the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, and Spain), which has received a total of 4,865,702 asylum applications for the period in question, and the five least religiously diverse countries (Malta, Portugal, Greece, Ireland, and Norway), which has received a total of 334,219 applications for the same period, is 599 for Table 4 and 560 for Table 5. That is, while there is a total increase in inflow with 127,163 asylum seekers based on a 1% overall increase in religious fractionalization in Western European countries, for a 1%

¹³ Data is from *Source OECD Aggregated Social Expenditure Dataset*.

increase in religious fractionalization among the five most religiously diverse countries, this block would receive an additional 797 applicants according to Table 4. For Table 5, where an overall 1 % increase would generate an additional inflow of 118,832 people to Western European countries, the same 1% increase for the most diverse block denotes an additional inflow of 745 asylum seekers. By contrast, for the least religiously diverse countries the same calculation yields a modest increase of 198 asylum seekers for Table 4 and for Table 5 an even lower effect of an additional 185 applicants.

Table 8: Religious Fractionalization Average Calculated by Time Invariant Data¹⁴

| Top 5: Average | Bottom 5: Average | Netherlands: Average | Malta: Average |
|----------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| 0.627 | 0.156 | 0.72 | 0.12 |

When comparing the most religiously diverse country (the Netherlands), which has received a total of 468,127 applications for the period in question, with the least diverse (Malta), which has received a total of 5,819 asylum seekers, the discrepancy is 762 for Table 4 and 713 for Table 5. For the Netherlands a 1% increase in religious fractionalization, generated by Table 4, produces an additional inflow of 918 asylum seekers and by Table 5 the same raise gives an extra 858 submissions. In contrast, by Table 4 Malta would receive an extra 156 asylum seekers and by Table 5 the increase would constitute a further inflow of 145 applicants.

Moving to unemployment. When looking at the five countries with the overall highest average unemployment (Spain, Ireland, Italy, France, and Belgium), presented in

¹⁴ Data is from *Alberto Alesina, Arnaud Devleeschauwer, William Easterly and Sergio Kurlat Fractionalization Dataset*.

Table 9, which as a block has received a total of 1,501,232 applications, a 1% increase in unemployment generates a decrease in inflow of 364 people by Table 4. For the same Table, this can be compared to an overall decrease of 3290 applicants for a 1% increase in unemployment in all of Western Europe. For Table 5 the reduction in inflow to the same five countries is slightly less as it indicates 292 fewer applications. For all of Western Europe, the total reduction for a 1% overall increase in unemployment is 2637 applications. Consider the opposite, five countries with the overall lowest unemployment (Switzerland, Norway, Austria, Sweden, and Portugal), which as a block has received a total of 1,573,196 applications, by Table 4 a 1% increase in unemployment yields a decrease of 150 asylum seekers and by Table 5 the same increase denotes an impact of 120 less applicants. The discrepancy between the two blocks is thus 214 for Table 3 and 172 for Table 5.

Table 9: Unemployment Average as a % of Total Labor Force from 1980 to 2007¹⁵

| Top 5: Average | Bottom 5: Average | Switzerland: Average | Spain: Average |
|----------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| 11.062 | 4.552 | 3.431 | 16.215 |

In comparison with the generosity of the welfare state and religious diversity, levels of far right sentiments in a country produce the greatest impact on numbers of asylum applicants. This, too, becomes crystallized when comparing the impact of a 1% increase in unemployment between two diametrically opposed examples. On the one hand, Switzerland, which has the lowest average unemployment and has received a total

¹⁵ Data is from *World Development Indicators Dataset*.

of 493,601 applications, would by a 1% increase in unemployment in Table 4 receive 113 less asylum applicants and by Table 5 the impact signifies a drop of 90 submissions. On the other hand, Spain, which has the highest average unemployment and has received a total of 135,875 applications, would by Table 4 experience a decline of 533 applications and, similarly, by Table 5 the inflow would fall with 428 asylum seekers. The difference between Switzerland and Spain in terms of cutbacks in asylum inflow is therefore 420 by Table 4 and 338 for Table 5.

Illustration of Some Possible Interactions

Given that social expenditure is shown to be a statistically significant variable for inflow of refugees, it is on the one hand interesting to note that although being the second largest recipient of asylum applicants¹⁶, the UK's social expenditure falls vaguely under the European average. In fact, in terms of social expenditure the UK positions as number 12 out of 17 and differ with 36% from the leading country of Sweden. As such, the country can be regarded to have an intermediate level of social expenditure. On the other hand, social expenditure is also shown to be negatively correlated with arms export and in this respect it is not surprising to find that the UK is the foremost European exporter with an average Trend Indicator Value (TIV) of 1414.55¹⁷. Nevertheless, while the UK qualifies as the second major recipient of refugees, when comparing the UK to Germany, which has the highest number of asylum applicants in Europe, the UK represents a mere 23.5% of the German total of 3 049 442 submissions. In this respect, the UK's overall inflow of refugees can be regarded as relatively small and coincides more or less with what can be expected from its level of social expenditure.

In accounting for far right, the UK displays a value slightly below the average and can therefore be considered to have an intermediate level of right wing populism. In

¹⁶ In this study, only applicants with a known origin have been taken into account. The numbers may therefore differ slightly from data presented elsewhere.

¹⁷ "SIPRI data on arms transfers refer to actual deliveries of major conventional weapons. Data on arms transfers are presented in the form of SIPRI Trend Indicator Values (TIVs). TIVs are expressed in US\$ m. at constant (1990) prices. TIVs are an indication of the volume of arms transferred and do not represent the financial value of goods. Hence, TIVs can be used to measure trends in international arms transfers, such as changes in the total flow of weapons and the geographic pattern of arms exports or imports. The data can also be used to measure a particular country's share of the overall import or export market or the rate of increase or decline in its imports or exports" (SIPRI).

addition, the UK is ranked as the second most religiously diverse country in Europe. From the limited variables discussed here, one can therefore argue that what seems to be pulling inflow to the UK is a combination of a intermediate (slightly below average) level of social expenditure, with a intermediate (slightly below average) level of far right, and a high level of religious fractionalization. Accordingly, in the case of the UK religious fractionalization can be assumed to contribute to an overall high attraction value for asylum applicants. Moreover, when taking network theory into account, the latter variable can also be assumed to explain some of the country's large inflow because of indicated levels of efficiently diffused information.

By contrast, Sweden's social expenditure is the highest in Europe and in terms of inflow it is slightly above the European average. While the country can be regarded as an intermediate recipient of asylum applicants, the difference between the UK and Sweden in terms of average number of asylum applicants is a marginal 7.1%. In comparison to Germany, Sweden displays a 16.4% of Germany's total and therefore becomes the 4th largest recipient of refugees in Europe. Moreover, the country depicts clear polar opposites in terms of social expenditure and arms export. Sweden is well under the European average in terms of export and has an average Trend Indicator Value (TIV) of 100.74¹⁸. Clearly, in this case a large level of social expenditure is in line with small export and an above average inflow.

¹⁸ "SIPRI data on arms transfers refer to actual deliveries of major conventional weapons. Data on arms transfers are presented in the form of SIPRI Trend Indicator Values (TIVs). TIVs are expressed in US\$ m. at constant (1990) prices. TIVs are an indication of the volume of arms transferred and do not represent the financial value of goods. Hence, TIVs can be used to measure trends in international arms transfers, such as changes in the total flow of weapons and the geographic pattern of arms exports or imports. The data can also be used to measure a particular country's share of the overall import or export market or the rate of increase or decline in its imports or exports" (SIPRI).

When looking at other variables such as far right and religious fractionalization, both shows values below the averages. With respect to right wing populism, Sweden ranks as number 14 out of 17. And in terms of religious fractionalization, it is the seventh most religiously homogenous country in Europe. In this case, what seems to be attracting inflow is simply a high level of social expenditure combined with a low (below average) value of far right. With respect to a low (below average) value of religious fractionalization, therefore, it can be argued that despite the highest social expenditure in Europe and a very open policy towards asylum applicants, the information about these circumstances are not being efficiently diffused. In part, this interaction could possibly explain the country's intermediate level of inflow. Conversely, for the asylum applicants that do receive information about Sweden as a potential host country, the country can be assumed to position highly in the trade-off of potential destinations.

Conclusion

In summary, I have by means of arms-export data from 17 Western European countries, tested against inflow of asylum seekers to these countries, covering the past 26 years, disclaimed of that arms-export from these countries contribute to their received asylum-inflow. My contribution is therefore both theoretical and empirical. In this respect, my main theoretical contribution to existing literature on arms export and migration is that I separate causes of outgoing migration from determinants of asylum immigration. Empirically, I disprove of claims asserting indirect connections between arms export and asylum inflow, which has been put forward both within academic literature and by NGOs like Amnesty International. Instead, I find the counter-intuitive. Increased arms export leads to less asylum immigration. This is attributed to the so called “guns for butter trade off” where social expenditure, one of the found significant determinants for asylum-immigration, is negatively associated with arms export but positively associated with asylum inflow. Other crucial determinants for inflow are absence of far right sentiments and religious diversity. Also, in contrast to previous literature on asylum immigration, I build on Granovetter (1973) and propose that diffusion of information through asylum networks depend on weak social connections as opposed to close relationships like ethnic bonds, family ties, and friendships. In addition, I problematize the tendency of existing literature to treat asylum seekers as labor migrants and argue for a framework founded on principles which account for the unique circumstances and life situations faced by asylum seekers. In doing so, my overall contribution is focused to a modest framework creation for asylum-immigration theory.

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