

# Who States Choose: The Economic Advantageousness Factor in Refugee Assistance

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## Abstract

This research study investigates the role of economic advantageousness in shaping refugee assistance policies and its impact on the treatment of refugees by host states. By considering both admittance and permanent residency as separate dependent variables, this paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how economic factors influence the prioritization of refugees for assistance by the host state. The economic aspect of refugee assistance is significant as it can have tangible implications for refugees, including their access to protection, their ability to integrate into host societies, and their prospects for finding a durable solution. However, the practice of prioritizing and processing refugee groups based on their economic potential may lead to unequal treatment and disparities in access to protection and resettlement. Therefore, gaining insights into the role of economic advantageousness in refugee assistance is crucial for developing more equitable and sustainable guidelines for host states to assist refugees.

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### **Introduction**

The issue of refugees and their treatment by states has been a topic of great concern and controversy for decades. Refugees are individuals who have been forced to flee their homes due to war, conflict, persecution, or other forms of violence. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there were over 26 million refugees worldwide in 2020 (UNHCR, 2021). The vast majority of these refugees are hosted by developing countries, while developed countries take in a smaller percentage. This raises questions about the fairness of burden sharing and the criteria that states use to determine which refugees they will admit and prioritize for resettlement.

For this paper, “refugees, a subset of immigrants, are defined as “[a] person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, [or] membership of a particular social group or political opinion is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it” (Chu, 2020; UNHCR, 1967).

### **The Gap**

Existing literature has explored the reasons why states treat refugees unequally. Some studies have suggested that intensity factors, such as media coverage or social pressure, play a role (Abdelaaty, 2021; Lee, 2021; Olsen et al., 2003). Others have focused on the strategic interests of states and the extent to which they adhere to international legal frameworks such as burden sharing while maximizing their gain during refugee assistance (Chu, 2020; Jackson & Atkinson, 2019; Loescher, 1994; Teitelbaum, 1984). While these factors provide valuable

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insights into the complex dynamics of refugee assistance, they do not fully explain why some refugees are prioritized over others. I theorize there is an undefined variable in refugee assistance literature that has yet to be directly linked to states' decision-making. This variable I introduce is the "Economic Advantageousness of a Refugee Group." I offer an answer to the research question at hand by introducing a variable that should provide significant findings relevant to the field it resides in.

This empirical puzzle has motivated the research question of this paper: what role does the "economic advantageousness" of a refugee group play in their treatment by states? Economic advantageousness refers to the perceived economic benefits that a refugee group may bring to the receiving state. Specifically, this paper theorizes that states will prioritize and process those refugee groups who are deemed more economically advantageous, based on factors such as their average age, health, wealth, and education levels.

### **The Assumptions & Agents**

Assuming that economic factors play a significant role in the decision-making processes of refugee host states, this paper argues that host states will be more inclusive towards more economically advantageous refugees. One of the agents is the refugee groups themselves. The other agent in this process is the host state itself, which is responsible for determining refugee inclusion policies and deciding which refugees are allowed to enter its borders and what level of assistance they receive. The theoretical mechanisms at work are primarily economic in nature and are based on the economic theory of migration. This theory suggests that refugees with valuable human capital, such as education and skilled labor, are more likely to have positive economic outcomes in their host state, thus leading to them receiving more favorable treatment from their host state. Other theoretical mechanisms that will be mentioned include burden

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sharing, brain drain, and the collective action problem frameworks. Political and social factors may also play a role in refugee inclusion, but this paper focuses primarily on the economic factors that drive inclusive refugee assistance. By examining the interplay between economic factors and host state behavior, this paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex processes that shape refugee inclusion in their host societies as well as aims to answer why states may be more inclusive to one refugee group and not the other.

### **The Contribution: Bolstering the Gap**

Framing the gap in the literature as simply an unexplored explanation for the treatment of refugees may not be sufficient to justify further research. Therefore, it is crucial to explain why this theoretical framework and empirical investigation are important and necessary.

The economic advantageousness factor in refugee assistance is significant because it has the potential to affect real-life outcomes for refugees, such as their access to protection, their ability to integrate into their host societies, and their prospects for a durable solution. By prioritizing and processing refugee groups based on their economic potential, states may be neglecting the protection needs of vulnerable refugees who may not have the same level of economic potential. This may result in unequal treatment and disparities in access to protection and resettlement. Moreover, understanding the role of economic advantageousness in refugee assistance policies is important for creating more equitable and sustainable refugee assistance guidelines for states. By incorporating a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that shape refugee assistance policies, policymakers at the international level can develop more effective and efficient policies and expectations on all hosting states that address the needs of refugees while also considering the economic benefits that they may bring.

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Additionally, this research should offer a fresh perspective on the “burden-sharing” and “collective-action problem” discussions amongst the international relations community. The findings my study produces may alleviate the “free-riding” problem (in *some* situations) as my proposed theory is supported by claims that being a more inclusive state toward refugees can turn out to benefit the host state (Bevelander & Pendakur, 2012).

Therefore, this research is important to fund and investigate because it has the potential to inform policy decisions that can significantly impact the lives of refugees and their host communities. By shedding light on the role of economic advantageousness in refugee assistance policies, this study can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of refugee assistance and provide insights into creating more equitable and inclusive policies.

### **This Paper’s Blueprint**

Following this introduction, this paper will continue with a comprehensive look at what current literature has to say about the state’s role in international refugee assistance. Various explanations as to the motivations and behaviors of states in refugee assistance will be analyzed. Then, the theory section will follow. Here, I will introduce why I theorize states give preferential treatment to some refugee groups over others. I will explain how I hypothesize a refugee group’s level of economic advantageousness is a driver behind states’ preferential refugee assistance. This claim will be backed and supported by clear causal mechanisms and relationships to help convey my thought process and make my theory feel intuitive. The theory section will end with my hypotheses after which we will move on to the research design. In this section, I will lay out how I intend to test my hypotheses as well as lay out my variables, data collection sources, and plans for analysis. I will bolster my research design with an explanation about how I intend to isolate my independent variable to make sure my study provides integrous results. Finally, I shall

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end with a conclusion about the implications of my proposed study and possible expected outcomes.

### **Literature Review**

As millions of people around the world are forced to flee their homes due to conflict, persecution, and other forms of violence, the international community has struggled to provide adequate assistance and protection to those in need. While states have opened their doors to some refugees and provided them with support and resources, for others, they have put them on the back burner and not been impartial. This raises the question: why do states unequally assist different refugee groups?

This literature review aims to explore the complex factors that shape states' responses to refugee crises, including political, economic, social, and cultural considerations. By examining existing scholarship on this topic, we will gain a deeper understanding of the motivations behind state behavior towards refugees and the implications of these actions for both refugees and the international community as a whole. Furthermore, this review will lay the foundation for the gap that is present in the field which this paper's study aims to fill.

To begin, what is it that states even do for refugees? Do they just support them monetarily? Do they build shelters and health facilities? Or is there more? One study by a large group of researchers looks at Ukraine and how many European states have become unified in helping refugees (Jain et al., 2022). This piece gives a great foundational depiction of what is happening on the ground right now and how states are operating purely based on their proximity to a refugee crisis. States such as Hungary, Moldova, Poland, and Romania all have measures in place for welcoming stations for incoming Ukrainian refugees. While these states have great short-term plans for how to integrate these refugees into new communities, it is still a challenge

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to set long-term goals without a clear plan (Jain et al., 2022, p 4). This article calls on scholars and IOs to formulate plans for establishing multi-level and multi-party operations to ease the burden of proximity refugee-hosting states in Europe.

Next is a strong driver amongst the rest of the literature on this topic. This source primarily argues the ethnic tensions explanation. Abdelaaty's book on states' responses to refugees provides a great foundational explanation as to why a state may service two different groups of refugees differently. As that is the main question my paper seeks to analyze, this source proves to offer many starting points. Mainly chapters 2, 4, and 5 are analyzed for this paper. The author looks at Turkey and Egypt and their intake of various refugee groups and theorizes on why they were much more inclusive with some groups over others. One explanation that current literature seems to profess is the ethnic tension pathway. As many refugee crises tend to have spillover effects into the states neighboring them, this can cause ethnic tensions, especially in those regions heavily grounded in rich cultures and religions. Turkey has historically been known to welcome millions of Syrian refugees into their borders. The state also has a history of servicing other refugee groups such as the Kurds, Bulgarians, and Iraqis. In particular, Bulgarian refugees were given much more inclusive treatment by the Turkish state and many were even easily assimilated into Turkish citizens after the majority were repatriated (Abdelaaty, 2021, Chapter 2). With the government's response to the Kurdish refugees being vastly different, the explanation of ethnic tensions was drawn up to explain the disparity between treatment (Abdelaaty, 2021). While I find Abdelaaty's arguments for Turkey and Egypt's unequal refugee treatment convincing, I restate that there is a piece of the puzzle not examined. There is another confounding variable that my paper argues is at play here.

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Other studies have argued different explanations for why states respond to refugees in the manner that they do. Many go on to theorize on media play is a factor that explains unequal refugee assistance. Some even cite the “CNN effect” when laying claims to states’ decisions (Olsen et al., 2003). The Kosovo crisis in 1999 and the Mozambique flood in 2000 which caused much displacement, are cited as instances where media play helped increase aid (Olsen et al., 2003). However, the literature also states that while media play is *one* explanation, it is nowhere near the most significant or most convincing explanation (Olsen et al., 2003). Lee (2021) echoes similar sentiments when their results come up as inconclusive that media attention has a significant effect on aid allocation for the Rohingya refugee crisis in Myanmar. I find it reassuring that while these two studies took on the challenge of testing the effects of media on aid, they promptly revealed that the correlation is not significantly high and therefore the media play answer to the topic at hand is not the most convincing explanation. This leaves room for scholars and future work, such as this one, to poke around for other explanations.

In the same vein, security concerns are commonly found explanations as well. As aforementioned, Abdelaaty’s (2021) paper’s findings support this explanation. Additionally, when they moved passed their inconclusive results on the media play theory, Olsen et al. (2003) & Lee (2021) also vouched for the explanation that states will respond to refugees based on security concerns. Such concerns can arise due to the fear of the potential security threats that *not* intervening may cause. These security threats can take many forms, including terrorism, political instability, and crime. One point by Olsen et al. (2003) is regarding aid given to North Korea from 1997 to 2001 stating that the decision to administer aid was due to the security concern that NK may implode without aid keeping its citizen fed. Additionally, Şahin-Mencütek & Tsourapas (2022) cite India’s intake of Bengali refugees from Pakistan as an act of security interest. The

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Indian administration reasoned that the crisis was a threat to India's infrastructure as there were nearly ten million refugees ready to enter the state. This gives insight into why states do what they do to refugees which ties back into the topic of this paper. Abdelaaty (2021) draws a picture using Turkey's response to Kurdish refugees as an example during the late 80s and early 90s. Here, it was a concern from Turkish officials that the integration of Iraqi Kurds into communities of Turkish Kurds would have caused civic violence and chaos. I do buy into the security concerns narrative; however, I do not think it considers all angles. The author even echoes my sentiment that this security concerns explanation does not explain the reasoning for Turkey's differences in its treatment of other refugee groups (Abdelaaty, 2021, p 129).

The final explanation gathered from current literature on this topic is that states act on strategic interest. This explanation is rooted in the theory that a state will be more likely to intake refugees of their enemies. This theory was partly developed by Weiner (1992) who explained that an intake state may accept refugees from an adversary to fuel their motives of changing the regime of their opponent. This sentiment can be applied to the India-Pakistan situation mentioned above as India's intake of refugees from Pakistan did end up resulting in an inter-state war over conflicting ideals. Furthermore, two other studies, by Loescher (1994) and Teitelbaum (1984) helped solidify this theory. Chu (2020) and Jackson & Atkinson (2019) find that states will take in refugees of their adversary as a way to shame their enemy. This works if the intake state treats the refugees well and endorses their human rights. The intake state then uses this situation to shame its adversary and thus, "undermining the adversary's legitimacy and discrediting the opposing government in the eyes of the international community" (Chu, 2020, p 4). This theory directly answers the question posed by the topic well and is a good explanation of

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the phenomenon of why states may unequally assist one refugee group over the other. My paper shall expand on the conclusions made with this theory.

### **Theory**

As the number of refugees around the world continues to increase, there has been growing interest in understanding the factors that influence their integration and inclusion in their host societies. Many states have been faced with the arrival of different refugee groups at their borders, but there is evidence of inequality when it comes to treatment and admittance policies (Abdelaaty, 2021). While there is a multitude of factors that can influence the integration and unfair treatment of refugees, many of which are covered by current literature (Abdelaaty, 2021; Lee, 2021; Loescher, 1994; Olsen et al., 2003; Teitelbaum, 1984; Weiner, 1992), one factor that has not been *fully* covered by extant literature is the economic advantageousness of refugees. My argument will be backed by the human capital theory of migration, studies on skilled migration, and the brain drain theory (Borjas, 1999; Docquier & Rapoport, 2007). This section of my paper seeks to address this gap in the literature by providing testable hypotheses and drawing causal links to further bolster the following theory: Host states will be more inclusive towards those refugees that are more economically advantageous over the other.

### **Hypothesis One**

Many prominent papers in the field have found that refugees who are more educated and offer skilled labor will then prosper in their host states and give back to the economy. Borjas (1999) provides a comprehensive economic analysis of immigration, including refugee migration. The author argues that, from an economic perspective, immigrants (including refugees) are likely to have positive economic outcomes in their host countries if they possess human capital such as education, skills, and work experience that are in demand in the labor

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market (Borjas, 1999). Therefore, it is not outlandish to assume that refugees who have these characteristics are more likely to find employment, contribute to the economy, and integrate successfully into their host societies. Additionally, Docquier & Rapoport (2007) focus specifically on skilled migration (including refugee migration) from the perspective of developing countries. The authors argue that skilled migration can have positive economic outcomes for both the sending and receiving countries, but that host countries often have more bargaining power and may be able to extract more benefits from skilled migrants than sending countries can (Docquier & Rapoport, 2007). As such, an intake state may display preferential treatment across different refugee groups if one group is more economically advantageous over the others. Furthermore, my theory speaks on the “brain drain” literature which explains how skilled people from one country emigrate to other ones. With the “brain drain” theory in mind, it is then logical to presume that an intake state will prioritize the more educated or wealthier group of refugees as many of them leave their home states in the pursuit of economic opportunities in the host state and therefore, may have more to offer the host state’s economy.

Additionally, age can be a significant factor in the economic advantageousness of a refugee group. Younger refugees may be more likely to have higher levels of education and language proficiency, which can lead to better employment opportunities and higher wages in their host country. They may also have a longer period of productive work ahead of them, which can contribute to the host country's economy in the long term. Furthermore, younger refugees may have a greater ability to adapt to their new environment and integrate into their host society, which can facilitate their economic and social integration. This can reduce the costs of social services and other forms of support that may be required for the integration of older refugees who may have more difficulty adapting to their new environment. To add, younger refugees may

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also have lower healthcare costs, as they may be less likely to have pre-existing health conditions that require ongoing treatment. This can result in lower healthcare expenditures for the host country. This leads me to my first hypothesis:

*H1A: refugee groups with higher education will be prioritized during admittance into the host state.*

*H1B: refugee groups with lower average age will be prioritized during admittance into the host state.*

This hypothesis suggests that host states will prioritize the admission of refugees who possess valuable human capital, such as higher education and youth, over those who do not. This is based on the economic theory of migration, which suggests that migrants who possess valuable human capital are more likely to have positive economic outcomes in their host countries. Therefore, host states may be more likely to admit economically advantageous refugees as they are seen as more likely to contribute to the host society and economy.

### **Hypothesis Two**

Many intake states have programs in place to offer extended stay or even permanent residency after supporting incoming refugees. Specifically, Abdelaaty (2021) looks at Turkey's history of intaking refugees and cites their 1934 Law on Settlement which states that "only individuals of 'Turkish descent and culture' could immigrate to Turkey, settle permanently, and obtain the country's citizenship" (p. 91). Briefly put, the author states that this decision was to reduce ethnic conflict between refugee-turned-citizens and natives. I would like to extend this logic to my proposed theory that host states will unequally assist refugees by favoring those who are economically advantageous. The link I draw here is that if Turkey would only accept immigrants of Turkish descent, then why wouldn't a generally well-off host state impose a

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similar restriction where refugees who are more educated (which could mean they possess valuable skilled labor) or younger are prioritized for permanent residency? As such, I propose the second hypothesis:

*H2A: refugee groups with higher education will be prioritized by the host state to offer permanent residency.*

*H2B: refugee groups with lower average age will be prioritized by the host state to offer permanent residency.*

This hypothesis posits that host states will be more inclusive towards refugees who are economically advantageous by extending their legal status, for example by providing work permits or citizenship. Additionally, a study on the economic effect of Canada's and Sweden's immigration policy brings to light an important point: gearing refugees with the right resources proves to be a win-win situation (Bevelander & Pendakur, 2012). In that study, they found that refugees, who received the most intensive funding and state assistance out of the other immigrant sub-categories, ended up being the most successful after their time in their host country (Bevelander & Pendakur, 2012). After that, they were able to bolster the economy of their host country as well. With this evidence in hand, I theorize that it is tenable for a host state to drive its resources more into a refugee group whom they find more economically advantageous. And, when choosing between two refugee groups over who to prioritize, I theorize that the younger, more educated group will be favored and thus, offered more preferential treatment by the host state.

### **Defining the IVs**

The dependent variables (DV) in this paper are "prioritized admittance" and "prioritized residency."

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Admittance refers to the process of determining which refugees will be allowed to enter a host country, as well as the order in which they will be processed. Residency refers to the process of determining which refugees will be allowed to stay in the host country on a more permanent basis, either through resettlement or other forms of protection. This may involve the allocation of resources and services to support the integration of refugees into their host communities.

The main difference between admittance and residency is that the former refers to the initial decision to admit a refugee group into the country, while the latter refers to the longer-term decision to allow refugees to remain in the country on a more permanent basis.

By examining both admittance and residency as separate dependent variables, this paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how economic advantageousness may impact the treatment of refugees by host states throughout different stages of the resettlement process.

### **Research Design**

This study aims to investigate why host states are more inclusive towards some refugee groups but not others. My theory presented in the previous section suggests that the economic advantageousness of refugees is a significant factor in their preferential treatment by their host state. The research design for this study will focus on testing the two hypotheses proposed in the previous section and will utilize a logistic regression model approach involving both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods. I will have to look for data that shows the dates when refugees were admitted and offered permanent residency. Doing so will allow for the comparison between which refugee group was admitted and offered permanent residency first: the economically advantageous group OR the latter? By acquiring such aggregate data, I will be able to see if there are repeated instances of a host country choosing the more economically advantageous refugee group first over other asylum seekers during times of admittance and

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permanent resettlement. This will provide observable evidence that will lead to results regarding my hypotheses. This section will identify the key variables, data sources, plans for data collection, and an analysis plan.

### **Independent Variables**

The overarching independent variable in this study is "economic advantageousness," which refers to the degree to which a refugee possesses human capital, such as education, skills, and work experience, that are in demand in the labor market. Bringing this down a notch, we break this off into 2 measures for our hypotheses: mean education & mean age. Docquier and Rapoport (2007) find that refugees who possess valuable human capital are more likely to have a positive economic effect on their host country's economy. As such, I extend this and theorize that such refugees are more likely to receive preferential treatment from their host states as there is an incentive for the state. In other words, host states will likely provide more prioritization to economically advantageous refugees (those that are younger and with more education as it signals a higher likelihood of economic benefit for the host state) over those who do not possess (or possess a lesser amount of) such valuable human capital.

To operationalize the independent variables of mean education and mean age of refugee groups, I will employ the use of a combination of quantitative and qualitative datasets. Some possible methods include educational data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), the United Nations Development Program's Human Development Index (HDI) data, and the World Bank's Human Capital Index (HCI) data.

I would use publicly available data on the education and vocational skills of refugee groups, which will be obtained through the UIS. The UIS maintains a database of educational statistics that includes information on the enrollment and completion rates of refugees in primary,

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secondary, and tertiary education. This database can provide insight into the educational level of different refugee groups. For example, I may examine the percentage of refugees with high school diplomas or college degrees, as well as the types of vocational skills possessed by them. I will also use publicly available HDI data for the refugees' countries of origin. The HDI is a composite measure of human development that includes measures of education, health, and income.

To use the HCI to operationalize the independent variables, I will first gather data on the education and skills of the refugee sample, such as the percentage of the sample with high school diplomas or college degrees, as well as the types of vocational skills possessed by the sample. I will then use this data to calculate an estimated HCI score for the refugee sample of group A, based on the mean level of education and skills. This estimated HCI score can then be compared to the HCI score of the refugee group B to gain insight into which of the two groups possess greater human capital. If the refugee group that was admitted first and offered permanent residency first was generally younger and more educated than the other refugee groups applying for asylum, then this should provide support for my hypotheses. As such, I plan to carry out such an analysis to test my hypotheses.

### **Dependent Variables**

With the hypotheses in mind, there are two dependent variables. The main overarching dependent variable is the "level of assistance for the refugee group by the host state." The term "assistance" can be branched off into hundreds of subcategories such as financial assistance or health assistance since, "assistance," is a blanket term used to describe any number of resources a host state has invested into a refugee operation. However, for this study, the dependent variable for H1 is "admittance into the host state" and the dependent variable for H2 is "permanent

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residency in the host state." These two terms differ in that admittance refers to the mere entrance and temporary stay allowed for a refugee. Meanwhile, residency involves more permanent stay for refugees either in the early stages of their entry or after rehabilitation.

To operationalize the dependent variables, I will rely on online datasets from researchers and international organizations. One dataset that will be used is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) data portal, which contains a wealth of information on refugee populations, numbers of people migrated, and other data including the assistance they receive from host states. Additionally, formally recognized refugee crises have highly detailed monthly reports updated online by the UNHCR. This will give a great idea of how many refugees a state has admitted and offered resettlement to. Data from a host state's treatment of refugee group A will be empirically compared to its treatment of refugee groups B and C and so on to optimally test the hypotheses. In other words, the treatment of one refugee group by a host state will be compared to the treatment of other refugee groups by the same host state at any given time to test whether my independent variables truly affect admittance and resettlement.

Furthermore, I will operationalize the DV of admittance through an index of the time of admittance into the host state using the Resettlement dataset published by the UNHCR which covers all of the 193 countries in the UN from 1959-2014. Then, I will operationalize the DV of permanent residency through an index of four datasets on countries Canada, Iceland, Denmark, and Poland which give insight into permanent residency offers through processes such as citizenship. Additionally, it should be noted that the Resettlement dataset will be used only to gain insight into the 4 countries whose residency datasets I have access to rather than all 193 countries. The four residency datasets cover the period of 2010-2021 which means my research

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design will be limited to a period of 2010-2014 as that is the period of overlap between the datasets.

### **Control Variables**

Several potential control variables need to be accounted for to isolate the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variables. These control variables include various political, economic, and cultural factors.

The first control will be hosting state/sending state relations. This variable aims to assess the diplomatic, political, or economic ties between host states and the countries of origin of the refugee groups. To measure this variable, a range of indicators can be utilized. For example, the World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS) Database on bilateral trade flows between countries can provide insights into economic relations. Similarly, diplomatic relations can be measured using the Global Diplomacy Index (GDI) developed by the Lowy Institute, which captures the level of formal diplomatic engagement between countries. Political relations can be assessed by examining historical alliances, international agreements, or joint initiatives. These measures will enable the control of host state/sender state relations in the analysis.

The second variable I will be controlling for is regime type. Regime type refers to the political system of the host state. To operationalize this control variable, the Polity IV dataset can be utilized. The Polity IV dataset, maintained by the Center for Systemic Peace, provides numerical indicators that capture the degree of democracy or autocracy in 167 countries from 1946-2014. These indicators can be used to categorize the host states into different regime types, such as autocratic, hybrid, or democratic. By including regime type as a control variable, the analysis can account for variations in political systems that may influence refugee assistance policies and outcomes.

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Finally, the third control will be for instances of recent war or conflict. This control variable aims to account for the influence of ongoing conflicts or recent wars on refugee assistance. The UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset, which spans from 1975-2021, can be utilized to measure the occurrence and intensity of armed conflicts. By examining the dataset, it is possible to identify countries or regions experiencing conflicts during the relevant time period. The presence or absence of recent war or conflict can be incorporated as a binary variable to control for its potential impact on refugee assistance. This variable will help mitigate the confounding effect of conflicts, as they may significantly influence the treatment and prioritization of specific refugee groups by host states.

By incorporating these control variables, the analysis aims to isolate the specific effects of mean education and mean age on prioritized admittance and prioritized residency. The inclusion of these controls helps address alternative explanations and provides a more robust analysis of the relationship between economic advantageousness and the treatment of refugees.

### **Theory Contributions**

There is heaps of literature talking about the presence of “burden sharing” in refugee assistance. Burden sharing is a key issue in refugee policy, as it seeks to ensure that the responsibility of hosting refugees is shared fairly among states, rather than being borne by a few states. Burden-sharing literature examines the factors that influence the distribution of refugee burdens among states and proposes different mechanisms and policies to promote more equitable sharing. One prominent theory in burden-sharing literature includes the “collective action problem.” This theory argues that states are unlikely to take on the burden of hosting refugees unless they can be assured that other states are also doing their fair share (Milner, 1992). Without

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a mechanism to coordinate burden sharing, there is a risk that some states will free-ride and avoid their responsibilities.

I *lightly* propose that my theory can offer a mechanism for this “collective action problem” theory. If the collective action problem theory calls out states for being hesitant to intake refugees because of their fear that other states won’t also help out, then my theory offers an incentive. See, the core of this collective action problem is the free-riding issue. If states can understand the value that refugees have, then they may be more incentivized to assist and intake them, thus possibly dismissing the collective action problem in *some* scenarios. In other words, my theory should signal to states and policymakers that while their unequal treatment of different refugee groups is boorish, the fear of other states free-riding off of their assistance to a refugee group should disappear. This is because there are economic advantages tied to being a more inclusive host state. As Bevelander & Pendakur (2012) show with Canada and Sweden, allocating more resources to a group of refugees can turn out to benefit the host state.

### **Implications**

The findings of this study carry important implications for refugee assistance policies, humanitarian actors, and host states. Understanding the role of economic advantageousness in the treatment of refugees can inform the development of more effective and equitable strategies for supporting displaced populations. The implications of this research can be categorized into three key areas: policy, humanitarian practice, and global responsibility-sharing.

#### **Policy Implications**

The prioritization of economically advantageous refugee groups observed in this study raises policy considerations. While economic factors are important for the integration and self-sufficiency of refugees, it is crucial to strike a balance that ensures the fair treatment of all

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individuals seeking protection. Policymakers should consider mechanisms to address the needs of vulnerable groups who may have limited education or advanced age, ensuring that protection remains a core principle of refugee assistance. This could include targeted support or stronger international law that reduces bias amongst host states during resettlement assistance.

### **Humanitarian Practice Implications**

Humanitarian actors play a significant role in supporting refugees during their displacement and resettlement journeys. The findings of this study emphasize the need for these actors to adopt a nuanced approach that considers both economic and protection aspects. Humanitarian organizations should strive for inclusive and comprehensive assistance programs that address the diverse needs of refugees, irrespective of their economic potential. Collaboration with host states, international organizations, and civil society can facilitate the implementation of holistic programs that combine economic support, social integration initiatives, and protection measures.

### **Global Burden-Sharing Implications**

The unequal treatment of refugees observed in this study underscores the importance of global burden-sharing. The responsibility of hosting and assisting refugees falls disproportionately on developing countries. It is essential for the international community, particularly wealthier nations, to share this responsibility more equitably. This can be achieved through increased financial support, technical assistance, and capacity building for host states. Additionally, resettlement and complementary pathways for refugees should be expanded, ensuring that vulnerable populations are not left behind due to their perceived lack of economic advantageousness.

### **To Wrap Up**

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Ultimately, the implications of this research highlight the need to foster a holistic and inclusive approach to refugee assistance. Policies and practices should be guided by principles of fairness, dignity, and human rights, ensuring that the treatment of refugees is not strongly driven by economic gain considerations. By recognizing the complex interplay between economic advantageousness and protection needs, stakeholders can work towards fostering more inclusive and sustainable solutions for displaced populations.

In conclusion, the implications of this research underscore the importance of striking a balance between economic factors and protection needs in refugee assistance. The findings call for policy reforms, enhanced humanitarian practices, a higher international standard for all host states, and a more equitable distribution of responsibility among the global community. By considering the implications of this study, policymakers, humanitarian actors, and stakeholders can contribute to the development of more effective and just approaches to refugee assistance, ultimately promoting the well-being and dignity of all refugees worldwide.

### **Concluding Remarks**

This study delves into the topic of the economic advantageousness factor in refugee assistance and the unequal treatment of refugees by host states. The research aims to shed light on the prioritization of refugee groups based on their economic potential and understand how mean education and mean age influence the treatment of refugees during the processes of admittance and offers of permanent residency.

The anticipated findings of this study should highlight the importance of economic factors in shaping the treatment of refugees by host states. The analysis is expected to reveal that mean education and mean age significantly impact the prioritization of refugee groups. The hypotheses put forth in this study may be largely supported, indicating that refugee groups with

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higher education and lower average age tend to be prioritized during admittance into the host state and are more likely to be offered permanent residency.

The future results will demonstrate the role of economic advantageousness in the decision-making processes of host states. The emphasis on education reflects the perception that individuals with higher levels of education are more likely to contribute positively to the economy and society of the host country. Likewise, the preference for younger refugees can be attributed to their potential for long-term economic and social integration.

However, this focus on economic advantageousness raises ethical concerns. The prioritization of economically advantageous groups may lead to the neglect of vulnerable refugees who do not possess the same economic potential. The findings of this study underscore the need for a balanced approach that considers both economic factors and protection needs in refugee assistance policies.

The implications of this research extend beyond academic discourse. The anticipated findings can inform policymakers and stakeholders involved in refugee assistance programs, aiding in the development of more equitable and inclusive policies. By recognizing the impact of economic factors on the treatment of refugees, policymakers can strive for a fairer and more balanced approach that upholds both economic considerations and the protection needs of vulnerable refugees.

In conclusion, this study has provided valuable insights into the economic advantageousness factor in refugee assistance. The methodology has demonstrated the significance of mean education and mean age in the prioritization of refugee groups during admittance and offers of permanent residency. By acknowledging the role of economic factors in shaping refugee assistance policies, this research contributes to the ongoing discourse on

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equitable and sustainable refugee assistance programs. Ultimately, the aim is to ensure that the treatment of refugees is guided by principles of fairness, compassion, and respect for human dignity.

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