Migration “crisis” in Europe
An overview of the influx of refugees and migrants

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Lokaverkefni til BA-gráðu í mannfraði

Félagsvísindasvið
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Ritgerð þessi er lokaverkefní til BA-gráðu í Mannfræði og er óheimilt að afrita ritgerðina á nokkurn hátt nema með leyfi rétthafa.

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Reykjavík, Ísland 2016
Abstract

The influx of foreign migrants into Europe as well as dramatic events on the Mediterranean Sea in the recent months has attracted attention of the public, political and academic spheres in Europe. Media’s coverage on migration and public debate constituted to popularization and dissemination of few key terms which are often confused or misunderstood. The most fundamental definitions come from UN, Red Cross and IOM. Migration can be dated back to the beginning of the human species. With the appearance of the states and borders migration processes became far more complicated and some people’s ability to move had been severely hindered. Contrary to the general public assumption, migrating processes have not intensified due to the Arab Spring but simply “continued along the previous trends” and majority of the fleeing population did not head to Europe but have been accommodated by the neighbouring countries. The main objective of the European Union regarding migration is to prevent irregular entries to its member states. To be granted an asylum and acquire a legitimate status of a refugee involves long and toilsome process handled in accordance with the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and Dublin Regulation. The current discourse among the Western public regarding migration shows that prejudicial ideas and stereotypical perceptions are still prevalent.
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**Introduction**

For the past few years the increasing number of migrants arriving to the Western world, and in particular into Europe has started riveting attention of the global media and, even more so, of the Western public. Although labour migrants, refugees and asylum seekers of various origins have always been present on the European continent, the immigration processes have intensified in the past fifty years, especially in the West Asian countries which are being devastated by civil wars and constantly plagued by social and political unrest (Khan, 2000). Indeed, the main trigger for people’s migration is the difficult situation in the home countries characterized by conflicts, political instability and non-efficiency of the socio-economic structure (Allievi, 2012). Since the beginning of uprising in the Arab world, better known as the Arab Spring, the ever-increasing influx of refugees as well as migrants from the Middle-East, where on-going armed conflicts endanger well-being of civil population, quickly became the most debatable topic among the Western public and governing parties across Europe. Those who seek security and better life opportunities, most often have to leave everything behind and face many obstacles upon their arrival to a supposedly promised land, such as immigration law and regulations and quite often hostile attitudes of the European societies. The biggest challenge in this complicated migration process, in recent years, is a lengthy and dangerous journey. It practically always involves attempting to enter the EU zone through the Western Balkans route and possibly running the gauntlet of robbers and traffickers or crossing the Mediterranean Sea, which is the most direct and most perilous route where deaths from drowning already rose past grim toll of two and a half thousand people in the first nine months of 2014 (Fargues & Fandrich, 2012; Fargues & Bonfanti, 2014).

The following text touches upon various aspects of the current phenomenon of migration into Europe, situation of Muslim migrants and refugees that are arriving into European continent. It is evident that the on-going mass migration tests how well the liberal principles and moral values of European nations are implemented in reality. This thesis is an attempt to present how the current influx revives suppressed prejudicial attitudes and beliefs about migrants so deeply embedded in the Western mind-set (Said, 1978; Khiabany & Williamson, 2012). It shows how migration “crisis” exposes well-hidden flaws that Europe for many years has ensured to stand against. Radical critics and proponents of conspiracy
theories endeavour to shift attention away from the human tragedy and instead focus on the aspect of national security of the EU member states by emphasizing possible association between migrants and refugees originating from the Middle East with terrorist groups. Furthermore, as Vanparys et al. (2013) points out, attitudes towards Muslim minorities are strongly dependent on terrorist activities of the Muslim extremists, which contribute to maintenance of false generalizations about migrant communities and create stereotypical ideas. This is well exemplified by situation of Muslim minorities in the Western world in the aftermath of the 9/11, which rapidly deteriorated and the public attitudes towards minorities and foreigners from the Middle-East turned very hostile (Ahmed, 2013; Fischer et al. 2007). Although the increase of hostility towards refugees, Islamophobia, xenophobia and racism are dependent on dramatic events, these attitudes and ideologies stem back from the past and were already well prevalent in the colonial times (Khiabany & Williamson, 2012). Given the nature of the current discourse within the Western societies, Said’s (1978) theories of Orientalism and dichotomies seem to be still valid and worth discussing in the contemporary context. Furthermore, given the role of media in creating representations of Others it is relevant to analyse implications of generalizations and, following the line of reasoning of Abu-Lughod (1991), one should assess the importance of creating accounts that focus on particular, which could work against the process of marginalization and separation of foreign cultures and populations.

This thesis is composed of four parts in which interrelated aspects associated with the subject of migration will be discussed. The first chapter explains fundamental terms such as refugee, migrant and asylum seeker, which are often confused or misunderstood. Becoming acquainted with these terms and being able to recognize essential differences between them may substantially aid comprehension of the following text. The second chapter provides the reader with historical context of migration into and out of Europe and discusses migration from statistical perspective. The third chapter briefly examines regulations, directives and other EU legislative acts concerning migrants and refugees. It reviews topics such as process of migration, access to Europe, protection in Europe, integration, protection in third countries and Dublin regulation. The final chapter looks at the conflicting views, re-emerging movements and various attitudes and ideologies such as Islamophobia and nationalism and how they manifest themselves within European societies, political propaganda and media discourse.
Migrant, asylum seeker or refugee?

The dramatic events on the Mediterranean Sea and the narratives of terrifying experiences from people who have attempted to reach European continent as well as the increased influx of foreign migrants into the European Union zone have attracted considerable attention of the public, political and academic spheres in Europe in the recent months. Media’s growing coverage on the complex phenomenon of international migration and heated public debate on numerous aspects associated with the incoming foreign groups, have contributed to the popularization and dissemination of a few key terms without defining their characteristics and/or acknowledging fundamental differences between them. This chapter will be devoted to presentation and analysis of the definitions used or constructed by institutions such as International Federations of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Organizations for Migration and most importantly the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). It also briefly presents some scholar perspectives on the theoretical aspects of these terms and how they are defined in the academic fields.

As Malkki (1995) points out, it is impossible to pinpoint the origins of a concept of a refugee. The internationally recognizable figure of refugee has transformed over the years and although people have always been searching for protection in foreign states, phenomenon of a refugee cannot be traced to any particular ancestral form from which it has evolved. However, as Malkki further explains, the emergence of a refugee as a social construct and legal problem can be associated with the post-World War II period in Europe where unprecedented scale of displacements of people prompted elaboration of new managing techniques and strategies which were to become a globalized standard. Most influential conceptualization of refugee comes from the UN Refugee Agency and its 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. This fundamental legal document described the concept of refugee, its rights and responsibilities of states and became the operational framework for other institutions, such as Red Cross (UNHCR, 2011). According to the UN Refugee Agency, a person is internationally recognized as refugee if due to an on-going armed conflict or military unrest in their homeland, where they might face persecution or even lose their lives, they are forced to flee and seek protection abroad. Refugees are ought to be protected by international law, with access to assistance from United Nations member states, UNHCR and other humanitarian aid organizations such as Red Cross, and allowed to
apply for an asylum (UNHCR Resettlement Handbook, 2011). According to article 1A(2) of
the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, as modified by the 1967 Protocol, a
refugee is a person who, "owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race,
religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions, is outside
the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail
himself to the protection of that country" (pp.80, UNHCR, 2011). In 1969 Organization of
African Unity (OAU) Convention further contributed to this definition, stating that any
person forced to leave his or her country "owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign
domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his
country or origin or nationality" should be regarded as refugee (UNHCR, 2013). This view
has been complemented in 1984 by Cartagena Declaration which further adjusted and
enlarged the scope of the definition, claiming that it should also include persons who
abandon their habitual place of residence "because their lives, security or freedom have
been threatened by generalised violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive
violations of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public
order" (pp.4, UNHCR The Cartagena Declaration, 2013).

While definition of refugee used by UN Agency for Refugees, developed as a result of
several international conventions, is considerably well specified, description of asylum
seeker term seems somewhat vague and obscures the distinction clarified by the definition
of refugee. International Organization for Migration states that asylum seeker is a person
whose life and livelihood are under threat and seeks shelter from persecution, in a country
other than his or her own. Such an individual is protected by authorities of the host country
while awaiting a decision on the submitted application for a refugee status. In case their
request is declined, the applicant must leave the country as his stay is no longer legal unless
being granted permit to stay based on humanitarian grounds by providing sufficient
evidence about facing potential persecution upon their return home (IOM, 2011). UNHCR
adds to this standpoint that in the light of recent mass movements of refugees, caused
mainly by armed conflict rather than individual persecutions, host countries struggle to cope
with the number of arriving cases and for the most part they are unable to conduct
individual asylum interviews. Because the reasons for fleeing their home country are quite
apparent and hardly questionable in these circumstances, such interviews are not usually
necessary and the migrating populations are regarded as “prima facie” (Latin expression meaning: on its first encounter or at first sight) refugees (UNHCR, 2002).

According to the Red Cross an asylum seeker is a person which flees its homeland and attempts to travel to any other country, where it reports their arrival to the authorities, demonstrate that returning home would put their well-being at risk, and finally, applies for an asylum. Such an individual is permitted to reside in the country until the application is completely reviewed. If the case is positively reviewed and asylum is granted, an individual acquires status of a refugee, which allows them to stay on a permanent basis. If the application is rejected, an asylum seeker will not be protected in a host country and will face deportation to their homeland unless they decide to appeal or there are legitimate reasons their return is not possible (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2009).

According to International Organization for Migration (2011) one of the most distinctive characteristic that specifies a migrant is the fact that, as opposed to refugees, migrants’ decision to move to another country is generally taken voluntarily and does not involve external compelling factors such as threat of persecution or death, also they can safely return home. People, who decide to settle in foreign country, generally hope to improve their socio-economic conditions and to secure better future prospects for their family. In some cases, people leave for the purpose of education or family reunion. This specification differs somewhat from the definition provided by The United Nations, according to which, an individual can be declared migrant if the length of his or her residence in a foreign country exceeds one year, irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary and regardless of the means used to migrate. There are various types of migrants that can be distinguished within the general definition such as economic migrant, which is a person leaving his home country in the purpose of employment and improvement of his own welfare. Another kind of a migrant is the irregular migrant, who lacks legal status due to unauthorized entry, breach of a condition of entry, expiry of visa, unauthorized employment or exceeded authorized length of stay. There is also a temporary migrant worker also known as contract migrant worker and skilled migrant who might be in advantaged position owing to his or her skills or professional experience, and is likely to be subjected to preferential treatment in the process of acquiring permanent permit to stay in the host country (IOM, 2011).
Regarding a definition of a migrant used by International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, it can be considered as confusingly broad, although as the organization assures, it is done so deliberately “in order to capture the full extent of humanitarian concerns related to migration” (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2009). According to the description of a migrant used by the Red Cross, migrant is a person who either voluntarily or involuntarily leaves its place of residence seeking security and improvement of their current situation in some other, most likely foreign, country. This term includes economic migrants, stateless migrants, irregular migrants, internally displaced migrants as well as refugees and asylum-seekers (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2009).

According to Gibney (2004), normative theorists usually use a more inclusive definition than the internationally agreed definition of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and its subsequent modifications and appendices. Their definition includes victims of war violence, those harmed by natural disasters and poverty. He proposes that the definition should be broadened so that it would include not only people who experienced or fear persecution but also those whose basic subsistence needs and safety is not secured due to omission by states or states’ actions. Many scholars, such as Matthew Gibney (2004), David Miller (2008), David Owen (2011) and Alex Betts (2013) argue that when defining a refugee and allocating asylum, instead of focusing on the contributing factors to relocation or causes of migration, one should look at the individual’s human rights and his need for protection. Interesting definition comes from Shacknove (1985), who stated that a refugee is a result of a breakage of social contract between a citizen and its country. Such break can take place if the state subjects a person to persecution and therefore fails to provide protection to its citizens or when the state is unable to guarantee their people the basic needs. Collapse of the social contract means that an individual’s security may be jeopardized in their country of origin and their only recourse is to seek sanctuary and restitution of their needs in a different country. Gibney (2015) agrees with this scholarship and further states that a refugee is a person which requires protection elsewhere than in his country of residence, where his basic needs and substantial human rights cannot be protected. Adoption of this definition would mean that apart from Convention refugees, other groups such as forced migrants would also be able to seek an asylum. Gibney (2015) also criticizes position of some scholars who argue that the definition of refugee should be contained to the
definition as elaborated by the UN Convention according to which those who are persecuted on ground of race, religion, etc. are more endangered than other groups, such as forced migrants, unlikely to receive help in their own country and therefore are the “most deserving of the deserving” (Hathaway, 1997). Gibney (2015) argues that such assumption will lead to forced decisions as to who is in greater need of protection, which is morally wrong.

It is very common that in the popular discourses, terms such as *asylum seeker*, *migrant* and *refugee* are blurred into one and used alternately in reference to diverse groups of people, which might differ substantially in other terms of motives for relocating to another country. Referring to people as either of these terms without careful consideration of the motives and underlying factors for leaving one’s home country and lack of knowledge about substantial differences between key terms leads to precipitant generalizations and creates artificial homogeneity of the arriving groups. This fallacy shapes wrong and stereotypical views and already has an example in the public discourse. As Gibney (2015) explains, people do not always distinguish correctly between a migrant, refugee and an asylum seeker, due to misconception of the above mentioned terms. They often assume that those arriving to Europe from the Middle East countries are exclusively refugees that will seek to live on the system, which in turn could severely affect European countries’ economy and have a negative effect on a well-being of the European citizens. Such erroneous way of thinking excludes other groups, such as skilled labour migrants whose intent of moving might be simply career related, not to mention that it also adds to increasing hostile attitudes in the European societies. As Edwards (2015) explains it is important to address a person of concern by an adequate term as it determines how such person will be perceived and approached. He further states that blurring key definitions takes attention away from legal protections refugees require. It can also lead to decline in public support for practice of granting asylum and refugees altogether. In practice, this might have severe implications on the process of adaptation to the new environment.

In the following chapters I will use the definition of a refugee developed by the UN Refugee Agency and complemented by articles of the 1967 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention and 1984 Cartagena Declaration as well as the definition used by the Red Cross as described in above sections. This definition does not make a clear distinction between people who have been granted
the status of a refugee and asylum seekers who are about to apply for such status. This approach is based on the acknowledgement of the diverse nature of the current migrating processes, a great number of people they involve, and conditions in a host country, all of which may hinder asylum procedures. As for the migrants, a definition provided by the UN Agency for Refugees will be used to refer to all types of migrants unless more specific distinction will be possible.

2. Historic and statistical background of the process of migration
In this chapter I will briefly discuss the phenomenon of migration into and out of Europe and the concept of refugee in a recent historical context and present the matter in focus from the statistical perspective. The activity of leaving habitual residence and moving over various distances to another location with the intention of settling either on a temporary or a permanent basis can be dated back to the beginning of the human species. About 85 thousand years ago human ancestors left what is now known as African continent and headed towards southern part of Asia which was the beginning of lengthy and complicated process of populating the earth (Park, 2009). Even though, intensities and trends of migration have much changed since those early human days, some of the underlying factors prevailed adapting to the existing conditions. People still move to different locations in order to improve their present situation, yet others are forced to flee due to natural disasters or unfavourable environment. With the appearance of the states and borders that delimited previously ownerless land, migration processes became far more complicated and some people’s ability to move had been severely hindered. Additionally, the affinity to one particular country had often proven to be a determining attribute, either permitting or prohibiting people to move to particular destinations (Czajka, 2014). The divergence between countries’ power status and privileges is well reflected by a passport power rank – an online index of world’s passports based on research from publicly available sources and information shared by government agencies. This online tool classifies world’s passports according to the number of visa free countries that their holders can visit without a visa or obtain a visa on arrival. Power rank ranges from 1 – representing the best passports to 80 – standing for the worst. Most of the 15 highest ranks are occupied by European countries, United States, Canada and some advanced Asian countries such as Japan and South Korea, whereas the bottom ranks are filled by developing countries from Africa, South and West
Asia. The top of the list belongs to United States and United Kingdom with a score of 147, for comparison, citizens of South Sudan and Palestinian territories are permitted to cross borders of only 28 foreign countries (Passport Index, 2015). The earliest mention of granting asylum to people fleeing their country due to persecution comes from 3,500 years old written sources. These sources refer to the great empires of the Middle East such as the Hittites, Babylonians, Assyrians and ancient Egyptians. This practice of protecting refugees can be regarded as the earliest hallmark of human civilization which over three millennia later came to be the fundamental aspect of the UN refugee agency (UNHCR, 2015).

The most important assumption in order to understand the political basis in the production of refugees and policies regarding refugees is that nations are the appropriate structural model for countries. Since the nineteenth century this type of global political organization has served European powers to maintain their dominance. Therefore, it can be stated that the production of refugees is embedded in a geopolitical structure (Keely, 1996). It should be also pointed out that in order to understand the circumstances of particular groups of refugees and the model of nation-state one has to consider the metaphorical concept of rootedness. That is the linkage between people and place and the idea of belonging to or being rooted in particular place that people regard as their homeland or nation and the source of their identity (Malkki, 1992). As Malkki (1995b) explains, a position of a refugee came to be perceived as an irregularity and a problem in the “national order of things” (pp.1-2) where a stable society and sedentary existence are regarded as the norm. The refugee seems to be a deviation from the categories of people developed by the nation-states; it occupies a “zone of pollution” (pp.4, 6) that cannot be fixed within national boundaries. As the history demonstrates, migrating processes strongly increase during turbulent times. Political upheaval, poverty, natural disasters, and war especially, are the main factors setting people on the move (Frank & Reinisch, 2014). Over the past centuries there have been a great number of armed conflicts around the world, be it an international military operation or a civil war. Given the fact that every of these conflicts has constituted, to varying degree, to the increase of number of international refugees, flow of migrants and general relocation of people, it is possible to devote a separate analytical text on each of these conflicts.

Until the end of the Second World War, the policies of the European countries towards foreign, predominantly non-white, migrants can be described as relatively tight and
selective (Ahmed, 2013). As Frank & Reinisch (2014) point out, the extent of support for refugees depended on whether Western states considered them as “economically and socially desirable or at least tolerable”. Thus, it is not that surprising that only few groups of people, either of African or Asian descent, such as students, aristocrats, rich upper individuals and political fugitives could be found in Europe at that time (Ahmed, 2013). For the most part of the first half of the twentieth century, European nation-states were in the process of constant transformation and adaptation to the very unstable at that time, political situation and changeable balance of power on the continent. For these reasons Europe’s governments were not constructively engaged in finding an effective approach to handle national and international refugee affairs. The situation changed in the period between 1940 and 1950, during which the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNNRA) and War Refugee Board were created. The establishment of these institutions indicated the acknowledgement by the nation states their international responsibilities. There are at least two factors that could account for this sudden shift of focus and increase of commitment. Firstly, the Second World War caused one of the biggest population transfers in the European modern history (Gatrell, 2013). Tens of millions of people were expelled, transferred, deported, or exchanged during and in the aftermath of the war. Displacement of such vast number of people affected most, if not all European countries, meaning that Europe could no longer exclude itself from the phenomenon of a refugee nor could it avoid their responsibilities. Another reason for the change of previously hostile attitudes and policies towards migrants could be associated with the shortage of labour power necessary to restore the European continent (Frank & Reinisch, 2014). Europe was devastated by the war and lacked necessary manpower to rebuild its economy. Therefore, badly needed workforce, had to be obtained from outside of the continent. The arrival of poor and unskilled but cheap manpower was warmly welcomed by the Western governments, which even allowed immigrant communities to establish their own cultural institutions and religious centres. The largest group among the newcomers were Muslims (Ahmed, 2013). As opposed to being classified as unwanted group in the 1930’s and 1940’s, the economic potential of non-European foreigners in the aftermath of the World War II changed their status to highly desirable (Frank & Reinisch, 2014). However, the European openness towards foreign workforce did not last long. Eventually the cultural and ethnic differences between the foreign minorities and mainstream society started to crystalize in
the anti-immigration concerns, shift of attitudes of the public and in the introduction of
tighter regulations for immigration. Already in 1962, the British legislature passed the law
according to which Pakistanis, Indians and other non-white individuals were required to first
find an employer before being able to apply for immigration. The majority-minority
relationship had further worsened since the late 1970s when the immigration from Middle
East, South Asia and Africa picked pace which resulted in the arrival of large numbers of
mostly political and humanitarian refugees. It was widely suspected by European
governments that the incoming Muslims were in fact either economic migrants or the

In order to understand migration trends in relation to the revolutionary wave of anti-
government demonstrations, protests, riots and armed rebellions that spread across South
Mediterranean and Middle East countries, also known as the Arab Spring that began in the
early 2011, it is necessary to examine scale of emigration in the period prior to and post
these events. As Fargues & Fandrich (2012) explain, contrary to the general public
assumption, migrating processes have not intensified due to the Arab Spring but simply
“continued along the previous trends”. The greatest movements of population during and
after Arab spring took place within the South Mediterranean countries, as the outcome of
the unrest and violence in Libya and Syria. Contrary to a common assumption, majority of
the fleeing population did not head to Europe but have been accommodated by the
neighbouring countries. People fleeing conflict in Libya crossed into Tunisia, Egypt, as well as
Algeria, Sudan, Chad and Niger whereas people fleeing war in Syria moved mostly to Turkey
as well as to Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq. Surprisingly, the emigration strongly accelerated in
the decade preceding the revolts, during which the number of emigrants to OECD countries
increased from 3.5 to almost 5 million. Out of the increased number of migrants, which was
estimated to be around 1.5 million, over 90% headed towards Europe where Italy, Spain and
France were the primary hosts. Whereas the influx into Italy and Spain was mostly
economically motivated, those destined to France intended to reunify with their families.
Furthermore, it should be noted that before the revolts, many of the Arab Mediterranean
countries were a popular destination for nearly 4.5 million migrants and refugees from
Africa and neighbouring Middle East. Due to lack of precise statistical data, it is difficult to
establish whether 1.5 years from the onset of the first uprisings the inflow and the outflow
from these regions of concern have systematically increased. Annual statistics of legal
migrant stocks provided by Germany, Italy, Spain, and United Kingdom suggest that there has been an increase in number of migrants and refugees, however reviewing the span of the five years it can be concluded that observed movements were simply a continuation of well-established trends (Fargues & Fandrich, 2012).

In order to gain a better understanding of the current migrating events it is necessary to get acquainted with quantitative aspect of migration, including migrants and refugees, over the period of the past decade up to the present point in time. Two measuring techniques are typically used for such estimations. First one uses migrant stock data, which is the total number of international migrants present in a given country at a particular point in time. Second approach uses migration flow data, which is the total number of people leaving or arriving to a given country at a particular point in time. Whereas the former type of measurement gives a precise figure for specific time and therefore allows for a comparison between countries, the latter technique captures the dynamic nature of migration processes (Abel & Sander, 2014). Although there is a variety of estimates provided by different national statistics institutes, comparison of their data is not adequate and may yield some erroneous results as they might differ in terms of measurements, definitions and research procedures. As opposed to the annual flow data of administrative records or national surveys, which takes into account every stay that exceeded the period of twelve months, the following statistics come from five-year flow estimates that include migrants who between mid-2005 and mid-2010 changed their country of residence on a permanent basis. The five-year flow estimate does not include return or multiple moves, taking into account only one transition for a particular period (Sander, Abel & Bauer, 2014).

According to The Global Flow of People (Sander, Abel & Bauer, 2014) only 0.6 percent of the world population was on the move in the five-year period from 1990-1995 to 2005-2010 indicating that migrating intensity over these two decades were very stable. Between 2005 and 2010 Europe accommodated about 8.9 million people. It was the main destination for migrants from USA (over 1 million), Morocco (ca. 600 thousand), India (just over 400 thousand), Pakistan (just over 350 thousand), Brazil (300 thousand), China (290 thousand), Argentina (260 thousand), Ecuador (ca. 250 thousand), Nigeria (ca. 170 thousand), Algeria (nearly 160 thousand), Turkey (ca. 160 thousand), and Syria (ca. 70 thousand). The majority of the total number of immigrants came from South Asia, Latin
America and Africa, where 8.7, 5.5 and 3.5 million people respectively, decided to move to another part of the globe. The main sender from South Asia was India (3.5 million) where over 70% of their migrants headed to the United States or United Arab Emirates. Interestingly, in Europe, Africa and the former Soviet Union more migrating processes in that period took place within rather than out of the region. It is important to point out that West Asia was the third biggest receiver of migrants (6.73 million) with only about 800 thousand people leaving this particular region. The most evident flow trend went from South Asia to United States and Gulf countries, however, the largest single flow, involving 1.8 million people, originated in Mexico and went to the United States. As for the European continent, which as mentioned above was the biggest recipient of migrants in the 2005-2010 period, it was selected as the destination mainly by populations from Africa (2 million), Latin America (1.6 million) and South Asia (1.4 million) although the greatest number of transitions took place between European countries (2.2 million).

According to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2013) annual flow estimates, the number of international migrants increased by 57 million from 2000 to 2013 reaching a total figure of 232 million. According to data from this period it can be stated that people tend to move to more developed regions as compared to their current place of residency. Thus, in the developed countries they represent 10.8 percent of the total population whereas in the developing countries they account for only 1.6 percent (UN, 2013). Regarding estimates on refugees, it is assumed that by the end of 2012 there were approximately 15.4 million refugees, of which 10.5 million were under the mandate of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and 4.9 million under the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNWRA). Contrary to erroneous assumption among European citizens, often used as an argument in the heated public discourse, over 87 percent of all refugees were granted an asylum in developing countries, Asia being the biggest host (10 million), followed by Africa (3.1 million) and finally, Europe in which 1.5 million people found an asylum (UN, 2013). According to Global Flow of Refugees based on UNHCR Statistical Population Database, by the end of 2014 almost all of migrating processes of refugees took place within rather than out of particular geographical regions (Sander & Bauer, 2015). To further stress the difference in the number of refugees and asylum seekers between the world’s regions it would be only necessary to compare figures from Germany, Turkey and Pakistan, which are
the biggest hosts in their geographical region, that accommodate 0.5, 1.6 and 1.5 million respectively. In the light of contemporary events which mostly concern populations coming from Syrian Arab Republic, it is relevant to mention that out of total of 3.9 million majority of refugees originating from that country, 1.5 million is being provided a temporary sanctuary within Turkish borders (UNHCR Global Trends, 2014).

3. **European conventions, laws, and policies concerning migrants and refugees**

In 2015 Europe has been witnessing the largest inflow of refugees and migrants since the Second World War. The record-breaking number of 626,000 applications handed in across European countries in 2014, will most likely be higher by end of the 2015 (Eurostat, 2015). According to International Organization for Migration (IOM) Mediterranean Routes Report (2015) and Mediterranean Update (2015), during the period from January to September 2015 more than 505 thousand people have crossed European borders after taking one of several sea routes. Although there have been attempts of entering the EU zone on land, through the Balkan route, the majority of refugees arrive by sea, which is a far more a dangerous alternative. There are three main migrant routes, depending on the geographical location of the migrant. People from the North-Western part of Africa most often take the route either through Morocco to mainland Spain or Algeria to Spanish Mallorca or south coast of France; or through Libya to Italy. Populations of the eastern and north-eastern Africa as well as Middle East migrate mainly through Turkey where the majority usually finds temporary protection, to Greece, Bulgaria, and Romania, and even to Italy. Majority of these migrants and refugees originated in Syria (175,000), Afghanistan (50,000), Eritrea (30,000) and Nigeria (15,000) and were destined to Greece and Italy where over 374 thousand and 128 thousand of arrivals have been recorded respectively. It is reported that almost three thousand people either are missing or have lost their lives during their attempt of reaching European coastline (IOM, 2015). The abrupt strong increase raised questions about the share of responsibilities among European states, about the execution of moral duties and finally, whether human right commitments that are the fundamental principles of European Union, are being fulfilled. The surge has already exposed many deficiencies in the present asylum procedures and refugee regulations, inadequacies in the current management of the situation, and the insufficiency of the applied approaches.
It would seem that the biggest challenge in the process of migration is the lengthy and life-threatening journey. Unfortunately, reaching a destination point or at least the mainland is not the end of the struggle for fleeing people. It is evident that European Union’s main priority is to prevent irregular entries to its member states rather than constructing efficient policies that would facilitate legal and safer travel options for those needing protection. EU primary tactic is to stop the potential inflow preferably in the refugee producing area or on the soil of third countries. In order to meet their target, EU introduced tighter visa requirements for non-Europeans and created a European Border Management Agency (FRONTEX). Although such measures might indeed decrease the number of people travelling in irregular manner, they fail to make a distinction between various types of migrating persons such as asylum seekers and legitimate economic migrants. Given the limited possibilities for relocation due to restricting international policies, refugees are very often trapped in a situation where they must choose between returning to their home country and possibly be subjected to persecution, stay in any of the neighbouring country without appropriate assistance and protection or make an attempt of crossing the sea, often in craft as basic as partially inflated rubber dinghies, risking their lives and possible deportation.

As European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) explain, majority of refugees move to the neighbouring countries where socio-economic situation is not always much different from the one they just left behind and it is not certain that their livelihoods will improve in the new location. In order to provide refugees with adequate protection, in 2005 the European Commission established Regional Protection Programmes that were supposed to relieve third countries from some of their responsibilities by providing their expertise, assistance, advice and resources. However, as ECRE points out, the long-lasting and effective solutions to the refugee related problems can be obtained if European states will focus on guaranteeing refugees and asylum seekers with non-refoulement and securing them complete civil, political, economic, social, cultural and legal rights (ECRE, 2007).

To be granted an asylum and acquire a legitimate status of a refugee involves long and toilsome process. Nowadays in the member states of EU, asylum cases are handled in accordance with the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), established to simplify and unify diverse asylum regulations across Europe, to make the procedures more efficient and comprehensive as well as to ensure that all applicants will get an equal treatment (Lavenex
Individual that arrives in any of the EU member states and intends to apply for an asylum must appear at the immigration office where their fingerprints will be taken and stored in the EURODAC database. Then, officials decide which country is going to review the application taking into consideration whether the applicant entered the EU zone legally, whether he has a valid visa or residence permit and whether he has a family member already residing in EU country. Next, the asylum seeker is interviewed by a caseworker who is to assess whether an applicant meets all the requirements of Qualification Directive and Asylum Procedures Directive and is eligible for a status of a refugee or subsidiary protection. While the application is being examined, which should not take more than six months, the applicant should have a dignified standard of living, which includes an access to employment, healthcare, education, legal assistance and social welfare. According to the EU reception conditions, asylum seekers should also receive material support such as food, housing and financial support. If the application is rejected, the asylum seeker is sent back to his home country unless he decides to file an appeal (EU: Council of the European Union, 2013).

One of the most substantial parts of the ECAS is the Dublin Regulation which stipulates that an asylum seeker must hand in the application in the first EU country it reaches. This regulation however may be annulled, as in the case of Germany regarding Syrian refugees. The main objectives of the Dublin Regulation are: to determine which of the member states will examine the application and possibly grant an asylum and to prevent multiple asylum claims by ensuring that only one country will be responsible for the examination of an application (EU: Council of the European Union, Regulation (EU) No 604/2013, Carrera & Guild, 2010). Although the reasoning behind Dublin Regulation seems sensible, there are also many drawbacks and its application in the light of the current events may act to the detriment of refugees. The most evident complication emerging from the application of the Dublin Regulation is the shift of responsibility towards countries located at the external borders of Europe, which are often the closest and the most accessible destination for asylum seekers. Due to economic discrepancies between the member states and the large number of arriving migrants, these primarily targeted countries are often unable to provide adequate support and protection (European Refugee Fund, 2013; Loescher, 2002). Since an asylum seeker is obliged to submit its application in a country he first entered, some countries such as Greece may end up with far more asylum cases compared to other states.
and the responsibility of examination every application can be hard to cope with. In these circumstances, some states may breach their obligations and try to prevent asylum seekers either from reaching their borders or getting an access to asylum office (Carrera & Guild, 2010). Another pitfall of the regulation is that it deprives an asylum seeker from the right to choose the country he would like to reside in and it impedes reaching a preferable member state where he would like to submit his application. As Gibney (2015) points out, there is a prevailing assumption that an asylum seeker should not be entitled to deciding his final destination but rather appreciate receiving protection in a safe country where his basic rights will be respected.

Another important aspect in the process of migration is the process of integration. There are various immigrant policies that host countries adopt regarding immigrant integration requirements and principles in the process of accommodation. Some host countries prefer civic-assimilationist model which enables them to restrain or ban certain cultural customs of the foreign groups such as Muslim religious practices which do not conform to dominant social norms whereas other countries adopt multiculturalist strategy of integration where rules of immigration are less strict which in turn makes accommodation easier and more successful (Lepinard, 2014). According to assimilation policy of integration there are significant cultural discrepancies between immigrants and the rest of the society which have to disappear or be minimized in order to maintain a homogenous entity of the mainstream society. To prevent distortion of public order and fundamental social principles upon which the host country operates, immigrants are required to adapt to specific social norms and cultural expressions (Zemni, 2011). According to Statham, the continuum of immigrant policies seems to run from France whose universalism ideas embodied in the principle of laïcité opposes all differentialism, through Britain which adopted moderate regulations and which recognizes immigrants’ cultural identity, through to the Netherlands which can be considered as the best example of successful implementation of cultural pluralism. He further explains that the main assumption of their immigrant policy is to provide ethnic minorities with equal opportunities for the development and with a large degree of autonomy. Representative organizations are incorporated into the political system and the residents have been enabled to vote in local elections and to be employed in the civil services (Statham et al. 2005).
Europe acknowledged that immediate help is a moral responsibility and a universal human duty they are obliged to carry out. However, apart from having announced the refugee quota plan, which determines how many refugees and migrants, member states of the European Union are going to allow across their borders, comprehensive measures are still undefined. It is still unclear what the most efficient way of managing aid is, how long it should last and how existing commitments should be effectively implemented. Tackling as a large issue as the current level of migration requires full collaboration of the ruling parties within the EU zone and a united approach, that is yet to be found. Given the overwhelming number of people arriving into Europe in very small period of time, governments started to fear that prolonged delivery of aid as well as long lasting and increasing accommodation of newcomers could affect their economy and internal stability (Loescher, 2002). According to Harvey (2000), the inflow of refugees exposes many flows in European refugee law. He believes that Northern states and Europe specifically – described as “Fortress Europe”, prefers to keep forcibly displaced away from their borders and implements various techniques to make sure that asylum seekers will not knock on their door. It is interesting to investigate whether policies towards asylum seekers, refugees and migrants and practices that the EU has adopted adhere to national laws and international agreements that EU member states not only signed but also heavily contributed to their elaboration. According to the article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights “Everyone has the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution”. However, the circumstances that the asylum seekers face upon their arrival to Europe negate this stipulation. Preventing people from entering the EU zone by placing razor wire fences or armed militants, putting minimal efforts to provide people with necessary information, aid and legal support as well as presenting logistical obstacles, such as lack of assistance in reaching distant asylum administrative offices, are not exactly the indicants of humanitarian aid strategies (Watters, 2007). Instead, they fall into the Foucauldian category of “apparatuses of security”, which Foucault (1991) describes as the mechanism in which only a limited social and mental health care is available for populations in need. Circumscribed contexts that such mechanisms create, makes it difficult to assess people’s need and to determine the nature and the required level of assistance. Following this line of reasoning, it could be stated that the very conditions and regulations created to protect and deliver help are in fact hindering this process. As Harvey (2000) points out, Europe deliberately attempts to present itself as
unattractive as possible to asylum seekers. It also established certain apparatuses aimed to keep asylum seekers away from the European continent. One could ponder on how Europe is supposed to objectively examine asylum cases and guarantee protection for all people fleeing persecution if they systematically create conditions which jeopardize the security of refugees and migrants. Rather than focusing on how to provide safety and to improve refugees’ lives, political parties of all orientations strive not only to reduce the number of those seeking asylum but also to reduce the number of successful applications by tightening asylum requirements and rapidly removing those whose claims have been rejected. Furthermore, by introducing refugee quotas, EU is undermining the hallmark of humanitarian approach to asylum unanimously recognized by the drafters of the 1951 Convention, which stipulates that the delivering of aid to those in need should not be selective nor should it be limited to a particular number of people. Finally, a pervasive practice of detention and forced deportation of asylum seekers including children, which often involves use of excessive force, breaches the regulations of the UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child, which holds that in all actions concerning children, the best interest of a child should be regarded as a top priority (Fekete, 2005). The adopted approach towards refugees often violates conventions on human rights and children’s rights protected by the international law and 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Fekete (2005, 2011), describes the current shift from protecting vulnerable to protecting states and reported actions of degrading treatment or punishment of fleeing persons as the “war on refugees”. She continues saying that measures such as forced deportations, systematic detention of undocumented immigrants and harsh methods of control confirm that EU member states do not live up to the responsibilities laid by Geneva Convention and Human Rights Convention. Deportation of refugees may put them at risk of possible persecution, however some groups are particularly might be particularly targeted and subjected to violence or other type of persecution upon their return to the home country. These groups include political dissidents, homosexuals, sex slaves, Roma people escaping racial violence, and war refugees (Fekete, 2005, 2011).
4. **Westerner’s ideas about and attitudes towards migrants and refugees**

In this chapter I will briefly discuss the role and the power of the media in creating stereotypical perceptions and how they shape range of attitudes among the public. Next, I will discuss Said’s (1978) position regarding prejudice, marginalization and stereotyping of the populations of the Middle- and Far-East concluded in his concept of Orientalism. I will also discuss the receptiveness of the European societies to Muslim foreigners and how minorities are treated during and after the process of integration.

Media play a very important role in creating and shaping public perceptions and attitudes towards ‘other’ cultures and foreign people from distant countries. Their coverage has a great impact on intercultural communication and social environment, especially in the aftermath of dramatic events, which often significantly constitutes to stereotypical ideas and hostility and might have direct implications on relations between host societies and minority groups (Shaw, 2012a). Language and selection of words play significant role when discussing culture, traditions and civilizations. According to Rehman (2007), unconsidered and reckless usage of words can deteriorate communication and jeopardise relations between communities and societies. They might be interpreted as provocative and hateful and create negative stereotypes and hostile attitudes towards all believers of Islam. Discrimination and marginalization of Muslims in the news also contribute to xenophobic and right-wing extremist movements. As Fekete (2012) puts it, purposeful negative portrayal of Islam “provides ammunition for neo-Nazis and violent ultrapatriotic defence leagues” as well as anti-Islam organizations such as Stop Islamisation of Europe (SIOE). Framing Western world and the Islamic world in binary system such as: us and them, West and the *Others*, where western countries are presented as the civilized norm and the Muslim countries are depicted as uncivilized, “radical, oppressive, fanatical, irrational” contribute to cultural conflicts, clash of civilization, and hinders compromising dialogues between social groups (Roy & Ross, 2011). Communication and therefore the usage of words should be used to promote peace and to contribute more to preservation of human rights and provision of protection. Media should base their work on intercultural communication and adopt the idea of human rights journalism, which Shaw describes as “journalism without borders- journalism based on human rights and global justice, a journalism that challenges political, economic, social and cultural imbalances of society at
both local and global levels”. There are two types of stereotypes, which can have different sort of implications on the subject of their concern. In essence, they are a social construct which makes social reality, events, and people more comprehensible. Stereotypes used in constructive way may have positive influence on intercultural communication and promote human rights journalism. Negative stereotyping, on the other hand, can have destructive effect on communication and relation between cultures (Shaw, 2012b).

According to Abu-Lughod (1991), one of the most problematic aspects of the Western professional discourse about the others is the process of generalization. As she explains, this prevalent mode of operation, writing and conceptualizing the world leads to artificial homogeneity, coherence and timelessness of a particular culture. Within the structure that generalizations create and which people label as some particular culture, there is a complex web of interrelated individuals having different aspirations, experiences, characteristics, struggles, etc. Western discourse and preoccupation with generalization, which can be considered as the language of authority and power, creates, maintains and intensifies stereotypical views and/or hostile attitudes towards foreign cultures and populations. For example, there is a redundancy of materials about Islamic world but mostly in the context of dramatic events, in relation to extremist groups and their activities, or when discussing customs and traditions associated with religion of Islam or cultures of the Middle-East countries that are conflicting with the Western norm. The latter is well reflected in heated public debate concerning the practice of covering face (burqa, niqab, hijab). Muslim women are often regarded by the West as being oppressed and forced to wear it but people rarely investigate particulars to find out personal motives for this custom. As Abu-Lughod (2002) explains, it is possible that individual does not voluntarily choose to cover its face but for many women it is a personal decision, a sign of modesty, clothing preference or/and habitual practice. There are many possible reasons for covering woman’s face, which can only be discovered by approaching particular individual, but to make hasty generalizations is an evident fallacy of reasoning, which came to be a foundation for Islamophobic views and hostile attitudes.

In the light of current events, where the number of immigrants arriving at European borders keeps increasing and given that majority of those people come from Islamic countries, it is not surprising that such movements evoked increased awareness of the Orient, Islam, and the Middle-East (Esposito, 2011; Albrecht, 2011). It is very common that
contemporary discourses on the subject of migration, whether in academic texts, in the media, in political talks, or predominantly in public debates, employ West/East or us/them dichotomies, indicating that Orientalism is still a prevailing element in Western ideology and is reemployed in contemporary Islamophobia. It is therefore important to look at the current events and discourses with Said’s (1978) hypotheses in mind. According to Said Orientalism is a way of perception; a specific standpoint that imagines, exaggerates and distorts differences between Arab and Western societies and cultures. These foreign cultures and people are perceived and portrayed as irrational, obscure, uncivilized, exotic, and at times dangerous. He further postulates that Orientalism is also the fundamental assumption in scholar, political and public spheres of the Western world, according to which the recognition of difference between the West and the Middle East or the far East, should be the starting point for any elaborate theories, descriptions and other accounts concerning these foreign people and their cultures. The origins of Orientalism are associated with the period of European Enlightenment and colonization of the East (The Orient) by the Western countries (The Occident). Orientalism have served to justify and rationalize suppression and colonization of the Orient by establishing asymmetric power relations and unresolvable dichotomy, where inferior East was perceived as lacking culture and doomed by its backwardness and therefore in desperate need to be rescued, civilized and enlightened by superior West which represented logic, rationality, peace and civilization (Said, 1978). Orientalism and Islamophobia are often interrelated and intertwined. In order to understand overlaps between these motifs and how they are mutually reinforcing, it is important to first present the definition of Islamophobia and how it operates (Zebiri, 2008). Although there are numerous definitions of Islamophobia, a description elaborated by Runnymede Trust (1997) is one of the most popular and widely accepted definitions. It states that Islamophobia can be understood as religiously-motivated hostility directed at Islam and Muslims. Marranci (2004) supplements this description claiming that Islamophobia is also “a form of racism as well as an unfounded fear of Islam”. Islamophobic attitudes and behaviour can be manifested or employed in different ways and contexts, for example: through exclusion or discrimination of an individual in employment or public/social spheres, through prejudice reflected in public discourse and stereotypical representations in the media and through violence that includes physical as well as verbal abuse (Runnymede Trust, 1997). Some scholars, such as El-Gallal (2014) and Marranci
(2004) suggest that Europe is a substantial contributor to the existing Islamophobia. Although its social, political and cultural frameworks do not prohibit or openly discriminate foreign cultures or religions, such as Islam, they do not completely accept them nor support them, which leads to isolation and even marginalization of Muslims. Out of all religions, it is Islam that is perceived as a threat to Western world. This along with Europe’s limited cultural and religious receptivity makes Islam and its followers regarded as incompatible elements of the Orient.

Although, anti-Muslim racism certainly has intensified after the events of 9/11 or other terrorist attacks, it should be pointed out that such attitudes, stereotypical misconceptions and perception of Muslims as backward and barbaric date back to the times of imperialism and colonialism of the Middle East and North Africa (Khiabany & Williamson, 2012). The word “Muslim” came to invoke fear and prejudice as it has been associated with terms such as terrorism, Islamic jihadism, religious fanaticism and fundamentalism and instilled into ideas about the Muslims by the mainstream media (Gottshalk & Greenberg, 2008). Terrorist acts or other violent incidents are often portrayed as a true representation of Islam, where the values and the dangerous character and the ideologies of the extremists are thought to be representative characteristics of all Muslims. Alsultany (2011) points out that crimes committed by Jews or Christians are not considered to have an influence on the general attitudes toward these religions, and in most cases media, when reporting on a crime, such as bombings in Palestine, murders, UN military operations in the Middle East, shootings or racial abuse, do not announce offenders’ religion. This is an interesting argument that exposes media’s selectivity and their discriminating policies. Mass media proved to be a powerful weapon for political leaders, which used biased representations that contributed to increase and maintenance of Islamophobic ideologies and to perpetuate their far-right agenda (Allen & Nielsen, 2002). In the light of the increasing political and military unrest worldwide, world’s population has once again been divided into democratic, peaceful and victimized citizens of the West and dangerous, exotic and backward despots from the Middle East (Asad, 2007). It has been postulated that Islam is the main obstacle preventing Middle-Eastern societies from innovation, progress and modernity (Diner, 2009). Others argue that because Islam is a religion of violence and terror (Varisco, 2005), also described as a conquest-oriented faith that threatens freedom and democracy (Karsh & Kumaraswamy, 2005), Muslims’ intentions are solely to overtake European continent
(Caldwell, 2009), destroy Western civilization and impose brutal Sharia law on all population (Tashman, 2012). With the striking absence of the images of the ordinary people and their everyday life, in the Western films, press and the news, people are deceived to expect only the worst from the Islamic culture (Shaheen, 2000).

The representations of the migrants and refugees are also characterized by a rather unsympathetic tone. Hostility motifs in the media coverage takes the attention away from the needs and protection that asylum seekers require and instead victimize the host country, by implementing terminology of natural disaster (immigrants are therefore described as ‘tidal waves’ that are ‘flooding’ the host country), as well as by referring to the arriving people either as migrants or illegal migrants (Leudar, 2008). People fleeing persecution in hope of finding sanctuary and improving their living conditions are predominantly portrayed and perceived as a threat to European states. They are treated with caution and suspicion and the reasons for their migration and their intentions are being continuously questioned by the public and the authorities of the receiving country (Vanparys et al., 2013; Leudar et al., 2008). It is often believed, that the arrival of refugees and their prolonged presence might severely harm economy of any particular country as they would only seek to live on the system (Gibney, 2015). All of the above mentioned examples lead to alienation of the foreigners in the Western society if not to their complete exclusion.

Another aspect worth discussing concerns the capability of European states of accommodating refugees and migrants and creating adequate conditions for inclusion and integration of the foreign populations into main society. Drawing the conclusion from the dominant discourse, as Czajka (2014) points out, reveals that migrating people are a significant problem for the nation-states. Foreign people often carry a different cultural baggage, have different customs and traditions and may live by different moral norms than the host society (Allievi, 2012). Any particular nation-state has a limited level of receptiveness to foreign cultures and its assimilability decreases as the cultural discrepancy between populations increase. In other words, there is only a certain degree of difference that nation-state can tolerate, even in countries whose national identity incorporates migration. This is well exemplified by the case of Poland, which remains to be a largely homogenous country, ethnically and religiously (Czajka, 2014). As Rozalska (2012) points out, Poland’s accession to European Union back in 2004 did not change country’s openness
to multiculturalism and increased migration into the country, as was initially hoped. Instead, as the analysis of political and media discourses and the attitudes of Polish citizens residing inside and outside their country point out, becoming a part of a diverse cultural landscape and experience of coexistence with foreign, culturally and ethnically different populations evoked the feeling of uncertainty and fear that the national identity was being under threat. Since the fall of the communism in 1989, which precluded the ideas of equal rights for minorities, Poland is still in the transition period to becoming more tolerant and open to the outside cultural and ethnic influences. According to Helsinki foundation for Human Rights report, foreigners residing or visiting Poland experience various kinds of racial discrimination, ranging from avoidance of interaction and contact, humiliation at public spheres, discrimination in the labour and housing sector, hate speech and physical violence. Although certain legislative acts are place to guarantee protection of rights for minorities, such as Polish Constitution which condemns any discrimination of the national and ethnic minorities and the Criminal Code that prohibits racially, nationally or ethnically motivated crimes are not often put into practice. Furthermore, country lacks appropriate instrument to monitor the implementation of EU legislations, designed to protect migrants and refugees which apparently were not incorporated in the national acts for protecting minorities. Poland’s cultural racism is a result of a limited contact with people of different cultures and ethnicities, misconceptions and erroneous generalizations about the foreigners, and feeling of threat and fear of the unknown otherness (Rozalska, 2014). Obviously the nature and level their accommodation of foreign population also depends on how well the incoming individuals are willing to adjust to the social norms in the new environment and how much people and institutions in the host country are willing to help in their process of adjustment or assimilation. As Parekh (1998) argues, the accommodation of Muslims in Europe will always be a problematic process because dominant societies are unable to provide its cultural minorities with full equality, which in turn impairs the process of integration and creates and reinforces confrontational relationship between dominant majority and mistreated minority. Although major political parties often pointed out the importance of tolerance, pluralism and openness to multiculturalism and declared ensuring equality in fields of education, housing, employment, welfare and health for all social groups including minorities, as one of their main political objective, these ambitious resolutions were rarely reflected in reality (Zemni, 2011).
Conclusion

It is evident that the current events regarding the influx of asylum seekers and migrants is a highly debatable subject and the appropriate responsive programs and efficient measures to assist and protect arriving populations are yet to be established. The fact that great numbers of people are willing to risk their lives attempting to reach European continent is a sufficient indicator about the gruesome living conditions and the contributing factors to abandon their habitual residence. People who decide to move do so because their country is no longer able to guarantee them sufficient protection or provide them with basic subsistence needs usually because of political instability, inefficiency of socio-economic structures or armed conflicts. Although European states recognized the gravity of the unfolding situation of migration and acknowledged that an immediate and efficient delivery of help is a moral obligation, their rules and policies, and implemented strategies do not always work in the best interest of arriving people. There are clearly inadequacies in the current management of the situation, and applied approaches often prove to be insufficient.

Views about migration and attitudes towards migrants and refugees in Europe are quite divided. Proponents of an unlimited refugee intake allowance very often ground their standpoint in the concept of humanitarianism characterized by moral of kindness, benevolence and altruism extended to all human beings as well as protection of human rights regardless of people’s nationality, religion or political orientation. Skeptics and opponents of an unlimited refugee intake, on the other hand, argue that coexistence of foreign minorities and dominant cultures could turn quite problematic and difficult to maintain, it might also lead to frequent social misunderstandings and disagreements. It is often pointed out that immigrants arrive with specific set of values, beliefs, traditions, histories, customs and ideas which could have a significant effect on the European cultural landscape and social institutions and will require a lengthy and complicated process of integration. Opponents also argue that accommodation of such large groups of people can have a detrimental effect on economies of the European states.

At the time of writing this text, another dramatic event took place on European soil. Paris has been targeted by the extremists of the Islamic State. French capital suffered a night of deadly attacks which President Francois Hollande described as an “act of war” on the nation. Shooting and suicide bomb attacks that took place in several locations have left at least 129
people dead, while 99 people were severely injured. Leaders from all over the world officially condemned the attacks and once again spoke either about the Western world or human values being under threat. It was obvious that these events would fuel far right propaganda and further stir already hostile debate about accommodation of migrants, some people would also use it to perpetuate their radical nationalist agenda. As much as this terror attacks terrified and disgusted me, I could not stop thinking about the imminent implications they would have on the life of asylum seekers, ethnic and religious minorities within Europe and further marginalization of Muslims in European societies. My curiosity was already appeased the very next day when it was announced that Poland would not respect EU relocation plan and will not accept an assigned quota of refugees because of the Paris attacks. The aftermath of this event further demonstrated what has already been discussed in this thesis that the situation of immigrants and minorities in the Western world is strongly dependent on dramatic events. It is interesting that Muslims always reassure that they do not support terrorism. It brings to my mind the power relations between the West and the marginalised Others which is always monitored, always treated with suspicion and probably will never be completely regarded as an equal citizen simply because of their ethnicity or religion. Current discourses on the subject of migration demonstrate that Westerners’ perception of foreign populations and cultures is still based on power relations and unresolvable dichotomies, and stereotypical ideas of Orientalism.
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