

Migration Practices in Europe: Economic and Cultural Factors

Zhibek Syzdykova^{1*}, Kalybek Koblandin², Nikolay Medvedev³

¹ Department of Central Asia and the Caucasus, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Kolmogorova str., 11/1 Mokhovaya Street, Moscow, 125009, Russian Federation

² Department of Regional Studies, L. N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University (ENU), Satpaev str. 2, Astana, 010000, Kazakhstan

³ Political Science Issues, Zagoryevskaya str., 10, Moscow, 115598, Russian Federation; e-mail: nk.medvedev@rambler.ru

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Correspondent email:

zh_syzdykova@rambler.ru

Abstract. This research aimed to identify the economic and cultural factors of migration in Europe within the context of contemporary economic and social realities. To achieve the research objective, a comprehensive multi-stage research project was developed and implemented, incorporating the advantages of statistical analysis, monitoring, rating and summary statistics. The research relied on harmonized and validated statistical data from 48 European countries, divided into four sub-regions, serving as the informational foundation for the study. Using summary statistics on migration factors in the context of economic and cultural factors made it possible to demonstrate the importance of considering cultural human rights in the country's migration policy. An interpretation of migration practices in Europe by this means enables us to highlight the cultural context as a determining indicator, based on an analysis of objective indicators in the development of migration processes. Furthermore, the study shows that the high quality of life and cultural attractiveness of the national policy stimulates the migration intentions of a person to seek out countries with more developed economies. The findings of this study hold relevance for policymakers and specialists in public administration, particularly those involved in the regulation and control of migration. Additionally, academic researchers can benefit from the empirical regularities established in this research and the identified prospective avenues for future investigations.

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1. Introduction

Back in 1970, 84,460,125 international migrants were recorded, representing 2.3% of the planet's population. By 2019, this number had risen to 271,642,105 people – 3.5% of the global population. That is, today, every 30th inhabitant of our planet is a migrant. Statistics indicate that 74% of all migrants are in the employable population, aged from 20 to 64, of whom 52% are men and 48% are women. Europe alone now accepts as many immigrants as there were in the whole world 50 years ago (International Organization of Migration, 2020).

The migration process is difficult not only for the migrants themselves (Bygnes & Erdal, 2017; Setiadi, 2010; Susiloningtyas, Boer, Adrianto, & Julianto, 2014) but also for the host or transit countries (Brunner & Kuhn, 2018; Estevens, 2018) and their states of origin (Castro-Palaganas et al., 2017; Crescenzi & Holman, 2017). Intrinsically, migration processes can be provoked by many reasons. They may be of political, social, economic, cultural, and other nature (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018; Dustmann, Fasani, Frattini, Minale, & Schönberg, 2017; Estevens, 2018). Even though recent academic works pay considerable attention to some of these factors (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018; Dustmann et al., 2017; Estevens, 2018), not enough consideration has been given, for example, to the influence of the culture of migrants on the very essence of the

migration process. This is confirmed by the analysis conducted by UN experts (Culture 2030 Goal campaign, 2021). As Barbashin (2020) notes, migrations connect communities and states not only in economic and social relationships, creating a single socio-economic space, but also in cultural ones. Barbashin (2020) argues that modern sociology considers the high cultural attractiveness of a state to be one of the factors favourable to migration. In this context, migration is a function of the relative attractiveness of countries of departure and entry, with culture playing the role of a push factor for migration flows in the countries of emigration and, conversely, an attracting factor in the countries of immigration.

Considering that migrants have a natural need to preserve their cultural traditions and customs, this fact sometimes hinders rather than facilitates the acculturation process, so the social adaptation of migrants becomes an important process on both personal and institutional levels (Culture 2030 Goal campaign, 2021). The main results of the analysis of Barbashin (2020) suggest that the study of migration requires an interdisciplinary approach, in which the role of the integrator of interdisciplinary scientific research regarding migration should be assumed by sociology. Relevant today is the theme of considering cultural capital in social integration and cohesion, as well as in the development of human capital,

the recognition of cultural manifestations of inequality and poverty, the development of policies to make culture accessible to all, increasing the quality and quantity of cultural events and cultural services. The services mentioned are related to the activation of public spaces through cultural expression and the democratization of culture through the decentralization of cultural spaces.

In this context, the study of the economic and cultural reasons for migration can contribute to the improvement of these processes of cultural assimilation (Mikhaylovich & Vasylyevna, 2016). The symbiosis between culture and economy is also encouraged through tourism and creative industries. To reduce the negative impacts of the dynamic process of migration on all its subjects (the populations of countries of origin, destination, and transit as well as migrants themselves), it is necessary to review the main aspects regularly within the framework of assimilation policy.

This question has become especially relevant since 2020, given how migration played a role in the spread of Covid-19 and the outcomes of this global pandemic have exerted a destructive impact on all spheres of human activity, resulting, among other things, in a drop in the migration rate and a deterioration in immigrants' living conditions (Song et al., 2020). The experts of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) have highlighted four key migration issues to be addressed by national governments in Europe in 2022: first, the rise of irregular migration in Europe due to the growing instability in countries of origin exacerbated by the economic impact of Covid-19; second, the migration effects of a power grab by force and the growing humanitarian crisis; third, the reformation of the European asylum system and ensuring a fair sharing of responsibility and solidarity among the Member States willing to accept migrants; and fourth, a discussion of the channels for legal migration.

Based on the most recent data on international migration, our study aimed to explore the economic and cultural causes of migration in Europe in the present realities. Our goal of establishing macro-social patterns and trends in our interpretation of migration practices implied a mixed approach combining qualitative and quantitative data sources.

We hope that our results will be useful in creating and revising policies regulating and coordinating migration flows, as well as in reinforcing and enhancing already available research results with new data. The obtained findings may induce researchers to investigate the problem of migration more comprehensively to bring this process to the lowest cost for all its participants.

According to contemporary researchers, the reasons compelling individuals to leave their home countries and seek alternative places of residence can vary significantly. These reasons range from the desire to improve one's well-being (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018) to escaping from wars (Dustmann et al., 2017) or the aftermath of natural disasters (Estevens, 2018).

In general, migration has both positive impacts (filling the labour market, a way out of the demographic crisis, cultural enrichment due to the integration of different ethnic and racial groups) and negative consequences, manifested in economic, social, political, cultural, and other spheres (Davis, Lizunkov, Ergunova, & Malushko, 2017). What is more, these results can be a threat to both host and home countries, for example, by the brain drain from lands of origin (Castro-Palaganas et al.,

2017) or an increase in crime and social tension in receiving or transit states (Cheliotis, 2017; Esteve, 2018).

The issue of migration consequences has attracted considerable interest from the world academic community. Many researchers have focused on the impact of migration on the economies of destination countries, underlining the positive impact of migration on the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita. As a result, it is widely argued that, through remittances, immigrants provide lucrative investments that, even if spent for consumption purposes, stimulate production by a multiplier effect (Syzykova, Medvedev, Suleymanova, Nazarova, & Volokh, 2020). Thus, for example, in New Zealand, 115 thousand migrants have been estimated to contribute to a stable 0.2% increase in the state's GDP per capita (Davis et al., 2017).

As the practice shows in the area of migration, immigrants can transform the social, economic, and government institutions of the host country, thereby creating a so-called 'diversity capital' as an important agent of change in several sectors. Immigrants tend to be more entrepreneurial than natives, actively participate in the civic responsibilities of the host society, and bring their customs and traditions to the social and cultural aspects of life through the distribution of food, culinary traditions, etc. (International Organisation of Migration, 2020). Given this, the governments of various states worldwide, and in particular of the European Union (EU), have adopted various measures to control and regulate the flow of migrants. These measures include measures to support the reception of refugees, the legalization and adaptation of migrants, the conduct of language training courses, migrants' protection, and the like (Davis et al., 2017; Safonov, 2022; Samburova, Safonov, & Avdushko, 2022; Ventsova & Safonov, 2021).

One widely adopted way to increase the population of a country is to attract international students. This tactic is designed so that after training, young, qualified, and already adapted to local realities specialists will remain in the country permanently (Crescenzi & Holman, 2017; Wu & Wilkes, 2017). In this case, benefits to the host country are as obvious as losses to the country of origin. To avoid a brain drain, some states try to return citizens to their homeland by offering monetary compensation (Crescenzi & Holman, 2017). However, many of them fail to take into account the benefits of such a situation, linked to already established social ties with peers, potential hirers, family members, and friends, who in turn provide streams of knowledge and direct foreign investment (Crescenzi & Holman, 2017).

Residents of some countries consider migrants to be the cause of economic, political, social, and criminal problems (Cheliotis, 2017; Esteve, 2018). This issue has become especially acute after a series of terrorist attacks, for example, in Paris in 2015. As a consequence, many states have adopted a controlling stance and sometimes even completely resisted the flow of migrants and tightened the border crossing regime. In Europe, these include Italy, Spain, and Greece, through whose borders the main flows of refugees have recently been increasingly directed (Davis et al., 2017; Cheliotis, 2017).

As a global player, Europe represents a link between the colonial past and the current multicultural society. The history of European migration goes back many decades, but its duration differs across countries. For instance, migration to the United Kingdom (UK) and some other European

states began long before World War II (Davies, 2020; Roberts, 1997). As of today, many nations like Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Ireland, which used to be countries of origin for the emigrant population, have recently become receiving or transit states due to becoming a pathway into legal integration in the EU (McGarrigle & Ascensão, 2018; Penninx, 2005). In parallel, Germany, one of the most popular host countries of today, is in line with France and Austria in terms of supporting immigrants' acculturation (the process of mutual influence of cultures), while the UK, Sweden, and Holland stand for multiculturalism (the fusion of all cultures into one through the preservation and development of cultural differences in a single country) (Davis et al., 2017; Penninx, 2005).

Since migration processes are likely to be extremely dynamic during globalization, constant revision and updating of available data on the matter based on the latest statistics is essential. This study aimed to explore the economic and cultural causes of migration in Europe in contemporary realities. To achieve this goal, three steps were followed: first, to review migration practices in Europe; second, to identify the causes and factors of migration that were contributing to its further growth; and third, to substantiate migration practices in the context of economic and cultural bases while taking into account factual evidence.

The novelty of this study resides in providing an analytical framework of European migration practices based on the economic and cultural aspects of migrant integration statistics in the context of national migration and other policies.

2. Methods

The current study was wholly based on the statistical analysis of data for the year 2020 retrieved from the International Organization of Migration, the International Monetary Fund (2021); the European Commission (Alvarez et al., 2021); The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2019); World Bank Data (World Bank, 2022); and *World Migration Report* (International Organization for Migration and UN Migration, 2022). These statistical sources were used: first, to provide an overview of migration processes; second, to expand the knowledge on migration causes and factors; and third, to provide an empirical basis for assessing European migration practices in the context of economic and cultural factors. The set of methods applied within the investigation included statistical analysis, monitoring, rating, and summary statistics.

This research was carried out in three stages.

2.1. Step 1

The starting point in the review of migration practices in Europe was data reflecting it in four subregions (Eastern, Western, Southern, and Northern). It should be noted that small countries with a population of fewer than 3 million people were not included in the analysis because their statehood is not associated with real economic and political independence compared to large countries. Understanding the extent and trends of migration provides knowledge on the mobility of people and the development of the socio-economic space of European societies. To visualize migration practices, this study benefited from the conditional formatting Microsoft Excel tool used with histogram rule: series of distribution of measured values. The maximum value (100) in a given histogram became the benchmark number for a high level of migration. The minimum value (1.1) – is low migration

rates. Other values were placed on a scale between the values 1.1 and 100. The result was given as a summary table (Data Table) in Excel, which converted the data to summarize it into a report. The results obtained in the report are confirmed by a secondary analysis of the previous year's data. This analysis distinguishes between countries of origin of migrants and final destinations by region in Europe.

2.2. Step 2

To expand the knowledge base on European migration practices, an analysis of factors influencing migration patterns and processes was performed using general statistics on migrants' integration in Europe (Alvarez et al., 2021). To visualize the data, a diagram showing the proportions of reasons that boost the likelihood of migration (family reunification, work prospects, asylum, and education) was created. The result of any of the four reasons would be the category "issuance of residence permits", therefore, it is not included in the list of comparable reasons in the chart.

2.3. Step 3

In the third and final stage, research results were analyzed in terms of economic and cultural factors and migration. In this context, issues related to differences in visa receiving, the impact of residence conditions, and the mobility of people in the practice of European countries were studied (iVisa, 2021). On the one hand, these differences captured the cultural context of migration in terms of the cultural attractiveness of national policies and mobility (through the Henley Passport Index and the Fragile States Index) as well as capturing the economic context of migration in terms of overall quality of life (through the Human Development Index) (International Organization for Migration and UN Migration, 2022). It should be noted that the Fragile States Index is based on a comprehensive social science methodology distinguishing three primary data streams – quantitative, qualitative, and expert – making it possible to reflect realities and patterns of conduct of countries at the national level in terms of socio-cultural processes.

The empirical substantiation of migration practices was carried out for European countries occupying leading positions in the analyzed ratings as of 2021. The result was the production of summary statistics of the key indicators presented through a line chart with accumulations to compare parts of the whole value in three categories: overall quality of life, legal culture, and the country's status in the international community.

3. Result and Discussion

Migration is a complex phenomenon that affects both economic and non-economic fundamentals. At the end of 2021, an estimated 86.7 million people migrated from one country to another in Europe. For comparison, this is an 18.5% increase from 2010 with its 70.6 million people. It should be noted that the share of international migrants varies considerably among European nations (Table 1). As the most recent data on the number of migrants in international statistical databases are available for 2015, the analysis is based on a comparison of migrant ratios to the total population.

The analysis of Figure 1 suggests that the largest shares of migrants in Eastern Europe are in Ukraine (11.4%) and Belarus (11.3%); for Northern Europe, these are Sweden (19.8%) and Ireland (17.6%); for Southern Europe – Spain

Table 1. Migrants as a Share of the Total Population, 2021

Eastern Europe: country/population total (million people)	% of migrants	Northern Europe: country/population total (mln. people)	% of migrants	Southern Europe: country/ population total (mln. people)	% of migrants	Western Europe: country/ population total (mln. people)	% of migrants
Ukraine / 43.8	11.4	Sweden / 10.4	19.8	Spain / 47.0	14.6	Austria / 8.9	19.3
Belarus / 9.3	11.3	Ireland / 5.0	17.6	Croatia / 3.8	12.9	Germany / 83.1	18.8
Russia / 143.4	8.0	Great Britain / 67.3	13.8	Greece / 10.6	12.9	Belgium / 11.5	17.3
Hungary / 9.7	6.1	Denmark / 5.8	12.4	Italy / 59.0	10.6	Netherlands / 17.5	13.8
Czech Republic / 10.7	5.1	Finland / 5.5	7.0	Portugal / 10.2	9.8	France / 67.4	13.1
Romania / 19.1	3.7						
Slovakia / 5.4	3.6						
Bulgaria / 6.8	2.7						
Poland / 37.7	2.2						

Note: The term migrant includes working migrants - persons of working age of 15 years and older who move from their state to another state for employment; a refugee - a person forced to flee their country because of a threat to personal security (war, persecution).

Source: OECD (2020); International Organization for Migration and UN Migration (2022); World Bank Data (2022).

Table 2. Top-5 Europe Countries of Origin and Destination, by Number and Proportion of Total Population, 2020

Country	Origin		Country	Destination	
	Emigrants (mln.)	(%)		Immigrants (mln.)	(%)
Russia	10.65	6.8	Germany	14.22	17.0
Ukraine	6.05	12.2	Russia	11.58	7.9
Poland	4.82	11.3	United Kingdom	8.92	13.1
United Kingdom	4.62	6.4	France	8.09	12.4
Romania	3.98	17.1	Spain	6.63	14.2
Germany	3.85	4.4	Italy	6.13	10.1
Italy	3.25	5.1	Ukraine	4.57	10.4

Source: International Organization for Migration and UN Migration (2022)

(14.6%) and Croatia (12.9%); for Western Europe – Austria (19.3%) and Germany (18.8%). The lowest migration rates are in Poland (2.2%), Finland (7.0%), Portugal (9.8%), and France (13.1%), respectively. Thus, one can state that the countries of Northern and Western Europe are the most attractive destinations for migrants, and the countries of Southern and Eastern Europe are the least attractive. The established trend contributes to the structural restructuring of the economy through the redistribution of human capital and the formation of multicultural societies. To confirm the findings in Table 1, the data analysis from 2020 is renewed in an attempt to distinguish between countries of origin and destination, in terms of number and share of the total population (Table 2).

The results of the secondary analysis (Table 2) confirm the fact that in most cases the region of origin of migrants is Eastern Europe, and the final destinations are Western and Northern Europe. To identify the factors that encourage the movement of people from one country to another, the reasons for international migration were monitored the causes of international migration. Here, work motives were considered to be an indicator of economic factors, while those related to the foundations of state cultural policy were embodied in the institution of the family, legal culture, and education (Figure 1).

Figure 1 shows that taken together, the ratio between the proportions of economic (work) and cultural factors

(family reunion, asylum, education) is 25:75. The determining economic reason for migration is the desire of the individual, family, and community to improve the overall quality of life through labour. The determining cultural reasons for migration are the search for justice in the area of human rights and safe living conditions. Accordingly, it can be stated that today, the push factor of migration is the violation of fundamental human rights in the state cultural policy guided by the society of the migrant.

Recognizing the importance of the impact of the cultural context associated with the institution of the family and human rights assuring the ability to develop and express one's humanity and worldviews makes it relevant to empirically justify migration practices from two perspectives: public cultural policies and human mobility (Figure 2).

A review of the evidence on migration practices in Europe in the context of overall quality of life and migration opportunities in terms of access to visas and safe residence demonstrates that the availability of migration options is partly related to nationality (in particular, the national passport of the potential migrant) and, in general, reflects a country's status in the international community and its attitude towards migrants from a particular state.

The primary migration routes in Europe (in terms of the number of migrants, in millions of people) are depicted in Figure 3.

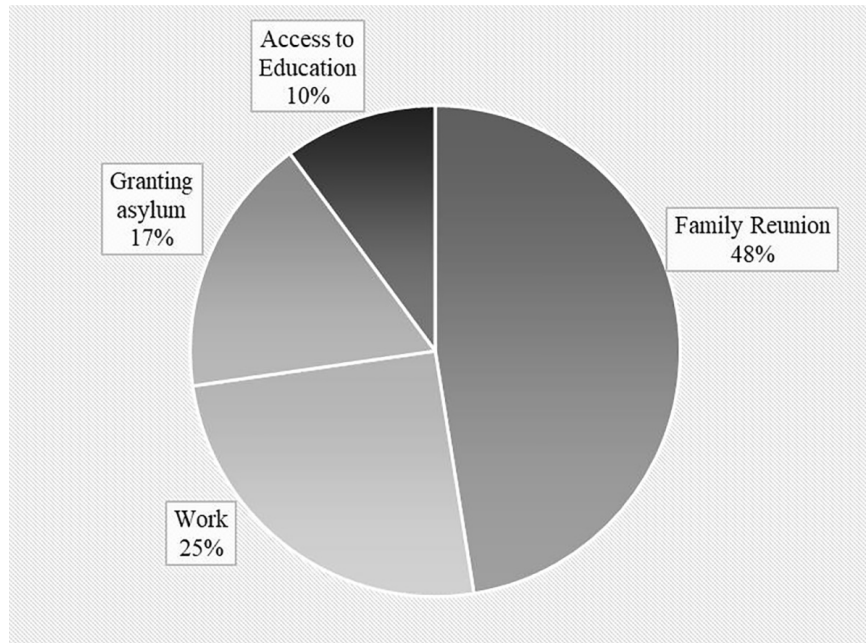


Figure 1. Reasons for Migration within European Countries, 2021
Source: Quest (2021)

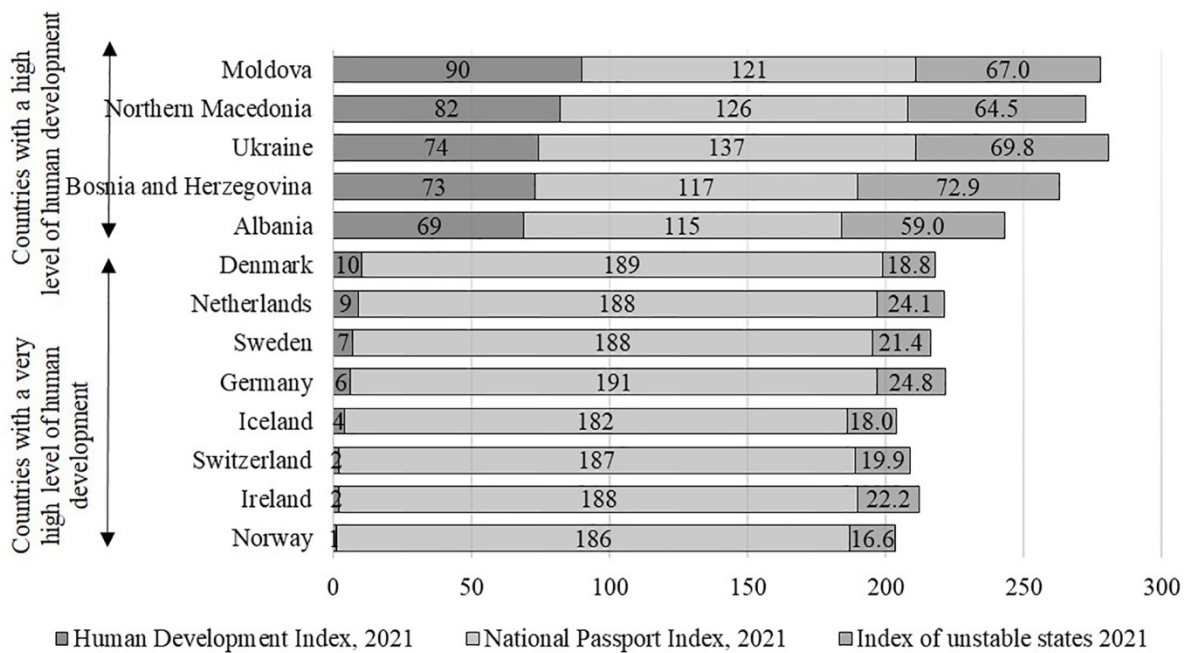


Figure 2. Human Development Index, Henley Passport Index, and Fragile States Index data for Selected Countries
Source: International Organization for Migration and UN Migration (2022)

Summarizing the data, the following macro-social patterns and trends in European migration practices can be highlighted. First, all European countries are characterized by migration growth, in which migrant mobility acts as a contributor to the redistribution of a country’s wealth and the formation of multicultural societies. The main factor driving migration is human rights violations. Secondly, the development of the modern migration process requires a migration infrastructure that would provide the opportunity to turn to legal migration and assure the maximum contribution of migrants to the development of the socio-economic space of the country.

The collected findings contribute to a better understanding of the state of migration in Europe by providing statistics on migrant integration, driving forces in migration patterns and

processes, and an empirical grounding of migration practices in economic and cultural contexts. Northern and Western European countries were proven to be the most popular destinations for migrants within the studied area. Also, migration was found to promote macro-changes through the contribution of human capital to the development of the socio-economic spaces of European countries. Estevens (2018) claims the 21st century to be a century of migrants since global mobility is now a highly stratified phenomenon: from the global tourist to the undocumented employee, from human trafficking to refugees forced to leave their country of origin because of climate changes, poverty, or war. Migration practices have become a global process with multilateral population movements between states in today’s world. In the great scheme



Figure 3. Major Migration Routes in Europe (Based on the Number of Migrants, in millions of people).

of things, international migration (Torkunov, Ryazantsev, & Levashov, 2021) has joined the ranks of the most important elements in ensuring sustainable development. The reason for this resides in the fact that it provides an opportunity for advanced nations with depopulation and demographic ageing to maintain the growth rate of national economies. In the meantime, in developing states with a progressive age structure, international migration solves the problem of excess labour resources and high unemployment. Another explanation for the interest in migration is that it is not infrequent that the local population sometimes regards immigrants as an economic or cultural threat (Tabellini, 2020). Here, the perceived economic threat stems from the increasing competition in the labor market, while cultural one is associated with the possibility of influencing the language, lifestyle, customs, cultural values, and beliefs of natives (Brunner & Kuhn, 2018). Accordingly, migration brings noteworthy changes in structures and institutions in global political, economic, and social relations (Estevens, 2018), which is fully consistent with the findings of this research. Bygnes and Erdal (2017) examined the novelty of migration flows triggered by the 2008 financial crisis based on the subjective assessment of adult Polish and Spanish migrants in Norway. Researchers found that family concerns, economic factors, and working life conditions in countries of origin were as prominent in migrants' reflections on the future. Hence, income differences were confirmed to be one of the main reasons for migration (Bazzi, 2017). As evidenced by the results of this study, people's priorities have changed over time. At present, migration is first determined and shaped by an individual's desire to improve the overall quality of life and only then by the observance of fundamental human rights in the national culture, primarily determined by a person's place of birth and residence. Similarly to the current work, Callens and Meuleman (2017) studied migration's economic and cultural factors in European countries. Though, their key emphasis was set upon a threat perspective. They uncovered that migrants living in countries with more inclusive integration policies, in particular policies aimed at access to the labour market and

political participation, are characterized by lower economic and cultural threat perceptions. All in all, culture is considered an integral part of economic development (Gorodnichenko & Roland, 2017). As the experience shows, all migrants either adhere to their culture (about one-third of all) or become part of the culture of the host state (Brell, Dustmann, & Preston, 2020; Brunner & Kuhn, 2018). This study's interpretation of migration relies on the prioritization of intangible factors in migration decisions related to the alignment of human legal status standards. Its deductions are confirmed by Lanati and Venturini (2021), who found that accounting for cultural indicators is a more important determinant in migration patterns and processes than traditional economic variables. The scholars also demonstrated that positive changes in cultural relations (bilateral linguistic, religious, genetic, and historical ties) facilitate bilateral migration over time.

Hence, the results of our research not only corroborate but also expand upon the findings of previous studies (Bazzi, 2017; Estevens, 2018). According to the empirical evidence presented in this study, the disparities in protecting human rights between highly developed countries and other nations emerge as a dominant cause of contemporary migration. The reliance on the Henley Passport Index, the Fragile States Index, and the Human Development Index allowed delivering comprehensive data to understand key features of migration practices in European countries in increasingly uncertain times of epidemics and escalating humanitarian crises, especially in the East.

4. Conclusions

By carrying out an in-depth study of data on international migration for 2021, this research found that in Europe, the largest migrant populations are in the North (Sweden and Ireland) and West (Austria and Germany), which is confirmed by actual data from the secondary analysis of the previous year's migration data. A thorough analysis of the causes and factors of the migration pattern and process revealed that this phenomenon is driven by violations of agreed human

rights standards in migrants' home countries. These aspects contribute to the forced movement to countries with high cultural attractiveness to meet the basic need for a fair assertion of one's rights host countries assure. Analysis of the evidence suggests the following macro-social patterns and trends in European migration practices:

- migration enhances the quality of human capital and maximizes the contribution of people's competencies and knowledge to the socioeconomic development of the country;
- migration is driven by the human rights violations in the national cultural policy guiding the migrant's society (this culture is present at various policy levels and is tightly related to values and attitudes relating to the institution of family, law, education, and lifestyle);
- migration assessment in the context of economic and cultural factors highlights significant differences between countries with different levels of human development in terms of human mobility and cultural values the person acquires by birth and residence.

The results of this research may have implications for politicians and statespersons working in the field of regulation and control of migration, as well as scholars studying migration processes and their causes.

Further work will be aimed at investigating a correlation between global upheavals and population migration to consider the impact of various drivers (including military conflicts) on migration corridors' evolution.

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