

Essay C Mark 15/36

This essay deals with changing patterns of refugee migration in Greece. The abstract is more of an introduction than a synopsis of the essay. The research question is contained only in the abstract.

The aim of the essay—to see if refugees are now more likely to stay in Greece rather than use it as a transit land as in the past—is a good one but the hypothesis relating to this is not clearly formulated. The background theory is relevant and sound but with only 30 refugees surveyed in one year there is no data to establish an historical trend in transit movements. The questionnaire, apart from question 6, is mostly irrelevant to the research question. The analysis is very simple and based only on current refugee movements. The candidate is therefore unable to answer the research question involving changing patterns effectively. Presentation is lacking as the pages are not numbered, all of the graphical material is in the appendix instead of in the body of the essay, and none of the graphs relate to the hypothesis.

Essay C



Category and candidate number									
Candidate name	Essay C								
School name									
Examination session	Month [May or November]: MAY						Year: 2003		

EXTENDED ESSAY COVER

Candidates must complete this page and then give this cover and their final version of the extended essay to their supervisor

IB subject in which this extended essay is registered:	GEOGRAPHY
(For an extended essay in the area of languages, state the language and whether it is group 1 or group 2.)	
Title of the extended essay:	CHANGING PATTERNS OF REFUGEE MIGRATION IN GREECE.

CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

If this declaration is not signed by the candidate the extended essay will not be assessed.

The extended essay I am submitting is my own work (apart from guidance allowed by the International Baccalaureate Organization).

I have acknowledged each use of the words, graphics or ideas of another person, whether written, or oral.

I am aware that the word limit for all extended essays is 4000 words and that examiners are not required to read beyond this limit.

Signature of candidate:

Date: 17/02/03

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SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

The supervisor should complete the report below and then give this cover, enclosing the final version of the extended essay, to the diploma coordinator. If this report is not signed by the supervisor the extended essay will not be assessed and may be returned to the school.

Name of supervisor [CAPITAL letters]

Comments

If appropriate, please comment on the candidate's performance, the context in which the candidate undertook the research for the extended essay, any difficulties encountered and how these were overcome. These comments can help the examiner award a level for criterion H. Do not comment on any personal adverse circumstances which may have affected the candidate.

This candidate showed considerable initiative by making use of family connections with the UNHCR offices in Athens. She worked very independently.

I have read the final version of the extended essay, which will be submitted to the examiner.

To the best of my knowledge, the extended essay is the authentic work of the candidate.

I spent hours with the candidate discussing the progress of the extended essay.

Signature of supervisor:

Date: 17-02-03

ASSESSMENT FORM (for examiner use only)

Category and candidate number							
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General assessment criteria

Refer to the general guidelines

ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL

	X	maximum	Y
A Research question	1	2	1
B Approach	2	3	2
C Analysis/interpretation	2	4	2
D Argument/evaluation	2	4	2
E Conclusion	1	2	1
F Abstract	1	2	1
G Formal presentation	1	3	1
H Holistic judgement	1	4	1
TOTAL OUT OF 24	11		11

Subject assessment criteria

Refer to the subject guidelines

Not all of the following criteria will apply to all subjects; use only the criteria which apply to the subject of the extended essay.

Criterion J	1		1
Criterion K	1		1
Criterion L	1		1
Criterion M	1		1
Criterion N			
Criterion P			
TOTAL OUT OF 12	4		4

Name of examiner [*CAPITAL letters*]:

Examiner number:

Signature of examiner:

Date: 06.04.2003

For IBCA use only

Stage A checker:	
Stage B checker:	21/5/03

EXTENDED ESSAY
GEOGRAPHY

CHANGING PATTERNS OF
REFUGEE MIGRATION IN
GREECE.

ABSTRACT

This essay aimed to explain the reasons why and how the refugee migration pattern has changed in Greece throughout the years. In developing this essay the hypothesis was, Greece is slowly transforming through the years from a transit country to a country of asylum. In order to prove my hypothesis I formulated a questionnaire, much later distributed to different refugee reception centers in Athens. I also had the opportunity to gather background information and to research past records with the help of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) branch office in Greece. I was given briefing notes and reports about the refugee situation in Greece completed by internal officers.

Through pursuing this project I gained a lot of knowledge and have become aware of the serious problems occurring to all the asylum seekers and refugees worldwide. Problems such as why and how people become refugees or claim for asylum, what are the consequences of fleeing their own country of origin by force and how a refugee is integrated to an asylum country. I investigated all the problems that refugees may face throughout their movement between countries. This work shows the difficulty in the integration process, which must be followed when arriving in a foreign country where the culture is completely different and the local population is not receptive to receive them.

Greece has developed positively in the past years in regards to addressing refugee migration problems. I have included in my project maps and graphs to show where the majority of the refugees are arriving from and graphs to facilitate the understanding of the results. Ultimately throughout this essay my hypothesis has been partly proved therefore Greece is an asylum country, however still a small number continue to other countries.

Word count: 292

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Introduction

Refugee migration has become a major focus of discussion within the international community. Often it is poorly understood due to the conflicts, which it brings to a country, such as affecting the economic structures, population density and distribution, altering the traditional ethnicity, linguistic and religious mixtures and thus inflaming national and international tensions.¹

According to the 1951 convention on refugees, a refugee is a person *persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or owing to such fear is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.*²

The aim of this essay is to examine the refugee movement in Greece: firstly I will briefly introduce the subject of international migration and its approaches to understanding the causes of migration movement. To achieve this aim I have divided this essay into three main parts, the method, the analysis and the conclusion. Throughout this work I will focus on the following hypothesis: Greece is slowly transforming through the years from a transit country to a country of asylum.

According to the United Nations population division it is estimated that there are a hundred million people living out of their country of origin. The majority coming from East Asia, Middle East and North Africa, however these numbers have increased throughout the recent

¹ www.msu.com - World Bank Report

² UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)

Protecting Refugees: questions answers page 1

(Published by Public Information section) UNHCR/PI/Q&A/ENG11/FEB2001

years³ By 1993 the United Nations claimed nineteen million refugees and an equal number of forced migrants in refugee like situations⁴

Most of these refugees in the world migrate from developing to developed countries. this is a problem for developed countries and as a result refugees are seen as a burden. Developed countries can only accept a certain number of refugees and so they advocate for border sharing. Border sharing means that refugees arriving to a certain country are shared within the borders of the neighbouring countries. It comes to a surprise that 30 to 60% of the international migrants are young male and more than half of the refugee population are women and children. Women and children are the most vulnerable in war situations.

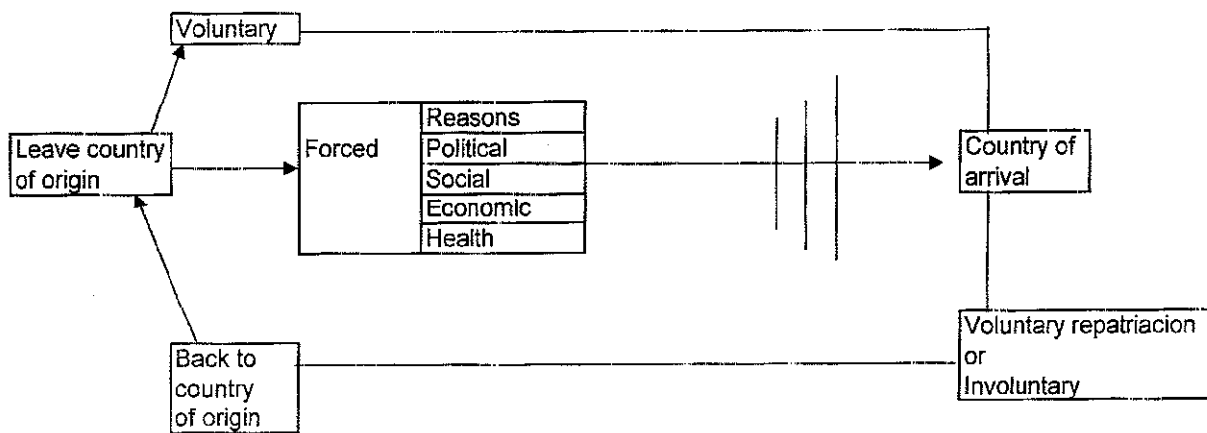
Secondly I will discuss the reasons why and how people become refugees. It is normal for a person to look up to their government and make sure that they are protected citizens hence they feel safe in their own country. Nevertheless, a refugee is a person who does not feel secure and rather feels that their rights are being violated by their own state. As we know a refugee may leave their country of origin due to persecution by their own country's government, due to reasons such as war or military occupation, opposing political ideas, religious belief, racial roots or even gender. Economic difficulties may also be part of the motives why a refugee leaves their country of origin. Most of these problems occur in less developed countries, without economic stability these people would not be able to survive. Moreover people who have left their country for reasons of natural catastrophe can be considered as refugees.

³ Population and geographic Data section & Population Data Unit 2001

⁴ www.msn.com refugee migration model

The following flow diagram represents the routes, which are taken in a refugee or migrant situation. This flow diagram shows the different forms of migration forced and voluntary. Voluntary migration may be caused by reasons such as climatic preference or commuting for jobs or education. On the other hand we have forced migration, which is the usual case of a refugee and asylum seeker.

Route Migration flow diagram



The second part of the route is taken only in the following cases.

- 1 The war or conflict has ended in the country of origin
- 2 The person decides to return to the country of origin voluntarily even if the conflicts are still in process.
- 3 The person has applied for a different nationality

Once a refugee has requested asylum in a country and has been accepted he/she is given most rights as any other citizen. For example the right to many privileges, such as, freedom of thought, speech, movement, medical care, accessibility to have a job, social and economic

rights and children have the right to attend school UNHCR provides assistance to refugees who cannot meet their own sufficient needs. These include financial grants, food, equipment (tools and kitchen ware), sanitation, schooling, clinics and shelter. The one thing that refugees have to obey is the law of their country of stay. Hypothesis: Greece is slowly transforming through the years from a transit country to a country of asylum.

The office of UNHCR in Greece has been operating since March 1952, it has been active for all these years helping and protecting the asylum seekers and refugees arriving in Greece. In the 1950s, 20,000 refugees were situated in Greece mainly arriving from countries like Armenia, Belarus, Romania and Russia. This was during the pre-war period in the Soviet Union. During the 1970s UNHCR received several hundred thousand cases of Eastern European refugees. They were considered as transitional refugees because they used Greece to have access to proceed to other countries in Europe or the USA and Canada. The same happened in 1976 where 3,000 Christian Iraqis were evacuated from Lebanon to Greece and were also on transit to proceed to other countries.⁵ In the 1980 refugees fled from Turkey, Poland, Iran and Ethiopia.

Since 1992 most asylum seekers came from Iraq, Iran, Turkey and from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.⁶ By the year 2000 the highest refugee movement came from Afghanistan, Iraq and Sierra Leone. The majority of the asylum seekers come in boats from Turkey to Greece in groups. The number of asylum seekers in Greece increases every month.

⁵ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Briefing note, Athens, August 2002 page 1

⁶ Ibid page 2

and this has become the main reason why Greece has started to change from a transit country to a country of asylum.

The overall refugee population in Greece at the moment is 7000 people however in 1996 out of 1,572 applicants 22% were recognized as refugees. Unfortunately due to governmental policies now out of 5,499 only 2% are recognized. Asylum seekers in Greece are allocated in reception centres in which they are provided and have easy access to food, accommodation, socio-psychological counselling, health services, education, employment, legal advice and employment. They are also provided with an interpreter who helps them communicate in their language with the rest of the community. The majority of the asylum seekers living in these reception centres are Afghans, Iranians, Iraqis, Sudanese, Algerians, Ethiopian, Turkish and Kurdish. The main countries where refugees come from are evident in Map (1) in the appendix.

Most of the population is made up of families with children; rarely there are any cases of elderly asylum seekers. The general reaction of the Greek residents in those areas are not very positive, however, Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) and individuals get support from them and provide them with clothes and food.

One of the main sources for the development of this essay has been a questionnaire that has helped me interview several refugees. I managed to obtain this information by going to a reception centre in Pendeli with the help of the UNHCR branch office in Greece.

Method

In order to support my hypothesis I carried out a survey firstly by creating a questionnaire. I have handed out this questionnaire in two different reception centres in Athens, Voluntary Work Athens (VWA) and Medicine du Monde (MdM). The first centre is located in Central Athens and has the capacity of supporting 30 people added to this there are another 6 separate apartments for larger families. These centres are supported by the money raised in fundraising events such as concerts and auctions, which are organised by the UNHCR office, as well as private donations.⁷ Here asylum seekers are supplied with a shelter, cooking, cleaning equipment and clothing; however they are not supplied with money. The main advantage is that they are granted a work permit. In these centre there are rules of maximum stay. In this particular shelter they are authorized to stay 9 months the most, however due to delayed legal procedures residents are allowed to stay a while longer.⁸

The second centre is also located in the centre of Athens. It is quite similar however different in the way that it targets mainly on families, men are only allowed to stay for 20 days and families up to 45 days. Asylum seekers in this shelter are interviewed and notified to the records of the police. In this centre they are provided with education (learning Greek), medical care, social welfare and legal advice.⁹

In these reception centres I had the opportunity to come into direct contact with several refugees who were willing to answer my questions. I was able to observe the conditions in which asylum seekers live in

⁷ Directive guidelines VWA pgl

⁸ IBID pa2

Results

The questionnaire consisted on 7 questions, in which each person could tick the answer that corresponded to them (refer to the appendix for questionnaire) The questions were related to their arrival and stay in Greece

I interviewed 21 asylum seekers, all from different countries, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Turkey (Kurdish) Iran and Sierra Leone: this can be seen in the result Table1 I interviewed 16 men and 5 women From this group of refugees 18 out of 21 were between the ages 16 to 32 and 3 were between 33 to 64 years old It is quite rare to have cases of elderly asylum seeker and children are usually taken care by other agencies in the United Nation such as UNICEF (United Nations International Emergency Fund).

Most of the nationalities where the asylum seekers are emerging from are countries that have been or are at war, the lack of security obligates people to leave their country of origin (Afghanistan, Iraq, Sierra Leone). The majority, 19 out of 21 asylum seekers left their country because of political reasons and only 2 people left because of economic reasons. When a person request asylum because of economic reasons they are not usually regarded as refugees, however there are many common and special cases where refugees flee from countries, which are less developed These countries are usually in state of conflict (war or civil war) thus people suffer from economic problems, and so they are regarded as economic migrants and still aided by the UNHCR

In this questionnaire I have also asked how long the person has lived in Greece Most of them have arrived during the year 2000 and

⁹ IBID MdM

onwards. A few of them have arrived before the year 2000; this may possibly be caused by the slow asylum procedure, which usually takes longer than expected. We can also see an enormous increase from the year 1996 to 2000 onwards. As for their future plans 15 people are planning to stay permanently in Greece, 3 are not sure (temporary stay) and another 3 are applying to other countries in the EU. Examples of other countries are Germany, France and the United Kingdom. These are the few individuals, which are still using Greece as a country of asylum.

The last question that I have asked was whether any of them have had problems staying in Greece. In this question people had the choice of answering whether they had legal problems or local population resisting. The most common difficulty was the legal procedure, as 19 of them ticked that box, the legal processes are insufficient. Another 2 people answered that their present problem was the local population not facilitating their integration in Greece. They most probably have difficulty in adapting with the different cultures and languages.

Analysis

This survey has corresponded in a well-developed manner with my hypothesis. The results obtained can give evidence that Greece is no longer being considered as a transit country, even though there are still a small number of people who use Greece as a transit country.

First and foremost we begin by looking at the results of question 6 in the questionnaire: most individuals ticked the permanent stay box. This is our first clear proof that people are deciding to stay in Greece. A few years ago Greece laid down a new law with the UN on the protection and assistance of refugees. Followed by three new decrees by which Greece must pursue their protection for refugees. The first decree was arranged in June 1998 it agreed on allowing employment to recognised refugees, asylum seekers and temporary residents.¹⁰ This is of great advantage and convenience for refugees arriving in Greece. As seen from table 2 the number of refugees that arrived from 1996 to the year 2000 increased immensely right after the decree was put down. Having a work permit hugely facilitates their lives in the new country of stay. This procedure allows them to work; consequently letting them live wherever they chose and permitting them by living more independently.

The second decree in June 1999 no 61 agreed on enforcing the asylum applications procedure.¹¹ This relates to question no 7 in the survey. Most individual still have problems with the legal procedures. these papers tend to take a very long time until they can be cleared out.

The third decree no 266 was arranged in October 1999 regarding the reception centres. These are houses were refugees and asylum

¹⁰ UNHCR: Briefing note, Athens August 2002, p 3

¹¹ Ibid pg 3



seekers can stay, they provide social care and health facilities whilst the individuals commence their settlement in Greece¹² These reception centres tend to deteriorate easily and quickly and so they have been obligated to improve

As we can see most of these laws are quite recent, due to these decrees Greece has slowly transformed and soon considered as a country of asylum. With these laws refugees get more privileges and facilities, now a refugee who is recognised by the Greek authorities is allowed to get a free residence permit valid for five years which can be renewed.

However with all these enforced laws there are still problems affecting the refugees in Greece. One of the main problems is the approach of the local people towards the refugees. As we can see from the results a few people ticked the box related to the local population resisting. Firstly, the main problem in the integration in Greece is the language difference. People rather go to France or the UK, where English and French are spoken thus making it easier to communicate with the locals. The second main problem is the Greek population, which transmit a negative attitude for the refugees, they are somewhat xenophobic, and this makes the integration process much harder for them. Many local people do not understand the difference between economic migrants and refugees. People tend to confuse between these two and therefore resulting in national tensions. However they do acquire help from some local citizens who care and help the asylum seekers with compassion.

Under the 1951 UN convention economic migrants are not considered as refugees however they may still receive aid from different

¹² Ibid p 3



NGO's and the UNHCR. Many economic migrants are in similar

situations to the refugees. The UNHCR also protects people who come from countries devastated by armed conflicts or generalized violence,¹³ sometimes it does include some economic migrants.

*A migrant normally leaves his or her country voluntarily to seek a better life. To a refugee the economic conditions of the country of asylum are less important than its safety. It is rather hard to distinguish between the two but nevertheless a migrant does not have safety problems in their home country.*¹⁴

Other reasons why some refugees may still opt to leave Greece even if the laws have been improved are simply because the procedures are not satisfying. Even though they have been re-enforced they are still not efficient enough. The procedure may take months to a year.

From our results we can also see how the majority of the refugees are men between the ages 16 to 32. This implies that most of the refugees belong to the active population of most countries. The male refugees that commonly leave their countries are typically single men running away from political persecution, military services (in case of war) or similar mandatory obligations because of fear of torture and prosecution for refusing to join the armed forces. Thus, their only option is to leave their country as refugees. From the survey we can notice that 5 out of the 21 interviewees were females. This comes to a surprise since it is known as a fact that women and children make 70% of the refugee population in the whole world so it would be expected to have interviewed a higher number of women refugees. However, the situation in Greece is quite the opposite. This is an abnormality, which could be due to the following.

¹³ Ibid p 9



We know from the survey that the majority of the refugees come from the

Middle East. Countries where men are considered to be superior to women and can leave the country easily yet still they are commonly persecuted for their political ideas. Women are restrained to many things due to their culture and only a small percentage gets to leave these countries. Since Greece is the closest developed country to the Middle East it is most likely that it will receive more male refugees from these countries than women. If we refer to the survey again we see in question no.5 where it was asked the reasons why they left their country of origin. The majority answered due to political reasons, this can be following the pattern of the majority being men from the Middle East and between the ages 16 to 32.

¹⁴ Ibid p. 8



Conclusion

This essay has successfully illustrated how Greece has indeed followed the pattern of a country of asylum. However there is still an existing minority, which decide to continue their journey to other European countries. It has reached the same level as the other European countries and therefore is no longer a transit country. Refugees arriving to Greece can now feel safe and secure. They are provided with aid when first settling in Greece and are later granted with a work permit allowing them to become more independent and being able to continue living their normal lives as best as possible.

I have efficiently accepted my hypothesis³ nearly to a full extent with given evidence from the results of the questionnaire. The migration pattern in Greece has slowly started to change from being the pathway to other countries in Europe to becoming a country where refugees can stay and live. Greece has developed in many ways in the refugee migration issue. It has been made clearer who is a migrant and who is a refugee, thus decreasing the tension that the local people have towards the refugees. The local population will have the ability of distinguishing and offering their help to refugees and asylum seekers. With the help received from the public awareness campaigns by the UNHCR and its implementing agencies. A good and strong fundraising association has begun, an increase in awareness and aid for the growing amount of refugees arriving to Greece for the past two years.

Greece has also now encouraged an intercultural educational program for the refugee and migrant children. Most of the migrant



children will be learning Greek in school and will be able to exchange their cultural backgrounds between the Greek and other international children thus facilitating their stay in Greece¹⁵ This will lessen the friction between cultures and ethnicity it will hopefully create a better environment for those entering in Greece with the local people

It is quite clear from the results obtained from the survey that the majority of the refugees arriving to Greece come from the Middle Eastern countries. During the year 2001, the war in Afghanistan has caused an immense flee of refugees. This has forced the Greek ministry to improve their facilities and resources for refugees as a result the refugee migration pattern has begun to change.

However there could have been a factor missing in the questionnaire that may or may not have affected the results. There are a great number of migrants and refugees that have not been recorded by the UNHCR; there are many more people who are not recognized who may still be refugees. This may occur due to problems of communication of any sort, whether it is the language, lack of translators or any misunderstanding between the applicant and the interviewer. It is also known that many more asylum seekers enter without any papers and begin a new life, they reside in Greece illegally.

Some limitations that I had whilst producing this essay were on approaching the asylum seekers at the reception centres. It was quite hard to come up with the correct questions and the correct way of asking them. I did not want to make the individual feel uncomfortable and so tried to ask the questions in the most appropriate manner.

Word count: 3,454

¹⁵ Athens news Friday 16 August 2002-Community pg 11

APPENDIX

Gender

Male-16
Female-5

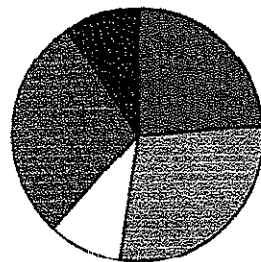
Reasons for leaving original country

Economic	2
Health	0
Political	19
Other	0

Age

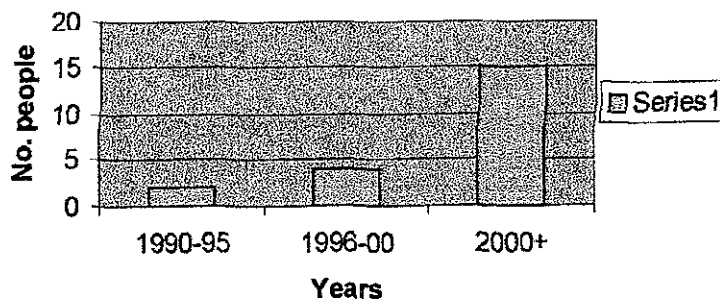
1 to 15	0
16 to 32	18
33 to 64	3
65+	0

Table 1-Countries of origin of asylum seekers



■ Afghanistan
■ Iraq
□ Iran
■ Turkey (Kurds)
■ Sierra Leone

Table 2-Date of arrival to Greece





Future plans

Permanent residence/employment	15
Temporary (not sure)	2
Application to another country	3

Present Problems

Technical or legal	18
Local population resisting	2

Map1





Questionnaire

1. Name _____

2. Country of origin _____

3. Gender

M F

Age

1-15 16-32 33-64 65+

4. Time of arrival to Greece

1990-95 1996-00 2000+

5. Reason for leaving country of origin

Economic Health Political Other

6. Future Plans

Permanent residence/employment

Temporary (not sure)

Application to another country _____

7. Present Problems

Technical or Legal

Local population resisting



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