

Political Science Magazine | *Politicologisch Magazine*



# DEBAT



Est. 1987

## Movement of People



**Are students the new migrants?**

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**The hypocrisy at the Polish borders**

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Jaargang // Volume 37

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Dear readers,

While writing this new edition of DEBAT Magazine, the first of the academic year, the world around us kept changing. These past months have brought worldwide conflict, crises, and tension; tension that could be felt all around.

This November edition of DEBAT focuses on Movement of People. Migration is one of the hottest, most palpable political and social issues we are all facing at the moment, in both domestic and international politics, and however small or big, it involves us all. We attempt in this edition to highlight all aspects of movements: causes, problems, solutions, consequences, etc.

Viewing these concepts and issues through an academic lens, we try to provide a broad, though nuanced, overview and understanding of migration and movement issues in our current world, to look beyond our assumptions and in the end, search to find the humanity in the politics of movement.

Thirze Wieggers and Ruchi van Zoelen  
DEBAT's editors-in-chief

**Beste lezers,**

Tijdens het schrijven van deze nieuwe DEBAT editie, de eerste van ons academische jaar, bleef de wereld om ons heen telkens veranderen. De afgelopen maanden hebben in het teken gestaan van wereldwijd conflict, crises, en een gevoel van spanning.

Deze novembereditie van DEBAT focust zich op beweging, op Movement of People. Migratie is een van de meest voelbare politieke en sociale problemen waar we op dit moment allemaal mee te maken krijgen, zowel in nationale als internationale politiek; hoe groot of klein dan ook, het raakt ons allen. In deze editie doen we een poging om alle aspecten van mensenbewegingen te belichten: oorzaken, problemen, oplossingen, consequenties, etc.

Kijkend naar deze concepten en problemen vanuit een academisch oogpunt, proberen we een genuanceerd overzicht te creëren, een breder besef van alle kanten van een probleem of situatie. We mogen verder te kijken dan onze eigen aannames, en uiteindelijk de menselijkheid terug te vinden in de migratiepolitiek.

Thirze Wieggers en Ruchi van Zoelen  
Hoofdredacteurs DEBAT



### Colofon | Colophon

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# The shaping of history by the women written out of it

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by Ruchi Van Zoelen

The influence of women in political issues has long been ignored throughout history. Many texts written by women were either published under male aliases or anonymously. Furthermore, a lot of books have been lost, destroyed or removed from libraries. The most common reason for this is because the books were considered to be heretical and unorthodox. Other reasons included sorcery or witchcraft. When doing research for her book about women in the middle ages, Janina Ramirez came across the term 'femina'. This means that a certain text was written by a woman, and therefore destroyed or not considered worthy of continuing to remain in that collection.

To get a full grasp of what and who influenced certain political ideas and decisions it is important to focus on as many narratives as possible, including that of women. In this article the stories of a couple of influential women in history will be highlighted, some more known than others. What these women do have in common is that they all moved away at some point in their lives, taking their culture and beliefs with them.

Queen Bertha of Kent is best known for the role she played in converting her pagan husband, King Æthelberht, to Christianity. Bertha was a Frankish princess born in the early 560s, and daughter of Charibert I, King of Paris. When marrying King Æthelberht, she moved to Kent. A condition for her marriage was that she would have the right to continue practising the Christian faith.

Medieval accounts have claimed that it was St Augustin who converted King Æthelberht to Christianity. He was a monk from Rome sent by Pope Gregory the Great on a mission to convert the pagan Anglo-Saxons to Christianity.

Modern retellings however almost always include Bertha, suggesting that she played a role in welcoming Augustine and convincing Æthelberht to convert. Evidence for this is for example a letter sent to Bertha by Pope Gregory in 601 implying that she should have a more active role in converting her husband to Christianity. The Pope also compliments her on welcoming St Augustine to Britain.

Ultimately Augustine successfully converted England into a Christian country. Even though it took decades, Bertha's contribution remained relevant to history and the shaping of politics during that time, even after her death.

A somewhat more known historical figure who had a big influence on politics at the time was Anne Boleyn. She is known as the second wife of King Henry VIII, and a key factor in England's break with the Roman Catholic Church in 1533. In modern media, she is often portrayed as a scheming temptress, ambitious and manipulative. However, her story is a bit more nuanced, and often neglects her humanitarian, religious and political efforts.

Anne Boleyn spent her childhood in Kent and was sent to the French court in 1513 to learn all the skills and manners expected of a lady at court and to form a close connection with the French and English royal families. She returned to England in 1522 to become lady-in-waiting to Henry's first wife, Katherine of Aragon. It was during this period that King Henry started to take more interest in Anne. However, not even a king could simply get a divorce during the Tudor period. This eventually led to Henry breaking with the Roman Catholic Church and becoming head of the English church.

During her time in court, Anne had quite some influence when it came to politics. When the Catholic Church, for example, started prosecuting people who were fighting for a bible in their own language, Boleyn offered amnesty to them in



England. Thereby, going against Cardinal Wolsey, who was Henry's right-hand man at the time.

In 1536 Anne was accused of committing adultery and arrested. She was tried and found guilty of adultery, incest and high treason, including the charge that she planned to kill the King, so she could elope with one of her lovers. This story has however long been contested by many historians. They argue that the charges were exaggerated or even fully made up by Thomas Cromwell, who was engaged in a power struggle with the Queen. Furthermore, two months before her execution, Boleyn was involved in passing nationwide legislation called the Poor Law. This law would see to the access of free healthcare and to provide the unemployed with jobs. It also entailed creating a new governing council which would rival that of Cromwell's. This creation of this law had long been credited to Cromwell, nevertheless, Boleyn's involvement was finally recognised as part of the U.K. Parliament Week in 2019.

Another, less well-known, historical figure is the medieval French poet Christine de Pizan. She was Europe's first professional female writer and feminist who defended women and attacked misogyny during a time in which the concept of feminism did not even

exist.

She was born in Venice, Italy, but spent most of her life in France, as her father joined the court of Charles V as his astrologer. She lived a comfortable life but did not receive a formal education like most girls during that period.

At age 15 Christine got married, but her husband unfortunately passed away in 1389. In order to support her three small children, she had to find a new way to support her family. Usually in that case women would either remarry or join a convent. Christine however chose to take up writing poems. She won the respect of aristocrats which provided her a steady income.

In her further writings, Christine wrote about the strengths of women and also provided practical instructions to women she wished she had received to manage her family's finances following her husband's death.

At the time her books were revolutionary, and even after her death in 1430, they continued to be translated and circulated throughout Europe. As of today, Christine's work offers a unique historical insight into how women in the Middle Ages were perceived by men, and her criticism of the patriarchy is still relevant to this day.

In this article, three European women in history were highlighted. Still, there are many more stories that haven't been told, but do contribute to the full understanding of history and how it has shaped politics to this day.

As political science is a multidisciplinary field, it is crucial to take past events into account when trying to explain or find correlations in events that are happening now. As seen before, women have contributed to religion, which is still a big cleavage in modern politics. Furthermore, the study of ideologies is a big part of Political Science. To fully understand those, it is important to know how and when they came into existence. Feminism for example is often considered quite modern, whereas Christine de Pizan's has shown that this has been an issue for quite a long time.

For the sake of both history and the study of politics, it is important to acknowledge the roles people have played in the past. To credit them, but also to understand the full picture of past politics.

# Women in Thought:

## Victoria Woodhull

by Juno Jahn

Victoria Woodhull takes the stage and begins to speak: “Women are the equals of men before the law, and are equal in all their rights”.

The room is in an uproar. The year is 1871, and Victoria Woodhull is the second woman in United States (US) history to address a committee of the US House of Representatives. Two years later, she was the first woman to run for President of the US.

Arguably one of the most colourful characters of the 19th century, Victoria California Claflin was born into poverty on the 23rd of September, 1838, in Homer, Ohio. Her father, Reuben Buckman Claflin was a con man who forced the family to abruptly leave town after he attempted arson fraud. Due to this incident, Woodhull only received 3 years of inconsistent formal schooling.

After leaving town, her family started a travelling medicine show. She spent most of her childhood as a part of this, telling fortunes and selling patent medicines. She met her future husband, Canning Woodhull, 13 years her senior, when her family sought him out to treat her for a chronic illness. At age 15, she married him to escape her father and had two children with him; severely disabled Byron, and Zula Maude.

Victoria soon found out that her husband was a drunkard and an

adulterer. To support her family, she and her sister Tennessee set up a business in 1860 as mediums. In 1864, Victoria divorced her husband and became an adamant supporter of the free love movement, which sought to destigmatize divorce to alleviate the process for women to leave their abusive husbands.

Soon after her divorce, Woodhull married Colonel James Harvey Blood. Together with her sister, she set up literary salons in New York and began to form her belief in women’s rights. The sisters continued their practice as mediums and came into touch with railroad magnate Cornelius Vanderbilt. With Vanderbilt’s financial advice, they enjoyed success on the stock market. Soon after, they opened their brokerage firm called Woodhull, Claflin & Company and a newspaper called Woodhull & Claflin’s Weekly. Here, they published the first English translation of The Communist Manifesto and promoted and addressed and promoted controversial issues such as short skirts and vegetarianism.

It was then that Woodhull became increasingly involved in the Women’s suffrage movement, gaining the recognition of famous suffragettes like Susan B. Anthony. After her historic 1871 address, she was nominated as a presidential candidate by the Equal Rights Party with Frederick Douglass as her running mate. He never formally

accepted or acknowledged the nomination. Woodhull at the time was only 34 years old and was also below the legal age requirement to run for president.

Days before the 1832 election, the sisters published a controversial account of an affair between Henry Ward Beecher, a prominent religious leader, and one of the members of his church. They were arrested on the grounds of obscenity and spent election day in jail.

Nearly bankrupt, disgraced, and divorced from her second husband, there was nothing left for Woodhull in the United States. Together with her sister and her children, she moved to England. She continued her career as a lecturer and married the aristocratic banker John Biddulph Martin in 1883. She took part in the British women’s suffrage movement and published a journal together with her daughter, named Humanitarian. Ironically, this journal was known for promoting eugenics, although her own son suffered from a serious disability.

After retiring from the public scene, she lived a quiet life in the English countryside. She died in 1927, aged 88.

# The Hawala System:

## Bypassing the EU's Brutal Fortification

### What is the Hawala system?

The Hawala system is an informal value system (IVTS), that allows the transfer of funds or value from one place to another, without leaving anything that could point to the source of the transaction. The transfers are often made without regulations from financial institutions.

Hawala takes its origin from the Indian subcontinent and is often characterized as one of the earliest and most important credit instruments in the region. Hawala operations consist of sending and receiving money, and settlement, which are upheld by trust. Sending and receiving money concerns the relationship between the hawaladar (hawala operator) and their clients, while settlement concerns the relationships among intermediaries.

To boil it down, if someone in one country wants to send money to someone in another country, they contact a hawaladar. The hawaladar then convenes with their counterpart in the other country. To get the money, the recipient meets the hawaladar counterpart and tells him a code previously agreed upon by all parties involved. Money does not physically move.

### How does Hawala facilitate entry into Europe?

Irregular migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, all seek a way to bypass policing at European borders. Hawala, with its 'no paper trail' mechanism, offers a way to do that. When using hawala, it is impossible for authorities to track

### by Erato Vaitisi

financial transactions. Thus, it destroys a principal way of conducting investigations.

Additionally, because Hawala is based on trust, it generates a feeling of security and prevents robbery. Because of the importance placed on trust and rising pushbacks, hawaladars' role is essential for the functioning of this whole system. They assure that money is delivered only if the destination is reached. This is paramount in creating a sense of security. The hawaladar also recommends people they consider to be the most reliable smugglers since this ensures that they will be more likely to collect their fees.

Finally, hawaladars charge smaller commissions than formal groups such as Western Union. Hawala also does not require identification.

Overall, these reasons combined make entry into Europe more **accessible for people who are extremely vulnerable**.



### Hawala in the West

There are discrepancies in the legal status of Hawala across countries. After 9/11, when the USA and its allies launched the 'War on Terror', Hawala was labelled as a 'system built for terrorism'. This association with criminality was propagated by the Western focus on terrorism and their 'facts by repetition'. However, the framing of Hawala as essentially criminal is dangerous. In some cases, it is culturally embedded in people's lives and can even be essential for practical matters like sending remittances to people in countries excluded from the international system.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that this framing of Hawala pertains to a wider pattern of Western narratives. 'Terrorism' is a void of objective meaning polemic label attributed based on external actors' interests. Moving from 'freedom fighter' or 'independence seeker' to 'terrorist' is more dependent on geopolitical factors, than tactics. The ability to maintain this label is dependent on the power of those who attribute it. However, Hawala has also been used by Western powers. For example, Hawala was the principal way the US-funded Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan.

Currently, the West is trying to get familiar with hawala and tackle it. The main focus is on registering and regulating it. Nonetheless, criminalization of using this system pertains. But as long as people are forced to smuggle routes, hawaladars will be the bankers of this system.

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# Are Students the new Migrants?

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## Students as the new wave of migration across the world

by **Daria Aron**

Immigration has always been a hot topic. Looking back at many Western countries' elections of the past few decades, immigration has always been a topic 'on the ballot'. The specific type of immigration has changed, however, as the waves of immigration moved forward. There was economic migration, refugees, and now seemingly, student migration. As this change occurs, many countries' governments are running out of their immigration processing capabilities. This is getting so dire, that even the Dutch cabinet fell due to an immigration issue. Despite this, migration is still increasing, and this is seen especially in student migration. Looking at the Netherlands alone, there are increasingly more residence permits being given out for students, something also seen in many other developed countries. As student migration becomes increasingly chronic, it is worth breaking down this new phenomenon.

Before going any further, however, some things must be established. First, what is student migration: students choosing to pursue their post-secondary studies in countries different to their origin. The boundaries of this are not clear, however, since different countries have different rules for what they consider 'internationals'. For example, in the European Union (EU) international students are broadly seen as students who do not possess the citizenship of an EU state. Some EU states, however, look more closely at the residence of the students before applying for a school in their country – if the student has not lived in an EU state for a consecutive number of years, they may not qualify for a full EU status. Other countries, without EU-similar partnerships, see all students who are not coming from their own country as international. When looking at the statistics

gathered by most databases, this last broad definition is applied to measure student migration.

Many studies have claimed that as countries become more developed, they receive an increasing amount of migrants, and due to the positive relationship between development and quality of education, an increased amount of students should follow. Looking at a few cases, the United Kingdom (UK), EU, Canada, the United States (US), and Australia have remained the top education destinations. Many of the top destinations within the EU, such as the Netherlands, France, and Germany have all reported increases in student immigration. In the UK, much of the immigration used to be made up of European citizens, and in the case of students, European students. This intake of European students decreased post-Brexit, however, despite EU student immigration decreasing by 50% from 2020 to 2022, the international student intake has doubled. This boom was also seen in all areas of immigration in the UK, as the intake of migrants is higher than pre-Brexit. The UK is the country desired by all, including its home students. There has been an increase in British students moving away from the UK, many going to universities in the EU and well as the US. Discussing the US, there has been a reported 80% increase in international students between 2000 and 2021. In Australia, international students have been named the "overwhelming driver of migration" by the Financial Times. Half of the immigration Australia sees yearly is made up of students. Canada followed suit and saw a 31% growth rate between 2021 and 2022. These last two destinations have been particularly favoured by Latin American students, who have begun studying in either country at a much higher rate than before.



But why is this happening? Why are more students migrating for their studies? The most direct reason can be seen in policy. Canada, besides having a strong recruitment campaign in Latin America, created the Student Direct Stream, which is an expedited permit processing programme for students from some specific countries. Of these countries, half are from South or Latin America. Australia is also known for strong recruitment campaigns. Visa-related policies are also seen in the UK as they eased student visas and introduced a two-year post-study work graduate route. This promoted the UK in the eyes of international students who in many other countries run the risk of having to leave the country as soon as they graduate. This was a result of the government's attempt to maximise education export revenue, however, this campaign reached its objective eight years ahead of schedule, contributing to the backlash to immigration currently in the country. Despite the two-year promise, however, there are still trends of many students deciding to leave due to the lack of possibilities for family to be brought to the UK.

Besides government policies, students themselves are motivated to study abroad. It is not hard to Google reasons why students should study abroad, and they will be hit with tens of articles outlining the amazing reasons why students should take the leap and choose another country. This is followed by even more articles which claim that students who study in an international environment will have more success

in their careers due to increased language and communication skills, adaptability, networking, and problem-solving skills. In such a globalised world, where travelling is seen as a completely normal experience for everyone, moving for education is becoming to be similarly normalised.

While problems due to increased student migration are beginning to show, some academics have come up with a few ideas. One study hypothesises that while traditional destinations will still have slowly increasing intakes of students each year, the development level of the home countries of students will also influence these numbers. For example, China's emigration of students is expected to decrease as its education is developing, while there will be a higher number from countries such as Vietnam, India, and Nigeria. Another study claims that migration occurs in waves, and while we see a steady increase in migration now, this can decrease in the coming years. Such a phenomenon is made more likely by immigration-limiting policies. These are already being discussed in some countries such as Canada, where the immigration minister expressed that study permits should be reconsidered, and decreased. Similarly, the Netherlands' well-known discontent with the increase in international students coming to the country has led to a plan of decreasing English-language courses to be waved around as a possibility. Given the ever-changing state of the situation, further developments will have to be closely observed.



# Politieke keuzes belemmeren klimaatbewust reizen in Europa

Een pleidooi voor een intensiever,  
extensiever en effectiever treinnetwerk

door **Sem Van Der Tang**

Niets is mooier dan jezelf vrijmaken met ervaringen in het buitenland en ervaring met andere culturen. Zo besloot ik 's zomers Berlijn te verkennen. Natuurlijk probeert iedereen op een zo klimaatbewust mogelijke manier te reizen naar de beoogde bestemming. Voor een korte afstand, zoals tussen Amsterdam en Berlijn, lijkt de trein een ideaal vervoermiddel. Ik had het fout. Reizigers die dit traject zelf hebben afgelegd, weten tegen welke problemen ze kunnen aanlopen: vertragingen; technische problemen; treinen die onverwachts niet rijden; onverwachts overstappen; lange reistijden. Terwijl ik troost vond in een zonovertogen en beeldend Berlijn, doemde er in mijn hoofd een vraag op: hoe is het toch mogelijk dat treinreizen door Europa niet zo ideaal als vanzelfsprekend is?

## Europese Spoorproblematiek

De voorgaande vraag zou eigenlijk niet gesteld moeten worden. Al meer dan tientallen jaren integreren Europese natiestaten onder één Europese vlag. Het verdrag van Maastricht – en daarmee de resulterende geboren Europese Unie – luidde een Euroforisch tijdperk in. Dit overheersende optimisme is herkenbaar in projecten zoals de 'Eurotunnel': de

tunnelverbinding voor treinen tussen Calais (Frankrijk) en Dover (Verenigd Koninkrijk). 'Pak de trein om 08:23 in Newcastle naar Nice en stap even over in Parijs,' is het beeld waarmee de publiciteit werd opgezocht. Toch is het beloofde 'grootste spoornetwerk ter wereld' nooit echt tot bloei gekomen.

Het is onmogelijk om te spreken van een 'netwerk' wanneer de machinist moet wisselen van locomotief bij het passeren van een landsgrens. Dit probleem wordt veroorzaakt door de verschillende en sterk variërende spanningen op de bovenleidingen van de spoorwegen. Er zijn binnen Europa maar liefst zes verschillende voltages. Bovendien hebben Frankrijk en het Verenigd Koninkrijk zelfs variërende spanningen binnen hun land. Tot overmaat van ramp hebben sommige Europese landen zelfs een andere spoorbreedte. In Spanje en Portugal maakt men namelijk gebruik van de Iberische breedte, ofwel een spoor dat 23,3 centimeter breder is dan gebruikelijk. De puzzel is dus dat Europa letterlijk en figuurlijk niet op dezelfde lijn zit.

De consument ondervindt ook nadeel bij de reisduur en de ticketprijs van een treinrit wanneer

dit vervoermiddel wordt vergeleken met het doorgaans populaire vliegtuig. Een simpel voorbeeld: een reis van Amsterdam naar Madrid. Per trein kost dit enkeltje een reiziger 380 euro en ruim 16 uur van zijn tijd. Deze situatie gaat eveneens uit van perfecte stiptheid, waardoor een reiziger niet het risico loopt om een van zijn drie overstapmomenten te missen. Binnen deze tijd was het ook mogelijk geweest om 3 keer heen en terug te vliegen. Voor één vlucht betaalt een reiziger vaak minder dan 130 euro. Enfin, het is niet schokkend dat burgers in een markteconomie vaker kiezen voor het vliegtuig dan de trein.

## Liberalisering, een politieke keuze

De geschetste situatie is niet de werkelijkheid waarmee burgers tevreden kunnen en moeten zijn. Het is de werkelijkheid die is gekozen door de politiek. De kern van deze ontwikkeling is de liberalisering van de luchtvaart. Hiermee heeft de Europese Unie gekozen voor welvaart op de korte termijn, wat wordt verklaard door de discrepantie tussen de investeringskosten en de operationele kosten. De constructiekosten van een luchthaven zijn relatief laag, als we dit vergelijken met de

aanleg van honderden kilometers spoor voor hogesnelheidstreinen. Waar de investeringskosten van de luchtvaartindustrie dus laag zijn, heeft de trein als vervoermiddel weer een tegenovergesteld voordeel. De operationele kosten van de vliegmarkt zijn namelijk erg hoog: de luchtverkeersleiding; het onderhoud van vliegtuigen; de aanschaf van vliegtuigen; de beveiliging in en rondom luchthavens. Daarentegen is het rijden van treinen heel efficiënt, zowel milieutechnisch als operationeel, met als gevolg dat treinritten zeer lucratief zijn.

Zodoende bracht liberalisering en subsidiëring ons de mogelijkheid om goedkoop te reizen. Het is beleid binnen de Europese Unie om ook de treinreizen over te leveren aan de vrije markt. Wanneer landen het alleenrecht op het spoor gunnen aan één bedrijf, onderneemt de Europese Commissie juridische stappen om dit tegen te gaan – onder andere in Nederland. Historische precedentes van spoorwegliberalisering scheppen echter twijfel aan de wenselijkheid hiervan. Jon Shaw en Iain Docherty beschrijven in hun boek *The Transport Debate* wat de gevolgen waren van marktwerking binnen het Britse treinnetwerk: weinig investeringen; minder verbindingen; en overvolle treinen.

Hoewel de Nederlandse Spoorwegen (NS) grotendeels in bezit is van het alleenrecht om treindiensten aan te bieden, moet ook deze organisatie streven naar winst, als gevolg van haar privatisering in de jaren 90. Onlangs bepleitte Wouter Koolmees – de president-directeur van NS – een ‘spitsheffing’ met als

doel het spreiden van de druktes op het spoor. Een ambitieus en effectief treinnetwerk in Europa heeft behoefte aan andere politieke keuzes. Europa leeft in het paradigma van marktdenken, waarin een treinreis als product wordt beschouwd. Maar, moet de consument zijn gedrag veranderen – dus niet in de spits reizen, zoals NS wilt – ten behoeve van de winst van NS, of moet NS juist altijd ten dienste staan aan de consument? Het komt de burger, Nederland en Europa ten goede wanneer we een treinreis zien als essentiële dienst, in plaats van een product waarmee een bedrijf slechts winst moet maken.

### **Extensief, intensief, effectief...**

De liberalisering van de vliegmarkt en de subsidiëring vanuit overheden maakt reizen dus goedkoop voor de consument. Wat niet inbegrepen is bij de ticketprijzen van een vlucht, zijn de negatieve externe effecten. Vliegtuigmotoren stoten naast koolstofdioxide ook andere schadelijke stoffen uit, welke op extreme hoogtes ook sterk bijdragen aan het broeikas-effect. Per kilometer stoot een vliegtuig tussen de 195 gram en 254 gram aan broeikasgassen uit, wat varieert per afstand – hoe korter, hoe meer uitstoot. Een trein scoort aanzienlijk beter: slechts 43 gram koolstofdioxide per kilometer. Wil de Europese Unie zich blijven committeren aan haar klimaatdoelen, dan zal de noodzakelijkheid van het stimuleren van de trein als (internationaal) vervoermiddel serieus moeten worden genomen.

Waar in Europa het treinnetwerk van 1910 hechter was dan het

huidige netwerk, neemt het aantal kilometers spoor aan de andere kant van de wereld toe. Het Chinese spoornet werd in 2022 uitgebreid met 4100 kilometer, waarvan ongeveer de helft hogesnelheidslijnen zijn. Natuurlijk, China is een opkomende economie; het totaal aantal kilometer spoor in Europa blijft groter; en er gelden strengere veiligheids- en milieuregels binnen de Europese Unie. Toch moet Europa, mits het een handelsblok binnen de voorhoede van de wereldeconomie wil blijven, ook sterk gaan en blijven investeren in de mobiliteit van haar mensen binnen het continent.

Zo zijn er klimaat- en milieuredenen en zo zijn er geopolitieke en economische redenen om de stoomketel van de locomotief flink te stoken. Het aanbieden van internationale treinreizen is exceptioneel winstgevend en er springen tal van initiatieven in Nederland op: Flix, Arriva, Qbuzz, European Sleeper en zelfs NS. Studies tonen aan dat hogesnelheidslijnen in de toekomst het dominante vervoersmiddel kunnen worden. Het uitbreiden en intensiveren van het treinnetwerk werkt dus eveneens in het markteconomische paradigma. De wil van de consument is er; de wil van de aanbieder is er; nu de politiek nog. Ter conclusie, laten we niet – zoals oud-president van de Verenigde Staten Eisenhower dat beschreef – “liggen op het spoor van de toekomst, wachtend op de trein van de toekomst die ons omverrijdt.”

# Migration and war: a historical perspective

## How conflict shapes public opinion on refugees

By Gijs Verhoeff

With the many cruelties of war comes one important issue for nations not directly involved in the conflict: refugees. For centuries, conflicts have displaced civilians, and it is interesting to look at how public opinion seems to shift on these refugees depending on the conflict. At times, refugees are accepted with open arms. Other times, these refugees are rejected by the society they look to for safety. History can teach us an important lesson about how we should handle these refugees.

1914. Sarajevo, Serbia. The Archduke of Austria-Hungary, Franz Ferdinand, is visiting the city. His chauffeur takes a wrong turn, and on the corner of said street is Gavrilo Princip, enjoying a sandwich. Shots are fired, and the archduke along with his wife meet their demise. We all know the events that led up to the first World War, the Great War. The war escalates quickly, and before we know it Belgium is almost entirely occupied by German forces. This causes a massive flow of refugees from our neighbours to the south. Millions of people were displaced, and the Netherlands along with the UK took in most of them.

Generally, when we look back on this period, we tend to try and compare it to the modern days. What differences are there

between the Belgians in WW1 and Syrians or Ukrainians now? There are quite a few, actually. Starting off, yes there were nearly a million Belgian refugees coming to the Netherlands during WW1, and yes we opened our doors for them. At first Dutch families took them in their homes, until the government decided to take more direct action and streamline the process. But these refugees were culturally very similar to the Dutch. This led to a more favourable public opinion about them.

Additionally, it is also important to remember that most of these refugees were set to return to Belgium when the opportunity presented itself to do so. Already in October of 1914, a mere three months after the first German boots had stepped on Belgian soil. These negotiations were for nearly a million Belgian refugees to return, and eventually the amount of Belgian refugees in the Netherlands stagnated at around 100,000 for the remainder of the war.

For a more recent example, Ukrainian refugees total around 90,000 in the Netherlands today. Similar numbers, and a similar mindset. These refugees will most likely want to return to their homeland after the war, with research showing that around 40% of refugees are sure they will return home after the conflict ends, and

only one third being sure they will stay in the Netherlands. 43% of them are currently working because of special regulations by the EU and the Dutch government being more lenient than with other refugees.

When the war broke out in Ukraine, many people also opened their homes to Ukrainians, and Europe was resolute in its response. Ukrainian refugees were welcome, and the support for them and their country unwavering. Europe was being threatened.

This feeling from both these examples does not translate to other refugees. During the height of the Syrian refugee crisis in 2015, no such measures were taken. When Lampedusa was overflowing with refugees, we didn't massively open our doors. Other refugees aren't allowed to work just a few weeks after arrival, and do not benefit from the protection of the Temporary Protection Directive. But why?

The answer to that question is a bleak one for the idealists among us. Islamophobia is one of the main driving forces behind the double standard that exists. The Belgian refugees were similar to the Dutch. They ate their dinner around the same times, spoke the same language, and dressed

similarly. Ukrainian refugees are mostly Christian, and are considered European.

The conflicts that pushes these refugees to flee their country are also not only physically but also ideologically farther away. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is an attack on the West, an attack on Europe. Meanwhile, the Syrian civil war or the war in Sudan for example are considered more distant conflicts that do not directly impact the Western world. Even though these conflicts can be just as devastating as the one in Ukraine, as long as the shells don't blow craters in front of the gates of our continent, we find it harder to sympathise with the people fleeing that same conflict.

The conflict in Ukraine is also a more symbolic one for the West. It is a return to the dual nature of the Cold War and has put NATO spendings and general defence infrastructure quality back to the top of European

nations' agendas. This has been much less so the case with other refugee-creating conflicts. If we look at the civil war in Syria in comparison, it is much harder to fit it within the simple black and white of right versus wrong for western leaders. On the one side is an authoritarian leader like Assad, who suppressed the Arab Spring in his country and halted pushes for democratisation. At the height of the conflict he was however fighting against a jihadi alternative in ISIS. A dilemma affecting the treatment of the only real losers of this war: the people turned refugees.

One other important factor in this matter is also the media coverage. Not only have the media world wide spent more time on the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, but Middle-Eastern and African conflicts are also covered differently. Ukrainians have unwaveringly been called refugees, when most media and politicians cannot agree whether

or not it should be Syrian refugees or migrants. This shapes the public opinion the most and is a flagrant display of the double standard present on this matter.

In short, the answer of why we sometimes treat refugees differently has a number of contributing factors. The main driving force is Islamophobia, with this phobia being driven by the different natures of the conflict and political leaders' reactions to it, as well as the coverage by the media on the topic. What we can learn from this is that we should not forget an important fact about refugees: they are people. Sometimes it may be better to put aside the question of who is right and who is wrong in a conflict, and focus on the humans that are being hit by the catastrophe of war. Don't treat Belgians as Belgians, Ukrainians as Ukrainians, and Syrians as Syrians. Treat humans as humans.



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# Political Science Worldwide

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By Thirze Wiegers

## Populists in power: trust in public institutions and support for strong leadership in the post-authoritarian democracies of Indonesia and the Philippines

Asian Journal of Political Science 31:1, 63-85 (2023) - Ronald A. Pernia

In this article, Pernia seeks to find out if support for strong leadership enhances trust in political institutions. To examine this question, he uses the post-authoritarian democracies of Indonesia and the Philippines. In the study, it is theorized that even when an incumbent is showing signs of populism or authoritarianism, citizens would still support their institutions if there is the appearance of “strong leadership”. It uses empirical evidence from the World Values Survey to study public opinion and support the argument. The results from the empirical study provide evidence supporting the argument. Citizens in countries that have turned into democracies yearn for stability and political organization. A strong leader, even one that has some populist traits, provides trust in political institutions. This can therefore not simply be called “democratic backsliding” or a return to the authoritarian history of the country. This study is a relevant piece of research in the debate on authoritarianism, democratic backsliding, and personalistic politics.

## Mobilizing the Underrepresented: Electoral Systems and Gender Inequality in Political Participation

American Journal of Political Science 67:3, 538-552 (2023) - Øyvind Søråas Skorge

Electoral systems are one of the most prominent concepts when studying comparative politics. In any democracy, the way representatives are elected or selected has a significant impact on how society is represented, and we can learn a lot from comparing them systematically. Skorge does this in his study on gender inequality in different electoral systems, theorizing that shifting from a plurality system to a PR (proportional representation) system decreases gender inequality in voting because PR systems would give more incentive to a party to mobilize the underrepresented group. It contributes both theoretically and empirically to the literature on the representative effect of PR systems. Norway’s municipalities are the chosen unit to get this empirical evidence, as it faced a sudden shift from plurality to PR systems. The evidence gained from this does support the theory that switching from a plurality system to a PR system leads to a substantial reduction in gender inequality in voting and therefore adds to the theory that PR systems improve the mobilisation of underrepresented groups.

## From Economic to Political Power: Economic Elites and Policymaking During Times of Crisis

Journal of Politics in Latin America 15:2, 138-167 (2023) – Laura García-Montoya & Pilar Manzi

This article contains research focusing on the COVID-19 crisis, and how different countries responded to the pandemic. The authors focus specifically on the economic elites in Chile, Mexico, and Peru, theorizing that countries with wealthy, organised economic elites, policymakers and COVID policies were easily influenced by these elites, more than in countries with less organised elite groupings. They follow the power resource theory and use regressions and in-depth analysis for the three countries to compare the economic elites of these Latin American states and the amount of access and influence they had on containment and business support policies. Their quantitative research indeed shows that when wealthy or cohesive elites were present, containment – lockdown – measures were delayed. The article uses the unique situation of the pandemic to thoroughly examine the types and magnitude of elite influence on policymakers and opens up a lot of future questions.

## It depends on personal networks: Feelings of stigmatisation among populist radical right party members

European Journal of Political Research 62:3, 723-741 (2023) – Sofia Ammassari

The rise of populism and the radical right is a salient issue in a lot of European countries. With raised concerns about the influence populism can have on the strength of a democracy, it is important to research what makes these populist parties or politicians so attractive or successful to voters. Ammassari specialises here on the concept of stigma when part of a radical right party, theorizing that the level of stigma a member feels is dependent on their personal networks. This article brings new research by focusing on party members instead of the parties themselves. It uses data from Sweden (the Sweden Democrats) to try and prove that members who have social networks that consist of highly educated people often feel more stigmatized for their membership than members whose personal networks are made up of people with lower education. She finds interesting relationships between a feeling of stigma and a member's personal network; for example, if one has family members already part of the party, the feeling of stigma weakens, but if a member for example is active at a university, they have a higher chance of feeling a stigma due to their membership. The article sheds an interesting light on what determines stigma for populist radical right party members and raises interesting dialogue on education and ideology.

## Can't Buy Me Love (with Foreign Aid)

Foreign Policy Analysis 19:4, (2023) - John Constantelos, Polly J. Diven, and H. Whitt Kilburn

The United States is known for its foreign aid, as is the EU. What this foreign aid actually achieves in a recipient country is an important matter as well, but Constantelos et al. decided to focus on how the image of a donor country changes in the recipient country when receiving aid instead. In this study, twenty recipient countries from the Obama and Trump administrations are studied, and the results are not overwhelmingly positive, leaning more towards scepticism of the positive influence that foreign aid would supposedly have on these countries' image of the US. They find little actual empirical evidence that would prove a correlation between foreign aid and the perception of the US in a recipient country. Instead, they find that the most impactful factor in this perception is the presidential image, and negativity about Obama and Trump is way more significant than foreign aid in a recipient country. However, the authors do mention anti-Americanism, and it is important to not generalize these findings for all countries (or organizations) participating in foreign aid, as the USA has a unique position on the global stage.



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# 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol

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By Anna Gruber

The Refugee Convention was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in July 1951 as the number of refugees soon peaked after the Second World War, with 60 million individuals being displaced. Refugees were mostly from Germany and countries under Soviet Occupation, such as Ukraine and Latvia. Further, there was a high number of Jewish refugees spreading out, mostly in the United States and Israel.

The Refugee Convention's goal was to address the needs of the refugees in the aftermath of the Second World War. Overall, the Refugee Convention is an international legal document that specifies the definition of a refugee and lists the rights of refugees. Countries who agree to the Convention must keep its key provisions; however, it is non-binding for non-signatory countries. There are 149 state parties to either or both the Convention and the Protocol.

According to the Refugee Convention, a refugee "has a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion; is outside the

country of [their] nationality; and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail [themselves] of the protection of that country." Specifically, persecution is not defined, but it has been referred to as involving threats to life or freedom or other violations of human rights.

In the Convention, refugees are given a special status if they have lost the protection of their own country that gives them rights as soon as they arrive in a country. However, refugees are also expected to follow the rules and laws of the host country to receive full protection. These rights are mostly the right to non-discrimination (article 3), the right to work (article 17), freedom of religion (article 4), the right to housing (article 21), the right to not be penalized for illegal entry (article 31), the right not to be expelled from a country unless the refugee poses a threat to national security or public order (article 32).

Further, one of the most crucial points of the article is the principle of non-refoulement, meaning the right not to be sent back to a country where their life or freedom would be threatened. Since mentioned in the Refugee Con-

vention, the principle of non-refoulement has become part of customary law; thus, non-signatory countries of the Refugee Convention are also expected to keep it. Lastly, the Refugee Convention states that refugees should not be penalized for illegal entry or stay; asylum-seeking can require refugees to break immigration rules.

As there have been increasing refugee movements outside of Europe, mainly due to decolonization movements, including the Algerian War for Independence, the Refugee Convention was completed with the 1967 Protocol. Specifically, the Protocol removed temporal and geographic restrictions, so the Convention applied universally. Firstly, Article 1 of the Protocol says that countries that ratify it agree to abide by the Refugee Convention as well – even if they are not a party to it. Secondly, Article 2 focuses on the cooperation with UNHCR and other UN organs to ensure the implementation of the Convention. Lastly, Article 4 states that any dispute between States Parties to the present Protocol which relates to its interpretation or application and which cannot be settled by other means shall be referred to the International Court of Justice



at the request of any one of the parties to the dispute.

Overall, the 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 proved to be groundbreaking legal documents in human rights law in its time. However, as years passed and the nature of the refugee crisis changed, it is hard to rely solely on the Convention when it comes to handling the flow of asylum-seekers.

#### Critiques:

The 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol were the first widely accepted legal documents regarding refugee coordination, yet they face a wide range of criticisms. Firstly, just like many international legal treaties, the Convention and Protocol have no enforcement mechanism; thus, the consequences of breaching it are limited.

Further, it is said that the rights of refugees are limited in the Convention. Specifically, it does not provide an individual seeking asylum with a right to enter another state after they have sought asylum in the first country. Instead, it imposes a 'limited obligation on a national state not to expel or return a refugee to a state where he or she faces persecution'. Additionally, an asylum seeker can only apply for refugee status if they arrive physically in that country. Furthermore, the Convention does not provide an individual who is granted refugee status with a right to permanent residence. The state of the host country can decide whether to give a refugee permanent residence or not. Specifically, the

principle of non-refoulement within Article 33(1) of the Convention allows refugees to be removed to a 'safe third country'. Alternatively, under Article 1C(5), an individual who has been granted refugee status can be forcibly repatriated to their home country once a government considers that the reasons for refugee status have ceased.

Moreover, it provides a limited definition of refugee as it does not include several reasons for possible prosecution. For instance, an individual facing persecution about their sexual preference or gender identity may be unsuccessful in applying for refugee status. Therefore, it can be said the Convention is androcentric and heteronormative in nature. However, some scholars argue that with the current development of case law, the principle of interpreting international legal documents with a gender-sensitive perspective has become an international legal norm in Westernized countries. Thus, even if the original Refugee Convention does not elaborate on the gender perspective, it should be interpreted with it, even without an additional legal clause specifying this. Consequently, this critique can be argued against. Nevertheless, the gender-sensitive interpretation does not happen often in countries with stricter religious societies, as well as countries with conservative values. Further, the Convention fails to include the phenomenon of climate-related movement. As climate change will play a big role in the future movement of people, it can be said that it outdates the legal text.

Additionally, it was "the product of a moment in history when the murderous dysfunctionality of the system of border controls within the European context, in particular, was revealed, and a small group of nations recognized their interdependence and agreed to extend fundamental human rights protection to those whom their state had rendered most vulnerable". In our current period, the interdependence between the countries is more complicated, and the nature of the refugee movement is different.

Lastly, it can be argued that the existence of the Convention undermines democratic practices. Meaningfully, the Convention is a standard legal document that was created by well-respected states of the international community. Thus, most of the members of the international community were pressured to sign it, even if the domestic public opinion did not agree with it. However, the government of those states whose public opinion does not agree might be influenced. As a result, "it also jeopardizes the demos by encouraging state practices that undermine international law".

# The hypocrisy of the Polish borders

## The Polish-Belarusian border migration

By **Hanna Kulesza**

Since the Russian invasion on Ukraine unfolded in February of last year, Poland has become a symbol of hope for those escaping the perils of the war - over 15 million Ukrainian refugees have found safety in the Polish territory. Meanwhile, the events taking place in the forests of the Polish-Belarusian border paint a strikingly different, horrific picture. Middle-Eastern and African migrants are freezing to death, attempting to seek asylum in Poland. Instead of extending a helping hand, the Polish government has instrumentalized these refugee's struggle since the crisis began in 2021 as an element of their far-right narrative.

The migrants on the Polish-Belarusian border are fleeing crises, such as armed conflicts in Yemen or Syria, persecution in Afghanistan, or famine in Sudan and Ethiopia. The reality that they face upon the gates of the European Union is, however, far from the safe haven they expected, and it is hostile in its own way.

Only in the first 6 months of the border stand-off, at least 19 migrants died, mostly due to the freezing temperatures. The ones who do survive the cold winter, however, often suffer malnutrition, hypothermia, and untreated

injuries. They fail to receive help, as doctors and volunteers' access to the border area is limited by the border guards.

What poses an insurmountable obstacle to seeking refuge in Poland is the 186 kilometer long, 5.5 meter tall steel wall that has been placed on the border by the Polish government in 2022. Although the structure is presented as protection of Polish security and integrity, there is however a striking resemblance to the wall built on the US-Mexico by former US President Donald Trump - with whom the Polish authorities maintained friendly relations throughout his time in office. The construction of such a wall shows how severe of measures the government of Poland is ready to use to keep these refugees out.

Most importantly, though, the Polish border forces are constantly using pushbacks - illegally forcing the migrants to return to Belarus (from where they attempt to enter the EU and find safety), where they face violence, despite their pleas for asylum in Poland.

The violent practice of pushbacks which powers the Polish-Belarusian border crisis have been legitimized by the Polish law. In October 2021, President Andrzej

Duda, signed the so-called 'deportation bill', which introduces significant changes to the Polish immigration law and allows pushbacks to deal with incoming migrants. The law states that if a foreigner applies for international protection immediately after crossing the border, it will be left without recognition unless the person comes directly from the territory where they face a severe threat to their life, freedom or safety. According to the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, not only does the bill violate the asylum laws of the European Union and the Geneva Conventions, but it also reinforces the narrative crafted by the Polish government, that the Middle Eastern and African migrants pose a danger to the public order and the state's security, despite having no evidence to back such claims up. Hence, not only does the government threaten the safety of the migrants at the border, it also weaves a narrative that legitimizes the violence towards the asylum seekers.

With lives being lost and international tensions growing, a solution is urgently needed - a complex one, taking into account human and security factors, both on national and international levels. Considering the fact that the crisis has been ongoing for over 2 years,

# The End of Hong Kong?

## The Consequences of the National Security Law

By Anna Slezack

On the 30th of June 2020 at 23:00 local time, an hour before the 23rd anniversary of Hong Kong's handover, the National Security Law came into effect.

Hong Kong was handed back to China by Great Britain in 1997 after 156 years of colonisation. This handover included a unique agreement: the Basic Law quasi-constitution and the "one country, two systems" principle. This agreement was meant to protect the freedom of Hong Kong and its capitalist system for the next fifty years (until 2047) from China. In February 2019, China's attempt at an extradition bill for Hong Kong failed miserably after major pro-democracy protests. This caused the implementation of the National Security Law (NSL) to condemn protests among other things. The NSL contains sixty-six articles which criminalise any act of secession, subversion, terrorism, or collusion with foreign or external forces punishable by a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. Since then, hundreds of protesters, activists and former opposition lawmakers have been arrested and over 10,000 individuals have been arrested for charges connected to anti-government protests.

It is unclear how many Hong Kong residents have departed permanently and how many of these departures were because of the political situation, but since 2020, there has been a continuing decrease in the population. In 2022, Hong Kong's population went from 7.5 million in 2019 to 7.3 million. More than 123,800 have moved to Britain and thousands of others gained permanent residency in Canada under special policies for people from Hong Kong after the security law took effect. There are also many pro-democracy activists who have found refuge in Taiwan.

International companies and banks also have been moving away. Hong Kong's capitalist traits, such as low taxes and a highly developed financial system, in addition to its close proximity to the world's second-largest economy, made it one of the most appealing marketplaces, differentiating it from mainland financial hubs. The issue is that without knowing, companies could possibly violate the NSL and this law applies to anyone, even non-permanent residents of Hong Kong. Cases could also be tried in mainland China, making companies feel uneasy. Thus, many have left the city. Social media enterprises have also raised concern over an

element of the law requiring them to hand over requested user data to the Hong Kong authorities, prompting TikTok to cease operations in the city. The chairman of the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce warned that "Hong Kong facing an exodus of educated workers on a scale not seen since the early 1990s". However, the country's GDP is growing and unemployment is a low 3.1%. Hong Kong also received "4.41 million visitors In the first quarter of 2023, which is about 12 times more than the previous quarter, and about 30% of pre-pandemic levels".

Thus, Hong Kong is still a global financial hub and "has already begun to boost economic integration with mainland China", but even though its economy is recovering, its freedom will never be able to and it is the end of Hong Kong as Asia's protest capital.

# Van het Malieveld naar de Utrechtsebaan

## Demonstratie, Staking, of Blokkade?

Door Rik Manuel

Dwars door het midden van Nederland ligt de halsslagader van het Hollandse verkeer; de A12 verbindt het bestuurlijke hoofd Den Haag met het kloppende transporthart Utrecht, en verder met Arnhem en Duitsland. Het in 1940 afgebouwde traject vormt de oudste snelweg van Nederland. Tevens de eerste snelweg in de wereld met vluchtstroken, vormt de A12 een bijzonder stukje geschiedenis door het polderende landschap. Maar waar wij Nederlanders bijzonder gesteld zijn op ons poldermodel, wordt de A12 de afgelopen periode regelmatig geassocieerd met blokkade, eis en protest, in plaats van met overleg, compromis en bollenveld. Recentelijk kneep Extinction Rebellion de verkeersader af en vond haar toevlucht op de vluchtstroken van Nederlands oudste autosnelweg; niet van Den Haag naar Utrecht, maar van het Malieveld naar de Utrechtsebaan.

### Boerenprotest en blokkeerfriezen

Het blokkeren van een snelweg door Extinction Rebellion en andere klimaatactiegroepen is niet nieuw. Eerder kreeg het verkeersnet te maken met boerenprotesten. Onder leiding van Farmers Defence Force en Agractie trokken op 1 oktober 2019 duizenden boeren

met hun trekkers de snelweg richting Den Haag op om te protesteren tegen overheidsplannen om de veehouderij in te perken. Onder andere de A28 werd moedwillig geblokkeerd.

Eerder, in 2017, maakte Nederland kennis met wie al vrij snel de “blokkeerfriezen” genoemd werden. Op 18 november 2017 wilde de actiegroep Kick Out Zwarte Piet tijdens de Sinterklaasintocht in Dokkum protesteren tegen Zwarte Piet. Hen werd echter de toegang tot de stad ontnomen door een groep mensen onder aanvoering van initiatiefneemster Jenny Douwes. Deze blokkeerfriezen versperden de A7 en verhinderden Kick Out Zwarte Piet om gedurende de intocht te demonstreren.

### Demonstratie en staking

Om het blokkeren van een snelweg zoals door Extinction Rebellion, Farmers Defence Force en Agractie of door de blokkeerfriezen te kunnen analyseren, is het noodzakelijk om dit fenomeen te vergelijken met andere vormen van protesteren. Wanneer wij denken aan een protestactie zijn wij wellicht geneigd te denken aan een groep mensen die bijvoorbeeld op het Malieveld staat en

die het bijvoorbeeld oneens is met bepaald beleid van de overheid, of juist steun wil uitspreken vóór een bepaalde zaak. Het ‘koffie drinken’ op het Museumplein tijdens de covidpandemie is hier een goed voorbeeld van. Het doel van een dergelijke betoging is vaak het agenderen van een bepaalde kwestie, het uitoefenen van invloed op de publieke opinie, en vaak het doen veranderen van beleid.

Een andere vorm van protest die wellicht snel bij ons opkomt is een staking. Een staking kan bijvoorbeeld georganiseerd worden door werknemers die niet tevreden zijn met hun werkomstandigheden. Het voornaamste doel van een staking is dan ook vaak het veranderen en verbeteren van werkomstandigheden. Het doel van een dergelijke actie wordt bereikt door het werk neer te leggen en de werkgever door de teruglopende inkomsten die ontstaan door een staking te dwingen akkoord te gaan met de eisen van de werknemers.

### Blokkeren van buitenstaanders als primair middel

Het is duidelijk dat het blokkeren van een snelweg een andere vorm van protest is dan een reguliere demonstratie of een staking.

Hoewel een blokkade hetzelfde doel heeft als een regulier protest is het middel anders. Een blokkade blokkeert de alledaagse bezigheden van buitenstaanders die in principe niks te maken hebben met de kwestie waarvoor gedemonstreerd wordt; mensen kunnen niet naar werk of school. Een regulier protest daarentegen zorgt wellicht voor overlast maar blokkeert niet de alledaagse bezigheden van buitenstaanders. Men kan het als vervelend ervaren dat er flyers worden uitgedeeld en dat er geschreeuwd wordt, maar niets belet men ervan door te lopen en zijn dagelijkse bezigheid te hervatten.

Hoewel een blokkade en een staking allebei middelen gebruiken die een bepaalde schade aanbrengen, is hier de benadeelde partij verschillend. Een staking schaadt de partij waarmee onderhandeld moet worden door deze partij onder druk te zetten, terwijl een blokkade buitenstaanders schaadt door hun alledaagse bezigheden te belemmeren. Hiertegen zou kunnen worden ingebracht dat bijvoorbeeld een staking in het OV ook op dezelfde manier buitenstaanders schaadt. Echter, het schaden van buitenstaanders is niet het doel van een staking maar een ongelukkige bijkomstigheid, terwijl bij een blokkade het schaden van buitenstaanders het primaire middel is om het doel van de blokkade te bereiken.

Een gevolg van dit onderscheid is dat we de classificatie van de blokkeerfriezen moeten heroverwegen. Immers het primaire doel van deze blokkade was niet

het agenderen van een bepaalde kwestie, maar werkelijk het ontzeggen van de toegang van Kick Out Zwarte Piet tot Dokkum. Zo was het hinderen van buitenstaanders, in dit geval de mensen die toevallig ook op de A7 reden, niet het primaire middel, maar een onbedoeld doch onsympathiek gevolg van de actie. Een vraag die nu onbesproken zal blijven is of de actie van de blokkeerfriezen van een gelijke soort is als de andere besproken snelwegblokkades of dat deze actie meer gelijkenissen vertoont met een staking van bijvoorbeeld het OV.

#### **Een moreel dilemma**

Een voor nu relevanter gevolg van de constatering dat het primaire middel toegepast door groepen die blokkades organiseren het schaden van buitenstaanders is, is de morele kwestie die opspeelt: mag je de alledaagse bezigheden van een ander blokkeren wanneer er in jouw ogen een existentiële crisis geagendeerd moet worden? En stel dat het antwoord op deze vraag ja is, hoe zit het dan met de kinderen op weg naar een stervende ouder of de ambulance op weg naar het ziekenhuis die ook letterlijk geblokkeerd worden?

Los van of we het eens zijn met de visie van Extinction Rebellion of van Farmers Defence Force en Agractie, en los van de bepalingen in de wet is dit een ingewikkeld dilemma waarbij verschillende visies op ethiek met elkaar botsen. Enerzijds valt te bepleiten dat het doel de middelen niet heiligt. 'De middelen zijn een

doel an sich,' zouden aanhangers van deze visie zeggen. In een land waar we 'leven en laten leven' zou het niet gepast zijn om voor eigen gewin of naar eigen inzicht en oordeel anderen te hinderen in hun bezigheden en in hun bewegingsvrijheid. Anderzijds valt te bepleiten dat het doel de middelen wel heiligt. Er zou vanuit deze visie beargumenteerd kunnen worden dat het belang van de buitenstaanders die tijdelijk geblokkeerd worden op de snelweg niet opweegt tegen de existentiële dreiging voor bijvoorbeeld het klimaat of boeren als deze kwesties niet geagendeerd worden. Volgens deze visie zijn de blokkades van de actiegroepen te verantwoorden omdat het belang van het doel naar oordeel van de actiegroepen vele malen groter en belangrijker is dan de relatief beperkte schade die de middelen anderen toebrengen.

Een maatschappelijk debat rondom snelwegblokkades is snel gepolariseerd, maar het is wel een kwestie waar Nederland het over moet hebben. Het gaat er niet om of we het eens zijn met de boodschap, maar over of we het middel dat ingezet wordt, het schaden van buitenstaanders, gerechtvaardigd vinden. In een modern land voldoet de uitspraak "doe maar normaal, dan doe je al gek genoeg" niet meer, en voldoen wellicht ook wetten geschreven vanuit eenzelfde mentaliteit niet langer. We moeten het hebben over de spelregels voor deze bijzondere vorm van protesteren, we moeten het hebben over wat normaal is.

# Russian migration and war resistance

## Essential for the end of the Ukrainian war?

By Nora Schütz

What do you think of when you hear the words Ukrainian war? Probably of the casualties, of all the Ukrainians that died in bombings like the one in Mariupol. Maybe the images of the more than 6.3 million refugees that have left Ukraine and have now settled in other European countries come to mind. However, what you might not have thought of is that it also affects Russian society deeply, causing over 1.3 million Russians to leave their home country in 2022. This mass immigration can significantly weaken the opposition in Russia. But it can also be an opportunity for western countries to finally bring an end to this war. We just have to figure out how to support the Russian migration and resistance in the right way.

The migration of Russians following the invasion of Ukraine on 24th February 2022 is completely different to the mass migration happening in Ukraine. Russians don't face immediate death by bombing of their home country, but prosecution or prison sentences if they express their opinion freely. Therefore, most of the 300,000 people leaving in February 2022 were journalists, politicians or human rights activists. After the partial mobilisation in September 2022 even more Russian citizens, mostly men, decided to leave the country. Although this migrant community is very diverse, they are all united by one mindset: the opposition to the war and Putin's dictatorship.

Historically, diaspora communities were unable to provide any assistance to those activists who remained in Russia in an attempt to make a change when campaigning against wars or domestic conflicts. Currently, even though there are still ongoing protests in Russia against the invasion, the movement was so far unable to make a real impact. With the government's enforcement of 'fake news' and 'Russian army discreditation' laws, open protests are nearly impossible. Anti-war groups have therefore turned to more quiet forms of protest, replacing price tags in supermarkets to spread information about the Ukrainian victims. Several activists have been arrested for accidentally matching blue and yellow in their clothing or even holding up a blank sheet of paper.

With all things considered, I believe that changing the Russian political system and its society is crucial for bringing an end to this war. On the 2nd November, the chief commander of the Ukrainian army, general Walerij Saluschnyj, stated that he fears a long war of attrition against Russia. Meaning, that there will be no end to the invasion unless one variable of the equation is fundamentally changed. Therefore, the highly separated anti-war diaspora has to be united to form an efficient force in a fight against Russian propaganda and repression. In fact it is the responsibility of European states

to help them in doing so. In November 2022, German chancellor Olaf Scholz promised Russian war resisters protection within Germany by granting them asylum after an extensive security check. But in reality, most migrants have to go through the regulations of the Dublin convention, forcing them to return to the EU country they were first registered in, before they even get to the security check. For a strong oppositional movement, Germany has to fulfil its promise of asylum and it should extend this program to political refugees and economic emigrants. Other countries have to join Germany in this endeavour. Even if migrants don't want to apply for asylum because of certain restraints on their work, they should be granted work visas. There also needs to be a change within our society. We all need to be more welcoming to Russian oppositionists coming to European countries and support them in releasing protest videos, offering legal support or educating others.



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# De positie van vrouwen in Iran

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## Tijd voor verandering

Door Nienke Uittenhout

Afgelopen maand zijn er twee prijzen uitgereikt aan de mensenrechtenbeweging in Iran die opkomt voor de rechten van vrouwen. Ondertussen wordt de noodzakelijkheid van de beweging opnieuw benadrukt door het recente nieuws van de dood van de 16-jarige Armita Geravand na arrestatie door de Iraanse autoriteiten. De aanhoudende vrouwenonderdrukking en protesten geven reden tot verdieping in de situatie van het land.

In Iran is het sinds 1979 verplicht voor vrouwen om zich in het openbaar te bedekken met een hoofddoek en lange, loszittende kleding. Sinds de Islamitische Revolutie van dat jaar is er altijd een vorm van moraalpolitie geweest die controleert of deze Islamitische gedragscode wordt nageleefd. Het Iraanse regime kent zowel een conservatieve Opperste Leider als een conservatieve president, die de idealen van de revolutie naleven. Ondanks eerdere demonstraties zonder succes, zien we in 2022 een enorme beweging ontstaan die pleit voor vrouwenrechten en verandering in het regime. Waar komen deze protesten vandaan?

In 2022 overleed Masha Amini, nadat zij gearresteerd was door de Iraanse moraalpolitie voor het niet correct dragen van haar hoofddoek. Hoewel deze politie beweert dat haar dood niet aan hen te wijten was, maakte dit verhaal veel los bij vrouwen door

het hele land. De “Woman Life Freedom” beweging protesteerde volop, en overall werden vrouwen zonder hoofddoek gezien. Het Iraanse regime besloot dit neer te slaan met grote hoeveelheden geweld en arrestaties.

Ook bij de internationale gemeenschap maakte de dood van Amini flink wat los. De oproep van Amnesty om een onderzoekscommissie te beginnen die de mensenrechtenschendingen onderzoekt, werd beantwoord met een resolutie van de Verenigde Naties. Echter, Iran heeft laten weten niet mee te werken aan de onderzoeken van deze commissie, omdat het land zelf al een commissie zou hebben ingesteld. Daarnaast heeft de EU sancties opgelegd aan meer dan 200 schuldigen van mensenrechtenschendingen in Iran. Ook worden er dus prijzen uitgereikt aan de protestbeweging, zoals de Nobelprijs voor de Vrede, om hun inspanningen te belonen. Ondertussen zien we in Iran alleen maar meer onderdrukking. Deze zomer werd al aangekondigd dat de moraalpolitie weer de straten op zou gaan. Daarnaast is er afgelopen week dus opnieuw een meisje overleden na arrestatie door deze moraalpolitie.

De vraag is of de internationale maatregelen genoeg zijn. Als gevolg van de protesten afgelopen jaar zijn er duizenden mensen gearresteerd, gemarteld of omgekomen. Hoewel er dus een onderzoekscommissie is ingesteld, zal er

weinig verandering plaatsvinden in reacties op protesten zolang deze commissie niet wordt erkend door Iran.

Toch is er hoop op verandering van binnenuit. Zo zullen er in maart 2024 verkiezingen voor het parlement en de Raad van Experts plaatsvinden. Hoewel verkiezingen sterk beïnvloed worden door de Opperste Leider - zoals bleek in 2021 toen een conservatieve vertrouweling van deze leider als president werd gekozen - is er hoop. De Opperste Leider staat voor de keuze om de verkiezingen zoveel mogelijk te controleren of om inclusievere verkiezingen te organiseren. Een progressiever parlement en Raad van Experts zouden kunnen zorgen voor een meer progressieve Opperste Leider, omdat de raad voor deze keuze verantwoordelijk is wanneer de huidige leider komt te overlijden. De aankomende verkiezingen zijn dus van groot belang.

Internationale druk, de uitreiking van prijzen, demonstreren en verkiezingen lijken tot nu toe weinig te veranderen in een land waar onderdrukking zichtbaar blijft. Toch blijkt dat de dood van Mahsa Amini veel los heeft gemaakt en vandaag de dag nog steeds leidt tot protesten. Wellicht zal een combinatie van externe druk en interne druk ervoor zorgen dat Iran uiteindelijk vrouwenrechten meer respecteert, maar dat zal de toekomst moeten uitwijzen.

# Youth in Eastern Europe

The New Political tendencies in the Youth of Central and Eastern Europe follow different trends than their Western counterparts

By Jokin de Carlos

Politics and youth have always been a complicated issue to talk about. In the United States and Europe, it has always been assumed that youth have their first political awakening on the left and slowly shift to the right as they get older. This image has survived in our collective memory but it is very self-limiting and ignores the experiences of previous and following generations, as well as the stories of other regions of the world.

Central and Eastern Europe is one of those regions. The political dilemmas in this region of the world cannot be simply explained in a left-right parameter. The experiences under communism as well as the political singularities of this region means that the youth does not necessarily go to the left or the right but rather moves through a series of more specific values, such as secularism, nationalism, europeanism and the fight against corruption.

## From Rebellion to Conservatism

In 1989, millions of people went to the streets to fight the police, they were rebelling against authority figures and they demanded the freedom to listen to rock and roll. In a way, these protests resembled those that Western European youths had done twenty years before in the

1968 protests.

The rebellion movements that rose against communism were more politically wide and brought in a series of different groups that would otherwise not come together. These included: liberals, conservatives, religious groups, trade unions, anarchists, environmentalists, pacifists etc, and even rock music fans. In a way, everyone got the chance to be a revolutionary.

The new decade and the dawn of the century brought many new opportunities but it also brought many new problems that these new regimes had to face. For starters, the privatisations had led to corruption and social inequality. Also, the end of communism led to new family values that were of great importance for older generations.

During the 2000s and 2010s, we saw a gradual shift towards either former communist leaders such as Viktor Yanukovich and Milos Zeman or towards right-wing nationalist leaders like Viktor Orban or the Kaczynski twins. For many voters the seemed as a return to more stable times. However, very soon they started to face opposition from the youngest sectors of society that had grown up under democracy. This new generation of voters and political activists is showing the following trends: secularism,

nationalism, europeanism the fight against corruption.

## Social Liberalism & Secularism

One of the trends that we are seeing among the youth of Central & Eastern Europe is the gradual secularisation and abandonment of certain traditional values, that until recently were considered the basis of their societies, such as women in the workforce or even abortion.

For instance, in countries like Poland, Hungary or Czechia the Catholic Church has been losing support among the youth, as attendance and priest recruitment goes down every year. In some countries like Poland, it is not that significant as the vast majority of the population is still Catholic, but in others like Czechia, the majority of the country is now formed by agnostic people. Nowadays the youth in the CEA has a tendency to support political parties that are independent from the control of religious institutions. This does not normally mean a vote for left-wing parties, but rather for liberal or centrist parties. As an example in Poland the main opposition to the conservative government is not led by the left but rather by the liberal KO or the centrist Third Way.



**Anti-Corruption**

Another issue that has captured the interest of the youth of CEA is the fight against corruption, a problem that has been hurting the region ever since the end of the Cold War. Both the post-communist social democrats and the new conservative political class that emerged in the 1990s have been plagued with accusations of corruption. The new privatisations allowed for oligarchs to emerge in the region. Some countries suffered the “oligarchification” of their economies more drastically (Ukraine, Russia, Hungary) than others (Czechia, Poland, Baltic Republics).

Many of the recent rising protests and political parties that we have seen in Central & Eastern Europe have the fight against corruption at the forefront of their program. These tend to be represented as single-issue or personalistic political parties. For specific cases, we have parties that appeared as grassroots movements against corruption, such as the “Save Romania Union” in Romania or the “Change Continues” in Bulgaria, as well as the “Pirate Party” in Czechia that would later inspire other similar movements in other parts of Europe.

**Europeanism & Atlanticism**

The influence of the European Union is also very palpable and in many ways: the trust of the youth in the European Union and NATO is in many cases higher than the trust they have for their own governments. Unlike other Europeans (EU and outside), the youth of Eastern

Europe tend to be optimistic about their future.

The reasons for this are indeed very speculative but we can certainly make some hypotheses. Generally speaking, the European Union is seen by many as a guarantor of wealth, development and democracy, the final objective to reach their way to modernisation. On the other hand, the armies of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation are seen as the defender of their independence.

This means that the youth tends to be more sceptical of those politicians who compromise the good relations of their country with the EU or NATO. The youth in the CEA tends to be particularly pro-EU, As an example, youth turnout for EU elections in Romania is higher than the one for national elections. This has some nuances though, most of the youth is still more socially conservative and as we'll soon see, very nationalistic.

**Nationalism**

The Soviet and Communist experiments were in essence internationalist experiments. This meant that the new communist regimes would try to erase most elements of nationalism that existed before the communist period. However, as we saw during the period of the 80s and 90s this did not work, and instead, a new wave of nationalist politicians would rise against Communism. In many countries, this anti-communist nationalism has evolved into a nationalism that has a series of different enemies. For some the new enemy is Russian Imperia-

lism and for others is the EU and the new secular and liberal elites. In many cases, the new nationalism that has appeared in the last decade has been constructed as an opposition to the new Russian imperialism and irredentism that Vladimir Putin represents, as is the case of many nationalist and anti-Russian movements throughout Central & Eastern Europe, as well as in the Caucasus. These movements would later lead to conflicts with Russia.

Another wave of nationalism is one that is reactionary and not based on opposition to Russia. Instead, it advocates a vigorous opposition to globalisation, and in favour of a return to traditional conservative values. This is the case for, for example, the EKRE party in Estonia, Our Homeland in Hungary or much more significantly, Confederation in Poland, which despite its negative results in the elections of 2023 still were more popular than Law and Justice (biggest right party in Poland) among the youth.

We must also remember that in the end, one of the main elements of youth politics in CEA is the abstention and general apathy to politics. Like in many other EU countries, the youth is less likely to go to vote than the elders. However, this does not mean that the youth has completely abandoned politics and as we have seen on many occasions it takes to the streets to make its voice heard by the political class.

# Hoe het Gazaanse conflict zich óók in Nederland afspeelt

## De gevolgen van secundaire emoties en mediaoorlogsvoering

Door Nina Joziasse

Het kan je onmogelijk voorbijgaan zijn: sinds de terroristische aanslag op 7 oktober van Hamas is er een oorlog aan de gang in de Gazastrook tussen de Israëli's en de Palestijnen. Naast de bombardementen en de blokkades wordt er ook, zoals in ieder (hedendaags) militair conflict, een mediaoorlog gevoerd. De beelden in deze mediaoorlog worden zodanig snel verspreid, dat er onmogelijk een verificatie van gemaakt of context van geschetst kan worden. Dit bereikt ook Nederland, met alle gevolgen van dien.

Een duidelijk voorbeeld van het gebrek aan verificatie was de tweet van Jamie Lee Curtis. De actrice is een duidelijk voorstander van het recht op zelfverdediging van Israël, en dacht een foto te posten van Israëli's die scholen voor een aanval van Hamas. Wat bleek: het waren juist Palestijnse kinderen die scholen voor Israëli's bommen. Ze verwijderde de tweet, en meldde daarbij: 'It's an awful situation for all the innocent people in the line of fire.' Een nuance die velen niet lijken te kunnen maken: beide volken zijn slachtoffers.

De dag na de aanslag van Hamas schoven namelijk zowel demissionair minister van Justitie en

Veiligheid en premierkandidaat, Dilan Yesilgöz, als oud-diplomaat van Nederland in Palestijns gebied, Berber van der Woude, aan bij OP1. In hun gesprek, voor zover het zo te noemen was met al het interrumpen, werd meteen de gevoeligheid en spanning die in heel Nederland te voelen zou zijn over het conflict duidelijk. Er werd gesnauwd, geïnterrupteerd en vijandig naar elkaar gekeken; er leek geen overeenkomst te kunnen komen over het feit dat zowel het Israëli's als het Palestijnse volk slachtoffer is van het geweld.

Deze gevoeligheid en alle emoties die ook in deze uitzending te zien zijn, zagen we slechts enkele dagen later terug op onze straten. Men sprak hun steun uit voor de zelfverdediging voor Israël, of ging de straat op om te pleiten voor de bevrijding van de Palestijnen. An sich waren dit, zeker samen met de vredesmars die geen van beide kanten 'koos', vreedzame protesten.

Helaas blijft het in ons land niet alleen bij deze vreedzame protesten. Joodse Nederlanders durven niet over straat te gaan met een keppeltje, islamitische vrouwen worden nageroepen met 'Kijk uit, daar is Hamas'. De woede die gevoeld wordt over een conflict wat qua zowel oorzaak als

afstand ver van ons af ligt, wordt afgerekend op de mensen in Nederland, die niet voor dit conflict gekozen hebben.

Deze woede lijkt, door alle haat en bedreigingen die zowel islamieten als joden over zich heen krijgen, een secundaire emotie te zijn. Om het verdriet over het leed in Israël en de Gazastrook, de primaire emotie, niet te hoeven voelen, wordt het omgezet in een secundaire emotie. Deze woede duwt andere mensen weg, en is er om het verdriet en de machteloosheid te beschermen. Door deze afscherming van primaire emoties valt men precies in de val die volgens Joris Luyendijk, voormalig correspondent van het Midden-Oosten, door de 'ontmenselijkers' gezet wordt: men verliest uit het oog dat we allemaal gewoon mensen zijn. Mensen die er allemaal niet voor gekozen hebben om van een zodanig groot conflict als deze, een betrokkene te zijn.

Al is het lastig om je verdriet niet te verschuilen achter je woede, al is het lastig om de mensen van hetzelfde volk als dat van terroristen los te zien van hen, zeker wanneer je op je media eenzijdige beelden te zien krijgt: vergeet niet dat we allemaal mensen zijn, die precies hetzelfde leed met zich meedragen.

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# Political refugees: A contested notion

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By Adèle Lang

In 2020, France granted Moukhtar Abliazov, a Kazakh politician, political asylum. The CNDA (the National Court of the Right of Asylum) did so, despite the pressure put by the authoritarian Kazakh government, who perceived the opponent as a threat and aimed to imprison him.

By receiving asylum, Abliazov became a refugee in the eyes of the law. He acquired the rights associated with his new status. These, stated in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, include the right to have access to local courts as well as to seek employment and education.

The 1951 Convention has set the basis for the current international regime on refugees. It provides a legal definition of a refugee - a person who is unable to return to their home country due to the threat of persecution. They must be protected by the government receiving them and according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone has the right to seek asylum. However, the Convention still has its limits as the decision of what constitutes a threat of persecution is arbitrary; each country is able to individually decide if a person can receive asylum or not.

This legal “gap” leads to many controversies as a number of migrants are not able to receive asylum because they do not fit the arbitrary criteria of fleeing persecution.

France concluded that Abliazov did risk political persecution if he were to be sent back to Kazakhstan and therefore granted him the status of political refugee.

Leaving for political reasons can be linked to authoritarianism. As a matter of fact, authoritarian governments, in order to achieve global control of the population, will often try to eliminate political dissidents by different means, whether those be censure, imprisonment or in the most radical cases death. That was the case for Alexei Navalny, a Russian politician opposed to Putin’s regime, poisoned

in a plane to Moscow in 2020. Whether or not this is an action of the government is not proven but it does question the extent of freedom of speech and thought in Russia, yet stated in the Constitution.

Similar processes have been used in many other authoritarian governments, such as during the former dictatorship of Chile. In 1973, Augusto Pinochet led a coup to overthrow the then-current democratically elected president Salvador Allende. Many of Allende’s supporters were imprisoned, killed, tortured or forced into exile by Pinochet’s regime. This was the case for Luis Sepulveda, a politically engaged Chilean author, who led the student movement supporting Allende’s administration, the JJCC (Juventudes Comunistas de Chile). Sepulveda was imprisoned for two and a half years and was freed thanks to the German branch of Amnesty International. The author fled through many South American countries, but due to overall political instability in the 1970s, finally settled in Germany where he continued to write and got engaged in the environmental cause.

This clearly demonstrates the intersectionality of issues concerning refugees and politics. The treatment of these refugees at the local and international scale is the subject of many controversies, as a number of governments try to shape the Convention’s definition around their own interests. One might even question if refugees can be “de-politicized” at all. Indeed, almost all of the reasons for which one could be forced into exile are linked to politics, such as war, sexuality or religion. The case of Abliazov is therefore not anodyne since it directly reflects France’s stand regarding Kazakhstan’s regime.

# Stilstaand, doch achteruitlopend

## De GGZ-kwestie uiteengezet

Door **Thirze Wiegers**

Hoewel er in deze editie een spot wordt geworpen op beweging, vooruitgang en elke mogelijke andere interpretatie van movement, is het op hetzelfde spectrum van belang om naar stilstand te kijken. Waar blijven we op hangen en wanneer komen we niet vooruit? Eind 2022 wachtten er meer dan tachtigduizend mensen in Nederland op geestelijke gezondheidszorg. De GGZ staat stil en komt niet verder, en mensen krijgen te weinig hulp. Waar komt dit vandaan, wanneer gaat dit veranderen, en wat zijn de gevolgen er als er niks gebeurt?

### Oorzaken

Het IGJ, Inspectie Gezondheid en Jeugd is een organisatie onder het Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, die sinds 2018 routinecontroles en inspecties doet op wachttijden bij zorginstellingen. Zij concluderen dat een van de grootste oorzaken van de lange wachttijden bestaat uit een gebrek aan gestroomlijnde communicatie en samenwerking tussen VWS, de zorginstelling en de zorgverzekeraar. Er is een positieve lijn zichtbaar als het gaat over deze samenwerking op regionaal niveau, maar landelijk schiet het netwerk tekort. Ook is er (net als overal in de zorg) een personeelstekort in de geestelijke gezondheidszorg. 90% van de GG-professionals kunnen direct na afstuderen een baan in hun vak vinden, en óók 90% van de GG-professionals geeft aan dat er een tekort aan professionals in hun instelling is. De druk op de zorg neemt ook niet af, er is een toenemende vraag naar zorg. Het Trimbos Instituut constateert dat dit komt door een wisselende, veeleisende samenleving en onbehandelde stress- of angstklachten die uitgroeien tot grotere problematiek. Het IGJ geeft aan dat door de Covid-19 pandemie er geen sprake is van een toename aan zorgvraag op de manier dat er méér mensen zijn met klachten, maar erkent wel de toegenomen druk door uitstel van zorg voor patiënten tijdens de crisis. De onmogelijkheid van fysieke behandeling in de psychische zorg heeft

duus wel tot gevolg gehad dat patiënten met klachten verergerden, en dat wachttijden nog meer opliepen.

### Gevolgen

Mentaal welzijn is essentieel om te kunnen functioneren in een maatschappij, en niet alleen het individu ervaart de consequenties van een gebrek aan goede, tijdige zorg. Een systematisch probleem in de zorg heeft impact op de gehele samenleving.

Het duidelijkste gevolg van te lange wachttijden is het verslechteren van de mentale gezondheid. Depressies, burn-outs en serieuze angst- of stressklachten zijn op hun gevaarlijkst als ze onbehandeld blijven en er van de persoon hetzelfde wordt gevraagd en verwacht. Er ontstaat een negatieve spiraal en een gebrek aan uitzicht op een oplossing, wanneer er niet vroegtijdig ingegrepen kan worden met gepaste ondersteuning vanuit een professional.

Naast deze mentale consequenties heeft de disharmonie tussen vraag en aanbod in de GGZ enorm veel invloed op de maatschappij als geheel. Onbehandelde mentale klachten zijn een groot probleem in de werksfeer, waarbij werknemers niet de hulp kunnen krijgen die ze nodig hebben en daarom onderpresteren of uitvallen. Econometrisch onderzoek heeft aangetoond dat elke maand dat een persoon met klachten op een GGZ-wachttijst staat, hun baankans met 1,8% verkleint. De arbeidskansen nemen af, herintegratie wordt moeilijker met hoe langer een patiënt moet wachten, en een werkgever verliest een medewerker. Kort door de bocht: de GGZ-wachttijsten blijken een duur probleem, met significante sociale en financiële consequenties voor werkgever en werknemer. Als er te weinig focus op herstel en integratie in een behandeling is door verergerde problematiek tijdens een wachtperiode, blijven patiënten sneller “fulltime” patiënt en stromen ze niet uit.

## Den Haag

In april 2023 verkondigde staatssecretaris Van Ooijen dat het de visie van het kabinet was dat de druk op de psychische jeugdzorg te hoog was, en dat een van de prominente oorzaken hiervan was dat jongeren te snel hulp zoeken. Volgens Van Ooijen moest psychische jeugdzorg gegeven worden aan jongeren met de hoogste prioriteit en complexe gezinssituaties, maar moesten kinderen of pubers die kampten met stress, somberheid en onzekerheid het eerder “bij elkaar zoeken” dan “een oplossing zoeken bij de overheid en de jeugdzorg.” In dit statement gaf de staatssecretaris echter geen verklaring voor de toenemende vraag naar psychische jeugdzorg. De oplossingsgerichtheid vanuit dit kabinet ontbreekt in deze visie, er wordt vooral gevraagd om saamhorigheid en meer steun vanuit thuis, school, clubs en kerk.

De Nederlandse GGZ organisatie is in juli 2023, na de val van kabinet Rutte IV, uitgekomen met een statement over de zorgagenda. Zij vreesden dat de belangrijke hervormingen en agenda's over volwassen- en jeugdzorg de prioriteit niet zouden krijgen tijdens de demissionaire periode van het kabinet. Wat er na de verkiezingen in november verder gebeurt met deze plannen – die al getekend zijn en aangeboden aan de Eerste en Tweede Kamer – zal ook deels afhangen van wat er gaat veranderen in de samenstelling van de Kamer. Een linkser of rechtser kabinet dan de afgelopen jaren kan een andere richting voor de zorg betekenen bijvoorbeeld. Echter, in elke mogelijke verkiezingsuitkomst kan politiek Den Haag er niet onderuit dat er een significant maatschappelijk probleem is ontstaan wat enkel nog kan groeien als er geen adequate actie wordt ondernomen.

## Toekomstperspectief

“Adequate actie”, wat valt daar dan onder? Het Trimbos Instituut, het landelijk kennisinstituut als het over mentale gezondheid gaat, heeft bijvoorbeeld een hervormingsplan voor de GGZ opgesteld. Veel van de punten staan in het teken van meer integratie in de zorg, laagdrempelige hulp zonder traject, en een algeheel betere promotie van mentale gezondheid. Echter, net als de staatssecretaris, benadrukt

het instituut ook het belang van gemeenschap en eigen kunnen in een geval van mentale problematiek. Wat Van Ooijen aangaf in het statement van het kabinet is terug te lezen – weliswaar genuanceerder, op andere toon en concreter – in het hervormingsplan van Trimbos: minder labels, meer zelf doen, focus op herstel, integratie, en jezelf (of anderen) kunnen helpen als er sprake is van een terugval.

Dat er druk op de zorg staat is geen nieuws. Nederland kampt al jaren met personeelstekorten in bijna alle zorgsectoren en probeert ook al jaren om deze aan te vullen, met gelimiteerd succes. Covid-19 was een pijnlijke confrontatie met wat een tekort aan hulpverleners daadwerkelijk betekent, maar heeft daarnaast ook meer druk gezet op de GGZ. De toenemende vraag naar geestelijk gezondheidszorg gaat niet zomaar stoppen; de wereld wordt niet minder ingewikkeld en veeleisend, sociale media en digitalisering blijken steeds meer negatieve mentale consequenties met zich mee te brengen, en jongeren stromen vroeger een zorgtraject in dan voorheen. Naast systematische aanpassingen die gedaan kunnen worden om banen in de zorg aantrekkelijk te maken, wordt er veel gesproken over eigen verantwoordelijkheid en zelfondersteuning. Een mooi principe, en psychiatrisch gezien logisch, maar in het geval dat het volgende kabinet echt steunt dat daar de enige oplossing ligt voor de toenemende druk op de psychische zorg, zal het een stevige uitdaging worden om groepsgevoel, gemeenschap en zelfhulp te realiseren in het huidige sociale klimaat.



# The Profile - Narges Mohammadi

A voice for the voiceless from the prison walls of Iran

By Deniz Terzi

A voice might be caged, but the courage is not. Imagine a 51-year-old human rights activist born in Zanjan, Iran. She has devoted her career to fighting government oppression in Iran, focusing primarily on women's rights. She is currently serving her prison sentence for her activism and is unable to receive her award. Let me introduce you to the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize Winner, Narges Mohammadi.

Narges Mohammadi is not as well known as other Nobel Peace Prize winners such as Nelson Mandela or Martin Luther King Jr.; however, she is the hope of every protester in Iran. In October 2023, Mrs Mohammadi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize "for her fight against the oppression of women in Iran and her fight to promote human rights and freedom for all," although the government of Iran is against it. Mrs Mohammadi is the second Nobel Peace Prize winner from Iran, the prior being her colleague and mentor Shirin Ebadi. The two winners have worked together at the Defenders of Human Rights Center, founded by Mrs Ebadi in 2001. The DHCR was an organisation founded by five members, all of whom were lawyers, that focused on the development and convening of groups with experts on

the subject of human rights.

The seed of Mrs Mohammadi's activism was planted early in her life where she started getting more involved in activism during her university years. Mrs Mohammadi has been an activist for 30 years, changing the world through education, advocacy, protests, and strengthening civil society. Her work, from inside high prison walls or the streets of Iran, consists of protests, sit-ins, essays, and interviews.

"Throughout her life, Mrs Mohammadi has been arrested 13 times, convicted five times, and sentenced to a total of 31 years in prison," said Reiss-Andersen at the announcement ceremony in Oslo. According to The Human Rights Watch, since the revolution in 1979, any form of human-related activism, especially regarding women's rights, has been oppressed by the authorities. For years, any activist group would face immense state pressure and large-scale arrests.

Last December, after the death of Mahsa Amini, when the people of Iran went to the streets to protest, and the rest of the world was watching at the edge of their seats, Mrs Mohammadi wrote from prison to give the BBC information about Iranian women

who were detained in the protests. Recently, in 2022, she has also published a book. In *White Torture: Interviews with Iranian Women Prisoners*, Mrs Mohammadi interviews 12 female prisoners and shares their experiences, focusing on harassment and abuse in prison. This is a rising issue with the continuous fight of Iranians for women's and human rights. Her bravery captivated the world as she was included in the BBC's 100 Women last year, as well as her numerous awards throughout the years.

For being the voice for the voiceless, the UN said that Mrs Mohammadi and her award represent "the courage and determination of the women of Iran and how they are an inspiration to the world". In 2020, Mrs Mohammadi explained to the BBC why she devoted herself to advocating women's rights in Iran. "In my opinion, supporting human rights efforts and actions aimed at achieving freedom and justice anywhere in the world, whether in Iran or any other country, is very important and very heart-warming," she said.



# SAVE THE DATE

Elections, SPIL Activities & Dutch Holidays

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November 20, 2023

Brussels Trip

November 22, 2023

Stairs Affairs Election Night

November 27, 2023

Sinterklaas 'Schoentje Zetten'

December 7, 2023

Merch Reveal Borrel

December 8, 2023

Purple Friday

January 12, 2024

Interfaculteit Gala

January 29-February 4, 2024

Short trip

February 7, 2023

Flo Career Event

February 7, 2023

Interfaculteit Food Festival

