

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Immigration is an international form of mobilization done by people from one place to other place which they are not familiar of. Differencing itself from many Western European countries, Poland has relatively short history of immigration as the result of two world wars and Soviet “occupation” which created centralized government (Franzke, 2021, p. 173). Owing to those factors, Poland was formerly known as “transit country” rather than destination country. Poland contacted the refugees from Ukraine and Germany, however, they developed a reluctance towards accepting immigrants back in mid 2015 mainly caused by the lack of knowledge from the effect of immigrations. During 2015 until 2017, Poland became decisive enemies towards refugees especially towards people from Middle East (Łanciak & Frelak, 2018, pp. 6–10). At that time, the Poles were reluctant towards Middle Eastern refugees which strongly associated to terrorism and the surge of refugees also increased the crime rate in Poland.

The 2015 immigrant crisis was subsides and a new crisis – between Belarus and Poland – emerged in July 2021. This crisis is caused by the deterioration of European Union and Belarus relations. This strained relations is the result of European Union’s sactions against Belarus for Lukashenko’s authoritarian government, the attempt of forced withdrawal of Krystsina Tsimanouskaya, and

the interception of opposition journalist Roman Protastevich aboard Ryanair by Aleksander Lukashenko (Barigazzi & von der Burchard, 2021). The new crisis involved tens of thousands of Middle Eastern refugees mainly from Iraq, Iran, Syria and Afghanistan (Bielecka, 2022). The people were encouraged by the local travel agents in the Middle East to travel to Belarusia. Belarusia facilitate the refugees by making fake claim about easy crossing into European Union via Belarus and simplification of Belarusian visa procedures (Gall et al., 2021; Metzelopoulou, 2022).

In the 2021 border crisis, Belarusian government sent the refugees to Poland in attempt to break into Europe. With this, Belarusian government used Poland as “transit country” with most of the refugees sought to enter Germany. This is allegedly called hybrid threat by the members of the European Union. Hybrid threat falls into a hybrid warfare category, however there is a distiction between hybrid war and hybrid threat. Hybrid threat doesn’t involved a armed involvement (Łubiński, 2022). Another reason to further determine Belarusian government to send the refugee to Poland is Poland’s support for the Belarusian democracy. This support can potentially threaten Lukashenko’s position within the government (Fried et al., 2021).

The attempts of forced entrance by the refugees are seen by the members of European Union as a potential threat and it may cause a sort of “domino effect” with the aim of applying political pressure against the European Union starting from Poland (Gönczi, 2023). Despite ratifying both Geneva Convention and 1951 Refugees Convention (UNHCR, 1951b), Poland is determined—as

member of the EU—to stop the flow of illegal immigrants by strengthening their border and eventually building a steel wall at its border with Belarus.

1.2 Literature Review

From the search of compatible research papers, the researcher found few papers, yet there are many articles which can provide researcher with information regarding the Belarussia-Poland border crisis. There are two books and a case study that will be used. The first book is “**Local Intergration of Migrants Policy: European Experiences and Challenge**” by Jochen Franzke. Jochen Franzke’s book is a compilation of research by many other researchers regarding the migration in Europe. One section – written by Małgorzata Molęda-Zdziech, Marta Pachocka, and Dominik Wach – specifically discuss the historical background of Poland’s migration. This section also discuss the development of Polish immigration rule which divided into four phases. The first phase characterized with absence of immigration rules; the second phases showed an emergence of immigration rules with IIPs (Individual Integration Programmes); the third phase was the continuation of second phase but the funding relied on European Funds; the last phase was the time Poland experiences the migration crisis. The three authors’ research contributes greatly in providing the researcher essential data regarding the timeline of Polish migration policy.

The second book is “**The Wages of Fear: Attitudes towards Refugees and Migrants in Poland**” by Beata Łanciak and Justyna Segeš Frelak. Both authors - Beata Łanciak and Justyna Segeš Frelak – give some information about

immigrants back in 2015 which suffers from discrimination due to sense of otherness within the Polish society at the time. While the reason behind 2021 Polish-Belarus border crisis was triggered by EU's sanction, the book contains interesting data regarding the imigrants which can be used as comparison in the future research.

The case study will be used as comparison in analyzing the issue of the thesis. The case study titled **“Hybrid Warfare or Hybrid Threat – The Weaponization of Migration as an Example of the Use of Lawfare – Case Study of Poland”** is the done by Piotr Łubiński to analyze the nature of hybrid warfare and hybrid threat. The case used in the study is also the border crisis between Belarus and Poland, but specifically focus into the nature of the crisis.

1.3 Research Question

The Belarussia-Poland border crisis and subsequent migrant crisis display unpredictable nature throughout its existence. Not only unpredictable in nature, but also potentially destructive towards the stability of Polish government. Not to mention, the allegation of the crisis used as a meant of hybrid threat murks the crisis itself. From the predicaments mentioned above, the researcher formulates a questions: “What influences Polish decision to block the Middle Eastern migrants if the government had ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention?”

1.4 Research Objective

This thesis aims to find and explain the reason behind Poland's decision to block immigrant during the 2021 migrant crisis. There are two type of objective the researcher try to point out in this thesis. The first objective is specific objective, which is to analyze Polish decision to block the flow of migrants into their territory. The second objective is universal objective, which is to explain the Belarussia-Poland border crisis and subsequent migrant crisis.

1.5 Research Objective

The thesis is written with purpose to provide benefit for future research regarding the simillar topic. The researcher aims to provide the future research with both academic benefit and pratical benefit.

1.5.1 Academic

The thesis aims to provide discussion regarding state's decision making and contribute to development of the Academic of International Relations. The researcher uses the politics between Poland and Belarussia during the crisis as the example of state's decision-making.

1.5.2 Practical

The thesis is expected to explain the reason taken by a state during a decision-making process. Particularly, the researcher tries to explain the

reason why Poland decides to close its border with Belarussia during the migrant crisis.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework covers the theory and concepts used to analyze the issue of the thesis. The researcher utilizes the Compliance Theory, with logic of appropriateness, international regime, and securitization as supporting concepts.

The Compliance Theory studies behaviour of both state and non-state actors towards a certain set of laws. Categorically, the theory can be separated into two: behaviour towards international laws and behaviour towards the domestic laws. Both behaviour are inherently linked, as international laws may influence domestic laws. For instance, international laws – also including international agreements and treaties – require both state’s agreement and resources to enforce compliance in domestic level. This enforcement to comply inevitably provide a sort of regulation for conducts of the state within international level (Lumbania, 2005). There are two factors which influence compliance theory. Material consideration and normative consideration are dealt with two specific types of influence during decision making. The material consideration are the tangible costs of decision-making process and intangible concern of reputation when it comes to non-compliance of a state; whereas the normative consideration are influence felt by state to comply with its obligation towards international laws (Peat et al., 2022).

The first supporting concept utilized by the researcher is the logic of consequences. In logic of consequences, state is seen as a rational actor in the face of international issue. As a rational actor, state will formulate a policy as solution to the issue based on cost-benefit analysis and analysis of the possible consequences (Lumbania, 2005; Schulz, 2016). The logic of consequences characterized by analysis aimed to search for alternatives, the possible outcome of said alternatives and determine the final solution to the issue.

The international regime is used by the researcher as the second supporting concept to analyze the issue. International regime in social institution consisted of principles, norms, and procedures agreed upon by the actor to govern their interaction in certain issue (Levy et al., 1995). The international regime can be formed through cooperation and hegemony between states. However, hegemony is unnecessary to maintain the existence of the regime as it can manage to persist through cooperation alone. One of best example of cooperation is coordination between states. In this form states try to accommodate their interest through adjustment of their policy (Keohane, 1984).

The last concept utilized by the researcher to analyze the issue is securitization. In securitization, national security policy is formulated through planning by securitising actor—an actor with institutional power—depending to the priority and threat level. The securitising actor wields power to move the threat beyond the politics, that is prioritizing an issue regardless of their

importance within political level. For a securitization to be considered as a success, the actor must convince the audience about the prioritization of said issue. The actor may put more emphasize to a selected threat should it becomes more dangerous (Eroukhmanoff, 2018). The focus of securitization is divided into two: the wideners and narrowers. The wideners focus not only to the militaristic side of the security, but also expanded view of the security—which include both human security and regional security. As for the narrowers, they focus only on the traditional side of a threat, which are political and military threats towards states.

1.7 Hypothesis

Polish action during the migrant crisis has intrigue the researcher. From the blockade happened in Polish-Belarusian border, the researcher draws a hypothesis, that is, compliance of Polish government is greatly influenced by their status as member of EU.

1.8 Research Method

1.8.1 Conceptual Definition

To deepen the understanding regarding the issue, this thesis will determine the conceptual definition of immigration, asylum seeker, and border crisis:

1.8.1.1 Immigration

Immigration refers to the action by which a person establishes his or her usual residence in the territory of a Member State for a period of time that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months (EUR-Lex, 2007). The immigrants are resident in another Member State or a third country.

1.8.1.2 Asylum Seeker

An asylum seeker is someone whose request for sanctuary has yet to be processed thus they cannot enter the destined country. Generally, an asylum seeker faces persecution and serious human rights violation.

1.8.1.3 Migration Crisis

Migration crisis refers to complex and large-scale movement of population within or outside borders of a country. This crisis can lead to vulnerability of one country's border, change in migratory pattern, and management challenge for future migration.

1.9 Research Type

The research type of the thesis is a descriptive explanatory research. The objective of the descriptive explanatory research is to explain a certain phenomenon. In the case of the thesis, descriptive explanatory research tries to explain Poland's decision to close its border against the illegal immigrants.

1.10 Range of Research

The research conducted during the writing of this thesis is limited by time and spatial limitation. Due to lack of data about the crisis, the researcher will use data for past five to ten years, including history of Belarus-Poland international relations. Addressing to the spatial limitation, the researcher will use the data regarding Poland and Belarus.

1.11 Data Collection Method

The researcher will use literature review as the method of data collection. Literature review, as a method, is learning from references regarding the same topic or considered to be beneficial for the research. Literature review is deemed suitable due to the abundance of articles and news discussing the issue.

1.12 Data Analysis Method

The data analysis will be done by Systematic Review method. Systematic Review is an activity in which the researcher collects empirical data from various sources to answer a specific question.

1.13 Systematic Writing

The systematic writing of this research paper will be presented in four chapters:

Chapter I: Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher explains the background of this paper, literature review, research question and purposes, research benefits both academical and practical, theoretical framework, hypothesis, research method including: conceptual definition, research type, range of research, data collection and data analysis methods, and systematic writing.

Chapter II: Brief History of Poland and Belarus International Relations

In this chapter, the researcher will try to give a brief history of international relations between Poland and Belarus. The researcher will use existing history book about the two nations. This chapter will influence the next chapter where the researcher will point out factors in the crisis.

Chapter III: Analysis of Poland's Decision

In this chapter, the researcher will try to give a brief history of Polish border crisis and point out the existing factors based on various articles, journals, and books of similar topic. Specifically, the researcher will use literatures regarding migrant crisis within past 10-years.

Chapter IV: Conclusion

This chapter will contain the conclusion of research topic. Additionally, the researcher will provide the shortcomings of the research and recommendation for future researches.