1
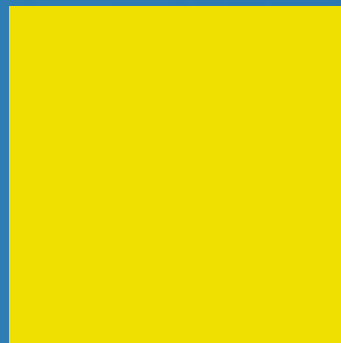
ENCOUNTER WITH THE OTHER: DEALING WITH DIVERSITY

DEALING WITH DIVERSITY

1.1 PREFACE TO THE MODULE

The topic addressed within this module is "Encounter with the other: dealing with diversity". The module addresses two broad themes under this general topic. The first is the question of **citizenship** and the protection that a (national) state offers. The main aim related to this is to highlight that justice includes the so-called **status justice**, securing the status of a person, which then enables him or her other rights. Often this aspect of justice is referred to as **"the right to have rights"**. The second question is the questions of **stateless persons and refugees**, who are among the most vulnerable groups and often cannot secure their basic human rights. Additionally, such persons are often members of other cultures or religions and, thus, face additional burden in encounters.

Concerning the prevention of polarization and radicalization as the central aspect of the Educ8 project, it is clear that the above-mentioned topics and issues are often a point of **disputes and disagreements**, including very divisive and contested ones (refugees and immigration as a "threat" to THE economy or culture, aspects of assimilation, etc.)

The main goals and learning outputs for the module are the following:

• to know and understand the concepts of stateless persons, displaced persons, and refugees,

• to recognize and appreciate the importance of status justice as part of global justice,

• to be able to analyze and evaluate the impact of globalization and associated issues on society,

• to understand the importance of hospitality and legal protection of the rights of refugees and migrants,

• to be able to reflect on how one "meets others", others that are different and what the prevalent obstacles to the ideal of (a culture of) hospitality are.n violence.

Figure 1.1
Refugee girl
Source: © Ahmed akacha/
Pexels

1.2 INTRODUCTION TO GLOBAL ETHICS AND COSMOPOLITAN ETHICS

Global ethics is a framework in ethics that attempts to frame questions and provide answers to ethical challenges that concern the world as a whole. It, therefore, recognizes the globalization and mutual interdependence of humanity as resulting in the state, in which the gravest challenges, including moral challenges that we are facing today (economic, socio-cultural, technological, geostrategic, informational, ecological, etc.) are global in their essence and can only be addressed within a similarly global framework (Strahovnik 2019).

Global ethics is framed in several ways or approaches, including the human rights approach, the ethics of capabilities approach, ethical cosmopolitanism, global ethos (Weltethos) initiatives, global law and global justice approaches, development ethics, among others. (Strahovnik 2019)

For example, working within a framework of ethics of basic capabilities, American philosopher Martha Nussbaum proposed the following vision of moral decency, which is highly marked with this global dimension and encompasses the recognition that a sustainable, just, and morally decent future for us all includes an acknowledgement that "we are citizens of one interdependent world, held together by mutual fellowship, as well as the pursuit of mutual advantage, by compassion as well as self-interest, by a love of human dignity in all people, even when there is nothing we have to gain from cooperating with them" (Nussbaum 2006b, 324). Such a notion of moral decency requires us to formulate, embed, and enforce ethical frameworks on a global scale.

Figure 1.2
Globe in our hands
Source: © Valentin
Antonucci / Pexels

However, how can this be achieved in light of diversity and disagreement?

The present age is marked by an ominous tension. Human diversity has never been so prominent, and the need for co-operation among utterly different people has never been so urgent. Differences in culture, education, ethnicity, religion, and lifestyles easily divide people. Can ethics provide standards of conduct that give everyone a sense of inherent worth and make it possible to resolve conflicts peacefully? This is a hope of most major writers in ethics. But they, too, differ among themselves, and their disagreements have, in many people, reduced confidence that ethics can provide standards we can all use in guiding our lives and our relations with others. (Audi 2007, 17)

We are confronted with a situation in which the awareness about the diversity of the world has never been greater than now, and we can simultaneously also recognize that the need for global co-operation has never been greater as well.

As the globe grows together materially into one world, it becomes all the more urgent to understand how claims to universality can be reconciled with assertions of religious and cultural difference; how the unity of reason can be reconciled with the diversity of life-forms (Benhabib 2011, 59).

Therefore, the hope of global ethics is to offer a framework for moral unification that will give or recognize each person's value and dignity while simultaneously offering possibilities for the resolution of conflicts.

One of the strategies employed in dealing with the challenge of how to establish enough common ground for a unified global ethical framework – despite all the differences among cultures and moral traditions – and at the same time offer a framework that would be robust enough to capture essential aspects of morality is to build a sort of two-level ethical framework. In such a framework, the upper level is shared and universal, while the lower level is particularized and is more rooted in the local traditions (Strahovnik 2019). Constructing such universal global ethics may follow one of the two structural models. The first model sees global ethics as limited to the sphere of interaction between different moral traditions or communities and to the domain of overlapping agreement between them on the boundaries of such interactions. Such a model of global ethics contains in its core an agreement consisting of a set of rules and commitments that cover interaction and exchanges between groups and communities on the regional and global levels. Among these rules and commitments, one can envision a commitment to peaceful co-existence, tolerance, mutual respect, partnership, mutual aid, and possible co-operation.

The second model, which is often labelled as the integration model, goes beyond that and attempts to achieve deeper moral integration, a common ethical core.

Global justice is an aspect of global ethics centered on justice on a global scale, focusing primarily on the domain of international and global institutions and those actions and policies of states and other actors in the global sphere that affect the world order. Within such a perspective, it searches for the universal standards of justice. It can be divided into two parts, the first one comprising the political dimensions of justice and the second part encompassing the socio-economical dimensions of justice. The former focuses on the just processes of (global) governance, justice as an aspect of political decision making and protection of basic human rights, while the latter encompasses a plethora of issues and questions related to social, economic and cultural statuses and conditions, including aspects of poverty and inequalities, distribution and exploitation of resources, global rules of trade and the possibility to access the global markets, and similar (Nagel 2005).

Cosmopolitanism or cosmopolitan ethics is a possible solution (or at least a first step towards such a solution) to the mentioned global challenges or as a proper perspective for ethical discourse given the global framework. Ethical cosmopolitanism is thus a view that we have obligations and responsibilities to others in that global world. Political cosmopolitism advocated for an idea of some kind of concrete global polity, world government, and associated global citizenship. Cultural cosmopolitanism is a view that we should cultivate an open-minded interest in different cultures (including preserving these cultures) and emerging universalistic culture.

1.3 HUMAN RIGHTS, STATUS JUSTICE, STATELESS PERSONS, AND REFUGEES

Human rights are the rights of individuals (or groups of individuals) that belong to them solely because they are human and are founded on an inalienable dignity and inherent value of every human being. They are the foundation of a just and peaceful society.

"Human rights are rights we have simply because we exist as human beings - they are not granted by any state. These universal rights are inherent to us all, regardless of nationality, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status. They range from the most fundamental - the right to life - to those that make life worth living, such as the rights to food, education, work, health, and liberty." (OHCRH 2021)

Human rights are:

- **universal:** they belong to every person, which means that all are equally entitled to them

- **inalienable:** they inherently belong to every person and should not be taken away from them; they can only be restricted in specific circumstances, for a limited amount of time, and in accordance with strict due process

- **indivisible and interdependent:** human rights make for a unified whole (economic, social, political, and cultural rights) and are dependent upon each other, meaning that one cannot fully enjoy a specific right without other rights being secured also. The violation of a particular right usually negatively affects other rights.

- **equal and non-discriminatory:** all human beings are equal in dignity and rights (OHCRH 2021).

Dignity is a basic, inherent, and inalienable value that all people have on the basis of their humanity. It is often regarded as the foundations for human rights. Dignity is therefore associated with an inalienable status that belongs to all human beings, regardless of their characteristics and circumstances. Each individual's dignity protects against interferences or types of improper treatment that would interfere with their dignity (e.g., degrading treatment, torture, etc.) or situations in which he may find himself (e.g., extreme poverty, slavery, statelessness, etc.). Basic human rights, in contrast, can be understood as the minimum conditions for providing or for protection of dignity, i.e., the inherent value of the individual.

Figure 1.4
Basic human rights
Source: © STOATPHOTO /
Adobe stock

Status justice concerns the question of what is needed to be recognised as the bearer of rights. Here, one of the central roles gets to be played by the concept of "the right to have rights" as, for example discussed in the works of Hannah Arendt and Seyla Benhabib (2004). Such a "right to membership or status" is important since it facilitates other rights. The right to have rights is a human right that can be defended within the principles of global and cosmopolitan justice and morality in general. This right represents a right of every human being to be recognized by others (and recognize others in turn) as a person entitled to moral respect and legally protected rights on the basis of common humanity (Benhabib 2011, 59–60).

Figure 1.5
Status justice
Source: ©RODNAE
Productions / Pexels

Stateless persons are those persons who are "not recognized as a national by any state under the operation of its law" (UN 1954), which means that a stateless person is someone who does not have the nationality of any country. As such, they are particularly vulnerable.

That is why there is a system in place the which establishes minimum standards of treatment for stateless people in respect to their rights (the right to education, employment and housing, the right to identity, travel documents and administrative assistance).

The possible consequences of statelessness are profound and touch on all aspects of life. It may not be possible to work legally, own property, or open a bank account. Stateless people may be easy prey for exploitation as cheap labour. They are often not permitted to attend school or university, may be prohibited from getting married and may not be able to register births and deaths. Stateless people can neither vote nor access the national justice system. (Couldrey & Herson 2009, 2)

The main causes of statelessness are gaps in nationality laws determining the circumstances under which someone acquires nationality or can have it withdrawn, migration (in combination with the context in which a person moves from the state of birth (that does not recognize nationality on birth alone) to a state that does not allow a parent to pass on nationality through family ties, the emergence of new states and changes regarding borders and the loss or deprivation of nationality (UNHCR 2021).

Figure 1.6
Entry denied
Source: ©nalidsa /
Adobe Stock

Displaced persons or persons displaced by force have been involuntary or forcibly moved away from their home or home region. According to the UN, there were around 80 million forcibly displaced persons all over the globe, with an estimated 30–34 million of them being children below 18 years of age. Out of all forcibly displaced persons, 26 million were refugees, and 45.7 million were internally displaced (UNHCR 2020).

At least 100 million people were forced to flee their homes during the last 10 years (2010-2019), seeking refuge either within or outside the borders of their country. Forced displacement and statelessness remained high on the international agenda in recent years and continued to generate dramatic headlines in every part of the world. As we approach two important anniversary years in 2021, the 70th anniversary of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 60th anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, it is clear these legal instruments have never been more relevant. [...] Tens of millions of people were able to return to their places of residence or find other solutions, such as voluntary repatriation or resettlement to third countries, but many more were not and joined the numbers of displaced from previous decades. By the end of 2019, the number of people forcibly displaced due to war, conflict, persecution, human rights violations and events seriously disturbing public order had grown to 79.5 million, the highest number on record according to available data. The number of displaced people was nearly double the 2010 number of 41 million and an increase from the 2018 number of 70.8 million. (UNHCR 2020, 6-8).

Refugees are those displaced persons forced to cross national boundaries and who cannot return home safely. They have a right to seek asylum. The 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees states that a refugee is a person, who

[...] owing to 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 his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (UN 1951)

According to the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, internally displaced persons are

[...[persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border. (UN, 2004)

Here are the most recent numbers in relation to the categories described above.
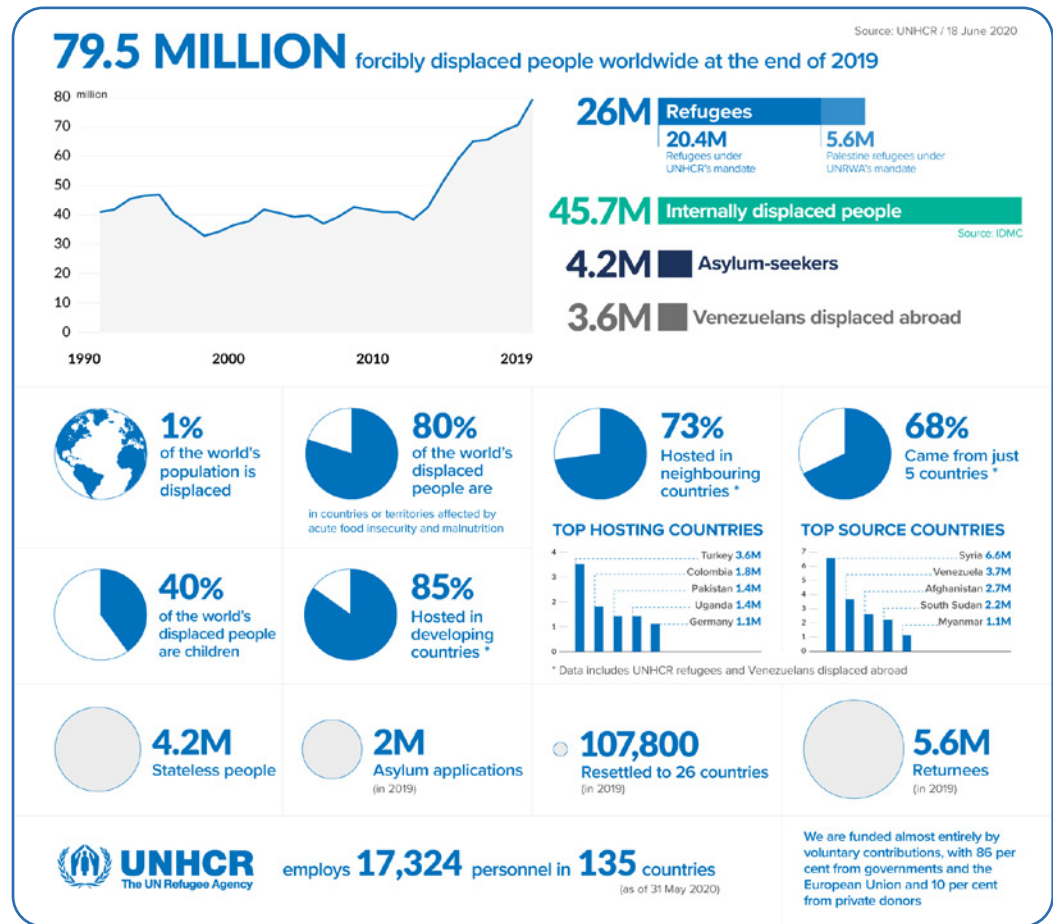

Figure 1.7
Basic info related to
displaced persons, 2020
Source: © UNHCR /
Younghee Lee

1.4. IMMIGRATION AND HOSPITALITY

First of all, the issue of hospitality concerns whether there are limits on the sovereignty of states to close off their borders completely. For German philosopher Immanuel Kant, this was predominantly an ethics question. In line with his ideas, hospitality is not to be understood as a sort of sociable gesture of kindness and generosity but as a right that belongs to all human beings due to their potential membership in a world republic on the basis of cosmopolitan ethics. If states and humanity as a whole fail to appreciate this and fail to be hospitable in this way, then this lays a foundation for grave atrocities in relation to human rights. One can only think of the work of Hannah Arendt, who clearly stated that the organization of Europe after the First World War created minorities that posed easy targets of genocidal persecution, i.e., "stateless people", "scum of the earth", "undesirable", "unidentifiable beggars, without nationality, without money and without passports" (Arendt 1962, 269), to which the supposedly inalienable basic human rights were denied. What emerged was a form of "organized solitude" and isolation. In her famous book on the origins of totalitarianism, Arendt said that:

> To be stripped of citizenship is to be stripped of worldliness; it is like returning to a wilderness as cavemen or savages […] A man who is nothing but a man has lost the very qualities which make it possible for other people to treat him as a fellow man […] they could live and die without leaving any trace, without having contributed anything to the common world. (1951, 300)

Figure 1.8
Armenian refugees in Baku, 1918,
© IWM Q 24947,
https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205213374

The role, function or value of a national group (in this case) and group membership is that it offers effective protection of an individual's rights.

The Second World War and the displaced-persons camps were not necessary to show that the only practical substitute for a non-existent homeland was an internment camp. Indeed, as early as the thirties this was the only 'country' the world had to offer the stateless (Arendt 1962, 284).

Therefore, the camps were not something that the Nazi system would create, but something that was already present in the heart of Europe since the end of the First world war.

Figure 1.9.
German prisoners in a French prison camp during the latter part of the WWI
Source: National Archives at College Park, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:German_prisoners_in_a_French_prison_camp._French_Pictorial_Service._-_NARA_-_533724.gif

That is one reason that the initiative to settle this problem started to emerge at that time. For example, Fridtjof Nansen, a former polar explorer, League of Nations high commissioner for refugees and later Nobel peace prize winner (1922), established the so-called Nansen passport system.

Figure 1.10
Fridtjof Nansen
Source: National
Library of Norway, via
Wikimedia commons,
https://commons.
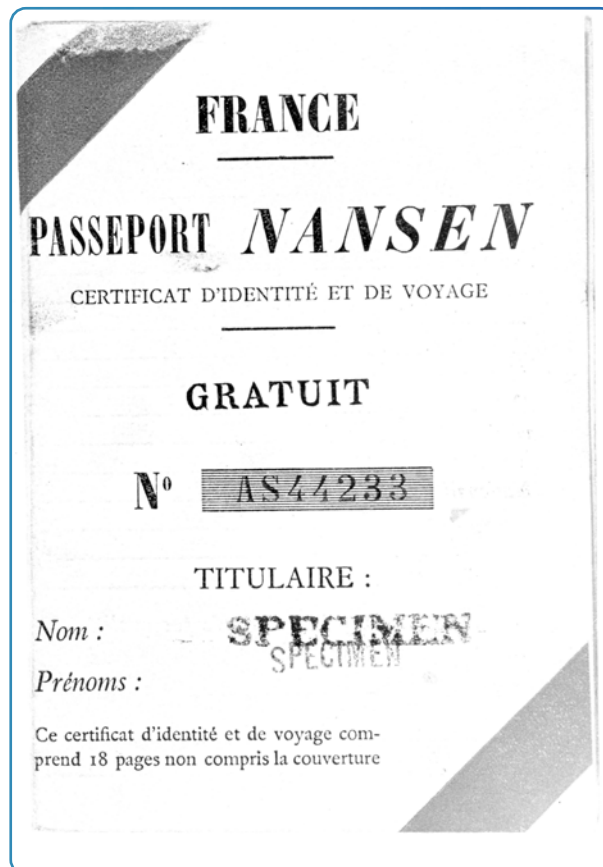wikimedia.org/wiki/
File:NansenJohansen.jpg

Figure 1.11.
Example of the Nansen
passport
Source: © UNHCR

The Nansen passport was a recognized travel document issued initially by the League of Nations for refugees and stateless people who could not obtain travel documents from a national state or authority. Such passports enabled and allowed such persons to travel (Campoy 2019).

Much like refugees today, they were often seen as a burden. Still, the then League of Nations high commissioner for refugees, a former polar explorer named Fridtjof Nansen, was able to convince leaders in Europe and elsewhere to open their doors, first to stranded Russians, and later to Armenians and Assyro-Chaldeans, among other stateless people. Nansen, who had previously helped nearly half a million war prisoners get home, came up with the idea of a one-year passport that allowed people to travel out of the country where they first landed, often to look for work. The number of countries that took in Russians eventually grew to more than 50. More than a dozen countries signed up to accept refugees from the other backgrounds. Overall, nearly half a million benefited from the Nansen passport. (Campoy 2019).

For more information about the Nansen passports and statelessness, you can visit an excellent online interactive map or exhibition of the EVZ Foundation.[1]

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[1] You can use the following link: https://www.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=84ce78_74a06a4c2897bd48561bf43a7d.

1.5 QUIZZES RELATED TO THE TOPIC AND GUIDANCE FOR ASSIGNMENTS

1.5.1 QUIZZES   There are three quizzes for students embedded in the animated video, each consisting of two questions. All questions allow for multiple answers. There are no straightforwardly correct or incorrect answers. The main aim is to animate students to consider various perspectives and dimensions embedded in the ethical issues dealing with immigration, refugees, and stateless persons. It is also possible for a given student not to choose any answer. In such a case, this is an opportunity for discussing the matters further in the classroom.

QUIZ 1   **?** Question 1: Was holding the family at the immigration check-point the right thing to do and why? (multiple answers possible)

☐ Yes, it was the right thing to do, since the family did not have the proper documents for entry.

☐ Yes, it was the right thing to do, since it is important to know exactly who is entering another country.

☐ Yes, it was the right thing to do, since the family did not have the right to enter the country.

☐ No, because there was no way for the family to renew their passports or get new ones.

☐ No, because the family needed help and protection.

☐ I don't know.

? Question 2: Why are passports important? (multiple answers possible)

☐ Because we can identify ourselves with them.

☐ Because we can travel safely to other countries with them and stay there.

☐ Because we can prove our citizenship with them.

☐ Because we can reenter our own country with it.

☐ I don't know.

QUIZ 2

? Question 3: Do you think that making a distinction between citizens and non-citizens is fair?

☐ Yes.

☐ No.

? Question 4: Do you agree that everybody should be free to travel, move or live wherever they please?

☐ Yes.

☐ No.

QUIZ 3

? Question 5: Why is accepting and protecting refugees important? (multiple answers possible)

☐ Because their state does not protect them or even persecutes or maltreats them.

☐ Because they often cannot stay in the homeland because of their safety.

☐ Because often their states do not offer conditions for decent living (e.g., severe lack of food and hunger, climate change and severe drought, etc.).

☐ Because we need to accept people in our countries since we need workers.

☐ I don't know.

? Question 6: Some persons are stateless. What would be the right thing to do in relation to their status?

☐ Accept them in other states and give them citizenships.

☐ Accept a universal and effective international system for the protection of the rights of stateless persons.

☐ Try to eliminate causes that create stateless persons in the first place.

☐ Nothing, in particular, if people gave up their citizenship freely.

☐ I don't know.

1.5.2 GUIDANCE FOR ASSIGNMENTS

In the Student's book, there are three assignments for students. This part provides you with some guidance on how to assist students and assess the assignments.

Assignment 1

This three-part assignment asks students to reflect upon global ethics, global justice, and cosmopolitanism. You can use the text in Section 4.2 above to provide additional information for them. You must highlight how the interconnectedness of the world affects their daily lives.

Assignment 2

This three-part assignment asks students to reflect upon the status of refugees, displaced persons, and stateless persons. You can use the text in Section 4.3 above and the links in Section 3.6 below to provide additional information for them. Questions and tasks (together with the story in the animated video and prompt questions) also offer an opportunity for in-class discussion. In it, you can focus on diverse viewpoints that your students have and ask them to explain them further.

Assignment 3

This three-part assignment asks students to reflect upon the notion of hospitality and meeting or welcoming others. You can use the text in Section 4.3 above to provide additional information for them. Questions and tasks also offer an opportunity for in-class discussion.

1.6 IDEAS FOR ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

There are several excellent online resources and tools for further learning and discussion about this module's topics. Three of them are particularly apt and interesting.

A. The project "Nowhere People"[2] presents the problem of statelessness in an engaging way. It contains stories, excellent photographs and several short films of stateless persons around the world, in addition to basic information about statelessness.

B. Nansen passports online exhibition[3] which offers an excellent overview of the development of the system for the protection of the rights of stateless persons as part of the system for the protection of human rights.

C. MOAS - Migrant Offshore Aid Station website[4] containing information about immigrant and refugees coming to Europe, predominantly by crossing the sea, refugee stories, a free documentary movie, etc.

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[2] Available at: http://www.nowherepeople.org/.
[3] Available at: https://www.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=84ce7874a06a4c2897bd4856 1bf43a7d.
[4] Available at: www.moas.eu.

1.7 GLOSSARY

Asylum: the protection granted by a state to someone who has left their home country as a refugee, usually a political refugee. It is founded upon the right to asylum as determined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Art. 14: "Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution. This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations" (UN 1948). Asylum thus offers protection against arrest and extradition, among others. A person that asks for asylum is called an "asylum-seeker". An asylum-seeker is thus someone whose request for protection and sanctuary in another country and has yet to be processed. Every year, around one million people seek asylum all over the world.

Citizenship: the relationship between an individual and a state. A citizen has certain rights and freedoms and is entitled to protection by the state but, in turn, also has responsibilities. Many of these rights, freedoms, and responsibilities are such that are unique to citizens of this state and not enjoyed by (residing) aliens and non-citizens. It can be acquired by birth within a state's territory, descent, marriage, and naturalization.

Cosmopolitanism: a view that argues that all people – independent from their citizenship or national state – should be afforded equal respect and consideration. Ethical cosmopolitanism is a view that we have substantial duties, obligations and responsibilities to others in a global world since we are all part of one global community. Political cosmopolitism advocated for an idea of some kind of concrete global polity, world government and associated global citizenship. Cultural cosmopolitanism is a view that we should cultivate an open-minded interest in different cultures (including the preservation of these cultures) and emerging universalistic culture.

Figure 1.12
Globe
Source: © Wesley
Carvalho / Pexels

Dignity: basic and special, inalienable value that all people have on the basis of their humanity. It is often regarded as the foundation for the basic entitlements and human rights of each individual.

Displaced Person: an individual who has been forced to leave their home for a longer period, e.g., due to war, unlawful persecution, or a natural disaster such as an earthquake, flood, or similar. If such a person did not cross the border of their country, they are considered an internally displaced person. If such a person did cross the border of their country, they are considered refugees.

Figure 1.13
Smile
Source: © Windo
Nugroho / Pexels

Global Ethics (Also Planetary Ethics): is a view that recognizes the globalization and mutual interdependence of humanity as a whole, including the fact that the gravest challenges, including the moral challenges that we are facing today (economic, socio-cultural, technological, geostrategic, informational, ecological etc.), are global in their essence and can only be addressed within a similarly global framework. The task of global ethics is thus to scale ethical dimensions of such a condition and put forward normative frameworks of global or transnational justice, collective action, maintenance of peace, and similar. Global ethics can be framed in several ways or approaches (e.g., human rights, ethics of capabilities approach, ethical cosmopolitanism, global ethos (Weltethos) initiatives, global law and global justice approaches, development ethics etc.)

Global Justice: an approach in global ethics that focuses on a world scale and especially on the domain of international and global institutions and those actions and policies of states and other actors in the global sphere that affect the world order. Within such a perspective, it searches for the universal standards of justice. It can be divided into two parts, the first encompassing political dimensions of justice (just processes of (global) governance, justice as an aspect of political decision making and protection of basic human rights) and the second encompassing socio-economic dimensions of justice (poverty and inequalities, distribution and exploitation of resources, global rules of trade and possibility to access the global markets, etc.).

Hospitality: in the broader sense, a sociable gesture of welcome, kindness and generosity; in the narrower sense, as employed in debates about immigration and refugees, it is considered an aspect of justice. The right to hospitality is related to the right to membership.

Human Rights: basic rights that belong to every human individual (or a group of individuals) solely on the basis of being human. They protect their basic interests and safeguard the possibility of leading a good and meaningful life (e.g., right to life and liberty, right to privacy, right to fair trial, freedom of religion, etc.).

Passport: a formal travel document, usually issued by a national government to its citizens that identifies the bearer while traveling as a citizen or national with a right to protection while abroad and a right to return to the home country. It usually has a form of a small booklet and contains the persons' name, date of birth, photograph, signature, and other relevant information, including information about visas. As a formal document, it became standard in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Figure 1.14
Travel with a passport
Source: © Tima Miroshnichenko / Pexels

Refugee: according to the definition of the UN, refugees are persons who are outside their country of nationality or habitual residence and unable to return there owing to serious and indiscriminate threats to life, physical integrity or freedom resulting from generalized violence or events seriously disturbing public order.

Figure 1.15
Refugee camp
Source: © hikrcn /
Adobe Stock

Stateless Person: an individual who is not considered a citizen or a national under the operation of the laws of any country, meaning without nationality of any country, and is thus without the protection of a country or state

Visa: an authorization granted by a state or territory to a foreign person, allowing them to enter, remain within, or to leave that territory. Usually, visas are noted in the person's passport.

1.8 TRANSCRIPT OF THE VIDEO

1 INT AIRPORT LOBBY

The group of kids with their suitcases/luggage is standing together under the sign that says "EU passports/EU citizens." There is also another sign saying, "All other passports." The line of people waiting under the second sign is much longer.

Lindsay: I am so glad that this student exchange is over, and that we are returning home

David: I wouldn't mind staying a bit more … if we would visit the beach every day. And Pieter-Jan was a fantastic roommate… he is even sleepier than I am.

Pieter-Jan: Hey! I am not such a sleepyhead. We just went to bed rather late on most days.

Sarah: I missed my family more than I thought I would.

Teacher (to the kids): Hey guys, pay attention … find your passports and have them ready at hand. We are almost at the front of the queue.

Sarah: Here is mine. It's already kind of beaten up. Not from traveling, but from rolling around in my drawers. I hardly use it since you can go to so many places and countries without it.

Lindsay: Mine is like new. My mother always safekeeps all our passports in a special box.

The group moves towards the passport control check-point. They observe in the other line a family being pulled to the side by immigration officers. They hear one of the officers saying:

Officer: "I am sorry, but I must deny entry for you and your entire family. Your passports are not valid since the state that issued them is not in our records of recognized passports. According to the system, the Third Republic of Madagascar does not exist anymore as a country…."

The group of students now passes to the other side of the check-point, still a little bit upset about what they just witnessed.

2 INT AIRPORT LOBBY

This time on the other side of the check-point.

David: Yes. I do not know how they could just expect to make entry without passports! Just what were they thinking. Why don't they just go home and stay there or get new passports?

Lindsay: But… didn't you hear that they perhaps do not have such a home. Maybe they are without a country.

Pieter-Jan: That is silly. Everybody is from somewhere. I know since you must put your nationality or country of residence down on almost every legal form or document.

Lindsay: No, it is not so simple. There are many stateless people around the world. I know that Friedrich Nietzsche, a philosopher we spoke about last week, was stateless since he asked for the cancellation of his Prussian citizenship. And so are many others, most often not by their own choice.

Pieter-Jan: Well, if you want to live in solitude and as a weirdo that is your problem. But if you're going to travel abroad, you better think about getting a passport first.

The teacher sees that the students are debating quite intensely, but he must leave them and says: "Guys, guys… calm down. And wait for me here. I must check the bus schedule and get us some tickets. Wait here with all the luggage and don't move anywhere! I am talking to you, Pieter-Jan."

3 INT AIRPORT LOBBY

Lindsay (continues the conversation): I don't think it is right that they treated that family in such a way. The family was not hurting anyone.

Pieter-Jan: That might be so. But I do not think it is fair if they would just let them enter.

David: I am just glad that we have avoided the long queue and the long wait, and that as EU citizens, we have priority.

Sarah: I don't think this is fair at all. It is not people's fault that they were born outside of the EU. It is a pure accident. And it is not like Europe is ours; we are not entitled to it. And on this note, why we even have borders?

Pieter-Jan: Well, then everyone would just come here. It would be like an invasion. The land would be overpopulated, and nobody would want to stay. It is just sensible that only citizens have the right to entry and residence.

Lindsay: We have just been in Morocco. We were allowed to enter, and the people there were very hospitable.

Pieter-Jan: That is not the point. We had reservations at the hotel and passports. And we had no intention of staying there. Sarah:

But what if somebody doesn't have a home anymore?

David: Well, that is their problem. My father and I were at the protests the other month. It is clear that we should keep foreigners out since there are no jobs even for us. My father has been unemployed for more than a year now. We shouted, "Build the wall that is nice and tall!" I liked being there at the protest, there in the crowd, since it seemed that everyone understood what I think.

Lindsay is getting sadder and sadder. She pushes her suitcase away from the group, sits down on it, and starts to cry.

David: What is the matter, Lindsay?

Lindsay: Just leave me alone, please.

David: What? What did I say?

Sarah: You guys! Both of you. Stop with this nonsense! Don't you guys know that Lindsay's mother was a refugee from the Balkan wars. Most of her family died, her house was burnt down. She was barely 18 years old, and she had to move across borders, from country to country, to finally find a safe place where she could stay. She had no papers, no proof of her identity.

Pieter-Jan: I really did not know this up till now.

Sarah: It doesn't matter. Just stop with your stupid propaganda and what is someone's right and what is not. You do not know the background story of each person. It is easy to say, "Get a passport" or "Go home". I would like to see how you two would think and feel if you had no home and no way to get a passport.

David: I am sorry. I did not want to hurt Lindsay. This is why she said that her mother keeps their passports in a special box.

Sarah: And it is not only her mother. Many people are stateless and not by their own choice. Not belonging to a state, not having a recognized identity means having no rights. And such people often suffer crimes and further injustices, not just the inability to travel across borders.

David: I am really, really sorry. I guess I was wrong.

Pieter-Jan: Yeah. I am also sorry. In the end, we are all human beings, belonging to a common humanity. The difference between us and "All other passports" [REFERRING BACK TO THE SIGN ABOVE THE CHECKPOINT] is arbitrary.

David: I want to apologize to Lindsay for my hurtful words and thoughts.

Pieter-Jan: Me too. Let's go over there to her.

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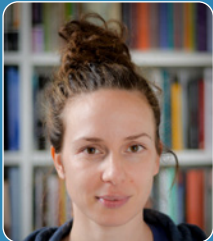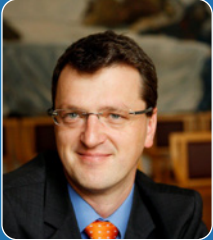
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