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**Migration as a response to differences in human rights and income:**

**A bilateral panel study**

**Pui-Hang Wong and Mehmet Guney Celbis**

**Maastricht Economic and social Research institute on Innovation and Technology (UNU-MERIT)**

email: [info@merit.unu.edu](mailto:info@merit.unu.edu) | website: <http://www.merit.unu.edu>

**Maastricht Graduate School of Governance (MGSOG)**

email: [info-governance@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:info-governance@maastrichtuniversity.nl) | website: <http://mgsog.merit.unu.edu>

Keizer Karelplein 19, 6211 TC Maastricht, The Netherlands

Tel: (31) (43) 388 4400, Fax: (31) (43) 388 4499

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# Migration as a response to differences in human rights and income: A bilateral panel study

Pui-Hang Wong\*      Mehmet Güney Celbiş†

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## Abstract

This study addresses the question of why migration persists despite welfare improvements in migrant-sending countries. We show that migrants proceed to a location where the difference in freedom and income relative to their original location is large. Moreover, it is not only the origin-destination differences that play a role, but also the differences of these locations with the rest of the world. We reach our results by controlling for this dependency and possible sample selection biases in the context of origin-destination models.

**Key words:** International migration, human rights, freedom, income differences, bilateral flows.

**JEL Classifications:** F22, F50, F68, O15, P16.

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\*UNU-MERIT and Maastricht University. Email: [wong@merit.unu.edu](mailto:wong@merit.unu.edu).

†UNU-MERIT and Maastricht University. Email: [celbis@merit.unu.edu](mailto:celbis@merit.unu.edu).

# 1 Introduction

In 2015, the European Union experienced one of the most significant refugee crises in its history. According to Eurostat (2015), the monthly number of non-EU asylum applicants in the EU-28 countries increased more than twofold – from 41,420 in June 2014 to 88,775 in June 2015.<sup>1</sup> Among all applicants, about one third were from Syria and Afghanistan and many others were from countries without widespread violence such as Eritrea, Ukraine, Russia, Bangladesh, and China. In other words, many of the applicants had the option to move to other safe places within their home country, instead of traveling many miles away to settle in a culturally distinct country. Reports also reveal that many asylum seekers chose not to register themselves in the first member state that they entered the EU but continued their journeys to a specific destination country in their minds, for instance, Germany. A better understanding of the destination choice is a necessary first step to help devise more effective policies to govern this policy challenge.

This paper addresses the above puzzle and found that existing literature is rather incomplete. While economic well-being is an important determinant of migration, our study reveals that human rights protection, a much overlooked factor, also plays a significant role in determining migrants' decision of moving out and choosing a destination. Our empirical analysis reveals that human rights is as important as other well-known economic determinants in relation to the variation in the stock of migrants in a country. Based on our estimation results, the effect of increasing the human rights measure by one unit is going to increase migration by more than 50 %.

This study differs from the existing studies in a number of ways. While the human rights issue is not entirely new to researchers in the migration literature, the concern has primarily been on the rights of migrants, refugees, or asylum seekers in the destination countries. For example, Gallagher (2002) addressed the issue of human trafficking; Crush (2001) discussed intolerance and discrimination against migrants in South Africa; Cholewinski (1997) assessed various rights of migrant workers in their country of employment. On the other hand, human rights protection is seldom treated as a potential driver of migration. Schmeidl (1997) and Moore and Shellman (2004), which look into the impact of political persecution on forced migration, are two exceptions. The authors argued that political violence alters people's expectations on their chances of being prosecuted. The fear of falling victim to state violence drives people to leave their homes. Built on their work, this paper goes beyond and considers economic and political freedom as essential in explaining voluntary migration. In contrast, this study does not confine the concept of human rights only to the realm of "physical integrity" and expands the argument to also cover the rights to express economic and political freedom as in Sen (2001); Paris (2001); Cingranelli and Richards (2010). While most people are unlikely to be the target of the state and face persecution, they do care about their rights being limited and value the freedom to exercise their liberty in order to

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<sup>1</sup>Note that the figure includes only those who applied for asylum but excludes those who entered the EU illegally or have not applied.

maximise their potential with minimum constraint. Thus we consider the aspiration to improve their living and to thrive – which complements economic motives – to offer a more complete understanding of migrants’ decision-making processes (Carling, 2002; De Haas, 2010).

Our focus on voluntary migration has an important policy dimension as well. Though it is not always easy to categorise, in general, forced migration often includes only people that leave their home countries – such as refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) – due to conflict or environmental hazards. Voluntary migration, on the other hand, involves also individuals who leave their countries voluntarily for better lives and include people such as highly-skilled migrants. These migrants usually bring up different policy issues that require different policy perspectives because the economic and societal impacts induced by forced migration could be relatively confined and limited when comparing with voluntary migration. For example, to limit various impacts associated with large scale migration, it is not uncommon that some governments would ask refugees to stay in refugee camps. Furthermore, in many countries, asylum seekers and refugees are not allowed to work in the countries that they seek asylum. Financial assistance to them are also limited. Consequently, the impacts associated with forced migration are usually under better monitoring and under greater control of the local government. As the recipient governments have no obligation to absorb them into the population and have the option to repatriate them once their countries of origin are considered safe for return, the impact of forced migration is likely to be temporary and relatively easier to contain. On the other hand, voluntary migrants such as skilled migrants enjoy a lot more freedom than forced migrants do. Recipient governments usually cannot limit their movement and activities. For instance, voluntary migrants are allowed to work and are expected to assimilate and integrate into society. Once naturalised, they are entitled to various forms of social welfare and have the right to vote. All of these differences make the impacts associated with voluntary migration more complex in nature and have the possibility to structurally transform the economy and society from within. Thus, the impacts of voluntary migration, be they positive or negative, are likely to be permanent and more difficult to control.

The rest of this study is structured as follows. After providing a brief overview of the literature in Section 2, we elaborate on the theoretical relationship between human rights and the migrants’ choice of destination. Sections 3 to 5 then describe the research design and present the results. We present a concluding discussion in Section 6.

## 2 Migration and Human Rights

Existing studies generally agree that migrants choose destinations that maximise their economic opportunities. The search for greater employment prospect and earnings are two of the most important determinants of migration. In a seminal study, Harris and Todaro (1970) modelled rural-urban migration as a function of expected income, and migrants respond not only to the

wage differential between rural and urban areas but also to the probability of being employed in the destination country. There are many other empirical studies that test this hypothesis and find supporting evidence. For example, Greenwood et al. (1986) found that migration flows are correlated with the business cycles of the destination economies. And more recently, McKenzie et al. (2014) found that migrant flows are sensitive to the employment conditions of the receiving countries but less so to wage differentials.<sup>2</sup>

But as Massey et al. (1993) pointed out, migration is a multifaceted phenomenon. The above view is proved to be inadequate. The recent emigration from China makes this point particularly well. The Chinese economy has been on the rise since the early 1980s and performed particularly well in the 2000s but Chinese emigration was also increased sharply during the same period. According to the CIA Factbook, China has recorded a negative net migration rate of about -0.3 per 1,000 population since 2000. While economic motives explain the pattern of internal migration within China well (e.g. Poncet (2006)), predictions based on the Harris-Todaro model seems to be inconsistent with the increasing trend of Chinese emigration. The theory would have predicted that improved economic well-being in China should decrease emigration. However, according to the US Department of Homeland Security, emigration from China to the US has been increasing. Between 1980 and 1989, there were 170,897 Chinese US residents who later obtained permanent residency status. The figure doubled to 342,058 in the 1990-1999 interval and reached 591,711 in the 2000-2009 interval. Between 2010 and 2012, in only three years, the figure was 229,421. Economic incentive is certainly a strong and sufficient motivation that lead to these migration figures, but this motive alone represents only a part of a greater picture.

Recent empirical contributions have considered a wider set of factors. For example, some sociologists emphasise the social dimension of migration, and consider cultural, communal, and family ties as vital factors in perpetuating migration between countries. Based on network theory, they argue that friends and relatives provide information and support to the newly migrated. This enables newcomers to gain access to jobs, an arrangement that helps reduce the risks and costs of migration substantially (Massey, 1990; Palloni et al., 2001). Geographers examine the role of climate change and observed that exposure to different natural hazards, such as drought and flooding, is associated with human migration (Hugo, 1996; Hunter, 2005; McLeman and Smit, 2006). On the other hand, political scientists argue that migration could be conflict-induced; migrants flee from their home to escape violent conflicts to save their own lives (Ibáñez and Vélez, 2008; Hatton, 2009; Bohra-Mishra and Massey, 2011). Indeed, the refugee crisis in Europe in 2015 has strong implications on this final point. All in all, according to the above theories, migration can be considered as an economic investment, a product of network behaviour, and an adaptive strategy.

These factors, however, are insufficient to explain a significant portion of migration. As the Chinese example illustrates, improvement in economic conditions is associated with an increasing

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<sup>2</sup>See Dustmann (2003) for an alternative explanation.

number of people moving *out* of the country. The Eurostat statistics also suggest that a considerable share of asylum seekers are not from conflict-prone countries. And in fact, many of the world's poorest countries are not on the list. The discrepancy suggests that a significant size of migrant population leave their homes out of considerations other than economic well-being.

A country which has a large migrant outflow is not only characterised by low income, high unemployment rate, low quality of life, and political instability, but also by a poor human rights record. Human rights can be broadly defined as a set of rights based on the principles of liberty and equality – which encompass various dimensions of human lives (Charvet and Kaczynska-Nay, 2008), as stipulated in the Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As Schmeidl (1997) showed, every year, the concerns over physical security drive thousands of refugees fleeing away from their homeland. Moore and Shellman (2004) further elaborated on human rights, and posited that state repression provides a visible public signal to a wide population. People who observe the signal will revise their beliefs about the threat to their physical integrity. When the subjective probability of being a victim of persecution becomes too high, people migrate.

In this article, we focus on the right to live freely, which is defined as the right to life, liberty and security. Accordingly, human rights abuses are not limited to acts that violate physical and personal integrity rights, exemplified by torture and political persecution. It also includes extrajudicial killing, unfair trials, restrictions on the freedom of expression, threats to freedom of expression, assembly, religion and movement.

Furthermore, fear is only one of the many motivations behind migration. And the emotion of fear itself does not sufficiently explain why migrants prefer some destinations to others. The decision to migrate is a multi-step process. Migrants react to both push and pull factors at different stages of the decision-making process. While push factors are likely to be more critical in driving the decisions of individuals to leave their home countries, pull factors are more important in the later stage of the the process when the movers try to find a place that can fulfill their aspirations of climbing the socio-economic ladder.

Extrajudicial killings are serious human rights violations, seen in Albania, Kosovo, and Pakistan (United Nations General Assembly, 2013); all three countries happen to be among the top migrant sending countries during the 2015 European Refugee Crisis. They rank, respectively, as the 3rd, the 5th, and the 7th (Eurostat, 2015). “Honour killing” is regarded as a form of gender-based violence in Pakistan and some other Islamic countries. Individuals, especially female, who refuse arranged marriages are subjected to the risks of being pursued and killed by their family members, who consider themselves authorised to kill them in order to restore the “honour” of their families. As a result, many people leave their home countries and seek asylum in culturally more liberal locations Plant (2005). This type of non-state-led violence highlights how the respect for human rights in a country influences one's propensity to move.

As another example, China is one of the major migrant-sending countries in the world. Ev-

ery year, it sends hundred thousands of students overseas. Between 2000 and 2013, the country cumulatively sent 2.7 million students to study abroad; during the same period, there were only about 1.3 million students who returned to China (NBSC, 2015). The reasons for the brain drain is manifold. Among them, the lack of political stability and political freedom were the top-two reasons why students chose not to return, as stated by Chinese overseas students (Zweig, 2006). Furthermore, both reasons are found to be more important than the factors of no opportunity for career advancement in China (ranked 3rd), poor working environment (4th), and low living standard (5th) (Zweig, 2006).

As these examples demonstrate, political persecution represents only a set of human rights violations that drives many people away from their homes. The China example further reveals that many migrants settle in new places that offer them better protection of political freedoms and rights. On average, Chinese students who study abroad usually have a better socio-economic background than their Chinese counterparts. Not surprisingly, they would have secured positions in areas such as business or information technology, if they chose to return. However, political freedoms – which have noticeable lifestyle-related effects – seem to have exerted an opposing force against their return decisions.

These examples also show a rich dynamic behind migration decisions, which are the product of the interplay between various push and pull factors. We propose that this push-pull dynamic could be captured by the differences between the sending and receiving countries. Traditionally, many empirical studies put the origin and destination variables into the regression equation in absolute terms.

However, this approach leads to incomplete conclusions because it forces the destination attributes to be held constant when estimating the importance of the origin’s attributes and vice-versa. But it is origin and destination human rights and income levels *move together* that can tell a complete story. For instance, an improvement in the income level or human rights score in the origin country, while having a negative influence, will not decrease migrant outflows if these attributes in the migrant-receiving countries also increase at least the same. Therefore, we relax the *ceteris paribus* assumption as a way to examine the real dynamics behind migration. In the following section, we introduce further details of our empirical model based on this differential approach.

### 3 Empirical Approach

Our core model is a gravity-like bilateral specification that emphasises the differences of certain variables between the origin  $i$  and destination  $j$ :



$$\begin{aligned} \ln m_{ijt} = & \alpha + \beta_1 \ln d_{ij} + \beta_2 \ln y_{ijt} + \beta_3 \text{Rights}_{ijt} + \beta_4 \text{Colony}_{ij} + \beta_5 \text{Language}_{ij} \\ & + \beta_6 \text{Contig}_{ij} + \beta_7 \ln N_{it} + \beta_8 \ln N_{jt} + e_{ijt} \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

where  $t$  indexes the year of observation and  $m_{ij,t}$  is the size of the migration from origin  $i$  to destination  $j$ ,  $d_{ij}$  is distance between the two locations,  $y_{ijt}$  and  $\text{Rights}_{ijt}$  are respectively the differences in the income per capita and human rights protection scores  $i$  and  $j$ . The dummy variables *language*, *colony*, and *contiguity*, respectively, take the value of one if  $i$  and  $j$  share a common language, have past colonial relations, and are contiguous. Finally,  $e_{ijt}$  is an error term.

Bilateral flows between two given locations are related to the pull and push forces exhibited by all other locations in the world. For instance, in the context of international trade, [Beckerman \(1956\)](#) has pointed out the importance of the relative distance between two economies as opposed to absolute distance. This concept was later formalised in the gravity model of trade as “multilateral resistance” by [Anderson and van Wincoop \(2003\)](#). Multilateral resistance to migration was first addressed both theoretically and empirically by [Bertoli and Moraga \(2013\)](#). For bilateral migration flows between two locations, a multilateral resistance term represents “the influence exerted by the opportunities (and barriers) to migrate to other destinations” ([Bertoli and Moraga, 2013](#), p. 82). As a result, the omission of multilateral resistance in the estimation of a gravity model of migration will yield biased coefficient estimates ([Beine et al., 2015](#)).

Several empirical approaches have been proposed to control for multilateral resistances in gravity models. [Baier and Bergstrand \(2009\)](#) transform the distance variable using the weighted distances of the origin and destination locations to all other locations. Using simple averages instead of GDP weights, the [Baier and Bergstrand \(2009\)](#) approach corresponds to redefining a distance variable  $d_{ij}$  for origin  $i$  and destination  $j$  as :  $\ln d_{ij} - \left(\frac{1}{n}\right) \sum_{j=1}^n \ln d_{ij} - \left(\frac{1}{m}\right) \sum_{i=1}^m \ln d_{ij} + \left(\frac{1}{mn}\right) \sum_{i=1}^m \sum_{j=1}^n \ln d_{ij}$  for  $n$  destination countries and  $m$  origin countries. The first term on the right-hand side is the unadjusted distance (in natural logarithms) of the exporting region  $i$  to the importing country  $j$ . In regard gravity models of migration flows, [Ortega and Peri \(2013\)](#) and [Bertoli and Moraga \(2013\)](#) suggest the use of origin-time dummies, and [Beine and Parsons \(2015\)](#) the use of destination-time dummies.

Firstly, we present results two additional models; an estimation where origin and destination fixed effects are both separately included, and a pooled OLS model where neither origin or destination fixed effects or multilateral resistances are taken into account. Year dummies are included in all models except those that include origin year ( $i$  year) or destination year ( $j$  year) dummies.

As alternative approaches to control for multilateral resistances together with the [Baier and Bergstrand \(2009\)](#) approach, we present extensions to our core model by including destination

time, and origin-time dummies.<sup>3</sup>

Sample selection bias may arise if migration flows of zero in the data exist, and estimation by OLS will drop these observations. Therefore, the probability of migrating would be a variable that is omitted in the model (Shepherd, 2012). As a result, we also estimate the three variants of the model (using the three alternative MRT approaches) by employing the Heckman (1979) method of sample selection.

Section 4 presents the detailed explanations of the variables included in the model. Tables 2 to 4 present the estimation results. The empirical results are discussed in Section 3.

## 4 Data

The data used in this study come from various sources. The dependent variable, stock of immigrants from country of origin  $i$  to destination country  $j$ , is based on the Global Bilateral Migration Database (1960-2000) of the World Bank (Özden et al., 2011). Due to the subject of interest, we examined only migration from developing countries. On the other hand, we allow all developing countries in the data set as potential destinations. The list of countries included in the analysis is contained in the Appendix.

The explanatory variable, the human rights protection score ( $Rights_{ijt}$ ), comes from Fariss (2014). It is a latent score generated based on data from various sources that include, for example, reports from the US State Department, Amnesty International, the Political Terror Scale Project (Gibney and Dalton, 1996; Wood and Gibney, 2010), and the CIRI Human Rights data set (Cingranelli and Richards, 1999), among others. A higher score indicates that a country has better human rights protection and politically less repressive than those with a lower score. Existing studies mainly rely on few indicators in their studies; for instance, Moore and Shellman (2004) use the Political Terror Scale in their study. In contrast, the indicator used in this study embraces a multidimensional approach and contains information about freedom of association, freedom of speech, rights of workers, etc., and hence is more suitable to test our hypothesis.

The second key independent variable,  $y_{ijt}$ , is defined as the difference in GDP per capita (in natural logarithm) between the destination and origin countries. Data come from the Penn World Table (Feenstra et al., 2015). Since the publication of the seminal work by Harris and Todaro (1970), migration has been regarded as an economic activity. Migrants response to economic opportunities available abroad and move from a low-income region to a high-income region. The variable is expected to have a positive impact on the dependent variable.

We also included a number of control variables that are commonly taken into account in the analysis of migration flows.

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<sup>3</sup>Bertoli and Moraga (2013) also propose the use of the Common Correlated Effects estimator (Pesaran, 2006) for long panels.

- Distance ( $d_{ij}$ ): distance (in natural logarithm) between the origin country and destination country. Data come from [Head et al. \(2010\)](#). The geographical distance between two countries has been found as one of the most important determinants of international migration ([Mayda, 2010](#); [Beine et al., 2015](#)). It is positively related to the costs of migration and hence is regarded as the major barrier of migration. The variable is expected to have a negative impact on the dependent variable.
- Contiguity ( $Contig_{ij}$ ): a dummy variable coded as 1 if the origin and destination countries share a common border. Data come from [Head et al. \(2010\)](#). The variable is expected to have a positive impact on the dependent variable.
- Colonial ties ( $Colony_{ij}$ ): a dummy variable coded as 1 if the origin and destination pair have had ever in a colonial relationship. Data come from [Head et al. \(2010\)](#). Emigrants from previous colonies, shall they choose to migrate to an advanced economy, often find previous colonists an attractive place to go. This may be due to the commonality in terms of culture and political institutions relative to an advanced economy which has not in a colonial relationship. The variable is expected to have a positive impact on the dependent variable.
- Common language ( $Language_{ij}$ ): a dummy variable equal to 1 if the countries in pair use the same official languages. Data come from [Head et al. \(2010\)](#). Stronger language skills provide migrants a competitive advantage in job seeking ([Dustmann and Fabbri, 2003](#)). Since migration is also a social phenomenon, strong language skills has an effect to facilitate integration process by improving their social experiences. The variable is expected to have a positive impact on the dependent variable.
- Population ( $N_{it}$  and  $N_{jt}$ ): population of the origin and destination country (in natural logarithm). Data come from the Penn World Table ([Feenstra et al., 2015](#)). Not surprisingly, origin country that has a larger size of population is more likely to have a more sizable stock of migrants in a destination country due to the network effects discussed earlier. The size of the sending country is expected to have a positive effect on migration.
- Freedom of foreign movement ( $Movement_{it}$ ): an index that indicates the level of freedom to leave or enter the country of origin. Data come from the CIRI Human Rights data set ([Cingranelli and Richards, 1999](#)). We used this indicator as the selection variable in estimating the Heckman specifications. Countries that restrict their citizens to move abroad are expected to have low or no international migration. [Table 1](#) provides the summary statistics of the variables.

TABLE 1.  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	N
$\ln M_{ijt}$	3.737	2.864	0	16.053	63391
$\ln d_{ij}$	8.771	0.769	4.088	9.901	149040
$\ln y_{ijt}$	8.365	1.566	-0.998	11.821	47571
$Rights_{ijt}$	0.273	1.763	-5.981	7.037	90998
$Colony_{ij}$	0.008	0.088	0	1	149040
$Language_{ij}$	0.159	0.366	0	1	149040
$Contig_{ij}$	0.016	0.127	0	1	149040
$\ln N_{it}$	1.489	1.964	-3.201	7.128	107824
$\ln N_{jt}$	1.635	1.945	-3.201	7.128	112976
$Movement_{it}$	-1.715	12.95	-77	1	44528

## 5 Empirical Results

The pooled OLS results and the model with origin and destination fixed effects ( $i, j$  FE) are presented in the first and second columns of Table 2 respectively. Except for destination population  $\ln N_{jt}$ , both models yield similar results. Most importantly, the differences in human rights and per capita income are found to positively and significantly impact on the migration from  $i$  to  $j$ . In other words, the more the income per capita and greater the human rights protection in the destination economy relative to the origin, the higher is migration from the poorer origin to the richer destination. This result implies that migrants do not simply move to locations that offer the highest living standards and individual freedoms, but to locations that are *most superior* in terms of these attributes relative to their country of origin. This is the core result of our analysis. For instance, if a migration-receiving country's individual freedom level remains the same or deteriorates, it will still receive higher migration if the freedoms in the migrant-sending locations deteriorate even more. We further test this result in Tables 3 and 4 and elaborate on them in Section 6.

The remaining results in Table 2 are in line with the general findings in the migration literature. Former colonial relations, common language, contiguity, and the origin population are all found to be significant factors that increase migration. Distance, as expected, has a negative effect on

migration flows. The only variable on which the pooled OLS and the fixed effects model find contradicting results is the destination population. However, such contradiction does not exist among our following – and empirically more suitable – model results.

We extend our model by taking into account the earlier discussed multilateral resistance terms, and present the results in Table 3. Results from the model that includes origin-year fixed effects are presented in the first column. The second column takes the alternative approach of using destination-year fixed effects. Finally, the third column uses the Baier and Bergstrand (2009) (B&B) method on the distance variable. The results regarding the differences in per capita income and individual freedoms are consistent with our earlier observations: migrants aim to maximise the positive difference in these attributes between the origin and the destination countries. Destination population, unlike in the results presented in Table 2, is consistently observed as a migration enhancing factor in all models. Colonial ties, common language, and contiguity yield the expected positive and significant results.

The final extension of our model is by introducing a sample selection component. Using the Heckman (1979) sample selection model, we internalise the information conveyed in bilateral migration flows of zero. Results from the three MRT variants of the Heckman model are presented in Table 4. The selection term used in the first stage of each model is the score of freedom of movement in the origin ( $Movement_{it}$ ). The Heckman results reinforce our previous findings and add further information regarding the role of the model variables in relation to the probability of migration. Per capita income and individual freedom differences do not only increase the magnitude of migration, but they also increase the probability of migration to take place between  $i$  and  $j$ . This finding is robust to the three alternative approaches to control for multilateral resistance. We estimate a per capita income difference elasticity of migration of about 0.65, and a coefficient of around 0.5 for the human rights variable. In other words, if the human rights difference between the origin and destination countries increase by one point, migration will increase by more than 50%. The Heckman results also suggest that sample selection is indeed an issue that could lead to bias if not controlled for, as the inverse Mills ratios are significant for all three models.

The remaining results from the Heckman model are also consistent with the results from the estimations presented in Table 3. Larger populations in both destination and origin increase migration together with the time invariant bilateral associations between the two locations (*Colony*, *Language*, *Contig*). Year dummies are included in all models except for those that make use of origin-year and destination-year dummies.

TABLE 2.  
OLS

	(1)	(2)
	OLS	$i,j$ FE
$\ln d_{ij}$	-1.519*** (0.0333)	-1.774*** (0.0349)
$\ln y_{ijt}$	0.414*** (0.0175)	0.0545** (0.0229)
$Rights_{ijt}$	0.210*** (0.0178)	0.146*** (0.0153)
$Colony_{ij}$	1.933*** (0.213)	1.727*** (0.190)
$Language_{ij}$	1.194*** (0.0686)	1.204*** (0.0632)
$Contig_{ij}$	2.546*** (0.162)	2.094*** (0.147)
$\ln N_{it}$	0.494*** (0.0155)	0.226* (0.118)
$\ln N_{jt}$	0.647*** (0.0152)	-0.793*** (0.0898)
$\alpha$	10.86*** (0.310)	13.06*** (0.612)
Observations	23091	23091
Number of pairs	8825	8825
Year Dummies	Yes	Yes
Standard errors clustered by	Pair	Pair
R-squared	0.450	0.664
Log likelihood	-51458.5	-45788.5

Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

TABLE 3.  
MRT

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	<i>i</i> year FE	<i>j</i> year FE	B&B
$\ln d_{ij}$	-1.518*** (0.0331)	-1.517*** (0.0331)	-1.830*** (0.0395)
$\ln y_{ijt}$	0.412*** (0.0171)	0.412*** (0.0171)	0.418*** (0.0175)
$Rights_{ijt}$	0.209*** (0.0176)	0.210*** (0.0175)	0.199*** (0.0173)
$Colony_{ij}$	1.936*** (0.213)	1.923*** (0.213)	2.344*** (0.205)
$Language_{ij}$	1.192*** (0.0684)	1.193*** (0.0685)	0.935*** (0.0677)
$Contig_{ij}$	2.551*** (0.162)	2.550*** (0.161)	2.108*** (0.170)
$\ln N_{it}$	0.494*** (0.0155)	0.494*** (0.0154)	0.490*** (0.0149)
$\ln N_{jt}$	0.647*** (0.0151)	0.645*** (0.0151)	0.622*** (0.0148)
$\alpha$	10.71*** (0.310)	10.71*** (0.308)	-2.492*** (0.157)
Observations	23091	23091	23091
Number of pairs	8825	8825	8825
Year Dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes
Standard errors clustered by	Pair	Pair	Pair
R-squared	0.450	0.450	0.460
Log likelihood	-51460.3	-51461.0	-51250.5

Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

TABLE 4.  
HECKMAN

	(1)		(2)		(3)	
	<i>i</i> year FE		<i>j</i> year FE		B&B	
	Outcome	Selection	Outcome	Selection	Outcome	Selection
<i>ln d<sub>ij</sub></i>	-2.235*** (0.0444)	-0.635*** (0.0173)	-2.238*** (0.0444)	-0.636*** (0.0173)	-2.791*** (0.0548)	-0.830*** (0.0214)
<i>ln y<sub>ijt</sub></i>	0.652*** (0.0262)	0.181*** (0.00877)	0.655*** (0.0263)	0.181*** (0.00878)	0.652*** (0.0264)	0.185*** (0.00892)
<i>Rights<sub>ijt</sub></i>	0.543*** (0.0268)	0.166*** (0.00899)	0.540*** (0.0268)	0.166*** (0.00902)	0.531*** (0.0259)	0.163*** (0.00887)
<i>Colony<sub>ij</sub></i>	2.281*** (0.269)	1.007*** (0.190)	2.329*** (0.272)	1.028*** (0.195)	2.779*** (0.266)	1.148*** (0.202)
<i>Contig<sub>ij</sub></i>	2.910*** (0.216)	0.537*** (0.152)	2.896*** (0.217)	0.534*** (0.152)	2.044*** (0.232)	0.278* (0.161)
<i>ln N<sub>it</sub></i>	0.740*** (0.0239)	0.223*** (0.00847)	0.745*** (0.0237)	0.224*** (0.00843)	0.724*** (0.0230)	0.222*** (0.00828)
<i>ln N<sub>jt</sub></i>	1.026*** (0.0195)	0.304*** (0.00684)	1.034*** (0.0197)	0.306*** (0.00690)	0.995*** (0.0189)	0.300*** (0.00679)
<i>Language<sub>ij</sub></i>	1.835*** (0.0888)	0.587*** (0.0313)	1.847*** (0.0886)	0.589*** (0.0313)	1.505*** (0.0875)	0.490*** (0.0309)
$\alpha$	11.15*** (0.4336)	3.12*** (0.1597)	11.42*** (0.434)	3.19*** (0.1611)	-8.309*** (0.2449)	-2.45*** (0.0792)
Observations	19824		19824		19824	
Number of pairs	11536		11536		11536	
Log likelihood	-37037.4		-37030.0		-36818.8	
Inverse Mills ratio	3.100*** (0.0458)		3.098*** (0.0452)		3.061*** (0.0466)	

Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$



## 6 Concluding discussion

What do the findings tell us? The empirical results we observe can be demonstrated with a hypothetical example. Assume that the world consisted only of Sweden and Afghanistan. Considering the income and human rights differences between the two countries, we can also assume that migration is almost one way; from Afghanistan to Sweden. Improving the economic and human rights conditions in Afghanistan will not decrease this migration if the conditions in Sweden improve even more – or at least improve as much as the conditions in Afghanistan. Therefore the only viable solution seems to be a convergence of world countries in terms of their freedoms and living standards.

A policy solution to an issue is affected by the lens through which one looks. Immediate questions about the 2015 refugee crisis in Europe are: how many of the migrants entering Europe are not economic migrants but asylum seekers? Why did many of them choose not to register themselves in the first member state that they entered the European Union according to the Dublin Regulation but continue their journeys to Germany, Austria, or Sweden? Why did many of them choose not to seek asylum in their neighbouring states?

Many studies have shown that migrants probably left their birth places for better economic prospects. Ignoring the potential effect of human rights, however, may confine the set of solutions to the problem. While greater border control remains the prevailing short-run policy, a long-run solution to the issue should not be limited to increasing the number and size of development programmes in the sending countries, liberalising the markets in the sending countries, or promoting business for peace. The findings of this paper suggest that there may be additional ways of governing the migration issue; that is, improving the human rights records of the under achievers relative to countries with high levels of human rights.

Improving the human rights record of a country is by no mean an easy task. But the discussion opens up a new avenue that could complement the economic strategy in alleviating the economic, political, and social pressures associated with immigration experienced by the receiving countries. Popular approaches that could enhance human rights practices include “naming and shaming” and greater enforcement of international law. The “naming and shaming” approach assumes that governments to various extents observe the norms established in the international society and hence are subject to socialisation pressure (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998). The theory assumes that governments may take (partial) “tactical concessions” to complaints about repression to assuage pressure put forth by the international community. This tactical concern, in turn, enters and alters governments’ preferences and changes their behaviours accordingly (Risse and Sikkink, 1999). This strategy works particularly well when there is a strong civil society and international non-governmental human rights organisations (INGOs) in a country (Neumayer, 2005; Murdie and Davis, 2012). Proponents of the international law approach, for instance, Simmons (2009), add

that international law provides a commitment and signalling device to governments that seek to improve their accountability and democratic deficit in their domestic political arena.

Hafner-Burton (2013), however, is critical about the norm-based approach and is concerned that repressive states would merely pay “lip service” to this approach. Nonetheless, she proposed that countries and international organisations can tie material benefits to compliance by integrating hard human rights standards into preferential trade agreements (Hafner-Burton, 2005). This will give potential human rights abusers greater incentives for compliance. For instance, the European Commission has put this into practice and was found effective in reducing human rights abuses in signing countries. The Lomé Convention, first signed in 1975, is one of the preferential trade agreements between the European Economic Community (EEC) and African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) states. It offers not only non-reciprocal preferences for exports from ACP countries to the EEC but also development funds to ACP states. In return, ACP states are obliged to improve their human rights records. Countries that do not fulfill the assessment risk losing the funds or membership. Between 1989 and 2002, the funds were suspended 26 times in 20 ACP countries (Hazelzet, 2005). Cross-country quantitative analysis also confirms that states that enter PTAs with hard human rights standards performed better in their practices (Hafner-Burton, 2005).

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## 7 Appendix

List of countries: Albania, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, South Korea, Kuwait, Kyrgyz Republic, Laos, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Russia, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Taiwan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe



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