Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey

Situation Room "Building walls in the ocean"

Diversity in a Globalized World (Gpo 218)

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Assigned Position: Justifying accepting Open Arms over Golatz

I was assigned to support the acceptance of the Open Arms ship over the Golatz. The rationale behind this position is based on prioritizing vulnerable populations such as women and children, which aligns with humanitarian principles that aim to protect those most at risk.

Personal Position on the Case

1. **What is the context of the problem?**
   The context revolves around two vessels, the *Open Arms* and *Golatz*, carrying migrants fleeing persecution, war, extreme poverty, etc. Both ships are denied entry to European ports, and after 21 days at sea, the situation is dire. Italy, Spain, Greece, and other EU countries have refused entry, leading to a humanitarian crisis. The Italian government, under media and public pressure, agrees to accept only one of the vessels, forcing a difficult decision about which group should receive priority.

(McAuliffe & Ruhs, 2018)

2. **How is the case related to issues such as human rights, gender, privilege, or bias?**
   The case is very connected to human rights, particularly the right to asylum for individuals fleeing violence, persecution, or inhumane conditions. Gender plays a significant role in the plight of those aboard the *Open Arms*—the majority of passengers are women and children, many of whom face gender-based violence, such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and the abduction of children by militias. These individuals are at heightened risk due to their vulnerability and lack of agency in their home countries, making their protection a matter of urgency.

(UNHCR, 2019)

Privilege and bias also influence the European response to the crisis. Wealthier European countries with stronger economies, such as Germany or France, have the capacity to take in more asylum seekers but often refuse, leaving countries like Italy, Spain, and Greece to bear the brunt of migrant arrivals. Also, there may be a bias against Muslim men on the *Golatz* due to stereotypes linking them with terrorism, which complicates their acceptance.

3. **What are possible different points of view related to the issue?**
   - **Humanitarian:** Some argue that both ships should be accepted without discrimination. This perspective focuses on the moral obligation to save lives and treat all migrants equally.
   - **Security:** Others can argue that the *Golatz* should be denied due to potential security risks, as its passengers consist of young Muslim men from regions associated with conflict. This point of view often reflects xenophobic or Islamophobic sentiments but also genuine concerns about managing integration and resources.
   - **Pragmatic:** Prioritizing the ship with the most vulnerable passengers (*Open Arms*), emphasizing the need to safeguard women and children first.

4. **What is your proposal for the Italian Government to act in the short term and, for European countries, in the long term?**
   Short Term: The Italian government should prioritize the *Open Arms* ship due to the severe vulnerabilities of its passengers, focusing on protecting women and children from further harm. The decision could be framed as a "temporary", as an emergency response to safeguard lives while coordinating with humanitarian NGOs and other governments to find a longer-term solution for both, those on the *Open Arms* and *Golatz*.
   Long Term: European countries need to create a coordinated migration and asylum policy that goes beyond the failed current system. This policy should account for the following.

- ○ Establish clear and fair burden-sharing mechanisms across all EU member states
    - i. No single country is overwhelmed by migrant arrivals.
- ○ Create secure, legal migration pathways
    - i. Prevent dangerous sea crossings.
- ○ Strengthen cooperation with countries of origin and transit
    - i. Addressing the root causes of migration such as war, poverty, and persecution.
- ○ Ensure that EU asylum policies uphold the principle of non-refoulement
    - i. Prohibits returning refugees to places where they may face danger

(UNHCR, 2019)

Bibliography

McAuliffe, M., & Ruhs, M. (Eds.). (2018). *World migration report 2018*. International Organization for Migration.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2019). *Global trends: Forced displacement in 2018*. UNHCR.